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Organization hybridity in the Dutch early childhood education and care system: Organization logic in relation to quality and inclusion

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates whether differences in quality and inclusion in a hybrid ECEC system can be explained by organization logics. Based on nationally representative data from 136 Dutch ECEC centers, we used a configurational approach to cluster organizations in three different types based on structural and cultural characteristics: engaged professional organizations, commercial service-oriented corporations and traditional bureaucratic organizations. Results indicated that engaged professional organizations outperform other organization types with regard to quality and inclusion. These organizations invest in professional development, are connected to local communities and express a clear social mission. These results add to the ongoing scientific and societal debate on the role of day care in major public tasks, such as reducing inequalities and preventing early education gaps.

1. Introduction

Cultural and linguistic diversity is increasing in many countries and inequalities in educational achievement by family socioeconomic status and immigration background are still persistent. As educational achievement gaps emerge early in life, early childhood education and care (ECEC) has gained legitimacy as a formal institution with the potential to narrow these gaps (Douglass & Gittell, 2012; Melhuish et al., 2015). Several studies indicate that both targeted and universal ECEC interventions can indeed help decrease inequality, if they are of high quality (Passaretta et al., 2019). Yet, ECEC organizations show much variation in the level of quality they provide (e.g., La Paro et al., 2014; Melhuish & Gardiner, 2017, Perren et al., 2016). A review of Slot (2018) shows that the majority of studies so far have focused on the impact of single variables on ECEC quality. In the current paper we adopt a configurational approach, arguing that organizations are more than just a sum of individual structural characteristics, and that differences we see in quality should raise the question whether some provisions have found more effective organization forms than others when it comes to creating inclusive, high quality environments.

1.1. System and organization hybridity

Since the 1980s, privatization and marketization have been introduced in educational services in many countries (Ball, 2009; Whitty & Power, 2000). This has led to hybrid education systems. The Dutch ECEC system is an example of such a hybrid system, where

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the public task of providing high quality early child care, including the reduction of inequalities and the prevention of early education gaps, is nowadays allocated to both private for-profit and not-for-profit organizations (Van der Werf, 2020). The current literature often addresses hybridity from a macro level perspective (i.e., system hybridity), while increased system hybridity might also have important local implications for organizations and work teams (Denis et al., 2015). Organizations tend to adapt to their local context, creating organization hybridity in terms of structure, strategies and power relations, especially in public sectors that are (partially) privatized, such as ECEC (Mintzberg et al., 2005). Moreover, in organizations where professional services are provided, 'real' factors (i.e., external and societal factors, such as growing cultural and linguistic diversity) continuously create new realities which also call for new principles on hybridity in terms of professionalism (Noordegraaf, 2011, 2015). In the current paper we adopt the theoretical framework of the Institutional Logics Approach (ILA) (e.g., Thornton et al., 2012) to investigate how organizations in the Dutch ECEC system have adopted to their environment, creating hybrid organization forms.

Organization hybridity according to ILA can be traced back to different institutional orders in society (i.e., family, community, religion, state, market, profession and corporation). These seven institutional orders each have their own source of legitimacy, authority and identity. This institutional rationality (or *logic*) is defined as the "socially constructed, historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices, including assumptions, values, and beliefs, by which individuals and organizations provide meaning to their daily activity, organize time and space, and reproduce their lives and experiences." (Thornton et al., 2012, p. 2). These institutional orders are unique, meaning that the way individuals within the 'family' organize themselves is fundamentally different from the way a 'market' gives meaning to its daily activity. Thornton et al. (2012) argue that organizations in real life are rarely in line with just one institutional logic. Rather, they adopt a plurality of logics and, as a result, new forms of organization culture, actor agency and professional identity are created in order to better fit the complex institutional environments organizations navigate in Skelcher and Smith (2015). This plurality of logics is called organization hybridity and in line with the ILA theory we assume that all organizations in the ECEC sector are to some extent hybrid.

1.2. Organization logic in the ECEC sector

Hybrid organizations thus occur when institutional orders intertwine. If we focus on the ECEC sector, we mainly see the influence of four institutional orders: *market, corporation, community, profession*. For instance, marketization and privatization have increased the influence of a market and corporation logic in the sector. The institutional order of the market has a faceless identity and is controlled by shareholders. Self-interest and increased profit are the norm and the economic system is based on a supply and demand principle (Thornton et al., 2012). Translated to the ECEC sector, this logic relates to for-profit goals of provisions and the appearance of private equity in child care. Moreover, economic welfare and women's rights activism has increased labor market participation and therefore the demand for provisions that supply flexible child care adapted to parents' needs.

The corporation logic has its basis in hierarchy, with bureaucratic roles of employees and authority that comes from top management. Legitimacy comes from the organization's position in the market (market share and size) and the informal mechanism of control is related to the organization's culture (Thornton et al., 2012). Moreover, a corporation logic implies a dichotomy between management and professionals. According to Noordegraaf (2011, 2015), however, professional services like ECEC may benefit from a relational approach that connects professionals and managers, which he refers to as organized professionalism. Professionalism is considered connective, and meaningful coordination occurs when connections are made between professionals and managers aimed at jointly tackling tasks and challenges (Noordegraaf, 2015). As such, a hierarchical corporation logic is less apparent in ECEC organizations with a strong team-oriented culture with interpersonal relationships between professionals and managers, and where organization policy is formed in interaction with staff (compared to a more top down approach).

The community logic centralizes reciprocity and mutual trust, in which members of the community derive their identity from their reputation within the group. Values and ideology that show commitment to the community are necessary, as well as personal investment in the group and cooperative practices (Thornton et al., 2012). In many countries, important public goals have been assigned to ECEC, giving the sector a meaningful role in society when it comes to social inclusion, school readiness and reducing education gaps, and decreasing overall inequalities (e.g., Leseman, 2009; Melhuish et al., 2015). To address the needs of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, ECEC needs to be part a professional network that reaches out to families and extends to community resources related to health, welfare, non-formal education, NGO's, etc. Isolated professionals do not benefit from the added social capital afforded by dense social networks and from the multilevel supports needed to effectively tackle social and educational inequalities (Aguiar & Pastori, 2019).

