



Motivational Differences? Comparing Private, Public and Hybrid Organizations

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Accepted: 12 January 2021 / Published online: 13 February 2021
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Abstract

While studies of motivational differences between managers in private and public organizations proliferate, few have compared managers' motivation in hybrid organizations to the motivation of managers in private and public organizations. This lack of studies is surprising, as corporatization has been an important trend in the public sector over the last decades. Using a large survey covering almost 3000 managers from a representative sample of organizations in Norway, this study fills this hole by comparing how managers in hybrid organizations differ on extrinsic, intrinsic and prosocial motivation from their counterparts in public and private organizations.

Keywords Motivation · Managers · Public-private comparison · Hybrid organizations · Norway

The interest in what motivates public servants has been central to public administration research since the writings of Max Weber and Woodrow Wilson. Consequently, empirical studies on motivational differences between the public and private sector abounds, especially if we include the current interest in Public Service Motivation (PSM) (Andersen et al. 2011, 2013; Andersen and Pedersen 2013; Baarspul and Wilderom 2011; Brewer and Brewer 2011; Bullock et al. 2015; Crewson 1997; Frank and Lewis 2004; Jacobsen et al. 2014; Kjeldsen and Jacobsen 2013; Rainey 2014; Rainey and Bozeman 2000; Rainey and Chun 2005; Wright 2001; Wright et al. 2017). Still, all these studies base their empirical research on a dichotomous distinction between the public and the private (Bozeman 2013; Buelens and Van den Broeck 2007; Lee and Wilkins 2011; Ritz et al. 2016; Wright 2001).

This stands in contrast to the continuous “hybridization” of the public sector, with an increasing amount of organizations that find themselves somewhere between the public

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and the private (Emery and Giaouque 2005; Johanson and Vakkuri 2018; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2017). Many previously public organizations have been “corporatized” or transformed into public businesses, partly removed from direct political control through the construction of partly autonomous boards and a strong focus on income from sales (Andrews et al. 2020; Bel and Fageda 2010; Ferry et al. 2018; Læg Reid et al. 2013; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2017). Others have been privatized in the sense that they are no longer formally under the political control of an democratically elected council or parliament, but political control is still held through public ownership and – consequently – appointment of board representatives (Jacobsen 2016).

Given the fact that such hybrid organizational forms have become so common in most countries, and that these organizations are central in production of important public services, it is a lack of studies on the motivations of managers of these organization. In fact, there seems to be a more general lack of studies focusing on how individuals in hybrid organizations act and think (Grossi et al. 2017:383).

To define hybridity, this study relies on the basic notion of *publicness*, or the degree to what an organization is exposed to political and economic authority (Bozeman 1987). This approach makes it possible to compare not only public and private organizations, but also “hybrid” forms that mix institutional logics in different ways. Three well established notions of motivation – extrinsic, intrinsic and prosocial – are used to see if managers in hybrid organizations diverge in their motivational focus from managers in more “pure” public and private organizations.

This study is based on a large survey of managers at different hierarchical levels in Norway ($N=2488$, response rate = 71%). Four different types of organizations are compared: “pure” public (owned by democratically elected representatives, financed over public budgets), “pure” private (owned by private investors, financed through market transactions), public business (owned by democratically elected representatives, financed through market transactions), and public/private shareholder companies (owned by both political representatives and private investors, financed through market transactions).

Motivation in Context – Publicness and Hybrid Forms

Organizational hybridity can take on many forms, but in general it refers to organizations that combine two or more institutional logics, or “(...) taken-for-granted social prescriptions that represent shared understandings of what constitutes legitimate goals and how they may be pursued (Battilana and Dorado 2010:1420). Examples may include combinations of non-profit with for-profit organizations (Doherty et al. 2014), public organizations and voluntary sector (Edelenbos et al. 2013), or – as the focus in this study – a mix of public and private sector logics (Bruton et al. 2015).

