Gender and leadership aspiration: the impact of organizational identification

Claudia Fritz and Daan van Knippenberg

Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Abstract

Purpose – Although nowadays more women occupy leadership roles, they still are a minority. Because aspiration is a precursor of advancement, examining conditions fostering female leadership aspiration is important. A neglected perspective is the impact of organizational identification. Identification can be argued to foster leadership aspiration because the essence of leadership is the pursuit of collective interests, and identification motivates such pursuits. The paper aims to discuss these issues.

Design/methodology/approach – A cross-sectional survey design with an $n = 400$ fulltime employed men and women, working for various organizations was selected.

Findings – The initial prediction was that identification is more important to women's leadership aspiration to the extent that gender is associated with communal orientation, because women tend to have stronger communal orientation with associated greater affiliation needs, and organizational identification can be expected to cater to those needs. The communal orientation by organizational identification interactive influence on leadership aspiration was supported. Also, the indirect effect of gender on leadership aspiration via this interactive influence of communal orientation and organizational identification was supported.

Research limitations/implications – Due to the selected survey approach the data are correlational and as a result no reference to matters of causality can be made. Thus (field) experimental data is needed to confirm these findings.

Practical implications – Within the paper the discussion focuses on the importance of creating an environment that is more conducive to organizational identification and as such speaks to the communal orientation – being more pronounced among women – to act in favor of the organization by aspiring leadership positions.

Originality/value – The presented results depict an important step toward understanding how organizational identification and communal orientation interact and how they interact with women's leadership aspiration.

Keywords Gender, Organizational identification, Communal orientation, Leadership aspiration

Paper type Research paper

Today's labor market remains characterized by a disparity between men and women occupying leadership positions. Although the percentage of women with a board position within the major listed EU companies has risen from 12 percent in 2010 to 23 percent in 2016 (European Commission, 2016), women clearly remain a minority. There are various factors linked to lower female leadership participation (cf. Carli and Eagly, 2016; Eagly and Carli, 2007; Heilman, 2001; Hoyt and Murphy, 2016; Rudman and Glick, 2001; Vial *et al.*, 2016), however, here the focus will be exclusively on lower female leadership aspiration (cf. Gregor and O'Brien, 2015; Hoobler *et al.*, 2014; Savery, 1990) as constituting an important yet not well understood factor. Aspiration is an important precursor of career attainment (Schoon and Polek, 2011), occupational status (Schoon *et al.*, 2007) and

hierarchical advancement (Tharenou, 2001) and therefore assessing factors stimulating female leadership aspiration is of importance.

Leadership aspiration is defined as the personal interest for reaching a leadership position and the will to accept the offer to take over such a position (Singer, 1991). Despite the fact that some studies have been conducted on female leadership aspiration (Boatwright and Egidio, 2003; Gregor and O'Brien, 2015; Litzky and Greenhaus, 2007; Savery, 1990; Singer, 1991) or related constructs such as managerial (Hoobler *et al.*, 2014) or career aspiration or ambition (Dikkers *et al.*, 2010; Gbadamosi *et al.*, 2015; Morrison *et al.*, 1987; Pas *et al.*, 2008; Pas *et al.*, 2014), moderating influences are not well understood. Scholars have paid attention to both individual factors as well as to the requirements of the leadership role itself that may diminish female aspiration. Studying the former, scholars have looked at factors such as self-efficacy (Gbadamosi *et al.*, 2015; Hoyt, 2012; Litzky and Greenhaus, 2007; Singer, 1991; van Vianen and Keizer, 1996) or automatic negative personal gender stereotyping (Davies *et al.*, 2002; Davies *et al.*, 2005; Rudman and Phelan, 2010). Regarding the latter, scholars have assessed what individuals associated with being in a leadership role. Scholars have shown that women fear to not be able any longer to fulfill family demands (Cross, 2010; Ezzedeen *et al.*, 2015) or to face relationship problems (Killeen *et al.*, 2006; Lips, 2000, 2001). Not only internally, but also externally may women experience additional pressure in this regard because employed mothers, and particularly successful ones, are perceived as less capable as employees as well as less effective parents, whereas these negative perceptions do not occur for employed fathers (Heilman and Okimoto, 2008; Okimoto and Heilman, 2012; Vinkenburg *et al.*, 2012).

Yet, scholars seem to have neglected the psychological linkage between the individual and the employing organization and in particular how this linkage may stimulate rather than diminish female leadership aspiration. Organizational identification, considered a "root construct in organizational studies" (Ashforth *et al.*, 2008, p. 326), was specifically conceptualized to capture the psychological relationship of individuals with their employing organization, and is defined as "the perceived oneness with an organization and the experience of the organization's successes and failures as one's own" (Mael and Ashforth, 1992, p. 103). As shown in two meta-analyses by Riketta (2005) and Lee *et al.* (2015) organizational identification is positively related to various beneficial outcomes, such as attachment to one's work group and occupation, job involvement, organizational commitment as well as job and organizational satisfaction, while also being related negatively to adverse outcomes such as intention to leave. Moreover, organizational identification is not just linked to general work motivation (Wegge *et al.*, 2006; van Knippenberg and van Schie, 2000), but it is specifically associated with the motivation to behave in a way beneficial for the organization (van Knippenberg, 2000). It is argued that because of its link with the motivation to pursue collective interests, organizational identification is positively related to leadership aspiration, because leadership itself is targeted at collaboratively pursuing collective objectives (Bass and Stogdill, 1990; Burns, 1978). Moreover, speaking to the issue of gender and leadership aspiration, it is proposed that because women tend to have a stronger communal orientation than men (Bakan, 1966; Eagly, 1987; Lyness and Heilman, 2006), and identification can be assumed to cater to the communal need to belong (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Ashforth, 2001; Ashforth *et al.*, 2008), women's leadership aspiration is more strongly influenced by organizational identification.

The contribution of this study lies in stressing the significance of the interplay between the individual and the organization in stimulating female leadership aspiration as it is shown how women's greater communal orientation can be triggered by organizational identification to inspire leadership aspiration. These insights advance theory in gender and leadership by discussing how an employee's psychological linkage to his or her organization leads to potential differences between male and female leadership aspiration.

Literature review and hypotheses

Communal orientation, organizational identification, and leadership aspiration

Women and men tend to have a different manifestation of certain gendered traits. Whereas men are considered to have a greater agentic orientation, women are disposed to a greater communal orientation (Bakan, 1966; Eagly, 1987). Agentic traits entail for instance being ambitious, competitive, and dominant (Gebauer *et al.*, 2013; Lyness and Heilman, 2006), whereas communal attributes range from being affectionate, caring, compassionate, sensitive, and understanding (Gebauer *et al.*, 2013) over being relationship oriented, considerate, and nice (Lyness and Heilman, 2006) to being courteous, helpful and sympathetic (Carli *et al.*, 2016). This is not to say that these differences are innate; women are generally more communal than men due to the exposure to traditional roles of women within society, requiring more communal behaviors (Eagly, 1987). Whereas agentic individuals generally strive for differentiation and have the tendency to demonstrate leadership to differentiate themselves (Tepper, 1998), communal individuals tend to strive for assimilation with their surrounding environment (Gebauer *et al.*, 2013). Individuals in general have the tendency to use group affiliation to fulfill their need to belong (Bowlby, 1969; Gabriel and Young, 2011; Tajfel, 1970) and particularly communal individuals seek for connection or identification (Bakan, 1966; Flum, 2001; Locke *et al.*, 2012; Wiggins, 1991).