As ECEC has gained legitimacy as a formal educational institution (Douglass & Gittell, 2012), influence of the institutional order of the profession is also apparent in the sector. Organizations that derive their legitimacy and identity from a professional logic highly value personal experience, professional reputation and good quality of their craft (Thornton et al., 2012). Translated to the ECEC sector this means an emphasis on highly qualified staff and the improvement of professional skills with the overall goal of improving young children's developmental and educational outcomes (i.e., professional development). Contrasting a single-educator focus, more recent emerging models conceptualize effective professional development "as fostering sustained and continuous learning, that is collaborative, intensive, adopts a classroom focus and is part of the broader center culture" (Siraj et al., 2019, p. 60). Though this collaborative effort, also referred to as *communities of practice* (e.g., Sheridan et al., 2009), is essential to organization learning and quality improvement (Siraj et al., 2019), it is ultimately the teacher who interacts with children in order to support their development. Specifically in relation to the public role of ECEC to create social inclusion and reduce inequalities, a review of Romijn et al. (2021) indicates that continuous professional development (CPD) at the teacher level can change teachers' belief systems, intercultural competences and cultural sensitivity. Therefore, we assume that PD is a key element in ECEC, both at the organization level as well as

the individual teacher level.

The influence of one institutional order does not necessarily or completely replace another, yet their different assumptions, values and beliefs can be competing (Thornton et al., 2012). Organizational hybridity in terms of logics can provide an opportunity for organizations to adapt effectively to their local context, creating new professional identities. Though we assume all organizations are hybrid to some extent, not all organizations may be effective in resolving or managing the inherent tensions between logics, leading to a blocked type of hybridity and organizational dysfunction (Skelcher & Smith, 2015). This leads us to the central question if we can identify organization types that are more successful than others when it comes to providing high quality and inclusive ECEC.

1.3. Quality and inclusion

High quality ECEC is beneficial for all children in terms of cognitive and social development, but even more so for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g., Janta et al., 2016; Melhuish et al., 2015). Quality is considered a multidimensional concept in which a common distinction is made between structural and process quality (Howes et al., 2008; Pianta et al., 2005). Structural quality refers to regulable characteristics of ECEC at the organization or teacher level such as group size, teacher-child ratio, and the educational background of teachers (e.g., Burchinal et al., 2010; Howes et al., 2008). These structural characteristics are considered a prerequisite for good process quality (Pianta et al., 2005). Process quality refers to the day-to-day experiences children have in terms of the physical, social, emotional, and educational aspects of their daily interaction with their teachers, peers, and materials, and is thought to directly determine children's developmental outcomes (e.g., Hamre et al., 2013; Howes et al., 2008). Another form of quality addressed in the literature concerns the activities children are provided with on a daily basis, also known as curriculum quality. The implemented curriculum can be considered part of the process quality as it refers to actual child experiences with materials that enhance knowledge and promote skill development (Slot, Leseman, et al., 2015).

Inclusion can be defined as a dynamic approach responding positively to pupil diversity (UNESCO, 2005). A key element in creating such an inclusive environment is the intercultural competence of teachers, which encompass intercultural knowledge, skills, belief systems and actions (Pastori et al., 2018). Though a focus on knowledge, skills and beliefs is important when addressing the topic of inclusion, studies also show that their relationship with actions is rather complex (e.g., Civitillo et al., 2018). For instance, teachers tend to overestimate their openness to others and there is a gap between teachers' implicit and explicit acceptance of diversity (Álvarez Valdivia & González Montoto, 2018). Thus, how teachers' assume they act and how they actually interact with children is not always aligned. Given that children's development is most directly determined by their daily interaction with teachers, we argue that it is ultimately the teachers' intercultural actions (rather than their intercultural knowledge, skills and explicit beliefs) that determine the level of inclusion. Hence, inclusive ECEC provisions are those that demonstrate inclusive classroom practices and teacher behavior on a daily basis.

1.4. Current study: A configurational approach

This study focused on the relation between organization logic and quality and inclusion in the Dutch ECEC system. As a result of large policy reformations in 2005 and 2018, the Netherlands has a hybrid ECEC system in which major public tasks are allocated to both private for-profit and not-for-profit organizations (Van der Werf, 2020). Nationally representative research in the Netherlands shows there is great variation between ECEC centers when it comes to quality and (inclusive) practices (Slot et al., 2019). Studies that try to explain differences in process quality frequently address the 'iron triangle' of structural characteristics (i.e., group size, teacher-child ratio, teachers' education level), with the overall idea that smaller groups, low teacher-child ratios, and highly educated teachers positively impact process quality (Slot, 2018). Yet, evidence is not conclusive, especially in the Dutch context where such structural characteristics are highly regulated by national policies (Slot, Leseman, et al., 2015). Moreover, a review of Slot (2018) shows that the majority of studies have focused on the impact of single variables. However, reality is more complex as teachers are actors within organizations and children's experiences are embedded within a system of classroom, staff, center and even country characteristics (i.e., Slot, Lerkkanen, et al., 2015). Therefore, these different levels and possible interactions between them need to be taken into account to gain a better understanding of how structural characteristics impact process quality (Slot, 2018). A configurational approach, in which organizations are described in terms of a relatively stable configuration of its characteristics with a particular organization structure and set of strategies that are adapted to the local context (Mintzberg et al., 2005), may therefore be a better way to explain differences in quality and practices.

