Does welfare mix matter?

Active citizenship in public, for-profit and nonprofit schools and nursing homes in Scandinavia

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PhD dissertation
Department of Political Science
Faculty of Social Sciences
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After getting married, I changed my middle name from Dalby to Solbu. At that point, one article was already published with Dalby as my middle name. One article was submitted when I was in the process of changing name, something that resulted in me not including any middle name. The last article and the dissertation itself are published with my current name: Håkon Solbu Trætteberg. Curiously, this means that I have different names in each of the three articles.

Summary

Public funding, regulation, and provision of welfare services are important components of Scandinavian welfare systems. Public funding and regulation arguably remain unchallenged in political debates in Scandinavia, while who should provide welfare services has become a salient political issue. The relevance of this issue is accentuated by ongoing changes in the Scandinavian welfare mix – the composition of public, for-profit and nonprofit providers. Public dominance over the welfare provision is now under pressure by for-profit providers. Over the last 15 years, Sweden has experienced a massive growth in the for-profit provision of welfare services, prompting questions about whether this trend will lead Sweden out of the social democratic regime. In Denmark, the high level of nonprofit provision, at least by Scandinavian standards, is being challenged by gains made by the for-profit sector. While in Norway, dominance by the public sector remains stable, and the nonprofit and for-profit sectors make up only limited shares of the welfare service provision; here too, however, the for-profit sector's share is growing.

These trends raise questions about whether it matters if public, for-profit or nonprofit providers supply publicly funded services and the effects of the mechanisms the public sector uses to contract nonpublic providers. In this dissertation, I take the perspective of the citizen who uses the services when I try to answer these questions. I use the analytic concept of active citizenship to evaluate how much control citizens have when they become users of public services. To control their lives as users of public services, citizens need to have influence. If obligations are forced upon citizens who receive such services, they will have less influence and thus less control. The concept of active citizenship comprises three dimensions: the choice users have when selecting or exiting an institution; the sense of empowerment users experience when they attempt to enact changes at the level of the institution; and the degree of participation users have in local policy processes.

The empirical investigation is based on a matching design with qualitative analysis of public and nonpublic schools and nursing homes in selected Scandinavian municipalities. One public and one nonpublic institution were compared in each municipality. The institutions were matched to be as similar as possible in terms of frame conditions, such as geography and size, in order to enable analysis of variations and consistencies between them. Interviews conducted with municipal political and administrative leaders, institutional leaders and staff

members, and representatives of users were used as the primary data source. These data were triangulated with local user surveys in municipalities that offered them and document studies at the municipal and institutional level. The data gathering process was based on a field guide that secured structure to the data collection. The findings from each municipality were presented in reports that were subsequently used as the basis for further analysis. In total, the dissertation is based on data from 27 institutions in seven municipalities in three Scandinavian countries, including 35 interviews in Denmark, 21 in Sweden and 57 in Norway.

I found that there were indeed differences between service providers from different institutional sectors. In regards to active citizenship, nonprofit schools were the most distinct. Their users tend to have more influence over the services they receive in terms of the dimensions of choice and empowerment, but less so when it comes to participation. User choice systems and the administrative freedom enjoyed by institutions are central factors that determine variations between providers in the welfare mix. User choice and greater administrative freedom allow for more variation, while bureaucratic planning in user allocation and strict public regulation allow for less variation.

Increased active citizenship seems to come at a cost, as the users who enjoy the most influence over the services they receive also have the most obligations. The state shifts responsibility to the users who, at the same time, obtain more control over the content of the services. Again, nonprofit schools serve as examples, since parents have obligations to contribute more than users at any other institution; while at the same time, they also have more influence.

Factors other than the institutional sector also influence the active citizenship of users. The results suggest that small, close-knit communities influence institutions in ways that diverge from hierarchical steering. Institutions in communities such as these exploit local networks to encourage volunteering and a sense of ownership of them. Community members who are already part of organisations and associations are recruited to make important contributions to the institutions. These mechanisms transcend the institutional sector split, since nonprofit and public institutions have the same level of access to local networks.

This dissertation consists of an introductory chapter and three articles. The first article is a chapter in a book that after a review process is accepted for publication, the second article is a

journal article that after a review process is accepted for publication, the third article is published in a journal:

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1 Introduction

1.1 The research theme and research questions

This dissertation analyses the relationship between the welfare mix and active citizenship. The division of public, for-profit and nonprofit public service providers constitutes the welfare mix. Active citizenship is an analytic concept I use to evaluate how much control and influence citizens have when they become users of public services. The empirical investigation consists of a comparative case study design. I match public and nonpublic institutions in selected Scandinavian municipalities and make qualitative comparisons between countries, between public, for-profit and nonprofit institutional sectors, and between the service areas under investigation: schools and nursing homes. The data collection method used in each institution (I use institution as a general synonym for schools and nursing homes) and municipality was structured according to a field guide which focused on research questions concerning dimensions and conditions of active citizenship. In total, 27 institutions were selected in seven municipalities in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.

Ongoing changes in the Scandinavian welfare mix accentuate the relevance of studying this issue. Traditional public dominance over the welfare provision is now under pressure by for-profit providers. For the last 15 years, Sweden has witnessed a massive growth in for-profit provision of services, prompting questions about whether this trend will lead Sweden out of the social democratic regime (Earles, 2011). In Denmark, the high level of nonprofit provision, at least by Scandinavian standards, is being challenged by gains made by the for-profit sector. In Norway, dominance by the public sector remains stable, and the nonprofit and for-profit sectors make up only limited shares of the welfare service provision; here too, however, the for-profit sector's share is growing (Sivesind, 2013, 2016). Moreover, changes in the welfare mix are being driven by the use of politically contentious market mechanisms, such as user choice (the right of an individual to choose among several service providers) and public tenders (an open bidding process where providers are chosen on the basis of price and quality), which are supposed to give users more influence and control over their care situation while at the same time boosting savings for the public purse (Meagher & Szebehely, 2013b; Rostgaard, 2011). Using pension schemes as an example, Hinrichs and Kangas (2003) suggested that small changes with almost no immediate and visible impacts can, over time,

represent a system shift. The possibility of such changes taking place in the provision of services warrants studies of the implications of such changes.

The changes themselves are not the topic of this dissertation, but they do provoke questions about the importance of which sector a provider belongs to. I assume the perspective of the citizens who use services and ask how providers being public, for-profit or nonprofit matters in terms of their ability to maintain control over their personal lives. To analyse how much control citizens have, I examined their degree of active citizenship. *Active citizenship* is an analytic concept that informs the analysis of the degree and form of user control in relation to a service provider. The concept comprises three dimensions: the *choice* users have when selecting or exiting an institution; the sense of *empowerment* users experience when they attempt to enact changes at the level of the institution; and the degree of *participation* users have in local policy processes.

The relations between institutions and citizens who use publicly funded services play out within the context of small-scale democracy. Whereas large-scale democracy concerns the level of influence citizens have over the situation of their polity, small-scale democracy is more concerned with how citizens control their own lives (Andersen & Rossteutscher, 2007). This type of control is relevant in many arenas of the everyday lives of citizens; but in this context, I am more interested in the everyday lives of citizens as users of public services. Relevant actions in small-scale democracy can be formal or informal, collective or individual, and directed toward teachers, carers or government officials, among others. The basic feature is that citizens attempt to achieve control over their lives. In schools, such actions can include issues related to details in the teaching of children or how to deal with bullying in schools. In nursing homes, issues can include the medical treatment of users or the times and content of their meals.

Traditionally, Scandinavian public sector institutions have had a reputation for being responsive to citizens (Andersen & Hoff, 2001; Petersson et al., 1989), a dynamic that gives citizens the opportunity to take control of their own lives as well as within care situations where they are dependent on the welfare state. When the dominance of the public sector in the service provision is reduced or challenged, it is important to understand the connection between the type of provider and the responsiveness of the institutions.

This dissertation intends to provide relevant knowledge by answering the overarching research question:

How do public, for-profit and nonprofit providers respectively affect the active citizenship of users of public services?

I will answer this question by exploring three subordinate research questions. First, I examine whether fundamental differences exist between different providers in the welfare mix. The first subordinate question is therefore:

What are the major differences between public, for-profit and nonprofit providers regarding active citizenship?

The differences between each provider in the welfare mix may not be the same across service areas and countries. The differences between public, for-profit and nonprofit providers can vary under different circumstances. The second subordinate question is therefore:

What explains the eventual variation in consequences of the provider belonging to the public, for-profit or nonprofit sector in regards to active citizenship?

