

# DOES GENDER DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE AFFECT JOB SATISFACTION AND TURNOVER INTENTIONS?

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## ABSTRACT

*Declining job-satisfaction and raising turnovers are identified as growing problems within the public sector (Tummers, 2013). Low job-satisfaction and instability in workforce is costly both in resource terms and to the quality of the services, the public organization delivers. In the present study, we focus on gender diversity in the workplace and explore its relationship with job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Contemporary research, on workplace gender diversity, does not agree about how workplace composition influences employees. However, our study is cross-sectional (2,818 employees from 13 different occupations in the Danish public sector) and allow us to have a particular focus on potential gender asymmetry and contextual meanings.*

*The findings indicate that organizational gender diversity among female employees leads to lower turnover intentions, but do not affect their degree of job-satisfaction – and it has in general no effect on men's job-satisfaction nor turn-over intentions. Hence, the overall indication is an asymmetric effect across the gender category. However, there are occupational differences. Academic staff in public administration stands out from the other occupations. Among female academic staff in public administration, the relationship between gender diversity and turnover intentions reverses in comparison with the trend, and among male academic staff in public administration, there is a significant negative relationship between gender diversity and turnover intentions. Hence, the study mainly contributes to the ongoing debate among gender diversity scholars by pinpointing both the question of asymmetric effects for males and females and the importance of contextual factors while studying potential positive and negative consequences of workplace diversity.*

**Keywords** – Gender diversity, workforce turnover, job satisfaction. .

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## INTRODUCTION

Declining job-satisfaction and raising turnovers are identified as growing problems within the public sector (Tummers, 2013). Low job-satisfaction and instability in workforce is costly not only in resource terms and loss of knowledge but also to the quality of the services, the public organization delivers (Balfour & Neff, 1993; Flower et al., 2005; Webb & Carpenter, 2012, Beazley, 2003). Furthermore, in many countries in particular the public sector is affected by the demographic challenge and an ageing and shrinking workforce, which highlight the empirical problem of dissatisfaction and turnover even more (Bossaert et al. 2012).

In this article, we focus on gender diversity in the workplace and explore its possible importance for male and female employees' job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

There are many interrelated reasons for the large and growing interest in diversity issues (Di-Tomaso, Post, & Parks-Yancy, 2007). First, the labor force composition in many countries drifts towards larger diversity with respect to socially significant categories of difference such as age, gender, and race/ethnicity (Balleer, Gómez-Salvador, & Turunen, 2009; Reskin & Maroto, 2010; Tomaskovic-Devey, Zimmer, Stainback, Robinson, Taylor, & McTague, 2006), and many social scientists strive to determine the consequences of the changes in organizations and society at large. From an organizational perspective, some researchers find that workplace diversity can give rise to mixing and pooling of different experiences and perspectives and therefore trigger innovation, creativity, and profitability for the organization (Dwyer, Richard, & Chadwick, 2003; Herring, 2009; Richard, Ford, & Ismail, 2006). However, opinions on diversity matters differ, and the optimism regarding diversity's mending of inequalities and promotion of innovation and profitability is challenged by insights from long-standing research on organizational demography, which points out that organizational diversity often diminishes group cohesiveness and even leads to conflict and hostility among co-workers from different categories and hence low job-satisfaction (Blalock, 1967). The

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overall opposition between diversity optimists and pessimists appears to be relatively unmediated. Representing both theoretical/analytical perspectives and normative attitudes, they often talk past each other rather than interact and enrich each other. Hence, based on a review of relevant literature, we account for several contrasting understandings of how gender diversity in the workplace can be related with female and male employees' well-being at work, and we outline several hypotheses.

We then report multivariate analyses of the relationships between gender diversity and our two dependent variables: job-satisfaction and turnover intentions. We perform our analyses on a survey data set containing replies from 2,818 employees from 13 different occupations in the Danish public sector. The sample is stratified according to gender and contains equal shares of women and men in each occupation. Since 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 job-satisfaction and turnover intentions for women and men across highly different occupational settings each representing among others different job characteristics with regard to salary, status, work terms, autonomy, career ladders, 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 or not workplace gender diversity has associations that are generalizable across gender and occupation. Hence, our study expands on existing diversity research by exploring the possible associations between workplace gender diversity and men's and women's job-satisfaction and turnover intentions with a particular view to the generalizability of diversity processes across a wide range of occupational settings.

We define gender diversity as sexual heterogeneity in the workplace. According to this definition, workplaces with equal shares of female and male employees have the highest degree of gender diversity, while gender-homogenous workplaces have low gender diversity. We

choose job satisfaction and turnover intentions as our dependent variables because these matters are – as mentioned above – important in themselves and because empirical research is unsettled as to the positive or negative relationship between diversity and these variables.

### **RESEARCH ON GENDER DIVERSITY AND JOB SATISFACTION**

Scholars on workplace demography have long agreed that workforce composition can have tremendous importance for organizational life and performance. As stated by Pfeffer (1983) in an important study, “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” (303-4). This perception is the basis for a wide range of research into the meanings and consequences of workplace diversity, including gender diversity.

As mentioned, however, contemporary research, also on workplace gender composition, does not agree about how workplace composition influences employees. The indeterminacy in contemporary research seems to go back to a disagreement between the understandings found in three seminal studies by Blalock (1967), Blau (1977), and Kanter (1977a).

