Gender diversity and management aspirations in public sector workplaces in Denmark

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to explore the relationship between workplace gender diversity among peers and management aspirations among male and female employees. It focuses on whether gender diversity influences men and women's management aspirations.

Design/methodology/approach – The study builds on cross-sectional survey data from the Danish public sector.

Findings – Results shows that in mixed-gender workplaces, male employees are less likely to express management aspirations than male employees in mono-gender workplaces, but female employees in mixed-gender workplaces express management aspirations to the same – low – degree as female employees in mono-gender workplaces. All in all, the findings show that gender differences in career aspirations are not just a matter of individual preferences and/or macro-structural factors but also a matter of factors at organizational level. The findings suggest both positive and negative implications of gender diversity, and hence problematize a – rather common – simplistic celebration of gender diversity. First of all, gender diversity seems to counteract the fertilization of rigid stereotypes of men and hence prevents some men from being pushed into management positions and a career ladder they perhaps do not want to be placed at in the first place.

Research limitations/implications – Because of the chosen research approach, the research results may lack generalizability. Therefore, researchers are encouraged to test the proposed propositions further.

Practical implications – The findings seem to identify that the challenge of secure a large and qualified pool of potential managers might be even extra challeging for managers in gender-diverse organisations.

Originality/value – A more nuanced view of the implications of gender diversity based on a basic argument of gender-asymmetry. Furthermore, the study are build on a unique dataset that allows to study the implications of gender diversity across a wide range of occupational setting and hence control for occupation specific characteristics.

Keywords Management aspirations, Gender diversity among peers, Gender stereotyping, Gender asymmetry

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

For several decades, most developed countries have seen increased workforce diversity (Forbes Insights, 2012; McKinsey, 2017). Women's increasing participation in education and paid employment as well as migration are important sources for workforce diversification (Forbes Insights, 2012; McKinsey, 2017; OECD, 2017). In the social sciences, workplace diversity has attracted considerable attention (DiTomaso *et al.*, 2007; Roberson *et al.*, 2017). Diversity research is often directed towards the analysis of whether and how various kinds of workforce diversity affect aggregated business outcomes in general, especially corporate

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profits and earnings (Herring, 2009; Noland *et al.*, 2016; Shore *et al.*, 2009; Tinker *et al.*, 2004). However, workplace diversity is also an essential part of the intimate social environment for the individual employee with possible importance for work-related experience and wellbeing. As Pfeffer (1983) states: "the relative proportions [of social categories] condition the form and nature of social interaction and group processes," all of which can affect employees' "psychological well-being, attitudes, and even job performance" (303-304). In the present study we hypothesize, that gender diversity among peers can affect the social and psychological environment in workplaces in ways that may form their career aspirations. We want to investigate whether workplace gender diversity of peers can affect entry of employees into the recruitment pipeline for lower-level management positions.

Gender gap in management positions

After several decades of struggle for gender equality in the labor market, men still occupy a clear majority of the authority positions in private as well as public organizations. Numbers from the OECD indicate that men's share of managerial employment totals almost 70 per cent (OECD, 2017). The gender gap with respect to workplace authority increases through the hierarchical levels, and in the OECD countries, women's share among chief executives in 2016 amounts to 4.8 per cent on average, though coming up from 2.4 per cent in 2013 (OECD, 2017). Even though Denmark is characterized by relatively high gender equality, especially when it comes to labor market participation and a shrinking wage gap, women's representation in management in general as well as top management positions is below OECD average (OECD, 2018). In the public sector, which, on average, is numerically dominated by women, men are also overrepresented in authority positions (European Commission, 2009). Again, when it comes to chief executive levels in the public sector, men typically hold the positions (European Commission, 2009). In Denmark, even in branches with overwhelming majority of women among regular employees, senior or chief executives are typically men (Madsen *et al.*, 2010). If the gender gap with regard to workplace authority is less marked today than it was a century ago, it is still quite evident, and changes are coming slowly especially in countries abstaining from the use of quotas and other legally binding measures (OECD, 2017).

There are several reasons to worry about the gender gap with regard to workplace authority. From an economic perspective, women's relative underrepresentation in the management and leadership of our working life can be regarded as inefficient. In today's Western welfare states, women are statistically equally or better educated than their male peers (Beck-Domzalska, 2007; OECD, 2017). Therefore, when women do not take equal part in the management and leadership, it can lead to underutilization of women's competencies and knowledge resources. Several studies indicate that corporations and organizations perform better if qualified women hold a more equal share of the management positions (Carter and Wagner, 2011; Hunt *et al.*, 2018; Noland *et al.*, 2016; Tinker *et al.*, 2004). From a broader societal or democratic perspective, the gender gap with regard to workplace authority is problematic because it exhibits that women as a group systematically have less influence than men on the substantial societal processes related to work and economic reproduction that take place in the workplaces. For economic as well as democratic reasons it is therefore important to elucidate which factors influence women's ways into the pipeline for workplace authority.

In the present study, we bring the literature on gender diversity together with theories and empirical research on the forming and social construction of men's and women's career aspirations in gendered work contexts (Cohen and Swim, 1995; Correll, 2004; McDonald *et al.*, 2004; Ridgeway and Correll, 2000). Instead of focusing on the effect of gender diversity in management to the career aspirations of lower-rank male and female employees, we focus on

how gender diversity among peers affect their management aspirations and thereby their entry into the pipeline for lower-level management positions. Hypothesizing that workplace gender diversity of peers affects the social and psychological environment in ways that are important for the forming of men's and women's career aspirations, we ask *how workplace gender diversity of peers affect employees' career aspirations, and whether female and male employees are affected in the same way?*

To put the analyses of gender diversity and career aspirations in perspective, we also explore whether or not workplace gender diversity correlates with men's and women's perceived career possibilities. Note that by workplace gender diversity of peers we understand the mix of female and male employees in a workplace. Accordingly, we define a workplace with high gender diversity of peers as a workplace with equal shares of women and men among employees.

In the study, we analyze unique survey data from workplaces within a wide range of public sector occupations (13) in Denmark. As the sample is composed by an equal number of women and men from the 13 occupations, we are able to analyze the association between gender diversity and management aspirations for women and men across highly different occupational settings each representing among others different structures of opportunity with regard to career ladders, job responsibilities etc. and hence control for these differences. Further controlling for working hours, tenure, family situation and more, our study has good prospects for determining whether workplace gender diversity has associations that are generalizable across gender and occupation. Our study expands on existing diversity research by exploring the possible associations between workplace gender diversity and men's and women's career aspirations with a particular view to the generalizability of diversity processes across a wide range of occupational settings. Theoretically, our contribution lies in the joining of general theories on gender diversity with theories on *the forming* of career aspirations in gendered work contexts. Our theoretical claim is that to understand the associations between workplace gender diversity of peers and male and female employees' career aspirations we need to build on theories of inter-gender social mechanisms within work organizations.

