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Published online: 10 Jan 2019.

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Militarization, stigma, and resistance: negotiating military reservist identity in the civilian workplace

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ABSTRACT

Set against the backdrop of the British Government's Future Reserves 2020 (FR2020) programme, this article addresses military reservists' experiences of how they are perceived by civilian colleagues in the workplace. Drawing on qualitative interviews with reservists, it analyses their understandings of civilian co-workers' qualified and sometimes reluctant acceptance in light of FR2020's implicit aim to use reservists to help realign civil–military relationships. While it appears that civilian work colleagues' social distancing of reservists helps consolidate the wider public's perceived lack of understanding of the British armed forces, a more critical view sees reservists' largely unchallenged presence in the workplace as an exemplary, yet subtle instance of militarization. This is because reservists' simultaneous (physical) inclusion and (social) distancing or stigmatization constitutes, and is constitutive of, their need to pass as civilian. In conclusion, we argue that a key implication of their passing as civilian is to neutralize debate of the legitimacy – or otherwise – of the armed forces as an institution tasked with violence on behalf of the state.

Introduction

While opinion polling in the UK suggests consistent and enduring public support for the armed forces at the macro level, little is known of the everyday experiences of reservists in civilian employment contexts. Yet, this is important because how civilian colleagues perceive a co-worker's military role may influence how reservists approach their part-time career in the armed forces (Dandeker, Greenberg, and Orme 2011). Set against the backdrop of the UK Armed Forces Future Reserves (FR2020) programme, and drawing on qualitative research interviews which elicited insights from reservists around how they are seen by colleagues, this article explores the consequences of military actors' presence in the civilian employment context. Specifically, we focus on the potential role of reservists in realigning civil–military relationships – sometimes conceptualized as a 'gap' – through educating colleagues about their reservist role. This line of enquiry has been animated by one of the rationales of FR2020, that a renewed

visibility and expansion of reservists might facilitate civilians' better understanding of the armed forces. This article, however, is also alert to a more critical perspective of FR2020 which sees it as a further instance of the militarization of the UK through attempts to normalize the military in a key sector of everyday life, employment (Walton 2014). The article develops a critical military studies (CMS) approach in problematizing rather than taking military power for granted (Basham and Gifkins 2015; Eastwood 2018), focussing on the micro-social and political contestation of military actors in the civilian workplace, and asking how far and in what kinds of ways reservists can be seen as vectors of militarization. Our analytical focus is on the potentially productive tensions between reservists' simultaneous workplace exclusion as exceptional military actors, and inclusion as civilians. Importantly, it draws on experiences reported by reservists themselves.

The article is structured as follows. After discussing the concepts of militarism and militarization, we provide an overview of FR2020 and introduce the methodology. We then examine how reservists believe they are regarded by civilians in the workplace as military actors of a particular kind. Discussion of how our military participants' identities were discredited by civilian co-workers in ways that chime with Erving Goffman's (1963) concept of stigma, or spoilt identity, follows. In response, reservists demonstrated a good deal of spontaneous reflexivity and creativity in presenting civilianized selves that balanced both distance and familiarity with colleagues. Key to our analysis and wider argument is a recognition that it is in the fertile interstices between reservists' physical proximity yet simultaneous social distance from civilians that militarization is manifest. We conclude with a discussion of what we term 'the militarist dividend'.

Context and concepts: militarism and militarization

Militarism and militarization continue to constitute and be expressed within the UK's political, economic, social, and cultural life. Examples range from the size and profile of the arms/defence industry (Stavrianakis 2012a) to the global proliferation of the British private military and security industry (Kinsey 2006), the ubiquity of military signs, symbols, and heritage sites in public spaces (Woodward 2005), mainstream media's general tendency to support military action (Brown 2003), the regularity with which the armed forces are deployed to fight (Dixon 2018), the relative lack of resistance to so-called wars of choice (Hill 2016) and the dominant, largely demilitarized ways that Britain's imperial history is framed as almost entirely beneficent for those 'in need of civilizing' (Gott 2011). Militarism and militarization are paradoxical, though; for example, alongside popular support for the UK armed forces, we see ongoing recruitment difficulties and waning support for the idea of overseas military intervention. A wealth of recent scholarship seeking to define and explain the causes and consequences of militarism and militarization has burgeoned across disciplines as diverse as international relations (Stavrianakis and Selby 2012), human geography (Woodward 2005; Rech et al. 2015), feminist studies (Enloe 2000; Stern and Zalewski 2009; Mohanty 2011; Åhäll 2016; Wibben 2018) criminology (Kraska 2007; Salter 2014; Evans 2017), sociology (Shaw 1991; Martino 2012; McSorley 2012) and, of most relevance to the current article, CMS (Enloe 2015; Agathangelou 2017; Massé, Lunstrum, and Holterman 2017). Broadening and deepening formulations of militarism derived from

