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# Understanding the mobility of public leaders: switching between sectors and governmental levels

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## ABSTRACT

Despite growing attention to public leader recruitment, mobility patterns remain understudied. To address this gap, we analyse motives for three distinct forms of public leader mobility: *within-level* (same government tier), *between-level* (across central and local tiers), and *between-sector* (from private to public sector). Utilizing unique survey and register data, we find that proximity between past and current roles is a valuable lens for understanding mobility motives. Career ambition is more important for high-proximity transitions, while low job satisfaction fuels low-proximity transitions. The desire to serve citizens is an important driver of transitions from the private to the public sector.

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**KEYWORDS** Leadership mobility; motivation; within-level switching; between-sector switching; between-level switching

## Introduction

Long-term employment within a single organization has become increasingly uncommon. Thus, all organizations – public, private, and non-profit – face a fundamental challenge: retention and recruitment. While much literature investigate the potential costs and benefits of turnover and mobility (Grissom 2012; Kellough and Osuna 1995; Lambert and Hogan 2009; Lambert, Hogan, and Barton 2001; D. S. Lee et al. 2015; Wynen, Op de Beeck, and Hondeghem 2013), as well as mobility intentions (Hur and Abner 2024), fewer studies have focused on analysing real-life mobility patterns and the motivation underlying such patterns. As argued by Grissom, Viano, and Selin: ‘Public administration would benefit from increased attention to employee mobility among public agencies or organizations. [...] Hampered by data scarcity, however, our knowledge of employee mobility within the public sector and its motivations is limited’ (2016, 247). A similar argument could be made for leader mobility. The current labour shortage further emphasizes the need for a comprehensive understanding of mobility

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patterns and motivations spanning different sectors and organizational levels. This holds particularly for public organizations, which grapple with the challenge of recruiting competent leaders (Cregård, Corin, and Skagert 2017).

In this article, we thus investigate what the patterns and motivations of leaders' job mobility are. We map leaders' mobility patterns and analyse how and to what extent leaders' motives for *within-level* (transition within the same government tier), *between-level* (transition between central and local government tiers), and *between-sector* (transition across public, private, or non-profit sectors) mobility differ. Unlike studies that primarily analyse differences regarding the intention to leave a job, our focus is on differences in motives between leaders who actually left and who made different choices about where to go. Switching to a leadership position in another sector or at a different level can be a means for leaders to pursue various ambitions, such as enhancing their career prospects, job security, working conditions, salary levels, or public service motivation (PSM), as well as other objectives, as different transitions can offer diverse opportunities (Bozeman and Ponomariov 2009; Su and Bozeman 2009). Specifically, we investigate the factors influencing why some leaders opt for a new position in a different sector or level of government, while others choose a new role within their current level of government.

Empirically, we investigate mobility patterns among Danish public leaders using a combination of register and survey data. We utilize the latest available register data spanning a 10-year period (2010–2019) to provide a comprehensive overview of mobility trends among Danish public leaders. Subsequently, we delve into the motives behind *within-level* transitions (high proximity), *between-level* (medium proximity), and *between-sector* transitions (low proximity) using survey data. Utilizing the register data, we identify leaders who have undergone job transitions within the last five years and then survey 1,721 public leaders who switched jobs within or into the public sector to understand their motives for the job transition. Denmark provide a good setting for studying such motives since public sector recruitment is merit-based, with mobility occurring voluntarily rather than being dictated by formal rules or policies.

This research contributes with three valuable insights. First, with few exceptions, existing studies predominantly explore mobility among public employees (Ali 2018; E. K. Lee and Kim 2020; Selden and Moynihan 2000), including mobility between sectors (Boardman, Bozeman, and Ponomariov 2010; Frederiksen and Hansen 2017) and the underlying motives (Hansen 2014). In contrast, research on *leader* mobility comprising mobility across sectors, and especially across levels, is rare (for exceptions, see Cregård, Corin, and Skagert 2017; Moynihan and Landuyt 2008; Su and Bozeman 2009). This study is a pioneer in mapping and comparing leaders' mobility within and between levels and sectors, revealing the extent of these different types of transitions and, most importantly, also offering insights into the distinct factors influencing these different types of transitions.

Second, while scholars have examined sector switching among employees across the public, private, and non-profit sectors (e.g. Bozeman and Ponomariov 2009; Frederiksen and Hansen 2014; Hansen 2014; Su and Bozeman 2009), and across different levels of government (Piatak 2017) our study focuses on comparing leader mobility within the same level of government, between different levels of government, and across sectors. Building on more nuanced approaches to understanding turnover that includes future job preferences (Ali 2018; Ertas 2015; Kim and Fernandez 2015; Wynen, Op de Beeck, and Hondeghem 2013), we propose *proximity* as a crucial factor

for understanding the drivers of public leader mobility. Analysing job transitions within the same government tier (high proximity), job transitions across government tiers (medium proximity), and job transitions across sectors (low proximity), we find that job transitions characterized by high proximity are more motivated by better career opportunities than job transitions characterized by low proximity. In contrast, job transitions characterized by low and medium proximity are more driven by discontent (low job satisfaction). Leaders transitioning due to disillusion seem to more often look for a new organizational context (which could potentially offer a better fit), rather than looking for a new job within the same government level.

Similar to previous studies (Ali 2018; Grissom, Viano, and Selin 2016), we find differences between leaders transitioning into the public sector (*between-sector* mobility) compared to leaders moving within the public sector (*within-level* and *between-level* mobility). Leaders moving into the public sector from the private sector are more driven by values associated with the public sector, such as better opportunities to help citizens, compared to leaders moving within the public sector. However, the increased job security offered by the public sector also plays a significant role in these transitions.

Third, this research stands out by examining leaders' actual job switches, rather than relying on turnover intentions as a proxy (Barak, Nissly, and Levin 2001; Cregård, Corin, and Skagert 2017; Ertas 2015). Previous studies often utilize turnover intentions, but their connection with actual turnover remains uncertain, showing inconsistent correlations (AbouAssi, McGinnis Johnson, and Holt 2019; Jung 2010). By investigating the motives of leaders who have recently changed jobs, this study directly links their considerations to their real job transitions, providing a more authentic understanding of leader mobility motives.

## Theory

The essence of leadership lies in the ability to influence others to comprehend and agree on the necessary actions and methods for accomplishing tasks, as well as facilitating both individual and collective efforts to achieve shared objectives (Yukl 2013). As a result, leader mobility can significantly impact organizations (Connolly 2018).