#### ***The Heritage from Blalock, Blau, and Kanter***

According to Blalock (1967), minority groups give rise to concern and hostility among majorities to the extent that they represent a threat to the majority. In other words, the larger the minority group, the larger the threat they pose and, consequently, the more concern and hostility grow among members of the majority. If this line of thought universally describes the relationship between minorities and majorities, then a high degree of diversity in a workplace should equal a high level of hostility and conflict among the different groups. Blalock’s un-

derstanding is generally consistent with the psychological perspective on similarity attraction, suggesting that people in general are attracted to and prefer the company of others who are similar to themselves (e.g., Byrne, 1971).

Blau's and Kanter's findings point in another direction (Blau, 1977; Kanter, 1977a, 1977b). Blau sets out from the observation that the relative proportions of different groups in an organization affect the likelihood of interaction between members from the different groups. The more equal the sizes of the different groups, the more likely are interactions across the boundaries. Conversely, according to Blau, in organizations with large majorities and small minorities, the majorities are likely to ignore and exclude the minorities. Blau finds that a high degree of heterogeneity in an organization equals a diminishing of discrimination against minorities. Consistent with Blau's findings, Kanter finds that so-called token minority representatives in organizations experience heightened visibility and exposure to exclusion and stereotyping from the majority group (Kanter, 1977a). Both Kanter's and Blau's findings are thus consistent with the view that a high degree of organizational diversity decreases rather than an increases organizational conflict.

### *Three Perspectives on Workplace*

The disagreement between Blalock, Blau, and Kanter has found its way into current diversity research. The disagreement shows up in the diversity literature as an apparent bifurcation into two overall perspectives or attitudes towards organizational diversity: a largely optimistic and a largely pessimistic perspective on diversity. These perspectives or attitudes towards diversity in the workplace are sometimes named "value-in-diversity" and "diversity-as-process-loss" (DiTomaso et al., 2007). Concentrating on the issue of organizational profitability, others talk

about the opposition between a business case for and against diversity (Herring, 2009). Several studies are based on either of these perspectives and build on sound empirical evidence.

Researchers from the optimistic value-in-diversity perspective find that organizational diversity tends to strengthen team spirit, engagement, and workplace creativity and therefore offers greater resources for problem solution, richer and more complex learning environments, and leads to higher earnings and profits (Cox, 2001; Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Richard et al., 2004). The underlying mechanisms for the innovative processes supposedly consist in interactional patterns, social and communicative exchange, and learning across and between diversity categories. The logic in the optimistic perspective is generally consistent with particularly Blau's understanding of heterogeneity in organizations, namely that heterogeneity equals more cross-categorical interaction and fewer discriminatory practices.

In contrast, researchers from the pessimistic diversity-as-process-loss perspective find that workplace diversity diminishes group cohesiveness and often leads to conflict among co-workers, employee absenteeism, and increased turnover (Pelled et al., 1999; Pelled, 1996; Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly III, 1992). The underlying mechanisms supposedly consist in social identification, exclusion of others/out-groups, and social closure. Any challenge from incumbents prompts conflict with the purpose of maintaining and consolidating group achievements in privileges, status, and power. The logic in the pessimistic diversity perspective is consistent with (and often refers back to) Blalock's understanding of the relationship between minority and majority groups in organizations.

Not wholly committed to neither the optimistic nor the pessimistic diversity perspectives, several studies on organizational composition find asymmetric responses to gender diversity between women and men (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2004; Konrad, Cannings, & Goldberg, 2010; Smith, 2002; Tsui & Gutek, 1999; Wharton & Baron, 1987, 1991). Typically, these studies

find that men respond negatively to gender diversity in the workplace, while women do not. Differences in ascribed status between the genders are often offered as a possible explanation. Accordingly, we designate this perspective “the status perspective on diversity.” The status perspective on gender diversity is based on the observation that men are typically ascribed higher societal status than women (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972; Rashotte, Slattery & Webster Jr., 2005; Ridgeway, 1991; Yoder, 1994). The suggested reason for men’s negative response to gender diversity is that the male status position comes under pressure when women enter male domains. Men reacting negatively towards increasing gender mix in the workplace can thus be said to behave as rational defenders of group position (Smith, 2002). Women in typically female dominated workplaces, on the other hand, are likely to gain from the “intrusion” of men on the status balance sheet. Consistent with this understanding, some researchers have found evidence that men are welcomed warmly in typically female-dominated occupations such as nursing (Heikes, 1991; Hultin, 2003; Williams, 1992).

Even though the three outlined perspectives differ substantially on the presumed outcomes of workplace diversity, they all agree that diversity is very important to the interactional patterns and the overall well-being among employees. Accordingly, we find it well founded to hypothesize that gender diversity should affect job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

### **Diversity Substance and Occupational Setting – the Importance of Context**

When diversity research points in such different directions, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that different contextual conditions can importantly affect the meanings and consequences of diversity. In the following, we discuss the possible importance of diversity substance (i.e., the categorical difference at the center of the diversity processes) and occupational context.

First of all, it is reasonable to assume that diversity with respect to categorical differences can trigger social processes with various organizational and individual outcomes. Gender diversity, for example, could be quite different from racial/ethnic diversity or diversity with respect to organizational tenure.

It is, of course, possible and meaningful to speak of workplace diversity with relation to any socially significant categorization of human beings. However, some categories bear more social significance and attract more attention than others.

Some diversity research originates from research on social rights, discrimination, minority groups, and inequality (Bell, 2007). This part of the diversity research naturally investigates diversity categories related with societal inequality. Typically, these categories comprise gender and race/ethnicity and sometimes extend to age, sexual orientation, physical disabilities, mental disorders, and so on. These categories of difference are often called identity categories by sociologists and social psychologists (Jenkins, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) because they are central to the formation of social identity for individuals. The identity categories are often connected with societal status ascription, and accordingly, they could be the most likely candidates for conflictual or asymmetric diversity processes. However, there is no broad consensus in this respect in the literature. For a study finding some evidence to the contrary, cf. Herring (2009).

