
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Ethnographic Study of the Military Body's Enactment of Routines at a Training Camp

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This study sets out to explore embodied aspects of military routines. It conceptualises the body as a waking-sleeping being and analyses routines from the perspective of sleep. In doing so, it challenges the privileged position wakefulness has had in earlier explorations of military routines. We have conducted a multi-year ethnographic study at a military training camp in Finland and analysed how cadets enact routines during their training. The analysis demonstrates how their bodies balance between sleeping and waking and remain active while asleep. We thus offer a rich micro-level understanding of the dynamic aspects of the sleeping-waking body's enactment of routines. Our study has implications for the studies of military bodies and military routines.

Keywords: routines; body; sleep; ethnography; military training

Introduction

The body plays a crucial role in the military world. It is therefore no surprise that the military body has attracted increasing research attention in recent years (e.g. Armitage, 2003). Much of the research has been concerned with exploring military bodies' capacities to act, investigating the role physical fitness and physical readiness play in combat training, for example (Boykin & Rice, 2020), and the impact of sleep deprivation on physical effectiveness (Vaara et al., 2009). The technologising of the military world – in the form of drones, satellites, robots, and mobile applications – has also led scholars to explore the changing role of the body in contemporary armed forces (Ben Ari, 2003; Fairhead, 2019; Godfrey, Lilley & Brewis, 2012; Marcuccio et al., 2019). The representations of military bodies have also attracted attention: an exploration of the affective force of wounded bodies in the media (Dawney, 2019) and the construction of the masculine military body in the film *Jarhead* (Godfrey, Lilley & Brewis, 2012) are examples. Then again, studies taking a gender perspective have highlighted the tensioned relation of femininity and masculinity in the historically hyper-masculine military context (Just, Kirkegaard & Muhr, 2019; Patterson, 2019).

One stream of research has focused on exploring routinised bodily activities as they are enacted in military contexts. The classic study by Marcel Mauss (1934/1971) provides a case in point. During the First World War, he observed that soldiers used their bodies and equipment differently depending on the army they represented. He coined the classic notion of the 'technique of the body', highlighting that even the most habituated ways of using the body, such as walking, sleeping and standing, varied according to social situations and history, and that these 'acquired abilities' were the result of education and socialisation. More recently, Hockey's (2009) ethnographic study of the routine life of UK infantry details the way infantrymen use their bodies when on patrol. We continue this stream of research by exploring how military bodies enact basic occupational routines at the training camp. For us, the military body enacting routines is at one and the same time both sleeping and waking. This view exposes a richer and more complex picture of the body's enactment of routines than what has been understood to date. In particular, it provides novel insights into the uncontrolled aspects of the body – in contrast to military expectations that disciplined bodies are always in control.

Empirically, we conducted a collaborative ethnographic study at a Finnish winter-training camp that seeks to educate cadets in leading live-fire situations. The camp was organised by the Finnish Defence University and was part of the military education (see Jansen & Kramer, 2019). This temporally and spatially intensive training camp allowed us to gain an in-depth understanding of the enactment of daytime and night-time military routines.

We first outline our theoretical frame. This is followed by a description of the ethnographic research setting and materials. The analysis discusses two themes – *balancing between sleeping and waking*, and *acting while asleep* – which illustrate the dynamism of the military bodies that are enacting routines. To conclude, the paper discusses contributions to the study of military bodies and military routines.

Theoretical background

Embodying routines

Routines have for long been recognised as primary means through which organisations accomplish their tasks, and military organisations are no exception. Organisational routines – routines that refer to forms of recognisable and repetitive activity that practitioners regularly engage in (Feldman & Pentland, 2003) – have been studied extensively. We draw from a branch of research that is exploring the internal dynamics of routines. Then, the accomplishment of a routine is viewed as a production of stability and change, and the focus is on the mutually constitutive relationship between the performative and ostensive aspects of a routine (Feldman & Pentland, 2003; Feldman, 2000; Pentland & Feldman, 2005). The ostensive aspect refers to the 'abstract, generalised idea of the routine', and it may take the form of a codified rule or exist as an implicit norm that is taken for granted. The performative aspect consists of 'specific actions, by specific people, in specific places and times' (Feldman & Pentland, 2003: 101). While actions are carried out against a background of ostensive rules and expectations, the particular course of action is always, to some extent, novel, because routine actors need to respond, adjust and improvise their behaviour according to changing social and material circumstances and events (D'Adderio, 2008; Feldman & Pentland, 2005, 2008). While routines are often associated with almost autonomous enactment, their accomplishment is not necessarily fluent and easy, but requires effort by the participants, especially when new routines are learnt (Cohendet & Simon, 2016).

