Handelshøyskolen BI

MAN 51971 Multikulturell ledelse

Term paper 60% - W

Predefinert informasjon

Startdato:	21-09-2022 09:00 CEST	**Termin:**	202310
Sluttdato:	27-06-2023 12:00 CEST	**Vurderingsform:**	Norsk 6-trinns skala (A-F)
Eksamensform:	P		
Flowkode:	202310||10091||IN09||W||P		
Intern sensor:	(Anonymisert)		

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Informasjon fra deltaker

Tittel *:	Term paper - Multicultural Leadership		
Navn på veileder *:	Sut I Wong		
Inneholder besvarelsen konfidensielt materiale?:	Nei	**Kan besvarelsen offentliggjøres?:**	Ja

Gruppe

Gruppenavn:	(Anonymisert)
Gruppenummer:	2
Andre medlemmer i gruppen:	Deltakeren har innlevert i en enkeltmannsgruppe

Multicultural Leadership

Module Assignment 1

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Hand-in date:

27.06.2023

Campus:

BI Oslo

Examination code and name:

MAN 5199 Multicultural Leadership

Program:

Executive Master of Management

Mini Case – Differences at Work

Based on Agerström et al. (2009) article, how would you apply to this case to classify the prejudice and hostile remark during the conversation – explicit or implicit prejudice?

The Agerström et al. (2009) article describes the implicit and explicit prejudice within the Swedish workplace, especially in regards to Arab-Muslims vs. Swedes. Through IAT tests it uncovers a large deviation between the explicit biases the participants admitted to, and their implicit biases, showing that we are not aware of how our own implicit bias can impact our actions and decisions. Sameer, an Indian-Muslim, was well within his right to react when a coworker made a horrible remark, expressing they wished an earthquake would strike the Gaza strip, after the news reported on a Hamas attack and an earthquake in some other part of the world.

Implicit prejudice refers to the attitudes and stereotypes that affect our actions, decisions, and understanding in an unconscious manner. This means that people may not be aware that they hold certain biases and prejudices towards a particular individual or group. These attitudes and stereotypes are often formed through cultural and societal norms and are deeply ingrained in people's subconscious. Implicit prejudice can manifest in various ways, including microaggressions, negative attitudes, and discrimination. Explicit prejudice refers to conscious and intentional negative beliefs and behaviors towards an individual or group. It is characterized by the open expression of biased opinions and discriminatory actions. Explicit prejudice is often based on preconceived notions and stereotypes about certain individuals or groups, and can lead to acts of discrimination and harassment. (Nelson, 2009)

In my opinion this remark would be explicit prejudice, as it is so blatant and overt, and based on what I would assume is a conscious contempt of Palestinians, and/or Arab-Muslims.

For example, some coworkers may have found the joke unfunny but chose to conform to group thinking and mimic others' reactions. Additionally, because the email came from a company leader, the coworkers may have felt pressure to conform to the company culture. The fact that coworkers and leaders feel

comfortable communicating offensive remarks and jokes suggests that they assume Sameer is "one of them" and not sensitive to religious and cultural attacks. They may assume that Sameer's loyalty to the group is higher than his loyalty to his own identity.

Based on the reading in this module, which possible consequences can tolerating such prejudice and hostile comments in the workplace, have for the whole organization?

Religious identity is a crucial aspect of workplace diversity that goes beyond surface-level differences like age or ethnicity. A key aspect of diversity is the desire for individuals to express their internal values through external actions, but workplace behavior and practice can create challenges for this expression of an authentic self. (Héliot et al., 2020)

When Sameer was given the job, he was open about his religious identity, and he felt that the workplace recognized and was supportive of his religious needs. After the attack however, the workplace communicated in a way that did not recognize his religious identity, which in turn worked towards alienating him.

Several studies, including Kutcher et al. (2010), and Héliot et al. (2020), have shown the beneficial effects of having an HR strategy that allows for religious diversity and connecting employee's values with those of the company. When the opposite is the case, the workplace stands to lose, not gain.

Tolerating prejudice and hostile comments can have severe consequences for the workplace. These include a decrease in employee engagement and job satisfaction, as employees who experience or witness such behavior may feel alienated and disconnected from their work. This can also lead to an increase in employee turnover, as those who feel unsupported or discriminated against may choose to leave the organization. A negative work environment can also decrease productivity and hinder collaboration among employees. Additionally, tolerating such behavior can discourage employees from diverse backgrounds from joining the organization or feeling included, leading to a less diverse and inclusive workforce. Furthermore, the organization may be exposed to legal and

reputational risks, such as discrimination lawsuits and damage to the company's brand and image, both of which can result in large financial losses.

Considering the case and the research findings on implicit prejudice, what should Sameer do and what should the organization as a whole do?

I empathize with Sameer's predicament of needing a positive reference while not wanting to risk his future opportunities. However, the remarks made by his coworkers and the founder's email are unacceptable and have no place in a workplace environment. If these behaviors continue, it is likely that the company culture will deteriorate further and eventually be exposed. This could lead Sameer to face questions later on, about his decision to work there, and whether he was complacent or a part of the problematic culture. As such, it is important, both for his current role, and future career, that he addresses this issue.

The study by Héliot et al. (2020), indicates that respect and tolerance are crucial in reducing conflicts related to the expression of religious identity in the workplace. Tolerance is defined as accepting without prejudice, while respect is taking an active stand regarding interpersonal treatment. The study shows that organizational practices can promote both respect and tolerance, which are important consequences of diversity management. Conflicts between religious and occupational identities can adversely affect individual well-being and contributions at work. However, insufficient effort to create a tolerant and psychologically safe community for all employees can lead to faultlines based on religion. Attempts to exclude religious identity from the workplace are not an effective approach to diversity management. Strategies for optimal management of religious identity and diversity are necessary to address potential conflicts and concerns. (Héliot et al., 2020)

I highly recommend that Sameer address the issue with his coworkers and the founder, but in a manner that is respectful and non-confrontational, and highlight how their remarks made him feel. It is likely that they have not considered the impact of their actions on other employees, and the seriousness of allowing prejudice and hostile comments. Sameer should emphasize the importance of tolerance and respect in the workplace.

Further the company should implement bias and diversity training. This type of training can provide employees with a better understanding of what bias is and how it can affect their behavior towards others in the workplace. By raising awareness of these issues, employees may become more aware of any implicit biases they may hold and how these biases can influence their interactions with coworkers.

Training can help highlight the harmful effects of prejudice and discrimination, and the importance of promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace, and provide employees with tools and strategies for addressing and preventing discrimination and bias.

Furthermore, employees should be encouraged to speak up about any prejudice or discrimination they witness in the workplace. Creating an environment where employees feel safe and supported in speaking up can help to identify and address issues before they escalate. Encouraging an open dialogue and active listening can help to build trust between employees and foster a culture of respect and inclusivity.

Case – Kirkens Bymisjon

Jeg skal her se nærmere på, og diskutere, Kirkens Bymisjon, en organisasjon med klar kristen religiøs identitet, og hvilke utfordringer de møter både i sin eksterne og interne merkevare og identitet, og hvordan de kan fremme seg selv som en arbeidsplass og organisasjon som er åpen for alle trosretninger og kulturer, samtidig som de opprettholder sin religiøse forankring.

Kirkens Bymisjon ble stiftet i 1855 og er en ideell organisasjon som driver sosialt arbeid gjennom virksomheter, tiltak og institusjoner, og er til stede i om lag 50 byer og steder i Norge. Organisasjonen har ca. 1800 ansatte og 4500 frivillige, og består av 12 frittstående stiftelser. Kirkens Bymisjon er en selvstendig organisasjon, men er tilknyttet Den Norske Kirke, og har en kristen humanistisk verdiforankring.

De definerer sitt formål som å «fremme diakonale tiltak som bidrar til å virkeliggjøre kirkens oppdrag». (Kirkens Bymisjon, 2020) Diakoni betyr «tjeneste», og Kirkens Bymisjon ble startet da Kirken så behovet for et «bakkemannskap» som kunne påta seg å utføre kirkens diakonale oppdrag.

Kirkens Bymisjons skriver at de arbeider «for, med og blant byens mennesker, særlig de svakest stilte» (Kirkens Bymisjon, 2017). De har et stort mangfold av arbeidsfelt, og er synlige i mange byrom og innenfor mange samfunnslag, og har et omfattende samarbeid med offentlige helse- og sosialmyndigheter.

Gjennom arbeidsfeltet Gatenært, tilbyr de hjelpeapparat for ulike behov, deriblant akuttovernatting til bostedsløse tilreisende og kvinner i rus og prostitusjon, gratis helsehjelp til papirløse migranter og rusavhengige i gatemiljøene, beskyttelse og rådgivning for menn og kvinner i prostitusjon og ofre for menneskehandel, og juridisk og økonomisk veiledning. De har også en rekke frivillighetssentraler som bistår med ledsagertjenester, språktrening, økonomisk rådgivning, rus problematikk m.m. Kirkens Bymisjon driver også et bredt tilbud for barn og unge, som inkluderer både korte lavterskeltilbud og ferieaktiviteter i nærmiljøene, og langvarig omsorgsansvar og oppfølging i samsvar med barnevernet. De er også aktive i eldreomsorg, gjennom eldreboliger, seniorsentre, arbeidstilbud og pleie- og omsorgs tjenester. Kirkens Bymisjon er også aktive innenfor politiske prosesser, miljøtiltak og flerkulturelt arbeid. (Kirkens Bymisjon, 2022)

Eksternt kommuniserer Kirkens Bymisjon en tydelig kristen identitet og merkevare. Innenfor merkevare kommunikasjon diskuterer man bl.a. begrepet semiotikk, teorien om brukt av tegn og symboler, og hvordan publikum tolker og forstår disse i bestemte kulturelle kontekster (Gripsrud, 2015). I organisasjonens eksterne merkevare kommunikasjon er semiotikk svært relevant. I Kirkens Bymisjons logo er korset veldig tydelig, omriss av en by kommuniserer det urbane, og bruk at ordet kirkens, og misjon, knytter det opp mot kirken.

(Logo, kirkensbymisjon.no, 2022)

Hvordan folk tolker disse symbolene avhenger av deres kultur, oppvekst og erfaringer. Religion, kirke og livssyn er begreper og symboler folk har veldig ulikt forhold til, og som gir forskjellige assosiasjoner. Mange har et kritisk forhold til den Kristne kirke, og/eller religion i sin helhet. For de som ikke deler samme livssyn kan en organisasjon med klar religiøs identitet føles ekskluderende, og avstøtende.