earlier literatures (Liebknecht and Sirnis 1972), allied work has identified the spatially and temporally diffuse character of militarization (Hyde 2016) that can play out at the level of everyday commodities (Turse 2008; Jackson 2017) and assume both subtle and hidden forms (Giroux 2004; Kallender and Hughes 2018). While militarism has typically been used to invoke the means by which societies may glorify or celebrate war (Vagts 1959; Shaw 1991), militarization focuses on the translation of these ideologies into material, discursive, and processual practices (Enloe 2002; Flusty et al. 2008). Explorations of militarism and militarization have sought, for example, to understand how military forces become identified as the ultimate resolver of tensions, that having enemies is a natural condition, that societies are predisposed to conflict, and that a state without a military is weak (Enloe 2002, 23–4). Critics have asked why values closely associated with military identity, such as loyalty, honour, conformity, and obedience, come to be privileged and framed as desirable for civilians and as panacea to particular kinds of social problems (Lutz 2009, 184; Bernazzoli and Flint 2009, 401). The agency of individuals engaged directly with processes which may be identified as militarizing has also elicited interest (Woodward, Jenkings, and Williams 2017; Enloe 2000) as has the indifference of some social actors to militaristic ideologies and the value to others of the state's maintenance of security capabilities and its role in the security–development nexus (Duffield 2014; Duncanson and Woodward 2015). By inference, militarization in its more obviously commodified forms (the Pentagon's links with Hollywood come to mind here; see Boggs 2015), might be conceived of not as straightforwardly problematic, but rather as an unintended consequence of an economic system whose logics transcend wider ethical consideration prioritizing the use of military force over other means.

Here, we move forward from an understanding that the circulation of ideas and beliefs around the superiority or inferiority of militarized values is most usefully conceptualized as an assemblage comprised of co-existing military and civilian ways of seeing, feeling, and acting that complicates the apparently discrete division between the two (Enloe 2002; Bernazzoli and Flint 2009, 399; Basham 2018; Howell 2018). In this view, militarization gains cultural, political, and economic traction because it is 'already there' as the 'in-between' (Basham and Gifkins 2015, 1), and many contemporary phenomena are always and already a product of the assemblage (Woodward, Jenkings, and Williams 2017). In taking this understanding further, Howell (2018) argues that liberal society is shaped by war-like relations that eschew the civil–military 'divide' altogether. In this article, rather than talking of a civil–military binary we conceptualize the field as a complex of civil–military relationships, where a 'divide' or 'gap' is understood as having discursive rather than analytic reality. Ultimately, bringing the permeable, fluid, and dynamic military–civilian interface into sharp relief allows us to better understand the everyday identity challenges faced by reservists as they move across these imbricated worlds. It is also a necessary undertaking. As individuals associated with an institutional *raison d'etre* around the use of state-legitimated lethal violence, there is a specificity (or 'need to be different'; Dandeker 2000) to military personnel that some might equate with moral superiority. It is, then, perhaps unsurprising that those providing this unique public good – nested in the use of violence and invoking questions of life and death – might be accorded a somewhat ambivalent status by colleagues in the civilian workplace.

Context: the Future Reserves 2020 programme

All three services in the UK armed forces have reservist traditions, though their origins and histories vary. Of these, the Army's long-established former Territorial Army (TA) was by far the most well known. Despite some of their number deploying to the Balkans following the break-up of Yugoslavia and consequent involvement in the Gulf War in 2003, investment in the TA declined against the backdrop of the so-called Cold War peace dividend. However, UK defence reforms, combined with public-sector funding stringencies in the years following the 2008 financial crisis and significant political pressures lobbying for a maintained UK reservist capability (see Edmunds et al. 2016; Bury 2018), set in train plans for Reserves reform. Under the FR2020 programme, and following considerable consultation, the reforms aimed to create a trained strength of 34,900 including 30,000 in a new Army Reserve, 3100 in the Royal Navy Reserve and Royal Marines Reserve, and 1800 in the Royal Auxiliary Air Force. Reservists were seen as being flexible additions to the UK armed forces, and cost efficient. These reforms chimed with the then Coalition Government's ideological emphasis on the 'Big Society' and its ethos of volunteering and civic responsibility. More broadly, the move reflected similar changes taking place in reserve forces across Europe, North America, and Australia.

Three related developments within the reserves are worth highlighting. First, the UK saw actual deployment and absence from civilian work of reservists to theatres of wars in Iraq (2003–2011) and Afghanistan (2001–2014), followed by their subsequent return to work. Second, there was a concerted effort by successive governments to increase the awareness and support of the civilian population towards the work of the armed forces. To these ends the *Report of Inquiry into National Recognition of our Armed Forces* (Davies, Clark, and Sharp 2008) advocated policies to enhance personnel's visibility in the media and in public life. The idea of an armed forces covenant and its realization as an organizational phenomenon also emerged, enhancing defence visibility in some parts of the public sector, and successive defence relationship management schemes (currently the Employer Recognition Scheme) promoted reserves visibility explicitly to employers. Third, an increased reliance upon reservists and their greater integration with regulars and the private sector through the Whole Force Concept required more direct engagement with some employers and workforces. In other words, there has been considerable realignment of civil–military relationships, shaping the civilian workplaces of reservists. However, little is known about the practical realities and consequent management of reservist social interactions through which workplaces are experienced by reservists.

FR2020 and reservists' proximity as 'outward facing'?

