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Dialectical perspective of truce-making processes: Integrating women into close combat roles in the Armed Forces

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Editors: Christian Mahringer, Briam Pentland, Birgit Renzl, Kathrin Sele, and Paul Spee

Alessandro Alvarenga

Cranfield University, Cranfield School of Management, UK

Alessandro.Alvarenga@cranfield.ac.uk

Mehdi Safavi

(Corresponding Author)

Cranfield University, Cranfield School of Management, UK

Mehdi.Safavi@cranfield.ac.uk

Gary T. Burke

University of Bristol Business School, UK

g.burke@bristol.ac.uk

Alessandro Alvarenga is a Visiting Scholar at Cranfield School of Management. With a PhD in Management from the University of Edinburgh, he has a decade of experience in project and operations management within the energy industry. His recent tenure in the Armed Forces saw Alessandro specializing in Force Protection. His research focuses on strategy and organization studies from a 'Routine Dynamics' perspective. As a visiting fellow at Cranfield University, Alessandro maintains a strong connection with academia and knowledge dissemination through research collaboration.

Mehdi Safavi is a Senior Lecturer in Strategy and Organization at Cranfield School of Management. His research focus is on analysing organizational change and inertia qualitatively through the lens of organizational routines (Routine Dynamics) during various internal and external change initiatives. His work has featured in Journal of Management Studies, British Journal of Management. Long Range Planning, Studies in Higher Education, and MIT Sloan Management Review.

Gary T. Burke is an Associate Professor of Strategy and Organization at the University of Bristol Business School. His research utilizes qualitative and ethnographic methodologies, and draws on practice and process philosophy perspectives to study how actors address complex (wicked) problems in practice. His work has appeared in Academy of Management Journal, Journal of Management Studies, Organization Studies, Research in the Sociology of Organizations, British Journal of Management, and Long Range Planning.

Running head: A dialectical perspective of truce-making processes in routines

Abstract. This paper investigates the intricate process of integrating historically excluded social groups into long-established routines. Drawing on a dialectical perspective, the research explores how persistence and change emerge through the interplay of opposing forces, shedding light on the dynamics of integrating new participants while ensuring stability in established routines. The empirical focus is on an Armed Forces' ground combat training course, examining the integration of the first female officers after the formal ban on their participation in close-combat roles was lifted. The findings reveal a nuanced evolution of routine adaptation and truce reformation, characterized by three dialectical cycles: tentative truces, experimental truces, and enactment truces. These cycles involve negotiations between continuity and reformation, accommodation and resistance, and modification and preservation, uncovering a dialectical dance where organizational actors invest intense effort in maintaining the status quo while accommodating ambiguity and settling tensions. The findings extend our understanding of routine dynamics by illuminating the performative aspect of truce-making, highlighting the effortful processes involved in accommodating new participants. This paper establishes a connection between routines and dialectics, providing novel avenues for exploring complex organizational challenges and emphasizing micro-strategies employed by routine participants to address differences in practice. It also contributes to the field of organizational inclusion by offering a dialectical understanding of integration, showcasing the intricate dynamics involved in integrating historically excluded groups into established routines.

Keywords: Routine Dynamics, Truce Dynamics, Dialectical Perspective, Integration, Inclusion, Equality

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Introduction

In today's societal settings, organizations face the complex challenge of coordinating daily works by continuously introducing new norms and values (Okhuysen & Bechky, 2009). Among many challenges organizations face, inclusion and equality in all organizational roles has become a mandate, and the pressure to provide equal opportunity for all, regardless of people's identities, interests, or abilities, to join the organization and climb the career ladder is greater than ever (Adamson, Kelan, Lewis, Śliwa, & Rumens, 2021; Kangas-Muller, Eraranta, & Moisander, 2023). Hence, organizational members must somehow redesign, renegotiate, and (re)enact longstanding organizational routines to integrate historically excluded participants (Brewis, 2019; Tyler & Vachhani, 2021) and challenge patterning of inequality (Feldman & Pentland, 2022).

In such an intricate situation, while organizations must avoid mistaking these novel conditions as instances for using repetitive familiar responses (Birnholtz, Cohen, & Hoch, 2007; Omidvar, Safavi, & Glaser, 2022; Turner & Fern, 2012), they must turn constant novelty into actionable similarity to guarantee stability and performance (Weick, 1995; Turner & Rindova, 2012). Routine Dynamics research shows that routines, as generative systems, provide the dynamism needed to address such novel situations (Feldman, 2000; Feldman & Pentland, 2003), and analysing situated patterning of actions and mutual adjustments over time is crucial in understanding this balancing act (Feldman & Pentland, 2003; D'Adderio, 2008). Routine dynamics scholars have revealed that routine performances involve negotiations, agreements, and cultural strategies to resolve conflicts and power dynamics (Bertels, Howard-Grenville, & Pek, 2016; D'Adderio & Safavi, 2021; Pentland & Haerem, 2015). However, we know little about how integrating new actors into established routines, which triggers organizational adaptation, disrupts extant 'truces', and how organizations, through complex learning journeys, arrive at new ones (Raisch, Hargrave, & Van De Ven, 2018).

Integrating historically excluded social groups into routines, in particular, will generate challenges associated with 'organizing and responding to differences' and dealing with uncertainty, ambiguity, political pressure, and oppositional forces (Brewis, 2019; Tyler & Vachhani, 2021). While routine dynamics research has explored organizational actors' adaptive responses to integrating new routines with 'poor cultural fit' (Bertels et al., 2016), as well as tensions raised by the inclusion of mass-market, cheaper products in new product development routines (Salvato and Rerup, 2018), we know very little about the processes of integrating historically excluded groups into long-established routines and the work involved in negotiating resultant tensions.

To solve this theoretical puzzle, we employ a dialectical perspective, which foregrounds how persistence and change are produced through an interplay of opposing forces and the relative balance of power between them (Van de Ven, 1992; Seo & Creed, 2002). This perspective enables routine dynamic scholars to better see the dialectical nature of situated patterning amid broader societal patterns and inequalities (Feldman & Pentland, 2022) and uncover how ongoing 'struggles' between opposing tendencies undergird stability and change (Ford & Ford, 1994). In particular, we use a dialectical perspective to explore how situated accommodations, acts of resistance, and oppositional struggles reshape implicit truce agreements (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995; Salvato & Rerup, 2018). We argue that a dialectic lens, which has been widely used to study socialization, group interaction, identity tensions, and learning processes, is an ideal complement to the routines-as-truces literature (Leonardi, Jackson, & Diwan, 2009; Gibbs, 2009; Kreiner, Hollensbe, Sheep, Smith, & Kataria, 2015; Raisch et al., 2018) because it illuminates how confronting oppositions can be generative for organizational routine adaptation.

Empirically, we studied the ground combat training (GCT) course within the Armed Forces of an undisclosed country. Although women had always played a crucial role in the

Armed Forces of that country, they were still formally banned from taking part in close combat until very recently. To investigate how this historically excluded group became integrated into long-established routines, we followed the first female officer intake. With unique insider access to the military training course, we undertook a 24-month ethnographic study of the transition to a mixed-gender course, using observational data, field notes, documents, and interviews to analyse how routine participants mutually adapted the training routines in the new setting with male and female officer trainees.