The enactment of routines is necessarily embodied, and this is particularly striking in the military context. The occupation as a soldier requires a unique kind of body work as such, and the basic military routines, such as marching or shooting, are thoroughly embodied (Ben-Ari, 2003; Hockey, 2009; Lande, 2007; Williams, 2005: 120–123). Furthermore, many of the military routines are directed at governing and managing bodies (military uniforms, sleeping time schedules). An increasing number of studies have begun to consider the accomplishment of routines as a bodily activity and as such dynamic, always subject to variation and change (Feldman et al., 2016: 511; Wright, 2016). To illustrate, Hockey's (2009) study on the routine life of infantry soldiers detailed the way in which embodied military routines, such as marching or attacking, may vary according to environmental characteristics, such as the amount of daylight or type of terrain. A study on teamwork in an anaesthesia room by Hindmarsh and Pilnick (2007) illustrated how bodily variation may stem from inter-corporeality: in teamwork, there is a need to anticipate the bodily acts of others and adjust one's own bodily acts accordingly. In turn, Hancock, Sullivan and Tyler's (2015) investigation of intimate labour, such as massage, demonstrated how the expectations inscribed in the interaction between clients and workers – such as 'proper' physical closeness and distance – create variety in the way the bodily interaction unfolds. Strati (2007), for his part, highlighted the vital role of the sensing body in the work of roof-makers, showing how variation in bodily performance might stem from different sensory skills (some have better 'ears', for instance).

The literature demonstrates that there is substantial variation in how the body performs the routine, and that routine actors not only recognise ostensive rules and patterns cognitively, but embody them. As Lande points out in his analysis of breathing in the military: 'cultural patterning in the army is not an abstract intellectual process, but takes place at the level of the body as it engages in practical activity in the training environment, and becomes adapted to the military milieu' (Lande, 2007, 93). In the same way, the Foucauldian analysis by Godfrey and his colleagues (Godfrey, Lilley & Brewis, 2012) demonstrates how the military discipline during the training materialises through the fleshy body. Studies of Goffman (1961) and Bourdieu (1986) also highlight how habits become embodied through education and training.

Yet, existing studies on bodies that are enacting routines have given primacy to the waking body – one that is alert and active – which reflects the deeply ingrained disciplinary habit of considering waking as a worthier state of being than sleeping, and as *the* state to be used as *the* basis of theory-making in the study of routinised life. To fill the existing gap, we understand the body as a waking and sleeping being and address

it from the point of view of sleep. This allows us to better highlight the significance of this often-neglected bodily state and practice in the study of routines. We do not consider waking and sleeping as separate, opposed and hierarchical states, but rather as equal, overlapping and continuous ones (Penoyer, 2005). We also acknowledge the interrelated nature of biological and social bodily processes (Birke, 1999: 173), as well as material and discursive ones (Godfrey, Lilley & Brewis, 2012).

We build, most notably, on the work of Marcel Mauss (1932/1973) and Elisabeth Grosz (1994) who both struggled, albeit from different perspectives, with the cultural and biological basis of the body, problematising any simplistic dualistic accounts of the body as a pre-given biological system or as a mere social inscription. In his seminal article *Techniques of the Body*, Mauss placed the body at the centre of his analysis of social life and conceived of the body as a biological, physiological and sociological apparatus that is simultaneously the instrument of experience, and the origin and object of action. Then again, Elisabeth Grosz (1994) helps us consider the relationship between the inner, physiological body and the outer, social body. She uses the Möbius strip – the inverted three-dimensional figure eight – as a metaphor for rethinking the relations between the inside and the outside of the body (Grosz, 1994: xii). Specifically, we consider sleeping and waking as interrelated and active bodily states, both biologically and culturally, as we explicate next.

Sleeping-waking body

Sleep is one of the basic human needs and, as such, a biologically regulated activity (Walker, 2018). The alternation between wakefulness and sleep constitutes a basic rhythm of life, connected to the 24-hour cycle of light and darkness. Despite the common biological basis, there is substantial variety in how individuals sleep. Studies show, for instance, that there are 'morning and evening types' (Hall et al., 1997), and that the need for sleep changes across the lifespan (Walker, 2018: 78–106).