One specific kind of social identification is organizational identification, implying that individuals internalize the organization's attributes as their own (Mael and Ashforth, 1995; Ashforth *et al.*, 2008). Organizational identification is related to various positive outcomes, such as cooperative behavior (Dukerich *et al.*, 2002; van Dick *et al.*, 2006), increased intention to stay (Demir *et al.*, 2015; van Dick *et al.*, 2004), reduced employee burnout (Avanzi *et al.*, 2015; Bosco *et al.*, 2013), extra-role behavior (Tavares *et al.*, 2015), work motivation (van Knippenberg and van Schie, 2000; Wegge *et al.*, 2006), and to the motivation to act to the benefit of the organization (van Knippenberg, 2000; van Knippenberg and van Schie, 2000). Also for the individual organizational identification is highly relevant because it caters to the need to belong (Ashforth *et al.*, 2008). Because the need to belong is particularly distinct among individuals with a higher communal orientation as communion is associated with "contact, connection, union, and a sense of being at one with others" (Flum, 2001, p. 1), it is predicted that organizational identification is particularly influential for communal individuals. In particular, it is expected that high organizational identification stimulates leadership aspiration of communal individuals, because identification is related to the motivation to serve the communal interest (van Knippenberg, 2000; van Knippenberg and van Schie, 2000) and because leadership itself is generally concerned with motivating employees to work toward shared successes (Bass and Stogdill, 1990; Burns, 1978):

H1. The interaction of communal orientation and organizational identification is positively related to leadership aspiration.

Gender differences in communal orientation and leadership aspiration

In line with various other scholars (e.g. Bakan, 1966; Eagly, 1987; Feingold, 1994; Helgeson, 1994) Abele (2003, p. 769) states that women "consistently score higher on measures of communal traits." By dint of a meta-analysis Donnelly and Twenge (2016) showed that women's femininity scores, not being congruent with communion, but entailing similar elements, such as being gentle and warm, have decreased significantly in the last 20 years. Yet these communal elements continue to be more pronounced among women than among men (Donnelly and Twenge, 2016). In line with the communal traits, such as being relationship oriented, considerate, and caring (Gebauer *et al.*, 2013; Lyness and Heilman, 2006) women seek "jobs that provide opportunities to work with people and help others" (Eagly and Carli, 2007, p. 60). Leadership, and consequently also leadership

aspiration, is speaking to the notion of motivating and helping others to collaboratively pursue organizational objectives (e.g. Bass and Stogdill, 1990; Burns, 1978; van Knippenberg *et al.*, 2004), hence to both aspects women value in jobs – cooperation and helping others. Yet, women might refrain from translating their communal motives into leadership aspiration as traditionally leadership is associated with agentic attributes, being more common among men (Carli and Eagly, 2016; Eagly and Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001; Lyness and Heilman, 2006). However, in accordance with the trait activation model (Tett and Burnett, 2003; Tett and Guterman, 2000; Tett *et al.*, 2013) it is expected that this translation of communal orientation into leadership aspiration can be activated by organizational identification. As organizational identification is linked to the need to belong (Ashforth, 2001; Ashforth *et al.*, 2008) and as connectedness needs are associated with women's leadership aspiration (Boatwright and Egidio, 2003), it is predicted that organizational identification is a particularly relevant cue to stimulate this translation of women's communal orientation into leadership aspiration:

H2. Gender has an indirect effect on leadership aspiration mediated by communal orientation and moderated by organizational identification. Women report higher leadership aspiration than men when they highly identify with their organization due to women's greater communal orientation.

Method
Procedure
For the data collection, an online survey was employed, which was distributed by a British online panel provider. The participants were recruited out of the pool of the online panel provider's respondents and had to meet certain criteria, such as being fulltime employed with a minimum of three years work and a minimum of one year job experience. Moreover, they had to work in a company with at least 20 employees. According to the online panel provider's modus operandi respondents received a small monetary incentive after completing the survey. Although online surveys feature various advantages, they are also often faced with some criticism. They are for instance criticized for being regarded as spam as well as for technological malfunctioning and usability issues for people with insufficient online experience (Evans and Mathur, 2005). To overcome these disadvantages, some pre-survey measures were taken. First and foremost, the survey was only sent to people who had selected to participate in the online panel, hence being willing to answer questions and second the survey was tested in various browsers before its launch to ensure both readability as well as functionality. Moreover, as currently almost 90 percent of the adults within the UK possess internet access (UK Office for National Statistic, 2016), missing online experience is not considered to be an issue. Thus, the online data's quality is expected to be adequate.

Participants
In total, 400 respondents answered the survey. Of these 400 respondents, 200 were male and 200 were female. The respondents were aged from 20 to 64 years (M = 45.64, SD = 10.30). More than half of the respondents had children (56.3 percent). With reference to the relationship status, 28.2 percent indicated that they were singles, 25.3 percent were within a relationship and 46.5 percent were married. Their work experience ranged from the required minimum of 3 to a maximum of 48 years (M = 24.35, SD = 10.96), their organizational tenure ranged from 1 to 43 years (M = 11.68, SD = 8.87) and their job tenure ranged from the required minimum of 1 to 41 years (M = 8.07, SD = 6.57). Their educational background was relatively homogeneously distributed between a non-academic (50.5 percent) and an academic background (49.5 percent). Of the former, 29.0 percent hold a high-school degree as their highest education and 21.5 percent an apprenticeship, whereas of the latter

32.3 percent possessed a bachelor's and 17.3 percent possessed a master's degree. The three most common occupational backgrounds were education (11.3 percent), administrative and support services (10.3 percent) and public administration (10.0 percent). The respondents' hierarchical positioning within their respective companies, was distributed between 44.8 percent having a non-supervisory position, hence were not delegating work to others, 22.0 percent being employed within first level, 26.8 percent within middle, 4.0 percent within upper and the remaining 2.5 percent within senior management. Their cultural background was relatively homogeneous as 92.5 percent had a British, 3.5 percent a Continental European, 2.5 percent an Asian and the remaining 1.5 percent had an African background (a detailed overview by gender can be found in the Appendix).

Measures

Leadership aspiration. As the focus was on organizational identification as an organization-specific psychological state and its impact on leadership aspiration, leadership aspiration tied to the specific organization employees worked for, was measured. Leadership aspiration was operationalised by using a 17-item, five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). It was designed in a way to measure both intentions and behavior because behavior is considered to be a more objective indicator than intentions only (Tharenou and Terry, 1998). With regards to the former, the "leadership and achievement scale" developed by Gray and O'Brien (2007) was employed. Further, also three more items were introduced to fulfill their request to enlarge the scale. To measure the organization-specific leadership aspiration, the items were slightly reworded to only ask respondents about their leadership intentions tied to the current organization they worked for. Sample items, such as "I hope to become a leader at the current organization I work for," "When I am established at the current organization, I would like to train others" and "My aspirations for advancing in management positions within this organization are very high" were included in the scale measuring intentions. As previously mentioned, also self-reported behavior was measured because behavior as enacted aspiration is considered to be a more objective measure (Tharenou and Terry, 1998) – despite also being self-reported. These items were inspired by the work of Day and Allen (2004), adapted from London (1993) and Noe *et al.* (1990) as well as Tharenou and Terry (1998). Here again the items were made organization specific. Sample items were for instance "I have engaged in career path planning to determine my career path within this organization," "I have discussed my aspirations with a senior person in the organization" or "I have requested to be considered for promotions at the current organization I work for" (see Appendix for the detailed scale).