Most former studies of mobility have investigated sector switching across the public, private, and non-profit sectors (Bozeman and Ponomariov 2009; Frederiksen and Hansen 2014; Hansen 2014; Piatak 2017), while leader mobility, particularly the distinctions between *within-level*, *between-level*, and *between-sector* mobility, remains relatively unexplored. To provide a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon, we therefore draw on several theoretical perspectives. We integrate research on inter-organizational mobility (Wynen, Op de Beeck, and Hondegheem 2013), including sector switching (Hansen 2014; Su and Bozeman 2009) and sector differences, as well as turnover literature (Ali 2018) and career ambition (Teodoro 2011). Additionally, we incorporate insights from the proximity literature (Knoben and Oerlemans 2006). We argue that institutional proximity and sector differences are key factors in understanding leader mobility patterns.

## Mobility between sectors and between levels

Most existing literature on turnover treats job transition as a binary choice between staying or leaving (Ali 2018). A few studies take a more nuanced approach and

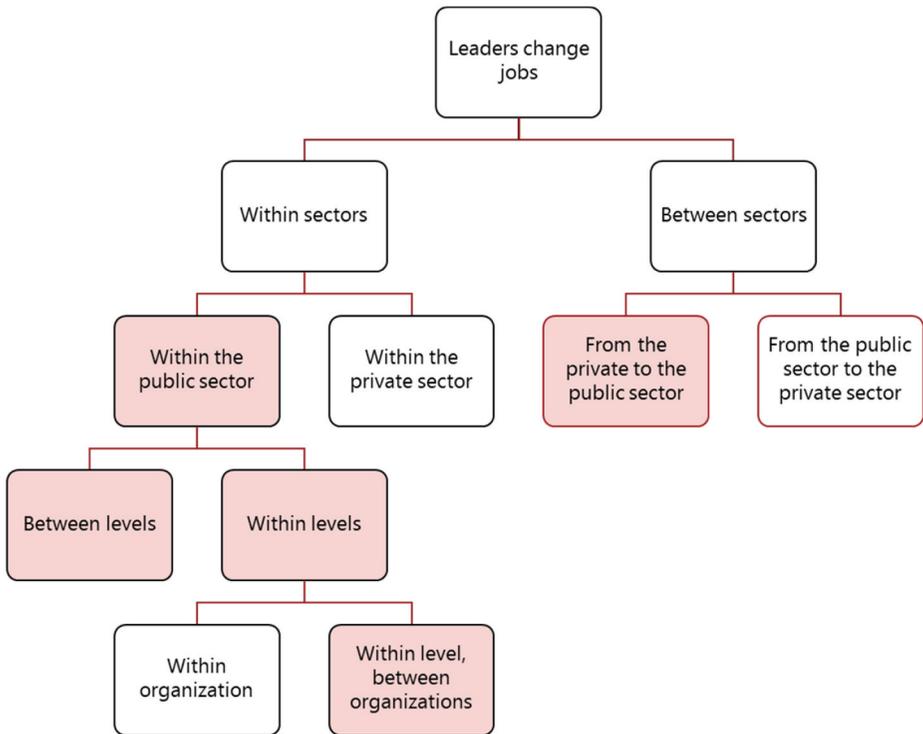
argue that motives for job transitions may vary across different types of mobility (Ali 2018; Ertas 2015; Kim and Fernandez 2015; Wynen, Op de Beeck, and Hondegheem 2013), including sector switching. Typically, these studies focus on sector mobility or attrition – moving in and out of public employment. For instance, Hansen (2014) studied the motivations of public sector employees switching to the private sector, while Piatak (2017) studied differences in sector switching between employees from different economic situations. Others have studied sector switching among different groups of employees, for example millennials (AbouAssi, McGinnis Johnson, and Holt 2019), higher educated employees (Hansen 2014), and managers and professionals (Su and Bozeman 2009), while Bozeman and Ponomariov (2009) studied the career implications of sector switching for employees.

These studies provide a much needed focus on the joint decision-making of job transitions – the decision to leave and the decision of where to take up a new position (Wynen, Op de Beeck, and Hondegheem 2013) – showing that motives for job transitions vary depending on whether employees are leaving or staying in public employment (Ali 2018; Grissom, Viano, and Selin 2016). While these studies provide important insight into employee turnover intentions and mobility between the public, private, and non-profit sector, knowledge of leader mobility is equally important. Existing findings on employee mobility need not apply to the mobility of leaders. Furthermore, we argue that the decision of where to take up a new position is more nuanced than a simple choice between staying or leaving public employment.

Leaders within the public sector can, when they change jobs, decide to take a job in an organization at the same level of government as their previous job (*within-level* mobility) or take a job in an organization at another tier of government (*between-level* mobility), which can be from local government to central government and vice versa (see Figure 1 and Table 1 for an overview). They can also choose to leave public employment entirely and seek a job in the private or non-profit sector, and leaders from the private or non-profit sector can switch to a job in the public sector (*between-sector* mobility).

This article aims to improve our knowledge of mobility of *public* leaders. Therefore, we study mobility patterns for leaders within the public sector or those transitioning from the private into the public sector and not the motivations of leaders leaving the public sector. Analysing transitions from the public to the private sector could be valuable, but it would require analysing leader transitions within the private sector to compare the factors driving public-to-private moves versus private-to-private ones. This was beyond the scope of the current study. We address this limitation in the discussion.

While earlier work analyzes employees' motives and explanations for sector switching (*between-sector* mobility) (Bozeman and Ponomariov 2009; Hansen 2014; Su and Bozeman 2009), to the best of our knowledge we are the first to systematically explore differences in motives for different types of leader mobility and to explore *between-level* mobility in comparison to other mobility types. Drawing on and expanding previous work, we expect that motives will differ for *within-level*, *between-level*, and *between-sector* for two key reasons: 1) the varying degrees of proximity between past and current roles and 2) the differing opportunities offered by the private and public sectors in terms of external and internal benefits, i.e. making a societal impact. We elaborate on these expectations below.



**Figure 1.** Types of job switching. Note: Shaded areas represent types of mobility analysed in this article's empirical section.

**Table 1.** Overview of types of mobility.

High Proximity	Medium Proximity	Low Proximity
<i>Within-level mobility</i>	<i>Between-level mobility</i>	<i>Between-sector mobility</i>

### ***Different motivations of high and low proximity job transitions***

Proximity is highlighted as an important factor for inter-organizational collaboration and innovation (Balland, Boschma, and Frenken 2015; van Thiel and Yesilkagit 2011). Proximity, particularly institutional proximity (Knoben and Oerlemans 2006), may be equally relevant for understanding mobility motives. Institutional proximity suggests greater alignment between past and current roles in terms of organizational frameworks, work tasks, and codes of conduct. This alignment is most evident when leaders transition within the same tier of government, which we categorize as high-proximity transitions. In contrast, medium- and low-proximity transitions – such as moves across different levels of government or between sectors – involve greater risks and more substantial changes in organizational structures, tasks, and norms. Between-sector transitions, in particular, introduce the added complexity of adapting to a new sector context, making these moves more uncertain and challenging.