We find it particularly interesting to explore the importance of an organizational factor like gender diversity among peers to career aspirations because, in comparison with personal or family-related factors like motherhood and marital relationship/cohabitation, and macro-structural factors like culturally dominant gender roles, workplace gender diversity of peers seems to be more accessible for modification by management or political intervention. Furthermore, by focusing on management aspirations and workplace gender diversity of peers we focus on how political and administrative managers might be able to cultivate a bigger and more varied resource pool to choose future public managers from. Equal *opportunities* for advancement might formally solve a gender equality matter, but if male and female employees do not use the opportunities equally because of different levels of aspirations it does not solve matters of recruitment and optimal use of the human resource pool.

In the following sections, we derive hypotheses based on the literature on women's and men's work orientation and career aspirations and the influence of workplace gender diversity of peers. After this, we describe data and methods, present the results from our analyses, and last, we discuss the results and present our conclusions.

Men's and women's career aspirations and gender diversity of peers

Traditionally, career aspirations are heavily gendered (Alvesson and Billing, 2009; Kirchmeyer, 2002; Powell and Butterfield, 2013). Several empirical studies have found that

women's and men's orientations towards career, promotion and job authority fit different typical patterns (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). In general, and in conformity with traditional gender roles, authority oriented career aspirations are more prevalent among men than among women (Heilman, 2012; Madsen *et al.*, 2010; Powell and Butterfield, 2013; Sheppard, 2018). It is widely discussed across different research perspectives, however, whether the widespread gender differences with respect to career aspirations are determined by societal and organizational structures, or, rather, if they are the expression of free choices of women and men. Economists, on the one hand, often referring back to the work of Becker (1985), typically account for differences between men's and women's work orientation and career aspirations on the basis of job seekers' utility maximizing choices, and they find that women with responsibilities in the family often choose to allocate less effort and commitment to their jobs than men with similar levels of skill and labor market experience do (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006; Thévenon, 2013). Many sociologists, on the other hand, begin with the assumption that "workers' location in social structures affects their work attitudes and behavior because location signals whether career advancement is possible, and workers react accordingly" (Reskin and Bielby, 2005, p. 79). In accordance with this assumption, Cassirer and Reskin (2000), in a study among 733 employed General Social Survey respondents, find that the differences between men's and women's career aspirations are due to different structural opportunities for women and men when they are placed in a gender segregated labor market.

In the present study, our aim is, as mentioned, to explore the association between an organizational variable, gender diversity of peers, and male and female employees' career aspirations. Thereby we wish to supplement the basic explanatory grips from the overall economic and sociological perspectives mentioned. It is important, however, in the analyses to control for family circumstances and for structural opportunity structures, and thereby take into account some of the basic insights into career aspirations from these perspectives.

Our hypotheses derive from various findings indicating that workplace gender diversity of peers can affect the social and psychological environment among employees in ways pertinent for processes of gender stereotyping and career aspirations among employees. Several organizational scholars have directed attention to the importance of workplace organizational composition for peoples' cognition, valuations and behavior (Pfeffer, 1997, chap. 4). In a line of research going back to Kanter (1977a, 1977b), King *et al.* (2010, pp. 483-484) find that the numerical representation of women and men in organizations is linked to "the psychological climate of gender inequality" they perceive, and that this psychological climate is "a critical predictor of their attitudes and behaviors at work". Like Kanter (1977a, 1977b), King *et al.* (2010) focus on organizational settings with distinctly skewed gender composition in which persons in clear numerical minority position is assumed to experience stereotyping. In the present study, we focus on organizational settings with a higher degree of gender diversity, and, assuming that increased diversity among peers can decrease stereotyping, we explore the possible direct relationship between organizational gender diversity of peers and career aspirations among employees.

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Gender stereotyping, diversity and career aspirations

From organizational studies it is well known that organizations in general contribute to the construction of shared meanings, beliefs and values among the individuals they comprise (Jaffee, 2001). As expressed by Pfeffer:

> [. . .] who you interact with and are therefore influenced by and, in turn, influence, is a function of the existing social structure [. . .] If an individual's social environment is made up almost exclusively of males, the opportunity for interaction with women is limited simply by the composition of the social group, regardless of the individual's interest in interacting with women (Pfeffer, 1997, p. 82).

Hence, the workplace organizational composition is important for employees' cognition, valuations and behavior (Pfeffer, 1997, chap. 4).

Stereotyping among employees in workplaces is one of the basic social process that can affect the formation of career preferences in organizational contexts. Stereotyping implicates generalizations or assumptions about the characteristics of all members of a social category based on a generalized image about what people in that category are like and what capabilities they have. In Western societies, widespread stereotypes on gender associate job authority and career closer with masculinity than with femininity (Alvesson and Billing, 2009; Wynn and Correll, 2018). Because career and management generally are gender typed male, gender stereotyping in a workplace setting should affect women and men differently. If general gender stereotypes ascribe attributes and qualities associated with job authority, ambition and career to men but not to women, then organizational settings with pronounced gender stereotyping could encourage men's ambitions, and at the same time, put restraints on women's ambitions.

A mechanism in this process is backed up in the literature on stereotype threat, indicating that when a person in a certain situation experiences stereotype threat (i.e. being defined in the situation as an example of a general negative stereotype), the stereotype threat seems to incur stereotypic features to the threatened person. A striking example of stereotype threat from experimental social psychology is female students underperforming in advanced math tests when they are made even vaguely conscious of their gender, but performing fine when the importance of gender is explicitly denied in the test situation (Spencer and Steele, 1999; Steele *et al.*, 2002). For individuals in a category with negative stereotypical images, stereotype threat may influence their self-image, their preferences, and even their capabilities in the situation so that the stereotypical image is confirmed. Several studies have found that the mechanism of stereotype threat may hold back women's career preferences in organizational settings with pronounced stereotyping processes (Correll, 2001, 2004; Hoyt and Murphy, 2016; Ridgeway and Correll, 2000).

In the present study, we focus on organizational settings with a higher degree of gender diversity, and we explore the possible direct relationship between organizational gender diversity of peers and career aspirations among employees. Our main line of thought is that increased gender diversity of peers may reduce stereotyping in the workplace in ways that can affect career aspirations. This reasoning builds on a broad literature departing from the so-called contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) saying that inter-categorical contact tends to dissolve stereotyping and prejudice, purportedly because face-to-face interaction often disconfirms the generalizations implied in the stereotypical images (Linnehan and Konrad, 1999; Reskin *et al.*, 1999; Ridgeway, 1991; Ridgeway and Correll, 2000; Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin, 1999). According to the contact hypothesis, interaction in an organizational context between individuals with different cognitive and evaluative starting points can thus be hypothesized to break down differences in held values, preferences and general outlook. DiTomaso *et al.* note that: "Under favorable conditions [. . .], intergroup contact may help

reduce the activation of bias, through mutual appreciation and friendship" (DiTomaso *et al.*, 2007, p. 490).

It is generally assumed that intergroup contact must have certain qualities to reduce stereotyping and prejudice. Scholars working in the contact theory perspective often discuss these qualities as scope conditions[1] for the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Paluck *et al.*, 2018; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006). Allport imagined that intergroup contact would work to reduce prejudice and stereotyping only if contact took place in settings with equal status between the participants, had character of collaboration, was directed by common goals, and that the effect would be enhanced if the contact was institutionally supported (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006).