Two recent studies of Van der Werf et al. (2020,2021) on Dutch ECEC data of 2012 and 2017–2018 show that a configurational approach can distinguish between different hybrid organization types. Organizations that Van der Werf et al. (2020,2021) classified as *engaged professional organizations* were the most hybrid type of organizations and seemed to outperform other types when looking at quality and inclusion. However, these organization types were composed from a management perspective and thus ignore the dynamic relation between professionals and organizations. Professional work and quality is not a product of a certain organization form (e.g., Noordegraaf, 2011, 2015), rather organization culture and identity derive from an interplay of organization policies and individual professional values. The current study will build on the work of Van der Werf et al. (2020,2021) and investigates if we can identify different (hybrid) organization types based on a variety of structural and cultural characteristics at the organization and teacher level. We included characteristics that provide insight in how organizations combine the four main organization logics we identified in the ECEC sector (i.e., market, corporation, community, profession). In line with the results of Van der Werf et al. (2020,2021) we hypothesize that organizations that are well connected to their local community (community logic) and highly value and structurally invest in professional development (profession logic) outperform other organization types. We address the following research

question: Can the structural characteristics of ECEC provisions and their teachers be clustered in differentiating organization types in terms of organization logic and if so, can these types explain differences in overall ECEC quality and (inclusive) practices?

2. Method

2.1. Research design and participants

The current study used data collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019 within the Dutch national daycare quality monitor, commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and ethically approved by the Faculty Ethics Review Board of the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences of Utrecht University. The four-year monitor started in 2017 and applies a rolling sampling method, using a national database listing all Dutch childcare provisions (at the center level) as our population. A random sample of different forms of early care and education provisions is drawn every year following a stratified sampling model based on region of the country, degree of urbanization and size of the organization. These annual samples result in a large, nationally representative sample over the consecutive years. The present study focuses on center-based full day care for 0- to 4-year-olds and half day education and care programs for 2½- to 4-year-olds. In total, 93 full day provisions (33.1% positive response) and 99 half day provisions (51.6% positive response) were sampled. This sample is considered representative as reasons for non-response did not reveal systematic biases (Slot et al., 2019). As we focus on toddlers, we excluded full day education groups that solely provided care to 0- to 2-year-olds ($N = 23$).

In each center, one group was randomly selected to participate in the study. For each group, classroom observations were performed by trained research assistants and teachers and managers were invited to fill out a questionnaire. The questionnaire for managers was filled out in 153 organizations (90.5%). A total of 250 teachers from 156 centers (92.3%) filled out the teacher questionnaire. The average age of the responding teachers was $M = 42.32$ ($SD = 12.09$) and the vast majority was female (97.6%) with a Dutch ethnic background (86.3%). A final sample size of $N = 136$ centers (60 full day and 76 half day provisions) was used that had data available on all levels (80.5%). Occasionally missing data will be addressed below.

2.2. Measures and procedures

The questionnaire for managers and teachers were specifically designed for the monitor to accumulate data on a wide range of topics. The scales used in the questionnaires are based on previous large scale national (e.g., Leseman & Slot, 2013; Leseman & Veen, 2016) and international studies such as the European CARE study (Slot et al., 2016) and OECD Starting Strong Staff Survey (e.g., OECD, 2020). For the current study, structural validity was checked for multi-item variables to justify one factor solutions. Moreover, internal consistency was checked and reported in terms of Cronbach's alfa after each multi-item variable.

2.2.1. Organization types

Organization types were based on 14 dichotomized variables constructed with both manager and teacher data. Variables were selected to provide insight in organization hybridity in terms of the presence of different organization logics: 1) market logic, 2) corporation logic, 3) community logic, and 4) profession logic.

The *market logic* included four variables of the manager questionnaire to identify to what extent organizations view ECEC as a commercial business, mainly for supporting labor market participation of parents. Profit goal indicated whether business profits remained within the organization to fund professional development or quality improvement (recoded as 0) or were distributed as dividend to shareholders or investors (recoded as 1). Legal entity refers to the formal organization structure, representing the four main types of legal entities in Dutch ECEC. Types were recoded into the values 0 (non-profit foundation) and 1 (for-profit companies). Flexibility of use was based on three items(Cronbach's alpha = 0.773), asking to what extent parents were allowed to bring or pick up their child at flexible times and whether they were free to switch days (1 'not flexible', 2 'somewhat flexible', 3 'flexible'). Based on median split, we recoded an average of 1.00 as 0 (not flexible) and an average of 1.01 to 3.00 as 1 (flexible). Service profile was based on three items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.853) where managers indicated how their organization can be distinguished from others, using a 5-point Likert-scale. They indicated to what extent organizations are characterized by their flexibility in hours and days to maximally adapt to the practical needs of parents. Using median split, the variable was recoded as 0 (low service profile) and 1 (high service profile).

Three variables were included to measure the *corporation logic*, using manager data. Manager presence was based on one item, asking the number of days per week that the manager is present at the location. A presence of two days or less was recoded as 0 (low presence), whereas a presence of three or more days was recoded as 1 (high presence). In depth analysis showed that low presence of management was related to a focus on quality assurance (i.e., pedagogical policy, professional development, staff supervision, contact with partner organizations in the network), whereas high presence of managers was associated with managers also performing more general managerial tasks (i.e., administration, planning, finance, housing). Second, organization size was used to express the relative market share of the wider organization. Organizations with less than 10 centers were characterized as small (recoded as 0), whereas organizations with more than 10 centers were characterized as big (recoded as 1). Finally, staff inclusion was based on four items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.782), using a 5-point Likert-scale to measure to what extent staff is included in policy and decision making. Based on median split inclusion was recoded as 0 (low staff inclusion) and 1 (high staff inclusion). Note that a high staff inclusion is indicative of a lower corporation logic.