Other diversity research concentrates on personal qualities with intimate and direct relation to the work processes, for example, work experiences, education, or the like (Webber & Donahue, 2001). These categories could be called work process-related differences. It is not uncommon that researchers with special interest in business performance and organizational profitability focus on work process-related differences rather than identity-related differences. The work process-related differences are perhaps the most obvious candidates for creative or

innovative diversity processes. But, again, there is no broad consensus in the literature on the matter.

Apart from the context of diversity substance, it is obvious to consider the possible importance for diversity processes of occupational contexts. Different occupations, for example, public administration versus teaching in primary schools, attract different categories of people as employees, partly because of the societal status and symbolic meaning each occupation has gained in society through history, not least with respect to gender (Abbott, 1993; Goldthorpe & Hope, 1972; Magnusson, 2010). Because of these differences between the occupations, workplace diversity may affect employees from different occupations in different ways, and diversity processes can be influenced by varieties in education, career structures, and terms of employment.

We do not suggest any concrete hypotheses about the specific relationships between occupational contexts and the meanings and consequences of workplace gender diversity for male and female employees. However, exploring a data sample composed of equal numbers of male and female employees from 13 different occupations allows us to control for occupational context and, possibly, to pinpoint whether or not occupational contexts are important for gender diversity.

## **HYPOTHESES**

Above, we have delineated three perspectives on workplace gender diversity: the optimistic creativity perspective, the pessimistic conflict perspective, and the asymmetric status perspective. We have also discussed the possible importance for workplace gender diversity of the context of diversity substance (the categorical difference at the center of the diversity processes) as well as occupational contexts. In accordance with the unsettled state of the literature, we choose not to prioritize in advance between the three perspectives. Instead, we pose

three sets of contrasting hypotheses representing each perspective. In accordance with our discussion of contexts, we briefly discuss the different sets of hypotheses.

The hypotheses all refer to the two dependent variables in our study: job satisfaction and turnover intention. In accordance with the optimistic value-in-diversity perspective, we suggest two hypotheses:

H1: Gender diversity in the workplace is positively correlated with job satisfaction among all employees irrespective of gender.

H2: Gender diversity in the workplace is negatively correlated with turnover intentions among all employees irrespective of gender.

The first set of hypotheses build on the notion that interaction between employees across different social categories entails social exchange and communication and may lead to an innovative and creative environment. In line with the overall ideas in this perspective, we hypothesize that such an environment also tends to produce well-being among employees.

As discussed above, gender as an identity category may not be the most obvious candidate for diversity processes that universally point towards innovation and creativity. However, the literature does not preclude it, and it deserves to be tested.

In accordance with the pessimistic diversity-as-process-loss perspective, we suggest two hypotheses:

H3: Gender diversity in the workplace is negatively correlated with job satisfaction among all employees irrespective of gender.

H4: Gender diversity in the workplace is positively correlated with turnover intentions among all employees irrespective of gender.

This second set of hypotheses build on the notion that interaction between employees from different social categories tends to be related with intercategorical hostility and conflict. In line with the overall ideas in this perspective, we hypothesize that conflict among employees will tend to obstruct the well-being among employees.

As discussed above, gender as a status-bearing identity category is a fairly obvious candidate for diversity processes pointing towards conflict. In accordance with the status-theoretical perspective on gender diversity, we hypothesize two gender-asymmetrical outcomes associated with gender diversity:

H5: Gender diversity in the workplace is negatively correlated with job satisfaction among male employees, but positively among female employees.

H6: Gender diversity in the workplace is positively correlated with turnover intentions among male employees, but negatively among female employees.

Our third set of hypotheses build on the notion that male employees – belonging to a category with comparatively high societal status – will tend to oppose working together with women, especially in situations with a high degree of gender diversity. The reason would be the risk of diluting acquired status position. In contrast, female employees could gain status by welcoming male employees. We hypothesize that male opposition will translate into dissatisfaction, while female acceptance will translate into satisfaction. However, most importantly, the third set of hypotheses point towards asymmetric responses across the gender category.

Just as our second set of hypotheses, the third set seems to match well with gender because it is a status-bearing identity category.

With respect to occupational contexts, we outline general hypotheses on the interaction between gender diversity and occupational context and our dependent variables.

H7: Job satisfaction is related with the interaction between occupational context and gender diversity.

H8: Turnover intention is related with the interaction between occupational context and gender diversity.

This fourth set of hypotheses build on the notion that occupational context may change the meaning and consequences of gender diversity or, in other words, that gender diversity may have varying consequences in varying occupational contexts.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN, DATA, AND MEASURES**

To test the hypotheses, we use a unique and large data set collected among Danish public employees (Madsen, Holt, Bruun Jonassen, & Kløft Schademan, 2010). The questionnaire was sent to 8,759 public employees, and a response rate of 56 percent was obtained.<sup>1</sup> The strategy was to obtain a fairly equal number of male and female respondents from the various representative occupations in the Danish public sector, and the survey was designed as a gender-stratified random sample of employees and managers in 13 occupations (see Table 1). Data were also collected among a 14<sup>th</sup> category of public employees – or rather among a redundant category, namely, employees outside the 13 occupations. For reasons of simplicity and clarity in interpreting the data, we excluded the 214 respondents in the 14<sup>th</sup> job category from the analysis along with 1,873 respondents in management positions.

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<sup>1</sup> The response rate was obtained by first sending the respondents a letter with a link to the questionnaire; after a couple of weeks we started calling those who had not replied offering them to complete the questionnaire on the phone.