Bozeman (1987) argues that the difference between public and private should be viewed as a dimensional construct with different degrees of *publicness*. As a consequence, “(...) some organizations are “more public” or “more private” than others and even business firms may be compared on their degree of publicness, just as government agencies can be compared on the basis of their privateness” (Bozeman 2013:176). Publicness is defined along two basic dimensions: political and economic authority (Bozeman 1987). The economic authority dimension refers to the degree to which an

organization is dependent on resources from the *market*. The degree of political or government control constitutes the political authority dimension, and is closely associated with *ownership* and the degree to which the government “owns” an organization (Andrews et al. 2011). Thus, a business will increase its publicness if a government buys shares in it, and a government owned entity will increase its “privateness” if it required to gain some of its income through a market mechanism. The two dimensions can be combined in a grid used to locate specific organizations (Bozeman 2013:177).

Using these two dimensions, we focus on two common hybrids that can be characterized as “corporatization” (Andrews et al. 2020). One is public companies, organizations that are fully owned by public institutions, but still strongly exposed to market mechanisms as most or all of the organization’s income is expected to be generated through sales of goods and/or services. The other is shared ownership, usually organizations regarded as private (for instance banks or producers of energy or transport), but partly owned by public institutions. Representatives of public institutions are thus represented in the governing organs (i.e. boards as most of them are shareholder companies), reflecting their ownership share, while income is generated through the market. These are organizations that must balance and combine two logics: on the one hand as a provider of a central public service and thus of public value, while on the other hand complying with the market logic of sales, competition and income generation.

Publicness and Motivation

Studies of motivation are usually founded in a distinction between “(...) *intrinsic motivation*, which refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and *extrinsic motivation*, which refers to doing something because it leads to separable outcome.” (Ryan and Deci 2000:55). Intrinsic motivation is connected to the work itself, and to the joy and/or challenge a person finds in doing a task. Thus, intrinsic motivation may be expected to vary between different tasks, between individuals performing the same tasks, and between different designs of individual jobs (Oldham and Hackman 2010). Extrinsic motivation is based on the ability to define an outcome of an activity, and the coupling of rewards to that outcome. Accordingly, motivation does not stem from the task itself, but from the rewards connected to how well an activity is conducted (Grant et al. 2011; Ryan and Deci 2000).

While theories of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation focuses on the job, the person executing the job, and rewards connected to it, prosocial motivation shifts the focus to who benefits from the task being performed (Everett 1995; Grant 2007). Currently, a strong link has been established between the notion of prosocial motivation, and the more recent concept of “Public Service motivation” (PSM) (Perry and Vandenabeele 2015; Perry and Wise 1990). PSM was at the start rather exclusively focused on motivation to work in the public sector, and – as a natural consequence – the theory and research on PSM has been developed with a rather one-eyed focus on leaders and employees in public sector organizations (Bozeman and Su 2015; Kjeldsen 2014; Kjeldsen and Jacobsen 2013). Using PSM to empirically compare public managers to managers in private organizations becomes difficult as the measurement of PSM contains topics that are of no or little relevance to managers in a private organization (Perry 1996; Perry et al. 2010; Steijn and van der Voet 2019). Still, prosocial motivation overlaps clearly with the concept of Public

Sector Motivation (PSM), especially on the dimensions of self-sacrifice and compassion (Marvel and Resh 2019; Perry et al. 2010; Wright et al. 2013). This is reflected in a more recent, generic definition of PSM as “(...) a general, altruistic motivation to serve the interests of a community of people, a state, a nation or humankind” (Rainey and Steinbauer 1999:417). Wright et al. (2013: 210) even indicate that pro-social motivation and PSM “(...) may represent the same underlying concept”. Perry et al. (2010) furthermore claim that there has been a convergence between PSM and prosocial motivation in their strong focus on altruism. Furthermore, they also state that “Given the blurring of boundaries between sectors and differences in the location of the functions of government, we do not assert that PSM is uniquely found in government organizations” (op.cit.:682).