The four variables that represent the *community logic* were all based on data from the manager questionnaire. The inclusive education profile was based on nine items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.851), where managers indicated how their organization can be

distinguished from others, using a 5-point Likert-scale. This concerned among others a strong focus on learning opportunities and positive attention to cultural diversity. Using median split, we recoded profile scores as 0 (low inclusive education profile) and 1 (high inclusive education profile). The organizations' diversity policy was based on four items regarding the importance of equal opportunities, the use their heritage language, multilingual information for parents, and religious or cultural preferences regarding food and dressing. The importance of equal opportunities was scored on a scale ranging from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important). Due to a skewed distribution of scores, 'very important' was recoded as 1 and 'not important at all' to 'important' was recoded as 0. The other three items concerning language and food were recoded as 0 (no) and 1 (yes, as much as possible). Using a median split, organizations that scored positively on two or more of these items were considered as positive towards diversity (value 1). For organizations who scored positively on only one or none of these four items, diversity policy was recoded as 0. Outreach to parents consisted of seven dichotomous items regarding the strategies that organizations use to ensure partnerships with (hard to reach) parents. Scores ranged from 0 to 1 (representing a percentage of used strategies). The variable was dichotomized as 0 (low outreach) and 1 (high outreach) using median split. Finally, network collaboration reflected the proportion of local partner organizations (e.g., schools, health organizations, local businesses) collaborated with. In total, 11 types of organizations were characterized as local connections and used to calculate the proportion of collaboration partners. Based on a median split, values were recoded as 0 (low network collaboration) and 1 (high network collaboration).

Finally, three constructs of professional development were measured in both the manager and teacher questionnaire to provide insights on the organization's *profession logic*. Continuous professional development was based on 10 items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.818) of the teacher questionnaire on a 5-point Likert-scale. It measured how often teachers were engaged in activities such as external workshops, coaching by colleagues or experts and the participation in communities of practice with other organizations. Support for professional development was based on 12 items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.722) of the manager questionnaire and included similar activities as the CPD scale. Managers indicated on a three-point scale if such activities were hardly ever provided (1), only provided to some of the staff (2) or systematically provided to most staff (3). Community of practice was based on eight items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.713) of the manager questionnaire on a 7-point Likert-scale asking how often teachers engaged in PD activities together with their team. Activities included discussing the developmental needs of individual children and the evaluation of practice and policies. Organizations that scored higher on this scale indicated a stronger learning community within their organization. All three variables were recoded into 0 (low PD) and 1 (high PD) based on a median split.

2.2.2. Quality

Organization types were compared on several quality measures, using both self-reported teacher data as well as independent observational data.

2.2.2.1. Process quality. Independent classroom observations were performed using the CLASS Toddler (La Paro et al., 2011), an internationally recognized reliable and valid instrument for measuring process quality (e.g., Slot et al., 2017). All observers were trained by a licensed trainer and obtained a reliability score of at least 80% agreement. Observers rated classroom processes and teacher-child interactions during four cycles of 15 to 20 min in one morning. For each cycle, process quality was scored on a seven-point scale for eight dimensions, clustered within two larger domains: emotional support and educational support. A score of 1 or 2 equals a low range, a score of 3, 4, or 5 indicates quality in the midrange, and a score of 6 or 7 equals high classroom quality. Regarding emotional support, classroom processes and teacher-child interactions were evaluated on five dimensions: positive climate, negative climate, teacher sensitivity, regard for child perspective and behavior guidance. The domain of the educational support was evaluated on three dimensions: facilitation of learning and development, quality of feedback and language modeling.

2.2.2.2. Curriculum quality. In the questionnaire, teachers indicated how often they perform several classroom practices on a 7-point Likert-scale. We included a wide variety of activities to get insight in differences in educational classroom practices: language activities, mathematical activities, sciences activities and special educational needs teaching activities. Language activities was based on seven items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.737) and included practices such as shared reading and labeling games. Mathematical activities was based on five items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.683) and consisted of counting games and activities in which quantities were compared. Science activities was based on five items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.719) and included practices on biology, physics and construction. Special educational needs activities was composed of two items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.711) on the use of special education programs and extra (language) support for disadvantaged children.

2.2.2.3. Structural quality and classroom composition. Important structural characteristics and group composition were reported in the teacher questionnaire. Included structural characteristics were group size during the week, teacher-child ratio's (interns and support staff not included), teachers' education level, teachers' ethnic background, and type of provision (full-day program versus half day program). Teachers' educational level was defined as the highest level of completed formal pre-service education and measured on a scale representing the levels of the Dutch secondary and tertiary education system, ranging from 1 (lower preparatory vocational education) to 8 (university education). Ethnic background was based on reported country of birth of the teacher and/or their parents. Group composition was based on the numbers of family and child backgrounds divided by the group size. We included background statistics on family socioeconomic status, ethnic background, language support needs, disabilities (e.g., Down Syndrome, physical handicaps, intellectual impairments), behavioral problems and refugee status.

2.2.3. Inclusion

Using self-reported teacher data, intercultural actions and inclusion was measured in terms of classroom practices and contact with parents. Intercultural activities was based on three items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.440) on 7-point Likert-scale asking teachers to what extent children from different backgrounds interact with each other and how often children learn about different cultural norms and customs. Inclusive classroom practices was based on the sum of three dichotomized items on whether teachers allow children to use their home language in the classroom, address parents in their home language as much as possible and if teachers take cultural customs into account, for instance concerning nutrition. The scale ranges from 0 (no inclusive classroom practices) to 3 (high regard for inclusive classroom practices). Variables regarding the contact teachers have with parents was based on 14 dichotomized items, divided in three categories: communication, community building and active outreach. The average of these items indicated the level of parent-teacher contact ranging from 0 to 1 (i.e., representing a percentage of used strategies). Communication included seven items on teacher communication practices that inform parents in general (i.e., distributing newsletters) or specifically on their child's development (i.e., progress reports and one-on-one communication). Community building included four items that address promotion of parent participation and community building with teachers and other parents (i.e., meetings to discuss policy and childrearing or social events). Finally, active outreach concerns three items that indicated if organizations put effort in reaching out to (hard to reach) parents by conducting home visits, using other parents as mediators, and providing activities for the home learning environment.