If the scope conditions are not fulfilled, extensive inter gender contact in organizational settings with high degree of gender diversity of peers could lead to other outcomes. Studies of gender and racial sensitivity training show that intergroup interaction training might backlash and trigger salience of gender and racial stereotypes (Tinkler *et al.*, 2007; Tinkler, 2012, 2013; Williams, 2017).

As data in the present study is collected among Danish public employees, we argue that the scope conditions defined by Allport (1954) for intergroup contact to reduce stereotyping are generally satisfied. Hence, one could argue that our Danish case of public employees is a critical case in testing the decreasing effect of diversity to the use of stereotypes.

Danish workplace culture – public as well as private – is characterized by among others flat hierarchy, working in a team, being quite democratic, acting proactively and an informal tone of communication (Hofstede Insights, 2018). Furthermore, in Danish workplaces, you enjoy your lunch break with peers and there are often many recurring social activities. Finally, most public workplaces in Denmark are characterized by educational homogeneity (Andersen, 2014) – either by law or by agreements between government and unions. Hence, the empirical organizational context of the data for the present study is characterized not only by equal status between the participants, but also by a character of collaboration and common goals, as the organizations as mentioned are characterized by teamwork in a democratic culture. In addition, gender equality is institutionally supported by both law and common norms.

Accordingly, we hypothesize that gender diversity of peers dilutes stereotyping and hence affects career aspirations among peers in public sector workplaces in Denmark.

Hypotheses

Assuming that pronounced gender stereotyping typically restrains management aspirations among women and furthers them among men, and assuming that organizational gender diversity of peers counteracts gender stereotyping through increased inter-gender interaction, we hypothesize that:

H1a. Workplace gender diversity of peers is positively correlated with management aspirations among women, but negatively among men.

Further, if pronounced gender stereotyping affects women's self-esteem negatively (but men's positively), we hypothesize that:

H1b. Workplace gender diversity of peers is positively correlated with perceived career possibilities among women, but negatively among men.

As mentioned above, our hypotheses assume that the scope conditions for the contact hypothesis are satisfied in the empirical setting of our study. If this is not the case, extensive

inter gender contact in organizational settings with high degree of gender diversity of peers could lead to other outcomes than we hypothesize. Allport (1954, p. 263) explicitly warned that if inter group contact retained a superficial and casual character, contact could lead in the opposite direction and increase conflict and prejudice: "the more contact the more trouble".

Based on the research reviewed above, we find that there are good reasons to assume that workplace gender diversity of peers can affect men's and women's career aspirations. We should emphasize, however, that we do not, of course, hereby claim that gender diversity is the only factor determining career aspirations. The associations we hypothesize between gender diversity of peers and career aspirations are thought to be relatively independent from overall (economic and sociological) perspectives on career aspirations and career choices, and our explorations are not aimed at invalidating any of these perspectives. Our ambition is to explore the possible independent importance of gender diversity of peers in the workplace for men's and women's career aspirations. In our analyses, however, we do control for family situation and for structural opportunities to construct the analyses adequately and to subsequently discuss the different overall perspectives on career aspirations.

Research design, data and measures

In the following, we present the context and design for testing the hypotheses, the data and measures used and how we carried out the statistics.

To test the hypotheses outlined above, we use a unique and large data set collected among Danish public employees. Respondents were drawn from Danish public employee registers[2]. The questionnaire was sent to 8,759 public employees and a response rate of 56 per cent was achieved[3]. As the strategy was to obtain a fairly equal share of male and female respondents within the various representative occupations in the Danish public sector, the survey was designed as a gender-stratified (over-sampling men) random sample of employees and managers within 13 different occupations (Table I). Data were also collected among a 14th category of public employees – or rather, among a redundant

Occupation	*N*	No. of male and female respondents
Social and health workers	213	M = 103, F = 110
Teachers in primary schools	226	M = 106, F = 120
Physicians	180	M = 92, F = 88
Healthcare professionals[a]	251	M = 117, F = 134
Office and IT staff	250	M = 107, F = 143
Academic staff in public administration	249	M = 120, F = 129
Prof. caretakers in 24-hour care institutions for vulnerable children	229	M = 109, F = 120
Professional caretakers in daycare institutions	211	M = 90, F = 121
Technical staff and cleaning	180	M = 87, F = 93
Teachers in youth educations[b]	336	M = 172, F = 164
Researchers	177	M = 71, F = 106
Police and prison staff	154	M = 75, F = 79
Employees in the armed forces	162	M = 61, F = 101
Sum	*2818*	*M = 1310, F = 1508*

Notes: [a]Health-care professionals are nurses, ergotherapists, physiotherapists, health visitors etc. which – compared to physicians – only have a bachelor-degree and not a master degree. [b]"Teachers in youth educations" covers in Denmark teachers at different educations after primary school but before possible university level (BA and MA) studies. In other words: High school teachers, business college teachers, technical colleges etc.

Table I.
List of occupations included in data and response rates

category of public employees, namely those not covered by the 13 occupations. For reasons of simplicity and clarity in interpreting the data, we chose to exclude the 214 respondents in the 14th job category from the analysis. Furthermore, 1,873 respondents are already in management positions and therefore also excluded in the analysis presented in this article. Hence, the actual sample size is 2,818.

The design and data of the article is however not without caveats. The cross-sectional data allow us, as mentioned, to analyze the correlation between workplace gender diversity of peers and management aspirations of women and men across highly different occupational settings each representing different structures of opportunity with regard to career ladders, job responsibilities etc., and hence control for these differences in occupational settings. However, cross-sectional data are susceptible to potential omitted variable bias and reverse causation bias. The first concern is that the occupational contexts with high workplace gender diversity of peers on certain other variables (unobserved and hence not controlled for by the researcher) differ from the occupational contexts with low workplace gender diversity of peers, and that these differences may be correlated with employee's management aspirations. Hence, we cannot be hundred *p* certain that workplace gender diversity of peers in itself is causing differences in management aspirations or whether the observed association is driven by something affecting both workplace gender diversity of peers and employee management aspirations. Hence caution in drawing causal inferences is advisable. However, the fact that the data are Danish, and hence collected in a socially homogenous setting diminishes the possibility of omitted variables related to the workplace gender diversity of peers and the dependent variable in regard to "usual suspects" as workplace diversity in ethnicity, race and religion or the individual employees' own ethnicity, race and religion. Furthermore, studying across different occupational settings also allows us to indirectly control for level of education, as the studied occupations requires different levels of education (e.g. to become a researcher in Denmark you need to have a Ph. D.-degree, to be a school teacher you have to have a four year bachelor-degree in teaching from a certified university college, and to become a physician one has to have master degree in medicine).

However, a second concern with cross-sectional data is that we do not know the causal order among variables. We do know that employee gender is first in causal order compared to workplace gender diversity of peers and management aspirations, but we cannot be certain that management aspirations are second to workplace gender diversity of peers or vice-versa. This is, however, a matter we will discuss in the "Conclusion and Discussion"-section.