I samtale med ansatte i Kirkens Bymisjon fikk jeg også opplyst at flere av deres brukere bærer med seg mentale sår fra kristne miljøer, som helvetesforkynnelse, fordømmelse av homofile og konverteringsterapi. For de dette gjelder vil det være svært vanskelig å søke støtte hos organisasjonen.

Totalt kan det legges til grunn at Kirkens Bymisjon har en tydelig ekstern kristen identitet og merkevare, som kan appellere for noen, men være avvisende for andre. Dette er en klar utfordring når de ønsker å nå ut til så mange som mulig gjennom sitt arbeid.

Der dette også er en utfordring er i rekruttering, da organisasjonen ønsker et stort mangfold av ansatte og ikke kun tiltrekke seg kristne. Det er påvist at arbeidsplasser med økt mangfold av livssyn er knyttet til en rekke fordeler, inkludert økt innovasjon, høyere trivsel og jobbtilfredshet, større medarbeiderengasjement, og bedre arbeidskultur (McKinsey, 2015). Det er dog naturlig at mulige ansatte forbinder organisasjonen med kirken og kristen religion. Kirkens Bymisjon bruker derfor store ressurser på å tiltrekke seg arbeidstakere med forskjellige livssyn, og sørge for mangfoldig rekruttering.

Kirkens Bymisjon kommuniserer at man trenger ikke være kristen for å jobbe eller engasjere seg i deres arbeid, og driver et livsynsåpent og dialogpreget arbeid. Alle medarbeidere må identifisere seg med organisasjonens verdier og menneskesyn, men det finnes ingen troskrav. De fremmer med det en arbeidsplass som tilgjengelig for både kristne, ikke-kristne, andre religioner, samt ikke-religiøse. «Vårt arbeid er basert på kristne og humanistiske verdier, men er ikke bygget opp som et livssynsfellesskap. Vår forankring er i kirken og den diakonale tradisjonen er sterk i arbeidet, men våre ansatte, frivillige, brukere og gjester kommer fra mange bakgrunner med ulik tro og livssyn.» (Kirkens Bymisjon, 2022)

Ser vi på organisasjonens oppdrag, oppgaver, formål og virksomheter, ser man at deres arbeid ikke er forkynnende i karakter, og deres verdier, fellesskap, verdighet, håp, rettferdighet, solidaritet og barmhjertighet er verdier som er både i tråd med deres diakonale oppdrag, og samtidig verdier som deles med ikke-kristne og ikke-religiøse.

Internt jobber Kirkens Bymisjon aktivt med å fremme livssynsåpenhet. Dette gjør de gjennom en rekke tiltak og virkemidler.

Kirkens Bymisjon jobber aktivt for at alle tros- og livssynsgrupper skal behandles likeverdig. De formelle bånd til kirken er lite synlige i arbeidsplassen i det daglige, da ingen virksomheter får lov å bruke religiøse symboler noe sted, med

mindre det er et kapell. Som organisasjon jobber de for å oppnå det de definerer som «conviviality». Det handler om å få folk til å føle seg velkommen på tvers av ulikhet og leve sammen i livssynsåpenhet. (Kirkens Bymisjon, 2020) Et viktig ledd i dette er Kirkens Bymisjons personalseminarer der alle tros- og livssyn inviteres til presentere sitt eget ståsted. Nattverdbordet dekkes, muslimer bretter ut bønnetepper, røkelse tennes på buddhistisk alter, og ikke-religiøse inviterer til samtaler og refleksjon, alt på et sted, før det initieres felles lystenning midt på gulvet. Slike samlinger er viktig for å gi ansatte mere rom til å knytte sitt livssyn og/eller religion opp mot arbeidet organisasjonen gjør. I stedet for å forsøke å skjule de ansattes egen religion og livssyn, legger de til rette for å gi rikelig rom for tro og livssynsutfoldelse, med engasjement og synlighet, på ulike arenaer.

Jeg har intervjuet virksomhetsleder i Kirkens Bymisjon Grünerløkka, Sol Gangsaas. Hun nevnte en rekke av tiltakene nevnt over, og bl.a. lystennings seremoniene deres en viktig del av den interne merkevarebyggingen og som et slags ledd å knytte de ansatte og deres livssyn opp mot organisasjonens kollektive arbeid.

En utfordring hun derimot møter er at hun har begrensede muligheter for å implementere det utvidede mangfoldet de ønsker, da ansatte normalt «har aldri lyst til å slutte». Hennes ansatte har jobbet der i lang tid, men trives så godt i stillingene sine, så det blir sjeldent jobbåpninger eller endringer. En rekke studier, inkludert Kutcher et al. 2010, viser at de som kan utrykke sitt livssyn og religion i arbeidsplassen blir mindre utbrent, mindre syke og mere forpliktede. Det kan være en god forklaring for at ansatte jobber lengre enn normalt, og ikke ønsker å slutte selv etter svært mange år i samme stilling.

Totalt vil jeg fastslå at organisasjonen har vært vellykket med å bygge sin interne merkevare og identitet, og fremme sine verdier fremfor et spesifikt livssyn. Men hvor går organisasjonen videre? Flere jeg har snakket med i organisasjonen, inkludert Sol Gangsaas, sier at balansen mellom deres Kristne identitet og ønsket mangfold i arbeidsplassen er en av de mest aktuelle utfordringene i både deres avdelinger og organisasjonen som helhet. De vil ha mangfold og livssynsåpenhet, men de kan ikke gå helt bort ifra det kristne, for da «mister de noe». Spørsmålet er om arbeidet med å tiltrekke seg ikke-kristne har kanskje gått for langt.

Gangsaas mener selv at arbeidet deres med å fremme en livssynsåpen organisasjon har vært såpass effektiv at per i dag er kristne medarbeidere en minoritet i store deler av organisasjonen. Hun mener mange i dag føler på en slags stigma rundt å identifisere seg som kristen i organisasjonen. Siden de jobber så hardt for å styrke mangfoldet av livssyn, er det å være kristen plutselig ikke i tråd med den «nye» promoterte kulturen i organisasjonen. En medarbeider nevnte bl.a. at hun følte at det var enklere å «komme ut» som homofil i organisasjonen, enn det var å komme ut som kristen.

Organisasjonens arbeid med å rekruttere ansatte med økt livsynsmangfold har vært i stor grad vellykket. Det kan dermed legges til grunn at deres eksterne kristne identitet har ikke hindret dem i å rekruttere ikke-kristne inn til organisasjonen. Det er derimot en del brukere som kan ha dårlige assosiasjoner med deres eksterne identitet. De nevner at bruker ikke noen kristne symboler noe sted annet enn kapell, men deres logo, som man møter i alle deres arbeidsplasser, er i seg selv et religiøst symbol. Jeg hadde foreslått at organisasjonen vurderte å endre symbolbruken i sin logo og merkevare, eller lage underliggende merkevarer uten religiøse symboler til de forskjellige initiativene deres. Spesielt der de er i møte med grupper som kan ha negative assosiasjoner med kirken og/eller kristen religion. Dette handler ikke om å skule sin kristne forankring, men heller å tilgjengeliggjøre og slippe ende flere folk inn, og på sikt gjøre det kristne mindre skummelt.

Når det gjelder mangfoldet i organisasjonen er Kirkens Bymisjon litt unikt, gitt at fokuset deres i hovedsak har vært å tiltrekke seg et tros og livssynsmangfold. De fleste studier rundt mangfold på arbeidsplasser har i hovedsak vært gjennomført med hensyn til lettere observerbart demografisk mangfold som kjønn, alder, etnisitet. (Gebert, D. et al, 2014). Det er også dette de fleste bedrifter fokuserer på når de setter en mangfolds strategi. Religion og livssyn er derimot svært viktige temaer. Gitt at religion er ofte kilden til mange av menneskehetens større konflikter skulle man tro at det var økt søkelys på dette også innenfor arbeidsplasser. Det har blitt gjort en rekke studier som viser at friheten til å uttrykke sin religion på arbeidsplassen fører til positive utfall, som høyere jobbtilfredshet, høyere produktivitet, mindre konflikter og økt engasjement (Kutcher et al, 2010).

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Kirkens Bymisjon har derimot ikke stort nok fokus på å tiltrekke seg kulturelt mangfold. Norges demografi er i rask endring, og antallet innvandrere har mer enn tredoblet seg de siste 20 årene alene (IMDi, 2023). Arbeidet med migranter øker, og de har behov for å tiltrekke seg flere med økt kulturell kompetanse.

Det er en rekke studier som peker på fordelene med høy kulturelt mangfold i organisasjoner, inkludert McKinsey's rapporter "Why diversity matters (2015), "Delivering through diversity" (2018) og "Diversity wins: How inclusion matters" (2020). Studiene viser at organisasjoner med høyt kulturelt mangfold er bedre i stand til å forstå og imøtekomme behovene til forskjellige kundegrupper og markeder, og bedre på å utvikle kommunikasjon som er mer effektiv og appellerer til en bredere demografi. Samlet sett har kulturelt mangfoldige organisasjoner en konkurransefordel ved å være bedre i stand til å tilpasse seg til et stadig mer mangfoldig og globalt landskap.

Det er viktig å merke seg at Kirkens Bymisjon fortsatt må ivareta sin religiøse identitet og diakonale formål, selv om de øker mangfoldet internt. Dette kan gjøres ved å holde fast ved organisasjonens kjerneverdier og diakonale arbeid, samtidig som man er åpen for og respekterer mangfoldet i de ansattes bakgrunn og erfaringer.

Kirkens Bymisjon er et interessant eksempel på hvordan man kan styrke, ivareta og tilrettelegge for religiøs identitet på arbeidsplassen. Organisasjonen har klart å tiltrekke ansatte som deler deres verdier, noe som gir ansatte mening i arbeidet, og muligheten til å knytte sitt eget livssyn opp mot arbeidet til organisasjonen. Det er nok en stor del av hvorfor Kirkens Bymisjon er en såpass vellykket organisasjon, med stor sosial påvirkning, og stort omfang av frivillige som ønsker å bidra inn mot organisasjonen og deres arbeid. Dersom de kan fortsette å ha verdibaserte krav, men utvide sin rekruttering, samt tone ned den kristne symbolbruken, tror jeg de vil kunne tiltrekke seg flere brukere, større kulturelt mangfold internt, og være enda bedre rustet til å møte morgendagens utfordringer.

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Multicultural Leadership

Module Assignment 2

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ID Number 1071535

Hand-in date:

27.06.2023

Campus:

BI Oslo

Examination code and name:

MAN 5199 Multicultural Leadership

Program:

Executive Master of Management

Lack of diverse leadership stifles workplace democracy

Introduction

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the call for diversity, especially in leadership roles, has never been more pronounced. Diversity in leadership fosters innovation, enhances decision-making, and most importantly, is a cornerstone of workplace democracy. In Norway workplace democracy is widely incorporated, but like many other countries, primarily employs a representative model. A critical examination of workplaces in Norway reveals an underrepresentation of women and minorities in representative roles, calling into question the full realization of this democratic ethos.