2.3. Analysis

Analysis proceeded in a number of steps. First, all organization characteristics were checked for normality and outliers. Since one to three teachers per classroom filled out the questionnaire, teacher data were aggregated per group as we did not meet the minimum within-group cluster size to adopt a multilevel structure (Hox, 2010). Subsequently, variables used to compose the organization types were dichotomized based on median split as Latent Class Analysis (LCA) requires variables that are measured on different scales to be standardized or dichotomized. We chose for dichotomization as several variables were either already dichotomous or measured on polytomous ordinal or nominal scales. Second, LCA was performed in Mplus and different solutions were compared on model fit indices (i.e., AIC, BIC, entropy, bootstrap likelihood ratio test), class proportion and interpretability of indicators. A three-cluster solution was found most satisfactory, to be detailed further in the Results section, and class membership was determined for all $N = 136$ organizations and merged with the self-reported teacher and classroom observation data. Third, multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA's) with pairwise comparisons were performed with class membership as independent variable and organization characteristics, self-reported teacher practices, and classroom observations as dependent variables.

3. Results

3.1. Organization types

3.1.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics of the 14 organization characteristics that were used to define organization types. Concerning the *market logic*, the majority of organizations indicated a not-for-profit motive and approximately half of the organizations had for-profit legal entities. Also, the majority of organizations did not allow flexibility of use. Service profile shows a large range, indicating the sample consists of both organizations that do and do not characterize themselves as in service to parents' needs. Concerning the *corporation logic*, the range of manager presence shows that the sample included locations where the manager is present less than one day, but also locations where managers are present the whole week. The average presence is two out of five days.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Organization Characteristics ($N = 136$).

Logic	Observed Range	*M*	*SD*	Missing
Market logic				
A Profit goal (1 = for-profit)	0.00–1.00	0.23	–	9
B Legal entity (1 = commercial company)	0.00–1.00	0.49	–	7
C Flexibility of use	1.00–3.00	1.38	0.66	2
D Service profile	1.00–5.00	2.96	1.28	1
Corporation logic				
A Manager presence	1.00–6.00	2.96	1.79	3
B Organization size	0.00–1.00	0.48	–	14
C Staff inclusion	3.00–5.00	4.29	0.53	–
Community logic				
A Inclusive education profile	1.11–4.89	3.81	0.58	1
B Diversity policy	0.00–4.00	1.30	0.95	0
C Outreach to parents	0.00–1.00	0.47	0.24	1
D Network collaboration	0.00–0.82	0.39	0.19	1
Profession logic				
A Continuous professional development	1.00–4.20	2.13	0.56	6
B Support for professional development	1.00–2.75	2.01	0.35	1
C Community of practice	1.00–5.38	3.01	0.89	1

Organization size was measured on a categorical scale with 20 categories, ranging from 1 to 10 and 11 to 250 locations (in steps increasing in size). Half of the organizations could be considered small with an average size of 4 locations per organization. Large organizations had on average approximately 45 locations. Lastly, staff inclusion indicates that on average managers think it is important to include staff in decision making. Regarding the *community logic*, on average organizations characterize themselves as having an inclusive-education profile to some extent, however, positive policies towards diversity were rare. Moreover, we found large differences in outreach to parents and collaboration with the network, with some organizations indicating no such activities at all versus other organizations that highly invested in outreach. Finally, for the *profession logic* teachers indicated that on average they rarely engaged in continuous PD activities. Managers indicated on average that their organizations sometimes supported PD for part of the staff and that community of practice activities generally occurred once per month. The relatively large ranges for PD indicate that there are organizations that hardly provided any PD as well as teachers that engaged in PD activities on a weekly basis.

3.1.2. Latent class analysis

To identify organization types, LCA was applied to the binary recoded organization characteristics listed in Table 1. One to five classes models were estimated and model fit indices, class proportions and interpretability of the classes were used to decide on the best solution. As Table 2 shows, the four classes solution was considered significantly better than the three classes model indicated by the bootstrap likelihood ratio test. However, the Vuong-Lo-Mendell-Rubin test ($p = .18$) and Lo-Mendell-Rubin adjusted LRT test ($p = .19$) indicated no significant difference between the three and four classes models. In terms of class proportions, in the four classes model one of the classes had a rather small class count with only 15% of the cases, whereas another class had a relatively large class count with over half of the cases. As both the three and four classes model showed acceptable entropy values (>0.80) and average latent class probabilities (>0.90), the three classes model had more equal class proportions and a better interpretability of the classes, we decided on a three classes solution (see Fig. 1).

An overview of estimated probability for each binary recoded organization characteristic is provided in Fig. 1. Class 2 (C2) had the largest class count with 55 organizations (40.4%), followed by 46 organizations (33.8%) in Class 3 (C3) and 35 organizations in Class 1 (C1) (25.7%). For the *market logic* we found that probability scores were the highest for C2 organizations, especially in terms of flexibility of use and the service profile. This logic is clearly absent in C3 organizations with hardly any of them indicating a for-profit goal or commercial legal entity. With regard to the *corporation logic*, C2 organizations scored higher compared to C1 and C3 organizations on all variables. For the *community logic* we found that C1 organizations scored higher on all variables compared to C2 and C3 organizations, with the difference in outreach to parents being the largest. Moreover, diversity policy was slightly more apparent in C2 organizations than C3 organizations. Finally, for the *profession logic* we also see that C1 organizations scored the highest in comparison to C2 and C3 organizations for all forms of professional development. A further interpretation and summary of the three types will be discussed in the Discussion section.

3.2. Quality

3.2.1. Process quality

A MANOVA performed on the CLASS Toddler domains was significant, Wilk's Lambda, $F(4, 264) = 3.18$, $p = .014$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.05$. Univariate testing and LSD post-hoc comparisons indicated only significant differences on educational support (see Table 3). C2 organizations scored significantly lower than C1 and C3 organizations on educational support.

3.2.2. Curriculum quality

Table 4 shows that language activities were performed most frequently with an average indicating these activities occurred several times per week. Furthermore, special education needs activities occurred on average almost once a week, whereas mathematical and science activities occurred approximately twice per month. A MANOVA showed that the classes differ significantly on curriculum quality, Wilk's Lambda, $F(8, 234) = 1.91$, $p = .006$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.09$. Univariate testing and LCD post-hoc comparisons showed that C1 organizations scored significantly higher than C2 and C3 organizations on mathematical activities. Science activities were performed significantly less often in C3 organizations compared to C1. Finally, special educational needs activities were significantly less often performed in C2 organizations compared to C3 organizations and C1 organizations (boarder line significant).