As mentioned, the survey was designed as a gender-stratified random sample within 13 different occupations, and as such it is not representative of the entire population within each of the 13 occupations. However, as our survey sample, as mentioned in footnote 2, was drawn from register data containing information about gender, age, education and workplace we can compare the respondents with the non-respondents of the survey. These comparisons showed no worrying significant differences. The response rate for males and females are almost equal (48 per cent for males and 52 per cent for females). Slightly less of the younger employees in the sample chose to fill in the questionnaire (47 per cent of those 34 years or younger) compared to the older employees 35-44 years = 59 per cent, 45-54 = 60 per cent, and 55+ = 60 per cent). Likewise, less from police and prison staff and technical staff and cleaning have answered (respectively 47 and 48 per cent) compared to e.g. academic staff in public administration (66 per cent) and teachers in youth educations (63 per cent). However, as we use these variables as control variables and hence do within-occupation-

studies these differences in response rate is not invalidating our statistic findings. The grouping of respondents between the 13 occupations is shown in Table I.

Even though Denmark has a high level of gender equality compared to other countries, when it comes to participation in the work force, the job market is fairly gender divided (Bloksgaard, 2011; Emerek and Holt, 2008). Women are employed in caretaking jobs in the public sector to a larger degree than men. At the same time, again compared to other countries, men and women are fairly even when it comes to taking care of family and home, being active in their spare time and organizational life, and level of education. Hence, because of the high level of equality and the norm of both genders taking part in the work force, one might argue that the Danish case is a critical one. In Denmark, men and women are used to regarding each other as equals at the work place and respecting and learning from each other, so if gender diversity of peers seems to minimize the differences in management aspirations between women and men, it might also be negatively associated in similar contexts. How high levels of general gender equality that is needed to expect learning in respect to management aspirations is however difficult to say. The data covers as mentioned only public organizations, but as the hypothesized causal mechanisms (learning respectively stereotyping) are social-psychological mechanisms between genders there seems, however, no reasons to expect differences between public and private organizations.

Our dependent variables are as mentioned 1) whether or not the employee is interested in a management position or not, and 2) to which degree the employee thinks it is possible that he/she will actually get a management position one day, either at his or her own workplace or at another place. We choose to test the hypotheses on two variables instead of only one as it provides a more comprehensive test of the association between gender diversity of peers and management aspirations. Aspiring to become a manager is not only a matter of the individual being interested but also a matter of the degree to which the individual thinks it is realistic. At the same time, one could argue that "being interested in" is partly affected by, how realistic it is, and hence we ought to control for perception of possibility when we study the relationship between gender diversity and employee interest in management position. However, if we controlled for "perception of possibility" while studying the effect of gender diversity among peers to employees interest in management position – and hence only measure its direct effect – we would run the risk of underestimating the importance of gender diversity to interest in management position, as the motivational self-censorship effect of stereotypes might be both direct and indirect – that is through the perception of the possibilities of becoming a manager.

However, as most employees do not want to become a manager[4] the answers to the questions "To which degree would you like to become a manager at your present workplace" and "To which degree would you like to become a manager at another workplace" are very left skewed[5]. Hence, we chose to recode the original five-point scale into a dummy variable measuring "interested" (the point 2-5) versus "not interested at all" (point 1). The answers to the two questions measuring the employees' perception of the possibility of getting a management position[6] are also left skewed (more employees have a negative perception than a positive one), but the skewness is small compared to the skewness concerning the interest in management positions (Tables AI and AII in Appendix for descriptives for occupations and women and men separately). Therefore, we chose to use the natural log of the variable instead of recoding into a dummy variable. A consequence of the recoding is that when testing our hypotheses on the employees' "interest in management position", we need to use logistic regression, whereas we use OLS regression to test them on the employees' perception of the possibility of getting a management position. To test the robustness of our findings based on the above recoding we tested our statistic models on

different coding of the dependent variables. The tests of robustness showed no significant differences in our findings[7].

Our explanatory variables of main interest, namely gender diversity of peers, employee gender and an interaction variable between gender and gender diversity of peers we likewise measured through survey-items. Gender is based on biological gender and is a dummy variable, where male = 0, and female = 1. In respect to gender diversity of peers we asked our respondents to answer the following question:

> How – approximately – is the allocation of male and female colleagues at your workplace? (If you are employed at a very large workplace divided into separate departments, think about the department or entity of employees that you are a part of).

We argue that as the effect of gender diversity of peers to management aspirations is a social-psychological mechanism it seems reasonable to use a self-reported – perceived – measure of degree of gender diversity of peers. Furthermore, as the theory of gender diversity is a theory of the effect of *diversity* and not a theory of the effect of either women or men being the minority at the workplace[8], we choose to code our measure of diversity into a variable going from 1: "more than 75 per cent of the employees being of one gender" to 3: "about the same number of female and male employees" (and 2 = one of the two sexes being between 74 and 51 per cent of the employees), indicating that the higher the score the higher the level of gender diversity at one's workplace[9]. [10] Furthermore, to test H1a and H1b we compute an interaction variable of gender and gender diversity to evaluate different impact on women and men.

Even though our study is a study of X's correlation with Y the ambition of which is to test the association between gender diversity of peers and employee's management aspirations depending on the gender of the employee, and not a study trying to explain the total variation in management aspirations (Y), we still - to reduce the risk of omitted variables – need to control for alternative explanations that might covary with our independent variables of main interest and the dependent variables and, hence, either lead to over- or underestimation of the association between gender diversity of peers, gender and the interaction variable if not included. The included control variables are: Age, occupation, working hours (measured whether or not the respondent is working part time (=/< 32 hours a week = 0) or (almost) full time > 32 hours a week = 1), children living at home (No = 0, Yes = 1), living with partner (No = 0, Yes = 1), and finally length of employment (measured in years). As the number of management positions, and hence structural opportunities of advancement, and level of education differs between the different occupations included in the survey data and gender diversity of peers differs within the occupations too, we choose to use dummy variables to control each of the different occupations. Furthermore, in the statistics, we choose to use "professional caretakers in 24-hour care institutions for vulnerable children and youth" as a reference category as this profession is the one in which employees score their management aspirations closest to the average.

Because working part time is gender biased (more women work part time than men) but focus of the article is to test the association between gender diversity of peers and management aspirations and possible differences between men and women and not the association between gender and management aspirations in itself we control for part time working. Descriptives of all variables are shown in Table AIII in Appendix.