In addition to differences between providers in the welfare mix, the public's use of governance mechanisms inspired by the market can also influence active citizenship. These mechanisms, such as quasi-markets and user choice systems, are instrumental in regulating the welfare mix. However, authorities also use them with the intention of empowering citizens regardless of which institutional sector the provider belongs to. To understand the role of different providers, it is thus necessary to understand the role of these governance mechanisms. The third subordinate question is therefore:

How can the authorities' use of market-emulating tools of governance influence the active citizenship of service users?

In broad terms, countries can design welfare services by making decisions regarding financing, regulation and provision (Alber, 1995; Lundqvist, 2001; Rothstein, 1994 p. 246). By emphasising various components of these three aspects, different scholars have identified a particular, distinctive Scandinavian welfare model (Anheier & Salamon, 2006; Buhr & Stoy, 2015; Esping-Andersen, 1990). One of the hallmarks of Scandinavian welfare societies is that the state finances, regulates and to a large extent provides services in order to obtain

equal service quality for all citizens (Fritzell et al., 2005). The result is a welfare mix – the division of public, for-profit and nonprofit providers – that is probably dominated more by the public provision than in any other western region (Anheier & Salamon, 2006; Salamon et al., 2004). A part of the reason behind this type of organisation is an attempt to achieve two simultaneous priorities: first, to help weaker groups and individuals in society improve their situation; and second, to avoid being a paternalistic construction where receiving services and benefits from the public comes with a social stigma, and where citizens are unduly subjected to the decisions of the authorities (Sejersted, 2005 p. 135). By making fundamental services universal, there are fewer stigmas involved since the publicly funded services at some point touch most citizens.

Historically, the Scandinavian social democratic approach to welfare has been that public dominance in all aspects of service provision is necessary in order to insulate citizens from the harmful effects of market forces. The public provision of services thus became a method for the collective creation of a new, democratic welfare society (Blomqvist, 2004 p. 143; Sejersted, 2005 p. 135). Indeed, the goal was to create services of such high quality that they would gain the support of citizens from all walks of life for what Rothstein (1994) labelled 'the high quality standardised solution': where almost equal welfare services were allocated to all citizens via bureaucratic planning.

In addition, the formulation of citizens' rights meant that individuals were not forced to beg for core services, but could demand them with some degree of authority (Sejersted, 2005 p. 135). The combination of democratic control of services and strong citizens' rights are central aspects of what has been called a Scandinavian form of citizenship (Andersen & Hoff, 2001; Hernes, 1988). The decentralisation of influence is a central tool used to reach the ideals of advanced social rights and equality. An implication of the decentralisation of influence is that it brings decisions about service provision as close as possible to individuals and thus gives them influence over their own situations (Andersen & Hoff, 2001).

On the input side in the electoral democracy, this has resulted in important services such as care and education have become a municipal responsibility and thus the subject of decisions made by local policymakers. These decisions are thus taken close to the citizens since 'welfare municipalities' are in charge of important services that affect people's lives (Kjølsrød, 2005; Kröger, 1997; Loughlin et al., 2011 p. 11). On the output side of the democratic process, Scandinavian citizenship entails that citizens who use services have the

power to influence the implementation of policies based on their position as autonomous users with rights to influence. This is where active citizenship is pursued: either collectively through user boards, or individually when relatives of nursing home users seek to obtain a certain approach to care or parents request special follow ups from their children's school.

1.2 The approach in this dissertation

This dissertation seeks to unite the research frontiers on Scandinavian citizenship, small-scale democracy and the welfare mix. With respect to the welfare mix, some studies have connected providers in the nonprofit sector to user control and co-production (Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006; Pestoff, 2009), but they seldom made explicit comparisons between all three institutional sectors in the welfare mix. Indeed, a recent survey of the research on the Norwegian nonprofit sector showed that studies of the welfare mix which both recognised and compared the three distinct sectors were all but absent in Norway and were also understudied in the other Scandinavian countries (Trætteberg & Sivesind, 2015).

The increased use of market mechanisms in Scandinavia, however, has been the subject of numerous studies (e.g. Hartman, 2011; Petersen et al., 2015; Wiborg, 2013). Studies such as these have focused on different aspects of cost, quality and the politics behind the use of market mechanisms and changes in the welfare mix. Other studies have investigated the link between user choice and empowerment (Hjort & Panican, 2014; Vrangbaek & Østergren, 2006) – an important aspect to consider in this dissertation. This approach is a way to connect studies of marketisation with research on the citizenship roles of users of the public sector. Yet, the connection between the citizenship roles of users, which is a pivotal part of the Scandinavian welfare model, and the welfare mix has received little attention. In this regard, this dissertation makes a genuinely new contribution to this field of research.

The empirical investigation consists of qualitative, comparative case studies in selected Scandinavian municipalities. I used a design that matched public and non-public institutions. The data consist of 35 interviews conducted in Denmark, 21 in Sweden, and 57 in Norway. Document studies and local user surveys were also important data sources. In total, investigations were conducted at 27 institutions in seven municipalities: eight institutions in two municipalities in Denmark, nine institutions in two municipalities in Sweden, and 10 institutions in three municipalities in Norway.

Schools and nursing homes were the selected service areas in this study. Education and health and social services are the main components of welfare services; consequently, nursing homes and schools represent the central branches of the Scandinavian welfare service model. They are both pivotal services; but concerning active citizenship, they have some differences that make them interesting for comparison.

Schools have a long tradition of democratic steering, also on the implementation side through local school boards and the strong position of parents (Antikainen, 2006; Oftedal Telhaug et al., 2006). The school sector is also a service area in which explicit attempts to empower through school choice are made. The right of parents to make decisions regarding the education of their children is also a reason why this service area has historically seen more acceptance of nonpublic providers, especially in Denmark (Segaard, 2015 pp. 95-96; Thuen & Tveit, 2013). In later years, the room for local influence on schools has arguably been diminished as many European states, including those which comprise Scandinavia, have become increasingly centralised in order to live up to international standards as part of the social investment agenda they have for schools (Jenson, 2013; Oftedal Telhaug et al., 2006; Van Lancker, 2013).

In contrast, nursing homes represent what is said to be the paternalistic side of the Scandinavian model. This implies that the state passivates its citizens once they become dependent on public services and imposes a content of care with little concern for their wishes. This aspect of the welfare model is connected to care services, and thus elderly care is an area where this perspective is relevant (NOU 2011: 11, pp. 40-41; Trägårdh & Svedberg, 2013). As with the school sector, the historical status of user control is also changing in this service area. Today, user autonomy and control have become central quality measures in all Scandinavian countries (Rostgaard, 2015 p. 7).

The results of this study are presented in three articles that, together with this introductory chapter, comprise the dissertation. In the introductory chapter, I will elaborate on important aspects of the research that underpin the articles, give a more comprehensive presentation of the research design and methodology, and draw some overarching conclusions that can only be observed when all of the articles are taken together. I start by presenting some background information about developments in the Scandinavian welfare mix and the research undertaken to understand it. Thereafter, I present the concepts of *small-scale democracy* and *citizenship*, followed by a section where I argue that *active citizenship* is a fruitful concept for analysing

variation in small-scale democracy. The theoretical section consists of a discussion of the central theories used to explain differences between public, for-profit and nonprofit providers, the market mechanisms that affect these differences, and the general importance of market mechanisms themselves. After a discussion of the data and methodology used in this dissertation, I present the articles and the main conclusions.

2 Background: The welfare mix in Scandinavia

The division of public, for-profit and nonprofit providers constitutes the welfare mix. Who is responsible for financing, regulating and providing services constitutes the division of responsibility between public and nonpublic actors (Lundqvist, 2001). Schools and nursing homes are core institutions of the Scandinavian welfare state over which the public sector has broad responsibility. The state funds both public and nonpublic providers' services. For example, users of nursing homes are charged the same regardless of whether the nursing home is public or nonpublic. All Swedish schools are free of charge. Norwegian and Danish public schools, by comparison, are also free, but users of nonprofit schools in these countries do pay fees. The public also regulates services, even if in some instances the states have different regulatory regimes for nonpublic institutions than they do for public institutions. This means that the most important variations are located at the level of the provision of services.

In this section, I will describe how the welfare mix (and ongoing changes to it) is understood from different perspectives. First, I describe the welfare mix in Scandinavia in general and in schools and nursing homes in particular. Second, I examine the main explanations for state dominance in the Scandinavian welfare mix. Third, I summarise some of the central research that has been conducted on differences between providers belonging to different sectors. Even if it often fails to recognise the three sectors in the welfare mix, it nonetheless constitutes a useful reference as the dominant approach to studying user plurality.

