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Imprinting and contested practices: The impact of public directors' private-sector experience on temporary employment in Dutch public organizations

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Abstract

This paper studies how organizational leaders' early private-sector leadership experiences impact adopting a contested organizational practice, temporary employment, in public organizations. We employed unique organization/year-level register panel data on the executive careers of the directors of Dutch public organizations and the prevalence of temporary employment in organizations they lead. Fixed-effect regression analyses of 29,031 organization/year observations between 2006 and 2019 show greater use of temporary employment in public organizations when directors have early private-sector executive experience. We found a similar impact of leaders' imprinted experiences in "fully" public and "hybrid" organizations that combine public and private sector elements. We discuss implications and suggestions for future studies on organizational leaders' role in contested practice adoption in the public sector.

Evidence for Practice

- When early-career private sector executive experiences are present in boards of directorates, public organizations are more likely to adopt employment practices that are contested in the public sector.
- The impact of public leaders' career background and socialization goes beyond their personal value orientations and affects the practices of organizations they lead.
- Executive recruitment in the public sector should be aware of such consequences of early-career experiences of leaders and should incorporate these insights in assessing the fit of candidates with public organizational goals and strategy.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, public organizations in Western societies have increasingly adopted personnel practices originating from the private sector (Knies et al., 2022). Among the variety of new practices in public organizations, "soft" human resource management (HRM) practices are popular, as their focus on development and wellbeing fits with public organizations' traditional employment model emphasizing stable organizational careers and long-term employment. They align with societal expectations of

public organizations as "model employers" (Boyne et al., 1999; Kalleberg et al., 2006; Knies & Leisink, 2018). However, it is puzzling how "hard" HRM practices (e.g., performance metrics, low wages) that are incongruent with public employment also took root in public organizations (Conley, 2006; Knies et al., 2022). Temporary employment is arguably among the most controversial practices, as it contradicts the central tenets of job security and long-term career development (Leisink & Boxall, 2021; Mevissen et al., 2015). Temporary employment violates the image of public organizations as

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“exemplary” employers, triggering negative reactions from societal stakeholders concerned with public organizations’ treatment of public employees, such as trade unions, citizens, and politicians on the political left (Leisink & Boxall, 2021; Shire & Van Jaarsveld, 2008).

Opposition to the use of temporary employment has manifested itself in several ways, such as in strikes (NOS, 2018), public labor unions writing appeals in which they urge politicians to revalue the principles of public-sector employment (FNV, n.d.; Hoffer et al., 2020), and politicians developing plans to increase the attractiveness of permanent employment in the public sector (van Gennip, 2022).

Earlier studies on the adoption of private-sector organizational practices in public organizations refer to institutional pressure from government austerity (e.g., due to increasing national debt) and New Public Management (NPM) (Drechsler, 2005; Farazmand, 2002; Filipovic, 2005) as important antecedents. These institutional processes suggest isomorphism between private and public organizations, and to a certain extent, such convergence in the management practices of the two sectors could be observed (Knies et al., 2022; Leisink & Boxall, 2021; Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2010). However, they cannot explain the adoption and use of contested practices in and of themselves. The incongruence of these practices with the traditional employment model and the strong opposition from stakeholders both constitute strong countervailing institutional pressures favoring the rejection of controversial practices (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

The literature on contested practices argues that characteristics of influential organizational actors (e.g., executives, CEOs) are key to understand how contested practices are adopted (Fiss & Zajac, 2004; Kraatz et al., 2002), as these actors have the power to generate change in organizational practices (Hwang & Colyvas, 2019), even when facing opposition (Kraatz & Moore, 2002). Focusing on corporate leaders’ cognitive schemas and educational socialization (DiMaggio, 1997; Fiss & Zajac, 2004), Sanders and Tuschke (2007) show that CEO’s participation in MBA programs positively impacts the local adoption of contested practices from the broader business environment, and Acemoglu et al. (2022) found that the business school background of CEOs affects wage-setting policies in the companies they lead.

Public management research, following the upper echelon tradition (Hambrick & Finkelstein, 1987), investigates the transformation of executive identities in the public sector (Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006). This stream of literature suggests that during the past two decades, the background of public leaders has changed, with previous executive experiences in private organizations becoming more common (Frederiksen & Hansen, 2017). Emerging scholarship on leadership succession and “sector switching” investigates the effects of new leaders’

“publicness fit” (Petrovsky et al., 2015), in particular on organizational performance (Boyne, 2002; Boyne et al., 2011; James et al., 2021).

The current literature has yet to address to what degree new public directors’ previous leadership experience in private organizations affects contested practice adoption in public organizations. Building on career imprinting theory (Higgins, 2005), and specifically sector imprinting (Boardman et al., 2010), we propose several mechanisms.

First, we argue that leadership experiences during the early phases of a leader’s career have a stronger imprinting effect than do experiences in later career phases. Early careers are highly formative periods that also have a lasting impact on decision-making behavior later in the career (Higgins, 2005). They also make directors with such early imprints more weakly “embedded” (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006) in public organizations compared to leaders who spent their formative leadership periods in public organizations. This experience makes them more aware and supportive of temporary employment practices that are common and legitimate in private organizations. It also tempers their concerns for reputational damage from adopting contested practices.

Second, we argue that the number of board members with previous experience in the private sector affects public organizations’ adoption of temporary employment. Such boards will pay greater attention to private sector practices, which fosters adoption of contested practices in two ways (Cho & Hambrick, 2006): Such teams will have better access to information about private sector practices, and the attentional patterns of the team tend to be strongly influenced by new team members.

Third, we argue that organizational hybridity (i.e., organizations not being “fully public”) can either temper (buffer mechanism) or boost (reinforcement mechanism) the impact that newcomers from the private sector will have on the adoption of temporary employment practices.

We test our hypotheses using a large-scale linked employer–employee register dataset from the Social Statistics Database (SSB) of the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS),¹ which links the complete population of employees and companies and identifies organizational leaders and their prior careers. It allows reconstruction of the career histories of the complete population of public directors, measuring early-career exposure to the private sector and investigating its impact on the use of temporary employment in public organizations in the period of 2006–2019.

Our study enriches current knowledge in three ways. First, previous public management research on career background found differences between public and private directors (Boyne, 2002) and detected effects on the performance of public organizations (e.g., Boyne et al., 2011; James et al., 2021; Petrovsky et al., 2015). We argue and find that career background also affects the

adoption of HRM practices. Second, we add to the literature on changing personnel policies in public organizations (Boyne et al., 1999; Kalleberg et al., 2006; Knies et al., 2022; Knies & Leisink, 2018) by specifying an important condition under which an HRM practice, which breaks with traditional public employment values, is introduced despite wide and heavy contestation. Finally, we contribute to the literature on organizational imprinting by addressing the underexplored role of powerful actors' experience from a different environment. Whereas previous research on private sector imprinting has focused on individual-level outcomes (Boardman et al., 2010; Lapuente et al., 2020), our study shifts attention to the agency of these powerful organizational actors and the impact of their actions on organizational level outcomes.