To test the hypotheses, we run the analyses in three steps. First, we test a model containing only the controls, shown in Table II as model 1. Second, in model 2, we add the variable measuring gender diversity of peers into the equation, testing the association between gender diversity of peers and management aspirations and whether or not adding gender diversity of peers affects the correlations of the controls and/or the overall

Table II. The effect of gender and organizational level of gender diversity on employees' interest in a management position and perception of the possibilities of getting a management position

Variable	Interest in management position No-Yes			Perception of possibilities of getting a management position		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant (Prof caretakers in 24-hour care institutions for vulnerable children and youth are ref. cat.)	2.271*** (9.693)	2.437*** (11.435)	2.670*** (14.872)	1.05*** (19.29)	1.07*** (18.40)	1.09*** (17.53)
Social and health workers	−0.047 (0.954)	−0.066 (0.936)	−0.085 (0.919)	−0.12*** (2.86)	−0.12*** (2.94)	−0.12*** (2.96)
Teachers in primary schools	−0.152 (0.859)	−0.152 (0.859)	−0.163 (0.850)	0.03 (0.80)	−0.03 (0.71)	−0.03 (0.72)
Physicians	0.870*** (2.387)	0.904*** (2.469)	0.879*** (2.409)	0.02 (0.36)	0.02 (0.41)	0.02 (0.38)
Healthcare professionals	−1.69 (0.844)	−0.200 (0.819)	−0.223 (0.780)	0.11*** (2.83)	0.11*** (2.71)	0.11*** (2.68)
Office and IT staff	0.178 (1.195)	0.187 (1.205)	0.177 (1.193)	0.00 (0.07)	0.00 (0.10)	0.00 (0.09)
Academic staff in public administration	0.770*** (2.160)	0.806*** (2.245)	0.787*** (2.200)	0.17*** (4.20)	0.17*** (4.29)	0.17*** (4.26)
Prof caretakers in daycare institutions	−0.445* (0.640)	−0.463 (0.629)	−0.462 (0.630)	−0.12 (2.89)	−0.12*** (2.86)	−0.12*** (2.85)
Technical staff and cleaning	−0.065 (0.938)	−0.060 (0.942)	−0.102 (0.903)	−0.12*** (2.88)	−0.12*** (2.77)	−0.12*** (2.82)
Teachers in youth educations	0.072 (1.074)	0.149 (1.161)	0.117 (1.124)	0.08** (2.07)	0.09** (2.31)	0.09** (2.25)
Researchers	0.976*** (2.654)	1.014*** (2.756)	0.990*** (2.692)	0.17*** (3.95)	0.18*** (4.06)	0.18*** (4.00)
Police and prison staff	−0.279 (0.756)	−0.282 (0.754)	−0.318 (0.728)	0.11** (2.28)	0.11** (2.30)	0.10** (2.24)
Employees in the armed forces	0.479* (1.615)	0.453* (1.573)	0.451** (1.570)	0.16*** (3.41)	0.16*** (3.33)	0.16*** (3.32)
Gender (M = 0, F = 1)	−0.463*** (0.629)	−0.482*** (0.617)	−0.904*** (0.405)	−0.09*** (5.60)	−0.09*** (5.65)	−0.12*** (3.05)
Age	−0.065*** (0.937)	−0.066*** (0.937)	−0.066*** (0.936)	−0.01*** (8.72)	−0.01*** (8.67)	−0.01*** (8.66)
Working hours	0.390*** (1.476)	0.403*** (1.496)	0.385*** (1.469)	0.14*** (6.30)	0.14*** (6.28)	0.14*** (6.22)
Children living at home	0.255** (1.290)	0.252** (1.287)	0.250** (1.284)	0.12*** (6.49)	0.12*** (6.44)	0.12*** (6.44)
Living with partner	0.075 (1.077)	0.087 (1.091)	0.088 (1.092)	−0.00 (0.01)	−0.00 (0.05)	−0.00 (0.03)
Length on employment (years)	−0.002 (0.998)	−0.002 (0.998)	−0.002*** (0.998)	−0.01*** (4.05)	−0.01*** (4.13)	−0.01*** (4.14)
Gender diversity of peers	IR	−0.095 (0.209)	−0.219*** (0.803)	IR	−0.01 (1.04)	−0.02 (1.31)

(*continued*)

Table II.

Variable	Interest in management position No-Yes			Perception of possibilities of getting a management position		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Interaction variable: Gender (F =1) * gender diversity of peers	IR	IR	0.242** (1.274)	IR	IR	0.02 (0.83)
Model statistic:						
N	2,166	2,159	2,159	2,782	2,773	2,773
Nagelkerke R^2/Adjusted R^2	0.25***	0.25***	0.26***	0.19	0.19	0.19
F-test				36.53***	34.35***	32.66***

Notes: For models explaining "Interest in Management position No-Yes" Logistic regression, *** = $p < 0.01$; ** = $p < 0.05$; * = 0.1 (two-tailed). Cell entries are B-coefficients with odds ratios in parentheses. For the models explaining "Perception of possibilities of getting a management position" OLS-regression. *** = $p < 0.01$; ** = $p < 0.05$; * = 0.1 (two-tailed). Cell entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with the absolute value of *t*-statistics in parentheses

explanatory power of the model (shown as the models overall R^2). Finally, we add the interaction variable gender*gender diversity of peers into the model. In doing so, we test whether the association between gender diversity of peers and managerial aspirations depends on the gender of the employee.

Findings

The results of the analysis are shown in Table II. The question is, first of all, whether or not gender, as expected, means anything to employee management aspirations – and, if so, whether or not introducing workplace gender diversity of peers to the explanatory model is in itself significant and changes the differences between males and females' interest in and perception of the possibility of getting a management position. As shown in Table II (both model 1 s), gender makes significant difference to both the interest in getting a management position and to the individual's perception of how possible it is to become a manager one day. As expected, men are both more interested and find it more possible that they will become managers than women (the gender variable has a significant negative effect). However, as shown in both "model 2"-columns in the table, adding gender diversity of peers to the explanatory model does not in itself change anything. In relation to both dependent variables, gender diversity of peers is in itself negative – but non-significant. Furthermore, it has a non-significant effect on the association between gender and management aspirations. But, in both columns of model 3, we control for the interaction variable between gender and gender diversity of peers to test whether or not gender diversity associates differently with management aspirations for male employees than for females, and hence, we test *H1a/H1b* concerning asymmetric effects for men and women. As shown in the last column (Model 3) in Table II, the interaction variable is insignificant and introducing an interaction variable to the model does not change the explanation of variation in the employee's *perception of the possibilities of getting a management position*. Whether or not the gender diversity of peers is high or low, it doesn't change either the male or the female employees' perception of their possibilities of getting a management position. Regardless of the organizational level of gender diversity of peers, the female employees perceive their possibilities of getting a management position to be less than their male colleagues – and that is the case even though we include the different control variables. Hence, even when men and women choose to spend an equal number of hours on their work and career, are in the same profession and in equal personal life situations, and work in fairly gender diverse organizations, women perceive their possibilities of getting a management position to be less compared to men. The association between gender diversity of peers and perceptions of the possibility of getting a management position is symmetrically non-significant to men and women.

