

**Leadership Dilemmas and Dynamics in research projects  
– entrepreneurial leadership?**

*Finn Hansson & Mette Mønsted*  
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**Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy**  
**Copenhagen Business School**  
Porcelænshaven 18A  
DK-2000 Frederiksberg C  
Phone: +45 38 15 36 30  
Fax: +45 38 15 36 35  
[www.mpp.cbs.dk](http://www.mpp.cbs.dk)

# **Leadership Dilemmas and Dynamics in research projects – entrepreneurial leadership?**

by

**Finn Hansson & Mette Mønsted**

**Department of Management, Politics & Philosophy, Copenhagen Business School.**

**Porcelænshaven 18 A, DK-2000 Frederiksberg, Denmark tel. +45 38 15 36 30**

**[fh.lpf@cbs.dk](mailto:fh.lpf@cbs.dk) & [mm.lpf@cbs.dk](mailto:mm.lpf@cbs.dk)**

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## 1.1 Introduction to dilemmas and themes:

The focus of the paper is on research leadership as leadership in public universities operating by of creating new knowledge in a complex field and of a complex field. Research leadership function today in situations with open boundaries to other knowledge organizations, arenas and networks, hence trust, scientific reputation and outside recognition is more important than traditional managerial skills in order to produce new knowledge. By analyzing a number of cases on the construction of new research groups we will introduce new perspectives on research leadership and management where dilemmas, uncertainty and complex relations to other managerial systems in the universities are in the forefront. The research question in the paper is constructed in order to investigate the dilemmas on the one hand between managing an organisation, teaching and administrative tasks of staff, and on the other hand leading the unknown route of investigation into new knowledge and creating a platform for research. We suggest that the increased quest for new knowledge in the knowledge economy and the ongoing discussion on changes in the basic structure in scientific knowledge production both regarding its organization (transdisciplinarity, Gibbons 1994) and its relation to society (production of social robust knowledge, Nowotny 2001) focus on new and innovative approaches or role models to these dilemmas.

One of the major problems of organising research in universities (and public business schools) is often associated with the fact, that it is only one of the traditional activities performed by universities (Blau 1973). Besides research, the other main activities is today teaching, administration and recently also research communication. This situation is often described as a shift from the classic disciplinary scientific knowledge production in universities toward a more transdisciplinary, open organization of the production of knowledge and even if the critics of these theories has problematized parts of this theory of mode one and mode two science (Nowotny 2001) the opening of the university knowledge monopoly is a fact not to be disputed<sup>1</sup>. Add to these changes the recent demands for research communication and dissemination to society, also a point made by Nowotny (2001), then the situation for constantly creating complex conditions for long time planning and execution of research is present. The result is often a need of a special creativity and a growing degree of dependency on innovative leadership in order to create the foundation for new research funds and human resources, and in this way develop a strategy for expanding toward study and teaching as well as research communication in the institution. The new demands to research leadership in the university required by the abovementioned changes as well as the ongoing competition with managerial tasks related to teaching and administration illustrate the actual dilemmas of research leadership in public universities and is for these reasons the starting point for our analysis of research leadership and construction of space for scientific projects.

In order to empirical investigate our thesis on the relations and problems of leadership and management in science, we will use case stories from our own institution related to the continuous construction and development of sections of the rather new department of Management, Politics & Philosophy at Copenhagen Business School. The cases will

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<sup>1</sup> The analysis by Gibbons et.al. (1994) and Nowotny et.al. (2001) has been criticised for lack of systematically empirical support and for exaggerating the importance of various observations (Audetat 2001, Fuller 2000, 2001, Weingart 2000, Godin 1998). Despite these criticisms, however, there seems to be broad agreement that recent changes in modern science and knowledge production is owed mainly to the growing influence of market forces on science.

demonstrate interesting dilemmas and strategies in competition for positions, new teaching fields and other resources. The emphasis in the analysis is on the construction of new themes and fields in a complex new department, where a number of different research groups, representing differences in disciplinary history, in relations to traditional business school subjects are creating a new joint setting for research and teaching. The development in the Policy Group is instructive for a very entrepreneurial and complex strategy in a kind of processes we want to investigate. The case of the business history follow some of the same tracks but is also about how large external funded research projects are generated and how the integration in the CBS environment of a new discipline develops and especially what are the long-term effects – seen from an organisational point of view.

As ex post factor cases based on a few intensive interviews we do not claim to give a valid picture of what was major problems related to leadership and managing. The interviews with central actors and research “entrepreneurs”, will present the kind of reflexive story-telling they have of their own actions. By doing so this we will be able to analyze different kinds of constructions of research leadership dilemmas in action and the influence of different strategies. The dilemmas and reflection on how to establish and not the least how to organize research within competing tasks helps us understand the process of self-management and leadership in this type of knowledge based organisations.

