

# The Reserves and wider civil-military relationships

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# 1. Social integration

The role of the Volunteer Reserve in integrating the armed forces with wider UK civil society is less significant than often assumed.

- FR20 guided by a desire 'that the Armed Forces would become better integrated with and understood by the society from which they draw their people' (MoD 2011)
- The need for a strategic narrative, delivery through 'community base, wide footprint and local influence'.
- Ambassadorial role evident, although not necessarily a prime motivator.
- Reserves service as stigma?

- Civil-military relationships as entanglements (cf. binary)
- Reservist compartmentalisation limits Reserves as tool for public engagement.
- Geography and defence estate issues – rationalisation
- Reservists as resource for defence understandings of civil-military entanglements and dynamics
- Wealth of academic analyses of cultural and social expressions of civil-military entanglements

***A more informed assessment of the limits of the ambassadorial role of the Volunteer Reserve would be beneficial to on-going defence efforts to better understand civil-military relationships and entanglements.***

## 2. Gender as a defence priority

- Gender shapes military phenomena, participation, civil-military entanglements
- Women's participation in the Reserves
  - Proportions
  - Experiences and opportunities
- The significance of spousal labour
  - Unpaid, unrecognised domestic labour facilitating participation
  - Extent to which Reserves is contingent on this?

***Because of recruitment and retention issues, a watching brief on gender as a Reserves issue is advised (beyond statistical monitoring)***

# 3. Labour market issues

- Benefits and vulnerabilities follow close relationship between Reserves participation and local labour markets.
- Existing FR20 recognition of skills interchange
- Workplace cultures; courtesies and expectations
- Disproportional representation of public sector employees; vulnerabilities under government austerity programmes; keep a watching brief on public sector employment trends
- Complexities of contemporary employment practices and relationships to Reserves participation

***The benefits to defence of informed, nuanced understanding of long-term UK labour market and employment changes, impact on recruitment and retention, and on workplace cultures.***