Sleeping is also regulated culturally and socially. Anthropological studies show us how sleeping habits and patterns vary across cultures (Glaskin & Chenhall, 2013). The biological body is hence educated to employ various 'techniques of sleep' (Mauss, 1973) to sleep in a culturally appropriate way in a certain situation. In this view, sleeping is an embodied skill and technique which bears imprints of culture and society, and which is shaped through the operation of habits. While the common Western eight-hour unbroken nocturnal sleep appears to be 'the proper sleep pattern', it is the result of a long socio-historical process, and other kinds of sleep patterns – such as a bi-phasic nocturnal sleep pattern – have also been common (Ekirch, 2015; Williams & Crossley, 2008; Williams, 2005). Likewise, bodies are educated to adjust to the demands of organisations, shift work providing a case in point (Sallinen, Härmä and Mutanen, 2003). The distribution of sleep in space represents another form of regulation. Consider, for instance, how sleeping is organised in private spaces, bedrooms and beds (Crook, 2008) or how, in the military, bodies sleep in shared spaces, in tents, barracks or huts, in a hierarchical order (Godfrey, Lilley & Brewis, 2012: 550). Sleeping is also regulated by the way it is valued and signified, as manifested in sayings such as 'I'll sleep when I am dead'. It exemplifies how sleeping is traditionally associated with laziness, passivity and death, whereas the current sleep discourse commonly casts sleep as an efficient way to improve one's wakeful performances. This is visible in the proliferation of powernaps, for instance, and in the attempts to 'improve' soldiers' naps by relaxation techniques (Debellemanni et al., 2018).

The military organisation provides a case in point in the regulation of sleeping and waking, offering a range of implicit and explicit ostensive rules and expectations (Ben-Ari, 2003; Hockey, 2009; Williams, 2005: 120–123). For instance, the military culture values regularity and early rising, as reflected by the practices of 'lights out' and 'silence' (Crook, 2008). Historically, the management of sleep has always played a part in warfare (Ben-Ari, 2003; Williams, 2005: 120–123). Sleep deprivation, for instance, has frequently been used as a 'weapon of war'. Soldiers are told to sleep and stay awake in line with the needs of the battle, and the 'optimal' soldier should adjust to these rhythms. No wonder, therefore, that there are a wealth of studies exploring the effects of too little sleep on the physiology and performance of soldiers. For instance, Vaara et al.'s (2009) study of Finnish cadets shows how 60 hours of sleep deprivation alters the cardiovascular regulation of the body as well as body temperature. Keramidis et al. (2018), for their part, show how even a brief period of sustained military operations with inadequate sleep constitutes a potent multi-stressor condition capable of compromising performance that requires physical and mental effort.

But what happens when the body falls asleep? Neuroscientific studies employing brain-scanning methods have established that the sleeper moves back and forth between NREM (deep sleep) and REM sleep (Rapid Eye Movement; when most dreams occur) (Walker, 2018: 193–236), as such manifesting inner body dynamics. REM sleep involves increased brain activity, during which the brain is as active as when awake, but with different regions being activated. During NREM sleep, ingredients perceived and learnt while awake are stored in the memory and then interconnected and remixed with each other during REM sleep, with the perceived

strangeness of dreams deriving from the unexpected remix of the conventional ingredients. Dreams are also peculiar in the sense that they cannot be directly willed or intentionally called forth. Nightmares, for instance, often appear unwillingly and repetitively after traumatic episodes such as war (Wilmer, 1996).

Sleepwalking and sleep talking represent an intriguing state of mixed consciousness. They are products of slow-wave NREM sleep (Non-rapid Eye Movement; Martin, 2002; Walker, 2018: 238–40), when the brain is sound asleep, but the body may act as if it were awake. Many factors can stimulate nocturnal behaviour of this sort, such as sleep deprivation, stress or illness. Sleep talking can involve a dialogue, complicated sentences, single words or mere murmuring (Rosenblatt, 2006). Sleepwalking, in turn, refers to walking or performing other wakeful bodily activities while asleep, ranging from simply sitting up in bed and looking around to walking around the room or house, or even leaving the house. Typically, the sleepwalker and sleep talker will not remember these nocturnal events upon awakening, but they can disturb the sleep of others and cause anxiety or even fear for them (Rosenblatt, 2006: 137–9).

All of the above suggests that being asleep is an active state both biologically (inner body) and socially (cultural body) (Grosz, 1994). Neurons form novel connections, cells are regenerated, blood circulates; the self travels to faraway places during dreams; the physical body moves, occasionally talks and even walks; the mind organises perceived events and thoughts, plans the future and may get creative ideas. Importantly, all of this activity happens without will and control, representing unmanaged aspects of organisational life (Gabriel, 1995).

Ethnographic methodology

Ethnographic fieldwork and materials

Ethnography is a methodology developed by anthropologists who sought to gain an understanding of 'strange' cultures in distant places (Atkinson et al., 2001). Today, it is widely used, also in military contexts (e.g. Hockey, 2009; Jansen & Kramer, 2019; Mohr, Sorensen & Weisdorf, 2019). In its basic form, ethnography consists of fieldwork and of a thick description of it. Ethnographic fieldwork is based on an assumption that by entering into close and relatively prolonged face-to-face interaction with people in their everyday lives, ethnographers can develop an understanding of the implicit and explicit ways in which people make sense of their lives in the setting in question.