Studies comparing motivational differences between public and private organizations seem to conclude that managers in public organizations are less geared towards extrinsic motivators like wage and bonuses (Buelens and Van den Broeck 2007; Crewson 1997; Kjeldsen and Jacobsen 2013; Wright 2001), putting somewhat more emphasis on intrinsic motivators like job variety and challenge (Buelens and Van den Broeck 2007; Frank and Lewis 2004; Khojasteh 1993; Georgellis et al. 2011; Korac et al. 2019:814; Mergel et al. forthcoming), and value prosocial motivators higher (Bullock et al. 2015; Chetkovich 2003; Clerkin and Cogburn 2012; Hinna et al. forthcoming; Holt 2018; Kjeldsen 2012; Kjeldsen and Hansen 2018; Perry and Vandenaabeele 2015; Rainey and Bozeman 2000:460). These differences are explained both by mechanisms of attraction, selection and socialization. Private organizations will probably attract and select persons with stronger emphasis on extrinsic motivators like salary and bonuses, while a constant focus on financial returns will reinforce this focus once inside the organization. On the other hand, public organizations will probably attract and select persons more focused on prosocial elements, and this will be reinforced through socialization over time working in a non-market environment (Kjeldsen and Jacobsen 2013; Kroll and Vogel 2018).

How then, can the organizational context of hybridity influence motivation? One of the arguments for “corporatization” – changing public organizations into hybrids like public business or public-private partnerships – is to make the organization more “market-like”, with emphasis on productivity and efficiency, adaption to the market, and competition (Andrews et al. 2020). This may result in a blurring of sectorial lines that “(...) negate the distinctiveness of public sector employment by emphasising market logics (and) can act as a counterforce to the public service motivation attraction linkage.” (Hinna et al. forthcoming:7). Thus, if people choose sector on the grounds of their motivation, hybrid organizations may be perceived more like private businesses than public organizations, even if the tasks that are performed by the hybrid organization are aimed at producing public value. No studies have been conducted on how socialization in hybrid organizations influence different types of motivation. Still one should expect, if there is a socialization effect, that the context of hybrid organizations with a stronger focus on markets and economic results will convey signals that will reinforce extrinsic motivators and weaken prosocial motivation.

The previous discussion leads to formulation of the two following hypotheses:

- H1: Managers in hybrid organizations will be more extrinsically motivated than managers in “pure” public organizations, and display more similar levels of extrinsic motivation to managers in “pure” private organizations.

- H2: Managers in hybrid organizations will exhibit weaker prosocial motivation than managers in “pure” public organizations, and display more similar levels of prosocial motivation to managers in “pure” private organizations.

Institution, Job or Individual?

The above discussion is based in a general notion that motivation to a large extent is moulded by institutional context, either through attraction, selection or socialization. Still it is a question if motivation, especially prosocial motivation, is more a function of work content than of institutional context (Andersen et al. 2011; Andersen and Pedersen 2013; Christensen and Wright 2011; Kjeldsen 2012, 2014; Kjeldsen and Jacobsen 2013; Wright 2001; Wright et al. 2017). Some tasks like basic schooling, health care, care for the elderly, psychiatric care, and kindergartens are inherently relational and aimed at helping others (van der Voet and Steijn 2019). People educated and selected to do such work may be highly pro-socially motivated, but do not necessarily care about the institutional context of the task. For instance, working in a private or a public hospital may be regarded as equal, what is important is working with helping people (Andersen and Pedersen 2013). Thus, to distinguish any effect of institutional context (publicness) from task, one need studies that can compare managers and employees across degrees of publicness performing identical tasks. Other studies indicate that job content may explain as much of the variance in motivation as sector (Buelens and Van den Broeck 2007).