While career ambition is universally recognized as an important motivator for mobility (Lambert, Hogan, and Barton 2001; E. K. Lee and Kim 2020; Selden and Moynihan 2000). Such ambition may be a more important driver of transitions characterized by higher proximity than by lower proximity. Drawing on Teodoro's (2011) work, we define career ambition narrowly as a '*desire for career advancement to higher-status positions*' (72). Career ambition thus centres on achieving advancement and power.

Career ambitions can be realized through traditional vertical career paths or more complex 'ramp' careers involving both vertical and diagonal shifts (Teodoro 2011). However, high-proximity transitions – such as *between-level* mobility – are more likely to be driven by career ambition, as the path to advancement is clearer and less risky within familiar structures. Leaders transitioning within the same tier or level have greater expertise and familiarity with organizational structures, tasks, and norms, making it easier to evaluate career progression opportunities.

In contrast, transitions with low proximity, such as those between sectors or across government levels, involve a higher degree of uncertainty regarding career advancement. Leaders are less familiar with the organizational dynamics of new environments, and the potential for upward mobility may be harder to assess. Furthermore, loss aversion may contribute to this dynamic (Teodoro 2009). As low-proximity transitions are riskier endeavours, leaders may be more hesitant to take on the added risks of transitioning across government levels or sectors. The potential career benefits of moving to a different level of government or sector can be less clear and may not outweigh the added risks of unfamiliarity, making high-proximity transitions a safer and more attractive option for those motivated by career ambition.

The shift to a different sector or level of government demands a more potent motivator than simple career advancement. Thus, leaders choosing low-proximity transitions are more likely to be driven by discontent rather than purely by career ambition. Discontent, as a motivating factor, signals a desire for significant change rather than the gradual adjustments typically associated with high-proximity transitions. This kind of motivation is likely necessary to confront the higher risks involved in low-proximity transitions, which require adapting to new organizational structures, tasks, and codes of conduct. Leaders considering such moves may feel a sense of unfulfilment or perceive a disconnect between their skills and their current role. As a result, leaders pursuing low-proximity transitions are likely more motivated by dissatisfaction with their current role than leaders pursuing high-proximity transitions.

### ***Different motivations of transitions within and between sectors***

*Between-sector* mobility involves transitions across sectors, while both *within-level* and *between-level* transitions occur within the public sector. Differences in external factors of the job, including job security, working conditions, and pay, are likely to play a smaller role for transitions within the public sector, as variations in these factors between public sector jobs are minor. However, when leaders transition between the private and public sectors, sector-specific considerations become much more significant.

We differentiate between external and internal benefits of a public job. Previous research has shown substantial differences in external benefits offered

by different sectors (Rainey 2009). In the private sector, compensation generally favours higher salaries but comes with reduced job security, as Rainey (2009) notes. These sharp contrasts make sector-specific benefits critical for individuals moving between sectors. For instance, transitions from the public to the private sector are often linked to higher salaries, while job security tends to retain employees in the public sector (Hansen 2014). In Denmark, similar differences in external benefits, such as wages, job security, and working conditions, exist between the public and private sectors. Transitions from the private to the public sector are therefore likely to be driven more by the desire for greater job security and less by salary considerations.

In addition to external benefits, there are also internal benefits or ‘hidden rewards’ related to public employment. Research has shown that PSM – the desire to do good for others and society – is a key motivational factor influencing job choices (Buelens and Van den Broeck 2007; Georgellis, Iossa, and Tabvuma 2011). For example, Y. Lee and Wilkins (2011) found that leaders motivated by a desire to do good are more likely to accept positions in the public sector rather than the non-profit sector, while Hansen (2014) demonstrated that PSM influences employees’ decisions to switch sectors. This desire to create a positive societal impact is also likely a significant motivator for leaders transitioning from the private to the public sector.

In sum, the framework suggests that career ambition is a stronger driver of high-proximity transitions (within the same level of government), while low-proximity transitions are more likely motivated by dissatisfaction. Given the greater differences in both external and internal benefits between sectors than between government levels, we expect sector-specific factors to play a larger role in *between-sector* mobility. Leaders making such transitions likely carefully consider factors like job security, working conditions, and the opportunity to make a societal impact.

## Design and methods

The empirical analysis combines register and survey data of public leaders in Denmark. Denmark is ideal for mobility analysis due to high labour mobility (Bredgaard and Madsen 2018), a small geography easing level transitions, low unemployment fostering sector mobility, and a merit-based civil service minimizing political hiring influence (Christensen 2006). Denmark thus constitutes a most likely case for sector mobility (Flyvbjerg 2006).

### Register data

We utilized register data to present an overview of mobility trends for all leaders within the public sector in Denmark from 2010 to 2019. We focus exclusively on leaders with formal leadership roles, meaning positions that are officially defined as leadership roles in the Danish registers with personnel responsibility including tasks like hiring, firing, performance reviews, and general staff supervision. Given our focus on formal leaders, the findings of this study may not be applicable to informal leaders.

The registers build on the ISCO-08 classification of jobs (International Labour Office 2012; Statistics Denmark 2024)<sup>1</sup> and our sample consists of public leaders in group 1 (management). This group includes positions such as director generals, department heads, and office managers in central government as well as CEOs of

municipalities, department heads, and leaders in hospitals, school, day cares, nursing homes and within sanitation. Our study consist of 21,711 public leaders representing all aspects of the public sector, namely, education, healthcare, elder care, day care, special needs, administration, government ministries and departments, and universities. We tracked the employment history (2010–2019) of the population of public leaders, allowing us to estimate the approximate size of *within-level*, *between-level*, and *between-sector* mobility.

While it's possible that our register data might not encompass all Danish public leaders and all job transitions due to registration errors, it provides a general overview of *within-level*, *between-level*, and *between-sector* mobility. It is important to emphasize that our analytical focus was exclusively on transitions between leadership positions. Individuals who changed jobs but did not move into or out of a leadership role are not part of our study. Such transitioning may have entirely different motivations, which lie beyond the scope of this research. We also leave out intraorganizational transitions<sup>2</sup> (transitions within one's own organization), as these could be the result of organizational changes and/or more automatic internal promotion. We focus on job transitions, where leaders have actually deliberated on motives and applied for a new job.