In its early iterations, it was hoped that FR2020 might lead to more developed forms of civil–military understanding, presenting the 'face' of the British military to civilian communities and populations (Dandeker, Greenberg, and Orme 2011, 349). It was imagined that an enhanced, vibrant, outward-facing reserve contingent would somewhat organically disseminate military values through the vector of the soldier-civilian. In this sense, to be outward facing is to be proximate to the civilian beneficiaries for whom learning more of the military and its ways is regarded in positive terms. While it could be argued that this informal reservist role existed primarily in rhetorical form, it

is nevertheless something of an enduring theme over many decades in policy discussion. As the 1998 Strategic Defence Review (SDR) White Paper argued, 'Perhaps more importantly, at a time when memories of National Service are fading, the network of TA units and drill halls provides an important link between the armed forces and the wider community' (Dodd and Oakes 1998, 46–7).

The FR2020 consultation document *Reserves 2020: The Independent Commission to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces* (MoD 2011) contained a series of claims around support for an armed forces generally held in high regard by the host population (Gribble et al. 2014), but which was felt to flow from 'sympathy' rather than 'understanding' (MoD 2011, 10). What was required was a 'strategic narrative … to re-establish popular understanding of Defence and the rationale for the Nation's Reserves' (MoD 2011, 11). It is reasoned that through their sheer presence, as if by osmosis, the values of armed forces personnel would seep into the consciousness of their host society, and that reservists would exert a default positive influence on the civilians with whom they interact on a daily basis.

FR2020: reservist proximity and militarization

The renewed focus on and reinvigoration of the new Army Reserve in the updated form of FR2020 has been read by critical commentators as a retrograde step, representing a further instance of the militarization of British society.[1] Seen in this critical register, policies are viewed as deepening and broadening wider existing militarizing tendencies that include the granting of £40,000 bursaries to veterans who wish to train as teachers (Ward 2018), the focus on 'military ethos' as a valorized set of values aimed at young people, military 'free schools', the Invictus Games involving former service people who were injured in recent conflicts and are celebrated in their ability to overcome adversity, and the shift from remembrance to celebration of those who have served, or who are currently on active service (Walton 2014; Basham 2016). FR2020 has received particular attention within this wider critique. Concern is expressed by critical commentators that the reserve forces have the 'potential to strengthen … support for the military from society' (Walton 2014, 9). Echoing points made above, the Quaker-authored report goes on to argue that a key rationale for FR2020 is the lack of public understanding of the military that might be addressed by the 'propaganda effectiveness' of the reserves (Walton 2014, 9). Here, an initiative intended to play a modest role in strengthening civil–military relations is read through a rather more sceptical lens as a further instance of militarization, replete with its ideologically nuanced character (Eastwood 2018). The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme, noted above, 'encourages employers to support defence and inspire others do the same' through a gold, silver, or bronze award aimed at private- and public-sector organizations encouraging employee participation in the Reserves. Taken together, then, formalized workplace policies oriented at managing the demands of reserve service through, and a pro-active stance towards, the armed forces underscore the militarization of the employers in question if we read these practices as 'being caught up in and influenced by military ways' (Eastwood 2018: 46). Yet whether FR2020 is seen as either positive or negative in regard to its wider impact is contingent on the evidence for precisely how these actors are perceived by colleagues. How far are they distanced or included in the workplace by colleagues on account of their reservist status?

Researching the reserves

This paper is based on qualitative empirical data collected for the *Keeping Enough in Reserve* (KEiR) project, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and part of the Future Reserves Research Programme (FRRP). The project was approved by MoD research ethics processes, and all publications and key findings were shared with the MoD as part of wider policy discussions, with the researchers retaining full intellectual freedom in disseminating the research. KEiR investigated how reservists negotiate the different commitments and pressures they face within their civilian jobs and their reserve unit work. We were particularly interested in their experiences within the workplace as this has been most affected by the changes in the reservist commitment. We did not speak to civilians about their perceptions of the military reserve as that was the focus of other projects within the wider FRRP (see Basham and Catignani 2018). The MoD does collect information about these concerns in its annual Armed Forces Continuous Attitude (AFCAS) although the statistical data yielded from survey methods of this kind leaves a gap in understanding around the subjectivities, experiences, and life-worlds of participants, material that emerges with more detail, depth, and nuance in qualitative research and which has been absent in much work in military sociology (Jenkings et al. 2010).

In order to examine the particular experiences and perceptions of reservists, we conducted two-stage, in-depth interviews and focus groups with individuals, including both men and women, serving in different reserve units across the Army, Navy, and Royal Air Force (RAF). Access was sought through top-down introductions to units followed by local negotiations with unit commanders. Participants were provided with a project information leaflet and consent form which was discussed in depth prior to starting. Participation was voluntary and the need to protect the anonymity of the participants means it is not possible to provide too much detail about the individual biographies of participants in published outputs. The research was conducted in two distinct regions of the UK: the South West around Bristol and the North East around Tyneside. We left a 12-month gap between the first and second interviews and, of the 53 interviewed in the first round (10 Royal Navy, nine RAF, and 24 Army), we were able to interview 25 in the second round as some people had moved on from the reserve, were deployed, or were unwilling to continue participating in the research. In the first stage of the interview process four to six people were interviewed in each unit, consisting of service equivalents of one commissioned officer, one senior non-commissioned officer, one junior non-commissioned officer and at least one private. We conducted nine focus groups, five in the South West (four Army and one Royal Marine units), and four in the North West (all Army). We also conducted a number of interviews with Human Resource (HR) Directors in different employer organizations, including the Police and the National Health Service (NHS). The interviews and focus groups were recorded and the transcribed data was coded and analysed according to emerging themes using NVivo. A key theme reported by reservists concerned the ways they were perceived by colleagues, the analysis of which we turn to next.