The absence of diverse leadership poses significant challenges to workplace democracy, which thrives on varied perspectives, experiences, and insights. The unequal representation in leadership can restrict the range of ideas, stunt the growth of inclusive practices, and inadvertently promote a homogeneity that contradicts the increasingly multicultural workplace and society. This paper will examine the issue of leadership diversity in the context of workplace democracy in Norway, focusing on the underrepresentation of women and minorities. It will identify the challenges that lack of diversity presents and propose potential solutions to improve the balance and, ultimately, strengthen workplace democracy. The proposed strategies will be aimed at creating a more inclusive, fair and democratic Norwegian workplace.

Background

Workplace democracy refers to a management approach that encourages the involvement of all members in an organization's decision-making processes. This concept entails employees participating actively in shaping their organization's policies and future direction. Rooted in the belief that those who contribute to a company's achievements - its employees - should have input in its operations and strategic trajectory.

Two typical models are used within workplace democracy, representative or participatory model. The representative model of workplace democracy is a system where workers elect representatives who make decisions on their behalf. On the other hand, a participatory model of workplace democracy allows every worker to have a direct say in decision-making processes within the organization

Historically, organizations have favored representative workplace democracy, seeing participative democracy as impractical, especially for large-scale establishments. However, recent research has challenged this notion, and evidence shows that organizations can scale while simultaneously maintaining a participative democracy. (Kokkinidis, 2012) The representative model, while commonly accepted, often results in the marginalization of many organizational members, as it transfers the power to speak and make decisions from the majority to a select group of leaders. This mechanism effectively positions representation and democracy as opposing concepts, rather than complementary ones. (Kokkinidis, 2012)

Diversity refers to the range of differences among individuals including but not limited to ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, education, and beliefs. Diversity within an organization acknowledges and values the unique experiences and perspectives that each person brings to the organization. It includes the blend of factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and cultural diversity in a welcoming and balanced manner. Viewed through the lens of discrimination and justice, diversity signifies the necessity for previously underrepresented groups to have equitable access to professional opportunities, matching those of the majority groups.

Diversity in leadership, meanwhile, refers to the representation of different genders, ethnicities, and other demographic categories at the highest levels of an organization. A diverse leadership body brings together a wide range of perspectives, experiences, and ideas, which can lead to more effective decision-making and problem-solving, improved understanding of diverse markets, and an organizational culture that values and promotes inclusivity. (Hunt et al., 2020)

The richness of our differences holds the potential for substantial value addition. This is not confined merely to bolstering returns and revenue, but also reaches out

to fostering more satisfied customers, users, and employees. Furthermore, it enhances an organization's adaptability, competitive edge, and overall reputation. (Hunt et al., 2018) Numerous studies have also established a correlation between diversity and heightened profitability. This correlation is particularly pronounced in the context of ethnic and gender diversity, underscoring the tangible benefits of embracing diversity within an organization. (Hunt et al., 2020)

Norway is applauded for its progressiveness, particularly regarding gender equality and workers rights. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index measures the extent of gender-based gaps in 146 countries, and gives each a ranking between 0-100%, 100% being the highest possible gender equality. Norway ranks second among the measured countries, with a score of 87.9%. (Global Gender Gap Report 2023) While Norway is rated as one of the most gender equal countries in the world, the gender gap is significant in the business sector. Despite several decades with a multitude of programs to enhance diversity and gender balance in companies the results are still bleak. Studies show especially room for improvement when it comes to diversity in leadership.

Centre for Research on Gender Equality at the Institute for Social Research develops the CORE Norwegian Gender Balance Scorecard on behalf of the Ministry of Culture and Equality. Every second year, they monitor the gender balance within the top management of the 200 largest companies in Norway. In their latest report women constitute only 27% of the members of executive committees, and only 15% of the companies have a female CEO. Women hold 32% of all board seats, and only 13% have a female chair of the board. Companies that are subject to gender quota legislation have more than twice as many women on the board, while the proportion of women on executive committees is approximately the same, regardless of whether the company is subject to gender quota legislation or not. Only 10% of the companies have a gender balance (balance defined as within the ranges of 40-60%) within both their boards and executive committees. Moreover, women are significantly underrepresented in operational roles with profit and loss responsibilities. In the report, it was found that women only occupy 19% of operational positions. In contrast, women hold a more substantial 32% of intermediate roles and a dominant 62% of support positions. (Centre for Research on Gender Equality, 2022)

Several reports further noted that the percentage of leaders from minority ethnic backgrounds are significantly lower yet. A recent study conducted by PA Consulting Group looked at the composition of the executive teams in the top 100 companies in Norway. The report discovered that 0.39% of leaders were Norwegian-born with multicultural backgrounds, while 2.3% were immigrants from non-European countries, and 5.6% were immigrants from European nations. In total, this amounts to approximately 8% of leaders within top Norwegian executive teams. (PA Consulting Group, 2023)

The Norwegian Institute for Social Research conducted a study in 2020 that explored attitudes, experiences, and practices in relation to ethnic and religious diversity in Norwegian workplaces. The study, which surveyed various industry sectors along with the general population, revealed that the private sector leaders displayed the least positive perspective towards immigration among the assessed categories, with 64% responding that immigration was very or fairly good for Norway. That said, this response was significantly more positive compared to the general population, where only 40% responded positively to the same question. More concerning however, was that only half of private sector leaders felt they missed out on expertise by not hiring minorities, and when asked if all major businesses should have a goal of recruiting minorities to senior positions, only 26% responded positive. (Brekke et al., 2020)

This correlates with findings from the Norwegian research foundation Fafo and their recent report on employer's attitudes toward ethnic diversity. It found that public sector employers were more positive about implementing specific inclusion measures than private sector employers, and female respondents were more positive than men. A majority of employers in the report view ethnic diversity as positive for both reputation, relations with customers and users, as well as well-being, innovation, and productivity. At the same time, the study shows that there is little correlation between the employer's attitudes and the company's inclusion practices. The majority of companies, 68 percent, reported that they did not have any specific goal to increase the proportion of employees with an immigrant background. (Andersen et al., 2022)

The study further shows employers were more supportive of measures that involve increasing the recruitment of immigrants than measures that ensure equal opportunities internally. When employers were asked about actively recruiting

women or individuals with immigrant backgrounds, approx. 42% said they were positive, but when asked about promoting diversity in leadership the numbers were far lower. 34% of employers supported measures for improving gender balance in leadership roles, and only 20% supported measures for improving to ethnic diversity in leadership. (Andersen et al., 2022)

Challenges

These findings above suggest an underrepresentation of women and minorities in leadership roles in Norway, a trend that runs counter to the principles of workplace democracy and gender equality. The underrepresentation of diverse groups in leadership positions poses significant challenges to workplace democracy, including implicit biases, lack of an inclusion and internal cultural understanding, and limits productivity, customer insight and innovation.

<u>Implicit bias</u>

Unlike explicit discrimination where one intentionally and unjustifiably treats people differently, implicit bias is an automatic, quick judgment about people based on our personal experiences, background, and cultural environment. Marie Louise Sunde, founder and CEO of Equality Check notes that everyone has biases and stereotypes, which we unconsciously discriminate on the basis of. We constantly use these biases to make decisions, which is necessary because we can't thoroughly contemplate every single action we make. However, using these automatic thought processes becomes problematic when making significant decisions, like hiring or promoting, without realizing it. (LederNytt, 2022) This can lead to unfair practices within a workplace. In Norway, where leadership roles are predominantly held by ethnic Norwegians, implicit biases can cause unequal distribution of opportunities, favoring certain groups over others.

Implicit bias in leadership is mainly reflected in two areas, recruitment and promotions. In recruitment, there is shown to be a preference for candidates who share similar backgrounds or characteristics with the recruiters or leaders. This affinity bias, often implicit, can unfairly disadvantage candidates from diverse backgrounds.

There have been numerous studies that have shown biases in recruitment processes in Norway and the Nordics. NIFU released a report in 2022 that summarized dozens of such studies and their findings. Collectively, the body of knowledge showed extensive discrimination against immigrants in recruitment processes, especially based on skin color and (Islamic) religion. (Wollscheid et al., 2022) In a report by Rogstad & Midtbøen (2012) they presented compelling evidence that discrimination is a prevalent issue in the Norwegian workplace, and having a background divergent from the mainstream Norwegian profile often plays a significant role in recruitment. Such evidence makes it comprehensible why job seekers from minority backgrounds might harbor fears of discrimination. (Rogstad & Midtbøen, 2012)

Further, implicit bias may guide employers to favor certain employees. This can lead to situations where employees from underrepresented groups are overlooked for promotions or assigned less stimulating tasks. Leaders may be predisposed to acknowledge and reward those whose perspectives, work methods, or backgrounds mirror their own, potentially marginalizing deserving employees who come from different backgrounds. Here there are less statistics to show. The NIFU report mentions that there are relatively few studies related to the phases after employment, such as wage development and promotions. (Wollscheid et al., 2022) That said, given the lack of diverse representation within leadership positions, it is likely to assume biases have played a part.

Bias can also infiltrate performance evaluations. Performance evaluations, often beginning with self-assessments and followed by managerial reviews, aim to objectively assess employees' performance. However, biases can infiltrate these evaluations. The open-ended format of review forms increasingly allows biases to come into play. (Mackenzie et al., 2019) Employers may unknowingly favor those who share their characteristics or align with their expectations, grading them more generously during performance evaluations. Conversely, employees from underrepresented groups may be subject to harsher evaluations due to misconceptions or stereotypes. Employers often fail to recognize that their actions contribute to inequality. A subconscious hierarchy between "them and us", coupled with legislation allowing subjective evaluations of personal suitability, grants employers considerable freedom without corresponding accountability. (Rogstad & Midtbøen, 2012)

Employers hold varying opinions on why individuals from minority groups often do not secure jobs aligned with their qualifications. In the Fafo report, approximately half of the respondents attribute this to the employees' qualifications, while the other half consider company-based biases and discriminatory practices as the primary reason. Respondents who consider the issue predominantly an employer problem show a greater openness to implement concrete measures within their own organizations. (Andersen et al., 2022)

<u>Lack of an inclusion and cultural understanding</u>

Workplace culture is heavily influenced by an organization's leadership. The values, behaviors, and practices promoted by leaders often set the tone for the overall working environment. A homogenous leadership can lead to a non-inclusive culture that doesn't value or reflect the diversity of the workforce. Employees from underrepresented groups may feel marginalized, leading to decreased job satisfaction, productivity, and engagement.