Organizational identification. Organizational identification was measured using a six-item, five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) which was initially developed by Mael and Ashforth (1992). In order to use the scale in a work context it was slightly reworded, as employed by other scholars, so that the "name of the school" was substituted with "my organization." Sample items included e.g. "When someone criticizes my organization, it feels like a personal insult" or "When someone praises this organization, it feels like a personal compliment." This scale was selected as it is considered to be superior to other scales when examining work behavior (Riketta, 2005) (see Appendix for the detailed scale).

Communal orientation. In order to measure communal orientation a ten-item, five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was used. The scale was initially developed by Gebauer *et al.* (2013) as a seven-point scale, however, for consistency across various variables, it was decided to use an adapted five-point scale. Respondents were asked how well each of the presented attributes generally described them. Sample items were "affectionate," "caring," and "understanding" (see Appendix for the detailed scale).

Gender. Obviously, gender was included in the design as a predictor variable.

Control variables. Taking the potential heterogeneity of the sample into consideration, it was decided to include some control variables as they are considered "as important as independent and dependent variables" (Becker, 2005, p. 275). In fact, control variables were selected that either covaried with gender or that had a strong theoretical basis for inclusion as suggested by Carlson and Wu (2012). First, men were more senior than women in all work, organizational and job experience. Thus, it was decided to include these tenure variables as controls. Although all three control variables do measure tenure, they measure different aspects of it and are therefore important to include. Whereas work experience measures the general work tenure (in years), organizational experience measures the tenure within the current organization (in years) one is employed at and lastly job experience measures the tenure regarding the current job or position one has (in years). Moreover, to understand whether having a higher educational academic background impacts leadership aspiration positively, the variable was dummy-coded $1 =$ Master, $0 =$ other. The female environment variable was inspired by Tharenou (2001), as she employed male hierarchy, which was composed of two sub-questions, directed at the gender ratio within the workforce and the exposure to female managers. To inquire whether the exposure to female managers has an impact on women's leadership aspiration, only this respective question was employed and a corresponding interval variable was created. Regarding the occupational background, it was decided to control for occupations within the health sector as they are often considered not only to be an occupation, but also "a calling" and hence people employed in this sector may possess a higher identification with their profession. As employees having both high levels of organizational and professional identification "are likely to experience identity conflict" (Hekman *et al.*, 2009, p. 1327), potentially organizational identification might be not as decisive for employees within the health sector for stimulating their leadership aspiration as for others. Consequently, the dummy-codes were $1 =$ health background and $0 =$ other. Eventually, regarding the hierarchical position, the assessment of Eagly and Karau (2002) that the misfit between being a leader while being female "might be somewhat lower for middle manager" (Eagly and Karau, 2002, p. 577) was taken into account. Consequently, to understand whether this hierarchical position features an impact on female leadership aspiration, two dummy-code variables – hierarchical level $1 =$ middle manager and $0 =$ other – were created.

Results

Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for all variables as well as reliabilities (Cronbach's α) for leadership aspiration, organizational identification and communal orientation can be found in Table I.

Regression analysis

To test the first hypothesis regarding the communal orientation and organizational identification interaction on leadership aspiration, a hierarchical regression analysis in which leadership aspiration was predicted by main effect terms (gender, organizational identification, communal orientation, and the before mentioned control variables) at step 1 and additionally the interaction term (communal orientation x organizational identification) at step 2 was conducted. Following Aiken and West (1991), the variables organizational identification and communal orientation were centered by subtracting the mean from each score. Hence, these two main effect terms as well as the interaction term of the two were based on this centered scored. Results are displayed in Table II.
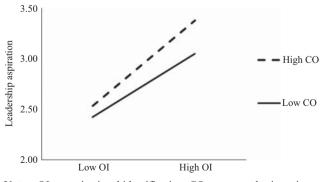
There were significant relationships for gender (negative), organizational identification (positive) and communal orientation (positive) that are all consistent with the conceptual

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Leadership aspiration	2.88	0.89	(0.95)									
2. Gender	n/a	n/a	0.01									
3. Organizational identification	3.36	0.82	0.49**	0.11*	(0.89)							
4. Communal orientation	3.89	0.54	0.23**	0.22**	0.34**	(0.89)						
5. Female environment	3.21	1.65	0.03	0.17**	-0.01	0.09						
6. Occupational background	n/a	n/a	-0.03	0.16**	0.05	0.06	0.12*					
7. Work experience	24.35	10.96	-0.29**	-0.18**	-0.10*	0.01	-0.02	-0.07				
8. Organizational experience	11.68	8.87	-0.12*	-0.06	-0.09	0.03	0.03	-0.10*	0.44**			
9. Job experience	8.07	6.57	-0.23**	-0.11*	-0.15**	-0.01	0.03	-0.05	0.34**	0.59**		
10. Educational background	n/a	n/a	0.21**	0.10*	0.10	0.07	0.06	0.07	-0.15**	-0.10*	-0.10*	
11. Hierarchical level	n/a	n/a	0.24**	-0.14**	0.10*	-0.05	0.03	-0.01	-0.01	0.02	-0.18**	0.16**

Notes: Gender (1 = female; 0 = male), occupational background (1 = health, 0 = other), educational background (1 = master, 0 = other) and hierarchical level (1 = middle manager; 0 = other), are dummy-coded variables. Coefficients α for each scale are given in parentheses in the diagonal. $*p < 0.05$; $**p < 0.01$

Predictor	b	SE	β	t	p
Step 1					
Constant	3.31	0.13		26.15	0.00
Gender	−0.16	0.08	−0.09	−2.11	0.04
Organizational identification	0.45	0.05	0.41	9.44	0.00
Communal orientation	0.18	0.07	0.11	2.46	0.01
Female environment	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.85	0.40
Occupational background	−0.21	0.13	−0.07	−1.63	0.10
Work experience	−0.02	0.00	−0.25	−5.48	0.00
Organizational experience	0.01	0.01	0.09	1.73	0.08
Job experience	−0.02	0.01	−0.12	−2.26	0.03
Educational background	0.26	0.10	0.11	2.64	0.01
Hierarchical level	0.30	0.09	0.15	3.49	0.00
Step 2					
Constant	3.27	0.13		25.68	0.00
Gender	−0.16	0.08	−0.09	−2.04	0.04
Organizational identification	0.45	0.05	0.41	9.56	0.00
Communal orientation	0.20	0.07	0.12	2.78	0.01
Female environment	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.84	0.40
Occupational background	−0.23	0.13	−0.07	−1.79	0.08
Work experience	−0.02	0.00	−0.24	−5.31	0.00
Organizational experience	0.01	0.01	0.09	1.74	0.08
Job experience	−0.02	0.01	−0.12	−2.28	0.02
Educational background	0.26	0.10	0.11	2.66	0.01
Hierarchical level	0.31	0.09	0.16	3.67	0.00
Communal orientation X organizational identification	0.12	0.06	0.08	2.03	0.04