3.2.3. Structural characteristics and group composition

To provide a more detailed description of the classes, the most important structural characteristics of the organizations are listed in Table 5. The average group size during the week is $M = 12.06$ ($SD = 3.30$) children, with a teacher-child ratio of $M = 6.27$ ($SD = 1.31$)

Table 2
LCA Model Fit Indices.

	Class #1	Class #2	Class #3	Class #4	Class #5
AIC	2526.36	2453.12	2396.51	2384.88	2383.95
Sample-size adjusted BIC	2522.84	2445.84	2385.48	2370.08	2365.39
BLRT	NA	1249.18*	1197.56*	1154.26*	1133.44
Entropy	NA	0.85	0.81	0.88	0.89

* $p < .001$.

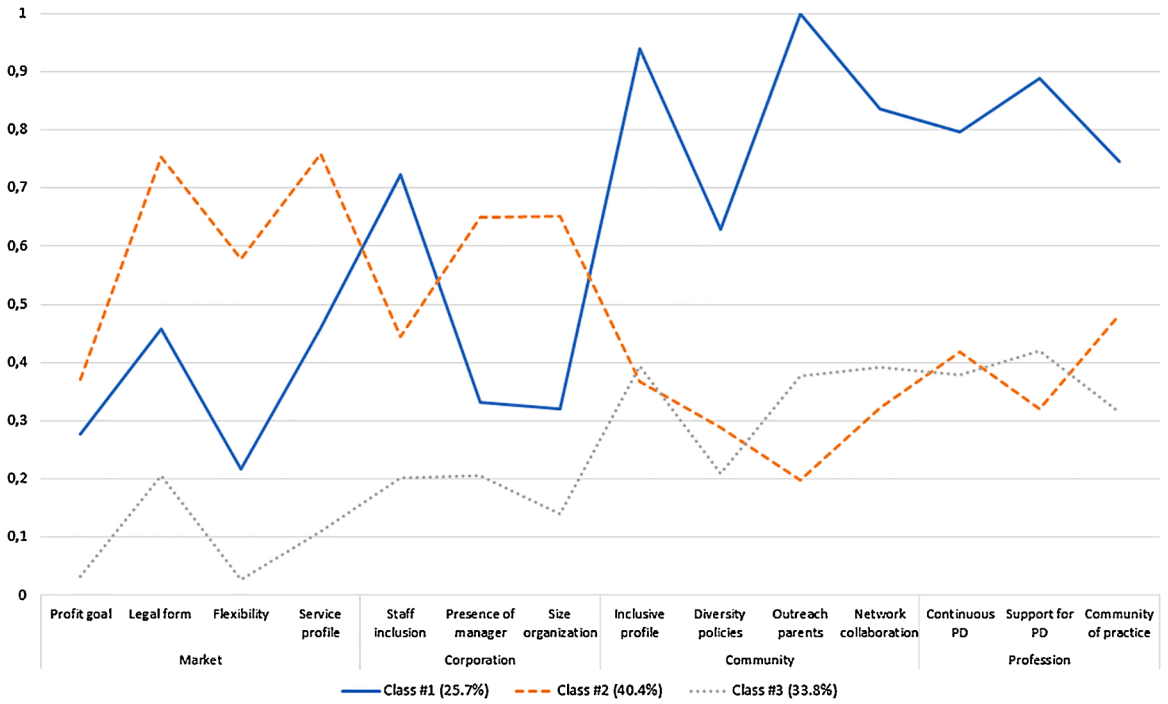

Fig. 1. Estimated probabilities of belonging to each class in the three classes model.

Table 3
Means and Standard Deviations of CLASS Toddler Process Quality within each Class.

	C1 *M* (*SD*)	C2 *M* (*SD*)	C3 *M* (*SD*)
Emotional Support	5.74 (0.50)	5.63 (0.48)	5.69 (0.42)
Educational Support	3.61 (0.73)[a]	3.11 (0.73)[b]	3.39 (0.55)[a]

Note. Means with different letters are statistically significant (LCD, $p < .05$.).

children per teacher (interns and support staff not included). The mean and distribution of teachers' education level indicates a vocational training level for approximately 75% of the teachers and a college or university degree for 25%. Regarding the ethnic background of teachers, less than 10% of reported a non-Dutch background. Moreover, almost 60% of the organizations were full day provisions. A MANOVA showed significant differences between classes on some of these structural indicators, Wilk's Lambda, $F(10, 256) = 6.66$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.21$. Univariate testing and LSD post-hoc comparisons showed that the average group size and teacher-child ratio was somewhat bigger in C3 organizations compared to C1 and C2 organizations. For type of provision, a significant difference was found between all classes. C3 organizations were mostly half day provisions (87%), C1 organizations were a more mixed group of half and full day programs (66% vs 34%), and the majority of C2 organizations were full day provisions (76%). Finally, no differences were found for teacher education level and background.

We also investigated background characteristics of the families and children these provisions serve (see Table 5). A MANOVA showed that the family and child background differed significantly between the three classes, Wilk's Lambda, $F(12, 196) = 3.33$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.17$. Univariate testing and LSD post-hoc comparisons indicated that classes did not differ significantly in percentage of children with behavioral problems or disability. In C1 organizations there were significantly more children enrolled with either a low SES background, refugee background, or children who need additional language support compared to C2 and C3. Also, children from a non-Dutch background were more often enrolled in C1 organizations compared to C3 organizations.

Table 4
Means and Standard Deviations of Teachers' Self-reported Curriculum Quality.

	C1 *M* (*SD*)	C2 *M* (*SD*)	C3 *M* (*SD*)
Language activities	5.21 (0.94)	5.19 (0.87)	5.07 (1.04)
Mathematical activities	3.43 (0.95)[a]	2.98 (0.84)[b]	2.90 (0.81)[b]
Science activities	3.11 (0.92)[a]	2.77 (0.79)[ab]	2.53 (0.86)[b]
Special education needs activities	4.05 (1.84)[ab]	3.19 (2.13)[b]	4.23 (1.97)[a]

Note. Means with different letters are statistically significant (LCD, $p < .05$.).