Ethnography may take several forms depending on the applied theoretical approach and on the empirical site in question. As the body occupies a central place in our theoretical framework, our ethnographic fieldwork is also informed by prior studies emphasising the importance of embodied immersion in the field (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2011; Hockey, 2009; Stroller, 1997; Strati, 1997). We have thus placed our bodies at the centre of a military training camp to get close to the everyday actions and achieve detailed first-hand knowledge of routine dynamics in that setting. Access to the camp was made possible through research permission granted by the main headquarters of the Finnish Defence Forces (written consent No. AI13071).

The camp in question is organised annually by the Finnish National Defence University in northeast Finland in January–February, 'in the middle of nowhere' and at a time when there is only two to three hours of daylight, some one metre of snow and temperatures that often plummet to minus 30 degrees Celsius. It aims at training cadets (aged approx. 25 years), the future leaders of the Finnish Defence Forces, to act in stressful situations in a routinised manner. In particular, it aims to train them to lead live fire under the surveillance of senior educators. The more general aim of the training is to prepare the cadets to confront the enemy. During the training sessions, the cadets are subjected to strict discipline and control, that is, to ostensive rules, and learn to enact – and embody – military routines appropriate in that particular context. The spatially restricted three-week training camp, where all cadets and other personnel (altogether some 350 people) spend their nights and days, provided a unique opportunity to empirically observe how sleeping and waking bodies enacted routines in situ. The participants of the camp and the researchers all have a Scandinavian background.

The question of the researcher's self has always been the subject of scrutiny in ethnographic research (Atkinson et al., 2001). Ethnographers enter the field as professionals and as gendered and bodily beings, and in doing so they become an undeniably part of the complexities of the field. While we are all in our fifties and have doctorates, we differ in terms of gender and educational background and have different relations to military life. The first author is a female professor in the field of organisational studies working at a Finnish university at the Faculty of Social Sciences and has not done any military service. The second author is a male professor of military leadership and a professional soldier working at the National Defence University in the Department of Leadership and Military Pedagogy; for the last ten years, he has also been engaged in office work. The third author is a female senior researcher (at the time of the fieldwork) who has training in education studies; she has not completed military service, but works at the National

Defence University in the Department of Leadership and Military Pedagogy. During the fieldwork, we all wore military attire so as to 'be like others in the camp'.

Our different positions not only affected the way we were treated by the participants, but also how we came to know and notice certain things, but not others (Rosaldo, 1993: 8). By way of illustration, while the second author immediately noticed if a bodily routine – such as a military salutation or dress code – was performed in an incorrect way, this went unnoticed by the first author as she did not have a similar pre-understanding of the strict rules through which the military body is governed. Then again, her outsider position was an asset in formal interviews and in informal conversations as the personnel expended much time and effort in explicating the implicit rules of the camp to her, in the form of jokes for instance. In this sense, the female non-military body invited particular talk which is relevant to our purpose. Furthermore, the hierarchised culture based on orders – and ostensibly the position as a professor – played a role in the way access to intimate places such as tents was accorded to her. For instance, when she went to sleep in a tent with eight male cadets, a captain accompanied her, saying to the cadets in a firm tone: 'The lady Professor is going to sleep in your tent.' The reply was: 'Yes, Sir.'

We spent four field periods of approximately one week's duration in the camp between 2011 and 2015. The time period was due to the organisation of the camp – the week we spent there was the key period of the training. While the individual fieldwork periods were not as prolonged as in many classic ethnographies, the repetition of the fieldwork over the years as well as the collaborative research practice, deepened our empirical insights. Furthermore, we closely followed the blogs and websites the cadets produced regarding the camp activities, and this kind of data helped us to familiarise ourselves with the cadets' views and to contextualise our observations and insights.

The ethnographer commonly participates to a greater or lesser extent in the field he or she is studying, because it is through participation that he or she learns to understand the participants' points-of-view (Atkinson et al., 2001). While in the field, we consequently immersed ourselves in the life of the camp by walking in the snow, sleeping in the tents, sitting around the campfire or stove, skiing with the cadets, trying to walk in the darkness of the night with all the equipment, chatting with the personnel, eating military food, waking up early in the morning, staying awake late at night, enjoying coffee and doughnuts in the canteen, wearing military clothing, and enjoying, or battling against, the cold winter weather which made our eyes water and fingers freeze. In doing so, our bodies were intimately immersed in the setting (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2011; Hockey, 2009; Stroller, 1997). This helped us to unravel the visible and invisible changes that were taking place in the bodies of the soldiers and ourselves, which might otherwise have remained implicit. It also refined our capacity to empathise with the soldiers and to imagine what it might be like for them (Strati, 1997) and to create a rapport with them, as, in some sense, we shared the 'same' experience of acting in the environment. They openly expressed their appreciation that we literally came to see and feel the everyday life of the camp, instead of staying at a distance and conducting surveys, for instance.