Findings: stigma and managing identity

With some notable exceptions and allied caveats, reservists believed that they were generally accepted in the workplace. However, disclosing one's role as a reservist was

not necessarily straightforward and frequently invoked social distance, with one reservist even saying 'I did make … a mistake in telling them what I did … it was the biggest learning curve'. Others reported colleagues' wariness towards them and, at certain moments, outright hostility. These observations are important to the project's overall line of enquiry around reservists' negotiation of military and civilian identities where we take their stigmatization as a potentially insightful point of departure. When confronted with negative responses in the workplace, reservists enacted various derivatives of what Goffman (1963) describes as passing, a concept that refers to the social tactics individuals use to manage a discredited or stigmatized aspect of their spoilt identity. One reading of Goffman is to see reservists' qualified disclosure – where only certain information about their role is conveyed – as an attempt at inclusion:

> The issue is not that of managing tension generated during social contacts, but rather that of managing information about this failing. To display or not to display; to tell or not to tell; to let on or not to let on; to lie or not to lie; and in each case, to whom, how, when, and where. (Goffman 1963, 42)

Unlike the ways the concept was developed by Goffman and taken up in subsequent years, its use here concerns an identity that can be, or perhaps is more usually, hidden, such that reservists have a greater latitude around whether or not to 'come out' as members of the armed forces. This is a question of reservists' information management shaped 'not only by the threat of stigmatization but also by concerns of authenticity [as 'real' soldiers], legitimacy [the politics of military service] and exceptionality [as 'not' civilian]' (Clair, Beatty, and Maclean 2005, 79). Challenges to reservist identity were faced in myriad ways and at certain moments invoked wounded masculinity presented in traditional, militarized forms (Arkin and Dobrofsky 1978; Hockey 1986; Barrett 1996; Higate 2003; Belkin 2012). For many, managing similarity and difference remained an everyday dilemma and was often negotiated through controlling precisely what participants would divulge about their reservist activities. Invoking an explicitly masculine trope around patriotism, one female reservist said, 'when my friends invite me out on a Tuesday [I can't say] I'm going to "serve my country" … and that is what it is to them'. Rationales varied for why participants might not choose to disclose their reservist role, with the question of how far 'civilians' would be presumed to 'understand the life' discussed by another reservist. One participant said 'no one really gets it … apart from my house mates … unless you're part of it you won't understand'. Both comments hint at the exceptional character of the masculinized soldier figure that required careful management – in these cases, suppression and thus social distance from colleagues.

Civilian misunderstanding of the reservist role: creating distance

Colleagues and the significant others of reservists expressed varying degrees of knowledge of their voluntary military activities. Perceptions ranged from a sense of the reality of their role through to its mythologized and caricatured dimensions. In terms of the former, one participant stated that 'most of my colleagues "get it" … they understand', whereas in the latter, another complained that his wife didn't think 'it' [the reserves] 'was a job'. This theme was continued when a focus group participant recalled what he

saw as his wife's feminization of the physical hardship he endured through the flippant question '"are you going camping this weekend?"' As Dandeker, Greenberg, and Orme (2011, 352) note: 'family and friendship networks may provide less of a buttress against indifference or even hostility from some quarters in civilian society whose support of the operations to which reservists have deployed may be lacking'.

Reservists suggested that civilians' misunderstanding could be explained by their 'lack of contact with the military … they've never been … interested in it themselves … they don't really care', a statement that further invokes the organization's distance from its host society. It was only when reservists were deployed to either Iraq or Afghanistan that colleagues' misconceptions about the reality of their role became apparent. One participant said, 'they wind us up' and 'when Iraq was kicking off they would say "oh, you'll be off there next!"'. The reservist continued, 'when I got me [sic] brown envelope through the door they were like "oh, she's really going"'. A number of reservists experienced difficulty in 'relaying what we've done … when we've been away' and at times, trying to explain could engender boredom for reservist and civilian alike. The participant went on to say, 'I gave up trying to explain [to work colleagues] … what it's about'. Framed sarcastically, other colleagues would ask him if he was 'going in the army this weekend?' to which the reservist replied with a terse 'Yes'. One's role as a reservist could also be distanced through being mistaken for something quite different. For example, one participant recounted a particular example as he left his house, 'I stepped out [wearing] white belt and brasses … and some of my medals and a female neighbour said "I didn't know you were in the cadets!"' This example in particular hints at a wounded masculine pride turning on infantilization in the case of being identified as a cadet, and was immediately countered with ironic imagery invoking hypermasculinity. An archaic reading of gender also produced a degree of alienation in the case of another participant who said of work colleagues 'no, they're not interested [in the reserves] … most of them [colleagues] are women, so it's not their thing'. He believed that their interests diverged sharply and involved wanting to 'go out and drink all the time, party, whatever they do on weekends'. In continuation of belittling through feminizing, another of the sample said 'people nowadays are interested in being celebrities … [or] looking at dresses or people in the [news]paper … following some crap on the telly', activities that jar with the gravity of armed forces professionals.