2.1 The current composition of the welfare mix in Scandinavia

Table 1 *Paid employment in Scandinavian welfare, in percentages*

	Norway			Sweden[a]			Denmark		
Sector	*2006*	*2013*	*5-year Change**	*2000*	*2013*	*5-year Change**	*2008*	*2013*	*5-year change*
Nonprofit	7.4	7.8	0.3	3.5	3.2	–0.1	15.1	13.8	–1.1
For-profit	11.5	13.4	1.2	8.7	19.2	3.8	6.5	7.1	0.5
Public	81.2	78.8	–1.5	87.8	77.6	–3.6	78.4	79.1	0.5
Total	528,400	632,800	12.3	1,033,597	1,230,412	6.8	590,419	614,479	0.3

[a] The numbers for Sweden are the number of employees in total, while for Norway and Denmark it is full-time employment.

* Average change in shares of full-time employment over a five-year period, in percentage points.

Source: Translated from Sivesind (2016 p. 20).

Table 1 documents the size of the different institutional sectors in Scandinavia. The numbers reveal that the for-profit sector has grown a lot in Sweden in recent years and only moderately so in Norway and Denmark. The public sector in all three countries is approximately the same size today, but this is a relatively new situation since the Swedish for-profit sector has grown rapidly at the expense of the public sector over the last years. The Danish and Norwegian mix is by comparison relatively stable, but Denmark has a larger nonprofit sector than the other two countries. The Swedish nonprofit share is the smallest among the Scandinavian countries, and may be the smallest nonprofit sector in the Western world (Sivesind & Selle, 2009).

In this dissertation, I am especially concerned with elementary schools and nursing homes. It is thus necessary to take a closer look at these service areas in particular. In Denmark, parents are free to choose schools for their children. The number of students in nonprofit elementary schools has grown by two percentage points between 2007 and 2011, from 13 to 15 percent

(Thøgersen, 2015 p. 11). There are no for-profit schools in Denmark since all nonpublic schools must be self-owned, nonprofit entities. In the nursing home sector, the share of nonprofit nursing homes remained stable at 20-21 percent between 2000 and 2010, even though the total number of nursing homes has declined as part of a bigger change in the structure for elderly care in Denmark (Thøgersen, 2015 p. 16). From 2007, a change in nursing home regulations allowed for the opening of independent nursing homes that could compete with their municipal counterparts. They can now be either nonprofit or for-profit, but most nursing homes established within this framework are Christian-based nursing homes in the nonprofit sector.

In Sweden, in 2013, 13 percent of elementary school students attended nonpublic schools (Skolverket, 2014 p. 26). Sixty-six percent attended for-profit schools, while the rest attended nonprofit schools. Interestingly, the share of students attending for-profit schools is quickly rising at the expense of nonprofit schools. Between 2009 and 2013, the share of students attending for-profit schools grew by nine percentage points, while the share of students attending nonprofit schools diminished accordingly (Skolverket, 2014 p. 31). In Swedish elderly care, the numbers also show dramatic changes. The percentage of staff employed at nonprofit elderly care organisations remained stable at 2-3 percent between 1993 and 2010. However, the for-profit sector grew substantially, from virtually nonexistent to nearly 17 percent of elderly care employees; this comes at the expense of the public sector, which has correspondingly shrunk and now accounts for about 80 percent of employees (Erlandsson et al., 2013 pp. 47-48).

In Norway, 3.3 percent of elementary school students attend nonprofit schools (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2016). This number is rather stable, experiencing only a modest 1-percentage point growth since 2005 (Utdanningsforbundet, 2014). By law, publicly funded Norwegian schools cannot distribute profits to their owners; thus, practically all of them are nonprofit. In the nursing home sector, there are no exact numbers to define the shares of the three sectors. There are different estimates that give slightly different results, but these measures describe a relatively stable situation with minor changes. Vabø et al. (2013 pp. 180-181) reported different estimates, finding that for-profits made up about 2–4 percent of the nursing home sector, while nonprofits made up 6–8 percent and the public sector accounted for 90 percent. In a recent report from the Confederation of Norwegian Service Industries, it

was found that nonprofits accounted for 5 percent of the nursing home sector, while for-profits accounted for 6 percent (NHO Service, 2015 p. 71).

This section documents the most recent developments in Scandinavian welfare. The main findings are that Sweden has seen a rapid growth in for-profit service providers, Denmark has experienced smaller changes while retaining a considerable nonprofit share, and Norway has changed little, with a small growth in for-profit service providers at the expense of the public sector. These overall developments in the entire Scandinavian welfare field can be traced to the school and nursing home areas. In the nursing home area, these developments fit well with the overall picture, while the limitation of for-profit schools in Norway and Denmark serve as examples of how to govern the welfare mix when this is what the states want. These latest developments do not change the fact that in Scandinavia the public sector dominates welfare provision. The following section will seek to explain this important heritage in comparative terms.

2.2 Understanding the welfare mix in Scandinavia

In comparative terms, the welfare mix in Scandinavia forms a specific cluster with a large public sector and limited nonprofit and for-profit sectors (Anheier & Salamon, 2006; Blomqvist, 2004; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Sivesind & Selle, 2010). The nonprofit sector was instrumental in developing the first welfare institutions, but the states have gradually taken over much of their operation, although to a lesser degree in Denmark. The social democratic regime has traditionally been hostile to the for-profit sector, mostly so in Sweden (Blomqvist, 2004 p. 140). The for-profit sector has had a historical presence in small pockets of Scandinavian welfare, but has grown over the last 20 years, especially in Sweden. This is part of a worldwide trend where market mechanisms and market actors are being used in an attempt to trim state budgets and make services more efficient (Fotaki & Boyd, 2005; Pavolini & Ranci, 2008).

The social democratic preference for public services is in part a legacy of the post-war view of the state as the modern instrument for lifting up the whole population to an acceptable, egalitarian living standard (Rothstein, 1994 p. 177; Sejersted, 2005). This view has affected the development of all three Scandinavian countries; but in Denmark, the nonprofit sector is in a stronger position and has thus been able to maintain a more prominent role as a welfare

provider than either Sweden or Norway (Henriksen & Bundesen, 2004). The state was a useful instrument for raising the living standard for different reasons. First, there were few if any alternative sources of financing. To base welfare on philanthropy and charity is not an option if there are not sufficient private sources of capital to rely on (Sivesind, 2015). Moreover, the influence the labour movement obtained on the state recast the state as a natural place to seek guarantees of social safety for the working class.

Second, and similarly, the social movements that fought in favour of social safety and equality had at their hearts the notion of individual autonomy. It has been debated whether the social democratic welfare state is an inherently paternalistic construction (for this view, see e.g. Hirdman (1987)). However, Rothstein (1998 ch. 7) rejected this view by demonstrating how the universal construction of the welfare state consistently increases the autonomy of individuals and liberates them from client relationships with the state. Trägårdh (1997, 2008) argued that this model not only liberates individuals from clientelism with the state, but from other societal actors as well. Control by the Church, families and communities is reduced as individuals obtain the safety they need from the state. This function of the state thus represents a partial victory for progressive forces in social movements.

Third, Scandinavian states have been relatively homogeneous societies. Accordingly, there has been less need to establish distinctive services for diverse groups (James, 1993). Compared to continental European welfare states, there has been no significant opposition to the ruling coalition in Scandinavia. As an example, some countries in continental Europe have both Lutheran and Catholics schools; in Scandinavia, however, dominance by the Lutheran church has made this a less relevant distinction (Anheier & Salamon, 2006 p. 108; Sivesind & Selle, 2009; Weisbrod, 1978).

The dominance of the public sector has come at the expense of nonprofit providers, who were often the pioneers of different service areas. The infiltration of nonprofit domains by the state is only been partly responsible for this development. In fact, it has been more common for nonprofits to actively encourage the state to take responsibility for the welfare of citizens in an expanding number of service areas (Kuhnle & Selle, 1992; Selle & Kuhnle, 1990). This shift in responsibility has, however, varied from service area to service area and organisation to organisation. The effect has been stronger in Sweden, where pubic dominance is greater, and weaker in Denmark, with Norway falling somewhere in between. The result has been that the size of the nonprofit sector has been reduced and is, for Scandinavian countries, only a

fraction of what is found in continental Europe (Salamon et al., 2004). Yet, there is important intra-Scandinavian variation as well, since the Danish nonprofit sector has been more resilient than its Norwegian and Swedish counterparts and is therefore larger (Henriksen et al., 2012). This difference is related to how the Danish welfare state has historically emphasised service providers with a differentiated service content and user choice, as opposed to the Norwegian and Swedish tradition, with a greater focus on high-quality standard solutions and strong legal rights for individuals (Andersen & Hoff, 2001).