The response rate for male employees is 48 percent and 52 percent for females. Comparisons of the respondents and non-respondents did not reveal any worrying significant differences. Fewer respondents from “police and prison staff” and “technical staff and cleaning” answered (47 and 48 % respectively) than, for example, “academic staff in public administration” (66 %) and “secondary school teachers” (63 %). However, since we use occupation as control variables and hence do “within profession” studies, these response rate differences do not invalidate our statistic findings. The distribution of respondents on the 13 occupations is shown in Table 1.

Even though gender equality in terms of labor force participation is high in Denmark compared to other countries, the job market is fairly gender divided (Emerek & Holt, 2008). More women than men are employed in care taking jobs in the public sector. However, men and women are – again compared to other countries – fairly equal in terms of caring for family and home, being active in leisure activities and organizational life, and in level of education. Hence, because of the high equality and the norm of both genders working, one might argue that the Danish case is critical.

**Table 1: List of Occupations Included in Data and Response Rate**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Number of male and female respondents</b>
Social and health workers	213	M = 103, F = 110
Primary school teachers	226	M = 106, F = 120
Physicians	180	M = 92, F = 88
Health care professionals	251	M = 117, F = 134
Office and IT staff	250	M = 107, F = 143
Academic staff in public administration	249	M = 120, F = 129
Professional care takers in 24-hour care institutions for vulnerable children and youth	229	M = 109, F = 120
Professional care takers in daycare institutions	211	M = 90, F = 121
Technical staff and cleaning	180	M = 87, F = 93
Teachers in youth educations	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
<b>Sum</b>	<b>2818</b>	<b>M = 1310, F = 1508</b>

In Denmark, men and women regard each other as equals in the work place and respect and learn from each other, so if gender diversity has a positive effect at Danish workplaces, it might also have a positive effect in similar contexts. However, it may not be possible to transfer positive findings to contexts with less equality and fewer women in the work force all in all since, in such cases, the conflict theory and its hypothesis might still be valid. On the other

hand, if gender diversity has a negative effect in Denmark despite the fairly high level of equality and respect between the genders, it may have a negative effect and perhaps even more negative in other contexts.

### *Measures*

**Dependent variables.** The dependent variables in the analysis are job satisfaction and turnover intentions. To measure job satisfaction, we used a survey item asking “How satisfied are you all in all with your present job?” Originally, the respondent had to answer on a 1 (very satisfied) to 5 (very dissatisfied) scale, but since the distribution of respondents was skewed to the left (most people being satisfied – please see Figure A1 in appendix for distribution of respondents), the variable was recoded into a dummy variable. The scores 1 and 2 were coded 1, while 3, 4, and 5 were coded 0. Hence, the score 1 equals “Yes, I am satisfied with my present job,” while the score 0 equals “No, I am not satisfied with my present job” (Mean = 0.77, SD = 0.42). The second dependent variable, turnover intentions, is measured by means of a survey item with the wording: “Are you currently considering changing jobs?” Originally, respondents were offered the following options: 1) “Yes, I have decided to change jobs,” 2) “Yes, I am considering changing jobs,” or 3) “No, I am not currently considering changing jobs” (Please see Figure A2 in appendix for distribution of respondents). Afterwards, the variable was recoded into a dummy variable. The first two options were coded as Yes = 1, while the third option was coded as No = 0. (Mean = 0.27, SD = 0.44).

Table 2 shows the rough mean scores of male and female employees on the two dependent variables. Initially, there are no significant differences between male and female employees. However, since the statistics in Table 2 does not include differences in gender diversity or control variables, it does not test whether gender diversity has no effect, nor does it necessarily mean that the potential effect of gender diversity is not different between the two genders.

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on Dependent Variables for all Respondents and Divided Between Male and Female Respondents.**

	All respondents (N = 2757)	Male respondents (N = 1284)	Female respondents (N = 1473)
<b>Satisfied with job</b>	0.77	0.78	0.77
<b>No = 0, Yes = 1</b>	(0.42)	(0.42)	(0.42)
<b>Turnover intentions</b>	0.27	0.27	0.27
<b>No = 0, Yes = 1</b>	(0.44)	(0.44)	(0.44)

**Explanatory variable of main interest: gender diversity.** Table 3 shows how gender diversity, the explanatory variable of main interest, is measured. Since the theory of gender diversity concerns the effect of *diversity* and not the effect of either women or men being the minority at the workplace, we choose to code our measure of diversity into a variable going from 1: “more than 75 % of the employees are of one sex” to 3: “about the same number of female and male employees,” indicating that the higher the score, the higher the level of gender diversity at one’s workplace.<sup>2</sup> The data is gathered through survey questions. The respondents were asked to answer in relation to their local workplace, and it was specified that if they

<sup>2</sup>The literature on diversity (including gender diversity) contains a broad variety of indices measuring gender diversity. In Blau’s index, heterogeneity equals  $1 - \sum p_i^2$ , where  $p_i$  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 our measure 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.

were employed at a very large workplace divided into separate departments, they should think about the department or entity of employees to which they belonged.

**Table 3: Explanatory Variables**

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*Gender diversity* – Responses to the following question: “How – approximately – is the allocation of males and females at your workplace? (If you are employed at a very large workplace divided into separate departments, think about the department or entity of employees to which you belong).” The responses are coded in the following way:

“Many more females than males (more than 75 % women)” and “Many more males than females (more than 75 % men) = 1

“More females than males (60-75 % women) and “More males than females (60-70 % men) = 2

“About the same number of females and males” = 3 (Mean = 1.74, Std.= 0.78)

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**Controls.** Our study is what we might call an independent variable study or a study of “do y affect x” (contrary to what explains x) (Gelman, 2011), with the ambition to test the effect of gender diversity on employees’ job satisfaction and turnover intentions, and not a dependent variable study trying to explain the total variation in job satisfaction or turnover intentions. However, we still need to control for alternative explanations that might covariate with our independent variable of main interest and the dependent variables and, hence, either lead to over- or underestimation of the effect of gender diversity if not included.