### Survey data

In March 2022, we surveyed public leaders who recently changed jobs. The survey was funded by the Danish Agency for Employees and Skills, and sent out by Statistics Denmark. Statistics Denmark identified a population 7,773 leaders (ISCO-08 group 1) who switched to a new leader job in the public sector during the period 2017–2021 (within the last five years). Leaders who switched from the public to the private sector were not surveyed.

Out of the 7,773 leaders, 1,721 leaders (22%) either switched levels within the public sector or from the private to the public sector. Given the lower number of leaders making *between-level* and *between-sector* switches, all leaders that made *between-level* and *between-sector* transitions were invited to participate in the survey, while 1,931 (32%) of the leaders making *within-level* transitions were invited to participate. The response rates after deducting incomplete responses and responses from individuals not in the target group (such as individual who were no longer employed as leaders) were 21% for *within-* and *between-sector* transitions and 28% for *within-level* transitions, resulting in survey answers from 900 leaders (Table A1 in the Appendix gives an overview of the types of leaders). Tests of representativeness (see Table A2 in the Appendix) indicate that leaders in our sample have higher wages, are younger, and are more frequently from local government positions. Although these differences are minor, our findings may not be fully representative of the entire population of leaders who change jobs.

The survey data allows us to link the leaders' motives directly to their job switch, which tends to yield more valid answers (Jung 2010). In the analyses, *within-level*, *between-level*, and *between-sector* switchers are compared in order to capture differences in motives for the three groups. Switchers are defined by their self-reported latest leader job change within the period 2017–2021. The five-year timeframe allows us to capture a larger number of job switchers, while the relatively recent period increases the likelihood that leaders accurately recall their reasons for changing jobs. However, recall bias remains a potential concern, which we address in the discussion.

**Table 2.** Overview of factors.

Theme	Factors
Career ambitions	Better career opportunities More political influence
Discontent	Low job satisfaction in old job
External benefits	More job security Higher salary Better working conditions
Internal benefits	Better opportunities to help citizens
Other (used as controls)	Shorter commute Better physical and/or psychological working environment Wanting a change Better opportunities for professional development Cooperation problems at old job Loss of job due to firing or not getting contract renewed Need for better work-life balance

### **Variables and analytical model**

In the survey, the leaders were asked to rate the importance of 14 motivational factors for their recent job change on a 5-point Likert scale (see Table 2). Drawing on Teodoro's definition of career ambition as a '*desire for career advancement to higher-status positions*' (72), we capture career ambition using the following two factors: 'Better career opportunities' and 'More political influence'. These factors may not encapsulate the entirety of leaders' career ambitions, but they are central for our definition of career ambition and are also substantiated by previous research as important for turnover (Hur and Abner 2024; Selden and Moynihan 2000). We anticipate these factors to hold even greater significance in the context of high proximity job transitions within the same tier of government (*within-level* mobility) than the other two types of mobility.

While discontent can manifest in various ways, we measure it through one key indicator: job satisfaction in the previous role – where low satisfaction indicates discontent. Since (March and Simon 1958) influential turnover model, which highlights the role of job satisfaction, job satisfaction has been recognized as a key indicator of discontent or motivation for transition and as a driver of job transitions. The complex link between job satisfaction and turnover has been well documented in the literature (e.g. Griffeth, Hom, and Gaertner 2000; Hur and Abner 2024). While existing research suggests that job satisfaction serves as a deterrent to turnover intentions (Cho and Lewis 2012; G. Lee and Jimenez 2011; Moynihan and Landuyt 2008), we expect that low job satisfaction plays a more critical role in driving low-proximity transitions, such as *between-level* and *between-sector* moves. These transitions involve greater risks and require stronger motivators, making discontent, reflected in low job satisfaction, a key factor in such mobility decisions.

To capture differences in external benefits between the public and private sector, we focus on the factors 'Higher job security', 'Higher salary', and 'Better working conditions', and to capture differences in internal benefits we measure the factor 'Better opportunities to help citizens'. While these factors likely influence mobility in general, we expect they stronger impact *between-sector* mobility. Transitions within the public sector are characterized by smaller changes in these organizational factors, making them more pivotal in the context of shifts between different sectors.

**Table 3.** Means of variables.

Variable	Mean			
	Type of mobility			
	<i>Within-level</i>	<i>Within-sector</i>	<i>Between-sector</i>	Total
<i>Career ambitions</i>				
Better career opportunities	3.18	2.95	2.59	3.01
More political influence	2.30	2.40	2.25	2.31
<i>Discontent</i>				
Low job satisfaction in old job	2.42	2.76	2.77	2.56
<i>External benefits</i>				
More job security	1.59	1.58	2.07	1.69
Higher salary	2.36	2.32	1.99	2.27
Better working conditions	2.34	2.35	2.52	2.38
<i>Internal benefits</i>				
Better opportunities for professional development	3.43	3.33	3.21	3.36
<i>Other motives (used as controls)</i>				
Loss of job due to firing or not getting contract renewed	1.82	1.90	2.35	1.95
Cooperation problems at old job	1.74	1.92	2.02	1.84
Need for better work-life balance	2.18	2.31	2.42	2.25
Wanting a change	3.79	3.71	3.66	3.75
Shorter commute	1.63	1.69	1.79	1.68
Better opportunities to help citizens	2.65	2.83	2.82	2.72
Better physical and/or psychological working environment	2.42	2.56	2.57	2.48
<i>Controls</i>				
Female	0.59	0.54	0.44	0.55
Age	51.57	52.66	52.18	51.91
Parent	0.58	0.61	0.59	0.59
Works in central government	0.25	0.42	0.40	0.31
Monthly salary (in DKK millions)	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Observations	541	168	191	900

In line with Wynen, Op de Beeck, and Hondeghem (2013), who argue that leaders change jobs for a myriad of different reasons, we also capture the importance of seven other factors: ‘Shorter commute’, ‘Better physical and/or psychological working environment’, ‘Wanting a change’, ‘Better opportunities for professional development’, ‘Loss of job due to firing or not getting contract renewed’, ‘Cooperation problems at old job’, and ‘Need for better work-life balance’. We include these as controls in our models as well as control for individual demographic factors. All motivational factors are presented in Table 2.

We use linear probability models to compare the significance of our motivational factors across the three types of mobility. Additionally, all models were run using logistic regression, yielding very similar results (see Table A4 in the Appendix). We first analyse differences for *between-level* mobility versus *within-level* mobility in model 1, while we compare *between-sector* mobility versus *within-level* mobility in model 2 and *between-level* mobility vs. *between-sector* mobility in model 3. The models include controls for gender, age, and being a parent of one or more children under 18. Means of all variables are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that the means of commuting and job security are lower compared to other factors. This may be attributed to Denmark’s small geographic size and its comprehensive unemployment security system, which may reduce the influence of these factors in the Danish context. However, as the analysis reveals, this does not

necessarily mean that these factors are unimportant for leader mobility across levels and sectors.