More broadly, however, while misunderstanding of the distanced reservist role is constitutive of an information vacuum often filled by soldierly stereotype, stigmatized identities of the kinds discussed here are far from fixed, with reservists exercising subtle forms of agency oriented towards shifting 'civilian mindsets' exemplified in deployment to Iraq as flagged above. De Jordy (2008, 509) argues that 'in the organisational setting, the frequency, permanency and interdependence of actors moves them from a transactional nature to a relational one' where, according to Goffman (1963, 86), 'every relationship obliges the related persons to exchange an appropriate amount of intimate facts about self, as evidence of trust and mutual commitment'. Acknowledging the inevitable reservist/civilian interaction chimes with wider MoD imperatives to educate the public through the vector of the reservist, as we see below, while also moving beyond Goffman's static formulation of power and the limited agency of the stigmatized. However, at other moments stigmatized identity might be essentialized and the actor framed purely through the lens of the reservist role as so-called 'master status'

(Goffman 1963). To illustrate, in wishing to discuss the weekend's training activities a participant said, 'I would have done something quite exciting and I wanted to share … what I did … and I was met with a lot of mixed emotional feeling'. A number of civilian colleagues even went so far as to 'stop speaking' to her, as well as – quite literally – 'keeping their distance' and 'making judgements'. The more hostile members of this cohort saw the participant's reservist role as helping to explain 'the way she was' and her 'personality' as key attributes of a master status.

Passing: facilitating proximity through humour

Recalling a well-known supermarket where he was previously employed, one reservist discussed a common jibe whereby colleagues would say 'Oh, Saturdays and Sundays squad's going out again … SAS they used to call us!' He then went on to talk about the acronym 'SWAT' and in seeking further clarification the interviewer was told that this referred to 'Some weekends and Thursdays'. Another reservist suggested that civilian work colleagues 'don't really know much about it [reservist life] … they just think we're off playing soldiers … [by calling us] "little action men"'. He accepted that 'getting ribbed' for his service was inevitable, and went on to say that 'people are going to take the piss'. Represented by colleagues in a gendered language that invoked a blend of farcical hyper-masculinity (Rambo) on the one hand, and marginal masculinity (little action men) on the other, these participants didn't feel that their military masculinity was taken seriously. The use of derogatory labels invites a second-class status, that can in turn lead to tensions and demonstrates misunderstanding of the reservist (Kirke 2008, 10). On the face of it, current findings signal reservists' ability to negotiate the potentially undermining impact of these framings through laughing them off or refusing to take them seriously (although they may have little choice to do otherwise). These and numerous other less than flattering comments made by colleagues amounted to being ridiculed at worst, or humoured and patronized at best, in ways that parallel treatment of the character 'Gareth' in the BBC's comedy show *The Office*. Gareth felt that his role as a member of the TA was never fully appreciated and his ability to achieve a militarized and masculinized form of gendered prowess was continually undermined.[2] As he notes on his (fictionalized) BBC webpage: 'A lot of people think that those in the Territorial Army are not real soldiers. We are. We are well trained, highly disciplined fighting machines ready for war. We're just not available during the week'.[3]

In a similar parodic manner and aimed with obvious delight at his audience, the British stand-up comedian Jack Dee delivers the following line: 'part-time solider – full time banging on about it!' and in a broader sense – as indicated – the reserve forces are often referred to in the media as weekend warriors or Dad's Army (Mervin 2005; Martin 2011). Paradoxically, however, since these labels have also been integrated into popular culture their ubiquitous use by both civilians and reservists may actually normalize the latter's 'military' presence in the workplace. Humour provides colleagues with a degree of control over reservists' 'otherness' through the dualism of reservists' simultaneous inclusion and exclusion. This is informed by civilians' tacit knowledge of popular cultural representations invoking an exceptional status or 'virtual social identity' (Goffman 1963, 2). The identity is contrasted with her or his *actual* social identity that 'he could in fact be proved to possess' (Goffman 1963, 2) and, as indicated above, one that could be cultivated by reservists through 'educating' colleagues about what it is they do. Reservists' virtual social identity

both constrains and liberates their workplace interactional possibilities in relation to how a discredited individual should act. In this way, colleagues set about 'constructing a stigma theory … an ideology to explain his [sic] inferiority … and account for the danger he represents'. (Goffman 1963, 67). In another sense, the negotiation of humour by reservists serves to normalize their identity in ways that 'make their difference seem commonplace or ordinary' (Clair, Beatty, and Maclean 2005, 83) in order to facilitate workplace integration.

'Tough Mudder' and 'camping' as limiting distance?

Another way in which to render the experience of reserve service familiar and thereby closer to civilian colleagues was for participants to stress its physically testing masculine character as a potential point of convergence with some aspects of civilian life.[4] Parodying colleagues' responses, one reservist said, '"Oh, look. There's a person pushing their body to the limit and doing extremely physical things"'. He went on to say that invoking fitness may be familiar to work colleagues and function as a corrective to the more typical kind of comment captured in the following '"Oh, look. There's Phil [just] going off and … doing some kind of weird soldiery [thing]"'. Another participant stressed the choice he made to become a reservist that often exposed him to being 'thrashed by an instructor or chucked in cold water or lying in a ditch'. The challenge, if he so chose, was to 'vocalise that' to civilians since 'it's a really difficult one to explain to somebody'. In a more specific sense, participants reflected on the comparison they made with 'Tough Mudder' which is an 8-10 mile military style endurance event . Participants also stressed the corporeality of the reservist role, involving activities that were carried out, in the words of one reservist, 'not because [we're] some kind of poncey [sic] people who want to swim through mud to make ourselves feel macho', but rather 'because the nature of the job demands that you are physically fit like that'. A female reservist stated, 'I can beat the majority of them [civilian men] … so they won't ask me to go to the gym with them'. Against the backdrop of what was clearly a competitive civilian environment that reached beyond the office and into the space of the gym, she went on to discuss the negative implications of this superior fitness that meant she was excluded in other work-related contexts.