Workplace culture extends beyond formal rules and policies. It encompasses daily interactions, communication styles, decision-making processes and conflict resolution approaches. A non-inclusive culture can manifest in a myriad of ways. For example, as highlighted in the Børve and Kvande (2022) article, the Norwegian workplace is based on a non-hierarchy model, and participation is expected from both employees and management. For some employees that are used to a very hierarchical top-down workplace they might find this challenging to navigate.

Cultural Intelligence serves as a critical skill in comprehending, relating to, and adeptly managing different cultural scenarios. As articulated by Ott & Michailova (2018), the essence of cultural intelligence lies in its capacity to perceive, appreciate, and adapt to a range of diverse viewpoints. The importance of cultural intelligence is highlighted by its role in enhancing communication, encouraging collaboration, and managing conflict resolution in our increasingly diverse and global workplaces. Homogenous leadership and lack of cultural intelligence can lead to poor communication, misunderstanding, and disengagement in culturally diverse teams, impacting morale and productivity.

Another aspect is recognition and celebration of cultural and religious events, and social activities. In a non-inclusive culture, only events pertaining to the dominant

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culture might be acknowledged or celebrated, leaving others feeling neglected. In Norway, as in many other places, workplace social activities often align with the interests and traditions of the dominant culture. Activities like skiing or hiking, which are embedded in Norwegian culture, may inadvertently exclude or marginalize employees from different cultural backgrounds who may lack the experience or skill in these pursuits. Such situations can be uncomfortable, and even belittling, particularly for those aiming for higher positions, as it can be humiliating to appear inept in front of coworkers. Similarly, organizing events centered around alcohol can alienate employees who abstain for religious or personal reasons, such as Muslims. These practices can inadvertently foster a divisive "them and us" mentality, enhancing a sense of separation rather than promoting inclusion and unity.

Limited productivity, customer insight & innovation

A substantial proportion of immigrants in Norway are overqualified for the jobs they hold, indicating that their skill sets are not being fully leveraged in their employment roles. This discrepancy is particularly prominent among non-EU immigrants who, despite possessing high levels of education and skills acquired in their home countries or in Norway, often find themselves employed in lower-skilled jobs. (Wold & Håland, 2016) This underutilization not only undercuts the economic potential of these individuals but also represents a missed opportunity for Norwegian businesses, society and economy. The failure to adequately recognize and utilize immigrants' skills can contribute to increased social and economic inequality, stifle productivity and innovation, and impede the integration of immigrants into Norwegian society.

A lack of diversity in leadership can pose considerable obstacles for an organization, particularly impacting customer understanding and the nurturing of innovation. The primary hurdle often stems from the restrictions in the variety of viewpoints and ideas. Homogeneous leadership risks cultivating an echo chamber scenario, where similar perspectives and ideas keep being reinforced, thereby limiting the potential for original thinking and creativity. This continual reinforcement of uniform ideas can greatly hinder an organization's capacity to innovate and adapt in an ever-changing market landscape. (Arkes & Blumer, 2021)

Furthermore, a homogeneous leadership team can create substantial blind spots when it comes to understanding and addressing the needs of a diverse customer base. An organization's ability to cater to its customers efficiently is closely linked to its comprehension of their needs, backgrounds, and expectations. When leadership lacks diverse representation, it may fail to resonate with a multicultural or global customer base. This disconnect can have far-reaching implications on the organization's customer relations, market reach, and ultimately, its competitive standing. (Hunt et al., 2020)

The challenges extend beyond innovation and customer engagement. Homogeneity in leadership can lead to a psychological phenomenon known as groupthink. This occurs when a group begins to think and make decisions collectively, prioritizing harmony over conflict, which often leads to the suppression of differing viewpoints. According to Johansson (2017), groupthink can restrict creative problem-solving and induce an unwarranted level of confidence in decisions due to a lack of critical evaluation or challenge. Thus, the lack of diversity in leadership can potentially compromise the quality of decision-making, impede innovative thought processes, and ultimately, undermine the organization's overall performance.

Solutions

Employers act based on what they presume is best for their business. Consequently, concerns about diversity and inclusion tend to be secondary. While it's obvious that employers focus on their businesses, societal change requires business leaders to broaden their perspective and acknowledge their role in perpetuating inequality. (Rogstad & Midtbøen, 2012)

Organizations need to take more responsibility, and greater efforts need to be made to substantially increase the representation of women and minorities in leadership positions. As demonstrated in the Fafo report a majority of businesses were positive to diversity measures aimed at the lower positions within their organization, but only 34% were positive to gender diversity measures within leadership, and 80% were negative to ethnic diversity measures for leadership positions. (Andersen et al., 2022) If Norway is to truly adapt to a diverse and democratic workplace, this needs to change. It requires efforts at the individual,

organizational, and societal levels, and involves addressing implicit bias, improving recruitment and promotion practices, promoting inclusion, and capitalizing on the potential benefits of diversity.

Addressing implicit bias

Addressing implicit bias is pivotal in the fight against discrimination and the pursuit of equality in the workplace. As such, organizations need to actively promote awareness and provide bias training to their employees, particularly those involved in recruitment and management, including upper leadership. This training helps individuals recognize their biases and learn techniques to reduce their impact on decision-making.

As the NIFU report noted a lack of studies in the phases after employment, regular research on this aspect can provide a better understanding of how implicit biases might be affecting promotions, evaluations and wage development.

Better recruitment and promotion practices

Organizations should implement more standardized processes for recruitment. Implementing structured interview processes and using a diverse interview panel can help reduce bias during candidate evaluation. Additionally, tapping into diverse talent pools through partnerships with organizations can broaden the diversity of candidates.

Promotion practices significantly influence the diversity of an organization's leadership. Career development programs can ensure employees from underrepresented groups are given opportunities to advance. It's also important to regularly review and remove any potential bias in the promotion process. For example, challenging the notion of "cultural fit" or "leadership material" which may be unconsciously biased towards certain demographics. (Bashford, 2018) Encouraging a variety of leadership styles and acknowledging that effective leaders can come from different backgrounds and experiences can likely help disrupt these biases.

Organizations should ensure that their evaluation processes are fair, and performance metrics are clear, objective, and uniformly applied to all employees. Anonymizing aspects of the evaluation process where possible, and having diverse panels for reviews, can further ensure fairness. Feedback should be

transparent, constructive, and provided consistently to all employees, regardless of their cultural or demographic background.

By placing a deliberate focus on these areas, organizations can ensure that their recruitment, promotion, and evaluation practices are effectively supporting their goals for increased diversity in leadership.

Promoting inclusion and diversity

Organizations should work to build an inclusive work environment where everyone feels acknowledged, respected, and actively involved. This is attainable by not only inviting but celebrating a diversity of thoughts and viewpoints, ensuring everyone is treated equitably, and nurturing a sense of belonging. Acknowledging a range of cultural and religious occasions, allowing adaptable work schedules to suit different needs, and making sure that company events and social activities are considerate and cater to diverse interests, can further enrich an inclusive environment.

The commitment to diversity should come from the top. Leadership needs to visibly champion diversity and inclusion, setting clear diversity goals and holding themselves accountable for progress towards these goals. They should communicate the importance of diversity and inclusion to the entire organization, demonstrating how it aligns with the organization's mission, values, and business objectives.

Staff should be trained on cultural intelligence, enabling them to understand, relate to, and manage different cultural scenarios. This can enhance communication, reduce misunderstandings, encourage collaboration, and improve conflict resolution. This is a continuous process requiring persistent curiosity and openness as cultures evolve.

These strategies can help to cultivate an inclusive culture where diversity is valued and individuals from all backgrounds have the opportunity to progress into leadership positions.

Capitalizing on the benefits of diversity

A substantial proportion of immigrants in Norway are overqualified for the jobs they hold, indicating their skills are not being fully leveraged. Addressing this can

increase productivity and innovation, and improve customer insight. Systems and processes can be put in place to better recognize and utilize the skills and qualifications of immigrants. This could include mechanisms for recognizing qualifications obtained overseas, and development and training programs to help individuals transition into roles that better match their skills.

Organizations should increase the use of mentoring and sponsorship programs. Currently two thirds of large Norwegian companies do not have such programs for underrepresented groups. (Andersen et al., 2022) Such programs can help to nurture diverse talent, and actively advocate for individuals' advancement within the organization. These programs should aim to pair individuals from underrepresented groups with senior leaders, providing them with opportunities to learn, develop, and take on leadership roles, enabling them to gain the experience and visibility needed for advancement.

Research has shown that diverse leadership can lead to greater innovation and better decision-making. Diverse leadership can provide a broader range of perspectives, potentially unearthing unconventional ideas or identifying potential issues that might be overlooked by homogeneous leadership. They can also offer unique insights into diverse markets, helping the company to cater to a wider demographic. (Hunt et al., 2020) Diversity in leadership can also improve an organization's understanding of a diverse customer base. Organizations can actively seek to leverage the insights and perspectives of their management to better understand and cater to customers needs. Data from Mckinsey & Company has shown, year over year, that diverse companies are more likely to financially outperform their peers. The positive metrics are highest when there is diversity both in leadership and the general employees within the organization. (Hunt et al., 2020) As such companies stand to gain, not lose, and should actively work to increase gender, ethnic and cultural diversity within their leadership.

Shifting towards a participatory model may allow for a greater range of perspectives from different backgrounds, challenging the lack of diversity often found in leadership roles. Even though representative democracy is the current standard, moving towards a participatory democracy could be an effective way to enhance leadership diversity in the workplace. This approach is supported by Kokkinidis (2012), who showed that organizations can grow while still

maintaining or even improving their democratic governance, illustrating that larger size doesn't have to compromise an organization's democratic nature.

To support these efforts, a broader societal commitment to diversity and inclusion is also crucial. This can include public policies and legislation that promote diversity and inclusion, societal campaigns to increase awareness and understanding of diversity, and efforts to challenge and change societal norms and attitudes. It's crucial that authorities and key drivers succeed in involving employers, whose local decisions ultimately determine how inclusive Norway's multicultural job market will be. (Rogstad & Midtbøen, 2012)

While these solutions may not immediately rectify the underrepresentation of diverse groups in leadership roles in Norway, they provide a path towards creating more equitable and inclusive workplaces, and towards leveraging the potential benefits of diversity.

Conclusion

The underrepresentation of women and minorities in leadership roles in Norway presents a significant challenge for both the principle of workplace democracy and the broader societal commitment to equality. As highlighted in this paper, this underrepresentation is the outcome of various factors including implicit biases, lack of an inclusive culture and the undervaluation of the skills and qualifications of immigrants, particularly those from non-EU countries.