The control variables are shown in Table 4. Since job satisfaction might differ between the different professions included in the survey and gender diversity differs within the professions, we choose to use dummy variables to control for each profession. Furthermore, by using cross-sectional data we are able to analyze the correlation between workplace gender diversity and job-satisfaction and turnover intentions of women and men across highly different occupational characteristics potential relevant to workplace well-being - e.g. salary, status,

work terms, autonomy, career ladders, etc., and hence indirectly control for these differences. In the statistics, we use “professional caretakers in 24-hour care institutions for vulnerable children and youth” as reference category since the employees’ score of job satisfaction and, partly, turnover intentions come closest to the average in this profession.

Because working hours, length of employment and number of changes jobs are gender biased (men work more hours than women, and changes jobs more frequently), we may underestimate the effect of gender by including the variable in the statistics. We include it anyhow; first of all, because we want to test the effect of gender diversity on job satisfaction and not the effect of gender in itself; second, because the number of working hours, length of employment and changes of jobs can be argued to correlate with job satisfaction and turnover intentions as well as organizational gender diversity.

#### **Table 4: Controls**

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*Gender* – Women = 1, Men = 0. Mean = 0,53 (std. 0,50)

*Age* – Mean = 43.42, Std. = 11.79.

*Occupation* – Dummy variables measuring each of the 13 categories of occupations.

*Working hours* – 30 hours a week or less = 1, >30 hours a week and < 38 hours = 2, >38 hours a week = 3. Mean = 2,21 (std. = 0,67)

*Length of employment* – Response to the following question: “How long have you been employed at your present work place?” Mean = 9.34, Std.= 10.14

*Number of changes of job* – Mean = 4.96 (std. = 3.81)

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Since the dependent variables measuring “job satisfaction” and “turnover intentions” are dummy variables, we test the hypotheses of the effect of gender diversity on these two variables by running logistic regressions. To test if the effect of gender diversity differs between male and female employees, we run the logistic regressions as split-file analyses dividing the

data into male and female employees. The findings of the statistics are shown and discussed in the next sections.

## FINDINGS

Tables 5 and 6 show the results of our multivariate analyses of the relationships between gender diversity and, respectively, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. The analyses proceed in several steps. In the first three steps, results are similar in the analyses of job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Accordingly, we go through these steps with the two dependent variables in parallel. The first step (shown as M1 in Tables 5 and 6) shows the statistical relationships between the independent variable, gender diversity, and the two dependent variables, job satisfaction and turnover intentions, respectively, with no controls in the models whatsoever. This first step shows no significant relationship between gender diversity and the dependent variables. The second step (M2) introduces the controls for the personal characteristics (age, working hours, length of employment, and number of job changes). Again, the results show no significant relationship between gender diversity and neither job-satisfaction nor turnover intentions. In the third step (M3), we introduce the dummy variables for the 13 occupations into the models. Many of these are significantly related with the two dependent variables showing that occupational context and hence job characteristics as salary, status, work terms, autonomy, career ladders etc. seems to have great importance for job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Again, however, the analyses show no significant relationships between gender diversity and the two dependent variables.

**Table 5: The Effect of Gender Diversity on Employees' Job Satisfaction**

	Satisfied with job							
	Women				Men			
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M1	M2	M3	M4
Constant (professional care takers in 24-hour care institutions for vulnerable children and youth are reference categories)	1.322***	1.082***	1.619***	No interaction variables between occupation and gender diversity are significant. Hence, the final model is similar to Model 3	1.120***	1.307***	1.205**	No interaction variables between occupation and gender diversity are significant. Hence the final model is similar to Model 3
<b>Gender diversity</b>	-0.070	-0.113	-0.031		0.070	0.104	0.102	
Age		0.008	0.004			0.000	0.000	
Working hours		0.026	0.073			-0.079	-0.025	
Length of employment		0.001	0.000			0.009	0.008	
Number of changes of job		-0.016	-0.013			-0.020	-0.022	
Social and health workers			-0.728**				0.262	
Teachers in primary schools			-0.185				0.056	

Physicians	-0.800**	-0.150
Health care professionals	-0.530	-0.102
Office and IT staff	-0.518	-0.339
Academic staff in public administration	- 1.288***	-0.074
Professional care takers in daycare institutions	-0.245	0.129
Technical staff and cleaning	-0.615	0.160
Teachers in youth educations	-0.727**	0.291
Researchers	-0.847**	-0.401
Police and prison staff	-0.433	-0.279
Employees in the armed forces	-0.668	0.689
Academic staff in Public Administration * gender diversity	IR	IR

<b>Model statistic:</b>	1481	1336	1336	1296	1182	1182
<b>N</b>	0.00	0.01	0.03**	0.00	0.01	0.02
<b>Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup></b>						

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Note: "Interest in management position No-Yes" Logistic regression. \*\*\* =  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\* =  $p < 0.05$ ; \* = 0.1 (two-tailed). Cell entries are B-coefficients.