'Becoming a civilian?'

A perspicuous example of the concealing of spoilt identity that can be attributed to a reservist comes from a participant who was a student at a University in Northern Ireland; although not a workplace example it is nonetheless illustrative. This reservist went to extraordinary lengths to hide his military identity from a girlfriend. His story involves a blend of subterfuge and quick thinking as integral to a conscious strategy of demilitarized presentation of the stigmatized self. His somewhat extreme practices - perhaps exacerbated by the politics of the regional context - reflect in-microcosm attempts by others in the sample to control what they felt able to reveal about their military role to civilians in order to facilitate inclusion and acceptance. The participant's exemplary story is worth recounting in some detail. He started by saying 'in my room there is no military kit on show [or] in drawers … but [it is kept in] walking bags', social practice that speaks explicitly to a mode of concealment that involves 'actively preventing others from learning personal information that has the potential to reveal a stigmatised identity' (Croteau, Anderson, and Bonnie 2008,

541). He went on to say, 'I was seeing this girl at the time' and the evening that he invited her to his room set in motion a series of actions oriented at preserving the secrecy of the reservist life. In his room were two paintings 'of me in military kit' that he had won in a competition, and having recalled the potential of these to shed light on his (secretive) role, the participant stated 'I ran upstairs and just threw them [the paintings] off the wall [sic] … [I] smashed one of them doing it'. The reason he gave for this decisive act 'was to sanitise [the] place … make sure everything was away' because, he recalled, '[she] didn't know I was in the army at all'. However, attempts to protect military identity did not end there. He went on 'I … left a bank statement out … she read [it] … the only real money coming in was from HMG [Her Majesty's Government]'. This posed a real challenge to the reservist who was forced to 'think on his feet' as his 'other' life was about to become known to the female. He told her that the letters 'HMG' on his statement referred to 'a thing called the Hills and Mountain Guides', a paid position he spontaneously invented to divert her from the truth. In providing false information, this participant created a new identity (Clair, Beatty, and Maclean 2005, 89) in order to explain away 'the boots and kit and maps' vital for the reservist role, and as the deception grew, it became increasingly difficult to divulge his 'real' identity as a member of the armed forces. The actions of this participant are worthy of brief consideration in regard to the stress he appeared to experience in hiding his identity and its corollary, deceiving his new partner. As Clair, Beatty, and Maclean (2005, 89) argue,

> passers may experience psychological strain from feeling like a fraud … because of a need to construct credible and consistent fabrications about their lives … 'concealing a stigma leads to an inner turmoil that is remarkable for its intensity and its capacity for absorbing an individual's mental life'. (Clair, Beatty, and Maclean 2005, 89)

One way in which to counter stigma-induced stress was through developing relationships with military veterans or 'kindred spirits' in the workplace, as we now see.

Closing the distance with 'wise others'

One of the more obvious predictors of favourable response discussed by our sample turned on the biography of work colleagues – were they ex-forces or did they at least profess to have some kind of tangible link to the institution? One participant recounted his experiences thus: 'when you find somebody who is ex-forces, or who has some sort of forces connection you can instantly build a bond with them'. Prior to this comment, he highlighted the very particular way in which a shared history configured interaction in regard to 'people in the military [who have a] "banter bug" … you speak to each other differently … [we can be] risqué, it is completely open season with someone from the military'. He went on to further personalize this possibility through invoking an ex-RAF work colleague, whose background fostered an immediate connection. The participant stated, 'as soon as we realized [it felt as if] we had been friends for … a thousand years … it's not like a secret language or anything … but [it's like] "ah thank God!"'. This affinity, characterized in part by 'the same sense of humour … and attitude about getting things done … that was not politically correct ', was presented as something of a military oasis in a civilian desert otherwise ignorant of military subjectivities. A similar experience was recounted in regard to the enduring importance of former military identity. This point of commonality sparked genuine interest in his reservist role from

former regulars 'who were asking me questions all the time … they were older than me … in their sixties … they loved to have a good crack about the army'. The desire for seeking out others with shared backgrounds and experiences assumed a heightened form for a number of reservists, not least since the durable social bonds fostered in these interactions eased the tensions of their othered identity. Those with whom personal information of the reserve role is shared are referred to by Goffman (1963) as wise others. These individuals 'seem knowledgeable about and sympathetic toward the particular difference … [the stigmatized] seek out and prefer to interact with [them] whom they believe support and validate their identity' (Clair, Beatty, and Maclean 2005, 86).