## **1.2 Theoretical positioning**

Managing research in universities has been discussed in management literature especially since a number of empirical studies of researchers in universities came out in late 60ties and early 70ties (Blau 1973, Pelz and Andrews 1966) and demonstrated the many conflicting goals and interests. In these discussions, the historical legacy of general management theory has been set in play in order to analyze the complexities of this field, first the scientific management approach also labelled as the tayloristic tradition (Taylor 1914, Drucker 1999) with metaphors such as brain, hand and tool illustrate a very straightforward form of management: division of labour of known tasks, rule and control. Then in the second paradigm, the organization of the firm appears as important conditions. Management is not just about ordering, but producing the right conditions for task accomplishment and it is a well-known tradition with many faces (Mintzberg 1989, Simon 1996). The third paradigm focused on complexity and self-management in fuzzy or open boundaries, where not only conditions are important but also to an extent, the very definition of the task is open, as they are the goals. Here we encounter sets of reflective practitioners organising resources as well as themselves (March and Olsen 1979, Yukl 1989, Mønsted 2002, 2003, Hansson 2004).

Even if all of these established traditions can contribute to explain certain aspects of managerial universe of problems in the university, we claim that in the university of to day management and leadership has become too complex to be analyzed solely by the use of these theories. The changed role of university in relation to society, the new forms of research, collective and transdisciplinary, the rapid growth of mass education in the university all present challenges to the universities in the knowledge economy demands a much more differentiated understanding of the many forms of leadership and management simultaneous going on in the university in order to fulfil the demand for response to these

changes. One recent attempt to analyze academic research management is to establish a differentiation between what is defined as first, second and third order research management (Ernøe et.al. 2001). We will argue, that this approach are still too much focused on managing research, even if it introduces the concept of self-management, as if research can be managed like other much more well-defined functions, like teaching and administration. The combination of teaching and research as a complex structure, where effectiveness of the organisation is a complex issue is raised in Ramsden (1994), and the problems of breaking down traditional bureaucratic and professional authority in order to create institutional innovation based on new disciplines are analysed at an institutional level in Blau (1994).

If complex tasks are the major problem for managing research and handle internal organizational and managerial tasks (organize teaching, research programmes, as well as external (funding and networking for support), a useful analogy for the modern research leadership could be the literature on project management. The seemingly proximity between project management (Kreiner 1995, 1996) and creating projects and research leadership appears to provide some answers to problems currently encountered in research leadership. In reality, the majority of the project management models build on relatively clear linear templates for projects (Lientz & Rea 1995), and not on the open-ended complexity for creativity, research and expert knowledge in post-industrial research under high level of uncertainty (Mønsted 2003, Lash 2003, Latour 1987, Alvesson & Wilmott 2003). The complexity of scientific leadership with conveying goals and different roles, styles and time horizons (Mayntz 1985, Liyanage et al. 1999) may build on elements from project management as well as from studies of professional credibility (Ziman, 2000) and epistemic cultures in science (Knorr-Cetina 1999). The planning dimension so important in project management theory does not cover the demands to research leaders in modern ambivalent research and teaching organizations like universities and modern business schools, where complex multitasking under high level of uncertainty constantly changes goals and ends.

One major difficulty in the literature on research management is the often undifferentiated use of the concepts of management and leadership. In this paper, we will differentiate between these two concepts by restricting the use of the concept of management and hence the power of management theory to analyze all the functions in and around the research organization demanded by formal rules, regulations and administrative practices, that is what the bureaucratic system demands. Research management is hence the managing of resources, the persons and the different obligations they have to fulfil in the university. But our key field of interest is what is left, the how to lead and build up research groups or the concept of research leadership. Taking serious the arguments for changes in the research toward more collective organizations and transdisciplinary work (Nowotny 2001), we argue that these problems cannot be analyzed from the more traditional management theory approach but need to be approached from two of the central discourses in the knowledge creating organization, knowledge management and organizational learning. Our goal is not to come up with an all encompassing theory on leadership and management in the university but to construct a convincing case of how to analyze the new conditions for construction research organization and act as research leaders.

From this point of view the challenge is to produce a theoretical framework for analyzing this type of new organizations forms and leadership as it grows up and develops in the

university. This we will do by primarily using input from two new fields in organizational studies, organizational learning and knowledge management.

Organisational learning “can be described as the ways firms build, supplement and organize knowledge and routines around their activities and within their cultures, and adapt and develop organizational efficiency by improving the use of the broad skills of their workforces.” (Dodgson 1993, 377). This definition follows the main trend in the understanding of organizational learning found in seminal works in organizational theory by James March, Karl Weick, Chris Argyris and others.<sup>2</sup> Organizational learning is different from formal education and training and in organizations like the university, very often it takes the form of tacit knowledge (Polyani 1983), in everyday work of skills and knowledge related to scientific work and work practice. Recent studies in organizational theory have turned the focus from the traditional understanding of learning to the necessity of explicit management strategies for learning (Nonaka 1994, 1998, Brown and Duguid 1991, 1998, Wenger 1998, Argyris & Schoen 1978). In many of the most successfully and creative knowledge organisations we can observe new and flexible ways of organizing the knowledge production. These new organizational forms challenge more conservative organizations like the university with its often rather stiff disciplinary systems of departments and traditional managerial systems..