To ensure that our understanding of the field would be well-grounded and detailed, we gathered a rich set of data – as is commonplace in ethnographic inquiries. We conducted participant and non-participant observations, kept research journals, carried out formal semi-structured interviews, had casual conversations and group discussions and took photographs and made videos at different sites in the camp and at different times. While we had specific sites assigned to each of us for the fieldwork, we also collaborated in many situations. For instance, the first author slept in the tents, the second followed guerrilla tactics in the woods, and the third observed a group of cadets during the entire camp. All three were present during the official feedback sessions that took place every morning. Oftentimes, the researchers also worked in pairs so that for instance shootings were observed by two of them. The collaboration made it possible to reflect upon the observations and to discuss their similarities and differences.

This fieldwork strategy and the different empirical materials helped us to gain a deep understanding of the routine life of the camp from different angles. For instance, the interviews and the observations helped us to see the implicit and explicit rules that guided how sleeping and waking were regarded and practised. The rules were crystallised in sayings such as 'Death will settle sleep debts' or 'Sleep whenever you can'. The photos and videos, for their part, were useful in analysing the bodily practices as well as the struggles related to developing embodied techniques such as skiing on unbroken snow with the clumsy skis that the army provides. The interviews with the educators and the cadets – during which they reflected upon their own bodily experiences and practices – taught us to perceive certain bodily traits, such as being bleary-eyed or exhibiting slowed down bodily movements that signal changes in corporeal states. Moreover, our own embodied experiences of the different feeling of walking or merely sitting after a sleepless night were helpful in identifying the relation between the biological and cultural body.

Ethnographic fieldwork is never without challenges. As Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) point out, fieldwork 'requires tolerance for complexity and ambiguity as it requires engaging with everyday realities of organisational life that are rich with contingency, multiplicity and emergence'. Our research task was challenging in itself. Like most other social scientific scholars, we were accustomed to contemplating and observing the waking reality only. Therefore, we needed to extend our faculty of perception and develop ways of 'noticing' issues that we had not noticed previously due to our academic training in attention. Gradually, through the fieldwork and the literature on sleep, we developed a capacity to consider the field beyond wakeful life. Paying attention to the interplay between biological and cultural bodies posed another challenge, and hence familiarisation with the literature was also helpful in this respect.

The process of analysis

In the analytical phase, which occurred in parallel with the fieldwork, the knowledge we had gained during the fieldwork was put into a dialogue with our theoretical knowledge. Overall, we organised six collaborative analytical sessions in which we shared our insights into the field, discussed empirical materials and emerging interpretations and developed our interpretive framework. For instance, we read our field notes aloud to each other, looked at the pictures we had taken and spoke about the feelings we had had in the field, such as how sleeping in the tent of the cadets had created some odd feelings. This practice helped us to enrich our interpretations, as we consolidated our disciplinary and occupational backgrounds. For instance, the second author with military background helped to make sense of the importance of certain military habits, such as fire watching and related military jargon, while the first author's know-how of body literature helped to consider the sensorial and fleshy aspects. The process of writing proved to be a central analytical 'device' in itself (Helin, 2015). Through this iterative process, our understanding of the field gradually evolved, as did the research problem itself. While we had an initial idea with respect to investigating the sleeping body when going into the field – as the fieldwork was part of a wider project on sleep – our theoretical lens and the very focus of our study developed during the field and the analysis. By reading theoretical literature, analysing our materials, discussing and testing several alternative angles (e.g. phenomenological reading), we finally ended up choosing a perspective on the sleeping-waking body that recognises the biological and cultural aspects. This allowed us to grasp hitherto unexplored aspects of bodily dynamics in routines.

Hence, sharing and discussing our materials collaboratively and engaging in the development of the interpretive framework by putting data and theory into a dialogue, constituted the cornerstones of our analytical process (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007). This process took the form of discussions and the production of written stories and vignettes based on our fieldwork. Thus, the analysis that follows is an outcome of our collaborative analysis of the fieldwork materials: it is a story knitted together of the small stories we heard, experienced and sensed in the field. To illustrate our analysis, we have selected extracts from our materials that reflect the themes we ended up highlighting.

Empirical findings

In this section, we elaborate on the dynamics arising from a) bodies trying to balance between waking and sleeping in the routinised activity of the camp, and b) the active nature of the body while asleep. Both dimensions highlight the active, unintentional and unmanageable aspects of the body enacting routines against a set of explicit and implicit – and oftentimes contradictory – ostensive rules.

Balancing between waking and sleeping

Let us start by considering a basic routine in the camp, a morning meeting, with the following extract from our field journal:

The official camp feedback session is about to begin. It takes place every morning in the 'Leading place' (Johtola), where meals are also served. The atmosphere appears to be somewhat official. The colonel and all of the officers in charge of certain tasks, such as security or food provision, are present. The cadets are sitting up, straight and motionless, on the wooden bench, shoulders back and chest out. The personnel start talking, reflecting on the events of the previous day, giving safety instructions, reminding us of the need to prepare for the cold weather and so on. Official military expressions (Sir, Colonel) and postures (attention) are employed throughout the session. All of a sudden, one of the personnel starts to nod off. He is sitting, but his eyes close, his upper body and his head bend forward, and he starts breathing more slowly than usual, in a slightly noisy manner. I feel embarrassed. Others seem to behave as if they haven't noticed what is happening.

