Preparing Strategic Military Leaders and Crisis Managers for Differing Degrees of Diversity: A New Strategic Model

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Abstract. Preparing military strategic leaders and crisis managers for work related to increasing competence and efficiency within their own organization is a complex task. Diversity in organizations is not easy to obtain but still necessary to increase competence and efficiency, not least in military organizations preparing for unforeseen situations. This study rests on two premises: that diversity is essential for handling unforeseen situations, and that a common framework for diversity across organizations is needed to develop inter-professional efficiency. The article aims to discuss the concept of diversity and what importance the nature of diversity can have in preparing military leaders. The term is analysed in accordance with a semantic view of theories and theory construction. The key point is to perceive diversity as a phenomenon consisting of many underlying and interdependent variables, which together constitute different degrees of diversity. Aligning this theoretical analysis with practical work, it is important to identify the organization's current plans for preparedness and its future need for diversity, including what can limit or hinder the development and implementation of its diversity policy. Our study identifies both potential and hindrances found in the Norwegian Armed Forces as an example. Based on this foundation, we introduce a new strategic model which may support leaders both within and across organizations in their work on diversity development. Based on our theoretical and empirical studies, we also introduce a definition of diversity.

Keywords. Diversity, strategic leadership, military leadership, crisis management, the unforeseen (UN), interaction ("samhandling"), organizational learning

1. Introduction

Preparing military strategic leaders and crisis managers for increasing competence and efficiency within their own organization is a complex task. Preparing them for utilizing the potential of the organization as a whole to handle unforeseen situations in interaction with other partners is not only a necessary but also a very challenging responsibility. In our case, it means identifying the organization's existing needs and action plans for

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preparedness in the short term. It also entails empirical investigations within the organization's own ranks to consider future needs for diversity needed for capacity building. A combination of both actions is a crucial part of being prepared for unforeseen events and situations in the long term.

1.1. Aims of the Article

This article aims to explain the concepts of diversity and relevant competence with examples from military organizations. Based on former work, we claim that the theoretical foundation and the model developed are relevant when preparing leaders for developing a workforce that should handle disruptive and unforeseen situations in common interaction. As such, emergency police, fire and medical units, volunteer organizations, and others aiming to develop competence to handle such situations are also within our scope.

We may argue that diversity in a military organization, and in emergency services in general, is a necessity for handling unforeseen situations in a successful way [1,2]. Diversity is necessary not only in enhancing skills for dealing with such challenges but also for creating better conditions for both interactions within an organization and for cross-sectoral interactions, not least in light of interactions between military and civil organizations. In this way, the combined competence power of the organizations, both individually and in interaction with each other, can be utilized to the best possible extent to solve complex, unforeseen, and hazardous tasks. Such an ambition requires the organizations' leaders to possess high competence in relevant diversity, both as a phenomenon and as a tool in competence and organizational development. An additional aim of this article is therefore to contribute to the development of a field of study we refer to as strategic diversity leadership (SDL).

1.2. Diversity and Standards

Strategic diversity, however, is not only a measure belonging to an outcome-oriented perspective. Diversity is also a political and social policy laying the foundation for maximizing employee potential by encouraging tolerance for people with different backgrounds. In Norway, the world's first Standard for Diversity Management was issued by Standards Norway in 2018 on these premises [3]. Also, the NATO Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy (2003) [4] emphasizes standards of conduct for both international staff and international military staff to avoid unfair discrimination (emphasis in original quote [4]). What the concept of unfair discrimination points to is that diversity is distinct from equal opportunities. While the principle of equal opportunities is focusing on removing discrimination, the principle of unfair discrimination is directed towards maximizing employee potential, according to the argumentation in the policy document. Here we see that the diversity policy of NATO directs the attention to differing degrees of diversity for all at the individual level in a perspective of lifelong learning (cf. [5]). As such, it is not limited to easily identifiable indicators inherent in the concept of equal opportunities, such as group markers of class, gender, age, or disabilities. Such policy distinctions demand a thorough theoretical analysis.

Accordingly, awareness and recognition of diversity are needed to meet objectives in a changing security environment, now requiring a much wider range of competences and skills to enhance NATO's capabilities [4]. Thus we discuss the concept of diversity and the importance it has in preparing military leaders to follow the explicit codes of

conduct intended to maximize individual talents, abilities, and experiences aiming to meet current and unforeseen competence, as well as in ensuring success in reaching military objectives. In our study we primarily use some examples from research conducted in the Norwegian Armed Forces in the past five years. The examples indicate what such work may entail in practice, especially pointing out factors that may enhance or limit the development and implementation of a diversity policy following our strategic model in a military organization.

1.3. Challenges for Diversity in Organizations

The question is, nevertheless, whether it is possible to obtain diversity in military organizations or similar institutions, which, by their very nature, tend to be relatively closed and mechanically organized compared to civilian companies and businesses. Brown [6] and Jayne and Dipboye [7] point out that diversity is not easy to obtain in even more open and flexible organizations. In addition, organizational theory and organizational didactics lack specific analysis and planning tools for the development of diversity in organizations. This article is a contribution that introduces a basic theoretical model and way of thinking, the Strategic Relational Model for Degrees of Diversity (SRDD-model).

1.4. Methodological Considerations

The development of the SRDD-model rests on a methodological foundation derived from an aggregated integration of findings in earlier theoretical and empirical studies. Theoretically, we have applied the semantic view of theories and theory construction (STC) [8–11] as the principle and method to identify underlying processes of diversity as a construct and phenomenon. STC is a meta-theory describing the constituents of data as the basis for models, theories, and related key concepts. Prior definitions and models of diversity have been analysed in such a perspective. The results of our theoretical analyses have been integrated with re-analyses of recent empirical studies on relevant diverse competence development in the higher military education system (war academies) in Norway [12,13]).