Achieving greater diversity in leadership is a complex and multifaceted task, requiring concerted efforts at the individual, organizational, and societal levels. It requires ongoing commitment, regular review, and a willingness to challenge and change established norms and practices. It also requires recognizing and valuing the diverse skills, experiences, and perspectives that individuals bring, and understanding that diversity is not just about fairness and equality, but is also a key driver of innovation and performance. The benefits of diversity in leadership go beyond ticking a box for corporate social responsibility. While these issues pose significant challenges, they also represent opportunities. Diverse leadership has tangible impacts on a company's performance, innovation, and bottom line. It

brings a wide array of perspectives and ideas, which can lead to more innovative solutions and robust decision-making. The benefits of diverse leadership highlight the value of addressing these issues and seeking solutions.

Lastly, demographic forecasts suggest an escalating demand for labor in the future, making it probable that Norway will compete globally for qualified and appealing foreign labor. In light of this, it becomes critical for Norway to be more than just a discrimination-free society, but also a place where individuals genuinely feel a sense of belonging and inclusion in society. (Rogstad & Midtbøen, 2012) However, findings from several studies highlighted in this paper, illuminate the fact that true equality of opportunities is still a distant goal. Thus, a conscious push towards fostering diversity and inclusion in leadership roles becomes pivotal, not only to foster flourishing organizations but also to shape a more inclusive and equitable society.

By implementing proactive and strategic measures to overcome these challenges, we can usher in a new era of diverse leadership, thereby better utilizing the potential of individuals, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, or cultural background. This will not only contribute to the individual and organizational success but also position Norway as an attractive destination for international talent, thus making significant strides towards the goal of equal opportunities for all.

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Multicultural Leadership

Module Assignment 3

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Hand-in date:

27.06.2023

Campus:

BI Oslo

Examination code and name:

MAN 5199 Multicultural Leadership

Program:

Executive Master of Management

The gender-equality gap in VC funding

The key to a robust innovation system is access to a well functioning venture capital industry. Venture capital is an integral part of the development and scaling of innovative companies, and remains the world largest sector of startup funding. The total amount of venture capital invested in startups was 483 billion USD in 2022 (Hamilton, 2023). Who gets access to this money is subject to controversy, as it on a societal level, it determines who gets access to our resources and who creates wealth and power.

Increasingly there is a focus on empowering female entrepreneurship, and subsequently the funding of female founders. The number of female-owned businesses has risen around the world, and the number of women becoming entrepreneurs has increased even more sharply. In Europe about a third of all founders are female, and in 2021 almost 50% of all new businesses in the U.S. were started by women. Collectively there is a clear trend towards female entrepreneurship, leading one to believe that funding for said entrepreneurship would be easy. Many female founders are assumed to be able to raise capital with ease, even easier than men, as they are aligning with the current (assumed) trends. There is often a (wrongful) sense that diversity is an advantage. Yet, women who venture into entrepreneurship are not poised to get a fair deal.

As I frequent startup events throughout Europe, I often hear comments made to female founders suggesting there is so much money for female founders right now, and that they will have such an easy time raising from VCs. If they have an additional diversity metric like "person of color", the assumption is they will have an even easier time yet. Based on the frequency and pervasiveness of these comments, one might assume there is a huge boom in venture capital being invested in female-founded and/or diversity lead companies. Yet, when you look at statistics, this is far from the case. The reality of the current landscape is that the venture capital ecosystem is far from embracing gender equality and diversity.

In the United States, total VC funding keeps growing, and 2021 it hit an all time high. Even though VC investment in 2022 declined from 2021's lofty heights, it still surpassed the $200 billion mark. As the total US VC funding numbers keep growing, the percentage of funding for female-founded companies has declined year-over-year. In 2022, companies founded solely by women garnered just 2.1%

of the total capital invested in VC-backed startups in the United States. This number is down from 2.3% in 2021, and is the lowest it has been since 2016. (Pitchbook, 2022)

Often one is quick to assume the picture of gender equality in the funding landscape would look better in Europe, but that assumption would be wrong. In Europe, VC funding for female-founded startups was only 0.9% of the total capital invested in 2022. This number is down from 2.1% the year before, and the lowest number since 2015 (Midkiff, 2023). In progressive European countries like France and Germany the number is slightly higher than the European average, but the picture remains the same, with only 1.3% of the total venture capital invested. (Unconventional VC, 2022)

The World Economic Forum compiles and releases the Global Gender Gap Index every year, which measures the extent of gender-based gaps in 156 countries, among four key dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment, then gives each country a ranking between 0-100%, 100% being the highest possible gender equality. Nordic countries historically take the top spots on the list, with Iceland ranked 1st, Norway in 2nd, Finland in 3rd, followed by Sweden in 5th, and Denmark 23rd. (World Economic Forum, 2023)

So how does the funding landscape look in the Nordics, a region with the highest gender equality rankings globally? Here again, the data is extremely disappointing, maybe even more so than in regions with lower gender equality rankings, as one would expect a clear correlation between the two metrics. In the Nordics as a whole, VC funding for female-founded startups was only 0,7% of the total venture capital invested in 2022. Within the three Scandinavian countries, Sweden, Denmark and Norway the numbers were 1%, 0.1% and 0% respectively in 2022. Here again there is a lack of correlation. Norway has the world's second highest gender equality ranking, but comes in last place among all Nordic countries in regards to VC funding for female founders with 0.7% in 2021 and >0.1% in 2022 (Unconventional VC, 2022)

More diversity, less capital

Out of the 2,3% of US venture capital that went to female-founded companies in 2021, approximately 0.5% went to Black women, 0.6% went to Hispanic founders, 0.7% to Asian women and 0.004% to Indigenous women. (Davis, 2022) To put this in another perspective, this amounts to only 0.012%, 0.012%, 0.016%, and 0.0001% of the total US venture capital invested. In Europe ethnicity is often not a metric that is registered in statistics, so here the data is lacking, but given all the other metrics show a clear correlation between the US and Europe, one can assume this situation is somewhat the same. Given that Black, Indigenous and women of color make up most of the women on Earth, its fair to say there is a huge lack of representation within VC funding.

Women get way more - if they are with men

In Europe, venture capital for female co-founded companies was 12.2% of total European VC funding in 2022. This number is down from 14.7% in 2021, and the lowest level since 2014, yet this is almost 14 times higher than the venture capital to female-founded companies.

The Nordics again tell a story contradictory to their portrayed image. VC funding for female co-founded companies was 7,6% in 2022, much lower than the European average, but still 11 times higher than Nordic venture capital to female-founded companies. This number is slightly lower than the 6 year average, but up from its 6 year low point in 2019 at 5,8% (Unconventional VC, 2022)

In the United States, where funding for female-founded companies has declined year-over-year, the share of venture capital to female co-founded companies ticked up to 16.5% of total VC funding in 2022, from 15.4% the year before.

In markets where these numbers are rising, one might jump to the conclusion this is a positive development, however, in markets like the U.S, while female co-founded VC investment rises, female-founded VC investment declines. It is telling how the numbers change substantially when a man is listed as a co-founder, signifying the importance of always keeping a man in the room.

Mostly, it's just (white) men

The overall message here is, even with both categories, female-founded and female co-founded companies, combined, in 2022, male-founded startups made up a staggering 81.6% of the total venture capital funding in the United States. In Europe the number is even bigger at 86.9%, and the Nordics "lead" with a whopping 91.7%. In sum, this translates to almost 9 out of 10 startups that receive VC funding throughout Europe and the U.S, are composed of only male founders.

The lack of diversity is not only reflected in who gets funding. Within venture capital companies the picture is quite similar. Men make up almost 90% of all VC deciders in the US and Europe, VC deciders being the employees within venture capital companies who are part of the funding decision-making process. According to a working paper from Harvard Business School, nearly 81 percent of US venture capital firms have never hired a female employee. (Kersten & Athanasia, 2022)

Biases

There are many reasons why women don't receive their share of VC funding. Some point out that many female founded companies are often not built for VC capital, referring to less scalable business models in lower growth industries. This notion is however getting challenged as there is an increasingly large number of asset-light, highly scalable tech companies being founded by female entrepreneurs. That said there is still a lack of representation of women in some of the key industries within entrepreneurship, like technology, business and engineering, compared to men. Some also suggest women are less aggressive in their fundraising, and tend to be less inclined to ask for VC funding. Another reason, can be the lack of mentors and role models, reducing the amount of women who successfully found and scale companies.

Founders very often create solutions for problems they experience firsthand. For many female founders this means creating solutions to female centered problems. Problems which male VC investors might not understand or appreciate. The same goes for the lack of cultural and ethnic diversity. The lack of understanding or

appreciation results in a lack of funding. As long as the pool of VC investors remain the same, this picture will not change.

The aforementioned points are part of the total picture, but not enough to validate the disproportionate allocation of venture capital. To understand this disparity one must acknowledge that there are some deeply entrenched biases against women within the venture capital landscape. In the early stages of a venture, there is so little objective data to go on, that it makes it easier for VCs to be influenced by implicit or explicit biases, and make judgments based on personal attributes like gender (Wharton, 2016)

The VC industry is mostly male-dominated, with women only representing 8.6 percent of all venture capitalists, 8 percent of firm partners, and 7 percent of board seats at venture capital firms in the US. Fewer than 5 percent of all VC-funded firms have women on their executive teams, and only 2.7 percent had a female CEO. (Kersten & Athanasia, 2022) VCs seek to minimize risk and traditionally invest in networks that they are most familiar with. People tend to seek out and are drawn to others that are similar to themselves, often referred to as homophily. If an investor shares gender, ethnicity or social background with a founder, they're part of the same personal and professional network, they will likely be inclined to want to work together. More men are VCs and consequently forge connections with other men. The homophily principle gets baked into the system, and women can't access these networks (Wharton, 2016).

Many female founders struggle just to be taken seriously, even if their companies have an even more compelling growth, traction and metrics than startups run by male founders. It's a fact that female-led businesses have a higher success rate over the long term. If investors are really looking at the data, that's a fact they should act on. One recent study showed that female co-founded companies outperformed male-founded by 63% (First Round Capital, n.d.), and Kaufmann released a report stating that tech companies headed up by women achieve 35% higher return on investment, and, once VC backed, bring in 12% more revenue than male-founded tech companies. (Kauffman, 2016) Given venture capital is a statistic driven game, one would assume this metric would shift the focus towards a more successful investment category, women. That however is not the case today, as most VC investors consider female-founded teams to be high risk. Systemic bias is unacceptable in any society that claims to value equal

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opportunity and moral decency but it is also hypocritical in an industry that prides itself on results-driven efficiency. (Manilla, 2019) The fact that VC's consider female-founded companies high risk is often demonstrated in times when the markets are in a decline, as the funding for women, and diverse founders in general, declines disproportionately. A partner at a leading European VC firm stated that "when the economy tanks, discrimination seems justified", and subsequently VC managers double down on what they consider safe and boring. (Halpern, 2023)

The VC investment process has four stages: deal sourcing, pitching, due diligence, and closing. The final two stages are largely numbers-oriented, so they're less hospitable to bias. Deal sourcing is highly dependent on personal networks, and susceptible to bias, but in a more overt way: If your network of startup founders is all male, it's difficult to argue you're giving women opportunities. During pitching however, biases can influence decision-making without loudly announcing itself. Multiple academic studies have shown that there is a strong gender bias in many different elements of the pitch process.