This is, however, not the case when we look at the interest in getting a management position. Hence, as shown in Table II (the first Model 3 column), gender diversity of peers has an asymmetric association to management aspirations for men and women. Introducing the interaction variable to the explanatory model reveals that gender diversity of peers lowers men's interest in management positions while it does not have any significant association – neither positive nor negative – with women's management aspirations[11]. Hence, data only partly support H1a saying that gender diversity of peers is positively correlated with management aspirations among women but negatively among men as, as hypothesized, it is negatively correlated among men whereas there is no positive effect among women. These findings indicate that gender diversity of peers only counteracts male stereotyping, but not female stereotyping – and only in relation to the interest to get a position not in relation to the perceived possibilities of getting it. Reasons for this will be discussed in next section. Furthermore, the association is not to be exaggerated. Calculated predicted probabilities

based on the above findings (not shown) show that a man in a gender diverse organization (about the same number of male and female employees) have a 4.6 percentage point lower probability of being interested in a management position than a male being in a less diverse organization (an organization with between 60-70 per cent men or women). However, as mentioned in footnote 3 we tested the model with different codings of the dependent variables, and it did not change the overall findings of our analysis. Hence, the findings seem to be robust.

In addition, the conceptual and theoretical focus of this article is gender diversity of peers, a different – but closely related – perspective on the matter of relationship between organizational gender composition and male and female employees' management aspirations is to study gender composition as a scale going from low degree of femininity (and hence high degree of masculinity) in one end to high degree of femininity (respectively low degree of masculinity) in the other end. Within such conceptualization, a gender diverse organization is in the middle. To further test the robustness of the above findings, we recoded the items measuring gender diversity into a measure of degree of femininity (measured on a five-point scale) and ran our statistical models with that operationalization[12] (Table AIV). Again, the findings support our findings above. Men working in a gender diverse organization (with a degree of femininity at point 3 on a five-point scale) have a significant lower interest in getting a management position, while all other degrees of femininity are insignificant. Moreover: Once again it has no significance to their perceived possibilities of getting a management position. Likewise, it is insignificant to women's perception of the possibilities of becoming manager. However, in addition, these tests give support to a third theoretical and conceptual perspective on the matter of organizational gender composition and employees' management aspiration, namely token-status (Greed, 2000; Gustafson, 2008; Kanter, 1977a, 1977b; Roth, 2004; Williams, 1992). The findings show that token-status – being a minority representative of their gender in the workplace – is negative to women's interest in management position, while insignificant to men's.

So, all in all, the analysis shows that the higher the gender diversity of peers at a workplace, the less interested the male employees seems to be in management positions, while women's interest in management aspirations is unassociated with gender diversity – but still relatively smaller than men's. When it comes to the question of the employee's perception of the possibility of getting a management position, gender diversity of peers has no association at all. Hence, H1b is rejected. Regardless of the level of gender diversity of peers in the organization, women perceive their opportunities to be much smaller than those of their male colleagues.

Conclusion and discussion

We have explored the relationship between workplace gender diversity of peers and career aspirations in a sample of female and male employees in workplaces within 13 public sector occupations. The multivariate analyses disclose that the associations between workplace gender diversity of peers and managerial aspirations are asymmetric between women and men. We find a negative correlation between workplace gender diversity of peers and career aspirations among male employees, while there is no significant correlation among female employees. In other words, male employees in mixed-gender workplaces are less likely to express management aspirations than male employees in mono-gender workplaces. Female employees in mixed-gender workplaces, however, seem to express management aspirations to the same degree as female employees in mono-gender workplaces. We consider this asymmetric response to be our main result. Furthermore, this association between gender diversity of peers and management aspirations is only relevant to interest in management

positions. Both male and female employees' perception of the possibilities of obtaining a management position is unassociated with gender diversity of peers. Note, however, that management aspirations and positively perceived career possibilities are more widespread among male than female employees, even when we include several control variables. This is not unexpected, and it confirms findings from other studies of both private and public organizations. As mentioned, the data used in this study covers only public organizations, but as the uncovered correlations are argued to be based on general social-psychological mechanisms it seems fair to expect similar findings in private organizations.

The asymmetric response to gender diversity of peers between women and men suggests that explanations must be found in perspectives drawing on theories on stereotyping – combined with a discussion of the attractiveness of management positions.

Prevalent societal gender stereotypes ascribe different qualities to women and men with respect to management and career; they seem to push men towards authority and career, while they tend to hold back women. If gender diversity of peers and interaction between women and men in the workplace erode stereotypes, the typical responses from women and men should reflect the differences between the stereotypical images being dissolved. Hence, we should expect asymmetric responses. Metaphorically speaking, men lose tail wind (with respect to a management career) when stereotypical images erode, whereas women are "relieved" from head wind. This reasoning led us to hypothesize that gender diversity of peers should increase management aspirations among women and decrease aspirations among men. However, in our sample, the hypothesis only holds for men.

If we adhere to the perspective on stereotyping processes, an explanation could be that men may be more influenced by stereotypical images than women with respect to management aspirations, and that responses among men therefore are more pronounced than among women. Another explanation could revolve around the "inherent" attractiveness of workplace authority and management jobs in our sample. If management jobs were "inherently" attractive, then women should be expected to aspire to a management career when they are relieved from the head wind blowing from stereotypical images of femininity. But in our sample, they are not. And, inversely, men are inclined to lower their management aspirations under circumstances (gender diversity of peers) where stereotypes are expected to dissolve. Hence, the asymmetric responses might be explained if we assumed that management jobs were "inherently" unattractive to many male as well as female employees. Under this assumption, men in our sample are inclined to refrain from management aspirations when they are relieved from the pressure of stereotypical images of masculinity. Men and women alike might be critical towards management careers, but gender stereotyping tends to push men in the management direction. Under circumstances where gender stereotypes tend to dissolve, men are thus relieved from a burden, while women maintain their critical stance.

Our findings suggest both positive and negative implications of gender diversity of peers, and hence problematize a – rather common – simplistic celebration of gender diversity. First of all, gender diversity of peers seems to counteract the fertilization of rigid stereotypes of men and hence prevents some men from being pushed into management positions and a career ladder they perhaps do not want to be placed at in the first place. However, the findings also seem to identify a human resource challenge for managers: our results indicate that diversity reduces the likelihood that men will compete for management positions and un-affects women's already low interest, and part of the reason can be an inherent unattractiveness of lower-level management positions in the Danish public sector. In the public sector, such management positions are mostly characterized by clarifying objectives and roles, planning work activities, and monitoring operations and performance of

professional or semiprofessional employees (Yukl, 2013). Moreover, protecting the organization from disruption is a core lower managerial function (O'Toole and Meier, 2011; Thompson, 1967). In public agencies, such protection often means buffering against interruptions from two levels: upward (buffering interruptions from political and administrative principals) and downward (buffering interruptions from clients and users). In other words, a job as lower-level manager is often characterized by a potentially uncomfortable cross-pressure from above (political and administrative principals) and below (employees, clients and users). Furthermore, to many public employees becoming a manager means that one must opt out a core element of one's professional identity – namely the daily interaction with specific groups of citizens. Finally, lower-level managers are those who must implement new policies and resources cutbacks in close interaction with the employees.