The relation between pro-social motivation and institutional context is further complicated by the fact that specific tasks are tightly linked to specific types of educations or professions. It is fairly well known that formal education always will contain a mix of factual knowledge and values (Carr 2006; Jacobsen 2001; Relman 1998). Medics, nurses, teachers, social workers; all have a strong element of professional ethics engrained in their education. For the most, these ethical concerns are focused on the universal duty to help others, no matter what the social or economic resources the recipient of the service possesses. In other educations, different values and norms are conveyed. In his now classic study of European political elites, David Putnam (1977) revealed that elite persons being educated in the technical sciences (like engineering, mathematics or physics) were less focused on democratic ideals like equity, solidarity and participation. The difference was especially significant between persons being educated in the technical science on the one hand, and social sciences on the other. More recently, there has been an intense discussion on the values conveyed in the classic business schools. The argument circles around that teaching theories based on the assumption of egotism also conveys the value of egotism (Evans and Tourish 2017; Ghoshal 2005; Mintzberg 2004). Empirical studies also indicate that business school students are more egotistic than students in other disciplines (Jacobsen 2001). As a consequence, we may find variations in motivation within the same organization depending on the educational background of the respondent.

Finally, motivation may be affected by personal characteristics. The probably most researched characteristic is gender, where the general conclusion seems to be that women are more focused on compassion and helping others – an important element of pro-social motivation (Ryan and Connell 1989) – than men (DeHart-Davis et al. 2006; Einolf 2011). Age is another characteristic that may influence both intrinsic and prosocial motivation.

Most studies indicate that age is positively correlated with empathy, a concept quite similar to prosocial motivation, which again is correlated strongly with prosocial behaviour (Macky et al. 2008). Other studies indicate that intrinsic values of work increases in importance as one ages (Ferssizidis et al. 2010). Finally, we include seniority in the organization as time spent in an organization can be used as an indicator of socialization (Garand et al. 2016).

The Empirical Study

A mail survey was sent to 4108 leaders in Norwegian organizations with more than ten employees during the winter 2011–2012, representing 1716 different organizations drawn randomly from a national register on all registered organizations. The sample of organizations was stratified proportionally according to business and size, and was then selected randomly in proportion of the size of the strata. Within each selected organization, a questionnaire was sent to all persons defined as managers. The initial sample was 4108 leaders, constituting a representative sample of Norwegian leaders. A total of 2910 leaders responded, giving a response rate of 71%. Leaders of trade associations, voluntary organizations and foundations were discarded, leaving a total of 2488 respondents in the current analysis.

Concerning publicness, four types of organizations were defined using register data from the national statistics bureau: (1) privately owned businesses (“pure” private), (2) businesses with shared ownership (both private and public sector owners), (3) publicly owned businesses (both state and local/regional government), and (4) public organizations (“pure” public). As no organization is possible to categorize as pure public or private (Bozeman 1987), the term pure is set between quotation marks.

Indicators of motivation is based on 12 items measuring motivation, with four items measuring each type of motivation. An exploratory factor analysis with all 12 items, where the four items measuring prosocial motivation was entered first (intrinsic motivation second, and extrinsic third), resulted in three distinct factors (prosocial motivation eigenvalue = 4.0, explained variance = 34%; intrinsic motivation eigenvalue = 2.3, explained variance = 19%; extrinsic motivation eigenvalue = 2.0, explained variance = 16%). The three component solution from the exploratory factor analysis was corroborated by a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with a good model fit (RMSA = 0.057, CFI = 0.969), indicating good discriminant validity. The items measuring each motivational type exhibited strong internal consistency (alpha intrinsic = 0.89, extrinsic = 0.83, prosocial = 0.86), and were collapsed into summative scales standardized by dividing on the number of items to retain the original values of 1 through 5.

Table 1 shows the mean differences between organizational types on the three indexes included in the analysis.

The distributions are skewed towards high (positive) values for intrinsic and prosocial motivation, and towards low (negative) values for extrinsic motivation. To obtain somewhat more normally distributed indexes, all three were logarithmically transformed. The transformed variables are used in the following analysis.