Table 6: The Effect of Gender Diversity on Employees' Turnover Intentions

	<b>Turnover intentions</b>									
	<b>Women</b>					<b>Men</b>				
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
Constant (professional care takers in 24-hour care institutions for vulnerable children and youth are ref. cat.)	-1.012**	0.961**	0.855*	1.024	3.203	-0.921***	0.249	0.498	0.331	2.345***
<b>Gender diversity</b>	0.003	0.008	-0.101	-0.204*	-0.258*	-0.042	-0.090	-0.094	0.005	0.012
Age		-0.048***	-0.044***	-0.044***	-0.054		-0.033***	-0.037***	-0.038***	-0.047***
Working hours		-0.079	-0.215**	-0.221**	-0.202		0.126	0.129	0.126	0.189
Length of employment		-0.014	-0.012	-0.012	-0.013		-0.018*	-0.009	-0.009	-0.009
Number of changes		0.061***	0.058***	0.057***	0.064		0.034**	0.038**	0.039**	0.037**

of job

Social and health workers	-0.407	-0.431	-0.809*	0.125	0.161	0.311
Teachers in primary schools	0.593	0.619*	0.774*	-0.151	-0.161	-0.195
Physicians	0.895***	0.954***	0.840**	0.037	0.022	-0.063
Health care professionals	0.455	0.434	0.422	-0.150	0.097	-0.212
Office and IT staff	0.086	0.097	-0.089	0.170	0.176	0.048
Academic staff in public administration	1.183***	0.075	-0.139	-0.041	1.594**	1.265*
Professional care takers in -daycare institutions	0.111	0.106	0.140	-0.479	-0.479	-0.509
Technical staff and cleaning	0.373	0.401	0.346	-0.656*	-0.629	-0.755*
Teachers in youth	0.478	0.585	0.451	-0.488	-0.532	-0.464

educations										
Researchers			0.564	0.639*	0.494			0.040	0.023	-0.106
Police and prison staff			-0.086	-0.057	-0.222			-0.534	-0.509	-0.645
Employees in the armed forces			0.533	0.529	0.354			-0.705	-0.655	-0.494
Academic staff in Public Administration *				0.590**	0.566*				-0.870***	-0.718**
gender diversity										
Job satisfaction					-					-2.397***
					2.335***					
<b>Model statistic:</b>										
N	1455	1313	1313	1313	1299	1271	1163	1163	1163	1158
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	0,00	0.09***	0.13***	0.13***	0.35***	0.00	0.07***	0.09***	0.10***	0.33***

Note: "Interest in management position No-Yes" Logistic regression. \*\*\* = p< 0.01; \*\* = p< 0.05; \* = 0.1 (two-tailed). Cell entries are B-coefficients.

In the case of job satisfaction (Table 5), neither of the further analytic steps changes the basic result. We find no significant relationship between workplace gender diversity and general job satisfaction among women or among men. However, in the case of turnover intentions (Table 6), steps 4 and 5 show new results. In step 4 (M4), we introduce interaction variables for gender diversity and each of the 13 occupations to establish whether or not gender diversity may have different relationships with turnover intentions in the different occupational contexts. (Because of the risk of multicollinearity, non-significant interaction variables were deleted from the statistics one by one<sup>3</sup>). The results indicate that this is indeed the case. We review the results for women first.

After the introduction of the interaction variables in M4, the coefficient for gender diversity among women takes on a significant negative value of -0.204. This result indicates that a reported high degree of gender diversity in the workplace tends to be related with less frequent turnover intentions. This general relationship among women has been concealed in the first steps of the analyses because there are important differences among the 13 occupational contexts. Among the interaction variables showing the occupational differences, interaction between gender diversity and academic staff in public administration takes on a significant positive value of 0.590. This indicates that among female academic staff in public administration, reports of a high degree of gender diversity are related with more frequent turnover intentions.

In step 5, we control for job satisfaction to determine whether the different relationships between gender diversity and turnover intentions could be due to different levels of job satisfaction. This step only deepens the found relationships among female employees. In

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<sup>3</sup> For the sake of place, in table 6 we only show the significant interaction variables.

M5, the coefficient for gender diversity takes on the significant negative value -0.251, while the interaction variable between gender diversity and academic staff in public administration takes on the significant positive value 0.566.

These analyses indicate a negative relationship between gender diversity and turnover intentions among female employees: The higher the degree of gender diversity, the less frequent the turnover intentions. However, female academic staff in public administration is an exception to the general tendency because of the positive relationship between gender diversity and turnover intentions: The higher the degree of reported gender diversity, the more frequent the turnover intentions among female academic staff in public administration. In the next section, we will discuss potential explanations.

Regarding the results for men, neither M4 nor M5 significantly changes the overall non-significant relationship between gender diversity and turnover intentions. Our analyses thus indicate that the degree of gender diversity in the workplace in general does not affect turnover intentions among male employees. The coefficient for gender diversity is non-significant and close to zero (0.005 in M4 and 0.012 in M5). However, the introduction of interaction variables in M4 shows that one of these (gender diversity \* academic staff in public administration) takes on a significant negative value (-0.870). In M5, controlling for job satisfaction, the result is confirmed as the interaction variable takes on a significant negative value of -0.718. These results indicate that while gender diversity has no general relationship with turnover intentions among male employees, there is a significant negative relationship among male employees in academic staff in public administration. Among male academic staff in public administration, the frequency of turnover intentions drops as the degree of gender diversity rises. Table 7 gives an overview of how the findings support the theoretically deducted hypothesis.