   Central to the development of the model is the condition that military organizations and civil emergency organizations need relevant competence to handle unforeseen situations (UN) [1]), and that a common framework for diversity across organizations is needed to develop inter-professional efficiency in "samhandling"[3] (interaction) under risk (SUR) [2].

   The article is structured in the following way: First, the basic concepts of the UN, SUR, and diversity are defined. Subsequently, the basic structures of the SRDD-model are explained. In the final sections, the concept of the model is aligned with conditions for relevant competence development in higher military education, and we indicate the relationship between strategic diversity leadership (SDL) and the SRDD-model in practical terms.

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[3] "Samhandling" is a Norwegian term that connotes concepts such as interaction and collaboration (see Section 2).
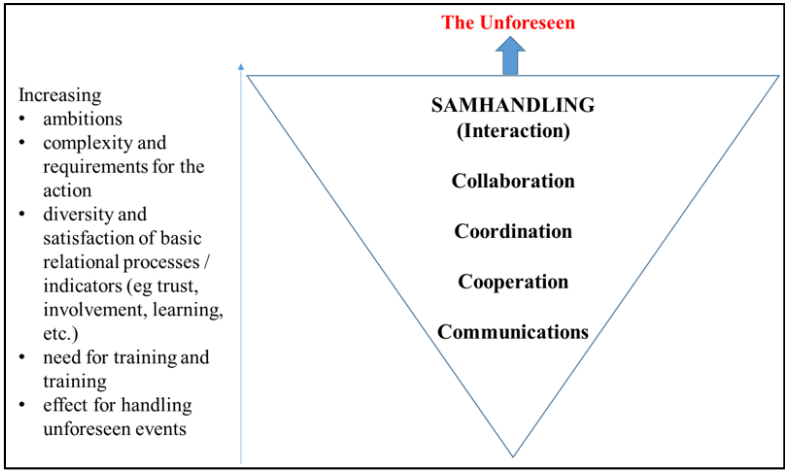
Figure 1. The concept of samhandling has a high level of relational ambition and covers collaboration, coordination, communication, and other relational forms. (p. 56) [48], [53,54].

2. Competence for the Unforeseen: Diversity and the Construct of "Samhandling"

Preparing military leaders for utilizing the potential of the organization to handle unforeseen situations in interactions with other partners is a crucial but challenging responsibility. In this section we examine the relationship between diversity and unforeseen events more closely. Difference and variety in competence, i.e. diversity, is necessary for complex task solution and for handling unforeseen events. In general, the unforeseen is defined as:

> Something that occurs relatively unexpected and with relatively low probability or predictability for those who experience and must deal with it. (p. 30) [1].

Diversity provides adaptability. Competence diversity requires new methods for strategic leadership, recruitment, and selection. Both to gain diversity in organizations and to exploit the potential in diversity as competence, "samhandling" is required.

"Samhandling" as a relational phenomenon has a wider relational ambition compared to similar relational processes such as communications, cooperation, coordination, and collaboration (Fig. 1). "Samhandling" is a Norwegian term that connotes interaction, collaboration, cooperation, and coordination in one word. Many underlying conditions must be satisfied to achieve samhandling in practice, including trust, involvement, ethical momentum, balance of power, and role consciousness [48].

A definition developed by Torgersen and Steiro is articulated as follows:

> Samhandling is an open and mutual communicative development between participants who develop skills and complement each other in terms of expertise, either directly, face-to-face, or mediated by technology or by hand power. It involves working towards common goals. The relationship between participants at any given time relies on trust, involvement, rationality and industry knowledge. (p. 130) [14], (p. 334) [47].

Our analysis shows that interaction or social interaction are constructs that cover the Norwegian term of samhandling [2,14]. Based on 28 studies of samhandling under risk

and of unpredictable conditions, Torgersen, Saeverot, Steiro and Kawano developed a definition of samhandling under risk (SUR) as:

> Samhandling Under Risk (SUR) implies an emphasis on specific educational, organizational and operational structures, and these structures can have different importance for the effectiveness of samhandling in order to master challenges in the phases of warning signs, incident moment and recovery. (p. 527) [2].

This definition emphasizes that several of the core dimensions, like trust, need to be present in SUR, but that there are additional properties that need to be stressed specifically when preparing leaders and managers for unforeseen situations (see also pp. 522–532 [2]). For example, there is a specific need to emphasize the ability and opportunity for swift trust, and the need for common perceptions clarifying unclear goals and disorder in information should such a situation arise. Another central feature is the stress on competence for interactions across sectors and organizations. Concurrent learning[4] (CL) is therefore important in training and action for the unforeseen [52,54,47]. CL means that actors learn from one another in the samhandling process. CL "…involves not only being familiar with one's own competence, but also learning so that individuals can connect to their own expertise and thus develop this further with the others to create something new. This learning process takes time – it needs to take time, and the process must be deliberate and organized." (p. 253 [52]).

New ways of training as well as an awareness of such conditions in doctrines and curricula are necessary to achieve such efficiency. These new skills that all parties involved should have and develop raise the standard for how diversity should be understood and developed in organizations. In sum, preparing leaders and managers for diversity in this perspective entails that competence is seen in a broad perspective, not only in terms of quantifiable and overall terms such as gender, muscle strength, age, and formal education.