Task was controlled for using the sectorial categorization utilized by the national statistical bureau (i.e. ten categories). The manager’s type of education was split into four categories: engineering/natural sciences (including practical training and military training), economy/business (including law), social and humanistic sciences (including teacher’s education), and health/social (including medicine, nursing, social care and

Table 1 One-way ANOVA. Mean values, (standard deviation)

	“Pure” public (<i>n</i> =603)	Public company (<i>n</i> =222)	Shared ownership (<i>n</i> =174)	“Pure” private (<i>n</i> =1445)	F-value (sig)
Intrinsic motivation	4.5 (.5)	4.5 (.5)	4.4 (.6)	4.6 (.6)	2.8 (.04)
Extrinsic motivation	2.1 (.8)	2.2 (.8)	2.4 (.9)	2.3 (.9)	6.2 (.00)
Prosocial motivation	4.3 (.7)	4.1 (.7)	4.0 (.6)	4.1 (.7)	14.0 (.00)

psychology). We also included an indicator on the length of education from mandatory 10-year schooling (coded 1) to more than 4 years of university (coded 5). Gender was coded 1 for men and 2 for women, while age and seniority was measured in years.

Analysis

Table 2 displays the zero-order correlations between the variables. We have omitted the correlations between tasks/sector, between different types of educational background, and between educational background and task/sector as they are less relevant for the main research question. The highest bivariate correlation is .55 between education in health/social disciplines and working in the same sector. This is still far from values indicating that the two variables are measuring the same phenomenon.

The correlations indicate clear differences between all types of organization. Focusing on the hybrid organizations, we see that they are heavily represented in three sectors: oil/gas/energy, transport/communication, and financial services. Hybrid organizations have managers with higher education, and to be educated in the fields of engineering/natural sciences or economy/business administration than their counterparts in the “pure” private organizations. Moreover, the proportion of male managers in hybrid organizations is much higher than in “pure” public organizations. These differences clearly opens up for the possibility that eventual motivational differences also can be caused by differences in sector (or task) and individual characteristics.

Three regressions with the three different types of motivation as dependent variables were conducted. “Pure” private organization is chosen as the reference category for organizational type, “other services” for sector, and “other education” for educational type. All dependent variables are logarithmically transformed. As only the dependent variables are reflective constructs, and all independent variables are observed variables, structural equation (SEM or the like) was not deemed as a relevant statistical technique. Table 3 show the results from the ordinary least square regressions (OLS).

The variance explained in all the equations is rather low, partly reflecting the rather low variance in all three types of motivation. To corroborate the robustness of the findings, we conducted two alternative regressions, one with the original summative indexes as the dependent variables (giving no substantially different results), and another with the regression factor scores. The last analysis is more similar to SEM as the factor scores produces indexes where the individual items are weighted according to their score on the latent variable (Loncke et al. 2018). Using both ordinary regression scores and Bartlett scores, none of these alternative analyses seriously altered the results.

Table 2 Univariate description of, and zero-order correlations (Pearson's r) between, variables in the analysis

	Y ₁	Y ₂	Y ₃	×0	×1	×2	×3
(Y ₁) Intrinsic motivation (log)							
(Y ₂) Extrinsic motivation (log)	-.18**						
(Y ₃) Prosocial motivation (log)	.29**	-.08**					
(×0) "Pure" private	-.04*	.09**	-.09**				
(×1) Shared ownership	-.03	.05*	-.03	-.26**			
(×2) Public company	.03	-.02	-.02	-.30**	-.07**		
(×3) "Pure" public	.02	-.08**	.10**	-.52**	-.13**	-.15**	
Sector: Agriculture	-.01	-.02	.02	-.06**	-.04*	.07**	-.15**
Sector: Oil, gas, energy	-.01	.03	-.06**	-.05*	.15**	.27**	-.15**
Sector: Industry, manufacturing	-.04*	.00	-.06**	.25**	-.01	-.09**	-.21**
Sector: construction	.01	.04*	-.06**	.21**	-.05*	-.01	-.13**
Sector: Trade, tourism	.01	.05*	.00	.23**	-.05**	-.07**	-.15**
Sector: Transport, communication	.00	.04*	-.02	-.05*	-.01	.12**	.06**
Sector: Financial services	.02	.08**	-.03	-.02	.15**	.00	-.10**
Sector: Other services	.03	-.01	.00	.05*	.00	-.02	-.09**
Sector: Education	-.02	-.05**	.02	-.18**	-.06**	-.04	.25**
Sector: Health, social services	.04	-.07**	.11**	-.18**	-.06**	.00	.27**
Edu: Engineering/natural sciences	-.04	-.01	-.06**	.01	.06**	.08**	-.08**
Edu: Economy/business	.01	.09**	-.07**	.03	.08**	-.02	-.09**
Edu: Social/human sciences	.01	-.10**	.02	-.20**	-.06**	-.02	.26**
Edu: Health/social/psychology	.03*	-.08**	.10**	-.12**	-.06**	-.05**	.25**
Length of education	.02	-.05**	-.07**	-.29**	.06**	.04*	.27**
Seniority	.00	-.09**	-.02	-.04*	.00	-.01	.01
Gender (Female=high value)	.11**	-.08**	.13**	-.14**	-.03	-.05**	.19**
Age	.08**	-.17**	.02	-.18**	-.00	.05**	.14**