Our findings reveal that the process of routine adaptation and truce reformation evolves through three dialectical cycles where *tentative truces* (emerging from a continuity versus reformation dialectic), *experimental truces* (emerging from an accommodation versus resistance dialectic), and *enactment truces* (emerging from a modify versus preserve dialectic) are negotiated through situated adaptive responses. As routine participants strive for change and continuity, they simultaneously stretch the routines (expansion) and pull them back towards stability (contraction). Thus, we reveal how unfolding actions and sensitized relations expand and contract "the space of possible paths" (Pentland, Mahringer, Dittrich, Feldman, & Wolf, 2020, p. 5), creating a dialectical dance where intense labour goes into 'staying the same', guaranteeing stability and recognizability in ground combat training routines.

Our study makes three important contributions. First, our dialectical perspective of truce-making extends the literature on routine dynamics and routines-as-truces. Contributing to the performative view of 'effortful truce-making' (D'Adderio & Safavi, 2021; Salvato & Rerup, 2018) and 'routines as effortful accomplishments' (Pentland & Rueter, 1994, Feldman, 2000), we extend understanding of situated, longitudinal processes that unfold when routine participants simultaneously pursue change and continuity in truce reformation through adaptive actions. By illustrating the dialectical dance taking place in integrating new routine participants, where intense labour goes into 'staying the same', our findings show how

organizational actors can guarantee stability and recognizability in established routines while accommodating ambiguity and settling tensions through a process of dynamic truce making. Second, we create a bridge between routines and dialectics, providing new avenues for researching complex organizational challenges. Complementing the dominant political and punctuated characterization of group tensions, struggles, and oppositions (Leonardi et al., 2009; Gibbs, 2009; Kreiner et al., 2015), and through a process-based conceptualization of routines as dynamic truces, we highlight micro-strategies and processes through which organizational members work out perceived differences in practice. Finally, we extend work on inclusion in organizations by providing a new dialectical understanding of integration.

Theoretical Background

Routines are "repetitive, recognizable patterns of interdependent actions carried out by multiple actors" (Feldman & Pentland 2003, p. 95). To solve the theoretical puzzle of how historically excluded groups become integrated into long-established routines, we seek to understand better the dialectic tensions and adaptive responses that enable a new group of actors – with different agendas, identities, interests, and abilities – to become part of long-established routines. It is currently unclear, for example, whether established routines must be changed to accommodate the needs, subjectivities, and abilities of previously excluded individuals or whether historically excluded individuals must themselves adapt to 'fit in'.

The routine dynamics literature suggests that the answer may lie in studying patterns of situated actions (Feldman & Pentland, 2003) and mutual adjustment (D'Adderio, 2008) over time. Routine dynamics portrays organizational routines as inherently adaptive and flexible, existing "through a process of (re)production, over time and space, through the ongoing effort of actants (people and things)" (Feldman, Pentland, D'Adderio, & Lazaric, 2016, p. 505). The implication is that different groups of routine participants will co-jointly reproduce the 'established routine', requiring existing and new actors to make ongoing adjustments in their

situated interactions and performances (Feldman, 2000; 2016). This perspective helps us to understand integration by foregrounding how the performative aspects of routines – i.e., patterning or adaptive actions taken by the groups participating in the routine – and the ostensive aspects of routines – i.e., principles, perspectives and understandings of the routine held by different groups as accepted patterns of action – may diverge, interact, and perhaps coalesce as integration unfolds over time (Feldman & Pentland, 2003). As Bertels and colleagues (2016) note, this requires close attention to the broader influences of context, culture, politics, and societal pressures on the situated actions and subjective understandings of diverse participants. When new actors jointly enact routines, latent sources of misfit can often surface to impede and derail the process of 'fitting' or 'integrating' due to incompatible assumptions, divergent norms, and conflicting intentions (Mirc, Sele, Rouzies, & Angwin, 2023).

Our focus on integrating historically excluded social groups also directs attention to the problem of "organizing difference" (Brewis, 2019, p. 94) and "responding to difference" (Tyler & Vachhani, 2021), which will manifest uncertainty, ambiguity, political pressures, and oppositional forces. While the routine dynamics literature offers some rudimentary insight into the challenges of integrating 'new routines' that are perceived to be a poor cultural fit for the adopting organization (Bertels et al., 2016), prior work on integration offers scant insight into the critical question of how historically excluded groups are integrated into long-established routines. Looking beyond the routine dynamics literature, research on the practice of inclusion (Adamson et al., 2021; Janssens & Steyaert, 2019; Kangas-Muller et al., 2023) suggests that efforts to introduce historically excluded groups will surface challenges and paradoxical tensions associated with, for instance, the politics of inclusion (Adamson et al., 2021), benevolent discrimination (Kangas-Muller et al., 2023), the reification of difference (Tyler & Vachhani, 2021), absorption and uniqueness (Ferdman, 2017), gender differences in masculine

contexts (Ainsworth, Batty, & Burchielli, 2014; Karazi-Presler, 2020), and power and resistance dynamics (Kangas-Muller et al., 2023; Tomlinson & Egan, 2002). While work on the practice of inclusion has adopted a critical lens (Adamson et al., 2021), focussing attention on how once excluded groups become integrated into established routines may help to unlock important new theoretical insights into the situated practice of mixing and the processes by which inclusion in accomplished in practice (Janssens & Steyaert, 2019). As Feldman & Pentland (2022) argue, more research is needed to understand the performative cycles that contribute to reducing social inequalities rooted in social structures, historical patterns of exclusion, and cultural stereotypes.

We, therefore, focus on the process by which perceived differences, tensions, and conflicts are negotiated through situated actions, interactions, and improvisational adjustments (D'Adderio, 2008; Feldman & Pentland, 2003). We argue this focus necessitates deeper engagement with two bodies of research – routines as truces and dialectical theory – that have thus far travelled along separate tracks, despite their latent potential to generate new theoretical insights about routine adaption and truce dynamics.

Routines as truces

Several recent studies have built on Nelson and Winter's (1982) insight that routine performances involve 'making truces' between organization members with divergent motives, roles, powers, perspectives, and understandings. These studies highlight how latent conflicts, power relations, and organizational cultures underly routine patterns of action (Bertels et al., 2016; D'Adderio & Safavi, 2021; Pentland & Haerem, 2015), which are partially resolved through negotiated settlements, implicit agreements, and cultural strategies of action (Bertels et al., 2016; Zbaracki & Bergen, 2010). According to Salvato and Rerup (2018, p. 171), a "truce is an agreement to cease fighting or disputing for a period of time." Such implicit agreements

constitute a social order in which diverse actors learn to look past their differences and perform established organizational routines together (Kho, Spee, & Gillespie, 2019).

Such truces are central to stability and change in organizational routines (Feldman & Pentland, 2003; Feldman et al., 2016). Truces are rooted in shared traditions (Nelson & Winter, 1982), organizational memory (Howard-Grenville, 2005), embedded structures (Cohendet & Simon, 2016), and cultural practices (Bertels et al., 2016), influencing member's frames and beliefs about how routines 'ought' to be performed and contributing to the continuity of routine performances (D'Adderio & Safavi, 2021; Kaplan, 2015). As Nelson and Winter (1982) asserted, the fear of breaking a truce is a "powerful force tending to hold organizations on the path of relatively inflexible routine" (Nelson & Winter, 1982, p. 112). Disrupting these truces can ignite tensions and conflicts between actors. Thus, disruptions are generally avoided unless necessary (Kaplan, 2015) and when breaches arise, actors work to repair them (Kho et al., 2019). For example, Bertels et al. (2016) describes how employees in a major oil producer undertook cultural work – e.g., cultural shielding and cultural shoring – to maintain a truce when integrating a new compliance routine perceived as a poor cultural fit. These practices were a direct response to perceived mismatches and "manifestations of a 'cultural truce' that enabled the routine to continue to be performed" (ibid, p. 590).