CONTESTED PRACTICES: TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT IN PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

Public organizations' personnel policies traditionally reflected Weberian principles of bureaucracy (Leisink & Boxall, 2021), including tenure-based promotion and high levels of employment security. Reform programs, such as NPM, introduced a focus on efficiency and effectuated changes in personnel policies. Multiple studies (Boyne et al., 1999; Kalleberg et al., 2006; Knies et al., 2022; Knies & Leisink, 2018) document public-sector organizations sticking to "soft" HRM practices (Borst & Blom, 2021), emphasizing employee wellbeing, commitment, and long-term career development. Soft HRM also aligns with the public-sector tradition of being an exemplary "model employer" (Knies & Leisink, 2018; Leisink & Boxall, 2021; Morgan & Allington, 2002).

Nevertheless, public organizations have also adopted "hard" HRM practices, which are frequently used in private businesses (Borst & Blom, 2021; Brown, 2004; Knies et al., 2022). The use of temporary employment contracts exemplifies such a "hard" HRM strategy (Conley, 2006; Knies et al., 2022). The resulting numerical workforce flexibility allows firms to quickly adapt to changing economic circumstances. In public organizations, temporary employment contracts also increase flexibility (e.g., when administrations face budget cuts) but break with the traditional bureaucratic principle that rewards civil servants with stable and predictable careers (Leisink & Boxall, 2021; Mevisen et al., 2015).

The Netherlands is one of the leading European countries when it comes to temporary employment (Kösters & Smits, 2015), and its use in Dutch public organizations has increased in recent decades (Dekker, 2017). Employment statistics show that in 2019, one in five Dutch public employees were employed in a temporary contract.² The adoption of temporary employment practices has generated opposition, public debates, and open contestation

from internal and external key stakeholders of public-sector organizations in the Netherlands. Dutch and international studies document the dissatisfaction of public employees with the "hard" HRM approach (Gorgievski et al., 2019; Lim & Pinto, 2009; Moloney et al., 2018). Similarly, surveys of Dutch employees indicate that preferences for stable, permanent employment (Donker van Heel et al., 2013), and temporary employment contracts in the public sector are associated with high degrees of perceived job insecurity (Leisink & Boxall, 2021).

Dutch unions, as key stakeholders concerned about employee security and wellbeing (Sowa, 2021), therefore heavily criticize the practice of temporary employment (Shire & Van Jaarsveld, 2008) and advocate policies regulating the use of temporary contracts (FNV, n.d.; Hoffer et al., 2020). Opposition from internal and external stakeholders fuels an ongoing social and political debate, documented in a series of advisory reports to the Dutch government regarding employment policy (Commissie Regulering van Werk, 2020; Euwals et al., 2016).

Finally, temporary employment is contested in academic and professional circles, as it potentially harms the sustainability of public services (Leisink & Boxall, 2021) and the creation of "public value" (Moore, 1995). Many fear that temporary employment undermines public employees' commitment, which is critical for maintaining high-quality public services, in particular given that citizens became more demanding than ever (Dulk et al., 2021).

PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS: IMPRINTING AND CONTESTED PRACTICE ADOPTION

Institutional theorists label practices that "face stiff opposition from key constituents in potential adopters' primary institutional environment" as "contested practices" (Sanders & Tuschke, 2007, p. 34). We opt to use the concept of "environment," as it incorporates both the more specific notions of "field" (used in the institutional literature on contested practices) and the notion of "sector" (employed in connotation with employment experiences of public-sector managers and decision makers). It is unclear why organizations adopt contested practices, given the risk of being sanctioned or stigmatized (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Sutton & Callahan, 1987). However, they are frequently used, as two studies illustrate. Fiss et al. (2012) demonstrate the spread of "golden parachute" contracts, which compensates top executives if their firms are taken over. This practice is widely diffused, despite fierce opposition from shareholders and policy makers. Sanders and Tuschke (2007) examined the diffusion of stock option pay in Germany. This practice runs counter to core values of Germany's stakeholder-oriented governance principles.

There is a growing consensus in the literature that contested practices originate in environments where they

are less or not contested and diffuse through organizational imitation (Sanders & Tuschke, 2007). This, however, does not automatically translate into the legitimation of these practices. Jung and Mun (2017) demonstrate that even when the majority of the organizations in an organizational field “mimic” each other’s practices, this does not lead to a greater perceived legitimacy of these practices (cf. Colyvas & Jonsson, 2011). Their study shows that Japanese organizations’ downsizing met initial opposition, as it contradicts widely shared norms of lifetime employment. Hardly any important stakeholder considered downsizing practices as legitimate, even once they were widely used. Similarly, despite becoming widely used, temporary employment is unlikely to become legitimate *within* the Dutch public sector and is therefore likely to meet contestation. Merely considering diffusion processes does not help us understand how practices subjected to contestation are adopted in organizations.

We suggest that weakly embedded yet powerful organizational actors such as public directors are key in adopting contested practices. Powerful actors have the capacity to transform institutions (Pacheco et al., 2010), but strong embeddedness in the field may be an obstacle for them to become initiators of practice change. Tight entanglement with a field and its conventions may reduce awareness of alternative practices, nourish skepticism and opposition to them, and come with feelings of obligations to stakeholders in the field whose interests do not align with contested practices. Advocacy for and implementation of contested practices is therefore likely to originate from actors who are powerful but “weakly embedded” in the field. They are more aware of and can draw on inspirations from *outside* (Kraatz & Moore, 2002) their current field of employment and have less vested interest in maintaining current practices.

Early career imprinting can be an important source of a director’s weak embeddedness in the public sector, for several reasons. First, cognitive schemas (DiMaggio, 1997) acquired during a leader’s formative years help them understand and evaluate developments in the broader business environment and translate and transfer contested practices to local use (Sanders & Tuschke, 2007). While there could be subsequent imprints during their later career trajectory and in other organizations, imprinting effects have been found to be strongest during the initial phase of a manager’s career. Leaders’ early exposure to organizational environments leaves a so-called career “imprint” (Marquis & Tilcsik, 2013), impacting their future managing style and decisions (e.g., Higgins, 2005; Phillips, 2005; Schoar & Zuo, 2017). During these early phases, individuals are particularly susceptible to influences from their organizational environment (i.e., organizational culture and practices, mentors, and peers). The socialization effect of these early formative experiences is strong enough to affect how an individual responds to and reflects on new job

situations (Dokko et al., 2009; Higgins, 2005). They are likely to rely on these experiences when they must handle the uncertainties of a completely new role (Marquis & Tilcsik, 2013). Early career experiences may thus persist even after leaders switch from one environment (e.g., private sector) to another (e.g., public sector).

Second, sectors are strong imprinting environments. Studies on sector-switching managers show that early career “sector imprinting” (Boardman et al., 2010) leaves a mark on the core organizational values and norms that directors identify with. This mark persists even after they switch sectors (Bozeman & Ponomarev, 2009; Su & Bozeman, 2009). For example, directors switching from the private to the public sector retain core private sector management values such as efficiency and results orientation (Lapueye et al., 2020).