Table II.
Regression results for
leadership aspiration

analysis, but the more important finding here is the test of *H1*. Supporting *H1*, the interaction of communal orientation and organizational identification was significantly related to leadership aspiration ($b = 0.12$, SE $= 0.06$, $p < 0.05$). To determine the nature of this interaction, subsequently a simple slope analysis according to Aiken and West (1991) was conducted. The analyses showed that whereas organizational identification was positively related to leadership aspiration for individuals with a high communal orientation ($b = 0.52$, SE $= 0.06$, $p < 0.01$) as well as for individuals with a low communal orientation ($b = 0.38$, SE $= 0.06$, $p < 0.01$), the slope was steeper for high communal orientation than for low communal orientation, supporting *H1* (see Figure 1 for visualization).

Notes: OI, organizational identification; CO, communal orientation

Figure 1.
Simple slope analysis
of leadership
aspiration

Second stage moderation model
In line with previous findings (e.g. Abele, 2003; Bakan, 1966; Eagly, 1987; Feingold, 1994; Lyness and Heilman, 2006) these results confirm that communal orientation and the dummy variable for gender (i.e. where female is coded 1 and male 0) are significantly positively related ($r = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$), hence women do possess a greater communal orientation than men. Consequently, communal orientation may play an important role in mediating gender effects. In order to test the second hypothesis, a second stage moderation model (see Figure 2) was conducted by using a bootstrapping approach, employing 5,000 bootstrap samples for the bias corrected confidence intervals of 0.95. The analysis showed that the direct effect of gender on leadership aspiration was negative ($b = -0.16$, SE $= 0.08$, LCI $= -0.31$ and UCI $= -0.01$). Thus, overall women have lower leadership aspiration than men. However, the conditional indirect effect of gender mediated by communion and moderated by organizational identification was positively related to leadership aspiration when organizational identification was high (mean +1 standard deviation) ($b = 0.07$, SE $= 0.03$, LCI $= 0.03$ and UCI $= 0.13$), but unrelated to leadership aspiration when organizational identification was low (mean −1 standard deviation) ($b = 0.02$, SE $= 0.02$, LCI $= -0.01$ and UCI $= 0.06$), hence supporting *H2*.

Discussion
Barriers to women achieving leadership positions are well-documented (Carli and Eagly, 2016; Eagly and Carli, 2007; Rudman and Glick, 2001) and such barriers may presumably also discourage women's leadership aspiration. The evidence generally also suggests that women indeed are more communal than men – a factor also argued to invite biases in others' leadership perceptions in favor of male leadership (Eagly and Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001; Lyness and Heilman, 2006). Importantly, however, the present study shows that communal orientation in and of itself does not discourage leadership aspiration. Indeed, with higher organizational identification it may stimulate leadership aspiration, and thus increase the leadership aspiration of women more than of men due to women's greater communal orientation. The moderated mediation evidence that women show higher leader aspiration than men, mediated by communal orientation, when they highly identify with the organization, speaks to how the psychological linkage with the organization may inspire leadership aspiration. These findings have some clear implications for theory and practice.

Theoretical implications
Traditionally agentic traits, being linked to an augmented self-esteem (Wojciszke *et al.*, 2011), to advancement within social hierarchies (Trapnell and Paulhus, 2012), and to career success (Abele, 2003), were considered to be more suitable for leadership (Eagly and Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001; Rudman and Glick, 2001). Women's more communal nature on
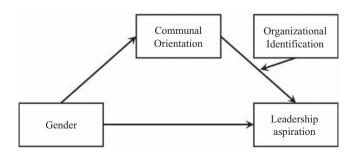

Figure 2.
Tested moderated
mediation model

the contrary was equated with inferior female performance within leadership roles
(Eagly and Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001; Lyness and Heilman, 2006).

However, meta-analytic evidence shows that this "masculine construal of leadership has
decreased over time" (Koenig *et al.*, 2011, p. 616) and people "begin acknowledging the
essential communal elements of leadership" (Hoyt, 2010, p. 493) as leaders who also
incorporate communal traits are more effective than purely agentic leaders (Gartzia and
van Knippenberg, 2015; Kark *et al.*, 2012). Meta-analytic evidence shows that women are as
effective as men within leadership positions (Eagly *et al.*, 1995; Paustian-Underdahl *et al.*,
2014). In the present study, this work was complemented from yet another angle, not looking
at others' perceptions and stereotypic preconceptions (Eagly and Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001;
Lyness and Heilman, 2006) or evaluation of the evidence of gender and communal
orientation's influence on leadership effectiveness (Eagly *et al.*, 1995; Gartzia and
van Knippenberg, 2015), but studying the relationship between gender, communal
orientation, and leadership aspiration. This is an important complementary perspective
because neither the stereotyping perspective nor the leadership effectiveness perspective
speaks to how gender and communal orientation may shape the ambition to become a leader,
and such leadership aspiration is an integral part of the achievement of leadership positions.

By introducing organizational identification into the equation, we showed that a communal
orientation may in fact inspire leadership aspiration for individuals strongly identifying with
their employing organization. Particularly the link between organizational identity, capturing
the "self-referential meaning" an organization attributes to itself (Corley *et al.*, 2006, p. 87) and
organizational identification may be important in this regard. As the overlap between personal
identity and organizational identity is associated with greater organizational identification
(Elsbach and Bhattacharya, 2001), future research may explore whether organizations,
incorporating communal elements in their organizational identity, do activate the communal
orientation of women to serve the collective and hence their leadership aspiration even to a
greater extent. The findings regarding the positive impact of organizational identification on
leadership aspiration further beg the question of whether other forms of identification can have
a similar positive influence on women's leadership aspiration. Studying various foci of
identification is an interesting avenue for future research because "identities at different levels
may be competing or simultaneously salient in motivating the same behavior" (He and Brown,
2013, p. 20). van Dick *et al.* (2008) have demonstrated the positive effect of both organizational
and work group identification for positive employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction or extra
role behavior. Future research may thus look at distinct types of identification within an
organizational context (e.g. department or work group) and assess whether a greater
identification, being linked to the motivation to act in favor of the collective (van Knippenberg,
2000; van Knippenberg and van Schie, 2000), at lower hierarchical levels (e.g. department or
work group) equally activates the orientation of communal individuals to serve the collective
by aspiring to serve this specific group as a leader.

In addition to studying the effect of identification among lower levels such as work
groups, future research may fruitfully explore the impact of cooperative climate among
close relationships, such as work groups. Such a cooperative or supportive climate, being
characterized by cooperation and team spirit (Fisher, 2014; Koys and DeCotiis, 1991), may be
particularly important for individuals with a communal orientation due to their greater
orientation toward positive close relationships (Gebauer *et al.*, 2013; Lyness and Heilman,
2006). As such future research may explore whether cooperative climate may comparably to
organizational identification activate the communal orientation to serve the community by
aspiring to become a leader of the respective community. Advancing research in the domain
of organizational climate or more broadly speaking regarding the organizational context is
decisive as "the impact of the organizational context on leadership is an under-researched
area" (Porter and McLaughlin, 2006, p. 573).