The other pillar in our study is knowledge management. In relation to knowledge management we will focus on two aspects, highlighted in studies of knowledge companies, the role of networks and brokerage and the role of social capital. (Burt 1997, 2005, Bourdieu 1981, 1985, 1998, 2004).

In the knowledge organization working with intermediate organizational structures, rapid organizational changes and networks characterize a new kind of organizational entrepreneur, who is confident in working in and between networks, where the networking perspective is just as much on the internal networking in the organization as it is on external networking, and on very short-lived networks as well as long-lasting.

In addition, if we combine the idea of networking entrepreneurship with Burt’s (2005) discussion on structural holes and brokerage, where the broker sees opportunities in the structural holes in the networks and established bridges, we have a tool to understand how the new type of research leaders operate. Acting as a broker, placing him/herself in (or on) bridges in networks make the coordination between networks across structural wholes by network entrepreneurs, introduces the role of the social and scientific capital of the research leader important. The structural holes are many and different in the university, some related to the institution, some to the international scientific networks and some to the outside world, to society as a whole. Especially the last kinds of networks and holes are closely related to the new demands to universities to produce social robust knowledge in interaction with society and stakeholders (Nowotny et.al. 2001).

Therefore, the ability to locate structural holes and brokerage opportunities as opposed to closure in social networks is one of the central qualities in the research leader. Though the excellence to manage networks also demands the ability to persuade followers and build up a group around him/herself. To do so the research leader must demonstrate scientific credibility and status, or what Bourdieu (1991, 1998, 2004) define as a special case of social capital, namely scientific capital constructed by the scientific reputation and the power to mobilize resources to research in order to attract followers. The sheer recognition of scientific capital is still not enough. We still need to explain how the followers over time

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<sup>2</sup> See Organizational Science Special issue: Organizational learning: Papers in Honor of (and by) James March, Vol. 2, nr. 1 1991, and Dodgson’s review article 1993.

accept to be member in a group, especially when the group in the beginning is regarded as outsiders by core member of the larger organization. The concept of communities of practice (Brown and Duguid 1991, Lave and Wenger 1991) can explain some of the coherence in a research group based on mutual interests practices and understandings, but as noticed by several critics (Roberts 2006) the concept of communities of practice is very weak on explaining power relations and other structural elements unavoidable in an organizations.

In open and complex organizations, the understanding of power as only formal organizations and managerial techniques does not apply. Instead we need to go back to Max Weber's famous discussions on charismatic leadership, as "resting on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him" (Weber 1966, 1976)

The Weberian analysis of power practised by special personal qualities, by charisma, as opposed to the rational, bureaucratic and the traditional power is used by Clark (2006) in a historical analysis of the origin of the research university to show how charisma works and is incorporated in both the structure of the university, as in famous professor chairs as well as in individual strategies in order to avoid too much collegial disciplining. It is the last dimension of charisma we can apply to the complex reality in the modern university in the knowledge economy, where the weberian concept of charisma can contribute to explain how the research leader operates in order to attract followers, but at the same time the research leader must be able to operate in the managerial world in the university, defined by obligations toward teaching and administration .

As our research question is about the dilemmas experienced by the research leader in acting between traditional managerial tasks formulated by the university and the tasks required by the research group, the research community and the larger community, we will try to conceptualize this dilemma by introducing the concept of entrepreneurship. The idea of using entrepreneurship in order to understand the behaviour of researchers was used by Louis et.al. (1989) to analyze the success in getting research grants in large life science projects. However, we suggest a different use of the concept, with a much stronger focus on the networking dimensions. In order to answer questions like how will the role of the entrepreneurial research leader develop over a number of years, will it be possible to continue as a change agent , will institutional, and bureaucratic pressures influence the entrepreneurial spirit and the role of networking, the concept of organizational entrepreneurship in the university has to be developed.

### **1.3 Methodology**

Doing case studies in organizations have long attracted interests from methods studies because it often challenge traditional methodological ideas of distance and objectivity to research objects and representation.

In a couple of recent articles, Alvesson (2002, 2003) put forward convincing arguments for a research strategy based on what he labels self-ethnography, using in a systematic way one's own pre-knowledge of the organization to be studied instead of constructing all kinds of barriers and distance, explicitly argues that for researchers the university is an obvious place to do self-ethnography. "Self-ethnography is especially of relevance for research on

universities and higher education. As mentioned, it is not, however, restricted to this.”  
(Alvesson 2003, 176)

The pre-knowledge of the organization can contribute to validate the validity of stories told during interview by combining interview information with the researchers pre-knowledge and this way produce much richer and encompassing accounts of the research problem. However, as also stressed by Alvesson, this methodology is not without deficits, closure or taking things for granted is easy to come by when one researches in an organization where the organizational culture is more or less part of one’s own experience.