Presently, however, this pattern has changed, with user choice having become to a varying degree a central value in all three countries, at least in the school sector (Segaard, 2015 p. 95). This is in keeping with an international trend whereby individualisation, market mechanisms and the growth of nonpublic providers has become widely prevalent (Seeleib-Kaiser, 2008).

2.3 Previous research on the use of nonpublic providers of public services

As mentioned, little empirical work has been done on the connection between the welfare mix and active citizenship. The use of for-profit providers in the delivery of public services has, however, received more attention. Research in this area has been implicitly concerned with the welfare mix as it has compared the different providers that comprise it, even if it has not always recognised the three institutional sectors. This research area is therefore part of the foundation upon which I built this dissertation.

Much of the research has focused on the role of for-profit firms, often overlooking the nonprofits. Early studies reported massive government savings because of public tenders and the use of for-profit providers. Based on empirical studies, predominantly from the US, Savas (1987) published an influential book with the telling title *Privatization: The Key to Better Government*. In one of the most cited studies on the issue, Domberger and Jensen (1997) arrived at the same result, identifying the number of providers competing in the market and the ability to specify quality in contract as central variables for efficient competition. Later studies have shown that gains made from provider privatisation are less clear when more aspects are included in the research, such as transaction costs, service sector differences, effects lasting longer than the first tender, and consequences for employees. Such aspects often received little attention in early studies; and when newer studies included them, the

results were less conclusive. In a review by Petersen et al. (2011), an effort was made to include all of these issues. They found that positive economic effects tend to decline after initial exposure to competition, and that few studies have actually considered enough relevant issues to be relevant themselves. They concluded that for so-called 'hard' technical services, savings can be obtained from letting for-profit companies compete; but in contrast, for 'soft' services like nursing homes and schools, no basis was found on which to draw similar conclusions. In an updated version, Petersen et al. (2014) surveyed studies published after 2011 and found them to be even less conclusive.

From the Scandinavian context, Bogen (2011) finds in a broad review of welfare in Norway that it was impossible to draw firm conclusions about the consequences of marketisation and private providers in the context of Norwegian welfare services. This claim is in line with results provided by Hartman (2011), who summarised research on Swedish experiences with competition over a 20-year period. The main conclusion was that the few studies that found that privatisation has had important effects on the quality or costs of the services, only covered small parts of the welfare field and often rested on an empirical design that does not allow for general conclusions.

For elderly care, studies from the US context have found that for-profit providers give poorer quality care than public or nonprofit providers (Comondore et al., 2009; Harrington et al., 2012). Concerning the Scandinavian nursing home sector, a study from Stolt et al. (2011, p. 560) found that in Sweden, 'privatization is indeed associated with significant quality differences'. They revealed that municipal entities scored better on structural factors, such as the number of employees per resident, while private entities scored better on service measures, such as having variety in terms of meals and options in terms of care plans. However, Gautun et al. (2013) used existing literature and some case studies to examine potential differences between nursing homes from different institutional sectors in Scandinavia. They discovered that although it was not possible to conclude that there were differences, this did not mean they did not exist, only that there was insufficient evidence for them. There is simply not enough research that has been conducted with a design tailored to reveal differences between institutional sectors. In a report that encompasses all of the Nordic countries, Meagher and Szebehely (2013a p. 277) concluded that there was 'no clear evidence that introducing competition and choice into Nordic eldercare services has led to cost savings

or quality improvements'. Their other main conclusion was that more research was needed, implying that such an effect may exist even if it currently remains undocumented.

In the school sector, a review encompassing research conducted in the countries belonging to The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Musset (2012 p. 43) found that 'theoretical benefits of introducing market mechanisms in education are not easily identified empirically.' In their review, Waslander et al. (2010) found that an important reason why most studies reveal minor effects on schools from market mechanisms is that a school market is inherently local. Choosing a different school than their local one often involves extra travelling for students and their parents, something that discourages changing school, and there are social costs involved in being away from established friendships. Little work has been done comparing Scandinavian experiences, since the three countries deviate on important aspects. Using scores from international student tests, some Swedish studies have suggested that marketisation reforms have improved the quality of education (Böhlmark & Lindahl, 2015), while other studies have observed that the effects are smaller (Edmark et al., 2014). Lindbom (2010) found that marketisation and private schools have added somewhat to the effect of increasing residential segregation. In Norway and Denmark, most studies have focused more on whether school choice creates differences between groups of citizens. Studies in Norway have indicated that families in nonprofit and public schools do not differ on important dimensions (Helland & Lauglo, 2005); whereas in Denmark, school choice tends to increase ethnic segregation (Rangvid, 2010).

Research on the consequences of privatisation and the use of nonpublic providers in Scandinavia is thus far inconclusive. Moreover, it seldom addresses the core interest of this dissertation: the relationship between the welfare mix and active citizenship. I therefore need to take a broader look at theories that can address my questions about the relationship between the type of provider and active citizenship, and between market conditions and active citizenship.

3 Citizen perspective on public services – small-scale democracy

In this study, I chose to investigate differences between providers in the welfare mix in terms of their users' citizenship roles. These roles are assumed within what we can term *small-scale democracy*. In the following, I first lay out the concept of small-scale democracy upon which this dissertation is based. I then discuss relevant conceptualisations of citizenship before moving on to a presentation of the concept of *active citizenship* in the following section, wherein I also explain how I deploy it as an analytic term.

Structures like the welfare state will always involve some form of imposition on individuals by institutions. To amend this 'colonization of the life world' of citizens (Habermas, 1989 p. 356), citizens need space and instruments which will enable them to guard their life worlds from state intervention. In small-scale democracy, citizens can shield their life worlds from state intervention, partly through arenas wherein the state itself invites citizens to act, and partly through arenas the citizens themselves define (Kristensen, 1999). This includes both individual and collective actions, in formal as well as informal fashions. Actions taken in small-scale democracies therefore reflect how citizens perceive their status as receivers of public care and education. Such actions thus combine the identities of citizens with their assessments of the receptiveness of the institutions in which they are involved.

The emphasis on small-scale democracy was first introduced in the Swedish citizen study (Petersson et al., 1989) and has inspired contributions based on this perspective from both Danish (Andersen, 2004 ch. 9) and Norwegian (Strømsnes, 2003) power studies. Thirteen years ago, Strømsnes (2003 p. 19) observed that what happens in the small-scale democracy has been less studied in Norway than they had been in Sweden and Denmark. This situation does not seem to have changed all that much in the decade since her observation. Besides a Master's thesis (Vedøy, 2007) and a couple of reports (Helgesen, 2006; Ødegård, 2011), there are few works that have explicitly used this approach, although a number of works have touched upon some of these same subjects (e.g. Alm Andreassen, 2009; Klausen et al., 2013; Rose, 2007).

The empirical work done on small-scale democracies has thus far largely been based on survey data. This type of research has mapped the extent and structure of participation in

small-scale democracies, what citizens do to influence them and why, who participates at the socioeconomic level, and the effects of participation (Andersen, 2004 ch. 9; Strømsnes, 2003; Van Deth et al., 2007b). Using individuals as the unit of analysis has rendered useful insights from a user's perspective, but has also yielded data about the institutions they use. The present investigation is focused more explicitly on institutions, even if it is from a citizen's perspective. It is also designed to make inferences beyond those presented in existing research, particularly in regards to the welfare mix, market governance, and opportunities for active citizenship.

Small-scale democracy has both a descriptive and normative component. Descriptively, participation in small-scale democracy includes how individuals act in order to make changes when presented with undesirable situations. This can range from informal contacts between students, parents and teachers when faced with undesirable circumstances at school, such as teaching problems or social environmental issues, to day-to-day issues at nursing homes, such as when users request different foods, sleeping times, or more social stimuli. In short, activities where individuals seek changes that they find are important for their situations are the activities that constitute participation in small-scale democracy.

Moreover, interactions with the municipal level can be a tool for citizens to protect their interests and life worlds. It is thus interesting to note how open this level is to the concerns of citizens in both general deliberations and particular approaches. Therefore, it is advisable to have a broad understanding of the frames of small-scale democracy in order to understand the routes available to affected citizens who take action to influence their own lives as users of public services. Thus, I chose to include actions taken by citizens through locally anchored institutions, such as user boards, as well as efforts made by them to influence local policymakers.