3. Definitions of Diversity

There are several definitions and approaches to the term "diversity". The understanding of diversity in organizations and the purpose of the concept have also changed throughout history following the development of society [6,16–22]. A meta- study conducted by Jayne and Dipboye [7] about how organizations define and use the term showed that the vast majority of definitions are not generally and theoretically anchored, but normative and designed in practical terms, adapted to one's own organization and workplace. Damon Williams [23], for instance, has developed a strategic leadership theory for diversity, especially related to higher education institutions in the U.S., based on the experiences that:

> In the new millennium, institutions will look more and more to strategic diversity leaders, not only to help make their campus communities more diverse, equitable, and inclusive, but also to improve their academic teaching and research objectives. To become a strategic diversity leader requires a mindset that can read external and internal pressures, navigate often treacherous organizational politics, leverage the best of what is known about diversity-themed change management science and engage others in the process of moving the notoriously complex and tradition-bounded cultures of academic institutions forward. (p. 7) [23].

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[4] CL is defined as "A deliberate and continuously functional and interacting learning process among actors that occurs simultaneously with the interaction." (p. 253 [52]).

Patrick and Kumar [49] have emphasized a more general definition:

> Diversity is a set of conscious practices that involve understanding and appreciating inter-dependence of humanity, cultures, and the natural environment; practicing mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from our own; understanding that diversity includes not only ways of being but also ways of knowing; recognizing that personal, cultural, and insti-tutionalized discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others; and building alliances across differences so that we can work together to eradicate all forms of discrimination. (p. 1) [49].

Others link the concept of diversity to organizational cultures and workplace climates. Based on a literature study and their own empirical analyses, Mohanty and Acharya suggest the following definition: "Diversity climate is broadly defined as the degree to which an organization focuses on maintaining an inclusive workplace." (p. 69) [50]. The term "degree" is defined empirically to differing survey scales (diversity scale, ordinal or interval) measuring selected indicators for diversity as a social phenomenon, e.g. Attitudes toward Diversity Scale [51].

Descriptions of diversity often list different concrete characteristics, or variables, either related to the type of competence or to the human being and cultural backgrounds. These are further organized in different groups or strata, often stressing two or more main groups of properties connecting diversity to inclusion, equality, and employee involvement in organizational innovation [24]. For example, the organization Sempra Energy expresses this as follows:

> "When we talk about diversity at Sempra Energy, we mean more than race, age, sexual orientation, and gender. We believe that diversity includes:
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> - Human diversity, characterized by our employees' physical differences, personal preferences, or life experiences.
> - Cultural diversity, characterized by different beliefs, values, and personal characteristics.
> - Systems diversity, characterized by the organizational structure and management systems in a workplace." (p. 411) [7].

In terms of characteristics, the distinction between "visible" and "invisible" diversity is often made. An example of this is found in the Norwegian official strategic competence policy document for the defence sector, *Competence for a New Age*:

> [Diversity] is about having a varied staff composition with regards to both visible and in-visible differences. Visible diversity refers to variables such as gender, ethnicity, age and physical capabilities. . . . Invisible variables refer to factors such as education, experiences, sexual orientation, religion, mindset, competence, social or geographical background. (p. 24, our translation) [7].

The purpose of focusing on and facilitating diversity in organizations has been to adapt skills and labour to the overall development of society [6,7,26]. Governing has often focused on the increasing rate of change in technology and the interactions between organizations and state governance systems. To be competitive, diversity is needed in competence development, not least for defence organizations.[5] Furthermore, a defence organization needs to be prepared to cope with serious and complicated unforeseen events, challenges that are not known or trained for in advance [2,14]. This is especially crucial when developing a cyber defence [27].

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[5] Cf. cross-cultural management and interaction [28].

It places particularly high demands on diversity in competence, mindset, learning, and interactivity (samhandling) as important parts of the fighting force. In order to prevent, meet, and recover from such events, management, planning, and practical measures are needed to ensure that the whole organization has the necessary skills and capabilities. In other words, what are required are special insight into diversity as a discipline and an awareness of how this can be strategically developed in the organization. This understanding aligns with the NATO Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy [4].

All in all, most definitions and descriptions on diversity are very general and situational. Based on our studies and model development described below, we introduce the following definition:

> Diversity is sustainable and relevant competence, comprised of various potentially interactive competency units, which must be identified, articulated, made aware, facilitated, and developed so that the potential is triggered for the best of the individual, the organization, and the society.

4. Development of a Model

The starting point for the model is cosmopolitan.[6] It entails the understanding that diversity is not a term that covers static or clear discontinuous stages or fixed levels, where ready-made solutions and measures can be found. Diversity cannot be sufficiently measured by using generic constructs and quantitative scales (diversity scales). An emphasis on such statistical approaches may disguise important nuances, leading to reduced understanding and insights into diversity as a phenomenon. In turn, this creates inconsistency and uncertainty in the knowledge foundation used when selecting practical measures and approaches to evaluations.

Diversity is a complex term built on underlying structures (characteristics) or conditions that must be met for the desired degree of diversity to be developed in an organization. There will also be different needs in organizations for what kind of diversity is deemed essential. For example, someone will need to increase the competence within certain scientific disciplines, while others need to focus on cultural understanding or gender.