Third, as cognitive schemes acquired during early private sector exposure also tend to persist later in their career, managers who switch from the private to the public sector show lower person–organization fit and a higher level of dissatisfaction with formalized rules and “red tape” than non-switchers (Chen, 2012).

Fourth, the choices and behaviors of co-workers and mentors (e.g., Azoulay et al., 2017) leave imprints during the early career phase. Directors with private-sector experience are more inclined to “mimic” managerial orientations and behaviors of the senior managers they worked with during their formative private sector executive periods.

Finally, early directorial career experiences in the private sector leave imprints on their personal networks. Social ties to former colleagues in the private sector may not only be a persisting source of information and support (McEvily et al., 2012) but also stimulate contested practice adoption through vicarious learning and encouragement. In contrast, directors whose professional networks mainly consist of public-sector actors opposing the practice may experience reputational threat when they advocate practices contested within the field (cf. Davis, 1991).

In sum, compared with organizational leaders who started their careers in the public sector, public-sector directors who started their career in the private sector are weakly “embedded” (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006). They are more likely to develop familiarity with temporary employment, identify more strongly with core private-sector values based on efficiency that motivate the use of this practice, are less attached to public-sector employment’s traditional commitment to permanent, life-time employment, and are likely to be influenced by private-sector contacts.

We therefore expect a higher proportion of organizational leaders with early-career experience in the private sector to increase the likelihood that private-sector imprinted experiences influence executive decisions (Cho & Hambrick, 2006).

H1. A higher proportion of directors in a public organization's board who had their early executive experience in the private sector leads to a higher proportion of temporary employment contracts.

FULLY PUBLIC VERSUS HYBRID ORGANIZATIONS: ORGANIZATIONAL EMBEDDEDNESS AND DEGREES OF CONTESTEDNESS

The mechanism behind early-career imprinting effects reflects the strong and lasting impact that previous embeddedness in a specific social context may have on individual decisions and behavior at later career stages. Of course, current organizational context conditions also matter (Dacin et al., 1999). We argue that the degree of an organization's publicness represents another important dimension of organizational embeddedness that is likely to affect the adoption of context practices. Organizations are "fully public" if they are entirely owned and funded by the government and if their main stakeholders are political authorities (Rainey, 2014), such as NHS hospitals in the UK. Organizations combining private and public-sector elements are referred to as "hybrids" (e.g., Brandsen & Karré, 2011; Doherty et al., 2014; Kickert, 2001; Rainey, 2014). Public hospitals in the Netherlands are hybrid, as part of their funding must be acquired in competition with other hospitals (Leisink & Boxall, 2021; Rainey, 2014). The difference between fully public and hybrid organizations may result in temporary employment practices facing different degrees of contestedness. We argue that the potential impact of private-sector imprinting on contested practice adoption is less straightforward in hybrid than in fully public organizations because in hybrid organizations, it may trigger two competing microfoundational mechanisms.

First, for hybrid organizations, independently of the presence of board members with private-sector experiences, temporary employment practices are likely to be more salient to boards, and leaders may already be familiar with their adoption. As a result, the relative impact of new members joining from the private sector is likely to be weaker when adopting temporary employment. We refer to this process as the buffer mechanism, as organizational hybridity weakens the effect of private sector imprinting on contested practice adoption.

Second, private-sector career imprints may have a stronger impact on contested practice adoption in hybrid than in fully public organizations, as temporary employment may be considered more legitimate. Leaders may thus expect less opposition to its adoption. New leaders with a private sector background joining the team may further strengthen the team's favorable stance toward the use of these practices. We refer to this process as a reinforcement mechanism.

Both mechanisms predict that organizational hybridity affects the impact of private-sector imprinting, but they lead to competing predictions, with the buffer mechanism leading to a negative moderation and the reinforcement mechanism resulting in a positive moderation. We therefore formulate the following undirected moderation hypothesis.

H2. Organizational hybridity moderates the relationship between the proportion of directors in a public organization's board who had their early executive experience in the private sector and the proportion of temporary employment contracts.

METHODS

Data

The results of this study are based on calculations by the authors using non-public microdata from Statistics Netherlands on the complete population of individuals and companies. The micro datasets we used were composed of (i) tax records, to obtain information on employment contracts of individual employees and the company they work for; (ii) company registers of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce (KVK), to obtain information on organizations (e.g., sector, size) and their directors (start and end dates of appointments); and (iii) population administration, to obtain demographic information on individuals (e.g., age, gender).

The Dutch Chamber of Commerce includes registrations of directors at the executive level (in Dutch: *bestuurders*), which is the level at which we expect decisions on employment strategies. To illustrate, the Dutch police has 10 regional units and a national unit. A chief of police, who is supported by four other directors (Organisatiestructuur Politie Nationaal, n.d.), leads all these units. A Dutch ministry, such as the Ministry of Health, consists of several departments, all with their own director (e.g., Department of Sport, Department of Pandemic Preparedness). These directors are responsible for policy development and implementation and chair meetings on ministry-wide decisions on personnel policies (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2021).

We compiled a unique dataset, reconstructing the past career of each director of a public organization using information on the start and end dates of each of their directorial jobs. After linking information on the sector of the organizations that they had managed in the past, we were able to determine whether their earliest observed executive experience was in the private or public sector. We aggregated this information per year and organization to obtain the percentage of directors on the board with imprinted career experiences in private

organizations. Finally, we linked aggregate data on employment contracts of employees (available from 2006 onwards) per year and organization to board composition of private career experience, which enabled assessment of how the presence of imprinted private-sector career experiences impacts organizations' use of temporary employment.

In 2019, the average number of directors per organization was 3.05. All variables pertaining to information on directors (age, work experience, gender, etc.) represent the mean across directors per public organization, per year.

The final dataset was an organization/year-level panel for the period 2006–2019. There were 2854 public organizations with an observation period of at least 1 year, with an average of 2113 organizations per year. The total number of observations was 29,031.

Research on sector-switching managers thus far has relied on survey data (Boardman et al., 2010; Chen, 2012; Lapuente et al., 2020). For our purpose, to study imprinted experiences and focus on top managers (i.e., directors) as a research population, register data has distinct benefits. First, a register data enabled us to reconstruct careers, and this approach reduces bias due to respondents' inaccurate recollections of experiences (Lapuente et al., 2020). Second, compared to surveys, company registers do not suffer from bias from low response, which hampers studies on top managers (Card et al., 2010). Submission of the registration of companies and the start and finish of tenure of organizational leaders to the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce is mandatory; therefore, we do not expect major biases because of omissions. Of course, register data is not free from error, for example, miscategorizations due to administrative error could still induce bias. Nevertheless, Statistics Netherlands has a legal obligation to publish high-quality and reliable microdata; it continuously checks the quality and consistency of its data and corrects errors. One distinct problem with register data is that administrative concepts (e.g., categorization of organizations) may not correspond to the theoretical concepts that scholars want to measure. However, CBS publishes a highly detailed, 53-category sector code that combines organizational activity (e.g., government, financial institutions, education) and ownership of the firm (public, private, foreign) (see Statistics Netherlands definitions in Chi, 2016). This level of detail enabled us to distinguish between fully public, hybrid, and private organizations.