One study from 2014 used identical slides and scripts, voiced by men and women, with or without photos of the 'presenter', and then asked study participants to rate the investment. Pitches voiced by men significantly outperformed those with a woman narrator. The researchers concluded, "Investors prefer pitches presented by male entrepreneurs compared with pitches made by female entrepreneurs, even when the content of the pitch is the same." (Hassan et al., 2020). A study from 2017 found that women are also asked different questions than men when pitching to VCs. Men were consistently asked more encouraging questions, highlighting upside and potential gains, while women were asked more negative questions, highlighting risk and challenges (Hassan et al., 2020).

Dropbox DocSend did a study in 2020 to uncover possible biases in how VC investors scrutinize pitch decks depending on the gender of the founding team. They measured how investors evaluate founders pitch decks, tracking the amount of time investors looked at each portion of the presentation. The more time spent viewing each section correlated with a negative reaction. VC viewing behavior was indicative of intention to fund the company, and they were able to identify the decision to invest, even prior to the founders even meeting with the investor. The study showed there is a clear bias, with 24-50% more time spent on the key

portions of the deck of female teams, except from the fundraising portion which on average was viewed 30% less. (Docsend, 2020).

A 2015 paper co-authored by professors at Harvard and MIT found that the most attractive investment opportunity of all was good-looking men. Often referred to as the halo effect, it showed that good looks made males 36% more persuasive, but plain-looking guys still came ahead of women. The study showed that male founders were 60% more likely to pitch successfully to investors than women. (Huang, 2015)

Where do we go from here

Numerous experts and articles have highlighted the need for VCs to take accountability for where and to whom their money goes, and for investors to take more chances on women and to implement standards that decrease gender and racial bias. What is missing is the commitment from those with the power to do so. (Davis, 2022)

The entire struggle is rooted in the power dynamic. Over 98% of all assets managed in the U.S. are managed by white men. It is integral that the VC industry shifts to new asset managers in a balanced way. It's a mathematical fact that this will increase their returns, so it's a simple and financially prudent fix. We urgently need more diversity and more women in funding and leadership roles within venture capital. More women need a seat at the table, with opportunities to speak and write checks. This has to become the norm rather than an exception to the rule. We also have to provide more support to females doing something truly innovative and complex. To give more women the power to invest means that as a society, we must invest more in women and be more intentional in promoting them, both from a policy perspective as well as a private sector perspective. (Davis, 2022)

The VC industry also needs to rely more on algorithms to do much of the deal sourcing. As mentioned there are a variety of biases at play, including similarity bias, and ethnic, gender and cultural biases. The irony is that, when we look at the facts, we find the perspective of gender bias to be flat-out irrational. A company's odds for success increase as the percentage of women in the company's leadership

increases. (Bueschen, 2015) As research indicates that investors are naturally prone to biases, relying solely on intuition is not an effective strategy for consistently making sound decisions. Recognizing and comprehending these biases can lead to the development of mechanisms, procedures, and tools that introduce more objectivity into the decision-making process. Utilizing such systematic approaches to decisions can enhance the precision of investors' choices, ultimately contributing to the prosperity of their portfolio. (Bueschen, 2015) Said simply, if the goal of venture investing is to pick the best companies and deliver top returns, it makes sense not to incorporate processes that knowingly are affected by strong biases, and lead to selecting startups based on gender and looks.

Several VC companies have implemented pitch-free, data -driven measures with greatly improved diversity results. Social Capital, which took applications online and evaluated companies largely by the numbers, reported investing in 40% female founded startups. Internationally new revenue-based venture investors such as Clearbanc claim to have funded eight times more women than the venture capital average. Another example is Loyal VC which, instead of traditional pitch sessions, sources companies based on recommendations from partner accelerator Founder Institute, which evaluates startups over a 14-week period. Loyal VC has seen 37% of its first investments go to female lead companies. (Hassan et al., 2020) Importantly, none of the aforementioned funds claim to have made exceptional efforts specifically for funding women entrepreneurs. Instead, their primary goal was to identify and fund the most promising companies. They achieved this by eliminating the traditional pitch process and shifting their focus to actual performance data from startups. Consequently, all of these funds have significantly increased the gender balance within their investment portfolios. In sum, VC's that are investing on pure financial performance, and don't evaluate a pitch at all, have invested in eight to twelve times more female-founded companies, even though they do not have an explicit gender mandate (Hassan et al., 2020).

If VCs choose to keep the conventional pitching model, one logical approach would be to distribute funds distinctly based on gender. This would effectively eradicate gender bias as women entrepreneurs would compete only against other women. (Hassan et al., 2020) This methodology is currently adopted by several

funds, including Female Founders Fund, and Unconventional VC which invests in women and minorities only.

The next generation of VCs are already making strides that will put them in a good position later on. The harrowing numbers today are only motivation for the future, a marker of how much more there is to accomplish. In her 2014 report, "Bridging the Gender Gap in Venture Capital," Professor Candida Brush sums it up accurately "There is an enormous untapped investment opportunity for venture capitalists smart enough to look at the numbers and fund women entrepreneurs." (Brush 2014) Luckily, there is an increase in the number of conversations around gender and racial inequity in venture capital. What's still missing is more action.

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Multicultural Leadership

Module Assignment 4

Prosjektoppgave - Norconsult

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Date:

05.05.2023

Campus:

BI Oslo

Examination code and name:

MAN 5199 Multicultural Leadership

Program:

Executive Master of Management

Innholdsfortegnelse

1. Innledning

Vi møtte Marisa Retamar som er HR - direktør og Benedikte Brøvig, som jobber med likestilling og mangfold på Norconsult sitt hovedkontor i Sandvika. De presenterte organisasjonen kort og gikk deretter nærmere inn på de problemstillingene som de ønsket konsultasjon på. Organisasjonen er i sterk vekst og utvikling av Norconsult Polen er en av fem sentrale strategiske satsingsområder. Strategien for 2022-2024 er å skape en signifikant vekst i Polen, både ressursmessig og innenfor flere markedsområder. Norconsult er i gang med å etablere en ressurspool med høyt kvalifiserte ingeniører som i hovedsak skal kunne bemanne oppdrag i Norden. Etablering av såkalte bemanningshub'er i andre land som har større tilgang på høy kompetanse til rimeligere priser er en velkjent strategi. Dette er noe mange selskaper har prøvd ut tidligere, med varierende resultat. Det er mange fordeler med å kunne benytte kompetanse på tvers av kulturer og landegrenser, men det er også risikoer forbundet med denne type forretningsmodell.

Norconsult har ansatt ny direktør i Polen som startet 1. mars 2023, og det er allerede 20-25 ansatte i Polen som kan fungere som en ressurs- og bemanningshub for Skandinavia, og det planlegges en ekspandering til 150 ansatte innen få år.

2. Identifisering av problemet

HR i Norconsult er bekymret for at polske ressurser ikke blir valgt av skandinaviske prosjektledere. Det antas at det er motstand for både prosjektledere og øvrige ansatte å ta i bruk polsk arbeidskraft. HR formidler en bekymring for om stereotypier, bevisste og ubevisste, kan være en problemstilling. Prosjektgrupper er overlatt til seg selv uten at det har vært fokus på kulturelle hensyn. HR beskriver at ingeniørene har mer kompetanse som problemløsere enn relasjonsbyggere.

HR har kulturell kompetanse, men representantene innrømmer at de har lite fokus på kultur eller kulturelle forskjeller per i dag. HR har ingen plan, eller program for å forhindre og takle utfordringer forbundet med ressursutnyttelse innad i arbeidsgrupper mellom Skandinavia og Polen. HR har heller ikke lett internt etter

ansatte som har erfaring med krysskulturelle problemstillinger. HR mistenker at språk er et aktuelt hinder, da kommunikasjon med polske ressurser går på engelsk, mens resten av selskapets aktiviteter går på norsk. HR har ingen innsikt i, og heller ikke spurt, om hva ansatte eller arbeidsgrupper opplever er problemstillinger, og/eller hvorfor samarbeidet med Polen ikke har fungert optimalt.

Norconsult nevner at flere av deres konkurrenter har prøvd og sviktet med lignende modeller. Verken HR, eller selskapet forøvrig, har søkt innsikt i hvorfor konkurrentenes modeller/forsøk har sviktet.

Arbeidsgruppene ledes av norske og svenske prosjektledere. Rekrutteringen av prosjektlederne går internt, basert på progresjon innenfor fagfelt, men har ofte begrenset med ledererfaring. Totalt er det flere hundre prosjektledere, men det er rundt 15-20, fra Energiavdelingen, som skal jobbe med Polen. Det har ikke blitt gjort endringer i prosjektledelsen, etter implementering av internasjonale arbeidsgrupper. Kultur og kulturforskjeller har ikke vært et tema og ikke del av dagens prosjektlederkurs. Dermed har kulturelle forskjeller ikke blitt hensyntatt, eksempelvis kommunikasjon, kjønnsroller, struktur eller hierarki.

Bestillingen blir konkretisert i andre møte: *Hva kan Norconsult gjøre for å øke sine sjanser for å lykkes i samarbeid med polske medarbeidere?*

3. Datainnsamling

Datainnsamling baserer seg på to intervjuer: ett den 15.03.23 og ett 16.03.23 og noe bakgrunnsinformasjon sendt på epost. Vi fikk en fin presentasjon om Norconsult, blant annet om størrelse, omsetning, om ansattgruppen, om hvilke områder det arbeides på, om verdier, om hvilke sosiale tiltak organisasjonen har.

4. Begrensninger

Vi har tatt utgangspunkt i handlinger vi anser som gjennomførbare, gitt størrelsen på mandatet til HR gruppen.

5. Forslag til handlingsplan

5.1 Avklare og innhente data

Noe som fremkom under møtene, var at HR hadde liten innsikt i hva innholdet i skepsisen innebærer og at det således kunne være nyttig å søke mer innsikt om dette. Denne innsikten kan man frembringe ved å spørre utvalgte prosjektledere og finne ut mer konkret hva det dreier seg om. Hva er skepsisen/problemstillingene med å jobbe med polske medarbeidere?