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[6] Cosmopolitism is universally oriented thinking that focuses on the fellowship and feeling of belonging among all people, where man is a cosmopolitan (Weltbürger). Cosmopolitan means being a fellow citizen who is welcome independently of national or cultural belongings, and where loaded (deliberative) concepts like human rights, reciprocity, equality, inclusion, and tolerance are governing behaviour and politics (deliberate democracy), not only within each single state, but also across borders and alliances. A cosmopolitan is concerned with global problems and solutions where solutions are beneficial to all humanity. This can also be described as the cosmopolitan ideal. This line of thinking is above all based on Immanuel Kant's essay on perpetual peace [29] and the terms "pacific federation" between states, equality for all as (world) citizens, international rights (law), and cosmopolitan rights as limited to the "… conditions of universal hospitality." (p. 105) [29]. A similar path of reasoning may be relevant in developing organizations, specifically for the conditions governing relations between organizations, and between employees as individuals and as members of subgroups [17,46]. Where the starting point for relations is founded on similar principles as the cosmopolitan ideal, decision making aiming at enhancing diversity will not be determined only by attitudes towards gender, historical background, political ideals, class, nationality, or other types of ideological prejudice and discrimination [30]. In this way the actual needs of organizations may be at the forefront in measures aiming to decrease irrelevant diversity and promoting relevant diversity. At the same time, other codes of organizational culture, routines, and hidden attitudes will become unveiled and be inspected for their usefulness in further organizational development. A cosmopolitan way of reasoning in organizations will therefore be on the level of ideal thinking, but still it is an essential part of raising awareness in leadership training in order to prepare for unforeseen situations and interaction under risk [31].
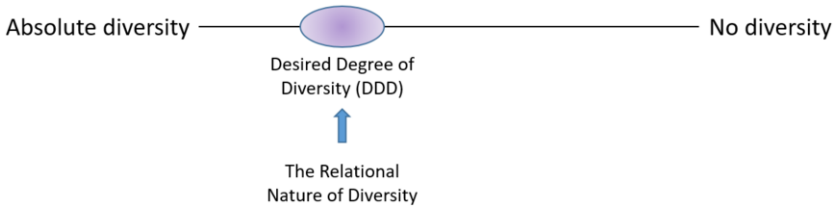
Figure 2. Basic continuum model of diversity in organizations.

4.1. Continuum and Degree of Diversity

Such a foundation of complex concepts is based on the semantic view of theories and theory construction [2,9,10]. Thus, it is a matter of which degree of diversity is desired or needed. Diversity, in an aggregated theoretical perspective, is thus a continuum concept [32], where a level or degree could be illustrated (as a metaphor) with a position or a dynamic area on a sliding scale between two imaginary (absolute and unattainable) extremes (Fig. 2). An organization must, in its strategic development plans, try to identify what degree and type of diversity is needed to solve its tasks. In addition, political and cultural guidelines can provide a framework for the needs. Such a degree of diversity in the organization can be termed the desired degree of diversity (DDD) (Fig. 2).

A key phase in the development is to articulate goals in a strategic plan and diversity policy. This should then be implemented in the organization. The challenges lie in being able to express the objectives so that they comply[7] with the actual ideas and opportunities considered essential. Secondly, the challenges lie in choosing measures that are adapted to the capacity of the organization. There should be consistency between the various phases—the idea phase, strategic plan, implementation, and evaluation—in order to achieve DDD in practice. At the same time, DDD should also be dynamic. DDD should describe a higher degree of diversity than what has already been implemented so that the organization continuously identifies potential for improvement as something to stretch for. These corresponding conditions are a problem in organizational development in general, and particularly difficult where diversity is involved. The problem has its background in the nature of diversity.

4.2. The Nature of Diversity and Space State of Diversity (SSD)

As mentioned, diversity consists of a variety of variables or attributes, divided into two or more main groups, such as visible and invisible variables. Diversity is the collective term and consists of the sum of a number of variables that can be individually located on different positions on the continuum scale. They are in an interactive and binding relationship with each other (Fig. 3). These variables have a multidimensional structure.

For example, the variable "gender" will be related not only to male or female, or the number of men or women in the organization, but also to other diversity variables, such as formal education, age, experience, mindset, status in society, and interests. This complicates the strategic planning for the development of diversity in the organization. For a military organization, the goal of increasing the degree of diversity can be justified by increasing the fighting power. Fighting power will thus be one of several management

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[7] Cf. compliance challenges, a classic theoretical (and practical) problem in organizational learning and design of strategic plans and curriculums [33,34].
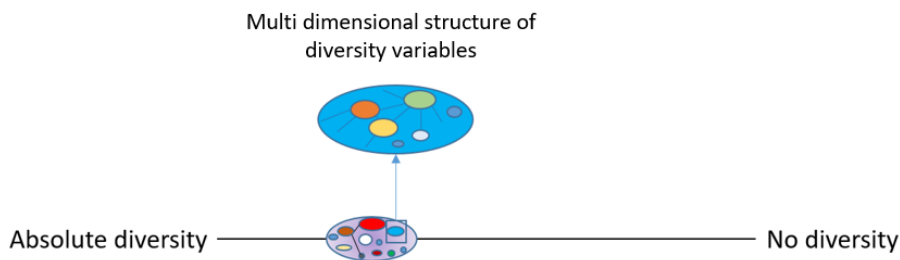
Figure 3. Diversity as a collective term and the multi-dimensional structure of diversity variables.
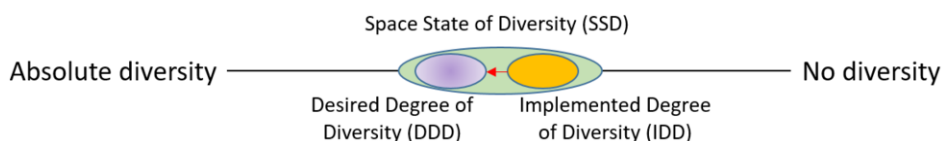

Figure 4. Ideal model for the development of diversity in organizations.

goals for selecting which diversity variables are chosen in a development process. However, these variables will not be delimited or particular; they are linked to and strongly dependent on several other variables within and between the main groups. If one variable is ignored, it has consequences for the other variables and the end result. Diversity has a relational and dynamic nature (Figs 2 and 3).