Practical implications

These findings further comprise some practical implications in terms of creating an environment that is more conducive to organizational identification and as such speaks to the communal orientation – being more pronounced among women – to act in favor of the organization by aspiring leadership positions.

First and foremost, from a practical perspective it is worthwhile to understand "how leadership at different levels may differently affect employees' organizational identification" (He and Brown, 2013, p. 19) and consequently stimulate women's leadership aspiration. Supervisors or other more senior members could potentially serve as role models in terms of possessing and displaying organizational identification. Particularly for women the positive effect of female role models on leadership aspiration has been shown by various scholars (e.g. Asgari *et al.*, 2012; Ely, 1994; Hoyt and Simon, 2012), therefore it is assumed that more senior women, showing organizational identification, may also have a positive impact on female organizational identification and eventually leadership aspiration. Moreover, as the organization's perceived prestige, attractiveness as well as its external image are associated with greater organizational identification (Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000; Dukerich *et al.*, 2002), organizations should consider investing time and effort in improving and aligning their external image through an adequate usage of PR as well as through developing, aligning and improving their employer branding.

Eventually, the human resource department should be empowered to work on a strategy improving organizational identification, including a clear roadmap and initiatives catalog. Part of the initiatives catalog should be the development of customized identity work tactics to create a good balance for employees between their individual and their identifications. Therefore employees should be trained about and encouraged to use identity work tactics according to their specific needs, ranging from differentiating tactics (e.g. separating role from identity) to integration tactics (e.g. merging role with identity) (Kreiner *et al.*, 2006). Yet, as identification is also associated with potentially negative behaviors such as ingroup bias, including favoring ingroup members while discriminating outgroup members (Ashforth *et al.*, 2008; van Leeuwen *et al.*, 2003) it is essential to not only develop initiatives how to increase organizational identification but to also develop strategies to encounter these negative side-effects as otherwise women, having high leadership aspiration might not be selected for leadership roles simply due to ingroup bias, favoring, e.g. employees from the same department or work group.

Limitations and directions for future research

This study has some limitations that need to be mentioned. A first and obvious limitation is that this study is correlational and hence it cannot refer to matters of causality. Besides, this study contains percept-percept relationships for the mediator-moderator-to-outcome link that are a particular concern in this respect. Thus, the mediator-moderator-to-outcome relationships inevitably rely on methodologically weaker evidence, yet the independent variable (gender), however, is objective. Although the tested relationships are rooted in a detailed theoretical background, field experimental data are necessary to be able to speak to causality. Further, it would also be interesting for future research to also examine more objective outcomes such as leadership attainment. Although there clearly is an important relationship between aspiration and attainment (Tharenou, 2001; Schoon *et al.*, 2007; Schoon and Polek, 2011), there may equally be other important factors influencing attainment. Consequently, it would be valuable to examine which other factors help to translate leadership aspirations into attainment.

Conclusion

Almost ten years ago Eagly and Carli (2007) informed the labyrinth metaphor for women aspiring to get to the top. According to their findings, women do not face a barrier to

leadership positions *per se*, but rather have to follow a circuitous, demanding and entwined path. As this metaphor is still valid today (Carli and Eagly, 2016; Kark and Eagly, 2010), the outlook toward a complex path to the top may discourage leadership aspiration among women. As such, understanding factors that may stimulate female leadership aspiration is crucial. The presented results depict an important step toward understanding how organizational identification and communal orientation interact and how they interact with women's leadership aspiration. Women express higher leadership aspiration, mediated by communal orientation, when they highly identify with the organization they work for. This speaks to the notion how the psychological linkage with the organization may in fact inspire leadership aspiration. These findings do emphasize interesting avenues for future research in terms of studying for instance the interplay between a communal organizational identity and organizational identification as well as different foci of identification and their respective impact on leadership aspiration. Likewise, relevant implications for practitioners, such as the importance of senior role models in displaying organizational identification and the significance of developing and implementing an encompassing HR strategy how to build organizational identification, are presented within this paper. These gained theoretical and practical insights should hopefully be beneficial for creating an organizational environment that stimulates rather than diminishes leadership aspiration among women.

References

Abele, A.E. (2003), "The dynamics of masculine-agentic and feminine-communal traits: findings from a prospective study", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 85 No. 4, pp. 768-776.

Aiken, L.S. and West, S.G. (1991), *Multiple Regression: Testing and Interpreting Interactions*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Asgari, S., Dasgupta, N. and Stout, J.G. (2012), "When do counterstereotypic ingroup members inspire versus deflate? The effect of successful professional women on young women's leadership self-concept", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 38 No. 3, pp. 370-383.

Ashforth, B.E. (2001), *Role Transitions in Organizational Life: An Identity-Based Perspective*, Routledge, Malwah, NJ.

Ashforth, B.E. and Mael, F. (1989), "Social identity theory and the organization", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 20-39.

Ashforth, B.E., Harrison, S.H. and Corley, K.G. (2008), "Identification in organizations: an examination of four fundamental questions", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 34 No. 3, pp. 325-374.

Avanzi, L., Schuh, S.C., Fraccaroli, F. and van Dick, R. (2015), "Why does organizational identification relate to reduced employee burnout? The mediating influence of social support and collective efficacy", *Work and Stress*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 1-10.

Bakan, D. (1966), *The Duality of Human Existence*, McNally, Chicago, IL.

Bass, B.M. and Stogdill, R.M. (1990), *Bass and Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications*, Simon and Schuster, New York, NY.

Becker, T.E. (2005), "Potential problems in the statistical control of variables in organizational research: a qualitative analysis with recommendations", *Organizational Research Methods*, Vol. 8 No. 3, pp. 274-289.

Bergami, M. and Bagozzi, R.P. (2000), "Self-categorization, affective commitment and group self-esteem as distinct aspects of social identity in the organization", *British Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 39 No. 4, pp. 555-577.

Boatwright, K.J. and Egidio, R.K. (2003), "Psychological predictors of college women's leadership aspirations", *Journal of College Student Development*, Vol. 44 No. 5, pp. 653-669.

Bosco, A., di Masi, M.N. and Manuti, A. (2013), "Burnout internal factors – self-esteem and negative affectivity in the workplace: the mediation role of organizational identification in times of job uncertainty", in Bährer-Kohler, S. (Ed.), *Burnout for Experts*, Springer, New York, NY, pp. 145-158.

Bowlby, J. (1969), *Attachment and Loss: Attachment*, Basic Books, New York, NY.

Burns, J.M. (1978), *Leadership*, Harper and Row, New York, NY.

Carli, L.L. and Eagly, A.H. (2016), "Women face a labyrinth: an examination of metaphors for women leaders", *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 31 No. 8, pp. 514-527.

Carli, L.L., Alawa, L., Lee, Y., Zhao, B. and Kim, E. (2016), "Stereotypes about gender and science women≠ scientists", *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Vol. 40 No. 2, pp. 1-17.