“Self-ethnography implies a mindset to some extent in opposition to a more technocratic-bureaucratic approach in which procedures, rules and techniques define and legitimize the scientific project. It calls for a more reflective approach in which data management matters less than a revealing, insightful account and interpretation. Self-reflection is thus crucial. Self-ethnography is indeed a risky project, but may offer an interesting alternative to other approaches.” (Alvesson 2003, 190)

In this paper we follow the inspiration from Alvesson and start out with studies from our own world, our department. The critical uses of theoretical analysis on the input from interviews and our own inside knowledge will be challenges later in the project by a change of space and location in the studies to follow. During this part of the research program, we will interview research leaders from different departments, where our pre-knowledge is less developed and later on we will extend the research program to other university departments and research groups, in Denmark as well as outside.

## **2. The CBS case-framework**

There are major differences between classic universities, most business schools and the Copenhagen Business School from the early 1990’s. CBS differs from most universities in being a dual faculty institution<sup>3</sup> and its non-disciplinary and problem oriented approach to teaching and research and from most business schools by its integration of social science and humanities together with more traditional business economics. The framework for research management is a university business school with teaching at Bachelor, Master of Science, Ph.D, executive master programmes, and diplomas as evening programmes, and with part time research as a right and obligation for the tenured staff.

The management structure in the Copenhagen Business School is basically organized in a matrix structure, where the head of department is responsible for research, for administration and for supplying teaching to different studies. The head of department is also responsible for the staff to fulfil these obligations. The study directors on the other hand are responsible for the studies, and may choose to recruit external part-time teachers, if the departments cannot provide tenured teachers with the right qualifications, or they want a cheaper recruitment of teachers for the undergraduate programmes<sup>4</sup>. The study programmes all include input from different departments and disciplines, such as marketing, accounting, organisation theory etc.

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<sup>3</sup> From 2007 CBS has decided to merge the two faculties and become a monofaculty institution.

<sup>4</sup> The external part-time teachers count less hours of preparation per teaching hour, and in the budget of the study programmes they are less expensive than internal staff.

The lack of clear discipline based educations also imply, that there is not a fixed study programme, but a combination of compulsory and a variety of choices, where only the courses chosen as first priority by more than 40 students are established. This profile of optional courses creates a flexibility to take up themes drawing on different disciplines, but also in a management perspective and staff perspective introduces an uncertainty on the ability to secure the teaching hours that each member of the academic staff has to provide for.

The balance in the matrix between departments and study lines is delicate and difficult, but it has proven itself very strong for the creative development of new study-lines and -programmes. The matrix structure inserts some marketing principles in the offered teaching, and management has to open up for some of the issues known in other open multiple task organisations. The incomes from the Ministry of Research are tied to the number of students going through exams and the final examinations (annual student years), and positions are tied to educational programmes. Assistant professors have 50 % of their time for teaching and administration, the professors and associate professors who are both categories on permanent employment have 65 % of their time for teaching and administration. The residual is for research.

Such a matrix structure might foster the development of localised policies without taking into account the overall strategies of CBS, but this has not been the case, partly due to a very active role by the president and dean in the period since the early 90ties. Both have been able to support new initiatives with seed money and other kinds of support in order to avoid internal struggles for funding af space, eg. having to cut down existing activities in order to have space for new ones. Part of this president policy is the result of a kind of garbage can thinking of the long term strategic development of CBS, but it also to a considerable degree rests on the fact, that CBS has been in a position of substantial growth in the period discussed. In case of severe budget cuts and the following reduction of tenured staff the conflict between established teaching activities and space for new ones could have created internal conflicts.

The management structure was until recently (2004) based on a president of the Business School heading two faculties: economic and a language faculty, each headed by a dean with economic responsibility. The heads of departments and the study directors are under the deans. Until 2004 all theses positions was filled with elected members of staff among associate and full professors. A Government law changed this (2004), and now there is a board with a majority of members from outside CBS, mainly from industry, with a chairperson from industry as well. The position as president, dean, head of department, and study directors are employed for the position, and not elected among the academic staff. The growth and management of research processes described were however under the former type of structure, i.e. a very traditional framework, but with flexibility for building up new educational programmes, and a willingness to do so.

From being a traditional business school, a number of new programmes have been launched in the early 90ties mainly combining business economics with language and area studies, mathematics, ICT, philosophy, corporate communication, and a broad social science education is launched last year. An international business economic education offered in English has also been part of the expanded profile.

Demographically trends in Demark (declining child births) have in recent years been discussed as problematic as the number of young people in the ages graduating from high-school is declining, which could create problems of declining intake of students. CBS has been under growth in number of students applying for being enrolled in the whole period.