Small-scale democracy involves particularised actions taken to influence an individual or small group, whereas actions aimed at larger groups belong to the category of large-scale democracy (Van Deth et al., 2007a p. 8). The latter is the form of democracy referred to in daily parlance and concerns elections and the legislative chain of influence in society as citizens engage in collective, democratic action. There are not always clearly defined borders between small-scale and large-scale democracy (Togeby et al., 2003 p. 56; Van Deth et al., 2007a pp. 7-8).

Normatively, the significance of small-scale democracy rests, at least in part, on the assumption that it is important and desirable for citizens to have control in their own lives while dependent on public policies. This is assumed to be important because the implementation of public policies is crucial for the overall functioning of democracy. Actions taken to secure citizenship rights in small-scale democracy can, arguably, be labelled as political actions. Research on political actions has expanded in scope from solely focusing on attempts to influence elected officials and their actions (Verba & Nie, 1972) to including the implementation of policies themselves (Andersen, 2004 p. 30). The emphasis on small-scale democracy constitutes a broadening of what is seen as political participation to include issues such as user involvement in the implementation of public services and individual approaches to government (Strømsnes, 2003 pp. 28-29). When all of these small actions are included in the understanding of democracy, the analysis of democracy changes as the scope of its attention broadens. When people try to influence their own lives, they do not always conceive of it as political action, but their ability to do so is a measure of how well democracy functions.

In spite of the abovementioned broadening of the understanding of political participation in the research literature, some of the activities covered by my concept of active citizenship fall outside of the scope of political participation (Togeby et al., 2003 p. 56). For example, school-based interactions between parents and teachers can hardly be labelled 'political' actions. Andersen and Rossteutscher (2007 pp. 225-226) give three reasons why these activities are still important to study. First, from a citizenship perspective, small-scale democracy is important in its own right. People have personal autonomy and the right to control their own lives; this also extends to their capacity as users of public services. Second, actions taken in small-scale democracy concern the implementation of public policies. In a meeting between a user and a street-level bureaucrat (Lipsky, 1980), the actions of both actors are important from a policy perspective. Third, in spite of the limited effect of each individual action, the sum of all the actions taken by individual users is significant: It is the sum of all the meetings between users and welfare institutions that constitute the welfare service itself.

3.1 Conceptions of citizenship

In small-scale democracy, citizens exercise their rights. The nature of citizenship rights, and the relationship between rights and obligations, are disputed. The concept of citizenship has

developed over time, but most modern debates about citizenship roles takes the seminal work of Thomas H Marshall (1950) as its point of departure. Marshall differentiated between civil, political and social citizenship rights and obligations, and traced their development to different centuries. By introducing the term *effective citizenship*, Marshall went beyond a legal understanding of the concept by establishing it as a sociological concept that can be measured (Bottomore, 1992). In other words, citizenship consists of rights that can be realised to varying degrees (Van Deth et al., 2007a p. 3).

In this study, we are interested in citizenship roles when citizens are users of public services. A number of scholars have made arguments about the connection between welfare services and citizenship (Perry & Katula, 2001). Some have pointed out the passivating effects extensive welfare rights may have on citizens (Giddens, 1998 pp. 114-115; Habermas, 1994 p. 31; Mead, 1997) and have even suggested that there may be conflict between an active state and active citizenship (Óskarsdóttir, 2007 p. 27). Some scholars, on the other hand, have pointed to the state as a facilitator of an active citizenry, since citizens gain autonomy through a large welfare state insofar as their economic and educational resources are enhanced (Andersen, 2003; Rothstein, 1998). Moreover, contrary to earlier beliefs (Salamon & Anheier, 1998), over the last decade it has been documented that the large Scandinavian states do not crowd out civil society, but rather complement it. This underlines how nonprofits in their capacity as civil society organisations have a role in expanding citizens' potential to influence society, which is the opposite of passivating citizens (Selle, 2008; Sivesind & Selle, 2009).

Miller (2000) has shown how different political groups can embrace the importance of citizenship by applying different meanings to the concept. The politicised and normative approaches to citizenship make it necessary to distinguish between different conceptions before the functioning of citizenship can be analysed. In *Citizenship and Civil Society*, Janoski (1998) differentiated between three conceptualisations of citizenship. By combining political theory with macro-empirical approaches to state and society, he identified a liberal, communitarian, and social democratic concept of citizenship, each of which overlaps with the different welfare regimes described by Esping-Andersen (1990). The differentiation between the conceptualisations is based primarily on the nature of rights the citizen has, as well as his or her obligations to the state. The market and civil society (the public sphere) are institutions that mediate between the state and the citizen (Janoski, 1998 pp. 12-13). Since not all of these

conceptualisations are equally relevant to my study, it is not critical necessary to elaborate extensively on them; rather, I present their basic framework instead.

The liberal conception of citizenship is associated with Anglo-Saxon countries, and its focus is on individual autonomy and freedom of choice. Individuals hold important and equal rights, such as civil liberties and property rights. Negative rights in the form of freedom from state intervention are instrumental (Miller, 2000 p. 50). There are no expectations as to what level rights are pursued – that is up to the individual. The emphasis is on the individual, and there are few obligations besides abiding by the rule of law. There is little room for collective rights and obligations, and the relationship with the state takes the form of a restricted exchange whereby the contractual relationship demands immediate reciprocity in terms of rights and obligations.

The communitarian conception focuses more on the collective than on the individual and is associated with continental European countries. The aim here is to create good communities based on mutuality, autonomy and participation (Selznick, 1992). Obligations individuals have toward the community are more comprehensive than rights, as shared identities and a sense of unity are being developed. The relationship between the state and the individual takes the form of a generalised exchange as citizens fulfill obligations without expecting immediate returns. The rights of citizens will eventually be fulfilled by the state, but this takes place over a long period of time (Janoski, 1998 p. 20).

The social democratic, or expansive democracy, conceptualisation is associated with the Scandinavian countries. Empowerment and participation in community decision making are regarded as central rights. This conceptualisation is distinguishable from the liberal version in that the pursuit of social mobility at the expense of others is rejected. An unwillingness to sacrifice individual rights for the benefit of community and group projects differentiates the social democratic conceptualisation from the communitarian one. On the issue of individual versus collective orientation, the social democratic conceptualisation is thus in a middle position, where:

> *The result is a complex self-identity that fuses individual interests through participation in community activities, whether they are work, neighborhood, or welfare-related needs, but at the same time protects individual civil rights (Janoski, 1998 p. 20).*

This dissertation is concerned with themes related to the social democratic conceptualisation. In identifying this conception, Janoski is part of a tradition of scholars who have emphasised the social democratic approach to citizenship. In the 1980s, claims were made that the Scandinavian countries represented a unique model not just in regards to social democratic welfare states (Esping-Andersen, 1990) but in terms of social democratic citizenship as well (Hernes, 1988). The notion of *social democratic citizenship* refers to particularly empowering welfare states, especially when it comes to the responsiveness of public service institutions (Andersen, 2004 p. 163; Petersson et al., 1989). This activist and participatory form of citizenship consists of the democratisation of 'all areas of social life' (Hernes, 1988 p. 203), which includes the decentralisation of influence to a local level.

Tension exists between this notion of Scandinavian citizenship and the Scandinavian welfare model. Rothstein (1994) referred to the Scandinavian welfare states as 'high quality standard solutions' wherein all citizens supposedly received the same level of service content. However, the importance of equality in the provision of services translates to little variation in terms of the actual content of the services themselves. One would think that this would be the opposite of a responsive organisation, since responsiveness demands a certain level of flexibility on the part of service providers.

A core prerequisite for a functioning 'Scandinavian citizenship' is the ability for users to pursue active citizenship via publicly financed services. What role provider plurality and market mechanisms play toward achieving this type of citizenship is an empirical question for this dissertation.

3.2 Core concept: active citizenship

Small-scale democracy concerns the control citizens have in their everyday lives as users of public services. Their level of control is based on their citizenship role – the division of rights and obligations. To control their lives as users of public services, citizens need to have influence. More influence means more control, but absolute control can hardly occur in real life. If obligations are forced upon citizens who receive services, then this is the opposite of influence and entails less control.

In the research literature, active citizenship is a contested concept with no shared definition. Different scholars have emphasised the issue of obligations in divergent ways. One approach

sees active citizenship as ‘a broad range of activities that promote and sustain democracy’ (Hoskins, 2014 p. 14). These activities include political participation in formal politics, but also activities situated in the work place, civil society, and the private sphere (Holford & van der Veen, 2003; Hoskins & Mascherini, 2009). This scholarly understanding of the concept overlaps with that of policymakers who believe that people should be ‘architects and actors of their own lives’ (Commission, 1998 p. 11). Obligations are not a prominent part of this understanding of active citizenship.