How do gender-diverse organizations secure a large and qualified pool of potential leaders? This study cannot give the answer but suggests that managers look for advice in studies of management recruitment strategies and means. Moreover, as women still represent the largest pool of available resources in public organizations, managers might benefit most from looking into strategies and means that enhance women's interest in management positions. Future research should take a more systematic and thorough look at the apparent unattractiveness of lower-level management positions, in particular whether the unattractiveness sticks more to public than to private organizations. The present study only analyzes public organizations, and even though we expect organizational gender diversity of peers to counteract the social-psychological mechanism of stereotyping independently of organizational ownership, our study cannot determine whether the non-association among women is caused by management positions being unattractive in general or by an unattractiveness of lower-level Danish public management positions in particular.

Gender diversity of peers and hence the task of securing a large and qualified pool of potential leaders, as male employees become less interested in management positions and women are unaffected, may not only challenge and potentially harm organizations; it may also have positive effects. First, relief from the pressure of stereotypical management aspirations might increase satisfaction and reduce stress for some male employees. Second, it might relieve organizations from recruiting male managers who may turn out to be bad managers because they did not want that position wholeheartedly.

Finally, the lack of correlations between gender diversity of peers in the workplace and *perceived career possibilities* among male and female employees seems a bit puzzling considering the correlations between gender diversity of peers and career aspirations. If career preferences are partly determined by gender diversity of peers, then why is diversity not correlated with perceived opportunities? As sociologists, we are used to thinking of preferences as (partly) determined by structures of opportunity. This result could be a reminder of the "partly". Although gender diversity of peers seems to have significance for forming career preferences among (especially male) employees, the significance could be confined to interactional patterns among employees and the subjective responses to these. "Real-world" structures of opportunity, which we believe must have important significance for perceived opportunities, could be untouched by interactional patterns among employees, and instead, perhaps, be determined by occupational specificities and material resources. However, all in all the findings suggest that gender differences in career aspirations are not just a matter of individual preferences and/or macro-structural factors, but of factors at the organizational level.

The present study is however, as mentioned, not without limitations. Even though the Danish cross-section data allow us to partly control for confounding variables, partly rule

out others based on characteristics of the Danish settings, we cannot jump from the observed correlations to a claim of causality, as there is still a risk of omitted variable bias. Furthermore, despite comprehensible and forceful theoretical arguments we cannot be certain that management aspirations are second to organizational gender diversity of peers or vice-versa. It might be so that if Peter does not want to be a manager, he will try to work in places where the pressure for being interested in a manager job is relieved, which may mean places with a high level of gender diversity of peers. Hence, future studies might focus on putting the concluded correlations and thus deduced hypothetical explanations to a more thorough test by using instrumental variables (which unfortunately was not possible within the present data set) or longitudinal data.

Furthermore, within this article the conceptual and theoretical focus is *gender diversity* of peers. Different – but closely related – theoretical perspectives on the matter of composition of employees' gender and male and female employees' managerial aspirations are *tokenism* (Kanter 1977a, 1977b) and *degree of masculinity/femininity* (Acker, 1990). The theoretical arguments of all three perspectives build on insight from theories on gender socialization and stereotyping, intergroup contact, role encapsulation, and stereotype threats, but as their starting points are different operationalizations of the same primary data they basically look at different aspects of workplace composition of male and female employees. However, our study – and its robustness test – indicates that the correlation between gender composition of peers and management aspirations probably is more nuanced and complex than one perspective can encapsulate and hence future studies should try to work out the differences and similarities between existing theoretical perspectives, concepts and operationalizations of gender workplace composition and focus on the interaction effects of gender diversity and token-status depending on the work place gender composition being masculine or feminine.

Notes

1. Pettigrew and Troop in an influential meta-analysis did not find evidence for Allports scope conditions (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006), but Paluck *et al.* (2018) conclude that there is not empirical ground for either rejecting or accepting the importance of scope conditions.
2. The registers are used for paying salaries, and contain among others information about gender, age, education and workplace.
3. The response rate was achieved by, first, sending the respondent the questionnaire by email and, after a couple of weeks, calling those who had not filled it in, offering them to answer the questionnaire over the phone.
4. The five original response categories and the distribution of responses were as follows: Question: To which degree would you like to become a manager at your present workplace?: Not at all: 56per cent, To a low degree: 20 per cent, Partly: 13 per cent, To a high degree: 6 per cent, To a very high degree: 3 per cent. Question: To which degree would you like to become a manager at another workplace?: Not at all: 46 per cent, To a low degree: 17 per cent, Partly: 18 per cent, To a high degree: 11 per cent, To a very high degree: 4 per cent.
5. Furthermore, a fairly large amount (23 per cent) of respondents did not answer or answered "Do not know" the questions. Therefore, the analysed N dropped further regarding this dependent variable.
6. "Do you think you have the possibility to become manager at your present workplace?" and "Do you think you have the possibility to become manager at your present workplace?" (measured on a five-point scale).
7. We ran the statistics on the following different coding of the dependent variables: Interest in Management position as a 1-5 variable using OLS and as both a 1-5 variable and a dummy

variable measuring "present workplace" and "in another workplace" separately. Likewise, we ran OLS statistics on a no-log coding of "Perception of possibilities of getting a management position". As mentioned, the statistics showed basically the same findings. One interesting difference, however, is that the tested models are slightly better at explaining variation in both "interest in" and "perception of possibilities of getting" a management position at another workplace than at one's own. The explanation is probably that interest and perception linked to "present workplace" compared to "another workplace" are more affected by local colleague-to-colleague and colleague-to-manager features, which are not included in the present explanatory model.

8. This is the main within the studies of token theory, and as we discuss in the conclusion, gender diversity studies might benefit from combining insight from token theory with the theory of the effect of diversity. See Author (f2018) for a study focusing on the effect of token status on management aspirations.

9. Within the literature of diversity (and among these of gender diversity) there is a broad variety of indices measuring gender diversity – by example Blau's index. In Blau's index heterogeneity equals 1- Σpi^2, where pi represents the fractions of the population in each group. However, Blau's index of heterogeneity is based on a ratio or continuous scale (Buckingham & Saunders, 2004), so the index increases as the representation of men and women in the organization becomes more equal (Blau, 1977). For gender diversity, the index ranges from zero representing homogeneity (0/100 gender proportions) to 0.5 representing maximum gender diversity (50/50 gender proportions). Because of the wording of the survey item used in our analysis (respondents were asked to answer to intervals and not specific numbers), we are not able to construct an index like Blau's. However, we argue that the measure used makes the study a conservative test of the hypotheses, since by using intervals we ask for more significant differences in gender diversity to go from e.g. a score one to a score two than an index running from 0-100 does.

10. As mentioned, even though Denmark has a high level of gender equality compared to other countries, when it comes to participation in the work force, the job market is fairly gender divided (Bloksgaard, 2011; Emerek and Holt, 2008). Our data also reflects this. 47 percent of the respondents are in workplaces with more than 75 percent of the employees being of one gender, 32 percent is at a workplace were one of the two sexes counts for between 74 and 51 percent of the employees, while 21 percent works at a workplace where there is "about the same number of female and male employees".

11. The association between the interaction variable (being a women * gender diversity) and the dependent variable is +0.242 but does only slightly exceed the negative – significant – association between gender diversity and management aspirations to men which is 0.219 since the variable "gender diversity" now measures the association for males only, since males are the residual category not included in the interaction variable gender * gender diversity.