### **3. Department level of management**

One rather unique part of the history of the CBS is related to one of the first larger research evaluations performed at the institution in the early 90ties and paved the way for new mergers of groups from other departments into a new department (Foss Hansen and Borum 2000) .

One of the important outcomes of a national debate on university research evaluations in the 90ties was a decision at CBS to set up department research evaluations from a bottom up perspective, i.e. involving the local research groups and researchers in formulation evaluation problems and agenda. Especially when the peer review based evaluations of the departments was discussed locally the bottom up process showed its strengths while the interpretation of results was seen just as much from an ownership position in the local research environments as in the faculty. In short, the evaluation of one large and heterogenic department managed to formulate the problems made visible in the process of the evaluation in some very constructive ways, more or less paving the future discussion on reconstruction of this department into what became the department of Management, Politics & Philosophy later on. This department was also the one where a later survey showed the greatest satisfaction with the whole evaluation process.

The new department of Management, Politics & Philosophy was established in 1995 as a merger between a number of smaller groups and the department of management and strategy. The head of the department at the time, professor P.O. Berg created motivation and mobilised the groups involved to form the new department, and managed to get support from the president and dean to get a number of positions to establish the different groups in a growth process. The group of philosophers already employed moved to the department. They had been involved mainly in method and philosophy of science courses. The group of political scientists was coming from a centre based on a network (COS), and a few positions to recruit a core of three researchers were established. The centre for innovation and Entrepreneurship became part of the new department as well. The business Historians joined the department later in 1999.

The general purpose of the Department is to develop research and teaching within Management (including strategy and innovation), Politics and Philosophy. The purpose of building up research from different disciplines but all related to leadership and management. This was one of the interesting strategies to form a joint theme, and trying to get also disciplines such as philosophy and political science to contribute to a business School perspective on management, where relations to firms and management was the core theme for all. The framework for the following story of growth is tied to both a social construction of legitimacy, of a space of opportunities waiting for entrepreneurial initiatives, and an entrepreneurial culture of the school supported strongly by the president Finn Junge-Jensen.

The management at the department level tried to open space of opportunities and encouraging making new educational programmes, while also stimulating the effort to get external funding as a part of the culture, which was not a dominant feature at that time.

The merging of a number of groups to form a new department was not done only as a top-down process, but an effort to build up a platform of joint understanding to get together, where the responsibility for the younger staff was stimulated, and where researchers perceived it as an interesting challenge and actually the department concentrated on increasing the growth potentials.

The time for applications to get external funding and R&D in educational programmes is a heavy investment from the start, and began as a process not only by one or two people, but by several, and a number of important research grants were won to sustain growth.

The development of new profiles of educations such as the combined educations with philosophy and the master in Knowledge Management is a collective effort, often initiated by a group of researchers. The role of management is both to stimulate initiatives, and allocate resources, but is much more involved in organising the framework and create conditions, than in the implementation.

#### **4. The case of the policy group and the centre for business history**

The process of constructing a research group takes a number of different routes some depending on the discipline and on traditions in the research community and some related to the specific themes in a research organizational context. Basic questions to be solved setting up a new research unit independent of discipline and institution is how to define or set up the agenda, how to recruit and especially how to select key personnel, how to secure funding. In a longer time perspective also, how to transform the group from an upcoming and promising initiative on the boundary of main research areas to a stable and influential part of the larger research organization maybe even on a more permanent basis. The following section will discuss our case story with special regard to how the two research groups were set up and how they grew into what after some years has become a more stable situation.

In the cases discussed here, the two research groups in focus have some important common features but also some marked differences in their history. The common feature relates to the role of participating in teaching programmes in the mother institution, i.e. CBS. The differences relates to mainly two aspects of the group construction, the role of and the relation to the disciplinary system in (social) science and the construction of the leadership roles in the group.

Seen in relation to the disciplinary structure of a traditional business schools both research groups was living on the edge, that is their major research questions and disciplinary core was and probably still is on the borderline of what conventionally is understood as related to business economics and relevant to a business school perspective. It goes for both the research group on public policy and the group on business history. Both groups faced the same kind of basic problem of establishing space and recognition inside the organization in order to survive and expand. In some aspects they chose the same strategy but in others,

and on other dimensions they chose very different ways of expanding and establishing the internal coherence of the groups.

Both group leaders stressed in the interview that a fundamental strategy was to focus on teaching if one wants to set up a new research group in the disciplinary borderlines. Teaching is both a strategy to get resources to the group but also, and more importantly, a strategy to get legitimacy to the group and their research from other parts of the institution and at the same time construct new dimensions and new substance in the teaching.

#### **4.1. The Policy group**

The group established itself over a period of 5-6 years with a well-defined profile in public policy analysis both in research and in teaching. In the last couple of years, the group has developed collaboration with organisations and institutions and made room for a couple of external funded research projects on the borderline between private and public policy, especially the role of NGO's. This process has made its own spin-off in both teaching and research profile for the whole group. This kind of entrepreneurial spirit in relation to research and teaching is not very well understood in the literature on scientific leadership and managing of departments.