$N = 2325-2472$. * = sig le .05, ** = sig le .01

The effects of publicness on the three types of motivation is negligible as the only significant effect indicates a stronger emphasis on prosocial motivation in the purely public organizations. Individual characteristics and – to a lesser extent – task characteristics, are the most influential factors in explaining variation in all types of motivation.

Discussion

Initially, one can conclude that no specific type of motivation is exclusive to the public sector. When studying different types of motivation, as is done in this study, managers across different publicness contexts express astonishingly similar views. They all assign very high importance to intrinsic motivation, slightly less so for prosocial motivation, and much less to extrinsic motivation. When controlling for contextual and individual variables, we find only small differences concerning intrinsic and

Table 3 Ordinary least squares regression

	Intrinsic motivation (log)	Extrinsic motivation (log)	Prosocial motivation (log)
(×1) Shared ownership	-.03	.01	.01
(×2) Public company	.04	-.04*	.01
(×3) “Pure” public	.01	-.02	.09**
Sector: Agriculture	.01	-.03	.01
Sector: Oil, gas, energy	.00	.03	-.03
Sector: Industry, manufacturing	-.01	-.04	-.05**
Sector: construction	.04	.01	-.06**
Sector: Trade, tourism	.03	.01	.00
Sector: Transport, communication	.02	.03	-.01
Sector: Financial services	.03	.06**	-.02
Sector: Education	-.02	-.01	.00
Sector: Health, social services	.02	.00	.05
Edu: Engineering/natural sci- ences	-.04	-.02	-.05
Edu: Economy/business	-.04	.04	-.10**
Edu: Social/human sciences	-.02	-.05*	-.05
Edu: Health/social/psychology	-.02	-.04	.00
Length of education	.04	-.03	-.10**
Seniority	-.01	-.04*	-.05*
Gender (Female=high value)	.12**	-.11**	.09**
Age	.11*	-.14**	.05*
F-value	5.83**	8.48**	7.16**
R ² -adjusted	.025	.06	.05

$N = 2325-2472$

Standardized coefficients (beta). * = sig le .05, ** = sig le .00

extrinsic motivation across different degrees of publicness. It is a small tendency for managers in public companies to be less extrinsically motivated than their counterparts in “pure” private organizations, but this is not the case for managers in the other type of hybrid organization; shared ownership. As a consequence, hypothesis H1 gets limited empirical support from this study.

However, it is important to note that this is not the same as saying that managers have similar motives in the public, hybrid and private sector. The difference is more subtle, due to the fact – clearly indicated in the correlations found in Table 2 – that organizations exhibiting different degrees of publicness are staffed with managers with different backgrounds. The correlations show that managers in “pure” public organizations are (a) more often female, (b) older, and (c) overrepresented when it comes to educational background dominated by health and social care as well as social science and humanities. All these individual factors are clearly and positively associated with intrinsic and prosocial motivation, and negatively associated with extrinsic motivation.

