

**Influence in interaction:**

**The realization of moments of leadership?**

Magnus Larsson & Christian Dyrland Wåhlin-Jacobsen  
& Liv Hassert / Lars Thøger Christensen

**How much for a female CEO - and who  
pays the price? Investigating the practices  
and processes of pricing women leaders  
in professional executive recruitment**

Sara L. Muhr & Kai Inga Liehr Storm / Minna Paunova

**CBS LEADERSHIP**

*Research Paper Series*

A discussion among peers  
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# 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!



*The Research Papers Series events are connecting colleagues and peers across CBS to discuss on-going research - how to make it even better and how it relates to leadership challenges in practice.*



# Influence in interaction: The realization of moments of leadership

**Presenter:** Christian Dyrland Wåhlin-Jacobsen, Adjunct, Dept. of Organization  
(Co-author: Magnus Larsson, Professor, Dept. of Organization, Liv Hassert, PhD)

**Discussant:** Lars Thøger-Christensen, Professor, Dept. of Management, Society and Comm.

**Facilitator:** Nicole Ferry, Dept. of Management, Society and Communication

## What is the spirit of leadership presented here?

Leadership can be understood as a process of influencing others. The paper focuses on how this happens by analyzing situations where people resist suggestions for action. The three analyzed situations relate to: the availability of resources for a requested task; the moral aspects of a requested task; and the shared understanding of a requested task. Zooming in on the details of the conversations between the involved persons, the paper shows that influence is a matter of persuading others by offering relevant and attractive identity categories (e.g., as “team members working together”) rather than imposing formal authority

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

The paper shows that leadership is very much a conversational practice where success is a matter of convincing rather than coercing employees. It also highlights the fact that not only formally appointed managers contribute to this conversational influencing and leadership, but anyone who offers ways to build terms and categories that bridge understandings and concerns.



*Christian Dyrland Wåhlin-Jacobsen presenting key points in his research paper and Lars Thøger-Christensen reflecting on ideas for further improvements before giving way to fruitful round table discussions.*

## What are the concrete take-aways for leadership practitioners?

Practicing leaders can fruitfully consider how resistance to organizational tasks or decisions may be transgressed by reformulating categories and role identities that are acceptable and even appealing to participants. They can invite participants to engage in this reformulation and acknowledge the collaborative nature of leadership moments.

# How Much for a Female CEO – and Who Pays the Price? Investigating the Practices and Processes of Pricing Women Leaders in Professional Executive Recruitment

**Presenter:** Kai Inga Liehr Storm, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Operations Management  
(co-author: Sara L. Muhr, Dept. of Organization)

**Discussant:** Minna Paunova, Associate Professor, Dept. of Management, Society and Comm.

**Facilitator:** Nicole Ferry, Dept. of Management, Society and Communication

## What is the spirit of leadership presented here?

The paper addresses the challenges that recruitment firms encounter in scouting for women candidates to top management positions. Analyzing interviews with recruiters from Danish search firms and clients/candidates, the paper presents several difficulties that hinders the identification and placement of women candidates. A core finding is that the search firms tend to over-use their existing network relations with former clients and candidates when they scout for new candidates, which tend to reduce the chance of finding people outside these networks. As these network relations are still heavily male dominated, this further reduces the likelihood to find and place more diverse candidates, including in particular women candidates. If the search firms are to provide organizations with more women candidates, they need to engage in more time-costly scouting and thus increase the recruitment price.

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

By investigating the inside of recruitment practices for top management positions, the paper highlights an overlooked aspect of why the number of women CEOs continues to be relatively low. Looking into the inner workings of recruitment processes – and the role of search firms – the paper contributed to a more nuanced understanding of why there might be a gender gap. Whereas much literature focus on unconscious biases, the paper points to economic aspects of engaging in broader search processes for CEO talent.



*A vivid presentation by Kai Inga Liehr Storm on executive recruitment of women was followed by discussions on learnings and ideas for going forward with research and papers.*

## What are the concrete take-aways for leadership practitioners?

To increase the pool of top management talents, companies and organizations need to realize the cost of looking outside the usual scouting circles. If they are willing to pay this extra cost, they should clarify their expectations to search firms. The search firms, on their part, should develop their search and networking strategies to work up broader and more diverse talent pools.

# SUGGESTED READING

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