## Results

Table 4 presents the results from the register analysis of the analyses of the 21,711 public leaders registered as employed at either the central or local government levels in 2019. The first column shows that around 38% of leaders employed at the central level in 2019 had at least one other leadership position during the period 2010–2019. Mobility is higher among public leaders employed at the local government level, where 47% had at least one other leadership position during the period 2010–2019.

The large majority of public leaders change jobs within their existing tier of government. Thus, *within-level* mobility makes up the lion's share of the total mobility. A total of 31% of leaders in central government have previously held another leadership position within central government, and 43% of leaders in local government previously held another position in local government. These percentages for *within-level* mobility significantly surpass those for *between-sector* and *between-level* mobility.

Table 4 further shows that *between-sector* mobility is around twice the size of *between-level* mobility. About 10% of leaders in central government in 2019 had a leadership position within the private sector within the past 10 years. For leaders at the local government level, *between-level* and *between-sector* mobility are noticeably smaller than for leaders at the central level. *Between-sector* mobility (6%), however, remains more than twice as large as *between-level* mobility (2.5%).

The results suggest that sector transition from the private to the public sector is more commonplace than level transition within the public sector. As the private sector is more than twice the size of the public sector in Denmark, opportunities for recruiting leaders from the private sector are plentiful. Differences in the size of mobility could therefore potentially be a result of the size of the job market. Disparities in mobility levels, however, cannot be solely attributed to the sector size, as evidenced by Table 4, which reveals significant *within-level* job mobility within the smaller public sector job market. Between 30% and 40% of the investigated leaders changed jobs within their level of government at least once from 2010 to 2019. Consequently, the

**Table 4.** Leader job changes 2010–2019.

Job mobility in the time period 2010–2019 for public leaders	Employed as leader in:	
	Central government	Local government
<b>Overall mobility.</b> Percentage of public leaders who switched jobs at least once in the investigated time period.	37.6%	46.9%
<b>Within-level mobility.</b> Percentage of public leaders who switched jobs within current tier of government at least once in the investigated time period.	31.5%	43.3%
<b>Between-sector mobility.</b> Percentage of public leaders who had at least one leadership job in the private sector in the investigated time period.	9.9%	5.8%
<b>Between-level mobility.</b> Percentage of public leaders who switched jobs between-level at least once in the investigated time period.	4.4%	2.3%
N	7,524	14,187

Some leaders changed jobs multiple times between 2010–2019. The total percentages, therefore, do not equal the added percentages of within-level, between-sector, and between-level mobility.

**Table 5.** Differences in motives for the three types of mobility.

	Model 1: <i>Between-level</i> transitions (vs. <i>within-level</i> transitions)	Model 2: <i>Between-sector</i> transitions (vs. <i>within-level</i> transitions)	Model 3: <i>Between-sector</i> transitions (vs. <i>between-level</i> transitions)
<b>Career ambitions</b>			
Better career opportunities	-0.0260 (0.0172)	<b>-0.0533***</b> (0.0166)	-0.0442 (0.0278)
More political influence	0.0171 (0.0142)	0.00911 (0.0141)	-0.0239 (0.0230)
<b>Discontent</b>			
Low job satisfaction in old job	<b>0.0501***</b> (0.0176)	<b>0.0445***</b> (0.0165)	-0.00988 (0.0275)
<b>External benefits</b>			
More job security	0.00357 (0.0204)	<b>0.0894***</b> (0.0178)	<b>0.117***</b> (0.0294)
Higher salary	0.0161 (0.0167)	-0.0277* (0.0160)	<b>-0.0616**</b> (0.0291)
Better working conditions	-0.0246 (0.0192)	-0.0213 (0.0187)	0.00833 (0.0321)
<b>Internal benefits</b>			
Better opportunities to help citizens	0.0230 (0.0140)	<b>0.0285**</b> (0.0137)	-0.00407 (0.0227)
Observations	699	723	356
R-squared	0.070	0.144	0.119

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \* $p < 0.1$ . Estimates for the controls: 'Shorter commute', 'Better physical and/or psychological working environment', and 'Wanting to try my competence in a new context' are not shown. See Appendix Table A3 for these results.

size of the job market alone does not adequately explain the lower levels of *between-level* mobility compared to both *within-level* and *between-sector* mobility.

The substantial variations in the magnitude of mobility within levels, between levels, and between sectors suggest the involvement of different underlying motivations. To delve deeper into this analysis, we leveraged our survey data, with Table 5 delineating discrepancies in motives for the three types of mobility. In models 1, 2, and 3 we compare the three types of mobility. Model 1 compares the motives for *between-level* and *within-level* transitions. Model 2 compares the motives for *between-sector* and *within-level* transitions, and finally, model 3 compares motives for *between-level* and *between-sector* transitions.

Models 1 and 2 in Table 5 present the results related to differences across high-, medium-, and low-proximity transitions. These findings generally align with our expectations regarding proximity. In Model 2, we observe a clear, significant, and negative estimate for the factor 'Better career opportunities', indicating that this factor is less relevant for *between-sector* mobility compared to *within-level* mobility. This supports our expectation that career opportunities are more critical in high-proximity transitions than in low-proximity ones. Similarly, Model 1 shows a negative estimate for *between-level* mobility compared to *within-level* mobility, though it is not statistically significant. Therefore, we find no strong evidence that career ambition is more influential

in high-proximity transitions compared to medium-proximity transitions. Regarding political influence, no significant differences are found across mobility groups, suggesting that this aspect of career ambition does not play a more important role in high-proximity transitions compared to medium- and low-proximity transitions.

In line with our expectations, the results show that ‘Low job satisfaction in old job’ is a significantly more important factor for low-proximity and medium-proximity transitions than for high-proximity transitions. The estimates are significant in both models 1 and 2, indicating that low job satisfaction is a more important driver for *between-level* and *between-sector* mobility than for *within-level* transitions.

We further expected that internal and external organizational benefits would be stronger drivers of *between-sector* transitions compared to transitions within the public sector (both *between-level* and *within-level* moves). Results in models 2 and 3 partly confirm this. Models 2 and 3 show, that job security plays a significantly larger role in *between-sector* mobility compared to transitions within the public sector, with significant estimates.

As anticipated, we find significant negative results related to salary. Since leaders moving to the private sector often face wage reductions or fewer opportunities for salary growth, salary is significantly less important for *between-sector* transitions than for *between-level* mobility (model 3). While model 2 also shows a negative estimate, it is not significant at the conventional 0.05 level. We find no significant estimates for ‘Better working conditions’.