So, while managers in “pure” public organizations differ in their motivation from managers in organizations characterized by weaker degrees of publicness, it is not a direct effect of publicness, but rather an indirect effect of systematically different recruitment or selection of managers in “pure” public organizations (Christensen and Wright 2011).

Still, we do find a significant difference in pro-social motivation, but only between those employed in “pure” public organizations sector and “the rest”. This finding supports H2, and the notion that the institutional context is of some importance when studying pro-social motivation (Kjeldsen 2014; Kjeldsen and Hansen 2018; Kjeldsen and Jacobsen 2013). Managers working with roughly the same task, having roughly the same education and exhibiting roughly the same individual characteristics, are still differing in their degree of pro-social motivation across different degrees of publicness. It is important here to emphasize “roughly” as the categorization of task in this study opens up for quite a lot of internal variation. Thus, we do not have the possibility to compare managers conducting exactly the same task, as is done in the studies of Andersen et al. (2011).

Second, managers of hybrid organizations do not differ significantly in their pro-social motivation from their counterparts in “pure” private organizations. And, as displayed in the univariate analysis, pro-social motivation is significantly lower among managers in hybrid and “pure” private organization than in “pure” public organizations. These findings opens for some interesting reflections. The hybrid organizations in this study – public companies and public/private companies – all represent the trend of corporatization that has followed in the wake of New Public Management initiatives all over the world (Bilodeau et al. 2007; Ferry et al. 2018; Grossi and Reichard 2008; Lindlbauer et al. 2016; Nelson and Nikolakis 2012; Shirley 1999). Although not representing full privatization through contracting or sale of public assets to private investors, corporatization may be termed as a partial privatization mostly through an increased exposure to market forces. Thus, these organization do not differ much from “pure” private organizations regarding the dimension of economic authority (Bozeman 2013). Where they differ, is on the dimension of political authority, or control and ownership. This is not enough, however, for managers in these organizations to exhibit somewhat more pro-social motivation than managers in the “pure” private organization. This finding may indicate that – concerning pro-social motivation – the economic dimension (market exposure) “overrides” the political dimension (ownership). Once organizations become dependent on creating economic income from the market, they will probably attract and recruit managers with lower emphasis on pro-social motivation, and possible also create lower prosocial motivation through the institutional context of being market focused.

If the above observation is correct, corporatization may be labelled a sort of psychological privatization “from within”. Exposure to market forces will probably skew attention in favour of profits and economic results, and thus away from more altruistic motives, no matter how involved politicians are in the ownership structure of the organization. One may argue that this is the logic behind all types of corporatization, to strengthen the focus on economic results and operational efficiency, and less on doing good for others.

As we do not have longitudinal data, it is impossible to state if these differences are due to self-selection, recruitment or socialization, and thus to say anything about

whether a change in the economic and political dimension will create a change in pro-social motivation. The regression results show that individual characteristics like gender, length of education and type of education are the strongest predictors of pro-social motivation, stronger than publicness or task. As corporatization – as a process – probably would imply that many of the managers would remain the same before and after the corporatization, it is difficult to state whether such a change in institutional context will lead to a change in these persons' motivations. Still, the insight provided by this study – that corporatization may be associated with lower pro-social motivation among managers – should be taken into account when discussing whether to corporatize or not.

On a final note, building on the strong correlation between PSM and prosocial motivation (Perry et al. 2010) as well as the practical implications of research on PSM (Christensen et al. 2017), this study may be used to inform recruitment of managers in the public sector. If managers with a stronger prosocial orientation are wanted, those in charge of recruitment and selection should consider seriously – within legal frames – to prioritize women, candidates with an educational background in anything else than economy and business administration, as well as preferring older to younger applicants. Although such advice is difficult to give at the individual level, i.e. the individual candidate, it should surely be of serious concern for those having the responsibility for the aggregate composition of managers in any organization.

Funding Open Access funding provided by University of Agder.

Declarations

Ethical Approval None.

Informed Consent Yes

Conflict of Interest None.

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