The extract illustrates how one of the participants fell asleep in the middle of the meeting. While remaining in the sitting position, his bodily gestures, closing of eyes and way of breathing, indicated that he had transformed into a sleep state. His bodily performance was hence deviating from the ostensive rule of staying awake and being alert that is inscribed in the routine of the meeting. The incident occurred in a public place, in front of other people, and so it also deviated from the Western rule of sleeping in privacy (Williams, 2005). It evoked embarrassed feelings in the author. Subsequent reflections on this episode with other participants indicated that they too had felt rather embarrassed and hesitant about how to react.

Falling asleep was most likely unintentional. It just happened, unexpectedly. Our data point to several issues that may facilitate 'accidental' sleep: the bodily position of lying down, lack of activity, boredom, tiredness and biological and material surroundings such as warm temperatures or darkness. For instance, one soldier described how he had to struggle to stay awake while on emergency duty: *Of course, I'm supposed to stay awake on emergency duty, but what can you do: you are alone in the tent, there is nothing to do, you just wait and wait, sitting and staring at the stove. Particularly if you lie down, you fall asleep so easily in a warm tent.* Another cadet revealed that while playing the role of a wounded soldier, which was part of the training, he accidentally fell asleep outdoors on a sledge, in cold winter weather conditions.

In yet another example taken from a lecture hall, the cadets were sitting on a bench side by side, listening to the lecturer talking about novel high-tech monitoring devices. Before the lecture, the cadets had been outdoors, taking part in exercises for several hours in the forest in deep snow. Soon after the lecturer had started his speech, one of the cadets dozed off, followed by another, and another and so on. The bodies of the cadets 'forgot' their military bodily conduct and swayed like branches in the wind: heads down, eyes closed, postures collapsed. Fellow cadets tried to wake them by nudging them or prodding them with their feet, but to no avail. The biological body superseded the cultural body and, as a result, the performance was against the ostensive rules.

The practice of fire watching further accentuates how staying awake may require particular efforts. In the military camp, cadets sleep in tents with a stove in the middle that keeps the tent warm even in cold winter weather. It is the fire watch's responsibility to ensure that the fire does not go out, and that the tent does not become too warm. To quote: *The temperature can vary between plus 5 and 30 degrees Celsius, if a lazy fire watch fills the stove to begin with and then lets it almost burn out.* As a consequence, and for safety reasons, it is vital that the fire watch stays awake. This is easier said than done, however. Our data include several bodily techniques that the fire watches had developed so as to avoid falling asleep, such as staying in a sitting position, moving their legs, making firewood or playing games on their mobile phone. These activities are examples of the efforts required when performing routine tasks in accordance with ostensive rules.

Then again, falling asleep might be just as effortful as trying to stay awake. In the words of an instructor:

I do have trouble falling asleep. It's awful. I've tried all those tips that suggest ways of falling asleep – those breathing techniques and so on – but no, no help at all. I envy those who just go to bed and fall asleep, or even sleep in the car! But on the other hand, I'm the kind of person who's alert right away when I wake up. So perhaps other people envy me... I wish that these two aspects could be combined.

The quote exemplifies how performing the seemingly simple practice of falling asleep may turn out to be difficult and bring about performative struggles. It also foregrounds the ostensive rule of how sleeping and waking is expected to be managed in the military culture. Soldiers are expected to develop an 'on-off' pattern: to be either fully alert or fast asleep, and the alternation between these states should happen quickly – being able to fall asleep at once and, once awakened, being immediately alert and ready to act. Yet, as Merleau-Ponty (1962: 163–164) famously pointed out, the sleeper cannot intentionally decide the moment of falling asleep, not even when practising various techniques of falling asleep. The body has a life of its own and does not necessarily obey in spite of various available body techniques targeted at both the inner and outer body (Grosz, 1994), such as breathing, trying to clear the mind of unpleasant thoughts, drinking milk, avoiding caffeine or making the material surroundings dark and quiet.

Yet, fellow bodies may facilitate falling asleep, as the following quote from a cadet suggests:

Quite often we make this kind of common decision where we say 'let's go and have a nap!'. And the thing is that if you're the only one who's awake, and the others are sleeping, then you more or less automatically go to bed, too. And once you go, all of a sudden you fall asleep.