In sum, these relationships mirror those between regular military personnel in that they are maintained through 'sharing experiences [and] reminiscing' (Dandeker, Greenberg, and Orme 2011, 352). Given the relative absence of reservists' opportunities to connect with other reservists in their workplace, it is perhaps unsurprising that they should be drawn to ex-forces personnel who 'know what it is all about and value it' (Dandeker, Greenberg, and Orme 2011, 352) in the form of veteran colleagues. In contrast, where work culture assumed a distinctly civilian identity inculcated through many years of employment within a specific corporate and bounded milieu, reservists rapidly defaulted to a degree of reticence in revealing their stigmatized role. One said, 'the guys I worked with … at Flannigans[5] were apprentices who had been in post since leaving formal education'. He continued, 'their culture was Flannigans through and through … I was aware that no one was in … the reserves'. Knowledge of the depth and tenacity of civilian work culture influenced the choice to suppress reservist identity, or as he put it, 'not feel the need' to divulge the role. As Clair, Beatty, and Maclean (2005, 84) argue, 'organizational context influences the decision to reveal [their stigma] as individuals assess the social norms of their workplace'; also, 'the support of … fellow [civilian] colleagues' towards reservists 'may be uneven in level and kind' (Dandeker et al. 2010, 276).

Discussion and Analysis

Our data has foregrounded the intersubjective dimensions of reservist agency in the form of passing, elicited through the stigma imputed to them by colleagues in the civilian work context. These interactions have played out against the backdrop of the informal elements of FR2020 around the belief that once publics have been enlightened by reservists in the workplace they will come to understand the value of the armed forces. In response to the 'spoilt identities' attributed to them, however, reservists developed various forms of passing with the effect that their potential educative role has been significantly curtailed through distancing from colleagues.[6] Following from this, it appears that stigma prevents or limits processes of militarization through discrediting, silencing, and distancing its potential advocates who then revert to or seek solace in a non-threatening presence or, in the most extreme of examples, a civilian identity. Seen in this light, their informal role in familiarizing colleagues with the importance of the military and the militarist ideas shaping its institutional culture meets tangible limits that fall short of the influence imagined by the architects of FR2020. Further, it also appears that critical scholars who claim that FR2020 is one element of the creeping militarization of British society do so with little regard to the nuanced dynamics shaping reservists' workplace presence. Their claims that reservists

'actively promote support for the military' (Walton 2014, 9) are hardly borne out in our findings. Taken together, then, the most obvious reading of these workplace dynamics is a civil–military relationship characterized by stasis where reservists appear *not* to be outward facing and processes of militarization fail to take root in the workplace.

Stigma and passing: militarization reconsidered

Yet, in paying careful attention to insights developed from within the militarization literature through a critical reading of the everyday that require us to start with stigmatized workplace interactions, we now reconsider the implications of reservists' social tactic of passing. This approach demands that we pay heed to the subtle dimensions of militarization, the influence of which is to be found in the productive tensions between the distance and familiarity negotiated by reservists through passing. At the same time as they maintain distance from an institution that is tasked, as we argue above, with the otherwise proscribed act of taking life when ordered to do so, reservists experience the need for the wider public to support them. In recent years the political calculations underpinning the emergence of risk-transfer militarism (Shaw 2002) have brought into sharp relief armed forces' dependence on a robust degree of support without which overseas interventions are quickly delegitimated (Shaw 1991; Gribble et al. 2014). As a new generation of military and civilian elites have attempted to render the armed forces and their personnel 'familiar, yet exceptional' – a process more advanced in the US context through Catherine Lutz's notion of the 'military normal' in the context of counterinsurgency warfare – so they have fallen foul of the increasingly blurred lines between the two chiming with Howell's (2018) martial politics that stresses the indivisibility of the civilian and military spheres. Whereas over-familiarity can engender a reluctance to put troops in harm's way as they are celebrated as actors of particular sacrificial kinds, human and known, rather than mythologized (King 2010), too much distance may render the armed forces beyond routine familiarity and, as it slips from view, an institution of potential irrelevance. It is by conceiving of the nexus linking stigma with passing as a *normalizing* move, however, that we are able to bring the productive dimensions of distance and familiarity into view. Following from this, we argue that reservists' presence in the workplace assumes a far greater militarizing influence than might be thought at first blush. This is because their role as members of the armed forces and the attitudes, beliefs, and social practices embodied therein (Mann 1987; Shaw 1991, 3; Basham and Gifkins 2015), while suppressed and at times belittled and at others neutralized, nonetheless prevail with relatively little *challenge* from colleagues. The use of humour, invocations of familiarity through the physicality of 'Tough Mudder' and the seeking out of 'wise others' spontaneously emerged in ways that engendered a 'passing with' colleagues, whereas the individual who fabricated his identity attempted to 'pass by' his girlfriend. In 'passing with', a manageable sense of self that balances both familiarity and distance emerges, whereas the process of 'passing by' renders ontologically insecure a reservist who has perhaps distanced himself excessively from a key actor in his social milieu. The key point here in regard to the fecund relationship between distance and familiarity is that reservists who might otherwise support, promote, or even celebrate their militarized role if they were *not* stigmatized, and in turn stimulate potential contestation from those colleagues wary of an organization that uses violence, are consequently deprived of the opportunity to do so because of their questionable military identity. Devoid of the reservist foil

with whom open and frank discussion might take place around the armed forces and the legitimacy of the militarist values upon which it depends, these actors reflexively position themselves, and are positioned by others, as somewhat apathetic to their voluntary role. This apathy can bleed into a qualified sense of cynicism by reservist and civilian alike towards the military in ways that downplay rather than actively engage the military's role, and the extent to which it has attained a heightened presence in everyday life. Here, colleagues' perceptions of reservists play out through liberal (Basham 2018) and ideological narratives (Eastwood 2018) where responses to the military may not 'take the form of an enthusiastic love … [but rather can be] ambiguous, even involuntary or unconscious' (Eastwood 2018, 48) though remaining shot through with militarizing logics.