Table 7: Overview of findings

Hypothesis	Findings
H1: Gender diversity in the workplace is positively correlated with job satisfaction among all employees irrespective of gender.	No support
H2: Gender diversity in the workplace is negatively correlated with turnover intentions among all employees irrespective of gender.	No support
H3: Gender diversity in the workplace is negatively correlated with job satisfaction among all employees irrespective of gender.	No support
H4: Gender diversity in the workplace is positively correlated with turnover intentions among all employees irrespective of gender.	No support
H5: Gender diversity in the workplace is negatively correlated with job satisfaction among male employees, but positively among female employees.	No support
H6: Gender diversity in the workplace is positively correlated with turnover intentions among male employees, but negatively among female employees.	Partial support – among female employees, gender diversity is generally negatively related with turnover intentions (12 out of 13 occupations). But no relation among men.
H7: Job satisfaction is related with the interaction between occupational context and gender diversity.	No support
H8: Turnover intention is related with the interaction between occupational context and gender diversity. (in other words, that gender diversity may have varying consequences in varying occupational contexts.)	Partial support – since among female academic staff in PA gender diversity is positively related with turnover intentions, while it is negatively related among men.

## CONCLUSIONS

In our analyses, we find no significant correlations between gender diversity and our first dependent variable, general job satisfaction. This basically negative result from the analysis of an important organizational variable seems to challenge the widespread notion that gender diversity is an all-important force in the social and psychological environment of a workplace. One might argue that the lack of relationship between gender diversity and job satisfaction primarily challenges the pessimistic diversity-as-process-

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loss perspective (H3), which expressly states that diversity in the dimensions of identity categories such as race/ethnicity or gender leads to conflict and, presumably, reduces employee well-being. However, the hypotheses from the other perspectives (H1 and H5) are also challenged.

The results of our analyses of the relationship between gender diversity and turnover intentions, our second dependent variable, are relatively complex. We find no direct correlation between gender diversity and turnover intentions, and no significant relationship turns up even when we control for a number of personal characteristics and the occupational contexts from the 13 occupations in the data set. Again, these results challenge the widespread notion in the diversity literature that gender diversity in the workplace is an important organizational factor universally affecting the well-being and performance of organizational members.

However, taking varying relationships between gender diversity and turnover intentions across different occupational contexts into consideration, we do find a widespread tendency of less frequent turnover intentions among female employees who report comparatively high degrees of gender diversity. This relationship applies to 12 of the 13 occupations in the sample. Among male employees, we do not find any generally applicable relationship between gender diversity and turnover intentions. The overall indication is an asymmetric result across the gender category. Among female employees, gender diversity is generally negatively related with turnover intentions; among male employees, gender diversity and turnover intentions are generally unrelated. On the face of it, this partially supports H6, and challenges H2 and H4. Note, however, that the partial support for H6 is debatable because of the occupational differences.

Among both women and men, the occupational context of academic staff in public administration stands out from the other occupations. In this occupational context, the relationship between gender diversity and turnover intentions differs from the general trend. Among female academic staff in public administration, the relationship between gender diversity and turnover intentions reverses in comparison with the trend. Among male academic staff in public administration, there is a significant negative relationship between gender diversity and turnover intentions, while no such relationship is found in general.

We should be cautious not to overstate the contrast between the general trends and the specific relationship among academic staff in public administration. We analyze a sample of employees from 13 predefined occupational contexts. When 12 out of 13 occupations display a certain relationship between gender diversity and turnover intentions, it is tempting to generalize this relationship to a general trend. However, the exception found in the 13<sup>th</sup> occupational context shows that there are limits to the generalizability. We may not have uncovered all relevant differences in the occupational settings represented in the sample. Furthermore, it is quite possible that occupations not included in the sample display specific circumstances that influence the ways gender diversity and turnover intentions are related. The results for academic staff in public administration support H8.

In our analyses, academic staff in public administration stands out from the other 12 occupations. We take this as an indication that the occupational context somehow makes a difference for the relationship between gender diversity and turnover intentions. Our analyses do not provide clear answers as to why the differences exist or how

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they work. The result thus raises new questions in need of analysis with sound empirical backing.

We suggest that a possible explanation for the special position of the occupational context of academic staff in public administration could be related with the meaning of turnover intentions. In this paper, we have tacitly assumed (as is common in the literature) that turnover intentions are an expression of dissatisfaction or lack of well-being. However, is this understanding necessarily valid in all occupational contexts? In some occupational contexts, turnover intentions may be an expression of career orientations – at least partly – and not (only) of dissatisfaction. Intending to get another job may express an urge to move on, develop, obtain better pay, and so on. We believe that this is possible among female academic staff in public administration in the sample. In the analyses, we try to back up the consistency of this idea by controlling for job satisfaction in M5. Furthermore, simple correlations show that to both female and male academic staff in public administration, turnover intentions are positively correlated with management aspirations.<sup>4</sup> Hence, turnover intentions may be an ambiguous indicator of organizational dissatisfaction or lack of well-being. In some contexts, turnover intentions may be an expression of positive career orientations, and an occupational variable may be decisive in capturing the relevant context for determining the meaning of turnover intentions.

However, job satisfaction does not seem to affect the academic women's management ambitions (there is no significant correlation between job satisfaction and management aspiration), while this relation is negative for male academic staff in public administration. We need more research and more focused and detailed data to untangle the mean-

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<sup>4</sup> The Pearson's correlation is .278\*\* for women and .225\*\* for men.

ing of turnover intentions and gain a better understanding of the – at least in some contexts – complex relation between turnover intentions and gender diversity.

Turning back to the widespread worries on declining job-satisfaction and raising turnover in the public sector the conclusion is that organizational gender diversity might among female employees lead to lower turnover intentions, but do not affect their degree of job-satisfaction – and it has in general no effect on men's job-satisfaction and turn-over intentions. Hence, the study mainly contributes to the ongoing debate among (gender) diversity scholars by pinpointing both the question of asymmetric effects for males and females (in line with the status-theoretical perspective) and the importance of contextual factors while studying potential positive and negative consequences of workplace diversity.