We consider organizations to be fully public if they correspond to Rainey's three criteria (2014): Fully government owned, fully government funded, and the government has full authority over their operations. In the Netherlands, organizations with "classic government" fulfill all these criteria (see Chi, 2016). Examples of Dutch "fully" public organizations are local governments, ministries, statutory social insurance funds, the police, and institutions involved in the administration of justice. We labeled all organizations that partially but not fully meet

the criteria for "fully" public as hybrid organizations. These include public organizations such as pension funds, over which the government has authority but are not fully government owned and funded (e.g., debts of these public organizations are not included in government short-ages). Other examples are schools, universities, and hospitals (not fully funded by the Dutch government), the CBS, and the Chamber of Commerce (carry out government tasks, but the government does not have full authority). Organizations that do not meet any of the three criteria for publicness were coded as private organizations. The Dutch government has no decisive control over, does not fund, and does not own these organizations (Chi, 2016).

Dependent variable

Proportion of employees with temporary contracts

The monthly tax registers document the type of employment contract (fixed-term or permanent) of all Dutch employees. We calculated the relative size of the temporary workforce per public organization at the end of the year (December). As the proportion of employees with a temporary contract can change throughout a year, possibly influencing our results, we operationalized the relative number of employees with a temporary contract in several ways. We calculated this for all jobs registered during a year, for all jobs in the organization on January 1 and December 31. We conducted our analyses for all alternative operationalizations of the proportion of temporary contracts but found no significant differences between these model specifications. We report the proportion of temporary employment at the end of the year, measured in December.

Hybrid organization

To test the second hypothesis, we created a dummy (0 = fully public, 1 = hybrid) indicating a hybrid organization. We identified public and hybrid organizations through a detailed, 53-category sector code that combines organizational activity (e.g., government, financial institutions, education) and ownership of the firm (public, private, foreign) (see Statistics Netherlands definitions in Chi, 2016).

Independent variable

Directors' first management experience in a private/public organization

For every public director, we created a dummy indicating whether the first managing job they had was in a private

organization (0 = no, 1 = yes).³ Aggregating this information to the organizational level, we created a variable measuring the proportion of directors in the board who had their first managing job in the private sector each year.

Control variables

We expected several other factors that could confound the impact of career imprints on temporary employment, which we controlled for in the analyses.

Directors' previous management experience in a private organization

One objection to our proposed mechanism is that directors may be recruited for their private-sector experience to initiate or manage organizational change. As the first private experience and recent private experience likely correlate, selection could have biased our estimates of early-career imprinting if not adjusted for. Under the likely assumption that recruitment to senior leadership positions typically focuses on recent experience and it is uncommon to specifically select leaders based on first experience, a regression adjustment (control) for previous private-sector executive experience can “block” confounding causal pathways (Morgan & Winship, 2007, p. 67). Adjusting for previous private-sector experience in our models, therefore, remedied selection bias. However, if selection effects did not exist or were small, including later private-sector experiences as a control could have downward biased the coefficient of imprinting because later experiences partially mediate the impact of early imprinting. As it is highly plausible to expect selection effects when studying change in executive positions, we expected upward and downward biases to cancel out each other. We could not ascertain if selection biases were substantial or small and therefore opted for a conservative estimate by including later experiences as controls.

For every public director, we reconstructed their past executive career (e.g., starting and finishing dates of each directorial jobs) to determine whether the executive position they had *before* starting their present public-sector executive job was in the private sector. Directors without a previous executive job were coded as missing values. Aggregating this information to the organizational level, we obtained a variable indicating the proportion of public board members whose previous executive job was in the private sector.

Average age of board members

We controlled for directors' average age per year per public organization, as older management teams may be less

open to organizational change (for an overview, see Tarus & Aime, 2014).

Female directors on the board

We controlled for gender composition because of evidence of differences in the decision making of male and female organizational leaders (e.g., DiTomaso & Hooijberg, 1996; Millward & Freeman, 2002; Sonfield et al., 2001). We used a dummy indicating the director's gender (0 = male, 1 = female) and calculated the proportion of female directors per year per public organization.

Maximum tenure on the board

We calculated the number of years each public director worked at their current organization. The variable reflects the number of years of the board member with the longest organizational tenure on the board. Controlling for tenure addressed potential confounding because of the embeddedness of directors (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006). Longer-serving board members could negatively influence the adoption of a contested practice and may also be less likely to hire directors with a different background.

Size of the board

We controlled for the number of directors per public organization, as larger boards could constrain strategic change (Tarus & Aime, 2014).

Organization size

We controlled for organization size, as many studies emphasize a link between organizational size, complexity, and the adoption of innovations (for an overview, see Damanpour, 1992). We defined organization size as the number of employees. We excluded organizations with fewer than 10 employees, as we believe that personal relations may influence employment strategy in small-sized organizations.

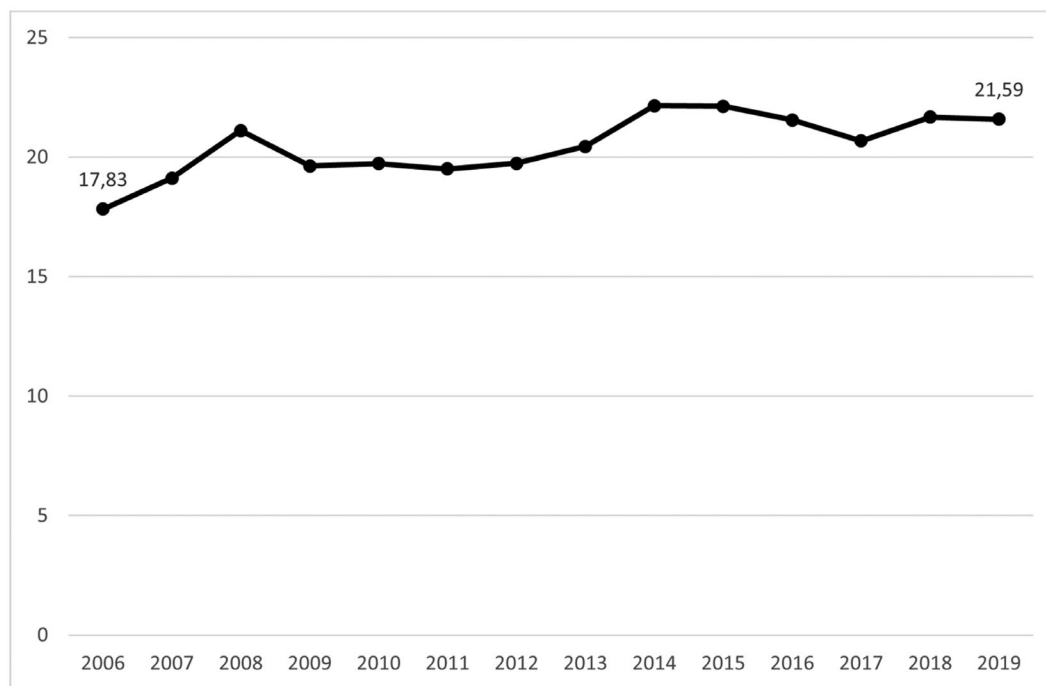
Organizational events

We controlled for organizational demographic events within a year that could influence board change and an organization's employment practices. We created dummies (0 = no, 1 = yes) for four organizational events: (1) birth of an organization, meaning that the organization first appeared that year; (2) death/collapse/combo birth and death of an organization, meaning that the observed year is the last time this organization appeared