In addition, context structures can bind or control both the options of choice of variables within the main group and how the development will take place. An example may be the desire and need for more PhD-level employees, or more women as military officers, because it will strengthen the fighting power. Thus, in the leadership and management of such a development process, a variety of variables must be seen in context, including structural, organizational, and other societal variables, which must then be part of strategic planning and adaptation for the development of diversity. It suggests what kind of diversity will have the intended and desired function. Overall, these factors will estimate the scope, or the possible room to maneuverer, for the degree of diversity to be realized within the organization. This we denote as the space state of diversity (SSD) for the choice and implementation of DDD, and secondly for the implemented degree of diversity (IDD) (Fig. 4). Ideally, both DDD and IDD should be within the SSD.

4.3. Bounded Degree of Diversity (BDD)

As mentioned above, the development of diversity in organizations is not an easy task to realize. It requires that leaders of all levels have professional competence in the nature of the concept of diversity as well as strategies for developing this in their organizations with their distinctive features. Not least, it is important that leaders have insight into what can limit or increase the degree of diversity in their own organization. The perception of relevance is a strong trigger of the chosen path towards the DDD, meaning what the leadership and the organization perceive to be the best knowledge or type of diversity needed to solve tasks and challenges and thus to acquire and develop. Examples may be what is judged to be the most relevant core competences or professional competences at a given point in time. The understanding of the concept of relevance is therefore essential

as a competence in itself, and it is an important influence in the choices made to increase the degree of diversity in an organization [13]. The concept of relevance and its relationship with diversity will therefore be explained later in this article. The understanding of relevance is an important part of leadership competence. At the same time this competence is aligned with the environment of the organization, rules, and culture. Military codes will for instance affect how the concept of relevance is to be understood within the organization.

Defence organizations also have their own characteristics. They represent power organizations governed by the state and national authorities in interaction with supranational structures such as NATO. The question is how these characteristics, which will differ in different countries and cultures, will affect the development of diversity in the organization. The various national defences, with their distinctive features, will indeed themselves constitute diversity.

However, the organizational and cultural characteristics of the individual military organizations could act as limitations in the development of diversity internally, based on the variable level. In a strategic planning and management process for the development of diversity in a military organization, consideration should be given to how particular traditional and cultural rules[8] may affect SSD, DDD, and IDD. Examples of such rules are the following (see also Fig. 5):

- Military codes (and subgroups, i.e. cultural differences between the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force)
- Hierarchical structures (command & control, range)
- Recruitment and selection
- Relationship between military and civilian (i.e. military officers–civilian employees), including the relation between military leaders and political control, "Commander's room for performing" [35].

These are often established cultural drivers in defence systems in many countries, and thus strong variables that can affect the development of diversity. This is because they can limit the number of inclusive underlying variables associated with the overall diversity variables, both within visible and invisible diversity. For example, strong military codes, traditional selection methods [36], and internal hierarchical structures can directly or indirectly limit the space state for choice and prioritization of variables. These are then guided by traditional criteria, so-called bounded rationality [37]. The organization can further justify priorities that hide new competence needs, and repel or ignore the value of competence flow with others. Thus the organization can continue to rely on its inherent and established identity, profession, and culture. This may cause the organization to be almost unnoticed in the outer environment and in effect limit the real force to perform. Majken Schultz and Mary Jo Hatch described such development as a form of "organizational narcissism" (p. 990) [38].

In summary, the result may be what we refer to as the bounded degree of diversity (BDD) (Fig. 5). This means that the organization and its members may implement a lower degree of diversity than SSD would allow. Another outcome is that the organization can believe or imagine that the implemented degree of diversity is higher than what is the actual case. Thus, the actual and implemented situation (IDD) differs from the organization's DDD. It does not comply. Then a situation occurs that will require the

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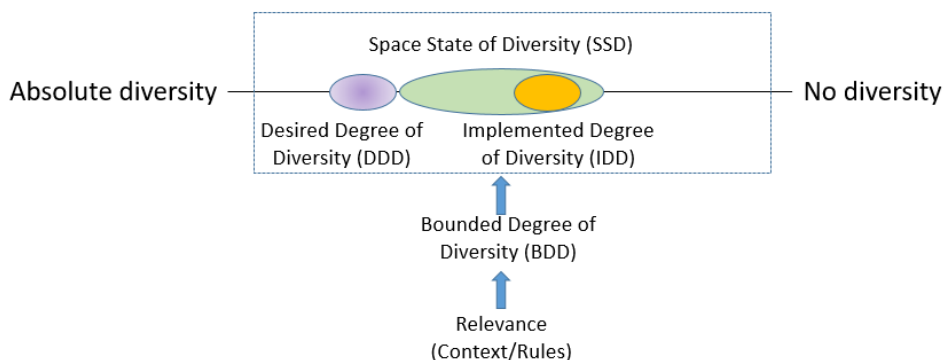[8] Cf. the "activity theory model" and "rules" by Engström [44,45].