The leader of the policy group stated the basic strategy using teaching opportunities to build a new group this way:

“..you participate in constructing your audience by setting up new expectations for what is teaching in management and organization by asking how to make myself relevant. .... We started by producing a number of electives and in this way it slowly developed into new expectations among students. It is a long struggle over many years to produce a teaching strategy, at the same time both creating our own teaching responsibilities but also a strategy for how we can contribute to other teaching programmes.” The same strategy was used by the history group even if they experienced a more explicit resistance from other researchers in traditional business school disciplines and had to make alliances with economists and others to demonstrate the relevance of business history in a business school. In both cases the two research groups chose a strategy explicitly aimed at getting a large share or portfolio in teaching on different levels for a couple of reasons. First to win legitimacy and respect from other researchers and departments, as they were both marginal disciplines in the business school, then to get a solid resource base for the research group for seeking external funding, and especially for the policy group by participating in a master programme they were able to get a number of valuable external contacts outside the business school. The teaching policy also had the function of being a major recruiting mechanism, especially in the first years before the groups had been recognised and internal and external funding could recruit new phd students and junior and senior researcher.

The two groups differ on important dimensions like the emphasis on external funding and how they combine teaching and recruiting policy.

The policy groups was very explicit on not “ to define or establish the group on a specific object or disciplinary problem, but on the idea of how to research on the tensions concerning the conditions for management in organizations, and in the meeting between private and public and public and NGO. Policy could of course be one object but it could also be a certain perspective. .. This way one open up for having a dynamic object that did not set up blockings for having playmates from other subject areas in the group....so we

defined a special way of working as agreeing on being able to disagree on the discursive analysis strategy as our basic idea.”

In the eyes of the research leader if such a new research group should move on, it had to give everybody the impressing of something new was happening all the time, “you cannot think in the framework of a zero-sum game or economy, because then you won’t get any new ‘playmates’, at best you might secure a small and stable number of positions. ....I think very important for the group to be a dynamic research environment and the very active doctoral school [at MPP] was decisive in producing expectations setting up new PhD’s all the time. ....One of the advantages of having PhD’s is in this connection, that they last for 3 years<sup>5</sup>, so you have all the time a pressure to get new people in the group. ..It might sound cold and cynical but it means much life because it demands that you constantly set up new research projects, and look around at other institutions to see who can we invite?”

In the first period of establishing the policy group the diversity of teaching in a variety of programmes produced a stable foundation for the group. From here the strategy was one of creating good and exciting research environments to enrol and inspire the members. In this process the research leader saw himself as a resource person, a coach, creating the best environment for the others, even if it meant “moving away from one’s own research agenda in order to make space for new and young members of the group, ....it is like being simultaneous a colleague and a coach.”

In the more mature state of the policy group the resources to the group came from both teaching ( for permanent positions) and external funding ( for temporary positions). Because of the cross-disciplinary core of the group, conditions for leadership in different organizational settings, the group has constantly to interact with other research groups and centres at the business school as well as outside, working with the field of management and leadership in relation to teaching as well as research. The constant interaction and boundary crossing has made the group become more and more central and visible in the business school environment. A good example of how successful the group has become is the fact that the group managed to launch a completely new social science master programme in political leadership and communication in the framework of the business school. In relation to the research agenda first formulated by the group leader, on ‘how to research on the struggle on the conditions for management in organizations’, this thematic core slowly worked its way deep into one of the traditional objects of business schools, management. In order to keep a special profile for the group and to avoid the research agenda to be ‘inflated’ by disciplinary traditions, but at the same time to create some kind of identity, the group’s research programme has developed its own combination of social theory, especially Luhmannian systems theory and Foucaultian power analysis with a discourse analytical approach. This development is very clearly reflected in the group’s new flagship, the master programme in political communication and leadership.

Being a successful and growing research group with responsibility for teaching programmes as well as for a number of external funded projects emphasised another dimension in the research leadership in this group. It is open around the leadership functions or in the words of the group leader, trying to construct a leadership at different levels, where a person is his own research entrepreneur: “At the department we have tried to redefine leadership into a responsibility one has for one’s own work.” The redefinition of

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<sup>5</sup> In Denmark Ph.d Students are young researchers employed on normal academic terms for 3 years on a specific Ph.d project.

leadership in this network based research group creates dynamics, though also problems. Being so close to colleagues in the group and acting as a coach makes it difficult to act as a leader-manager in situations of conflict and f.ex. dismissals, or not recruiting Ph.D.s for assistant professorship. In such situations is the close almost personal relations between members of the network a personal problem for the leader, and after experimenting with different models a solution was found, where the personnel management aspects in the group was handed over to the head of department. Another important thing when the group is established and have passed the first years of enthusiasm is to create a feeling of growth and change and to reach out to other environments – “it is not necessary to have constant growth if you have important circulation, it is important to have a flow in and out of co-researchers. Here time limited appointments are important, guest professors but also PhD’s with their 3 years project time. The research group has to be a group, a network, and not a department.”