Et annet forslag til avklaring som kom frem, var at HR skaffer innsikt i hva det er som er sentrale faktorer til at både konkurrenters og egne underliggende internasjonale selskap i Norconsult tidligere ikke har lyktes med et slikt samarbeid. Basert på denne innsikten og erfaringene kan man utvikle konkrete tiltak knyttet til fremkommet informasjon for å redusere/eliminere disse problemstillingene.

HR hadde allerede før møte 2, tatt kontakt med en medarbeider i selskapet som kunne fortelle om erfaringer med å ha ansatt en fasilitator på Norconsult sin avdeling i Sverige. Denne ansatte var ikke ingeniør, slik vi oppfattet det, men en som skulle arbeide med å innhente tilbud. Dette var en spennende funksjon som det var knyttet stor optimisme til. Her ville de følge denne utviklingen tett å vurdere om dette kunne være et alternativ også i Norge. Vi vil komme tilbake til rollen som fasilitator under forslag til handlingsplan.

5.2 Reduksjon av fordommer

HR formidlet en bekymring for at stereotypier kunne være en problemstilling. Multikulturelle organisasjoner, team og individuelle ansatte påvirkes i forhold til om de identifiserer seg med sin hjemmekultur, vertskultur eller begge. De som har en integrerende tilnærming, vil identifisere seg med både hjemme og

vertskulturen. De som har en assimilerende (de sosiale og kulturelle skillene mellom gruppene viskes ut) tilnærming vil identifisere seg med vertskulturen og ikke hjemme kulturen. De som har en separerende tilnærming, vil identifisere seg med hjemme kulturen og ikke vertskulturen. De som har en marginaliserende tilnærming identifiserer seg verken med hjemme- eller vertskulturen (Lee et al, 2018).

Organisasjoner og team som har en lav global identitet med balanse mellom hjemme- og vertskulturen eller høy global identitet, vil tilegne seg kulturell intelligens og ledere som er sensitive på kulturelle forskjeller, som fører til produktive multikulturelle organisasjoner eller team. Kulturell intelligens fører til felles gruppeidentitet, som igjen fører til god kommunikasjon og effektive organisasjoner eller team (Lisak & Erez, 2015).

Norconsult som konsern vil kunne tilegne seg kulturell intelligens ved å samhandle og samarbeide med Norconsult i Skandinavia og Polen. Norconsult Polen besitter høy kompetanse, og er i tillegg positive til å lære seg engelsk. Ved å benytte disse etablerte ressurspoler og bemanningshubber, vil man kunne opparbeide seg en felles kulturforståelse og skape en felles identitet. Dette vil også bidra til å bryte ned stereotypier og heller fokusere på det man har felles, som er kvalifiserte ingeniører i begge land.

Den største innvandrergruppen i Norge er fra Polen. Ewa Sapiezynska har skrevet boken *"Jeg er ikke polakken din"* som er basert på hennes møte med Norge, og opplevelsene til andre polske hun har intervjuet. Hun beskriver hvordan polske innvandrere i Norge blir stigmatisert og satt merkelapper på. Eksempelvis beskriver hun hvor stigmatiserende hun opplever det er å nærmest alltid få spørsmål om hvor hun kommer fra og hva hun jobber med (Sapiezynska, 2022). Mange opplever at de ikke blir verdsatt, og blir sett på som å være lavt utdannet og har lav status i arbeidslivet, med dårligere vilkår og lønn enn de etnisk tilhørende i vertslandet. For mange er det vanskelig å integrere seg på arbeidsplassen, og ofte vil de ha en marginaliserende tilnærming. De er som oftest stolt av sin kulturelle identitet, men prøver å skjule den fordi den ikke oppleves verdsatt i vertslandet.

En av grunnene til at prosjektledere vegrer seg fra å benytte kompetanse fra datterselskapet i Polen, kan være akkurat slike fordommer som Sapiezynska

påpeker. De polske utdanningsinstitusjonene blir ikke anerkjent, og siden prissetting i Polen er betydelig lavere enn i Norge, blir også kompetansenivået vurdert lavere. Det kan også tenkes at Norconsult Norge kan være redd for å miste oppdrag og tap av omdømme ved å benytte polske ingeniører, basert på generelle holdninger og stigma i norsk arbeidsliv som gjelder polske arbeidere.

Kulturell identitet handler om å identifisere seg med en gruppe, og i et globalisert samfunn er en slik gruppe sjelden avgrenset eller enhetlig. Din kulturelle identitet handler da om at du selv føler at du tilhører ett eller flere kulturelle fellesskap som du velger å identifisere deg med. Kulturelle identitetshindringer oppstår når du opplever at du ikke passer inn i gruppen, ikke blir forstått, respektert eller blir marginalisert, hvor din kultur/ hjemme- kultur ikke blir verdsatt. Interkulturell kommunikasjon betyr kommunikasjon mellom folk fra ulike kulturer. Interkulturelle hindringer er ofte feilkommunikasjon, misforståelser eller konflikter som hindrer kunnskapsdeling og integrasjon på tvers av kulturelle grenser. Identitetstrussel kan beskrives som tilstedeværelsen av andre kulturelle grupper (ut-grupper), som truer prestisje og stolthet over egen kulturell identitet. Identitetsfragmentering kan beskrives som mangel på felles kulturell identitet blant teammedlemmer eller (inn-grupper) du er en del av.

Norconsult kan øke identitetssikkerheten ved å øke motivasjonen for å unngå stereotypisering, formidle inkluderende oppfatninger, og anvende systematiske, strukturerte og transparente utvelgelsesprosedyrer. Norconsult kan også skape identitetstrygghet ved å hjelpe sine medarbeidere til å bli mer bevisst på sin kulturelle identitet, og å skape mer passende mønstre for kulturell identifikasjon, som igjen kan være en fruktbar ny retning for tverrkulturell opplæring. Slik blir den enkelte involvert i flerkulturelt teamarbeid og kan mer bevisst iverksette identitetsarbeid, definert som spekteret av aktiviteter som den enkelte engasjerer seg i, ved å skape, presentere og opprettholde personlige identiteter som er kongruente med og støtter selvet.

Således vil arbeid med unngå stereotypier og med reduksjon av fordommer være sentralt for å få til bruk av polske ressurser i Norconsult.

5.3 Sosial identitet

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Tverrkulturell opplæring kan introdusere moduler som hjelper folk til å forstå «hvem de er kulturelt sett», og se alternative måter identitet kan erfares og forstå virkningen av kontekst og oppdragelse på egen identitetsutvikling. Dette sørger for at enkeltpersoner kan utvikle ønskelige identitetsmønstre i flerkulturelle team og jobbe bredere globalt (Lee et al, 2018). Det kan også bidra til å redusere intrapersonlige konflikter, som er konflikter mellom tanker og følelser i personen selv. Din sosiale identitet er knyttet til ulike abstraksjonsnivåer som gruppe- rollen og personen. Noen ganger kommer disse nivåene på kollisjonskurs, og dine verdier og normer kommer i konflikt med rollen du inntar eller gruppen du er en del av. Da blir det viktig å se helheten/ kosmopolitisme som filosofen Kwame Anthony Appiah tar opp i boken sin, «*The lies that bind*» (2019). Vi er ikke bare medlemmer av vår egen by, nasjon, stamme eller familie, men medlemmer av et globalt samfunn som overskrider lokale forhold. Vi har moralske forpliktelser overfor andre mennesker, mer enn bare å dele statsborgerskap. Vi må ta andre menneskers liv på alvor og bli informert om deres praksis og tro.

Appiah (2019) beskriver fem kategorier som vi mennesker klart bruker når vi definerer oss selv og menneskene vi møter: Creed, Country, Color, Class og Culture. Dette er ikke en fullstendig oppsummering av hvilke faktorer vi som mennesker klassifiserer individer vi møter på, men det gir oss et utgangspunkt for forståelse. I en arbeidslivssituasjon vil også andre faktorer spille inn. For å nevne noen kan det være: erfaring, kompetanse, kommunikasjonsevner, tittel, alder, utseende, kjønn og fysisk størrelse.

Som nevnt over har vi et grunnleggende behov for å definere hvem vi er og hvor vi passer inn i vår opplevde verden. For å kunne gjennomføre en slik definisjon og vurdering av egen sosial identitet er vi avhengige av å kunne kategorisere alle de mennesker vi omgir oss med og konkludere med hvor de passer inn i det verdensbilde som vi i det daglige lever i og forholder oss til. Dette legger så grunnlaget for hvilke grupper det enkelte individ skaper, knytter seg til og finner tilhørighet med. Men det er også viktig å ha i tankene at den samme vurderingen også underbygger hvem vi unngår å omgi oss med og definerer som «de andre, de som ikke er som oss». Kompleksiteten i dette øker selvfølgelig markant når vi tar inn over oss at dette er vurderingsprosesser som alle mennesker gjør.

Vår sosiale identitet (gruppen) henger også sammen med vår personlige identitet (rolle), hvor den kognitive prosessen i sosial identitetsteori er depersonalisering,

og personlig identitetsteori er selvverifisering, hvor økt selvtillit er motivasjonen i sosial identitetsteori, og følelse av mestring i personlig identitetsteori. Individet handler i forhold til sine egne mål og ønsker snarere enn som medlem av en gruppe eller kategori. Identitetsnivået som aktiveres (det personlige eller det sosiale) avhenger av faktorer i situasjonen, som sosial sammenligning eller normativ tilpasning, som gjør en gruppeidentitet operativ og overstyrer den personlige identiteten (Stets & Burke, 2000).

I en organisasjon som Norconsult, er dannelsen av slike gruppestrukturer basert på sosial identitet både en styrke og en utfordring. En styrke, fordi grupper der individene naturlig finner samhold, kommuniserer ofte bedre, har felles forståelse, er effektive, har økt trygghet og trivsel. Kompetanse og ressurser utnyttes dermed normalt på et godt nivå. Det er også en utfordring fordi slike grupper kan ekskludere individer fra egen gruppe eller distansere seg fra andre grupper. Resultatet kan dermed være fragmentering og tap av latent kunnskap fra de ekskluderte individer eller grupperinger. Mistrivsel, utenforskap og usikkerhet kan derfor føre til kortsiktig tap av medvirkning og produksjon samt et sannsynlig fremtidig tap av ellers verdifulle individer som potensielt ville ha tilført stor verdi til både gruppe, bedrift og organisasjon.