While these studies are insightful, integrating new actors into long-established routines is likely to unsettle existing truces, generate mismatches, and precipitate negotiations that differ from those associated with bringing in external routines. For instance, dialectical tensions associated with 'doing inclusion' (Adamson et al., 2021; Janssens & Steyaert, 2019; Kangas-Muller et al., 2023) and 'responding to difference' (Tyler & Vachhani, 2021) will require actors to journey through complex learning spirals together (Raisch et al., 2018). And those in authority will confront the problem of trying to preserve the existing truces with traditional participants while developing new implicit agreements (truces) with a new group of actors with

different perspectives, motivations, and abilities so that all participating actors can set aside – work with – any perceived differences to perform the organizational routines (Kho et al., 2019).

The literature provides some clues about how inside and outside groups might negotiate and reformulate truces (D'Adderio & Safavi, 2021; Kho et al., 2019). One group of studies suggest those in positions of higher authority must intervene to maintain and remake truces. For example, Zbaracki and Bergen (2010) showed how price changes in a manufacturing firm created a truce breakdown between sales and marketing. This was only restored when the vice president made a decision that sidestepped differences and encouraged the groups to revert to the truce. Similarly, Kaplan (2015) highlights CEOs' role in breaking and remaking truces when reconfiguring an organization's routines. Another group of studies suggest that truces are reformulated and negotiated collaboratively (D'Adderio, 2008; Kho et al., 2019). For example, Salvato and Rerup (2018) studied a new product development routine at Alessi, a design firm. They showed how routine participants reformulated truces using regulatory actions – i.e., splicing, activating, and repressing – to accommodate problems and tensions between them. They note that the truce that emerged was not a periodic entity implemented by top managers to mitigate conflicts. Rather, "the truce emerged through an effortful process of truce-making involving many participants" (ibid, p.201).

A dialectical perspective of truce negotiation

We build on and augment this performative view of "effortful truce-making" (Salvato & Rerup, 2018) by adopting a dialectical perspective to unpack how oppositional struggles, acts of resistance, and situated accommodations underpin truce reformulations in complex social settings (c.f. Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). We noted above how integrating historically excluded groups into long-established routines is likely to generate tensions, ambiguities, and dilemmas as perceived differences and incompatibilities collide (Adamson et al., 2021; Ferdman, 2017; Kangas-Muller et al., 2023). The dialectical perspective (Benson, 1977; Seo & Creed, 2002)

provides an ideal complement to performative views that can help us unpack how actors reformulate novel truces by generating, confronting, and negotiating forces for and against change and resolving oppositions in action. Prior studies have adopted a dialectic lens to study socialization (Leonardi et al., 2009), group interaction (Gibbs, 2009), identity tensions (Kreiner et al., 2015), and learning processes (Raisch et al., 2018). Yet, the routines-as-truces literature has not yet engaged with dialectic theory, despite the complementary concerns with group conflicts, tensions, struggles, and dynamic truces.

Central to the dialectical perspective is the proposition that development and change occur when distinct entities or actors confront a conflicting thesis and antithesis (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). The thesis is the status quo – a structural arrangement, understanding, or agreement – and the antithesis is an opposing force or idea that stems from, among other things, political events, alternative values, misunderstandings, frustrations, or ideologies (Ford & Ford, 1994). The degree of change depends on the relative power of these opposing forces. As Van de Ven (1992, p.178) notes, "stability is produced through partisan struggles and accommodations which maintain the status quo between oppositions," as we see with many settled truces. However, change occurs when opposing forces gain sufficient impetus to confront the current thesis (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995) and produce a novel synthesis, where the "thesis and antithesis become something altogether different" (Ford & Ford, 1994, p. 775).

We explore how integrating historically excluded social groups into long-established routines precipitates dialectical processes and oppositional struggles that drive diverse actors towards a new truce reformulation. Importantly, we pay close attention to how the dialectical interplay unfolds as an ongoing process during routines enactment (Clegg & Cunha, 2017) as participating actors act and react, diverge and converge, resist and accommodate, and gradually learn to transcend perceived differences (Raisch et al., 2018).

Research Methods

Case Selection

We opted for a ground combat training course as a single case following Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), who deemed this approach as the preferred choice for two main reasons. First, it is an extreme context due to the nature of the organization (military and highly hierarchical, with long-establish traditions) facing a critical transition from an all-male to a mixed-gender unit. Second, as the first author is a military officer, we obtained insider access to this unique context, which is under-researched in organization studies. These allowed us to observe how historically excluded groups become integrated into the long-established training routines of the ground combat training course.

Empirical context

The Infantry Officer Course[1] consists of 26 weeks of tough ground combat training, in which participants are taught how to soldier, command, and lead troops. The course is divided into three modules, consisting of multiple routines focused on individual soldiering skills and basic and advanced command (Figure 1).

Insert Figure 1 here

Before starting the course, the cohort (usually 20-30 students) moves to the base, where training is conducted. As they will be in that location for seven months, they are assigned individual rooms in a dedicated accommodation block. The students are also kitted (sleeping bags, rucksacks, body armour, etc.) and shown the facilities around the base. The government

[1] For ease of understanding, in this paper we use Infantry Officer Course and Ground Combat Training Course interchangeably.

lifted its ban on women in close combat roles recently. Shortly after, the infantry received female applicants; the first female officers graduated a couple of years later.

The individual soldiering skills phase lasts 10 weeks, from which six are spent in the "field" (unpopulated areas reserved for military training), where students live together as a unit, eating, moving, exercising, and training together. The troops must respect officers and are expected to command as well as soldier. They must first master individual skills as an infantry soldier. They are taught how to handle weapons, pack their equipment, navigate difficult terrain (day and night), react to enemy fire, administrate themselves in the field, use radios, and give target indications. Fitness training is also an essential aspect of this first module. The students constantly participate in high-intensity interval training, boot runs, loaded marches, and battle physical training sessions.

Students then progress to the basic command phase, which builds on the skills acquired to start fulfilling the role of an officer. The focus is now on leadership. They are taught the mechanics and tactics of an 8-person infantry unit called "Section". The officers live in the field for three weeks and are given a series of scenarios to be taught and tested as leaders. A student, for instance, might have to plan and conduct a reconnaissance patrol leading his Section to a known enemy position to observe and report; these patrols often encompass long distances carrying heavy equipment such as weapons, ammunition, and stretchers.

The last and hardest part of the course is the advanced command phase. Over 12 weeks (out of which eight are spent in field conditions), the officers are taught the mechanics of a platoon, how to plan and conduct different types of operations (such as how to defend a position, how to conduct an ambush, and how to advance into contact with enemy forces), how to deliver orders to soldiers, and how to send standardised reports over the radio. The

commanders are given three Sections totalling roughly 24 soldiers and are assessed in how they lead those troops – at this stage, they must demonstrate they can fulfil the command role.

Those who are successful in the course – usually less than 50% of the initial cohort – will graduate as infantry officers and are posted to an operational unit. The pass rate is low as the course is arduous; it is mentally challenging (commanding 24 soldiers in combat scenarios), physically demanding (long distances carrying heavy loads; students are constantly sleep deprived, e.g., a 25 hours-on/5 hours-off for weeks at times), and the living conditions are testing (sleeping, washing, and eating under the stars in forested areas in summer and winter conditions).

Data collection

To explore how female officers were introduced into the training routines, we undertook an ethnographic case study drawing on four data sources: participant observation, document analysis, picture/video, and interviews (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Van Maanen, 1979; Yin, 2009).