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics of the variables in our dataset.^a

	Observations	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Proportion of temporary workers	29,031	0.206	0.171	2.382	10.226
Directors' early private-sector experience (proportion)	29,031	0.497	0.396	0.093	1.442
Directors' last private-sector experience (proportion)	18,498	0.846	0.310	-1.896	5.179
Average age of management team members	29,031	52.741	6.785	-0.258	2.412
Female directors (proportion)	29,031	0.230	0.304	1.279	3.719
Maximal tenure in management team	29,031	7.778	5.699	1.833	8.284
Organization size	29,031	245.220	545.554	6.841	71.356
Organization size (log)	29,031	2.507	1.350	0.371	2.615
Board size	29,031	3.560	2.95	1.182	4.042
Type of organization (0 = no, 1 = yes)					
Fully public	8941 (30.8%)				
Hybrid	20,090 (69.2%)				
Organizational events (0 = did not happen, 1 = did happen)					
Birth	469 (1.6%)				
Death/collapse/combination birth and death	170 (0.5%)				
Split/merge/takeover	695 (2.3%)				
Varia/restructuring	226 (0.7%)				
Observations	29,031				
Average number of public organizations per year	2113				

^aMinimum and maximum values cannot be included here due to identification risk.

**FIGURE 1** Percentage of temporary employment in Dutch public organizations.

in the records (0 = no, 1 = yes); (3) the organization splits, merges with another organization, or is taken over by another organization; (4) the organization restructures.

We conducted additional analyses adding a dummy variable indicating the event of a new member joining

the board team of a public organization to see whether personnel change in the board, rather than director background, influences the adoption of temporary employment. We included this variable as a control variable, but it did not alter the results of our analyses presented in this

article. For the sake of model parsimony, we decided to omit this variable from the final analyses.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of all the variables in our dataset. We included values for skewness and kurtosis to check the need for adjustments if variables were highly skewed. Organization size shows a severe left-skewed distribution because of several organizations with many employees. In the analyses, we therefore used the log of organization size.

Figure 1 shows the proportion of temporary employment in all public organizations between 2006 and 2019. The figure shows that in 2006, the proportion of public employees with a temporary contract was already relatively high at 17.83%. This increased to 21.59% in 2019. We found no significant differences in the development of temporary employment rates between fully public and hybrid organizations.

Analysis

Our data required the use of fixed-effects regression models, including organization and year fixed effects (Wooldridge, 2015). Organization fixed effects controlled for possible time-invariant heterogeneity among organizations (e.g., period of organizational establishment, industry in which organizations operate) that may impact hiring of directors with specific characteristics and the use of employment practices. We also included year fixed effects to eliminate the impact of common temporal shocks (e.g., political cycle changes, changing economic conditions, changing labor laws). Our analyses utilized within-organization variation in the predictors and outcomes that was specific to the organization and not explained by common trends that may affect all organizations. Not all organizations had measurements for each year, resulting in an unbalanced dataset, but the fixed-effects estimation routines we used (Stata's *xtreg*) make the necessary adjustments and provide robust results when dealing with unbalanced data (Wooldridge, 2010, p. 830; Wooldridge, 2015, p. 447). While fixed-effects analysis is highly suited for our data, this strategy does come with limitations, such as a lower statistical power (Hill et al., 2020). Most important to our application are, however, omitted variable bias by time-varying confounders. As a (quasi)-experimental design was not possible, we took substantial effort to control for plausible time-varying characteristics. Nevertheless, we cannot entirely rule out that there are non-observed characteristics that we do not account for in our analyses.

Board compositional changes (e.g., new directors bringing in private-sector executive experience) do not instantly influence an organization's employment practice. Strategic decisions on employment practices may involve planning and negotiations, and their effect takes time to appear. We therefore lagged our variables

containing information on directors' private-sector experience by 2 years (T-2). We also considered that our control variables pertaining to board composition (age, gender, maximal tenure, board size) may influence the decision to hire someone from the private sector. To control for such selection effects, we lagged these control variables by 3 years (T-3). As a check, we ran our analyses with a one-year lag for our explanatory variables, and 2-year lag for the control variables (results not shown). As expected, these models show a weaker effect for imprinting, and poorer model fit.

All our models included the control variables. We used the log of organization size in our analysis to adjust for the left-skewed distribution because of a few organizations with many employees. To test our second hypothesis, we included an interaction term between the type of organization (0 = fully public, 1 = hybrid) and directors' early private-sector experience (proportion). Including an interaction effect requires that the main effect of both variables to be included in the model (Agresti & Finlay, 2014, p. 343). However, the main effect for the type of organization is omitted from our results, as fixed-effects analysis only allows the inclusion of variables that change over time (Wooldridge, 2015, p. 435). It is, however, possible to interact a time-constant variable with a variable that changes over time.

All models were checked for multicollinearity using variance inflation factor values, and we found no issues (Agresti & Finlay, 2014). Our analyses included fully robust standard errors and test statistics by clustering to reduce bias due to heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation in our data (Wooldridge, 2015, p. 459). All analyses were conducted in Stata 16.1.

RESULTS

Table 2 presents the results of a panel regression with organization and year fixed effects, with the proportion of temporary employment as the dependent variable. Model 1 includes directors' early private-sector experience and all control variables (with the exception of previous private-sector executive experience, the most likely confounder). We found that a change in early private-sector experience on the board of directors was positively associated with an increased use of temporary employment in the organization ($p < .05$). Model 2 shows that directors' previous private-sector executive experience positively influenced the proportion of temporary contracts in a public organization; however, the effect was very small and statistically insignificant when early private sector experience was not included in the model ($p > .05$; $b = .001$). When we included directors' early private-sector experience, total private-sector executive experience, and all other controls together in the model (model 3), the significant positive effect of the early private-sector

TABLE 2 Linear fixed-effects regression results for public organizations' use of temporary employment contracts^a