The militarist dividend

While stigma appears to flow from colleagues' relative ambivalence to their reservist peers, it may also be that largely *unacknowledged* interests in the form of what we call the militarist dividend play a part in civilians' existential motivations to distance, yet render familiar, reservist peers. Developed from Raewyn Connell's (1995) concept of the patriarchal dividend where complicit masculinities' acquiescence towards prevailing power regimes supports the gendered (patriarchal/fratriarchal) status quo, is the militarist dividend that signals colleagues' simultaneous wariness towards and gratitude for the armed forces. Like the patriarchal dividend, this stance also involves a form of collusion, in this instance of the militarist status quo, where acceptance of the political implications of reservist presence is left largely unspoken. While ostensibly uninvested in the militarist discourse, it is through stigma as qualified resistance that colleagues reap the perceived benefits of the military as (apparent) guarantor of national security. As beneficiaries of the militarist (security) dividend symbolized by the institution and its members, colleagues' use of stigma helps maintain the status quo where the armed forces remain largely unquestioned. One way to read their ambivalence towards the military is to see it as flowing from 'fear and feelings of insecurity [that] facilitate conditions in which military action can be actively supported, opposed and ignored all at once, but normalized nonetheless' (Basham 2018, 34).

As we have seen, stigma distances civilian from reservist and reflects in microcosm one of the ways in which violence can be disassociated from politics in a liberal militarist context (Basham 2018). Taken together, the broader implications of the mundane workplace interactional practices discussed above are considerable since they remind us that militarism is '*not* antithetical to the norm', as demonstrated in the social context of civilian employment, for example (Basham 2018, 33, emphasis added). Whether reservists are attempting to enlighten colleagues about the armed forces or not, the politics of security are nonetheless embodied within the individual volunteer by virtue of his or her military status (Hyndman 2004; Kuus 2009, 548). Seen in this way, and attuned to the productive dimensions of passivity, reservists are vectors of militarization that depend on subtle, at times explicit and yet contingent configurations of normalized, diffuse, and hidden power that may itself appear wholly benign. As Eastwood (2018, 48) argues in reference to participation in war and military activity in the widest sense, 'of course it includes the work of soldiers … [but] can even be extended to passive acceptance or acquiescence in war'. In passing as banal and unexceptional in their liminal, and at times obfuscated, stigmatized military subjectivity

(Baaz and Verweijen 2016), without these actors the institution would cease to exist in its current and future expanded form, given the aims of FR2020. A note of caution is warranted, however. Militarization is an *unintended* consequence of stigma that emanates not from reservists' calculated instrumentality to skilfully promote particular kinds of militarist agenda through its normalization, but rather from altogether more prosaic attempts to manage a spoilt identity in the workplace. In sum, it is by paying attention to the quotidian that we are able to grasp the 'mobile, processual and transformative' dimensions of militarization (Hyde 2016, 864) made possible by the nexus linking reservist proximity/distance with the stigma/passing it facilitates.

Finally, in keeping with the acute sensitivity of critical scholars who stress the importance of the mundane and apparently innocuous context of everyday social relations, our focus has been on particular kinds of workplace interactions through which processes of militarization come to the fore in inconsistent and surprising ways. Our analysis foregrounds the inadvertent dimensions of militarization, the influence of which should be grappled with in the same manner as more explicit attempts to instil military values in civilians as discussed in the examination of tactics employed by North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, to take one example (Kuus 2009). Ultimately, this paper directs attention to sociological and psychoanalytic processes that may well lie beyond the immediate grasp of the actors involved, and for whom their negotiation of militarization and the militarist ideas it embodies come to influence the non-discursive realm (Giddens 1994). Our hope is that the current contribution paves the way for analysis attuned to the subtleties of militarization in the form of the reservists who continue to play an important role in the British context where the absent presence of war-like relations demands close attention.

Notes

1. It is our contention that militarization is inflected with regional difference to which much scholarship is insensitive. To talk of 'UK' or 'British militarization' is to conflate the political-defence dynamics and associated public opinion in Scotland, Wales, and England. For example, the nationalist political parties in Scotland (The Scottish National Party) and in Wales (Plaid Cymru) have both called for the *Trident* 'nuclear deterrent' to be scrapped. Second, and speaking directly to the rigour of the claims we make here, data has been generated solely from the English context.
2. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AlFkHTNiycU, accessed 31 August 2018.
3. See http://www.bbc.co.uk/comedy/theoffice/gareth/, accessed 31 August 2018.
4. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tough_Mudder, accessed 31 August 2018. Tough Mudder is supported by the charity Help for Heroes, and when analysed through the imagery by which it is promoted on its own website, has obvious similarity to the militarized aesthetic of physical challenge, suffering, and competition.
5. The name of this company has been changed for reasons of anonymity.
6. The line of argument developed in this paper gives rise to both a puzzle and a question. In respect of the latter, we might ask how far and in what kinds of ways – if at all – the *public* role of the reservist as a member of a taxpayer-funded institution should be disclosed to civilian co-workers. With this in mind is the puzzle that a number of our reservists felt unable to disclose their identity even though they are typically presented as revered and respected members of a national institution.

Disclosure statement

Funding

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