Napping in the camp (in the barracks or in the tent) is a way to rest, to compensate for lack of sleep or just to kill time. When napping together, the bodies expose themselves to others and are in close physical proximity. As the quote indicates, the bodies also mutually influence each other: seeing and hearing others sleep makes one fall asleep as well. It appeared to be an implicit expectation that everybody would be sleeping – physiologically or at least sociologically, enacting the prevalent sleeping technique of lying down and being still.

Our data also indicate that balancing between sleeping and waking may take the form of experiencing that one's body is half-awake and half-asleep. For instance, we heard stories of bodies which perform routines while not feeling fully awake, but which are still compelled to act as if they were. The following quote from a cadet expresses this poignantly:

In a previous camp that took place during the summer, I had gone without sleep for some 37 hours, and then we had a long, long march. I remember that while marching I didn't pay attention to anything, I didn't feel anything or think anything. I just walked, and walked and walked. I remember how the sand got in my eyes, sweaty clothes were glued to my skin, and I was tired, soooo tired. And the way I moved and my body and everything just got slower and slower. And the funny thing was that I stopped caring about what was happening around me, who I was with, what the others were doing, or what was happening to my stuff. I just walked, feeling like I was asleep, but I was awake.

The quote reminds us that the military culture expects soldiers to be able to stay awake for a long period of time, yet still enact the routines properly (Ben-Ari, 2003). Marching is a basic military routine and even in a state of extreme tiredness, as the quote illustrates, a part of this routine remains (moving one's legs, staying on one's feet), while part of the routine loses significance (anchoring on others, caring about one's belongings). The performance of bodily skills and habits – once learned and mastered (Mauss, 1973) – is diminished. This was a common topic in the camp. As one cadet reflected: *when a tired body has to lift things, he is not using his back, only his legs*. His colleague went on to say that one can identify a tired body by looking at the eyes that: *are just standing still in your head*. The slowing down of all activities was considered as a common consequence of being sleep-deprived. This concerned both cognitive activities – *your head functions as a hat rack* – and other bodily activities such as leading. According to one instructor, cadets become: *highly phlegmatic; they lose their grip on the groups, and they just can't lead anymore*. The comments indicate that there is a mismatch between the performing body and the ostensive rules – the tired body fails to carry out routines properly.

The above discussion exemplifies, firstly, how sleep resides as a potentiality in the body that enacts routines: the possibility of falling asleep is always lurking. It highlights how the biological body assumes its own implicit rules and expectations that may conflict with the cultural ones. The biological body may assert agency over the cultural body. This is supported by the surrounding material and biological conditions and, oftentimes, bodily postures. Secondly, the discussion exemplifies how balancing between sleeping and waking requires particular efforts and may still result in failure. Thirdly, bodies performing routines in-between wakefulness and sleeping points to the way routines are only partly performed in line with the rules. Taken together, these bodily insights enrich the existing understanding of the role of the body in the internal dynamics of routines.

Acting while asleep

Let us next consider the active and unintentional nature of the body in the context of shared sleeping – a common practice in the military context. The following extract is from the field journal of the first author:

After a long day, it's time to go to the tent. I enter. There are eight male cadets who each have their own place to sleep around a stove. I am shown to my place. I go there, settle down and start listening, taking part in a casual conversation, observing, half sitting, half lying down. When the time comes to go to sleep, the cadet next to me puts his bulletproof vest in between us and says, 'so that nothing happens'. I'm glad he did. Horizontal eye-to-eye and face-to-face contact seems threatening to me, too. I lie down, listen to the sounds of the stove and those coming from mobile phones, and I watch the shadows dancing on the ceiling where the lantern sheds its yellow light. I hear rustling as the cadets move in their sleeping bags, then sounds of deep breathing, some snoring. I feel the cold in my head, but I fall asleep. In the middle of the night, I'm woken up by a kick on my foot. I feel irritated. The cadet sleeping next to me is restless. I'm glad that we were both in our sleeping bags.

The extract illustrates the distinct bodily interaction of shared sleeping: bodies lying down, side by side, in close proximity so that physical (unanticipated) contact is possible. Such inter-corporeal intimacy is not normally seen in commonplace organisational settings. One can hear and feel the intimate sounds coming from the bodies of others, such as breathing, snoring and sudden bodily movements. Such encounter deviates from the ostensive rule of sleeping in privacy and only in the presence of those close to us. While shared sleeping is a regular pattern in the military and one that is trained, the above situation highlights the ostensive rule of gendered bodies performing sleep together: while in the camp, female and male cadets share the same tent, with the age and the role of not being 'one of them' highlighted here. This rule is manifested, for instance, by the issue of touching and being touched. The extract illustrates that the feet of male and female bodies sleeping side by side may touch (when covered by a sleeping bag), while faces (with skin exposed) should not. To avoid this situation, the participants developed distancing strategies that were aimed at preventing a potentially overly intimate encounter, with the help of a bulletproof vest between the bodies.