Carlson, K.D. and Wu, J. (2012), "The illusion of statistical control: control variable practice in management research", *Organizational Research Methods*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 413-435.

Corley, K.G., Harquail, C.V., Pratt, M.G., Glynn, M.A., Fiol, C.M. and Hatch, M.J. (2006), "Guiding organizational identity through aged adolescence", *Journal of Management Inquiry*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 85-99.

Cross, C. (2010), "Barriers to the executive suite: evidence from Ireland", *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 104-119.

Davies, P.G., Spencer, S.J. and Steele, C.M. (2005), "Clearing the air: identity safety moderates the effects of stereotype threat on women's leadership aspirations", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 88 No. 2, pp. 276-287.

Davies, P.G., Spencer, S.J., Quinn, D.M. and Gerhardstein, R. (2002), "Consuming images: how television commercials that elicit stereotype threat can restrain women academically and professionally", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 28 No. 12, pp. 1615-1628.

Day, R. and Allen, T.D. (2004), "The relationship between career motivation and self-efficacy with protégé career success", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 64 No. 1, pp. 72-91.

Demir, M., Demir, S.S. and Nield, K. (2015), "The relationship between person-organization fit, organizational identification and work outcomes", *Journal of Business Economics and Management*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 369-386.

Dikkers, J., van Engen, M. and Vinkenburg, C. (2010), "Flexible work: ambitious parents' recipe for career success in The Netherlands", *Career Development International*, Vol. 15 No. 6, pp. 562-582.

Donnelly, K. and Twenge, J.M. (2016), "Masculine and feminine traits on the bem sex-role inventory, 1993-2012: a cross-temporal meta-analysis", *Sex Roles*, Vol. 76 No. 9, pp. 556-565.

Dukerich, J.M., Golden, B.R. and Shortell, S.M. (2002), "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder: the impact of organizational identification, identity, and image on the cooperative behaviors of physicians", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 47 No. 3, pp. 507-533.

Eagly, A.H. (1987), *Sex Differences in Social Behavior: A Social-Role Interpretation*, Psychology Press, Hillsdale, NJ.

Eagly, A.H. and Carli, L.L. (2007), *Through the Labyrinth*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA.

Eagly, A.H. and Karau, S.J. (2002), "Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders", *Psychological Review*, Vol. 109 No. 3, pp. 573-598.

Eagly, A.H., Karau, S.J. and Makhijani, M.G. (1995), "Gender and the effectiveness of leaders: a meta-analysis", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 117 No. 1, pp. 125-145.

Elsbach, K.D. and Bhattacharya, C.B. (2001), "Defining who you are by what you're not: organizational disidentification and the National Rifle Association", *Organization Science*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 393-413.

Ely, R.J. (1994), "The effects of organizational demographics and social identity on relationships among professional women", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 203-238.

European Commission (2016), "Gender balance in decision-making positions", available at: http://ec,europa,eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/index_en,htm (accessed November 1, 2016).

Evans, J.R. and Mathur, A. (2005), "The value of online surveys", *Internet Research*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 195-219.

Ezzedeen, S.R., Budworth, M.H. and Baker, S.D. (2015), "The glass ceiling and executive careers still an issue for pre-career women", *Journal of Career Development*, Vol. 42 No. 5, pp. 355-369.

Feingold, A. (1994), "Gender differences in personality: a meta-analysis", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 116 No. 3, pp. 429-456.

Fisher, D.M. (2014), "A multilevel cross-cultural examination of role overload and organizational commitment: investigating the interactive effects of context", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 99 No. 4, pp. 723-736.

Flum, H. (2001), "Relational dimensions in career development", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 59 No. 1, pp. 1-16.

Gabriel, S. and Young, A.F. (2011), "Becoming a vampire without being bitten the narrative collective-assimilation hypothesis", *Psychological Science*, Vol. 22 No. 8, pp. 990-994.

Gartzia, L. and van Knippenberg, D. (2015), "Too masculine, too bad: effects of communion on leaders' promotion of cooperation", *Group and Organization Management*, Vol. 41 No. 4, pp. 458-490.

Gbadamosi, G., Evans, C., Richardson, M. and Ridolfo, M. (2015), "Employability and students' part-time work in the UK: does self-efficacy and career aspiration matter?", *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 41 No. 6, pp. 1086-1107.

Gebauer, J.E., Paulhus, D.L. and Neberich, W. (2013), "Big two personality and religiosity across cultures: communals as religious conformists and agentics as religious contrarians", *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 21-30.

Gregor, M.A. and O'Brien, K.M. (2015), "The changing face of psychology leadership aspirations of female doctoral students", *The Counseling Psychologist*, Vol. 43 No. 8, pp. 1090-1113.

Gray, M.P. and O'Brien, K.M. (2007), "Advancing the assessment of women's career choices: the career aspiration scale", *Journal of Career Assessment*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 317-337.

He, H. and Brown, A.D. (2013), "Organizational identity and organizational identification a review of the literature and suggestions for future research", *Group and Organization Management*, Vol. 38 No. 1, pp. 3-35.

Heilman, M.E. (2001), "Description and prescription: how gender stereotypes prevent women's ascent up the organizational ladder", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 57 No. 4, pp. 657-674.

Heilman, M.E. and Okimoto, T.G. (2008), "Motherhood: a potential source of bias in employment decisions", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 93 No. 1, pp. 189-198.

Hekman, D.R., Steensma, H.K., Bigley, G.A. and Hereford, J.F. (2009), "Effects of organizational and professional identification on the relationship between administrators' social influence and professional employees' adoption of new work behavior", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 94 No. 5, pp. 1325-1355.

Helgeson, V.S. (1994), "Relation of agency and communion to well-being: evidence and potential explanations", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 116 No. 3, pp. 412-428.

Hoobler, J.M., Lemmon, G. and Wayne, S.J. (2014), "Women's managerial aspirations an organizational development perspective", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 40 No. 3, pp. 703-730.

Hoyt, C.L. (2010), "Women, men, and leadership: exploring the gender gap at the top", *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, Vol. 4 No. 7, pp. 484-498.

Hoyt, C.L. (2012), "Inspirational or self-deflating the role of self-efficacy in elite role model effectiveness", *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 290-298.

Hoyt, C.L. and Murphy, S.E. (2016), "Managing to clear the air: stereotype threat, women, and leadership", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 27 No. 3, pp. 387-399.

Hoyt, C.L. and Simon, S. (2012), "Female leaders injurious or inspiring role models for women?", *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 143-157.

Kark, R. and Eagly, A.H. (2010), "Gender and leadership: negotiating the labyrinth", in Chrisler, J.C. and McCreary, D.R. (Eds), *Handbook of Gender Research in Psychology*, Springer, New York, NY, pp. 443-468.

Kark, R., Waismel-Manor, R. and Shamir, B. (2012), "Does valuing androgyny and femininity lead to a female advantage? The relationship between gender-role, transformational leadership and identification", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 620-640.

Killeen, L.A., López-Zafra, E. and Eagly, A.H. (2006), "Envisioning oneself as a leader: comparisons of women and men in Spain and the United States", *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Vol. 30 No. 3, pp. 312-322.