Firstly, the first author is a member of the military and took part in a ground combat all-male course as an officer trainee; he has also conducted training and deployed on operations with Armed Forces of many allied countries. He gathered field notes as an observer in the mixed-gender course in 2020. Thus, his experience and insider access to the training course routines was a big part of our data collection, comprising more than 24 months of ethnographic research. Secondly, we collected and analysed documents released by infantry units (including guidelines, training programmes, emails, and other internal documents) illustrating the process of change and adaptation to prepare the Corps for its first female officers. Thirdly, we examined pictures and videos from the course before and after its transition to better understand the integration of the female infantry officers. Lastly, fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with varied groups of personnel, including the staff, training design team, and

former students from the all-male and mixed-gender courses (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton., 2012). Table I summarises our data sources[2].

Insert Table 1 here

Data analysis

Data collection and analysis occurred concurrently, following the tenets of inductive inquiry (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Our primary focus was how female officers, who had historically been excluded from infantry training, were introduced into the training routines. In line with Clark, Gioia, Ketchen, & Thomas (2010), we scrutinised our data, coding interview transcripts, secondary documents, visual data and drawing on the first author's field notes from observations of ground combat courses. Our data analysis progressed in three stages.

First, we wrote a thick chronological description, which we temporally bracketed (Langley, 1999). Specifically, we organized the data into logical phases, scrutinizing anticipatory planning, where the training team began to prepare for the mixed-gender course, and all key phases throughout the course, from the initial arrivals at the base to the advanced command phase. As we analysed this data using open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), we noticed a recurring struggles between continuity and change, acts of accommodation and resistance, and routine customization. We clustered these into provisional temporal categories (cycles) and coded interactions within them, generating grounded codes, such as 'reasoned accommodations', 'improvisational adjustments' and 'routine resistance'.

Building on these initial insights and the literature on routine dynamics, we began to conceive these cycles as constituting a dynamic process of truce making, where implicit

[2] We used abbreviations throughout the text to reference data collected during our study: "obn" for participant observation, "fn" for field notes, "doc" for documents, "pic" for pictures/videos, and "int" for interviews.

agreements were negotiated through oppositional struggles. Applying a dialectical lens, we sharpened our analysis by isolating and categorising each opposition in the data, identifying core dialectics, which we labelled a 'stability dialectic', an 'integrative dialectic' and an 'enactment dialectic'. Our attention then turned to axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and theorize the dynamic relations between the identified dialectics, course routines, and routine truce reformulations. Returning to our data, comparing and refining codes, and using diagramming (Locke, 2001), we created a process model that shows how routine adaptation and truce reformation emerges through a 'stability dialectic between continuity versus reformation' (cycle 1), an 'integrative dialectic between accommodation versus resistance' (cycle 2), and an "enactment dialectic between modify versus preserve" (cycle 3).

In a final step to ensure the rigour of this analysis, we discussed our interpretations and theoretical conceptualization with the members of the infantry that were interviewed. We received feedback, validated our interpretations, and allowed the participants to reflect further on the results (Yin, 2009). This helped us to significantly improve our findings' reliability and validity, together with the triangulation of our data sources. The following section presents our findings in three parts, following the three dialectical cycles outlined.

Findings

Cycle 1: Planning as a stability dialectic between continuity versus reformation

The unit was informed that female officers were joining its infantry course in early 2019, but the instructors had anticipated this as the government changed its policy a few years before that (doc12). Although the training officers expected the change to happen, no one knew what integrating female infantry officers entailed because it was uncharted territory. Throughout 2019, and before the start of the mixed-gender course, there were many conversations between the routine participants (training officers, students, and staff), which showed conflicting opinions and attitudes towards the expected changes: While some opposed the idea of any

modifications, others supported a reasonable set of adjustments. In these conversations, we also noticed the pressure from the higher echelons to accommodate the first women through GCT. These intense societal, political, and ethical pressures to integrate female officer trainees unsettled the existing routines (truces) since actors were suddenly focused on perceived 'differences' and potential 'incompatibilities', experiencing a growing need for 'accommodating ambiguity'. Because despite the anticipated disruption it could cause, no detailed guidance was provided to the training design team, thus leaving much ambiguity in place (fn/Jun-Dec/2019).

As a result, the training team began to plan for unknown changes before the first female student was nominated. Liam[3], a Training Officer, recalled that:

> Information was already out there, already in place politically, from the top of the Armed Forces. So, when I arrived [as this job], we knew we would be dealing with women in ground close combat. So, we were gearing ourselves for the arrival of the first woman (int05).

With that information in hand, the training design team, consisting of training officers and infantry officers, gathered several times to "imagine" what the syllabus (training routines) would need to look like to accommodate the new arrivals (doc33-39). The dilemma of integrating female recruits with different needs and abilities generated a lot of ambivalence. The composition of the team did not help this. Edd, a Training Officer, noticed that in the initial meeting, all attendees were men, confronting many unknowns.

> I was actually at the meeting where we were talking about 'what do women need on this course', but I looked around at the meeting, and there was a bunch of middle-aged men. And we know from Military Policy that 'if you have women in training, you should have a woman's voice'. So, we set up a Women's Advisory Panel of female officers and sergeants/corporals across the base to give us advice (int09).

[3] To maintain anonymity, all the names included in this paper are pseudonyms.

The team set out to discuss what changes they believed needed to happen and carried out an estimated training needs analysis and a detailed syllabus review. They examined the challenges in two main areas: the course content (lessons, assessments, schedule, etc.) and the welfare of the officer trainees (accommodation, support, mentoring, etc.). A dialectical tension between continuity versus reformation underpinned the process. On the one hand, the team recognized that they had to make changes to accommodate female recruits. On the other hand, they needed to preserve the integrity of routines and all they stood for. For example, participants were committed to a guiding principle that introducing the new officer trainees should not have a detrimental effect on the prestige of the course and the infantry officers. Andy, an infantry officer, explained that maintaining standards was a concern from the onset:

> There was almost this view: let's not bend ourselves out of shape, let's not put too much of a focus because we also don't want them [women] to be anything special. We wanted them to earn their infantry badges[4] the same way as everyone else … It was sort of a G.I. Jane scenario: if you want to join the infantry, you have to meet the standard, and it is this. There was no dilution of the standards (int03).

Nathan, another infantry officer, also shared Andy's view. In an interview, Nathan was vocal in debunking anecdotal accounts within the unit that standards had been lowered – he was talking about how the course should be the same with or without the women. He was emphatic in pointing out that if there was to be a place for women, the training design team were not willing to lower the standards to qualify for the infantry badge (int02).

Liam, from the course design team, explained that the final decision, while lacking consensus, was made by the team lead. While this decision was informed by research and discussions with the Women's Advisory Panel, it was still based on what the team imagined was needed and appropriate because there were no precedents (fn22/Aug/19).

[4] The infantry badge is a patch worn by infantry-trained personnel. It signals (to those within and outside the infantry) that the person has passed the arduous infantry course and is a symbol of pride.

After extended discussions about how the course might need to be reformed, causing some consternation, it was eventually decided that the structure, format and marking criteria should remain the same. As Liam explained:

> From instructional/course design, there were no changes at the end; I know it sounds quite surprising, but there were some [academic] studies done about women going to the US Marine Corps, (…) the impact of certain kit on women, the impact of jumping out of helicopters on their hips, and these are the sort of things that the Army had been looking (int05).