Regarding internal benefits, we find that ‘Better opportunities to help citizens’ is a significantly stronger motivator for *between-sector* transitions than for *within-level* transitions (model 2). However, no significant difference exist between *between-sector* and *between-level* mobility in this respect (model 3).

The full results (Table A3 in the Appendix) show that fewer women make *between-sector* transitions, which may be due to the higher perceived risk associated with these moves. Research suggests that men tend to be less risk-averse than women (Charness and Gneezy 2012) The elevated risk of *between-sector* transitions may therefore discourage female leaders more than their male counterparts, reinforcing gender differences in risk tolerance when making career decisions.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that leaders making *between-level* transitions are older, and both *between-level* and *between-sector* switchers are more likely to be employed in central government positions compared to those making *within-level* transitions. This suggests that more complex transitions, such as moving between levels or sectors, are more common among seasoned leaders in central government, who may have the experience and resources necessary to successfully navigate these more challenging career shifts.

## Discussion and conclusion

As long-term employment within a single organization becomes less common and labour shortages intensify, understanding public leader mobility patterns across sectors and organizational levels has become critical. While much research has analysed turnover drivers – the choice to stay or leave (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, and Keiser 2012; Kellough and Osuna 1995; Lambert, Hogan, and Barton 2001; D. S. Lee et al. 2015; Wynen, Op de Beeck, and Hondegheem 2013) – we propose

that valuable insights emerge from studying the motives of leaders who have left but opted for different career path, a relatively underexplored topic. This article analyzes the factors influencing why some leaders transition to new roles either within a different sector, at another government level, or within their current governmental level. Differentiating *between-level*, *between-sector*, and *within-level* mobility, we identify three key findings.

First, our study introduces the concept of proximity between past and current roles as a valuable framework for understanding leadership mobility motives, specifically for distinguishing within-level transitions (within the same government tier), between-level transitions (across central and local government tiers), and between-sector transitions (among public, private, and non-profit sectors). Our findings indicate that high-proximity transitions – those within the same government tier – are more strongly driven by career advancement than low-proximity transitions, such as those across sectors.

Proximity, or the ‘closeness’ in organizational context between former and prospective roles, appears to shape how leaders evaluate new opportunities. Results suggest that leaders driven by career advancement perceive high-proximity transitions – where they take on a new role within a familiar organizational tier – as more appealing. Such transitions allow leaders to capitalize on their expertise and familiarity with the structure, tasks, and norms of their organization (Knoben and Oerlemans 2006). By contrast, lower-proximity transitions carry more uncertainties around career progression due to the unfamiliarity of new organizational contexts and roles. Furthermore, concerns about the transferability of skills across sectors may impact how leaders perceive their career value in these broader moves.

Not all career-related factors were statistically significant. While ‘Better career opportunities’ was more influential in high-proximity transitions, political influence did not yield significant results. Therefore, career ambition linked to political influence does not appear to play a more critical role in high-proximity transitions than in medium- or low-proximity ones. Overall, political influence emerged as a less central motivator across all types of mobility compared to ‘Better career opportunities’, suggesting that leaders may prioritize personal career progression over political influence in mobility decisions. Future research might explore if and when political influence matter for mobility decisions, as well as how leaders balance career opportunities against political influence in pursuing career advancement.

Additionally, low job satisfaction significantly motivates low- and medium-proximity transitions compared to high-proximity ones. While dissatisfaction is widely acknowledged as a primary driver of job changes (e.g. Cho and Lewis 2012; Moynihan and Landuyt 2008), our findings suggest that discontented leaders are more likely to seek organizational changes, aiming for contexts better suited to their aspirations and skills, rather than accepting new roles within the same government tier. Leaders who feel unfulfilled or sense a disconnect between their skills and their current roles are thus less likely to remain within the same organizational tier, possibly because they sense that similar roles will not resolve their dissatisfaction. For these leaders, a greater organizational change seems necessary to achieve alignment between their skills, goals, and work environment. Dissatisfaction also may make them more willing to take on the higher risks associated with low-proximity transitions, as they seek environments that align better with their professional goals.

These findings suggest that, leaders with career ambitions tend to prioritize traditional vertical mobility over more complex ‘ramp’ career paths (Teodoro 2009, 2011) involving lateral or diagonal moves across sectors or levels. This result does not imply that career ambition is irrelevant for leaders making *between-sector* moves; rather, it tends to be less important on average compared to *within-level* transitions. While we do observe individual cases where leaders cited ambition as a key factor for between-sector moves – consistent with studies that document instances of ramp-style career progression (Teodoro 2009, 2011), –our analysis suggests that career ambition is, on average, more closely associated with ladder-style transitions within a single level of government than with ramp careers spanning multiple levels or sectors, at least in the Danish context.

Moreover, our results support Teodoro’s observation that different types of leaders pursue distinct career paths, whether through ramp or ladder trajectories, with varying motivators influencing different types of transitions (Teodoro 2011). Personal characteristics also impact these career paths. For example, fewer women appear to pursue *between-sector* transitions, potentially due to gender differences in risk aversion (Charness and Gneezy 2012). This highlights the importance of considering both motivational and personal factors in understanding leadership mobility.

Second, as expected, we identify different motivators for transitions within the public sector compared to transitions from the private to the public sector. Higher job security and salary serve as distinct motivators for *between-sector* moves. These findings to some extent echo the conclusion of previous studies (Ali 2018; Grissom, Viano, and Selin 2016). Leaders moving from the private to the public sector prioritize job security over salary, suggesting a wish for more stability. Job-security and salary may also be important co-determining factors for leaders’ decisions to move into the private sector; however, as our study does not include transitions from public to private roles, we are unable to determine whether higher pay and less concern about job security are primary motivators in these cases (Hansen 2014).

Additionally, our findings show that ‘Better opportunities to help citizens’ holds greater importance for leaders making *between-sector* moves than for those remaining within public employment. This suggests that leaders transitioning from the private sector are particularly drawn to public service’s intrinsic rewards, such as societal contribution. This is consistent with previous research indicating that public sector motivation is a powerful tool for improving recruitment and enhancing job satisfaction (Fernandes, Santinha, and Forte 2022; Georgellis, Iossa, and Tabvuma 2011; Hansen 2014). While previous studies have primarily focused on the political and economic factors affecting turnover (Ali 2018, 2020; Boyne et al. 2010a), our study broadens this scope by emphasizing motivational factors tied to public service roles. The significance of PSM in cross-sector recruitment is particularly relevant in light of ongoing challenges in attracting skilled leaders to public organizations (Cregård, Corin, and Skagert 2017). These findings underscore the value of leveraging PSM and job security as key strategies in attracting talent and addressing the public sector’s recruitment challenges.