## **4.2 The history group/centre for business history**

The history group took a quite different road. It is reflected in the teaching strategy as well as in the recruiting. Instead of defining the group around a special approach to a broad problem area like the policy group, the history group expanded on the idea of developing the discipline of modern history into the area of economic and especially business history. The overall strategy was like the one used by the policy group, starting on teaching through collaboration in teaching with an economist from one of the old departments at the business school in order to present a historic perspective on business areas like finance, international trade, mergers and acquisitions, but closely related to recent development in these fields. The teaching program took off from the well-defined sub-discipline of economic history, a field with a long tradition for empirical studies and a distance toward social science theory. Eventually it developed to a new subject area at the business school, business history but it took “a number of internal disputes on the relevance” to establish the field as teaching area. Besides a number of internal disputes to gain recognition from other departments in business economics, the field of business history demanded a redefinition of the economic history with an approach to social and economic theory not normally used or accepted in the discipline of history.

At the same time business history became a research program based on a number of large projects based on external funding, especially by companies who wanted a research based business history. Much of these company history projects were initiated by the senior researcher, who originally took the initiative to introduce this subject area at the business school. The idea was to produce serious and well-documented studies, produced with no strings attached concerning access to sources or the publication of results – but also studies that would have a larger public than traditional academic historians. Because of the external funding the history group could recruit, first a senior researcher and then a number of post.docs.

The recruitment was quite different from the one in the policy group, who could recruit young researchers from other parts of CBS as well as from outside. The history group/centre with a much more disciplinary profile had to recruit young and open-minded historians from University of Copenhagen, where the future for phd’s was more or less without perspectives with no growth and an age-profile leaving no new positions in the

next few years. First after a first consolidation period the history group or centre as it has been established later on began to fund and recruit its own phd's. Mainly based on the considerable external funding the group was able to offer at professorship in banking history to a researcher from another Danish university.

The group moved from a loose research group to a centre and formed an advisory board with prominent historians and people from outside the university to create visibility and formalize the external recognition. Besides acting in relation to the outside world, the advisory board also had an important function as a medium for corrections and reflections on the group's plans and strategy as well as it acted as an important mediator to external funding.

The sub discipline of business history is today an established field at the business school and the centre has established itself a leader in the field in northern Europe. In relation to the business school the staffs at the centre is teaching in almost all programmes in the business school, with a heavy emphasis on the combined philosophy-business economic education. By introducing the business history approach the history group has introduced the idea of source critique, a classic methodology in history, which is not always understood in social science and business economy.

The centre has during the last years been able to attract a number of large external programmes funding, especially related to Danish business history in the Second World War. This funding has made the centre quite independent in relation to the business school and the department, and turned its relations in networks much more toward external partners than was the case with the policy group, whose networking with other research groups within the business school seems to increase rapidly.

## **5. Strategies for creating research**

The case stories described above focus on different strategies in research leadership when a new unit is constructed in the framework of a large institution, the business school. Both started out as pretty marginal disciplines in a business school, and have to work hard to get access to teaching and to get legitimacy as researchers in the eyes of the traditional business economy community.

As stated earlier, we make the the basic assumption for our analysis, that business schools, especially one with a large university like teaching portfolio like CBS, have experienced the effects of the much discussed recent changes in science-society relation. This discussion have different headings like changes between mode one and mode two research programmes, triple helix, academic capitalism or commercialization of research (Nowotny 2001, Etzkowitz 1983, 2001, Jacob et. al. 2003, Slaughter 2004, Benner 2000).

In our cases, we have found interesting similarities and differences in the strategies used in order to build a new and stable research group. We find these differences very important because they demonstrate that the conceptualization of research leadership and management is much more complicated and extend the level of implementation of traditional management concepts.

As a preliminary conclusion from this explorative case study we will argue, that ideas from entrepreneurship (Drucker 1999) seems to be much more relevant in order to describe the strategies used in the two cases. The description of the construction of a research platform

and a strategy of how to form the agora is providing a platform for understanding how research in business schools may be seen as a type of mode 2 research management (Nowotny 2001) , where the relationship to practice provide the basis for research, both in relation to funding and access to data, and where brokerage to networks outside CBS and the science community play an important role. The resources and researchers recruited in this way may be activated in the next round to create new platforms in terms of external funding or teaching as a basis for recruitment. The straddling on external funding – teaching- internal positions are a clear goal and strategy, and the turnover of staff in the temporary positions stresses not only the continuous partnering with organisations outside the business school, but also the input of new ideas.

The cases challenge the many complaints of the declining resources from the government (which is true), as this is a clear strategy to expand resources, bot directly by funding and indirectly through the development of interesting teaching profiles based on research, thus expanding the recruitment of students.