12. To be able to identify potential non-linear correlations we treat each category of degree of femininity as a dummy variable, and to avoid problems of multicollinearity we ran the statistical models as split file models between men and women.

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Appendix

Table AI.
List of occupations included in data and response rates

Occupation	*N*	No. of male and female respondents	MI[a]	MP[b]	GD[c]
Social and health workers	213	M = 103, F = 110	1.78 (1.07)	2.04 (0.97)	1.31 (0.58)
Teachers in primary schools	226	M = 106, F = 120	1.63 (0.86)	2.30 (1.04)	1.80 (0.65)
Physicians	180	M = 92, F = 88	2.48 (1.06)	2.78 (0.98)	1.94 (0.74)
Healthcare professionals[b]	251	M = 117, F = 134	1.70 (0.94)	2.66 (1.09)	1.25 (0.51)
Office and IT staff	250	M = 107, F = 143	1.87 (1.05)	2.36 (0.95)	1.67 (0.74)
Academic staff in public administration	249	M = 120, F = 129	2.33 (1.12)	2.87 (0.91)	1.97 (0.77)
Professional caretakers in 24-hour care institutions for vulnerable children and youth	229	M = 109, F = 120	1.80 (0.98)	2.35 (0.96)	1.66 (0.75)
Professional caretakers in daycare institutions	211	M = 90, F = 121	1.73 (0.97)	2.18 (0.95)	1.58 (0.76)
Technical staff and cleaning	180	M = 87, F = 93	1.70 (0.94)	2.06 (0.92)	1.70 (0.79)
Teachers in youth educations	336	M = 172, F = 164	1.74 (0.85)	2.54 (1.07)	2.39 (0.69)
Researchers	177	M = 71, F = 106	2.32 (0.97)	2.94 (0.88)	2.04 (0.76)
Police and prison staff	154	M = 75, F = 79	1.86 (1.03)	2.75 (1.07)	1.51 (0.71)
Employees in the armed forces	162	M = 61, F = 101	2.37 (1.16)	2.99 (1.17)	1.28 (0.55)
Sum	*2818*	*M = 1310, F = 1508*			

Notes: [a]MI = Interest in management position; [b]MP = Perception of the possibility of, getting a management position; [c]GD = Gender Diversity

Variable	Metric	All $N = 2785$ Mean	Men $N = 1291$ Mean	Women $N = 1494$ Mean
To which degree would you like to become manager at your present workplace?	A scale from 1 to 5 with endpoints indicating "Not at all" and "To a very large degree"	1.78	1.87	1.69
To which degree would you like to become manager at another workplace?	A scale from 1 to 5 with endpoints indicating "Not at all" and "To a very large degree"	2.07	2.15	1.99
Do you think you have the possibility to become manager at your present workplace	A scale from 1 to 5 with endpoints indicating "No, not at all" and "Yes, definitively"	2.23	2.33	2.14
Do you think you have the possibility to become manager at another workplace?	A scale from 1 to 5 with endpoints indicating "No, not at all" and "Yes, definitively"	2.79	2.89	2.70

Table AII. Descriptives concerning male and female employees' management aspirations

Variable	Mean	Std.
The interest in management position (No-Yes)	*0.44*	*0.50*
The perception of the possibility of getting a management position (Scale: 1 to 5)	*2.50*	*1.05*
Gender diversity of peers (Scale: 1 to 3)	*1.74*	*0.78*
Gender	*0.54*	*0.50*
Age	*43.42*	*11.79*
Occupation – Dummy variables measuring each of the 13 different categories of occupations		
Working hours – Dummy variable (=/< 32 hours a week = 0, > 32 hours a week = 1)	*0.81*	*0.39*
Children living at home (No = 0, Yes = 1)	*0.51*	*0.50*
Living with partner (No = 0, Yes = 1)	*0.76*	*0.43*
Length of employment (Years)	*9.34*	*10.14*

Table AIII. Descriptives of dependent, independent and control variables

Table AIV.
The effect of gender and different degrees of employee femininity on employees' interest in a management position and perception of the possibilities of getting a management position –. Statistics divided between men and women

Variable	Interest in Management position No-Yes		Perception of possibilities of getting a management position	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Constant (Prof caretakers in 24-hour care institutions for vulnerable children and youth working in a org with degree of femininity at 5 (very high) are ref. cat.)	1.948***	1.905***	(12.93)***	(12.98)***
Social and health workers	−0.019	−0.117	−0.09*** (2.85)	−0.04 (1.23)
Teachers in primary schools	0.351	−0.499	0.02 (0.51)	−0.05 (1.37)
Physicians	1.542***	0.267	0.05 (1.58)	−0.03 (0.97)
Healthcare professionals	0.068	−0.440	0.07** (2.34)	0.05 (1.37)
Office and IT staff	0.370	0.421	−0.02 (0.558)	0.03 (0.72)
Academic staff in public administration	1.725***	0.003	0.14*** (4.19)	0.06 (1.70)
Professional caretakers in daycare institutions	−0.243	−0.335	−0.06 (1.89)	−0.07** (2.09)
Technical staff and cleaning	−0.007	−0.021	−0.07** (2.37)	−0.07** (1.97)
Teachers in youth educations	0.721**	0.125	0.09** (2.50)	0.01 (0.16)
Researchers	1.347***	1.027**	0.12*** (3.78)	0.02 (0.49)
Police and prison staff	0.673	−0.847	0.03 (0.93)	0.02 (0.45)
Employees in the armed forces	1.489***	0.119	0.07 (1.76)	0.04 (1.03)
Age	−0.058***	−0.060***	−0.18*** (5.88)	−0.22*** (6.34)
Working hours	0.180	0.690***	0.10*** (3.76)	0.12*** (4.27)
Children living at home	0.073	0.334**	0.13*** (5.08)	0.11*** (3.70)
Living with partner	−0.297	0.480***	−0.04 (1.55)	0.06 (1.93)
Length on employment	−0.026***	−0.012	−0.09*** (2.86)	−0.08** (2.42)
Degree of femininity 1(very low)	−0.550**	0.169	0.04 (1.27)	0.02 (0.53)
Degree of femininity 2	0.209	0.016	0.05 (1.77)	0.05 (1.54)
Degree of femininity 3	0.248	−0.533**	−0.02 (0.50)	−0.01 (0.24)
Degree of femininity 4 (high)	−0.090	−0.060	−0.04 (1.64)	−0.03 (0.87)
Model statistic:				
N	1,178	972	1,488	1284
Nagelkerke R^2/Adjusted R^2	0.31***	0.24***	0.22	0.14
F-test			21.02***	10.92***

Notes: For the models explaining "Perception of possibilities of getting a management position" OLS-regression. *** = $p < 0.01$; ** = $p < 0.05$; (two-tailed). Cell entries are standardized regression coefficients with the absolute value of t-statistics in parentheses. For models explaining "Interest in Management position No-Yes" Logistic regression, *** = $p < 0.01$; ** = $p < 0.05$; (two-tailed). Cell entries are B-coefficients

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