Another approach *does* emphasise increased obligations for users as aspects of the agency of citizens (Newman & Tonkens, 2011), as it uses the term active citizenship to explain why responsibilities for services are shifted from the state to the citizens (Fuller et al., 2008). These obligations can take the form of care for oneself or for relatives, and citizens are expected to be market actors who influence the welfare sector by giving market incentives to providers. This approach is paralleled by that of policymakers who see citizenship as a way to promote individual responsibilities in the relationship between the citizen and the welfare state (St. meld. 29 (2012–2013), p. 49). The two approaches just discussed overlap on important issues like the right to participate and influence, but vary in their differential emphasis on obligations and duties.

Given the unsettled status of *active citizenship* in the research literature, I have used the existing literature to develop a conception that enables the evaluation of differences in citizenship roles of users of services delivered by different providers in the welfare mix. My understanding of active citizenship takes the first approach presented above as its point of departure. However, in order to grasp the relevant aspects of provider plurality, I must also consider the obligations and duties different welfare arrangements entail for users. Accordingly, I am also concerned with the obligations and circumstances of users who are either unable or unwilling to be active citizens.

The details of my conceptualisation of active citizenship are presented in the included articles. Therefore, in this introduction, I include only a summary. In the first article, I provide a comprehensive presentation of the concept, its three dimensions, and its indicators. Put briefly, the concept of active citizenship reflects that there are three main actors involved in deciding the content of a public service when a citizen becomes a user: the user, the staff, and the administrators and local politicians at the municipal level. The user can influence a public

service by meeting with staff and institutional leaders or via changes obtained in interactions with leaders at the municipal level.

With my analytic concept, I will assess the core activities in small-scale democracy, such as day-to-day interactions between users and staff members and collective forms of user control via user boards and related media. In addition, the concept covers local political processes whereby user experiences are transmitted to the municipal level. The concept of active citizenship thus brings attention to formal as well as informal ways of influencing services and elucidates the implementation of public policies. Active citizenship encompasses the activities users can engage in when assessing where to become users – at their institutions, in local policy processes, and in their communities – in order to influence the service in question. In this respect, active citizenship is an analytic tool for elucidating variations and consistencies when comparing different service providers.

The active citizenship of users of public services is the ability citizens or their relatives have to actively control their own lives while being users of public services. Active control can be exercised prior to becoming a user or while being a user. Both choice and voice are important instruments for practicing active citizenship. More specifically, I used three dimensions of active citizenship to analyse differences in the capacity for active citizenship for users of public, for-profit and nonprofit welfare services and their next of kin: *choice*, *empowerment* and *participation*. Table 2 presents the concept with its dimensions and indicators as it is presented in the first article.

Table 2 *Active citizenship, its dimensions, and its empirical indicators*

Background concept	Dimensions	Empirical indicators
Active citizenship	Choice	Promoting a broader range of services where more users obtain services that cater to their interests.
		Formal and real exit opportunities give power to users.
	Empowerment	Influence through collective representation in user boards
		Influence through individual, day-to-day contact with staff
	Participation	Interactions between user representatives and municipal decision makers, either directly or mediated by civil society organisations.

Source: Article 1.

With its three dimensions, active citizenship is an analytic perspective that enables us to measure aspects of users' experiences with welfare services. At the same time, it is an ideal type to which an empirical reality can be compared.

In Article 2, I expand the understanding of active citizenship by taking an approach to the concept that is more in line with the second approach outlined above; consequently, this approach is inclined to examine obligations and duties, as well as situations where users are either unwilling or unable to be active citizens. The central term used in this article is *user influence*, which includes two of the dimensions of active citizenship just listed: choice and empowerment. This article demonstrates how market mechanisms can lead to a shift in the burden of obligations and responsibilities from the public sector to users and their relatives. In addition, the importance of users having a voice while being users of publicly funded services is imperative, since lacking a voice is an indicator that responsibilities may be shifted upon the user. Differences between public, for-profit and nonprofit providers regarding structures for voice are thus essential to investigate when evaluating active citizenship.

4 Theories about the welfare mix

In this project, I chose to examine differences between providers in the welfare mix and the conditions responsible for increasing or decreasing these differences. In the following sections, I will first lay out a theoretical argument that explains how providers from different institutional sectors are distinctive. I will then look at their relationships with public financiers to determine how these affect the distinctiveness of the providers. Thereafter, I will explore theories about how market mechanisms may create conditions whereby users gain more or less control of services.

4.1 Fundamental sector differences?

Economic theories of nonprofit organisations try in principle to answer the question of why we need a third sector when we have a market and a state. In order to do this, these theories identify essential aspects of each of the institutional sectors and explain why and how they are different (Salamon & Toepler, 2015; Steinberger, 2006).

A key expectation relates to creating complete services for the population: a fundamental component of the first dimension of active citizenship. Citizens are an increasingly diverse group with respect to culture, religion, ethnicity, and so forth, and thus it is becoming equally difficult to create services suited to individual citizens (Phillips & Smith, 2011a). Governments may lack the knowledge, capacity and coordinative ability to create a diverse enough system to cover the entire population. In addition, the public sector has a tendency to centre its attention on the median voter and majority groups in society and thus overlook the interest of marginal groups. For-profit providers offer services to the largest market segment, which is not so different from the public sector's emphasis on the median citizen. Consequently, there is a gap in services for minority populations: a gap the nonprofit sector is well suited to fill (Weisbrod, 1978). By directing services toward smaller niches in the population, nonprofits compensate for the lack of breadth in public and for-profit providers' offerings in terms of quality, special needs, interests, methodology, ideology or beliefs (Clemens, 2006; Smith & Grønbjerg, 2006 p. 224).

Welfare services are services where there is great information asymmetry between providers of services and users. The users are often frail and the complexity of the services makes it

impossible for one user to acquire the same expertise as the professional providers. Therefore, the ability for users and society to trust providers is decisive (Hansmann, 1980). The less information users have, the more important it is for them to be able to trust the service provider. This applies both to users and public regulators, as there are limited opportunities for monitoring the quality of this type of service (Evers et al., 1997). Weisbrod (1988) proposed distinguishing between quality indicators that are easy to observe and assess and those that are difficult to observe. Different market participants have different incentives to prioritise the two different forms of quality. A profit-oriented provider has an incentive to achieve high measurable quality, but if doing so reduces profits, it will have an incentive not to devote resources to having high unobservable quality (Hansmann, 1987 p. 29). Nonprofit providers do not have the same dis-incentive to allocate resources to improve invisible quality (Salamon & Toepler, 2015 p. 2168).

Ben-Ner and Van Hoomissen (1991) complemented insights about why there is a demand for nonprofits by explaining the supply of nonprofits. To do this, they focused on the entrepreneurs who founded the nonprofit providers. These entrepreneurs had no economic incentive to create nonprofit alternatives. Therefore, a different objective must have motivated them, and this objective was often a commitment to improve the quality of services within the service area. Their participation in nonprofit activities can therefore be a basis for trust. Stakeholders seek to ensure that the organisation remains loyal to its founding values by recruiting people and establishing institutional solutions that promote adherence to their values (James, 1990). This may attract nonprofit providers that are particularly user-oriented, since the users themselves often establish the culture and define the structure of the organisation.

This is part of the backdrop when Enjolras (2009) argued that nonprofits often have governance structures that enable them to deal with the potential negative effects of lacking active owners and a well-defined target structure. Nonprofits sometimes lack economic incentives for efficient operation, which can lead to economic waste in the form of unnecessary benefits to employees or other organisational excesses (Fama & Jensen, 1983). The governance logic that remedies these potential drawbacks include membership based democracy, grassroots involvement and the internalised values of the organisation. There is no guarantee that these conditions will protect the organisation from poor operation, but they

are factors that can point in a positive direction. Democracy as a form of government can also be seen as a valuable in itself (Enjolras, 2009 p. 775).

The potential benefits of nonprofits when it comes to trust and broadening the scope of public services can help explain their functioning in the welfare mix. Yet, it is an all but universal Western phenomenon that the state shoulders the main responsibility for welfare but cooperates with nonprofit and for-profit providers in solving social and economic problems (Salamon & Toepler, 2015 p. 2161). To understand the persistence of this phenomenon, Salamon (1987) developed the theory of interdependence. Its guiding principle is that each of the three sectors has strengths and weaknesses, with the strengths of one sector to some extent compensating for the weaknesses of another.