Koenig, A.M., Eagly, A.H., Mitchell, A.A. and Ristikari, T. (2011), "Are leader stereotypes masculine? A meta-analysis of three research paradigms", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 137 No. 4, pp. 616-642.

Koys, D.J. and DeCotiis, T.A. (1991), "Inductive measures of psychological climate", *Human Relations*, Vol. 44 No. 3, pp. 265-285.

Kreiner, G.E., Hollensbe, E.C. and Sheep, M.L. (2006), "Where is the 'me' among the 'we'? Identity work and the search for optimal balance", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 49 No. 5, pp. 1031-1057.

Lee, E.S., Park, T.Y. and Koo, B. (2015), "Identifying organizational identification as a basis for attitudes and behaviors: a meta-analytic review", *American Psychological Association*, Vol. 141 No. 5, pp. 1049-1080.

Lips, H.M. (2000), "College students' visions of power and possibility as moderated by gender", *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 39-43.

Lips, H.M. (2001), "Envisioning positions of leadership: the expectations of university students in Virginia and Puerto Rico", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 57 No. 4, pp. 799-813.

Litzky, B. and Greenhaus, J. (2007), "The relationship between gender and aspirations to senior management", *Career Development International*, Vol. 12 No. 7, pp. 637-659.

Locke, K.D., Craig, T., Baik, K.D. and Gohil, K. (2012), "Binds and bounds of communion: effects of interpersonal values on assumed similarity of self and others", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 103 No. 5, pp. 879-897.

London, M. (1993), "Relationships between career motivation, empowerment and support for career development", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 66 No. 1, pp. 55-69.

Lyness, K.S. and Heilman, M.E. (2006), "When fit is fundamental: performance evaluations and promotions of upper-level female and male managers", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 91 No. 4, pp. 777-785.

Mael, F.A. and Ashforth, B.E. (1992), "Alumni and their alma mater: a partial test of the reformulated model of organizational identification", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 103-123.

Mael, F.A. and Ashforth, B.E. (1995), "Loyal from day one: biodata, organizational identification, and turnover among newcomers", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 48 No. 2, pp. 309-333.

Morrison, A.M., White, R.P. and Velsor, E.V. (1987), *Breaking the Glass Ceiling*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA.

Noe, R.A., Noe, A.W. and Bachhuber, J.A. (1990), "An investigation of the correlates of career motivation", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 37 No. 3, pp. 340-356.

Okimoto, T.G. and Heilman, M.E. (2012), "The 'bad parent' assumption: how gender stereotypes affect reactions to working mothers", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 68 No. 4, pp. 704-724.

Paustian-Underdahl, S.C., Walker, L.S. and Woehr, D.J. (2014), "Gender and perceptions of leadership effectiveness: a meta-analysis of contextual moderators", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 99 No. 6, pp. 129-1145.

Pas, B.R., Lagro-Janssen, A.L., Doorewaard, J.A., Eisinga, R.N. and Peters, C.P. (2008), "Gender differences in career motivation: female doctors' ambitions benefit from family friendly work environment", *Nederlands tijdschrift voor geneeskunde*, Vol. 152 No. 40, pp. 2172-2176.

Pas, B.R., Peters, P., Doorewaard, H., Eisinga, R. and Lagro-Janssen, T. (2014), "Supporting 'superwomen'? Conflicting role prescriptions, gender-equality arrangements and career motivation among Dutch women physicians", *Human Relations*, Vol. 67 No. 2, pp. 175-204.

Porter, L.W. and McLaughlin, G.B. (2006), "Leadership and the organizational context: like the weather?", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 17 No. 6, pp. 559-576.

Riketta, M. (2005), "Organizational identification: a meta-analysis", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 66 No. 2, pp. 358-384.

Rudman, L.A. and Glick, P. (2001), "Prescriptive gender stereotypes and backlash toward agentic women", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 57 No. 4, pp. 743-762.

Rudman, L.A. and Phelan, J.E. (2010), "The effect of priming gender roles on women's implicit gender beliefs and career aspirations", *Social Psychology*, Vol. 41 No. 3, pp. 192-202.

Savery, L.K. (1990), "Men and women in the workplace: evidence of occupational differences", *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 11 No. 2, pp. 13-16.

Schoon, I. and Polek, E. (2011), "Teenage career aspirations and adult career attainment: the role of gender, social background and general cognitive ability", *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, Vol. 35 No. 3, pp. 210-217.

Schoon, I., Martin, P. and Ross, A. (2007), "Career transitions in times of social change, His and her story", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 70 No. 1, pp. 78-96.

Singer, M. (1991), "The relationship between employee sex, length of service and leadership aspirations: a study from valence, self-efficacy and attribution perspectives", *Applied Psychology*, Vol. 40 No. 4, pp. 417-436.

Tajfel, H. (1970), "Experiments in intergroup discrimination", *Scientific American*, Vol. 223 No. 5, pp. 96-102.

Tavares, S.M., van Knippenberg, D. and van Dick, R. (2015), "Organizational identification and 'currencies of exchange': integrating social identity and social exchange perspectives", *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 46 No. 1, pp. 34-45.

Tepper, K. (1998), "Gender differences in the performance of individuating acts", *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 5 No. 2, pp. 165-190.

Tett, R.P. and Burnett, D.D. (2003), "A personality trait-based interactionist model of job performance", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 88 No. 3, pp. 500-517.

Tett, R.P. and Guterman, H.A. (2000), "Situation trait relevance, trait expression, and cross-situational consistency: testing a principle of trait activation", *Journal of Research in Personality*, Vol. 34 No. 4, pp. 397-423.

Tett, R.P., Simonet, D.V., Walser, B. and Brown, C. (2013), "Trait activation theory", in Christiansen, N.D. and Tett, R.P. (Eds), *Handbook of Personality at Work*, Taylor and Francis, New York, NY, pp. 71-100.

Tharenou, P. (2001), "Going up? Do traits and informal social processes predict advancing in management?", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 44 No. 5, pp. 1005-1017.

Tharenou, P. and Terry, D.J. (1998), "Reliability and validity of scores on scales to measure managerial aspirations", *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, Vol. 58 No. 3, pp. 475-492.

Tharenou, P., Latimer, S. and Conroy, D. (1994), "How do you make it to the top? An examination of influences on women's and men's managerial advancement", *Academy of Management journal*, Vol. 37 No. 4, pp. 899-931.

Trapnell, P.D. and Paulhus, D.L. (2012), "Agentic and communal values: their scope and measurement", *Journal of Personality Assessment*, Vol. 94 No. 1, pp. 39-52.