One of the similarities in strategy used in both cases was a conscious use of the very open and market-like teaching portfolio system at the business school. Both research leaders were very clear on how they in the beginning started to set up local teaching programmes in order to have a platform for further expansion, e.g. the resource argument, as well as a platform for recognition of the research agenda. It could be the new approach to management in public organizations, the struggle to manage, or the idea of constructing the field of business history founded on case studies on large companies in Denmark.

The main differences has there roots in very specific research profiles.

The history group/centre was from the beginning a disciplinary based project. Even if it has developed into a very advanced understanding of modern business history, where theory and other disciplines are recognised, the group is still is a group of people all with at degree in history. From this point of view the group can be described as a rather traditional construction of a disciplinary empire, even if it is a very successful one, with an internal hierarchy based on the senior professors central positions in all kinds of networks of peers and managers of large firms around the centre. In combination with the ability to secure large external funding the centre is on one and the same time closely integrated in a growing number of teaching areas on the level of subcontractors, and on the other hand rather independent in relation to departments and other units at CBS.

The policy group on the other hand was from the beginning much more a network based organization, with an idea of defining the core on research, not as disciplines but by subject area and problems, specific approaches to how to understand the battlefield for leadership in organizations. The disciplinary openness in defining the group is reflected in the multi-disciplinarity of its members, the group has recruited its members from different social sciences and from different universities. This manifold is on the other hand centred on a certain approach and understanding. The group leadership is less formalised, as the group is not a centre, but an internal research group. Within teaching a new bachelor in communication and business economics, and a new master program in political communication and leadership. The research agenda has also extended the groups network into a number of central areas in the traditional research agenda of business schools, especially in management.

## **7. The Organisational knowledge and learning perspectives:**

The cases are emphasising the open space of opportunities and the limitation of zero-sum-game perspective waiting for exploitation of time for research. The intuitional innovation processes are interesting to compare to other type of University renewal (Blau 1994, Ramden 2006). The research entrepreneurial development is reformulating not only a research platform and growth strategy, but also the creation of a flexible research environment, where part of the strategy is to initiate growth processes. The research leader has to be able to handle these demands as well as the ones bound up on special efforts to increase the capacity of the group to take in new assignments and create new relevant teaching, not only for the existing staff, but for further expansion. The research agenda in this context is to form an interesting and dynamic research environment. The organisation of seminars within networks including research groups from other universities as well as the inclusion of non-university key persons produced an outstanding reputation inside as well as outside the business school, and created an organisational potential for attracting very good researchers from other universities as well as good collaborations abroad. In terms of organisational learning a fundamental part of this process is tied to the knowledge and culture among younger members of the group, both assistant professors and Ph.D.s that they have responsibilities for generating new possibilities, both in research and teaching. The organisational culture of entrepreneurship and decentralised responsibility is an embedded part of the organisation, more in the policy group than in the history group. The young researchers also train the younger recruits to be aware of these features.

The creation of the modern research group in the agora is not a one-time creation, but it is a process of constant movement and mobilising resources, taking responsibilities to construct and reconstruct a learning milieu. It is an institutional innovation based on entrepreneurial behaviour of researchers and leaders. The individual responsibility for every researcher for contributing to the construction of the organisation is very clear. It is most visible in relation to the PhD's where a large number wanted, but not all succeed to stay in a research job at the department. The individual responsibility add pressures on the PhDs to create their own job as postdoc or assistant professor by applying for external funding. Also more senior groups of researchers are under constant pressure to contribute to a dynamic environment.

The training and learning to be active entrepreneurial members of a business school or university in job functions based on teaching and research are then demanding new entrepreneurial management function at all levels in the research and teaching organisation. This implies concern for both the obligations at universities and business schools, high performance on theoretical research, partnerships with organisations to create funding and access to empirical research and clear teaching strategies as well. The creation of a market for expertise of a special kind such as disciplines on the boundary of business economics, need creative thinking and a dynamic leadership. The research leadership strategies create an interesting perspective on the classic Humboldtian university's relationship between research and teaching. The teaching becomes part of the effort to create research groups, and getting externally paid research develop a basis for creating new teaching programmes. The successful researcher is then one who is able to mobilize resources from many different sources, in- and outside the university system, and seen from this perspective one who is acting like a classic entrepreneur. One could argue, that the recent changes in the function of public universities opens up for a more complex relationship between research and teaching than the traditional Humboldt model. To sum up: The CBS case study has demonstrated the need of special qualities for research leadership, such as

- 1) Personal qualities (scientific capital and charisma) in order to create respect and formulate research programs
- 2) The ability to be a broker between networks in teaching and research and not the least in the outside world
- 3) To be able to use of rules and organizational openings creative
- 4) The creating an environment of self management in a collective research group

In other words, entrepreneurial leadership in research creating leadership, opportunities, and resources rather than adapting to existing structures and resources.

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