Furthermore, the extract displays how the sleeping body is out of control: the body may create sounds, such as snoring or passing wind, saliva may dribble out of open mouths, hands and feet may make unexpected movements, or the head may drop onto a neighbour's shoulder. The unintentional bodily conduct of other bodies may disrupt the sleep: one may wake up in the middle of the night unwillingly, because of others. Exposing one's body when it is out of control deviates from the norm of the controlled and managed body.

Bodily activities taking place beyond one's will and control are further accentuated when we consider sleepwalking and sleep talking, which were mentioned as being relatively common in the camp and even given a nickname – 'crazy tent episodes' (*telttahäröily* in Finnish). Fire watches are those who witness at first-hand what happens when fellow bodies are sleeping, as one cadet reflected:

It happens quite often. The guys keep fighting even when they're asleep, and in the morning, they don't remember any of it. For instance, in our tent there was one guy who got out of his sleeping bag and stood up in the middle of the night. While he was fully asleep, he had his eyes wide open, and he shouted, 'Let's attack, let's attack!'. I told him to stop acting crazy, but he didn't react at all. Another night, when I was on fire watch, there was one guy who suddenly sprang into a sitting position, stared into my eyes and said, 'I'm going to kill you'. He had a knife in his hand, so that was a bit scary. But then he quickly fell asleep again. Actually, the fire watches are often the only eyewitness to these kinds of incidents, and they don't necessarily talk about them in the morning.

The quote illustrates that one fellow cadet performs acts as if he were awake, but when he wakes up, he has no recollection of the nocturnal episode – as is typical. The quote also illustrates that once a routine is embodied, it may be performed in a skilful or at least recognisable manner by a sleeping body that is, at least partly, finds itself beyond intention, awareness and will. Such body may repeat bodily gestures (e.g. using hands to show that it is time to attack), use discursive expressions (e.g. commands) and appropriately employ artefacts (e.g. a knife) against imaginary enemies, as if involved in a military routine of attacking. Such body breaks the ostensive expectations associated with the sleeping body that is supposed to perform sleeping, that is, stay relatively still in a horizontal bodily position. Another cadet confirmed that such episodes – or 'milder' ones involving only sleep talking – were common, especially in tents: *Almost every time you stay awake for an hour and look around, there is somebody that sits up is staring or saying something.*

The above discussion reveals how the body remains active even while asleep, and that this activity may take many forms, from sleepwalking to the production of movements and sounds while sleeping. The discussion duly highlights the interesting dynamics stemming from the body and deviating from the norm of associating activity only with alertness.

Discussion and conclusion

Based on ethnographic fieldwork, our study highlights first, how the body balances between sleeping and waking when performing routines and, second, how the body remains active even during sleep. By drawing attention to both sleep-related routines (e.g. night-time sleeping in a tent) and the presence of sleep during other routines (e.g. meetings), it demonstrates that the routinised life of the military is not necessarily restricted to waking life. Specifically, our study offers three contributions.

First, while constructions of military bodies are associated with expectations of being in control, our study suggests that aspects of un-control and un-management always remain (Gabriel, 1995; Valtonen et al., 2017). The analysis shows how the body, despite the range of techniques enacted, may fail to fall asleep,

wake unwillingly in the middle of the night, move and act unintentionally while sleeping or fall asleep unintentionally on occasions when it should not. Thereby, bodies do not 'fit' the 'on-off' rule that guides military bodies as either fully awake or fully asleep. This insight adds to existing explorations that have identified 'misfits' and tensions between the expectations of military bodies and their lived experiences. For example, traditional docile military bodies do not necessarily 'fit' the cyborgian technology of war (Godfrey, Lilley & Brewis, 2012), and we highlight the misfit to the rules governing sleeping and waking.

Second, our empirical study offers novel insights into bodies engaged in the habitual training processes of military routines. Hockey (2009) has demonstrated that skilful practising of certain bodily postures – such as the 'alert' position – and movements and rhythms is a crucial aspect of the soldiers' occupation, and our study broadens the scope to cover the postures and movements of sleeping bodies. Hockey also stresses the skilful use of the senses as a crucial part of soldiers' work, highlighting the need to develop skills in observing the surroundings, for example (ibid. 483–4). Our study adds the skill of observing the physical condition of military bodies. The analysis shows that educators have developed skills that must be observed by the cadets' eyes and rhythms whether or not they are exhausted.

Third, our inquiry adds to existing military ethnographies. Jansen and Kramer (2019) conducted an institutional ethnographic study at the Netherlands Defence Academy which opened up the 'black box' of military education, but they did not focus on the embodied aspects as our study does. For his part, Hockey (2009) offers an analysis of the embodied nature of military routines, but his focus is on the waking body. Our ethnography details how waking/sleeping bodies enact routines and thereby extends the current understanding of the bodily nature of military work.

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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