Figure 5. A general Strategic Relational Model for Degrees of Diversity (SRDD model) in organizations, shown with a situation where the DDD is outside the SSD, but the actual situation (IDD) is within, but with a lower degree of diversity than is possible.

DDD to be adapted to the IDD, and such a situation can create ambiguities, misunderstandings, and communication and collaboration problems both in the organization and between the interacting agencies and sectors or states. However, if the organization and management are aware of these dangers, strong organizational cultures and structures can be turned into an advantage, thus strengthening the progress in the development of diversity.

5. Diversity and Relevance of Competence in Implementation

In the development of the DDD, a systematic analysis of competence needs aligned with tasks to solve or expected to come is needed. This is an important element of increasing the potential for efficient interaction in the case of unforeseen events. Identifying these competence needs entails an understanding of the concept of educational relevance, how to raise awareness of this concept, as well as its use in practice. To raise such awareness, it is crucial to ask what competence is deemed relevant for the development of DDD for organizations—in different situations at various points in time. This way of linking theory and practice is a necessary part in developing an implementation strategy (IDD).

5.1. Linking Theory and Practice

Although we may agree on a theoretical understanding of the strategic model of diversity, obtaining differing degrees of diversity in practice may stumble upon hindrances inherent in an organization's structure and culture when it comes to what kind of competence is deemed relevant by members belonging to different levels in the hierarchy. It may also be contingent upon leaders' own competence and experience. These possible hindrances should be identified and resolved to include transboundary reflections. This is an important step in developing an implementation strategy if the aim is to move from BDD to DDD. Learning from such work, and sharing results across organizations, may in turn make the theories, models, and practices even more accurate and correct. It is the concrete content of the concepts of diversity and relevant competence that are important for practical training in raising diversity awareness [2,39].

5.2. Pressure for Diversity Awareness in the Norwegian Armed Forces

The highest accredited military education in Norway has recently experienced pressure from society, the political level, and not least from within its own organization, to raise diversity awareness. Both the Royal Norwegian Air Force and the Norwegian Military Academy have conducted studies in the past few years to get closer to an understanding of new political signals such as those mentioned in the Norwegian official strategic competence policy document of 2012 [25], or what we here call their own SSD.

The research was commissioned from the academy leadership level as an ongoing part of assessing the relevance of their preparation of military leaders. The studies included analyses of policy and strategic documents, curriculum analyses, survey data for cadets, and participant observation, as well as interviews with leadership, teachers, cadets, and relevant stakeholders [12[9],13[10],40[11]]. Data was analysed and aligned with knowledge about changes in the military environment and updated professional development strategies. Accordingly, the studies were conducted in a perspective of development, i.e. we ensured that the research had a transboundary scope to look beyond their own bounded degree of diversity (BDD).

In these cases, we decided to take a closer look at the invisible level of diversity, directing attention to factors such as current and future relevant experiences and competences. We found that the academies had sufficiently formal planning tools for addressing the indicators of a BDD. Not surprisingly perhaps, we could also conclude that the research process itself raised greater awareness of challenges related to competence identification and mismatch issues needed to resolve competence utilization needed for handling unforeseen events. This enhanced the leadership competence in terms of looking beyond the BDD and towards an empirically founded DDD.

In effect, the commissioning of research was an intentional way of improving the strategic competence planning process. It also served as a way of linking theory and practice to formulate an implementation strategy by enabling the participants to make tacit knowledge more explicit.

5.3. Making Tacit Knowledge About Diversity More Explicit

As mentioned, military institutions, by their very nature, may be relatively closed and mechanically organized, compared to civilian companies and businesses. Our findings show that even though this may be the case seen from an external perspective comparing military institutions to civilian ones, the members of the military institutions saw the structure and the organization of the education system as rather elusive, with unclear communication lines among the academy, force, and political levels. A result was that the competence needs of the force, and thereby what competence diversity the officer education should focus on, was known to vary at different levels in the system. The competence deemed relevant both for current and future tasks by members belonging to different levels in the hierarchy was mostly tacit knowledge best understood within different subsystems. This was a hindrance in the assessment of a competence mismatch in preparing for the unforeseen. It was also a limitation in the work on a strategic competence development plan for the organization as a whole attempting to move from BDD to DDD.

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[9] Semi-structured interviews with leadership, instructors, stakeholders, N = 41.
[10] Survey to cadets 2013–2016, N = 280.
[11] Semi-structured interviews with leadership and instructors, N = 6.

Several informants pointed out that competence mismatches could be decreased if the level of explicit knowledge organization was improved. In fact, the system was judged to be dominated by informal communication with partly fragmented documentation and a low level of systematics in the material necessary to monitor the indicators needed at the parameter level. At the same time, we found that the nature of this current military academy structure and organization allowed for quick changes in educational staff, ensuring that competence development included fresh operational experience and a flexibility to adjust teaching methods and content to align with changes in the national and international military and civilian environment. The tensions found between some informants' wishes for clear structure and transparency and others' views of a military leader preparation strengthened by freedom and flexibility constituted a factor that may provide great potential in improving strategies. But it may also be a hindrance in the implementation phase. Such discussions did, however, serve as a good foundation for defining the direction of further work in identifying if there was a lower degree of diversity than the organization had the capacity to develop.