Edd, a Training Officer, confirmed this account, noting that some within the training design team wanted to change the course (pre-course) format, but they could not justify the changes as the data did not suggest the need to alter the course structure (doc42). Interestingly, Edd also observed that some colleagues from the infantry emphasised that Infantry Officer Training should remain the same for a man or a woman. The need for equal treatment of all students counteracted notions to change the syllabus to accommodate female officer trainees:

> There was nothing clearly identified that said women can or can't do, and therefore, you need to change that and here is the scientific proof. (…) We were going to give women a longer beat-up programme before they joined the Army and sort of say to them: 'Look, you need to start [physical] training a lot earlier on'. But the attitude of the infantry was: 'Look, we are not doing that for the guys, so we shouldn't do it for the women; they know the standard, they know it is going to be tough, so they need to be at the standard we need (int09).

The team also looked at whether changes were needed from a 'welfare' perspective. They looked at the accommodation, instructors, access to support groups, medical cover and even whether they needed to load female students in pairs rather than as individuals (doc23). Kate (Training Officer) recalls how this sparked some heated conversations with differing views. One example, she recounted, involved a proposed change to the accommodation block:

> There were several discussions about building partitions within the accommodation block to allow women to have separate areas. Also, to have a Corporal [supervisor] in the corridor to stop the guys and the girls mixing (int12).

Some officers felt it was imperative to have dedicated living spaces for the women. However, this proposal was dismissed after much debate based on a lesson learned in 2019. Kate explained that a female trainee (not an officer) had attempted to join the infantry (as a soldier) but withdrew before graduating. In an interview, the trainee said that the separate blocks were one of the main reasons she left the course: she felt excluded from the group (all men) not because of her gender but because the separate living areas prevented her from socialising and fully integrating with the cohort. So, for the mixed-gender officer course, the training team believed it was better to keep all participants in the same accommodation block.

Kate also described the consensual decision to establish a new medical policy for female candidates, providing specific medical support to minimise the risk of injury from carrying excessive loads during their training, which was included in the Army's Policy (doc05). Similarly, they agreed that having female instructors as part of the course delivery team (teaching) would be a good idea. Facing the challenge of not having any GCT-trained women in the Army, the course designers attempted to bring in an infantry-trained Exchange Officer from an allied nation. However, when this option was deemed unfeasible, they transferred an Army female instructor with a tactical policing background so she could be part of the instructing cadre (obn6/June/19).

The team also opted to create a Women's Advisory Panel, which became a support group for the female students as they envisaged this would be useful for the newly joined officer trainees. Kate added that, although this welfare change was introduced and remained in place during the mixed-gender course, the initiative was not utilised as "the only two female students at the time had no demand" (int12).

The last discussion regarding female students' welfare concerned how to load the course. Some in the training design team believed it would be better to load women in pairs, while others argued that this policy was unnecessary (doc13). Liam explained that a final policy

decision was postponed during our data collection period because two female candidates applied for the same course iteration. Nonetheless, Liam reflects on the discussions held:

> Another consideration we had was, do we let one woman through if she doesn't have another woman to team up with, or do you wait and wait for there to be two or three female applicants and then put them through together? But then you risk losing one because she goes – 'I don't want to hang around and wait until another woman joins up, and I am happy to start with a bunch of guys' (int05).

To summarise, the infantry and training officers had to use their experience of an all-man environment to envision the required changes for integrating female infantry officer trainees (and later officers) in the Corps. Accordingly, they began preparing and envisaging what they believed would be appropriate changes. As a member of the design team explained:

> We had this mandate but didn't know how to integrate women into the infantry, so we did as much as we could to prepare for it beforehand and just accepted that we would need to adjust things once the mixed-gender course started (int 16).

As this quote illustrates, in this anticipatory stage, the infantry and training officers had to imagine how women would need to be accommodated, forcing them to wrestle with the need for continuity and change. Although many changes were considered, relatively minor changes were enacted (e.g., adding female instructors and having dedicated medical support), curtailed by a strong desire to protect and maintain the standards of the male-only course. Consequently, the course structure and physical standards remained unchanged, while minor changes were made to welfare policies and practices. However, training officers recognized that these 'tentative truces' to enable integration were not yet fully worked out or tested in practice.

Cycle 2: Enacting as an integrative dialectic between accommodation versus resistance

The mixed-gender course started in February 2020 with 34 personnel: 32 men and 2 women. For the first time, training officers and male and female trainees now started to interact and enact the training routines, playing their roles. Kate, one of the Training Officers involved in the design phase, anticipated that some changes would have been made whilst in the field:

> Any changes that were made would have been at the tactical level; as in like, when delivering a lesson or organising, you might need to order more ablutions. Or rather than saying go for a piss in the bush, you might go, ok, we needed to buy some she-wees type of thing. Nothing of it happened at the training design level or a planning level (int12).

On the first day of the course, the training staff met the students and gave them an introductory brief about their accommodation (fn9/Feb/20). The students were accommodated in single rooms, but the toilets/showers were shared (there were 4 shower/toilet blocks, each with 2 toilets and 2 showers). The brief started with a tour of the building, including the ablutions (blocks with washing facilities and toilets). At this point, one of the training staff briefed the students and one of the instructors improvised; he suggested dedicated showers/toilets for the female trainees.

> Staff: "These are your ablution blocks, and I expect them to be kept at a good standard. We have cleaners that come in to tidy it up, but they are not your mothers, so use the brushes, don't leave any skid marks and keep it clean – is that understood?"
>
> Students respond: "Roger."
>
> Staff: "There are four ablution blocks, so this one is reserved for you two (pointing at the two female students); so, all you guys to use the other three. Any dramas or issues, just let me know (fn9/Feb/20).

The brief lasted 10 minutes as the staff covered fire and safety points, room allocations and housekeeping rules (cleanliness and hygiene standards). After the staff finished and left the accommodation block, one of the two women turned to the other students and said:

> Guys, just letting you know that Helen and I don't need an ablution block for ourselves, so forget about all that. The toilets have doors, and the showers have curtains so everyone can use whichever block they want. So bottom line is that we don't care (fn9/feb/20).

The above exchange exemplifies how the core dialectic shifted to an integrative dialectic between accommodation (improvisational adjustments) and resistance (forget about all that). Training staff had made a perceived (over) adjustment to the routine, which the female trainees immediately resisted, signalling to staff and students that the routine adjustment was

unnecessary; we are all the same. Throughout the remainder of the course (6 months), as the training routines were enacted, all ablution blocks were used by all the students, regardless of gender. Gary (a student on the course) saw this with positive eyes and said that he thinks that "they don't want to be female infantry officers; they just want to be infantry officers" (int08).

The rest of week 1 was spent on the base; every day was filled with briefs, lessons, kitting, and physical training sessions. The students were free on most of the evenings to socialise and rest. The syllabus was the same as it had been in the previous iteration of the infantry officer course with no differences at all (obn14/Feb/20).

The cohort deployed to the field for weeks 2 and 3 of the course (fn17/Feb/20). The 'field' means moving the staff and students to a large unbuilt (forested/rural) military training area (120 km^2 in this case) as a unit to simulate a deployment to a combat. The intent is to have an area where soldiering skills can be taught and tested, as shown in pictures 1 and 2 below.

Insert Picture 1&2 here

When in the field, the students operated in sub-units (Fire Teams of 4 and Sections of 8), which made up a platoon (up to 30 soldiers) and were given a series of tasks such as reconnaissance patrols or defending a position from enemy forces (doc06). The team took full equipment (including weapons, ammunition, food, and clothing) to survive for two weeks in austere conditions. They lived and operated together under 'shelter sheets,' which is a rustic personal military shelter similar to an open tent. This included managing their personal hygiene, such as using toilets, getting dressed, and washing themselves.