In spite of the supposed benefits of nonprofit provision, such providers also have some potential weaknesses that make them unsuitable as the only types of providers. Their central weakness is that they do not have sufficient growth capacity to produce all of the services people want. They lack the ability to raise capital, as they tend to focus on their care mission rather than its expansion. Furthermore, the research literature holds that they are particularistic since they adapt their services to small groups and do not reach out to the whole population. Finally, they are accused of being paternalistic, providing services with a special vision for the community in mind rather than accommodating the visions of the users or of society at large (Salamon, 1987).

For-profit providers complement the strengths and weaknesses of nonprofits as they are skilled at quickly creating a large and efficient production to serve large proportions of the population. Nevertheless, for-profits have three weaknesses: They may produce too little of services (parts of) the population need; their services are often too expensive for much of the population, thereby limiting access to them; and as mentioned previously, they have public trust issues (Anheier, 2005 pp. 181-182).

The public sector aims to compensate for the failures of the for-profits. When for-profits do not provide enough of a service, the public sector can contract out the provision or the provider of the service itself. To ensure affordable prices for the population, the government can pay for the service through voucher systems or subsidies. To remedy the lack of trust, the public can regulate the service and provide increased information flow to users (Steinberger, 2006).

However, the public cannot fully compensate for the failures of the for-profits. The government tends to adapt the service to the median citizen. This makes the service maladjusted to citizens who want a particular quality of service, or who for various reasons want a type of service content that differs from the majority's preferences. Furthermore, lack of trust is often based on key aspects of health and care services not being readily observable (Steinberger, 2006). The public can thus have difficulties regulating something it does not know much about, rendering their efforts at best incomplete. These weaknesses of the state are addressed by nonprofits that cater to niche populations and enjoy more public trust (Anheier, 2005 pp. 129-131).

Consequently, the state pursues widespread cooperation with other providers in the welfare mix. Since the state cannot reach an optimal service level by providing all services in-house, and since nonprofit and for-profit providers are dependent on public financing and steering, the three sectors are interdependent. The theory of interdependence in the welfare mix has set the agenda for extensive research on the three institutional sectors and how they solve different tasks in the welfare mix (Steinberger, 2006). Much of the empirical work has been done thus far in an American context where the relationship between the sectors is different from that of Scandinavia. That said, the theory has a general scope, which suggests that the mechanisms it describes may also be active in a Scandinavian context.

The theory of interdependence gives some expectations regarding the first research question, which addresses differences between public, for-profit and nonprofit providers. Schools and nursing homes are complex institutions, and theories about the fundamental differences between providers can guide the data analysis as I identify differences and consistencies between them. The interdependence between state and nonpublic providers underlines how public financing and steering influence nonpublic providers. It thus gives clues about where to look for conditions that increase or decrease differences between actors in the welfare mix. The mechanisms used to govern the relationship between the state and service providers are instrumental and will be presented in the following section.

4.2 How market mechanisms affect welfare institutions

Because of the perceived differences between providers, most countries have policies to manage the composition of the welfare mix (Boris & Steuerle, 2006; Lundbäck & Lundberg, 2012; Salamon, 2002). Yet, given that there are differences between public, for-profit and nonprofit providers, these differences are not static. Different contexts and conditions may increase or decrease differences.

How the Scandinavian context creates conditions that affect the prominence of these differences is a central theme in the included articles. This dynamic is based on the established literature, which holds that within a contractual regime with the public sector, nonpublic providers may lose much of their distinctiveness (Salamon & Toepler, 2015 p. 2169; Toepler, 2010). However, there is an important difference between supply-based and demand-based financing of nonpublic service providers (Ascoli & Ranci, 2002 pp. 6-9). Supply-based financing involves the privatisation of the provision of services. The idea is that the state wants to change how services are supplied to the public by transferring management responsibility from a public agency to a nonpublic entity. This form of financing makes small alterations in the relationship between citizens and providers, but enables the state to make demands of potential providers who are seeking to become suppliers of services. Demand-based financing means that the state wants to change the demand structure of the provision by enabling citizens to act as market customers by selecting their own providers. The changes sought from this type of financing are thus intended to influence providers by making changes in the relationship between citizens and providers.

Supply-based privatisation of the provision of services has a tendency to weaken nonpublic distinctiveness. A particularly relevant example are public tenders. This form of provider privatisation contributes to their commercialisation and promotes innovation related to management and organisation and not to the actual content of the service (Goodin, 2003 pp. 390-391). Tenders where nonprofit and for-profit providers compete on equal terms may lead the nonprofits to adapt the for-profit operational logic in order to remain competitive (Haugh & Kitson, 2007). When Eikås and Selle (2002 p. 72) observed a trend toward increasing the use of a contractual regime in relations between nonprofits and the public sector, they foresaw a development whereby Norway was moving toward the Anglo-American model. In this

model, the nonprofits resembled for-profit providers since they were less membership-based, democratic organisations that increased nonprofit autonomy (Smith & Lipsky, 2009). A sign that the trend foreseen by Eikås and Selle is currently taking place is that some important nonprofits are downscaling their democratic structure in order to be more competitive market actors. They do this by reducing the importance of their elected bodies and giving more manoeuvrability to professional leaders who are supposedly better skilled at competing with for-profit providers for contracts with municipalities and the state (Gulbrandsen & Ødegård, 2011 pp. 61-64). Public tenders are not the only form of supply-based provider privatisation. The public can also contract nonpublic providers in a number of different ways that are to a lesser degree based on market logic. The effects of alternative forms of supply-based contracting are dependent on the level of freedom granted to the nonpublic provider under the contractual regime.

Demand-based financing takes place when the users themselves choose an institution. As long as the public sector funds the service provider, it will be dependent on approval from public agencies; once this has been obtained, it can compete to attract users. Within this regime, market mechanisms to some extent replace public regulation. Since users are able to opt in and out of different institutions, it is not necessary for the government to impose the same level of regulation as it does when all users are forced to use the same institutions. The idea is that institutions whose services are not good enough will be uncompetitive and will thus be eliminated from the quasi-market. In this way, only institutions with an acceptable level of services remain, as the market does the job that the state must do when market forces are not allowed to function. This gives the different providers increased ability to develop distinct characteristics as long as these are in accordance with users' preferences (Ascoli & Ranci, 2002). Whether this happens depends on the heterogeneity of citizens' demands and the diversity of providers. For example, a multi-religious population can include schools which cater to different religious groups, each with their own distinct approach to school operations. Supply diversity is thus an empirical question for each context.

A key point from this section is that the fundamental distinctiveness of nonpublic providers is not universal, but varies according to legal and institutional frame conditions and funding arrangements. Within a Scandinavian-like welfare model, this context is largely constituted by decisions made by the public regulator and financer. To explore conditions that increase

and decrease differences between providers in the welfare mix, it is therefore necessary to look at how the state manages its relations with different providers.

4.3 How market mechanisms affect user control in small-scale democracy

The last section looked at how market mechanisms can affect welfare institutions and thus make them more or less distinctive by comparison. In this section, I discuss how market mechanisms themselves can increase or decrease the active citizenship of users, not by affecting the institutions but by increasing or decreasing the power the user has when approaching the institutions with no regard to what institutional sector the provider belongs. This is thus a different type of explanation of variance in the importance of the welfare mix.

Publicly funded welfare services can never be considered a true market since they are based on the idea of insulating citizens from negative market effects. The public sector can, however, introduce market mechanisms and thus create a quasi-market. Le Grand and Bartlett (1993) presented five conditions needed to have a well-working quasi-market. First, the market must be structured in a way that incentivises competition and price formation, which requires various providers and many customers. Second, information must flow to users. Third, transaction costs must be limited. Fourth, the motivation of market actors must be to a certain degree based on financial considerations. Fifth, *cream skimming* must be avoided. In other words, providers cannot only serve citizens who can generate a profit for them. Le Grand and Bartlett (1993) (for an updated version, see Le Grand (2007)) identified four arguments for quasi-markets in the public service provision. The first is concerned with efficiency gains and costs for the government. The other three involve giving power to citizens. They argued that quasi-markets enhance public sector responsiveness, empower citizens by providing them with choices, and promote equality by giving market powers to all citizens, not just those able to pay for services. If market mechanisms can produce these effects, they will give citizens more control over their own lives in relation to public services and thus enable active citizenship.