Third, we show that *between-level* mobility is relatively rare – at least in the Danish context. Furthermore, this form of mobility has been largely overlooked in the existing literature on turnover and sector transition leaving theoretical and practical gaps in our knowledge of this type of mobility. Our article contributes to the field by shedding light on this underexplored area, aiming to stimulate further research and discussion on this aspect of leadership transitions.

Other research suggests that outside hires can bring new perspective, a large external network, and more innovation (Teodoro 2009; Vantaggiato et al. 2024; Villadsen 2012). For public leaders transitioning between sectors, this can translate into a unique potential to introduce new ideas, foster creativity, and drive substantial changes that enhance overall performance. Sector mobility supports a diversity of experiences and knowledge-sharing across sectors (D. S. Lee et al. 2015), which strengthens the adaptability and problem-solving capacity within public organizations. Similarly, mobility across government levels, such as between local and central positions, could increase the quality of central decision-making by incorporating insights from local implementation – such potential benefits of *between-level* mobility are underexplored. With current labour shortages in the public sector, encouraging between-level mobility may also expand the candidate pool for leadership roles, providing an additional reservoir of talent.

However, transitioning between levels or sectors can also introduce additional costs, including recruiting and training expenses, potential disruptions to efficiency, and the temporary loss of institutional knowledge (Cho and Lewis 2012; Hayes et al. 2006; Moynihan and Landuyt 2009). The precise impact of leadership mobility on organizational performance is still unclear, with studies showing mixed results that vary by context (Boyne et al. 2011; Connolly 2018; Wang and Sun 2022). These findings suggest a need for further research on the performance outcomes associated with different types of mobility, specifically examining how leader transitions can most effectively support organizational goals.

Our findings offer practical guidance for public sector organizations seeking to refine their recruitment processes. Recognizing the distinct motivations associated with *within-level*, *between-level*, and *between-sector* mobility is essential for designing recruitment and integration strategies that enhance organizational effectiveness. Leaders moving across levels or sectors may benefit from specialized onboarding that addresses their unique experiences and challenges. Tailoring these onboarding practices – especially to support network-building and familiarize leaders with new organizational structures and cultures (Vantaggiato et al. 2024) – can facilitate their integration and maximize their contributions. By adopting tailored onboarding and integration approaches, public sector organizations can more effectively leverage the benefits of leadership mobility.

Although our empirical design contributes to the advancement of the literature, it is not without limitations. First, we are unable to identify leaders who applied for but were unsuccessful in transitioning between or within levels and sectors. One possible explanation for the low level of mobility between government levels could be that public employers exhibit a preference for hiring leaders from their ‘own’ level of government. Consequently, the results may not be fully generalizable to leaders who are unsuccessful in job transitions. Future research should explore the pre-hiring process from both applicants’ and recruiters’ perspectives to better understand potential barriers to mobility across levels and sectors.

Second, this study does not include leaders transitioning from the public to the private sector. Previous research indicating that such transitions reflect unique and significant motivational factors (Ali 2018; Grissom, Viano, and Selin 2016; Hansen 2014). As a result, we are unable to determine whether and how the identified motivational factors influence leaders’ decisions to leave the public sector. Future studies would benefit from examining additional forms

of mobility, such as transitions to the non-profit sector or movements from various levels within the public sector to the private sector. Expanding the scope beyond the investigated mobility types could offer valuable insights into the complexities of mobility, both from and to the public sector, as previous research suggests that motivations vary across these sectors (Y. Lee and Wilkins 2011). Furthermore, investigating transitions to the private sector could shed light on the distinct motives driving such moves, which are likely to differ from those influencing public or non-profit sector transitions.

Third, while this study advances the research by examining the motivations behind actual job switches, rather than turnover intentions (AbouAssi, McGinnis Johnson, and Holt 2019; Ertas 2015), it is important to recognize the potential influence of memory or recall bias on our results. Memory bias, a cognitive tendency to recall certain information more readily than other information (Fyock and Stangor 1994), may affect the accuracy of leaders' recollection of their motives. As a result, leaders may not be fully aware of all the factors that influenced their decision to switch jobs. However, the potential impact of memory bias is likely mitigated by our specific focus on comparing differences between mobility types. While it is possible that all leaders are subject to such biases, we have no reason to believe that these biases would be more pronounced or diminished for leaders undergoing *within-level*, *between-level*, or *between-sector* transitions. Therefore, while our study may not capture all relevant motives and may underestimate the importance of certain factors due to memory bias, we can reasonably assert the robustness of our findings concerning the differences between these types of mobility, as the effects of memory bias are likely consistent across categories.

Fourth, while the Danish context provides a strong testing ground for this study, Denmark's small size and comprehensive unemployment security system may influence our findings (Bredgaard and Madsen 2018). For instance, our results indicate low levels of *between-level* mobility within this setting, but these findings may not be generalizable to other contexts. Moreover, recruitment in Denmark is primarily merit-based, and it is likely that the career decisions of public sector leaders is different in systems where political coalitions play a more prominent role for career advancement and job switches.

Finally, while our study includes a broad range of factors to capture career ambition, job dissatisfaction, and both external and internal organizational benefits, it does not account for all potentially relevant factors influencing job transitions. As a result, we cannot rule out the possibility that other important differences in motivations exist among leaders engaging in *within-level*, *between-level*, and *between-sector* mobility. Future research could examine additional factors. Moreover, scholars could explore leaders' career trajectories in line with Teodoro's (2011) work, which would provide a more nuanced understanding of the various vertical and diagonal pathways that shape leader mobility. Investigating whether distinct leadership positions require unique career patterns would be particularly insightful. Tracking leaders' career paths over time offers a promising avenue for future research—one that could enhance our understanding both qualitatively and quantitatively.

## Notes

1. For more information on the use of ISCO-08 for research see, for example (Ganzeboom, 2010; Mihaylov & Tijdens, 2019)
2. Fx. a leader from the Department of the Treasury moving into a new leadership role within this same department is not included in the study. However, if the leader transitions to the Agency for Public Finance, the transition forms part of this analysis. As small country with a highly decentralized government structure consisting of small departments/ministries and numerous agencies, Denmark sees frequent job transitions between organizations.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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## Appendix

**Table A1.** Types of leaders in the survey sample.

Type of leader	Percent
Top executives	12.8
Administrative leaders	45.0
Leaders within service provision	45.2
Total	900 (100%)

**Table A2.** Test of representativeness.

Variables	Leaders in the sample
Monthly salary (in DKK millions)	1.181*** (0.141)
Female	0.0125* (0.00684)
Age	-0.000896** (0.000391)
Parent	0.0129 (0.00833)
Central government	-0.0348*** (0.00699)
Constant	0.0904*** (0.0250)
Observations	7,485
R-squared	0.015

\*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05. \*p < 0.1. OLS regression. Dependent variable: 0 (not part of sample), 1 (part of sample). The data has been weighted to account for the different probabilities of being invited to participate in the survey among the three mobility groups.