On the first day in the field, the students were taught how to set up their living space (fn18/feb/20). They were taught how to dig a shell scrape, how to camouflage it, how to set up

a shelter sheet, where to lay the equipment, and also about personal hygiene routines. At this point, the training staff improvised once again and suggested what they imagined was appropriate for the women on the course:

> Troops, looking after yourselves in the field is the most important part of the job; if you go down, then your soldiers will have lost their commander and will need to look after you as a casualty. So, stay on top of it! When you get up, the first thing you want to do is get some water boiling to heat your food and make some coffee. Whilst that is happening, start packing the kit you don't need, like your sleeping bags, mats, and your warm kit. (…) When you have eaten, use the hot water for shaving and washing yourselves. Helen, Louise, if you want, just go to another area (pointing to another corner of the wooded area) so you two can have a bit more privacy to get changed and washed. Guys, you all stay together (fn17/Feb/20).

Here, we see another improvisational adjustment and the core dialectic between routine accommodations and routine resistance being worked out as female trainees resist perceived over-adjustments. Once the students were given the order to head back to camp to get some sleep, the women completely ignored the option to find a more private area and, as part of the group, just washed and got changed with the unit; no one from the group paid much attention to this and just carried on with their tasks. Five hours later, as the group woke up to restart their patrols, the same scene took place; everyone conducted personal hygiene (including getting changed) as a group, and there was no separation based on gender (fn20-21/Feb/20). By passively resisting routine over-adjustments, the women's symbolic actions created experiential truces that encouraged the routine participants to look past differences. When asked about his thoughts on it, Stuart (a student on the course) reflected that:

> Fair play to them [the women]. They just want to be part of the infantry like me or any of the guys out here. They don't want to be any different, so they're doing exactly the same things that we are. We eat, live and patrol together, and they're with us; we're all soldiers out here (int07).

The rest of the week continued, and the course remained as it had been on its previous (all-male) iterations. Everyone was carrying the same loads, and the group was conducting the

same type of patrols and covering the same distances. This was the same for the physical training sessions led by a female instructor, using the same standards for all the participants. Lawrence, one of the students on the course, recalled that:

> The Physical Training Instructors were obviously doing the fitness sessions, and they're quite strict; you have people like Gemma [the instructor] who were there, and if she can do it, everyone should be able to do it. She maintained that standard very professionally to encourage people, and the girls were not treated any differently (int04).

The course continued following the same format that it had previously. However, we did observe that, compared to the all-male course in 2019, the mixed-gender version in 2020 was getting a lot more visits from the Army's media team (obn8-21/mar/20). We saw that GCT was much more frequent in the Army's social media platforms than in the previous year; we also noted that the women on the course were present (often on the forefront) in almost all pictures posted (pics180-190). Although this is unrelated to the course format, we found it relevant as it created tension; the male trainees felt they were given less importance, while the female students felt they were being positively discriminated. This can also be interpreted as another instance of staff over-modifying the routines, which female trainees resisted because it implicitly portrayed them as different, unsettling the truces created through performances in the field. One of the female students formally requested the leadership of the course to stop portraying them (Helen and Louise) in those pictures and said she did not want to be on any media posts. She said she did not "understand" the big fuss about them being in the infantry and that she disliked the attention she perceived to be getting from the Army – she did not want to be a female infantry officer, just an infantry officer (fn9/July/20).

In summary, training officers made several "improvisational adjustments" to the training routines, which female officer trainees resisted, signalling a desire to be treated the same. Similarly, the Army Media team's heightened attention, which was different from the usual training routines, was resisted because it marked female trainees as different. To the surprise

of the training staff, planned welfare changes were not taken up by female officer trainees because they implied privileges for female officer trainees (e.g., using the Women's Advisory Panel as a support group). This dialectic between accommodation and resistance, therefore, enabled experiential (implicit) truces to be constructed as perceived over adjustments were negotiated in action, allowing participants to work through perceived differences.

Cycle 3: Fine-tuning as a dialectic between modify versus preserve

As the course progressed throughout the summer, the experiential truces were further refined through mutual customizations and subtle adjustments to language and patterns of action. The instructors delivered the lessons and tested the students, who were, in turn, trying to absorb and demonstrate the skills they had acquired. While the routine participants had gone a long way to overcome perceived differences and establish working truces, subtle tensions (e.g., between modifying and preserving routine performances) continued to arise, which were worked out through micro-adjustments in daily enactments.

One example of these routine calibrations was the language used by the instructors when addressing the students. In the all-male edition of GCT, they usually referred to the group as 'guys' and, when irritated with the cohort, it was common to use the derogatory word 'c*#t' to express their frustration. This language was still used by the instructors of the mixed-gender course (especially in the first month), but there was an active effort by the training staff to correct their choice of words – the language was notably more gender neutral by the end of the course (fn10/mar/20). Dom (a student) recalled that:

> It was funny to see Sgt Duff [Josh, one of the instructors] struggling with his words at the beginning. On one of the first briefs, he started off by saying, 'right guys… [and as his eyes caught Helen and Louise].. huh… guys and ladies… err… ladies & gents… ahh f*#k it – you know what I mean and just don't get offended'. As he had started to speak to us and noticed the girls, he began to stutter and just couldn't pick his words.
>
> This happened quite often in the first month when they'd just say 'guys' to address us all but, more and more, attempted to change and use 'troops' instead. I don't think that the girls or anyone else cared, but, slowly, we [the students] also began to use 'troops' rather than 'guys' (int06).

However, this gradual and effortful adoption of a gender-neutral language was not as smooth as one could have imagined. The use of expletives (e.g., f*#k) remained commonplace during GCT as it was in the infantry, and some of the expressions used caused a bit of tension between the new routine participants and their male counterparts:

> The instructors swore at us on a regular basis during the six months of the course… It's very common in the infantry, and no one [including the women] cared about it; it's just how we spoke. But, in the first month, Helen did create a bit of a scene when the Sgt called us 'c*#ts' repeatedly during a lesson in the field – she called him out and explained she hated that word... The instructor took the criticism on board and apologised before continuing the lesson.
>
> After that episode, we [the male students and instructors] were all actively trying to avoid using the word 'c*#ts', and I think the girls acknowledged that effort. So, if someone had a slip and used that word when addressing someone when tired and wet, no one seemed to be offended, and even Helen seemed to accept it had not been intentional (int10).

This process of adapting language required time and effort to reach a "working consensus". There was a noticeable attempt by everyone to negotiate changes and a difference in the choice of words used at the beginning and the end of the course; 'lads', 'gents', or 'guys' often became 'troops', 'all' and whilst swearing remained usual during the course, the use of certain gendered words diminished considerably. And it wasn't just the instructors and male students changing how they spoke; the women (Helen and Louise) also changed their vocabulary and adopted infantry expressions to 'fit in' with the group and preserve the status quo. So, they also swore more as the course progressed and would use GCT expressions such as 'scoff' when referring to 'food', 'doss bag' for 'sleeping bag', 'faff' for 'wasting time', 'jack' for 'selfish/lazy', 'rig' for 'uniform' and so on (obn18-27/Feb&May/20).