Table 5
Means and Standard Deviations of Structural Characteristics within each Class.

	C1 *M* (*SD*)	C2 *M* (*SD*)	C3 *M* (*SD*)
Group size	11.86 (2.63)[a]	10.78 (2.75)[a]	13.70 (3.65)[b]
Teacher-child ratio	6.20 (1.15)[a]	5.69 (1.15)[a]	7.00 (1.25)[b]
Teacher education level	5.45 (0.74)	5.41 (0.79)	5.35 (0.65)
Non-Dutch teacher background	0.06 (0.20)	0.09 (0.17)	0.07 (0.21)
Type of provision	0.34[a]	0.76[b]	0.13[c]
Family and child background			
% Low SES	34.25 (30.57)[b]	16.55 (22.85)[a]	20.69 (25.52)[a]
% Non-Dutch	29.51 (26.80)[a]	21.31 (21.76)[ab]	15.27 (25.62)[b]
% Language support needs	43.27 (31.50)[a]	16.81 (17.25)[b]	22.69 (30.61)[b]
% Disabilities	3.52 (7.24)	2.90 (5.11)	1.04 (3.60)
% Behavioral problems	7.78 (8.89)	4.87 (7.80)	6.78 (13.49)
% Refugee status	7.21 (14.69)[a]	1.29 (3.64)[b]	0.09 (2.65)[b]

Note. Means with different letters are statistically significant (LCD, $p < .05$.).

3.3. Inclusion

Teachers indicated they engage in intercultural activities on average once or twice per month (see Table 6). Inclusive practices (with regard to home language, food and holidays) are not that common. Most teachers report no inclusive practices or only with regard to one of these areas. Finally, contact with parents is relatively common, though there are differences in the underlying goal of the contact. Locations most often interact with parents to exchange information (communication), whereas activities for community building are on average less common. Contact in which organizations try to actively reach out to hard to reach parents occurs the least often. A MANOVA on these practices showed significant differences on several activities, Wilk's Lambda, $F(10, 232) = 4.25$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.16$. Univariate testing and LSD post-hoc comparisons showed no differences in intercultural activities but inclusive practices occurred more often in C1 organizations compared to C2 and C3. With regard to parent contact differences were found for communication and community building. In terms of communication, C3 organizations scored significantly lower compared to C1 and C2 organizations. For community building activities C1 organizations scored higher than C2 and C3. For active outreach no differences were found.

4. Discussion

Privatization and marketization have created a hybrid ECEC system in the Netherlands in which organizations adapt differently to their local context in terms of organization structure and power relations (Mintzberg et al., 2005; Van der Werf, 2020), professionalism (Noordegraaf, 2011, 2015) and logics (Skelcher & Smith, 2015). As a result of this plurality of structures and logics, new forms of actor agency are created and organization hybridity becomes the rule rather than the exception. In the current paper we wanted to investigate if the structural characteristics of ECEC provisions and their teachers can be clustered in differentiating organization types in terms of organization logic and if so, to what extent these types explain differences in overall ECEC quality and (inclusive) practices.

To answer the first part of our research question we examined structural characteristics corresponding to the four institutional logics of the market, corporation, community and profession. In line with the ILA theory (Thornton et al., 2012) we expected to find organization hybridity in which different institutional logics are combined. Our latent class analysis indicated that organizational characteristics can indeed be clustered into meaningful organization profiles using the four institutional logics. Our results indicated three different types of ECEC organizations. When investigating the hybridity of logics per type, the results are in line with the organization types that Van der Werf et al. (2020,2021) found. The first class (27.5%) can be characterized as *engaged professional organizations*. These organizations are considered engaged in the sense that they show a strong connection with their community. They actively reach out to parents, engage in partnerships with local organizations (i.e., schools, community services), and have a clear social mission. These organizations have an inclusive education profile and more policies that promote diversity and inclusion, such as including children's home language within the classroom. They can also be considered professional organizations as they try to create communities of practice and support teachers in their continuous and team-based professional development. Also, professionals and managers are more interconnected as they show lower scores on the corporation logic. Interestingly, the stronger focus on

Table 6
Means and Standard Deviations of Self-reported Inclusive Teacher Practices.

	C1 *M* (*SD*)	C2 *M* (*SD*)	C3 *M* (*SD*)
Intercultural activities	2.85 (1.21)	2.80 (1.28)	2.33 (0.95)
Inclusive practices	1.14 (0.69)[a]	0.64 (0.63)[b]	0.77 (0.90)[b]
Contact with parents – communication	0.74 (0.16)[a]	0.76 (0.14)[a]	0.64 (0.18)[b]
Contact with parents – community building	0.62 (0.24)[a]	0.43 (0.24)[b]	0.40 (0.27)[b]
Contact with parents – active outreach	0.40 (0.19)	0.33 (0.15)	0.35 (0.19)

Note. Means with different letters are statistically significant (LCD, $p < .05$.).

interconnectedness that is demonstrated by a low corporation logic and high community and profession logic does not by definition exclude a market logic. Though these organizations are not characterized by strong profit goals or client-centered flexibility, they can be for-profit legal entities and endorse a relatively strong service-oriented profile. As such, these organizations demonstrate signs of what Noordegraaf (2015) refers to as *organized professionalism*. In organized professionalism coordination occurs when connections are made within professional domains aimed at jointly tackling tasks and authority is shared by professionals actively taking responsibility in relation to stakeholders (i.e., parents and families). Simultaneously, organization values are not singular and professionals know how to serve multiple values at the same time as quality and efficiency both belong to professional work (Noordegraaf, 2015). This seems to be the case for how engaged professional organizations adapted to the hybrid Dutch ECEC system in which public goals are part of a private system. They have eye for the quality of their work (professional logic) and the public goal of childcare to fulfill a meaningful role in the community (community logic), while not losing sight of their position in the market and addressing parents needs for flexibility (market logic).