Table A3. Full model.

	Model 1: <i>Between-level</i> transitions (vs. <i>within-</i> <i>level</i> transitions)	Model 2: <i>Between-sector</i> transitions (vs. <i>within-</i> <i>level</i> transitions)	Model 3: <i>Between-sector</i> transitions (vs. <i>between-level</i> transitions)
<b>Career ambitions</b>			
Better career opportunities	-0.0260 (0.0172)	<b>-0.0533***</b> (0.0166)	-0.0442 (0.0278)
More political influence	0.0171 (0.0142)	0.00911 (0.0141)	-0.0239 (0.0230)
<b>Discontent</b>			
Low job satisfaction in old job	<b>0.0501***</b> (0.0176)	<b>0.0445***</b> (0.0165)	-0.00988 (0.0275)
<b>External benefits</b>			
More job security	0.00357 (0.0204)	<b>0.0894***</b> (0.0178)	<b>0.117***</b> (0.0294)
Higher salary	0.0161 (0.0167)	-0.0277* (0.0160)	<b>-0.0616**</b> (0.0291)
Better working conditions	-0.0246 (0.0192)	-0.0213 (0.0187)	0.00833 (0.0321)
<b>Internal benefits</b>			
Better opportunities to help citizens	0.0230 (0.0140)	<b>0.0285**</b> (0.0137)	-0.00407 (0.0227)
<b>Other factors</b>			
Wanting a change	0.00484 (0.0193)	0.0224 (0.0188)	0.00886 (0.0281)
Shorter commute	0.00111 (0.0148)	0.0161 (0.0143)	0.00646 (0.0238)
Better physical and/or psychological working environment	-0.00645 (0.0175)	<b>-0.0341**</b> (0.0171)	-0.0305 (0.0281)
Better opportunities for professional development	-0.0120 (0.0209)	-0.00820 (0.0202)	0.0290 (0.0314)
Loss of job due to firing or not getting contract renewed	-0.00213 (0.0121)	0.0158 (0.0114)	0.0138 (0.0193)
Cooperation problems at old job	0.0106 (0.0177)	0.0149 (0.0163)	-0.00365 (0.0260)
Need for better work-life balance	0.00678 (0.0148)	0.000258 (0.0146)	0.00647 (0.0230)
<b>Individual factors</b>			
Female	-0.0234 (0.0332)	<b>-0.105***</b> (0.0323)	<b>-0.119**</b> (0.0531)
Age	<b>0.00692**</b> (0.00293)	0.00127 (0.00284)	-0.00529 (0.00465)
Parent	0.0745* (0.0391)	0.0493 (0.0372)	-0.0327 (0.0611)
Central government	<b>0.144***</b> (0.0360)	<b>0.110***</b> (0.0360)	-0.0152 (0.0537)
Monthly salary (in DKK millions)	0.982 (0.753)	-0.560 (0.667)	-0.831 (0.955)
Constant	-0.367* (0.195)	0.0767 (0.190)	<b>0.951***</b> (0.327)
Observations	699	723	356
R-squared	0.070	0.144	0.119

\*\*\*p &lt; 0.01, \*\*p &lt; 0.05, \*p &lt; 0.1.

**Table A4.** Logit models.

	Model 1: <i>Between-level</i> transitions (vs. <i>within-</i> <i>level</i> transitions)	Model 2: <i>Between-sector</i> transitions (vs. <i>within-</i> <i>level</i> transitions)	Model 3: <i>Between-sector</i> transitions (vs. <i>between-</i> <i>level</i> transitions)
<b>Career ambitions</b>			
Better career opportunities	-0.145 (0.100)	<b>-0.311***</b> (0.0992)	-0.200 (0.124)
More political influence	0.104 (0.0829)	0.0503 (0.0856)	-0.110 (0.102)
<b>Discontent</b>			
Low job satisfaction in old job	<b>0.296***</b> (0.103)	<b>0.256***</b> (0.0973)	-0.0514 (0.122)
<b>External benefits</b>			
More job security	0.0165 (0.124)	<b>0.490***</b> (0.103)	<b>0.564***</b> (0.144)
Higher salary	0.0942 (0.0984)	-0.184* (0.100)	<b>-0.286**</b> (0.131)
Better working conditions	-0.137 (0.112)	-0.114 (0.114)	0.0404 (0.143)
<b>Internal benefits</b>			
Better opportunities to help citizens	0.128 (0.0815)	<b>0.176**</b> (0.0822)	-0.0215 (0.101)
<b>Other factors</b>			
Wanting a change	0.0228 (0.112)	0.108 (0.110)	0.0455 (0.124)
Shorter commute	0.00553 (0.0858)	0.0958 (0.0832)	0.0235 (0.105)
Better physical and/or psychological working environment	-0.0450 (0.102)	<b>-0.213**</b> (0.105)	-0.135 (0.125)
Better opportunities for professional development	-0.0656 (0.121)	-0.0342 (0.118)	0.129 (0.140)
Loss of job due to firing or not getting contract renewed	-0.0141 (0.0711)	0.0777 (0.0649)	0.0627 (0.0857)
Cooperation problems at old job	0.0610 (0.0998)	0.0892 (0.0928)	-0.0276 (0.116)
Need for better work-life balance	0.0407 (0.0854)	0.00682 (0.0857)	0.0239 (0.102)
<b>Individual factors</b>			
Female	-0.141 (0.193)	<b>-0.610***</b> (0.191)	<b>-0.524**</b> (0.236)
Age	0.0426** (0.0176)	0.00767 (0.0168)	-0.0238 (0.0207)
Parent	0.459* (0.235)	0.310 (0.222)	-0.134 (0.272)
Central government	0.776*** (0.199)	<b>0.580***</b> (0.206)	-0.0528 (0.238)

(Continued)

**Table A4.** (Continued).

	Model 1: <i>Between-level</i> transitions (vs. <i>within-</i> <i>level</i> transitions)	Model 2: <i>Between-sector</i> transitions (vs. <i>within-</i> <i>level</i> transitions)	Model 3: <i>Between-sector</i> transitions (vs. <i>between-</i> <i>level</i> transitions)
Monthly salary (in DKK millions)	6.064 (4.291)	-3.336 (3.790)	-3.737 (4.125)
Constant	<b>-4.921***</b> (1.195)	-2.149* (1.127)	2.029 (1.458)
Observations	699	723	356

\*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05, \*p < 0.1.