However, future research should test the validity of our findings in other cultural and political settings than Denmark. Aspects of our findings support their generalizability and robustness, but also call for more studies. First, the study was a large-scale cross-occupation study. Second, one could argue that the high level of gender equality in Denmark, compared to some other countries, makes positive effects of gender diversity generalizable only to similar contexts since conflict theory and its hypothesis might still be valid in contexts with less gender equality. At the same time, negative effects could be expected to also have a negative effect and perhaps even more negative in other contexts. Since the findings are mixed, the arguments for generalizability point to further studies.

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## APPENDIX

Figure A1: Distribution of Job Satisfaction

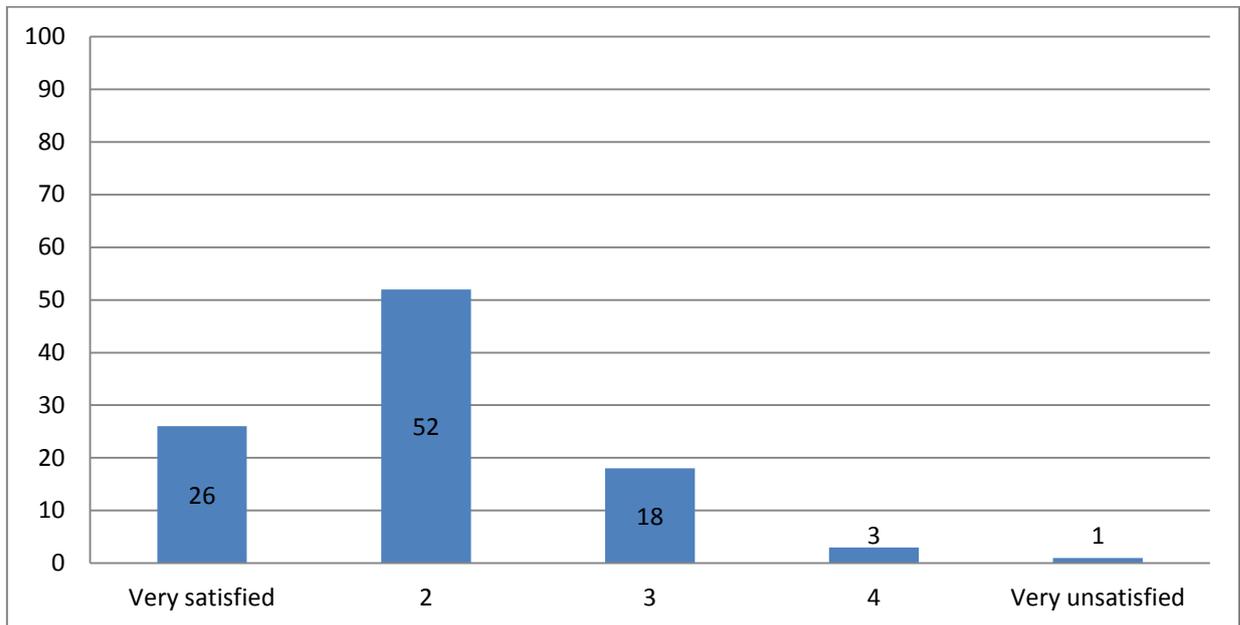
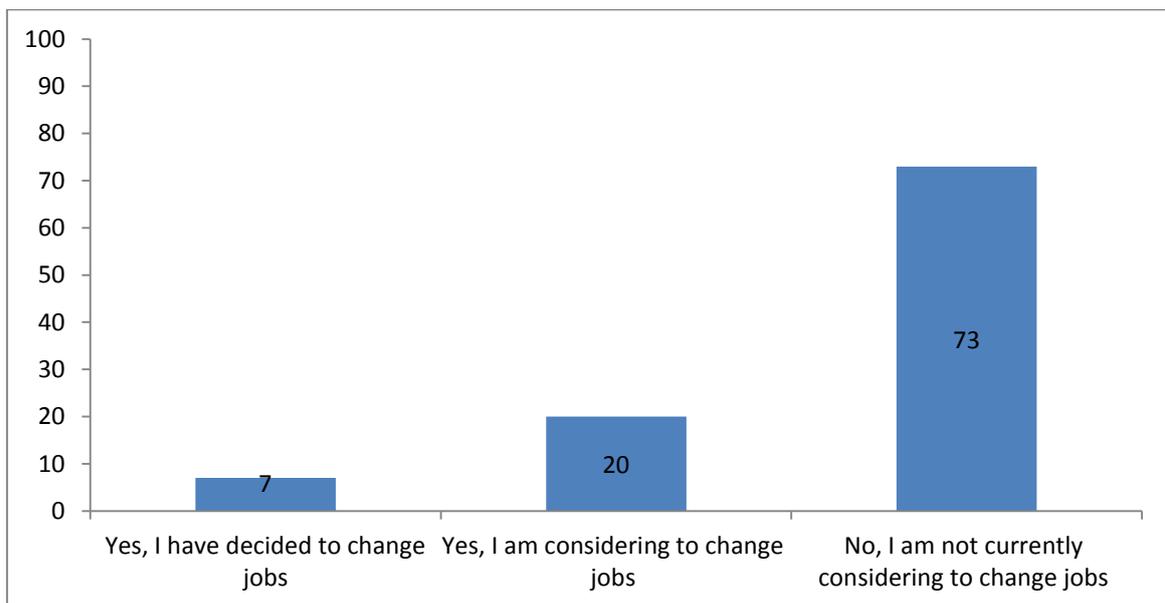


Figure A2: Distribution of Turnover Intentions



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