Similar routine calibrations ('mutual customizations') were also evident in the group's behaviour in the field. Before every patrol tasking, for instance, the group had to assign roles, including who would carry the machine gun – this wasn't a popular choice as that weapon system, and its ammunition is twice as heavy as the rifle – but, from the very beginning, Helen was always a volunteer for the task which in turn impressed the men and the instructors

(fn3/mar/20). Ryan (a student) recalled that this was not always the case for Louise, and, on a couple of occasions, he 'called her out' in front of the group, saying she was being lazy by avoiding the machine gun – he said she was upset with him but eventually started to join in that role (int11). Thus, latent conflicts were surfaced, worked through, and settled through daily performances and adaptive responses.

Another example from the field was casualty extractions, where performances shifted perceptions. A patrol usually ended with a simulated firefight and a casualty that needed to be extracted to a safe location – this was to test the students' ability to send reports over the radio, to administer first aid but also to test their resilience as carrying a casualty on a stretcher is arduous. When interviewed, Dom (int06) explained that Helen and Louise would 'jump' on the stretchers like everyone else and sometimes help extract a heavy casualty for a mile or two; Dom reiterated that seeing this changed his initial opinion about the women and that, from then on, he did not see them as women but as GCT students. Interestingly, when talking about the same experience, Lawrence (a student who had failed his first attempt at GCT in an all-male edition) said the instructors were a bit more lenient during the casualty extractions, revealing how latent tensions still existed among some despite the effortful truce-making.

> Yeah, I think the casualty extractions were a bit easier on this [mixed gender] GCT… I think the instructors appreciated that Helen and Louise were working hard and, as a result, kept the distances a bit shorter to avoid licking us out (int04).

However, he (Lawrence) also talked about a change in how Louise delivered orders in the field. A 'set of orders' is a standardised process by which a GCT officer briefs the soldiers about the location, objectives and plans for a given patrol and is usually delivered over the course of two hours – the content follows a 'field manual' and can be dull at times; getting the soldiers to pay attention is not always easy. Lawrence (int04) said that, in her first attempt, Louise struggled to keep the guys' attention as she did not speak as loud nor showed as much aggression as some of the male students. Louise complained to the guys, but in her second

attempt, the men ignored her protests and still talked whilst she delivered orders. The guys were then shocked when she, whilst delivering orders for the third time, just stopped, swore and snapped at the group, saying they were 'd*#s' – her tone commanded the attention and the respect of the male students who, from then on, paid more respect when she was speaking. Such situated adjustments were part of a suite of routine calibrations that forged a truce.

In summary, truces were refined through fine-grained, subtle, often inconspicuous acts – what we labelled "mutual customizations." The need to preserve and modify routine enactments surfaced several latent tensions – e.g. relating to language, performances, and misunderstandings – which were ironed out through micro-adjustments and routine calibrations. Over time, meanings coalesced into implicit truces that enabled routine participants to perform the routines[5]. Seen together, the truce reformulations outlined meant that oppositional struggles diminished as new syntheses created working consensuses.

Discussion

We began our study with the goal of understanding how organizations integrate historically excluded groups into long-established routines and the work involved in negotiating resultant tensions. Integrating excluded groups in organizations is an important and complex challenge, yet we lack a full understanding of how these processes unfold in the daily enactments of organizational routines (Brewis, 2019; Tyler & Vachhani, 2021). To solve this theoretical puzzle, we focused on the oppositional forces and adaptive responses that enabled a new group of actors to be integrated into established routines. Prior work signals that integrating historically excluded social groups directs attention to the problem of "organizing difference" (Brewis, 2019, p. 94) and "responding to difference" (Tyler & Vachhani, 2021), which

[5] Of the 34 students started the course, 13, including Helen and Louise, graduated in August 2020, earning their infantry badges and officially becoming part of the Corps; Helen was awarded the top-student prize on the course.

manifests ambiguity, dialectics, and truce (re)negotiations. While the routine dynamics literature offers some rudimentary insight into the challenges of integrating 'new routines' that are perceived to be a poor cultural fit for the adopting organization (Bertels et al., 2016), we know little about the dynamics involved in integrating new routine participants.

Our revelatory case improves understanding of a dynamic conceptualization of truce-making in organizational routines adaptation. Our study reveals how the process of truce reformation evolves through three dialectical cycles where tentative truces (reasoned accommodations), experimental truces (improvisational adjustments), and enactment truces (mutual customization) are gradually negotiated through adaptive responses (Figure 2). As different routine participants strive for change and continuity, they simultaneously stretch the routines (expansion) and pull back towards stability (contraction), creating a dialectical dance where intense labour goes into 'staying the same'.

Insert Figure 2 here

Theoretical implications

Our study makes three important contributions. First, our dialectical perspective of truce-making extends the literature on routine dynamics and routines-as-truces (D'Adderio & Safavi, 2021; Kho et al., 2019; Salvato and Rerup, 2018). We reveal and build theory on the intricate processes that unfold when organizations seek to integrate historically excluded groups into their routines. We know from the extant literature that organizational actors often redesign and change routines enactment to adapt to evolving societal settings (Harrison, 2015; Feldman, 2016; Ladge, Clair, & Greenberg, 2012). We also know that, despite the will to adapt, routine participants tend to protect and preserve the norms and practices which are generally accepted and help to define their understanding of how work needs to be done in and around their

organization (Birnholtz et al., 2007). Routines, as generative systems, provide a dynamism which, on the one hand, can assist in addressing novel situations (Feldman & Pentland, 2003; Pentland & Rueter, 1994) but, on the other hand, can result in alteration in performances and action patterning. Organizations endeavour to adapt by converting their responses to the unknown into actions congruent with their understandings (Birnholtz et al., 2007; Weick, 1995; Turner & Rindova, 2012). Our analysis reveals how integrating a new group into established routines involves complex adaptive actions and truce-making negotiations as people 'work out' perceived differences in action.

Routine dynamics researchers have expanded the analysis of organizational conflicts by exploring 'performative struggles' within routine dynamics (D'Adderio, 2014; Kho et al., 2019). These struggles demonstrate how conflicts during routine adaptation can escalate, resulting in a shift in truce reliance from one routine iteration to another. The literature is therefore evolving from viewing truces as *conflict resolution outcomes* to understanding them as *dynamic processes* involving compromises and the formation of new truces (Salvato & Rerup, 2018; Zbaracki & Bergen, 2010). We build theory on these dynamic processes that unfold when organizations seek to integrate historically excluded groups, extending work that, with very few exceptions (e.g., D'Adderio 2014, Salvato and Rerup, 2018), has black-boxed situated, longitudinal truce-making processes. Instead of discarding established action patterning or turning tensions into overt conflicts that break down the routines, our findings reveal that the organizational actors exert additional – sometimes inconspicuous – work in managing perceived mismatches between extant performances and requisite adjustments, as they manifest in unfolding action. In this way, our findings also add to the conceptualization of stability in routines as effortful accomplishments (Pentland & Rueter, 1994). We show that organizational actors respond to tensions by taking adaptive actions that, without breaking the

truce, “create junctures between individuals supporting conflicting goals, thereby embracing conflict and keeping the truce balanced, flexible, and alive” (Salvato & Rerup, 2018, p.202).

Second, our study creates a bridge between routines research and dialectics, opening up new avenues for researching complex organizational challenges. Moving away from and complementing the dominant political and punctuated characterization of group tensions and oppositions (Leonardi et al., 2009; Gibbs, 2009; Kreiner et al., 2015), and through a more dynamic conceptualization of truce-making in organizations, we highlight processes through which organizational members work out the perceived differences in practice. Prior studies have adopted a dialectic lens to study socialization (Leonardi et al., 2009), group interaction (Gibbs, 2009), identity tensions (Kreiner et al., 2015), and learning processes (Raisch et al., 2018). Yet, the literature has not yet engaged the process-based conceptualization of routines as dynamic truces where conflict is not suppressed or eliminated but is embraced in daily enactments of organizational routines. By demonstrating the dialectical interplay that unfolds as an ongoing process during routines enactment (Clegg & Cunha, 2017) as participating actors act and react, diverge and converge, resist and accommodate, and gradually learn to transcend perceived differences (Raisch et al., 2018), we extend understanding of micro-strategies and processes through which organizational members reach working consensus to get things done in and around the organization. Our study thus illuminates how confronting oppositions can be generative for organizational routine adaptation and provides a novel theoretical basis for future research to explore further how actors reformulate truces in other settings involving group tensions, struggles, and oppositions.