Norconsult bør alltid jobbe aktivt med å styrke organisasjonskulturen og skape en felles sosial identitet på tvers av land og avdelinger. Mye av dette gjør nok Norconsult allerede i dag, men det kan nevnes noen punkter som kan brukes til å styrke kulturen. Organisasjonen bør definere og kommunisere felles verdier, som kan bidra til å skape en følelse av fellesskap og hjelpe ansatte med å identifisere seg med organisasjonens formål og målsettinger. Organisasjonen bør tydelig kommunisere selskapets felles visjon og strategi, til alle ansatte på tvers av geografiske grenser. Organisasjonen bør jobbe aktivt for å påse et inkluderende arbeidsmiljø, som fremmer mangfold, og gjøre tiltak for å unngå stereotypisering som beskrevet over. Bruk av teknologi kan også være et virkemiddel, eksempelvis bruk av en felles teknologisk plattform for samarbeid og kunnskapsdeling på tvers av organisasjonen.

Norconsult er et internasjonalt konsern. Det vil ha stor betydning hvordan Norconsult presenterer seg både internt og eksternt for å skape en inkluderende identitet. Det å presentere merkevaren eksternt som Norconsult Polen og Norconsult Norge gir liten mening om man skal tilby fagtjenester på tvers av disse

avdelingene. Dersom det ligger latente negative holdninger til polsk arbeidskraft hos potensielle oppdragsgivere, vil det å presentere sine høyt kvalifiserte ingeniører under Norconsult Polen kun virke forringende. Kompetanse bør stå i fokus, ikke nasjonalitet. I tillegg kan man styrke denne internasjonale profilen ved å legge om til engelsk som arbeidsspråk i de avdelingene som jobber mellom Skandinavia og Polen.

5.3 Økt samhandling

Det er beskrevet flere kulturelle forskjeller i arbeidslivet mellom Polen og Norge, blant annet i Hofstede, (2001). Kjennskap til forskjellene kan være viktig for å unngå misforståelser som baserer seg på kulturelle forskjeller. Blant annet er det beskrevet at polsk arbeidskultur i prinsippet kan være mer hierarkisk enn skandinavisk. Dette kan innebære at en polsk medarbeider i større grad enn skandinaviske forventer tydelige beskjeder og forventninger om hva som skal gjøres. Polske vil kanskje utøve respekt for en prosjektleder på en annen måte, blant annet ved å ikke motsi eller komme med motforestillinger som man i større grad ville kunne se som naturlig i skandinavia, som har en mer flat arbeidskultur. En skandinavisk prosjektleder vil kunne oppleve at utførelsen av respekt skjer på en annen måte, samtidig som en skandinavisk prosjektleder vil kunne behandle sine polske ingeniørkollegaer mer som likemenn enn det som er vanlig lokalt. I en flatere struktur kan presentasjon av motforestillinger eller alternativer være forventet og sees på som viktige bidrag i en beslutningsprosess. Slike motsetninger vil kunne føre til en ytterligere forsterkning av en "oss-" og "dem-gruppe"

Basert på teoriene om sosial og kulturell identitet som er beskrevet over, vil et viktig forslag til tiltak for å øke en "vi-gruppe", være å ha fokus på økt samhandling mellom skandinaviske og polske ingeniører. For at tiltak skal føre til endring av atferd, bør det være fokus på noe som kan være konkret, og ikke minst mulig å gjennomføre raskt. Oppdragsgiver var opptatt av at tiltakene ikke skulle være med for mye "snakk om forståelse", følelser eller myke verdier. Da vil sjansen for å nå frem bli redusert og prosjektleder gruppen vil ikke ta i mot. Veien inn til prosjektledernes "mage", er gjennom faget. Prosjektledergruppen er opptatt av å være faglig oppdatert, som tall og fakta. Derfor vil det å skape en ramme for

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samhandling mellom polske og skandinaviske prosjektmedarbeidere gjennom fag, være en konstruktiv vei å gå. Det er essensielt at det bygges en relasjon mellom Norconsults skandinaviske prosjektledere og Norconsults polske ingeniører. Dersom prosjektlederne ikke kjenner til eller har tillit til ingeniørene i Polen har de heller ingen grunnlag for å velge å benytte seg av både reell og latent kompetanse.

Norconsult bør gi prosjektlederne muligheten til å knytte relasjoner til sine polske ingeniør- kollegaer på et felles faglig grunnlag. Alle mennesker er forskjellige og har ulike evner og preferanser. En vane de fleste har til felles er at vi vegrer å ta risiko når vi har muligheten til å unngå det. Det å møte nye mennesker kan være utfordrende for mange, særlig dersom det er en mulighet for at det kan dukke opp hindringer som språk, kultur, status eller andre barrierer. En løsning på dette er å sende prosjektledere til Polen, både individuelt og som grupper, ved å både flytte møter, seminarer og kurs til Polen.

Under våre korte samtaler med representanter fra Norconsult kom det frem at hoveddelen av prosjektlederne har sin utdannelse fra NTNU. Dette gir grunnlag for en gruppetenkning som definerer "vi med utdannelse fra NTNU". Ved å gjennomføre oppdatering og/eller styrking av kompetanse for prosjektlederne ved universitetet i Krakow skapes en personlig tilknytning til denne utdanningsinstitusjonen og følgelig også landet den ligger i. Det er selvfølgelig av avgjørende viktighet at kompetansehevingen oppleves solid, relevant og holder en faglig standard som tilsvarer og helst overgår tidligere kurs de har tatt i Skandinavia. Målsetningen må være at den individuelle prosjektleder i etterkant selv velger å føre kurset opp på sin CV. Dersom de selv har Universitetet i Krakow på sin CV er det mye lettere å relatere, respektere og knytte seg til andre som har denne utdannelsesinstitusjonen i sin bakgrunn. Det skapes med andre ord en forbindelse. Et gryende grunnlag for samhørighet, en utvidet definisjon av «vi».

I en ideell setting vil det også være gunstig på sikt om polske ingeniører som jobber primært mot Skandinavia får oppdatering og fagstyrkende kurs ved eksempelvis NTNU. Dette vil knytte tilhørighet og respekt samt medvirke til bygging av felles faglig plattform på tvers av nasjonalitet.

Man kan også kunne vurdere å bruke bonus som et virkemiddel for å øke samhandling mellom polske og norske ingeniører. Hertzberg to-faktor teori beskriver hygienefaktorer, som jobbsikkerhet, lønn, arbeidsbetingelser, og sosiale forhold, som grunnleggende og må dekkes, og motivasjonsfaktorer som er stimulerende, såkalt vekstfaktorer, som bonuser, tittel, status, ansvar, vekst o.l. (Hertzberg et al, 1993). Monetære belønninger er et insentiv som kan brukes for å motivere eller belønne prosjektlederne til å benytte, i dette tilfellet, polske ressurser i prosjekter. Dette kan derimot ofte ha en kortvarig effekt. Tittel, status og andre fordeler kan eksempelvis være gode alternativer. Kanskje en kombinasjon er det mest gunstige, her må Norconsult HR vurdere verdi og kost. Eksempelvis kan prosjektledere som bruker polske ingeniører i en viss mengde i sine prosjekter, få tittelen "internasjonal prosjektleder". Om en slik tittel også åpner for økte muligheter i organisasjonen, vil dette kunne gi et insentiv for flere prosjektledere og ansatte å strekke seg etter.

5.4. Bruk av fasilitator

Faglitteraturen om multikulturelle team beskriver ofte bruk av mekler i situasjoner der det allerede har oppstått konflikt mellom teammedlemmer (Halverson et al, 2008). En annen måte å benytte seg av en mekler eller fasilitator på er å forebygge konflikt eller fasilitere økt samhandling. Samtidig kan det være en måte å redusere identitetstrusler, som beskrevet over. Norconsult viser innledningsvis til at det var ansatt en person i Sverige som skulle arbeide med å innhente tilbud, samtidig som det var en med kjennskap til begge arbeidskulturer. Dette er et godt tiltak som Norconsult bør fortsette med og utvide. Det å ta i bruk en nøytral mekler/fasilitator med interkulturell kompetanse, vil kunne være en måte å fortolke eller "oversette" tilnærminger, fungere som en buffer, og koordinere kommunikasjonen slik at misforståelser ikke oppstår. Det vil kunne være med på å håndtere forskjeller i arbeidskultur for å forhindre konflikter mellom medarbeidere med forskjellig kulturer i et team.

Et viktig prinsipp er at fasilitatoren/mekleren skal være nøytral, og forskning har vist at det er et viktig element for å dempe konflikter (Goldman, 2008). Dette kan medføre at man sammen kan finne løsninger som gir mening for flere. Det vektlegges videre i faglitteraturen at det ikke finnes "en løsning for alt", men at en "utenforstående/tredjepart/mekler/fasilitator" i større grad har mulighet til å se situasjonen utenfra og kan få et klarere bilde av hva som oppstår. Kjennskap til

ulike typer forhandlingsstiler kan være en fordel. En mer skandinavisk forhandlingsstil kan beskrives som soft, som fokuserer på å beholde gode relasjoner. I andre kulturer kan forhandlingsstilen beskrives som mer "hard" der det vil i større grad dreie seg om å vinne forhandlingene og bli enig om et resultat. Mer konkret kan dette være en polsk person som har erfaring med norsk kultur eller en fra Skandinavia som har god kjennskap til arbeidskulturer i Polen som kan inneha denne rollen i tillegg til å innhente tilbud.

6. Konklusjon

Bestillingen fra Norconsult som ble presentert for oss var: *Hva kan Norconsult gjøre for å øke sine sjanser for å lykkes i samarbeid med polske medarbeidere?* Basert på bestillingen over er våre foreslåtte tiltak oppsummert som følger:

Det blir viktig å se på tiltak som indirekte kan være med på å redusere fordommer, øke vi-gruppen og arbeide med å forhindre "oss-og-dem".

- Innhente innsikt i tidligere prosjekter, både eksternt og internt i Norconsult.

- Styrke organisasjonskulturen og skape en sterkere felles sosial identitet på tvers av land og avdelinger.

- Bruke engelsk som arbeidsspråk i avdelingene som jobber mot Polen og Skandinavia.

- Kommunisere én merkevare, Norconsult, fremfor Norconsult Norge og Norconsult Polen.

- Øke samhandling gjennom et felles faglig grunnlag, og se på muligheter for felles kurs, seminarer og kompetanseheving i Polen.

- Gjennomføre styrking av kompetanse for prosjektlederne ved Universitetet i Krakow. Dette skaper en personlig tilknytning og validering av institusjonen og utdanningen.

- Gi oppdaterende og fagstyrkende kurs ved eksempelvis NTNU for polske ingeniører som jobber mot Skandinavia.

- Utvide bruk av fasilitatorer med interkulturell kompetanse, som et ledd i å forebygge konflikter og få bedre kommunikasjon og samhandling. Fasilitatoren bør ha høy kjennskap til begge kulturer og ha en nøytral rolle.

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