The second class (40.4%) can be described as *commercial service-oriented corporations* and is strongly characterized by the market logic and corporation logic. These organizations usually have for-profit legal entities and are relatively flexible when it comes to pick-up times and switching days. Moreover, they have a bigger market share with more centers in the wider organization and management is more often at location, indicating a stronger managerial influence in general tasks (i.e., planning, finance, administration) rather than quality assurance tasks. Together with a less apparent inclusive education profile and a weaker connection to their community, these organizations demonstrate a stronger view of ECEC as a commercial instrument for labor market participation in which parents are considered clients. In this sense, these organizations focus on running an efficient business (corporation logic) in which success is measured by profit and market share (market logic) in order to stay relevant in the (partially) privatized Dutch ECEC system.

The opposite seems true for the third class (33.8%), as a commercial service-oriented market logic is almost completely absent in the third class. These *traditional bureaucratic organizations* are non-profit provisions with fixed hours and days. The corporation logic shows a more mixed pattern. These organizations are usually small in size, however, staff is not often included in decision making. Thus, they do not focus on their position in the market to stay relevant in the sector, yet we also don't see that they create a meaningful role for themselves within the community (community logic). Nor do they have an enlarged focus on the quality of their craft (profession logic). In fact, they do not seem to derive their legitimacy, authority and identity from any logic, resulting in a rather faceless identity within their environment. This could be an indicator of what Skelcher and Smith (2015) refer to as blocked hybridity, referring to organizations that are unable to solve or manage the irreconcilable tensions between logics, leading to organization dysfunction. In other words, these traditional bureaucratic organizations have been unable to effectively adapt to the hybrid Dutch ECEC systems.

For the second part of our research question we investigated differences between the profiles in quality and inclusion. In line with the conclusions of Van der Werf (2020), we hypothesized that organizations that are more connected to their community and structurally invest in professional development (i.e., the engaged professional organizations) outperform other types of organizations when it comes to providing inclusive and high quality care. Our findings largely support this hypothesis as we found several differences between the engaged professional organizations on the one hand and the commercial service-oriented corporations and traditional bureaucratic organizations on the other hand. For process quality, the differences in educational support were the biggest, with engaged professional organizations showing better support than commercial service-oriented corporations. For the curriculum quality of educational activities, engaged professional organizations outperformed the other types of organizations in several domains. Finally, teachers in engaged professional organizations also reported more inclusive practices and scored overall higher on contact with parents (especially community building contact). Commercial service-oriented corporations also scored relatively high on communication with parents, but considerably lower on community building contact and active outreach. This further demonstrates the service-orientation of this organization type in which good communication is key, yet also shows that these organizations are generally less connected to the parents in their community as compared to the engaged professional organizations.

Besides process quality (including curriculum quality) and inclusive practices, we also looked at difference in structural quality and classroom composition. This interest in structural quality was twofold, as any found differences in quality are as relevant to the theoretical debate as any absence of differences. Our results show that differences in group size and teacher-child ratio were rather small, with the most favorable ratio's showing in the commercial service-oriented corporations and the least favorable in the traditional bureaucratic organizations. No differences were found for teachers' educational and ethnic background. This indicates that the higher process quality and more inclusive practices in engaged professional organizations cannot be related to more favorable 'iron-triangle' characteristics (i.e., group size, teacher-child ratio, teachers' educational level) in these organizations. This underlines that studying the impact of single structural variables to explain differences in process quality and practice may be losing its value, especially in countries such as the Netherlands were the 'iron triangle' characteristics are highly regulated by national policies (Slot, Leseman, et al., 2015). Moreover, we found that the engaged professional organizations served considerably more children from a disadvantaged background compared to the other two types. Though high quality childcare is important for all children, it is not equally important for all children as numerous studies show that children with disadvantaged backgrounds have the most to gain (e.g., Passaretta et al., 2019). The fact that engaged professional organizations more often serve disadvantaged children, taken together with the differences in quality and practice, indicates that the best quality ECEC is, to some extent, indeed provided to those most in need.

4.1. Limitations and suggestions for future research

Some limitations of the current study need to be taken into account when interpreting the results. For instance, measures on inclusion were somewhat roughly operationalized and based on self-reports due to data availability. Simultaneously, independent observations used in this study – the CLASS Toddler which measures process quality - did not include specific aspects on intercultural and

multilingual practices in the classroom. As a result, our data can indicate which organizations engage in high quality interactions, but it provides little information on how interculturally competent teachers in these classrooms are. To overcome these issues, independent observational data and stronger operationalized diversity and inclusion constructs should be considered in future research. Finally, future research should indicate whether similar patterns can be found in other countries and to what extent these insights can also be relevant for organizations that provide education and care to older children, such as (primary) schools and after-school care provisions.

4.2. Conclusion

The present findings illustrate that a clear professional and community logic are necessary to create inclusive ECEC provisions of high quality. This professional and community logic is illustrated in the investment in continuous and collaborative professional development and the connectedness to the community in terms of collaboration with parents and local organizations. Moreover, it is expressed in the clear social mission of these organizations to strive for inclusive education. These organizations pay positive attention to cultural diversity, deem equal learning opportunities for disadvantaged children important and more often support the use of home languages. However, we found that this strong social mission does not by definition exclude market logics, indicating some organizations found an effective way of using hybridity to adapt to the privatized ECEC market system in the Netherlands. Concludingly, our results should raise a question for policy makers if it is in the best interest of our children to equally support all organizations in terms of public funding, if not all organizations are equally effective in fulfilling the public task of the sector (i.e., high quality care). There has been a societal and scientific debate on whether marketization and privatization are favorable in public sectors, however, we do not argue that the hybridity of the Dutch ECEC system in itself is a problem. Rather, we argue that policy makers should investigate effective ways to motivate all organizations to align their organization structure and culture with that of the engaged professional organizations.

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Declaration of competing interest

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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