5.4. Understanding Strategic Competence Development in a Temporal Perspective

As emphasized above, the development of diversity in organizations is not easy. It requires that leaders of all levels have professional competence in both the nature of the concept of diversity as well as strategies for developing this in their organizations with their distinctive features. Not least, it is important that the leaders have insight into what can limit the degree of diversity in their own organization. One of the most unresolved challenges found in the studies in the Norwegian Armed Forces, and what was considered a potential hindrance to implementation of a desired degree of diversity, was that leaders and instructors had varying opinions and beliefs about the temporal relationship between learning and use of knowledge. Several of the instructors expressed that military leadership preparation should focus on short-term relevance, e.g. training on specific skills related to tactical relevance. The leaders, however, found that military leadership preparation also needed a more long-term relevance aspect, e.g. generalist and more strategic skills development related to handling unforeseen developments and a continued lifelong learning in the military (see Fig. 6). This temporal perspective on learning for students is also part of mandatory requirements for being accredited as a higher education institution in European countries [5].
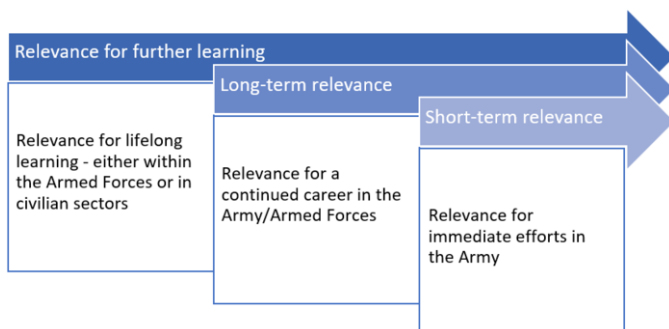

Figure 6. Relevance of competence development aiming for DDD among three temporal lines: short-term, long-term, and lifelong learning (modified from [12,13]).
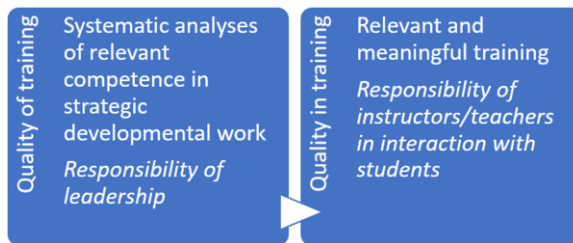
Figure 7. Increasing the quality of interactions between leadership and the other members of the organization, moving from BDD to DDD in practice (modified from [13]).

Nuancing the concept of relevance for invisible diversity [cf. 7] along a continuum of temporality shows that the preparation of military leaders should include knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for different purposes. The empirical studies indicated that the balance among these three foci was unclear and sometimes contested among instructors, leadership within the academy, and the political leadership at the ministry level [12,13]. To complicate the matter, the indicators of samhandling were not clearly defined in military doctrines used in the curricula, according to our research [40]. In some cases, the formal curriculum was then overridden by the "hidden curriculum", where the established culture with a set of current values, behaviour, and thinking that have been developed over time in the organization was defining the military leader preparation. The hidden curriculum encouraged a BDD mindset in need of more explicit transboundary reflections.

In situations where adjustments of competence are necessary to achieve an optimal level of diversity, reflections of different understandings of relevant competence may therefore be strengthened when used explicitly in leadership and training (see Fig. 7). The aim is to raise awareness of different perceptions of the concept of relevance and to what is at stake as different understandings meet in practice when preparing military leaders. It may in fact seem a paradox in strategic competence development that to plan far ahead increases the need—not for more abstract strategies on paper, but for building trust and immediate relationships between leaders and instructors/teachers in interaction with students in practice. This is important to understand in all educational planning, which always encompasses dynamics of balancing value-laden purposes and practical perspectives.

5.5. Understanding Different Roles of Responsibility in Preparing Leaders for Diversity

In the research we have been responsible for in interaction with the Norwegian Armed Forces, three challenges were identified in future work on defining and developing relevant competence (and DDD) as part of quality in training—and quality of training—when preparing military leaders: new structure in the training system (all accredited officer training institutions to merge into one institution), new ways of organizing the preparation of resources (a new military order as of 2015), and a restructuring of the armed forces' need for competence to handle unforeseen events [13]. These challenges arose from the recently experienced pressure from society, the political level, and from within the organization, to raise diversity awareness. The re-analysis of the findings in these studies indicates that such challenges may trigger fruitful discussions about visible and

invisible diversity [25]. It also suggests that responding to such challenges in a systematic way may have the potential to increase the quality of interactions between leadership and the other members of the organization working to move from BDD to DDD [12,13].

5.6. Relating Relevant Diversity to Samhandling for the Unforeseen

Neither relevance nor diversity are aims easy to target. Still, both concepts are used in military politics and preparation practice. Sometimes the concept of relevance is expressed in opposition to quality in leadership preparation. Relevance is then considered the performance target or the outcome of preparation (often action-oriented), and quality is seen as something inherent in the planning and process of training (often based on research-based knowledge). As seen in Fig. 7, we do not operate with such opposites. Instead we claim that the academization of military leader preparation is an inherent part of military leadership relevance.

In situations where the aim is to adjust the competence and diversity level according to new political decisions, we have suggested that different understandings of relevance be used explicitly in preparing military leaders. This method may increase awareness and exceed situations that increase relevance understanding in the profession as a whole (ibid). This may alter the preparation from being based on a tacit BDD often linked to the hidden curriculum to an empirically founded DDD.

