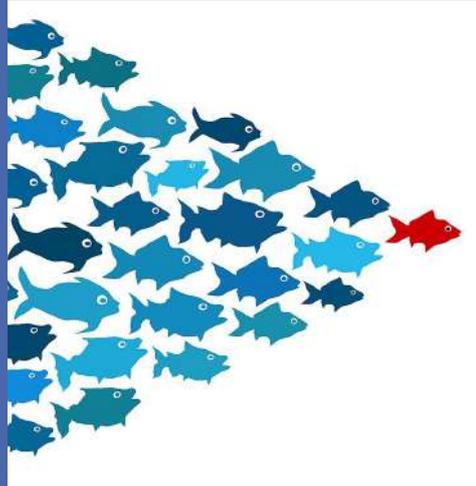


# HOW DO LEADERS LOOK AND ACT LIKE?

Research-based reflections on diversity in leadership at  
Copenhagen Business School

Florence Villesèche  
Associate Professor, MPP



## Diversity - a definition

The collective amount of differences  
among members within a social unit  
with respect to a common attribute.  
(Harrison and Klein, 2000:1200)



## What are our metaphors?



- Commander
- Priest
- Saint
- Coach
- Chef



3

## Bias



### Affinity Bias

Feeling a connection to those similar to us



### Perception Bias

Stereotypes and assumptions about different groups



### Halo Effect

Projecting positive qualities onto people without actually knowing them



### Confirmation Bias

Looking to confirm our own opinions and pre-existing ideas.

“Social judgment [...] does not require personal animus, hostility, or even awareness. [...]. Prejudice also lives and thrives in the banal workings of normal, everyday human thought and activity”  
(Hardin and Banaji, 2013, pp. 13-14).

- We are *all* biased
- Unconscious/implicit bias
- Bias is related to: beliefs, stereotypes, norms, prejudice
- Positive outcomes for some, negative for others
- > **Bias leads to unfair, suboptimal judgment and decisions**

4



### Privilege

- When was the last time you had to worry that who you are / how you look will play against you?

If you don't have to think about it, **it's a privilege.**

## Leadership in Denmark and at CBS

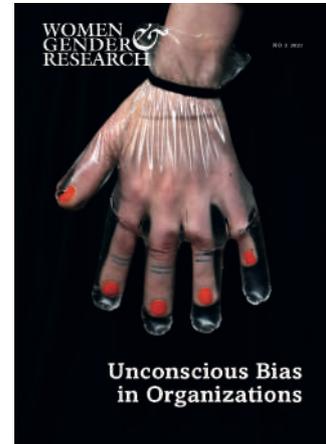
Some of my recent research

**Bias and leadership aspirations:** Exploring the interaction of gender and parental status in self-evaluations  
(Villesèche, Ottsen and Paunova, 2022)

**Take away:** all women want leadership roles, but men with children want them significantly more

**A Lacanian perspective on bias in language:** How women can(not) ever make it in academia  
(Einersen, Villesèche and Huoppalainen, 2022)

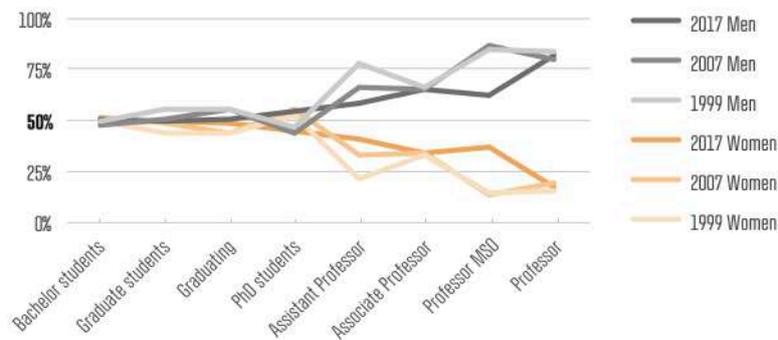
**Take away:** women who are professors want to lead the change, but at the same time reproduce the existing norms and behaviours



