

British Army veterans' experiences of the transition into civilian life

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Résumé ou extrait : Over the last few decades, the academic and public gaze has increasingly focused on military veterans. The extant literature has documented a wealth of problems that emerge once a service leaver enters civilian life, including homelessness, mental health issues, criminality, and substance misuse. Accordingly, the intention to improve the wellbeing of veterans in the UK has certainly been evident within various government-initiated strategies. However, most scholarly attention has concentrated on the few veterans who encounter these extreme transitions. This book sheds light on the vast majority who are deemed to have an 'unproblematic' transition on account of their employment status and lack of serious social or health issues by drawing on data from 58 interviews with Army veterans, spouses of Army veterans, and charity workers. By mapping participants trajectory from pre-military life to years after service, a holistic theorisation of the transition is provided using the tenets of ultra-realism. It shows that, for most, merely being in employment was not an accurate measure of success. Instead, entrance to the civilian job market was characterised by precarity and intense competition between employees. This served as a dichotomy to the work environment veterans were familiar with and caused tension between the subject and the ideology they were assimilated to. In putting

forward this argument, this book advances the existing ultra-realist theoretical framework and veteran research in an empirically informed manner.

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