Exceeding borders of tacit understanding may show that the relevant competence inherent in diversity development may change over time and be part of an explicit strategy that includes a temporal perspective (cf. Fig. 6). Competence is related to a dimension moving between known and unknown needs, aligned to a dimension of temporality between immediate and unforeseen needs. The research conducted in cooperation with the Norwegian Armed Forces showed us that explicit frameworks were essential in communicating and implementing such tacit dimensions within the organization. In the case of the Norwegian Military Academy we therefore developed a relevance test to be used in leadership and training to increase both quality of training and quality in training [13]. The goal was to link theory and practice in developing an implementation strategy, allowing for explicit discussions of the relationships among personal, professional, academic, organizational, vocational, and societal relevance of leadership preparation. Such an explicit framework builds on the premise that discussions about competence needs for diversity are dynamic and may be subject to change according to new strategic political decisions as well as professional and immediate needs. Some competences are known, and others are not yet known. Some are deemed relevant and others less so. This indicates a need to discuss the balance between generalist and specialist competences in the workforce systematically. Also, a diverse workforce will have to be supported and developed to handle both immediate concerns while still being prepared for the unforeseen. In the framework we developed, all levels affect each other, meaning that the understanding of what relevance is at the societal level may affect the understanding of what relevant competence may be defined as at the level of vocational relevance and vice versa [13].

These examples point to the need for more explicit definitions of the DDD in training plans. They also indicate that discussions about what relevant diversity is and could be within an organization may increase the quality in interactions needed to handle unforeseen events across organizations and sectors.

6. Strategic Diversity Leadership and the SRDD Model

The theoretical and empirical contributions of this article represent a way of thinking about diversity that may be of aid to leaders and managers in their development of organizations—in developing the concept of diversity and in developing relevant diversity. There is no doubt that the development of diversity is a binding responsibility for leadership.

Such reasoning will align with work that leaders are familiar with in other areas of leadership education, such as strategic human resource management (SHRM). Central to SHRM is competence-related value chains such as recruitment, development, mobilization, and redeployment/liquidation of capacity in an organization [41–43]. However, in developing diversity, a common framework is needed that communicates across organizations, to politicians and to society at large. To be able to establish such a common effort with a specific focus on diversity as a central concept, phenomenon, and a practical relevance, we place it along with Damon Williams [23] in the category of strategic diversity leadership (SDL). Where Williams has focused specifically on diversity in higher education institutions based on a subordinate model of that context, we suggest that the Strategic Relational Model for Degrees of Diversity (SRDD model) is more fundamental and suitable as a general foundation for different types of organizations.

The model has a complex theoretical and empirical foundation, but the intent has been to create a theory-based practical tool for leaders to plan, implement, and evaluate relevant diversity within their organization and in interaction with partners. This does not mean that the reasoning, model, or practical approaches are complete. This article is meant as a fundament that each respective leader and organization may develop further according to their own needs. In each situation it will be a natural part of the process to translate several of the concepts in the SRDD model to relevant questions that may generate common reflection and serve as a foundation for practical measures. Some examples may be as follows (10 basic questions that we call the small diversity test):

1) How will we define/describe diversity and what is *relevant* diversity to us?
2) Do we have an overall sufficient culture for diversity in our organization?
3) Do we have an affiliated diversity policy? What are the desired results of the policy?
4) Why does our organization need more (or less) diversity than what we have today?
5) How can we articulate SSD within our organization (through i.e. foresight analyses)?
6) What conditions for BDD are relevant for us, and how do we ensure that these conditions are not limiting factors in the development of our organization? Can we, and do we want to change these conditions?
7) Who should be responsible for implementing a strategy for differing degrees of diversity?
8) What is the status of our present DDD in relation to our IDD?
9) Who should be responsible for monitoring the different temporal dimensions of diversity development?
10) Should our work be systematically evaluated? And if so, how, by whom, and for what purpose(s)?

Each organization should translate the model for contextual purposes, it is important that the principles are left intact for cross-organizational purposes. We emphasize the

importance of the principle of a relational approach in this regard. The principle entails that this work is not based on a traditional goal-based approach to management, nor on classical gap analyses with predefined goals. What the SRDD model invites to, is to start anywhere, with goals or measures, and to be open for adjusting each component of the model in action according to a strategically well-considered approach open for the unforeseen. The results of this work should be articulated and expressed in the organization's strategic human resources, business, and action plans, both with goals and concrete measures for implementation and evaluation.

7. Conclusion

We introduced our topic by stating our belief that preparing military strategic leaders and crisis managers for handling unforeseen situations rests on two premises: that diversity is essential for handling unforeseen situations, and that a common framework for diversity across organizations is needed to develop inter-professional efficiency. Our approach to this work has been twofold: first, to develop a model based on a theoretical and conceptual analysis (SRDD model), and second, to show by example what kind of work is involved in such leadership development at the empirical level. Combined, we aim to contribute to the development of a field of study we refer to as strategic diversity leadership (SDL), and to offer a starting point for developing a new intercontinental and intercultural scientific model of unforeseen, diversity, and samhandling. Based on our theoretical and empirical studies as reported in this article, we also introduce an overall definition of diversity.

What the model has shown is that preparing military leaders for work related to increasing competence and efficiency within their organization, and not least across emergency units, is a complex task. The degree of diversity is not a static size. DDD will also be constantly changing as the needs of the organization change. To achieve this in practice, a new type of management competence is required, which has insight into the relational and dynamic nature of diversity as well as the awareness of relevant competence resources. Key insights concerned with the foundation of diversity and relevance as key phenomena in organizations, and what challenges diversity and relevance pose in the development of goals and strategic plans, need to be further analysed. Knowledge about the design of practical measures and forms of assessment related to different understandings of relevant diversity is necessary when developing a solid implementation strategy. The principles and ways of thinking expressed in the Strategic Relational Model for Degrees of Diversity may be an aid to this.

Acknowledgements

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