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Directors' early private-sector experience (proportion)	.015* (.006)		.017* (.009)	.015 (.026)
Directors' last private-sector experience (proportion)		.001 (.007)	-.003 (.008)	-.004 (.008)
Directors' early private-sector experience (proportion) × hybrid organization (0 = no, 1 = yes)				.003 (.024)
Average age of board members	<-.001 (<.001)	<-.001 (<.001)	<-.001 (<.001)	<-.001 (<.001)
Female directors (proportion)	-.003 (<.001)	-.002 (.008)	-.001 (.009)	-.002 (.009)
Maximal tenure in board	<-.001 (<.001)	<-.001 (<.001)	<-.001 (<.001)	<-.001 (<.001)
Organization size (log)	.031** (<.001)	.019 (.012)	.020 (.012)	.020 (.012)
Board size	.001 (<.001)	<.001 (<.001)	<.001 (<.001)	<.001 (<.001)
Event—death/collapse/combo birth death	.031 (.029)	-.041** (.010)	-.042** (.010)	-.042** (.011)
Event—split/merge/takeover	.002 (.005)	<-.001 (<.001)	<-.001 (<.001)	<-.001 (<.001)
Event—varia/restructure	-.008 (.008)	-.013 (.010)	-.013 (.010)	-.013 (.010)
Adjusted R^2	.699	.726	.727	.727
Observations	20,418	12,815	12,815	12,815
Number of organizations	2469	1881	1881	1881

Note: Models include organization and year (2006–2019) fixed effects. Fully-robust standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

^aThe main effect for type of organization: hybrid (0 = no, 1 = yes) is omitted due to the variable having no variance over time.

executive experience persisted ($p < .05$; $b = .017$). To interpret the effect size, we imagined a board of 10 members where a director with a private imprint joined. Two years later, the proportion of temporary employment increased by 1.5%. We did not see a significant positive effect of total private-sector executive experience on the adoption of temporary employment practices. We thus found support for our first hypothesis that early-career private sector experience in management teams impacts contested practice adoption in public organizations. These results were robust to controlling for selection effects (e.g., recruitment of directors with recent private-sector experience and other compositional features of the board that impact hiring decisions). Of the control variables, we only found one organizational event that negatively influenced temporary employment in public organizations (death/collapse/combo birth death of an organization) ($p < .01$; $b = -.042$).

To test our second hypothesis, we include an interaction between directors' early private management experience and hybrid versus "fully" public organizations. The results are shown in model 4. We found private career imprints of directors to have a slightly stronger influence on the adoption in hybrid organizations than in "fully" public organizations ($b = .003$); however, the result was not statistically significant ($p > .05$). We cannot conclude that hybrid organizations moderate the relationship between private imprints and the adoption of temporary employment in public organizations. We found no evidence for our second hypothesis. We conducted additional exploratory analyses (see Table A1 in Appendix A) to determine whether private imprints are distinct from hybrid organizational imprints. We did not find evidence

that hybrid imprints impact adoption of temporary employment in Dutch public organizations.

Robustness checks

We conducted several additional analyses to ensure our findings were robust. First, we employed the fractional regression method suitable for modeling proportions as outcomes as a robustness check. As standard software does not facilitate fixed-effects fractional regression, we controlled for each firm by including a dummy variable for each category. The results strongly resemble the linear models (Table B1 in Appendix B). We report the latter because they allow for higher computational efficiency and more straightforward interpretations.

Second, to investigate the possibility of autocorrelation bias, we included our dependent variable (T-3) as a control variable (Table C1 in Appendix C). These results do not alter our conclusions from our main analyses.

Finally, there may be a discontinuity of the effect of directorate imprint on temporary work use if organizations strive for a flexible component of approximately 20% of their employees. Above this threshold, there could be additional barriers to implementing flexible employment and to imprinting having an impact. Appendix D (Tables D1 and D2) shows models with an interaction term between our explanatory variables and (1) whether an organization's proportion of temporary employment was under 20% at the beginning of the observation period, and (2) after the organization exceeded the 20% threshold (lagged with 2 years as directorate imprints). There is no evidence of a threshold effect in these models.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In recent decades, “hard” HRM practices popularized in business settings have become a staple features of public employment. This diffusion has occurred despite the poor “fit” of these practices with traditional notions and practices of public employment, such as secure jobs and life-long employment, triggering disapproval and contestation from external and internal stakeholders. In line with recent efforts in organizational scholarship to understand organization-level and agentic processes constituting the “microfoundations” of institutional change (e.g., Powell & Rerup, 2017; Ruotsalainen, 2019), we provided an actor-focused account of contested practice adoption in the public sector. Focusing on the use of temporary employment, we studied whether directors’ early career experiences—imprints—in fields where contested practices have legitimacy can further our understanding of how such practices overcome contestation. We used unique, linked employer–employee administrative data from the Netherlands to capture directorate careers, and our longitudinal analyses show that a higher prevalence of early-career private sector imprinting on boards of directors increases the extent of temporary employment use within public-sector organizations.

Our main finding is in line with accounts of the growing influence of organizational leaders in the public sector (e.g., Boyne, 2002; Boyne et al., 2011; James et al., 2021), owing to the influx of executives with diverse past experiences to the private sector (e.g., Boardman et al., 2010; Frederiksen & Hansen, 2017) and growing managerial autonomy (e.g., Fiss & Zajac, 2004; Hwang & Colyvas, 2019; Kraatz et al., 2002; Kraatz & Moore, 2002). While existing studies on “publicness fit” document how new public leaders’ backgrounds impact organizational performance (James et al., 2021; Petrovsky et al., 2015), our results show the transformational influence on organizational practices. Processes that follow public-sector reforms (Knies & Steijn, 2021) generate more room for personal influence and agentic processes in public organizations, which have traditionally only been attributed to the private sector (Morales et al., 2013). The findings also imply that research on public-sector HRM practices would benefit from complementing its current focus on organization-level strategic and organizational fit (Boselie et al., 2021; Wood, 1999) and macro-level environmental contingencies (Boxall & Purcell, 2000) as drivers of HRM practice adoption in public organizations with studies on the influence of key organizational decision makers. A related literature in sociology on the nature and origins of the changing employment relationship (Cappelli, 1998; Kalleberg, 2011; Spreitzer et al., 2017) is similarly focused on macro-economic processes and institutions (e.g., Bidwell, 2013; Cobb, 2015). It has paid less attention to organizational processes and

agency that explain the spread of contested employment practices.

We suggest three main avenues for future research that link public-sector decision makers to contested organizational practices and that have the potential to overcome limitations of scope and data in our current study such as Individual-level cognitive and motivational processes of imprinting and contested practice adoption, the interplay of imprints with relational processes of organizational practice adoption, and variation by organizational and institutional characteristics.

Cognitive and motivational processes

Our study built upon, but could not directly observe, cognitive and motivational processes of how directors with private sector imprints interpret and evaluate contested practices. Similarly, we only theoretically established how the experiences and knowledge acquired during imprinting motivate leaders to keep these practices in their leadership repertoire. A fruitful avenue could be to study managers’ own recollections of the process of deciding on using practices that are contested in the public sector. This approach would illuminate how managers draw on their experiences to justify the use of these practices (Bisel et al., 2017; Söderlund & Borg, 2018). In addition, managerial narratives could shed light on the cognitive process of how managers reconcile tensions involved in using these practices.