7

## Gender and leadership at CBS - a few figures

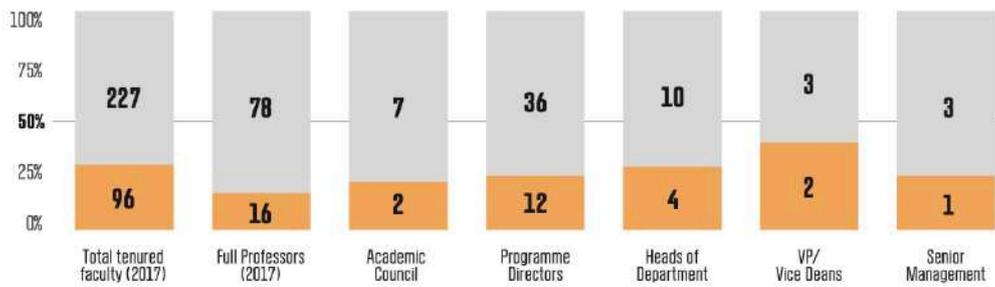
SHARE OF WOMEN/MEN IN ACADEMIC STAFF AND STUDENTS



8

## Gender and leadership at CBS - a few figures

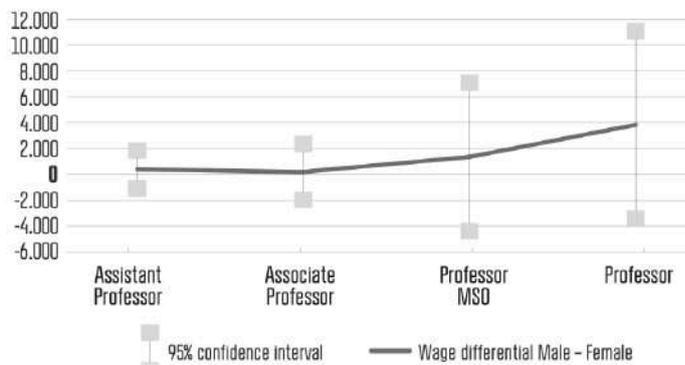
### REPRESENTATION OF MALE AND FEMALE FACULTY IN FORMAL ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP, 2018



9

## Gender and leadership at CBS - a few figures

### GENDERED WAGE DIFFERENCE AMONG FACULTY, MONTHLY SALARY



10

## Gender and leadership at CBS

### Gender and Academic Leadership Practices at Copenhagen Business School An Action Research Project

Munar, Ana Maria; Villesèche, Florence (2016)

- At universities, leadership is not only the president, rector, university director
- key role of heads of departments, and professors as leadership figures

## Gender and leadership at CBS

Some key findings

### Agency and structure

Societal-structural view dominance

"There is a problem but it is not my/our fault"

*I don't think it's CBS's fault that our society works as it does, if women have been discouraged for ten million years.*

Maybe it is our fault, but why?

*What can we do about that? [...] Where is that failure?*

*We should look for that failure.*

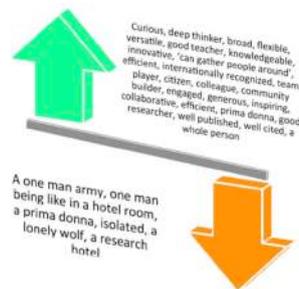
### Merit and excellence

Diversity of 'truths'

"The myth of the genius"

Absolute and relative understandings of excellence

Two metaphors: the tulip field and the botanical garden



## The new Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

Released 2022 - Priorities

- Increase the local **leadership capacity** to conduct diversity management that nurtures a diversity of talents, fosters inclusive environments and counters the operation of biases
- develop a comprehensive **staff and career policy** to facilitate and support diverse career paths and flexible work-life-balance solutions that even out typical gender differences in career trajectories, for instance in parental leave
- develop policies and measures to **counter sexism** in working and learning environments, so that those environments are equally inclusive and attractive to women and men
- conduct a **gender review of learning environments** and introduce measures in programmes with the aim to improve the diversity and gender balance of our student population and to increase diversity awareness in our pedagogical approach to improve gender inclusion and thus strengthen diversity in the supply chain both to the external labour market and to academic environments

### Some solutions / tools

- Inclusive talent programs
- Employee resource networks
- Bias and diversity training
- Back to work after leave schemes
- Flexible work options
- Mentoring schemes
- Nudging and Scouting
- Quotas

COPENHAGEN BUSINESS SCHOOL  
HANDELSHØJSKOLEN

## What can today's leaders do?

Ask questions about the *terms of inclusion* in structures of power and privilege

Address systematic *cultural* problems of machismo, racism, homophobia, etc.

Think through the *bias* that emerges from bodies

Learning from *alternative* ways of doing things

Instead of fixing the 'others' *fix* the organization