UK Office for National Statistics (2016), "Internet users in the UK: 2016", available at: www,ons,gov,uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/2016 (accessed November 17, 2016).

van Dick, R., Grojean, M.W., Christ, O. and Wieseke, J. (2006), "Identity and the extra mile: relationships between organizational identification and organizational citizenship behavior", *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 283-301.

van Dick, R., van Knippenberg, D., Kerschreiter, R., Hertel, G. and Wieseke, J. (2008), "Interactive effects of work group and organizational identification on job satisfaction and extra-role behavior", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 72 No. 3, pp. 388-399.

van Dick, R., Christ, O., Stellmacher, J., Wagner, U., Ahlswede, O., Grubba, C. and Tissington, P.A. (2004), "Should I stay or should I go? Explaining turnover intentions with organizational identification and job satisfaction", *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 351-360.

van Knippenberg, D. (2000), "Work motivation and performance: a social identity perspective", *Applied Psychology*, Vol. 49 No. 3, pp. 357-371.

van Knippenberg, D. and van Schie, E.C.M. (2000), "Foci and correlates of organizational identification", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational psychology*, Vol. 73 No. 2, pp. 137-147.

van Knippenberg, D., van Knippenberg, B., De Cremer, D. and Hogg, M.A. (2004), "Leadership, self, and identity: a review and research agenda", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 15 No. 6, pp. 825-856.

van Leeuwen, E., van Knippenberg, D. and Ellemers, N. (2003), "Continuing and changing group identities: the effects of merging on social identification and ingroup bias", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 29 No. 6, pp. 679-690.

van Vianen, A.E.M. and Keizer, W.A. (1996), "Gender differences in managerial intention", *Gender, Work and Organization*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 103-114.

Vial, A.C., Napier, J.L. and Brescoll, V.L. (2016), "A bed of thorns: female leaders and the self-reinforcing cycle of illegitimacy", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 27 No. 3, pp. 400-414.

Vinkenburg, C.J., van Engen, M.L., Coffeng, J. and Dikkers, J.S. (2012), "Bias in employment decisions about mothers and fathers: the (dis) advantages of sharing care responsibilities", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 68 No. 4, pp. 725-741.

Wegge, J., van Dick, R., Fisher, G.K., Wecking, C. and Moltzen, K. (2006), "Work motivation, organisational identification, and well-being in call centre work", *Work and Stress*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 60-83.

Wiggins, J.S. (1991), "Agency and communion as conceptual coordinates for the understanding and measurement of interpersonal behavior", in William, M.G. and Cichetti, D. (Eds), *Thinking Clearly About Psychology*, Univeristy of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, pp. 89-113.

Wojciszke, B., Baryla, W., Parzuchowski, M., Szymkow, A. and Abele, A.E. (2011), "Self-esteem is dominated by agentic over communal information", *European Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 41 No. 5, pp. 617-627.

Further reading

Hackett, G. and Betz, N.E. (1981), "A self-efficacy approach to the career development of women", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 326-339.

Hall, D.T., Kossek, E.E., Briscoe, J.P., Pichler, S. and Lee, M.D. (2013), "Nonwork orientations relative to career: a multidimensional measure", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 83 No. 3, pp. 539-550.

Rho, E. (2012), "The effects of organizational image and identification on absenteeism and extra-role behavior", *Academy of Management Proceedings*, Vol. 2012 No. 1, pp. 1-10.

Appendix

	Women Mean	SD	%	Men Mean	SD	%
Demographics						
Age	43.78	10.78		47.51	9.47	
Children			48.5			64.0
Single			33.0			23.5
relationship			24.0			26.5
Married			43.0			50.0
Experience						
Work experience	22.33	11.18		26.37	10.45	
Organizational experience	11.13	8.73		12.23	8.99	
Job experience	7.34	5.80		8.81	7.19	
Hierarchical position						
Non-supervisor			49.5			40.0
First-level management			23.5			20.5
Middle management			20.5			33.0
Upper management			3.5			4.5
Executive management			3.0			2.0
Educational background						
High-school			30.5			27.5
Apprenticeship			16.0			27.0
Bachelor			32.5			32.0
Master			21.0			13.5
Cultural background						
British			91.0			94.0
Continental European			4.0			3.0
African			2.5			0.5
American			0.0			0.0
Asian			2.5			2.5
Australian			0.0			0.0

Table AI.
Gender differences

Measurements scales

Leadership aspiration (five-point scale, 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree)
Please indicate to which extent you agree with each statement:

(1) I hope to become a leader at the current organization I work for.

(2) When I am established in my career, I would like to manage other employees at the current organization I work for – not at a different one.

(3) I do not plan on devoting energy to getting promoted in the organization I am working for (reverse).

(4) When I am established at the current organization, I would like to train others.

(5) I hope to move up through the organization I work for.

(6) Attaining leadership status in this organization is not that important to me (reverse).

(7) I would like to obtain a (higher) leadership position within the organization I work for.

(8) I would like to be in a position of greater responsibility and influence in my organization.

(9) My aspirations for advancing in management positions within this organization are very high.

(10) I have sought feedback on my job performance at the current organization I work for.

(11) I have discussed my career prospects with someone with more experience in this organization.

(12) I have engaged in career path planning to determine my career path within this organization.

(13) I have updated my skills in order to be more competitive for promotion within this organization.

(14) I have discussed my aspirations with a senior person in the organization.

(15) While working for the current organization, I have volunteered for activities other than my day-to-day work tasks, such as working parties and selection panels.

(16) I have volunteered for important assignments with the intent of helping to further my advancement possibilities within this particular organization.

(17) I have requested to be considered for promotions at the current organization I work for.

Communal orientation (five-point scale, 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree)
How well does each of the following traits generally describes you?

(1) Affectionate

(2) Caring

(3) Compassionate

(4) Faithful

(5) Honest

(6) Kind

(7) Patient

(8) Sensitive

(9) Trusting

(10) Understanding

Organizational identification (five-point scale, 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree)
Please answer the following statements:

(1) When someone criticizes my organization, it feels like a personal insult.

(2) I am very interested in what others think about my organization.

(3) When I talk about this organization, I usually say "we" rather than "they".

(4) This organization's successes are my successes.

(5) When someone praises this organization, it feels like a personal compliment.

(6) If a story in the media criticized the organization, I would feel embarrassed.

Female environment (five-point scale, see below)
Please answer the following statement:

(1) How long have you worked closely with a women manager?

(1 = not worked with a women manager; 2 = less than 12 months; 3 = 1 up to 2 years; 4 = 2 up to 4 years; 5 = 4 or more years)

Notes: Leadership aspiration scale adapted from Gray and O'Brien (2007); Tharenou and Terry (1998); Day and Allen (2004) – being itself adapted from London (1993) and Noe *et al.* (1990). Communal orientation developed by Gebauer *et al.* (2013). Organizational identification adapted from Mael and Ashforth (1992). Female environment scale adapted from Tharenou *et al.* (1994).

About the authors

Claudia Fritz (née Erlemann) focused in her PhD dissertation, being supervised by Professor Dr Daan van Knippenberg, on gender differences in leadership aspiration. Claudia is particularly interested in understanding how the organizational environment can positively impact leadership aspiration among women. Claudia Fritz is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: erlemann@rsm.nl

Daan van Knippenberg is the Rocereto Chair of Leadership at LeBow College of Business, Drexel University. His main research interests are in leadership, diversity, teams, and creativity. Daan is an Editor in Chief of *Academy of Management Annals*, and was the Founding Editor of *Organizational Psychology Review*, and an Associate Editor of *Academy of Management Journal*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, and *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. Daan is a Fellow of the Academy of Management, of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, and of the American Psychological Association.