While our study shows how imprints developed during a key transition period (e.g., first executive experience) impact future organizational outcomes, it is important to note that individuals can experience several transition periods during their lives (McEvily et al., 2012). For directors, studies note that imprints do not only develop during their professional career but also stem from educational or social class background (Kish-Gephart & Campbell, 2015; Sanders & Tuschke, 2007). A worthwhile avenue for future research is to make the contextual and internal processes explicit that underlie learned behavior and see how early imprints influence the development of new ones (Cowen et al., 2022).

Relational processes

Beyond the individual decision maker, imprints may intersect with relational processes and shape the implementation of contested practices in public-sector organizations. While the cognitive features of board directors can impact board functioning, studies document how relational equality and degree of information sharing between main actors (e.g., directors) also play a large role (Cowen et al., 2022). Earlier research suggests that organizational

practices are adopted (and enacted) as “negotiated orders” following relational and interactional processes between organizational participants at and below executive level (e.g., worker’s councils, members of the directorate) (Hallett, 2010). It could be fruitful to compare the leadership of organizations with public and private sector influence and study how imprinted experiences and leadership repertoires enter the negotiation process of adopting employment practices (or other contested HR provisions, such as performance pay) and the final form these practices take when implemented. An important and theoretically relevant consequence could be that contested practices transform during the negotiation process of implementation, forming unique adaptations “on the ground” that incorporate elements from both the origin and the destination environments (Johnson, 2007; Suddaby & Foster, 2017).

Organizational and institutional variation

We advocate further research into the embeddedness of agentic influences on organizational practice adoption in different types of organizations and institutions (Breugh & Hammerschmid, 2021; Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2010; Paauwe & Farndale, 2017). In the current study, we explored variation by types of public-sector organizations and did not find differences between fully public and hybrid organizations, which may be related to countervailing buffering and reinforcing mechanisms. We would need more fine-grained data on decision-making processes within the boards of directorates to disentangle these mechanisms. A potentially interesting source of organizational variation could be distinguishing first and late adopters, which we could not undertake because of our data being limited to an observation period between 2006 and 2019. Organizations that are the first to violate norms and values in an institutional field are the most susceptible to opposition in the field (Sanders & Tuschke, 2007), but it is less known to what degree imprints play a role in “pioneering” new and contested practices in the private sector. More importantly, it was beyond the scope of our single-country study to capture institutional variation in the processes we studied across administrative traditions (i.e., the distinction between sovereign and model employer; see Bach & Kessler, 2021; Peters, 2021) and different degrees of centralization and individualization of decision making (Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2010). These institutional influences are relevant to consider in future theorizing on imprinting mechanisms, as they potentially shape the contestedness of private-sector practices in public organizations, in addition to the recruitment process and values of public-sector executives and their executive decision-making latitude. For example, countries following the sovereign model tradition, such as France, emphasize an active role of the state and stronger attachment to public employment traditions. Here, civil servants enjoy a distinctive status

and employment, which continues to reflect Weberian principles (Bach & Bordogna, 2011). Temporary employment is expected to face more contestation in the public sector in France, where it violates both the image of public employers and the status and lifelong employment tradition associated with civil servants. In addition, administrative traditions impact the recruitment channels of leaders (e.g., institutions and typical career ladders) and their value orientations, which may intersect with early-career imprints in the process of decision making.

The processes we studied are also embedded in institutionalized participatory decision making (e.g., employee representation and workers council) and systems that vary in their degree of centralized decision making. These institutions will likely shape how strongly the executive level (and imprints of directors) can influence practice adoption. The Netherlands leans toward more decentralized decision making, characterized by involvement of lower-level organizational actors and less autonomy of individual leaders (Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2010), which may explain the modest effect sizes in our study. However, even in decentralized HRM systems, lower-level management is involved in decisions on HRM practices and employment strategy. Therefore, decentralization does not directly translate to individualized lower-level decision making; rather, lower levels of management participate by providing input in strategizing on HRM and employment practices (Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2010). We can still reasonably expect high-level decision making—and, as we theorized, imprints—to be consequential for the overall degree of temporary employment use. While it was beyond the scope of our research to investigate the role of institutionalized forms of stakeholder involvement in decision making, we see it as a fruitful avenue for research on private-sector imprinting and contested practice adoption.

It is important to note that our study only focused on temporary employment, but there are many more instances of “contested” private-sector practices that are contested in public-sector organizations, such as the use of performance indicators (Van Dooren et al., 2015). While temporary employment is highly contested and polarizes organizations and management teams, our research calls for further, preferably comparative, research on practices with different degrees of contestedness in the field.

In sum, our article contributes to endeavors to understand adoption of institutionally contested practices in public organizations. Our results support and further encourage the growing interest in the role of organizational leaders in organizational change (Carberry & Zajac, 2021) and the study of contested practices (Sanders & Tuschke, 2007). We have furthered the understanding of the adoption of contested practices by incorporating the mechanism of imprinting (Marquis & Tilcsik, 2013). We encourage scholars to explore specific mechanisms by which individual pasts affect the organizational present.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ CBS microdata is non-public. Under certain conditions, the microdata is accessible for statistical and scientific research. For further information: microdata@cbs.nl.
- ² Based on own calculations using non-public microdata from Statistics Netherlands. The average proportion of employees on a temporary employment contract in Dutch public organizations in 2019 was 21.59%.
- ³ We conducted an exploratory analysis to address the hybrid-imprint directors. The results can be found in Appendix A (Table A1).

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APPENDIX A

TABLE A1 Linear fixed-effects regression results for public organizations' use of temporary employment contracts—exploratory analyses for hybrid-sector imprint.^a

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Directors' early hybrid experience (proportion)	−.017 (.020)		.015 (.032)	.018 (.035)
Directors' last hybrid experience (proportion)		.004 (.007)	.008 (.007)	.009 (.007)
Directors' early private-sector experience (proportion)	.001 (.019)	.018* (.009)	.033 (.034)	.032 (.034)
Directors' early hybrid experience (proportion) × Hybrid organization (0 = no, 1 = yes)				−.004 (.017)
Average age of board members	<−.001 (<.001)	<−.001 (<.001)	<−.001 (<.001)	<−.001 (<.001)
Female directors (proportion)	−.003 (.006)	−.002 (.008)	−.001 (.009)	−.002 (.009)
Maximal tenure in board	<−.001 (<.001)	<−.001 (<.001)	<−.001 (<.001)	<−.001 (<.001)
Organization size (log)	.032** (.009)	.020 (.012)	.021 (.012)	.020 (.012)
Board size	.001 (<.001)	.001 (<.001)	.001 (<.001)	.001 (<.001)
Event—death/collapse/combo birth death	.030 (.029)	−.041** (.010)	−.041** (.010)	−.041** (.011)
Event—split/merge/takeover	.002 (.005)	−.001 (.005)	−.001 (.005)	−.001 (.005)
Event—varia/restructure	−.008 (.008)	−.013 (.010)	−.013 (.010)	−.013 (.010)
Adjusted R^2	.699	.726	.727	.727
Observations	20,418	12,815	12,815	12,815
Number of organizations	2469	1881	1881	1881

Note: Models include organization and year (2006–2019) fixed effects. Fully-robust standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

^aThe main effect for type of organization: hybrid (0 = no, 1 = yes) is omitted due to the variable having no variance over time.

