

**The play's the thing - Hamlet and the
question of leadership**

Robin Holt/Eric Guthey

**So, I just sit there and laugh at jokes that
aren't funny: Dealing with tension and
Gender in the Danish Workplace**

Edmonia Baker/Signe Vikkelsø

CBS LEADERSHIP
Research Paper Series

16. March 2022

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Research Paper Series – discussions among peers on leadership, and part of the CBS Leadership Initiative

The Leadership Research Paper Series is a part of the CBS Leadership Initiative that aims at making CBS the Nordic center for leadership knowledge, research and education – connecting academia and practitioners from both the private and the public sector.

The Research Paper Series is a forum for junior and senior colleagues, as well as visiting and guest scholars, to present and discuss leadership research in progress from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and theoretical traditions. Presenters will receive constructive feedback from discussants and attendees with the aim of developing their papers and arguments for eventual publication.

The Paper Series will also function to promote discussion and debate across CBS about leadership and leadership development and, finally, it will put attention on how research can be applied on a daily basis by business professionals who carry out leadership on a practical level.

Welcome to the Research Paper Series talks and to the CBS Leadership Initiative!



Robin Holt presenting his work at the first Research Papers Series talk at CBS.

The play's the thing – Hamlet and the question of leadership

Presenter: Robin Holt, Professor, Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy

Discussant: Eric Guthey, Associate Professor, Department of Management, Society and Communication

Facilitator: Nicole Ferry, Department of Management, Society and Communication

What is the spirit of leadership presented here?

Robin's paper invites us to consider how Shakespeare's Hamlet exemplifies the tension between reflection and action: What is the situation? What should I do about it? Many consider Hamlet a tragic figure, unable to revenge his father's death because of a brooding sense of doubt and dread. Robin's close reading, in contrast, paints Hamlet as a transitional figure between a traditional vision of leadership as robust and decisive action, and leadership as a process of reflection—albeit one that fails if it ends up in paralysis.

How does this inform CBS' contribution to leadership in society?

It highlights the connections between leaders' personal dramas and the unfolding of events around him or her in the organization and in society: when does the personal history block action and when can it be a good reason to pause and think twice.

What are the concrete take-aways for leadership practitioners?

Robin's paper draws attention to the value of literature and fiction for capturing the human nature of leadership as well as to the difficulties and dilemmas that many leaders confront when personal issues interfere with, stall, or shut down decisive action.



Robin Holt presented thoughts how Hamlet can be used to investigate dynamics in personal leadership.

So, I just sit there and laugh at jokes that aren't funny: Dealing with tension and gender in the Danish workplace

Presenter: Edmonia Baker, PhD Fellow, Department of Management, Society and Communication

Discussant: Signe Vikkelsø, Professor, Department of Organization

Facilitator: Nicole Ferry, Department of Management, Society and Communication

What is the spirit of leadership presented here?

Edmonia's paper centers on how the researcher engages with tensions arising in herself when addressing sensitive issues. Being aware of your personal reaction patterns in critical situations is just as relevant for leaders as it is for researchers. Edmonia's work explores the ways that Danish top managers experience and respond to gender diversity in the workplace. She argues that such issues call for new forms of inquiry in which the usual supporters and opponents to gender diversity are not set in stone. This requires researchers (but also leaders) to have strong self-awareness and a purposeful handling of the researcher's/leader's own biases, role preferences, and emotions vis-à-vis stakeholders.



How does this inform CBS' contribution to leadership in society?

Edmonia's work points to the need for developing and adopting constructive leadership roles that expand the dialogue around gender diversity by being reflexive about tensions and engaging in the difficult conversations that are necessary to achieve progress.

What are the concrete take-aways for leadership practitioners?

Edmonia's work can help practitioners to learn to confront rather than flee from the tensions generated by such issues as gender inequality. Her work shows the importance of engaging with tensions as a way to deal with complexity and to connect with others who are wrestling with it as well, even if they do so from different or even conflicting positions.

Edmonia Baker had feedback on her work on addressing dilemmas of diversity in leadership dialogue.

SUGGESTED READING

Folger website: <https://www.folger.edu/hamlet>

Radio 4: https://www.radio4.dk/program/serieservice/?id=godt-og-drligt-lederskab_ep_18_03_22

RADIO

SERIESERVICE

FREDAG FRA 14-15

'Serieservice' guider dig til, hvilke serier du skal se, hvis du gerne vil blive klogere på den verden, vi lever i. Vært Zissel Astrid Kjertum-Mohr er hver uge flankeret af to nye eksperter med viden inden for det område og de tematikker, ugens serier behandler. Det kan være alt fra psykologer og forskere til politiske kommentatorer. Sammen piller de nænsomt tidens mest interessante tv-serier, filmføljetoner og tv-programmer fra hinanden og forklarer dig, hvordan du kan bruge tv-serierne til at forstå verden omkring dig og de relationer, vi som mennesker indgår i.

RSS



ZISSEL ASTRID KJERTUM-MOHR

18.03.22 (54 minutter)

GODT OG DÅRLIGT LEDERSKAB



Beskrivelse

Det værste der findes er ondskab imod dyr og sageløse børn. Men lige efter det kommer dårlig ledelse. I denne uges Serieservice undersøger vi, hvad Hamlet, The Wire og Succession kan fortælle os om både god og dårlig ledelse. Vi har fået besøg af Robin Holt og Eric Guthey, professorer fra CBS Leadership som kan svare på bl.a. what brings great leadership?, og what is the definition of a modern leader? og meget mere når vi snakker engelsk i ugens afsnit.

Eva Fog Bruun
Senior Transformation Officer,
heading the CBS Leadership Initiative

efb.slk@cbs.dk

Signe Vikkelsø
Academic Director
CBS Leadership Initiative

ssv.ioa@cbs.dk