Finally, we extend work on inclusion in organizations by providing a new dialectical understanding of integration. We know that modern organizations face the complex challenge of coordinating everyday activities with the continuous introduction of new norms and values (Okhuysen & Bechky, 2009). Pressures to include historically excluded groups only increase

as organizations seek to become more socially or ethically responsible. The social pressure to integrate all people regardless of their identities, abilities, or interests is stronger than ever (Adamson et al., 2021; Ainsworth et al., 2014; Ferdman, 2017; Kangas-Muller et al., 2023; Karazi-Presler, 2020; Ladge et al., 2012). Daily organizational routines, hence, need to be redesigned and enacted somehow differently to accommodate new participants. Some of these changes are merely structural, but others require questioning current organisational norms and accepted practices. As a result, incumbents may think their organizational identity will be threatened in the process (Kreiner et al., 2015). While organizations must avoid mistaking these novel conditions as instances for using repetitive familiar responses (Birnholtz et al., 2007; Omidvar et al., 2022; Turner & Fern, 2012), they must also turn constant novelty into actionable similarity to guarantee stability and performance (Weick, 1995; Turner & Rindova, 2012). Our research shows that routines, as effortful accomplishments, can provide the dynamism needed to address such novel and complex situations (Feldman, 2000; Feldman & Pentland, 2003). While it is not feasible to plan everything up front, e.g., through designing roles, SOPs, formal schedules, or algorithms to control performances (Dittrich & Seidl, 2018; Omidvar et al., 2022; Zbaracki & Bergen, 2010), embracing and leveraging the dynamism in enacting daily routines can provide a safe route to manage rising tensions and to accommodate power conflicts in integrating historically excluded groups, with stability and recognisability guaranteed in the performance of established routines (Howard-Grenville, 2005; Turner & Fern, 2012).

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Figures

Figure 1. The Infantry Officer Course

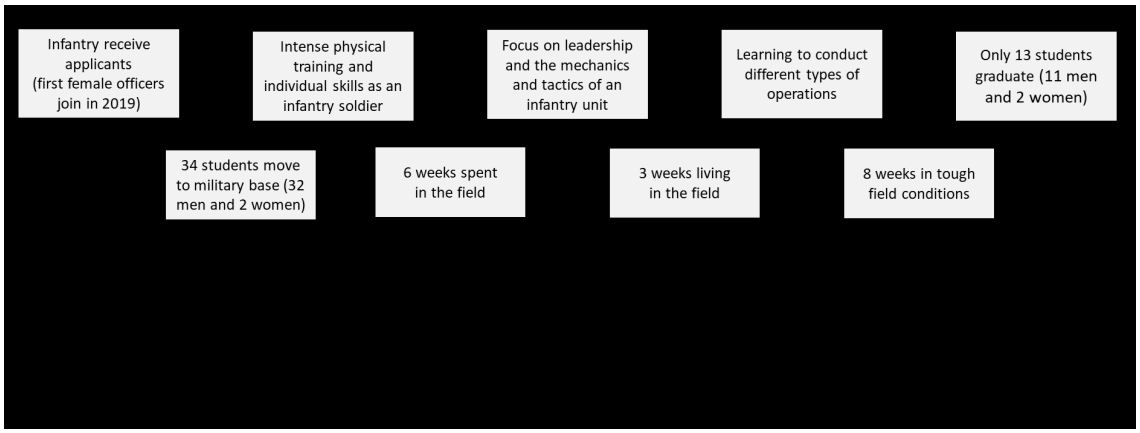
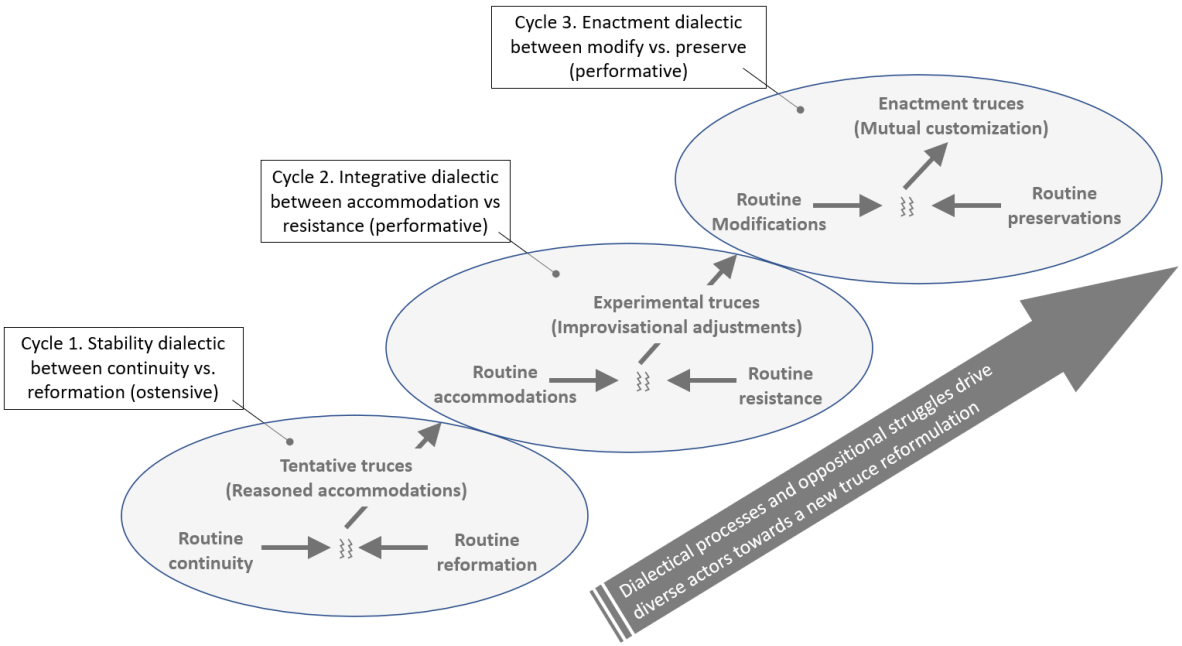


Figure 2. The process of truce reformulation when integrating a different group into a routine



Tables

Table 1. Overview of the data

Data Collection Methods	All-male course	Mixed-gender course
Participant Observation (obn)	186 days of participant observation, including classroom and fieldwork	Three weeks of observation (classroom and social settings)
Field Notes (fn)	56 pages of personal diary taken during the all-male course	12 pages of notes from conversations held with routine participants during the course
Secondary Documents (doc)	More than 150 pages of internal document analysis	33 pages of internal document analysis
Pictures/Videos (pic)	177 photographs/videos	13 photographs/videos
Interviews (int)	5 interviews with participants that were present during the all-male *and* the mixed-gender course	11 semi-structured interviews with participants from the mixed-gender course.

Pictures

Picture 1: Patrol

Source: Fist Author

Picture 2: Simulating a fight with enemy forces

Source: Fist Author