APPENDIX B

TABLE B1 Fractional regression results for public organizations' use of temporary employment contracts.^a

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Directors' early private-sector experience (proportion)	.101* (.042)		.115* [†] (.060)	.098 (.182)
Directors' last private-sector experience (proportion)		.001 (.048)	-.027 (.052)	-.029 (.052)
Directors' early private-sector experience (proportion) × Hybrid organization (0 = no, 1 = yes)				.024 (.167)
Average age of board members	-.003 (.003)	-.003 (.004)	-.003 (.003)	-.003 (.004)
Female directors (proportion)	-.023 (.045)	-.014 (.060)	-.008 (.059)	-.010 (.058)
Maximal tenure in board	-.004 (.003)	-.003 (.004)	-.002 (.004)	-.002 (.004)
Organization size (log)	.197** (.061)	.116 (.083)	.122 (.083)	.122 (.083)
Board size	.010 (.005)	.002 (.006)	.004 (.006)	.003 (.006)
Event—death/collapse/combination birth death	.230 (.229)	-.241** (.025)	-.247** (.024)	-.258** (.033)
Event—split/merge/takeover	.015 (.037)	.001 (.037)	-.002 (.037)	-.002 (.037)
Event—varia/restructure	-.074 (.068)	-.112 (.089)	-.120 (.089)	-.121 (.088)
McFadden's pseudo R^2	.107	.111	.111	.111
Observations	20,574	13,022	13,022	13,022
Number of organizations	2777	2776	2776	2776

Note: Models control for organization and year (2006–2019) with dummy fixed effects. Fully-robust standard errors in parentheses.

** $p < .05$; * $p < .01$.

[†]Marginally significant ($p = .054$).

^aThe main effect for type of organization: hybrid (0 = no, 1 = yes) is omitted due to the variable having no variance over time.

APPENDIX C

TABLE C1 Linear fixed-effects regression results for public organizations' use of temporary employment contracts—robustness analysis of controlling for lagged dependent variable.^a

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Directors' early private-sector experience (proportion)	.015* (.006)		.017* (.008)	.014 (.026)
Directors' last private-sector experience (proportion)		.001 (.007)	-.003 (.008)	-.003 (.007)
Directors' early private-sector experience (proportion) × hybrid organization (0 = no, 1 = yes)				.004 (.024)
Proportion temporary employees in organizations (T-3)	.030 (.020)	.023 (.026)	.023 (.026)	.023 (.027)
Average age of board members	<-.001 (<.001)	<-.001 (.001)	<-.001 (<.001)	-.001 (.001)
Female directors (proportion)	-.003 (.007)	-.002 (.009)	-.001 (.009)	-.001 (.008)
Maximal tenure in board	-.001 (<.001)	<-.001 (.001)	<.001 (<.001)	<-.001 (.001)
Organization size (log)	.030** (.008)	.018 (.012)	.019 (.012)	.019 (.012)
Board size	.001 (<.001)	<.001 (<.001)	.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)
Event—death/collapse/combination birth death	.031 (.030)	-.040** (.010)	-.041** (.009)	-.042** (.011)
Event—split/merge/takeover	.002 (.005)	<-.001 (.005)	-.001 (.008)	-.001 (.005)
Event—varia/restructure	-.008 (.008)	-.013 (.010)	-.013 (.010)	-.015 (.010)
Adjusted R^2	.699	.727	.726	.726
Observations	20,418	12,815	12,815	12,815
Number of organizations	2469	1881	1881	1881

Note: Models include organization and year (2006–2019) fixed effects. Fully-robust standard errors in parentheses.

** $p < .05$; * $p < .01$.

^aThe main effect for type of organization: hybrid (0 = no, 1 = yes) is omitted due to the variable having no variance over time.

APPENDIX D

TABLE D1 Linear fixed-effects regression results for public organizations' use of temporary employment contracts—robustness analysis of flexibility threshold at first observation.^a

	Model 1	Model 2
Directors' early private-sector experience (proportion)	.037* (.016)	.018* (.009)
Directors' last private-sector experience (proportion)	-.004 (.008)	-.012 (.014)
Directors' early private-sector experience (proportion) × first observation temporary employment under 20% (0 = no, 1 = yes)	-.027 (.018)	
Directors' last private-sector experience (proportion) × first observation temporary employment under 20% (0 = no, 1 = yes)		.011 (.016)
Average age of board members	<-.001 (<.001)	<-.001 (.001)
Female directors (proportion)	-.001 (.009)	-.001 (.009)
Maximal tenure in board	<-.001 (<.001)	<-.001 (<.001)
Organization size (log)	.021 (.012)	.020 (.012)
Board size	.001 (<.001)	.001 (<.001)
Event—death/collapse/combination birth death	-.042** (.009)	-.041** (.010)
Event—split/merge/takeover	<-.001 (.005)	-.001 (.005)
Event—varia/restructure	-.013 (.010)	-.013 (.010)
Adjusted R^2	.726	.727
Observations	12,815	12,815
Number of organizations	1881	1881

Note: Models include organization and year (2006–2019) fixed effects. Fully-robust standard errors in parentheses.

** $p < .05$; * $p < .01$.

^aThe main effect for first observation temporary employment under 20% (0 = no, 1 = yes) is omitted due to the variable having no variance over time.

TABLE D2 Linear fixed-effects regression results for public organizations' use of temporary employment contracts—robustness analysis of flexibility threshold (2-year lag).

	Model 1	Model 2
Directors' early private-sector experience (proportion)	.002 (.013)	.017 [†] (.009)
Directors' last private-sector experience (proportion)	-.003 (.008)	-.006 (.010)
Organization's temporary employment exceeds 20% (0 = no, 1 = yes)	-.001 (.007)	.007 (.010)
Directors' early private-sector experience (proportion) × organization's temporary employment exceeds 20% (0 = no, 1 = yes)	-.023 (.014)	
Directors' last private-sector experience (proportion) × organization's temporary employment exceeds 20% (0 = no, 1 = yes)		.004 (.010)
Average age of board members	<-.001 (.001)	<-.001 (.001)
Female directors (proportion)	-.001 (.009)	-.001 (.009)
Maximal tenure in board	<-.001 (.001)	<-.001 (.001)
Organization size (log)	.020 (.012)	.020 (.012)
Board size	.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)
Event—death/collapse/combination birth death	-.042** (.009)	-.042** (.009)
Event—split/merge/takeover	-.001 (.005)	-.001 (.005)
Event—varia/restructure	-.014 (.010)	-.013 (.010)
Adjusted R^2	.727	.727
Observations	12,815	12,815
Number of organizations	1881	1881

Note: Models include organization and year (2006–2019) fixed effects. Fully-robust standard errors in parentheses. ** $p < .05$; * $p < .01$; [†]marginally significant ($p = .053$).