Le Grand entered this debate as an economist interested in public governance. Blomqvist and Rothstein (2008 p. 15) were explicit about their perspective not being based on economic cost–benefit analysis, but rather on an approach inspired by theories of democracy. They

raised the fundamental issue of 'the black hole of democracy' (p. 16) that occurs when street-level bureaucrats exert influence over the implementation of decisions made by elected officials (Lipsky, 1980). They suggested using market mechanisms to remedy this problem by empowering citizens through user choice to select their preferred street-level bureaucrats and thus alter the power relations for the benefit of citizens.

The concept of institutionalised citizen empowerment take this power balance as a point of departure as it explores the relationships between citizens and public institutions (Kumlin, 2004 p. 56; Solevid, 2009 ch 3). The literature identifies two main factors in determining this balance: the bureaucratic discretion of institutional staff and the exit options of the users. Too much bureaucratic power in the hands of staff means that their ability to influence the implementation of services is greatly increased (Lipsky, 1980). When the content of these services are valued by both the agency and the citizen, more power by staff members dis-empowers citizens, and vice-versa (Hoff, 1993). The exit option enables the citizen to avoid bureaucratic power and thus shifts power from the public agency to the user. In addition to the two main factors, institutional citizen empowerment also includes other factors such as voice opportunities and legal rights. The mix of these instruments varies across Scandinavia, as Norway and Sweden have traditionally used the legal rights of citizens more actively than Denmark, which has in turn promoted more user choice and thus more exit opportunities (Andersen & Hoff, 2001). This policy has, however, changed over the last 20 years as Sweden has dramatically increased the role of user choice in its welfare services (Hartman, 2011).

Both the concept of institutionalised citizen empowerment and the black hole of democracy were inspired by Hirschman (1970) explanation of how one can enact changes in an organisation. He described three strategies for the individual: exit, voice and loyalty. The point of departure was how firms respond to consumer responses. The fundamental logic of his theory is that the firm or organisation should heed signals from its users about parts of its operation that are functioning at suboptimal levels. Based on these signals, the organisation can change its operation and improve quality in line with signals given by users. Users can send these signals in two ways: through choice (Hirschman uses the term *exit*. I use exit and choice interchangeably) and voice.

Exit is the clear-cut economic logic. In the realm of public services, it means that citizens who are unhappy with a service will choose a different institution and thus send a powerful signal

that they are not content with the service. Voice is the political option, and refers to an individual remaining in an organisation and arguing for changes in order to improve what he or she finds unsatisfactory. Hirschman argued that the efficiency of choice and voice will vary depending on the organisation, service and situation. An important factor is the loyalty of an individual to an organisation. If an unhappy user chooses to stay at an institution and ask for changes or if the user exits the institution at first opportunity, affects the pressure for change the institution experiences. This is especially relevant in care services where the social benefits of staying in a familiar environment can be considerable.

In addition to the various arguments about how different market mechanisms can give power to users, there is also the possibility of them creating the opposite effect. Critics of the use of market mechanisms point out that the privatisation of provision can sometimes be a tool not for user empowerment, but rather as a strategy for curbing public expenditure (Brennan et al., 2012; Christensen, 2012). Others point to a side effect of market mechanisms whereby power may be given to citizens, but at the same time they are made responsible for the functioning of markets and occasionally for the services themselves (Newman & Tonkens, 2011).

A take away from this section is that market mechanisms can influence active citizenship in two ways. First, market mechanisms influence institutions. When institutions change, the potential for active citizenship for users also changes. Second, market mechanisms directly change the power relations between users and institutions and thus also directly affect the possibilities for active citizenship. It is therefore necessary to be conscious of both effects when one studies the types of market conditions that increase or decrease active citizenship.

5 Alternative conditions that influence active citizenship

A main argument in this dissertation is that institutional sectors matter for active citizenship. In addition, the preceding section has shown how the allocation of contracts (e.g., through market mechanisms) is relevant for assessing capacity for active citizenship. There are, however, alternative factors that may also influence the active citizenship of users of schools and nursing homes.

Attributes of the individuals involved may also influence the capacity for active citizenship. In both nursing homes (Swagerty, 2005) and schools (Møller, 2009), leadership has been shown to have importance for the overall operation of the institution, including issues related to user influence on the service. Differences between institutions can thus occur because those in charge possess different leadership qualities, not because of the institutions themselves. At the same time, some studies have shown that staff members are differentially motivated in different institutional sectors (Perry et al., 2010): an observation that is in line with the assumption that institutional sectors matter for active citizenship.

Furthermore, the attributes of users may influence how they use their capacity for active citizenship. It is one thing for the tools needed to control one's own life to be formally available; it is another to possess the ability to exploit these tools (Bang et al., 2000 pp. 25-26). Socioeconomic status, language skills and minority preferences are all attributes of individuals that affect their capacity to enjoy public services (Djuve et al., 2011).

Legal frameworks and national or local regulations regarding user influence can also be important for access to active citizenship for citizens. These regulations can vary between service areas and can thus be used to explain differences along this comparative dimension. In other instances, different legal framework can exist between different institutional sectors. These are clearly not inherent differences between sectors, and yet differences in legal frameworks can help answer the second subordinate question that addresses variations in the importance of active citizenship for providers belonging to the public, for-profit or nonprofit sectors.

Finally, it is also possible that there are other alternative conditions that can explain differences in the capacity for active citizenship, but that my design renders me unable to identify them. I have a limited set of cases that I examine, and features that are not central in my cases may have wider importance in other instances. The qualitative approach I use in this study yields substantial knowledge about the cases that reduces the risk of overlooking important aspects; however, this possibility can never be entirely disregarded (Mahoney, 2007 p. 130).

6 Research design, methodology and data

This study was carried out within the framework of a research project titled 'Outsourcing of Scandinavian welfare societies? Consequences of private and nonprofit service provision for active citizenship'. The project was funded by the Research Council of Norway and coordinated by the Institute for Social Research in Oslo. The project duration was three and one half years, and in total seven researchers participated from The Institute for Social Research in Norway, the University of Southern Denmark and Aalborg University in Denmark, and Umeå University in Sweden. Articles 2 and 3 are based on data I collected in a Norwegian context, while Article 1 is also based on data collected by colleagues in Sweden and Denmark.

6.1 Why a qualitative, comparative case study?

Thomas (2011) differentiated between the practical units for investigation – the subject of the study – and the analytic frame which is the object of the study. In this case, both the subject (i.e., welfare institutions) and the object (i.e., the concept of active citizenship) are complex phenomena. On the explanatory side, welfare institutions are complex systems with many attributes, many of which potentially play some role in configurations that produce outcomes (Ragin, 1994 p. 115). In addition, the outcome that I chose to explain, active citizenship, is a complex concept that can be difficult to measure. To achieve good conceptual validity is therefore an important challenge, but the qualitative approach is well suited for obtaining it (George & Bennett, 2005 p. 19).

The comparative approach involves a case-based comparison of sets of cases (Ragin, 2008 pp. 13-15). My main set is municipal welfare institutions, with schools and nursing homes serving as subsets of this nested set. Likewise, each type of owner of an institution, municipal or nonpublic, constitutes another subset (e.g., municipal schools constitute one subset, private schools another, etc.). The search for patterns of commonalities and differences within and between subsets will focus on how different causal conditions are linked to divergent outcomes in interpretable ways. This enables me to look at how configurations of causes can produce different outcomes (Ragin, 1994 p. 114). My research question is based on an interest

in the differences between nonpublic and municipal providers when it comes to active citizenship. A comparative design can help reveal how institutional sector of a provider in conjunction with other causal conditions enables active citizenship. The pattern of causal conditions facilitating active citizenship can explain how and in what circumstances different providers are connected to active citizenship. The relations between the different subsets will thus give an indication about how general these causal relationships are.

This understanding of how the comparative method can be used to make causal inferences is similar to how Mjøset (2009 p. 59) understood causal mechanisms. Causal mechanisms are understood as patterns of social interaction that are triggered in different contexts. These patterns are general in nature so that, ideally, equal conditions will trigger equal mechanisms and result in equal outcomes. Accordingly, there are two challenges: identifying the mechanisms that produce an outcome and uncovering the conditions that trigger the mechanisms. An approach like the one outlined above, where subsets of cases are used to reveal causal conjunctions that produce outcomes, is a way to investigate how such mechanisms work. For my research question, it is just as central to understand the context that triggers the mechanisms. Elster (1993 p. 47) held that these mechanisms can never be fully understood due to the fluid nature of the social world. Yet, I find it fruitful to attempt to understand at least as much as I can about the importance of some aspects of the context.

In addition to providing generalisable inferences that can be made from one study alone, it is also possible that my conclusions can play a wider role when used as the basis for subsequent work. By seeing the project as a building block in the larger task of mapping the relationship between the organisation of welfare institutions and citizenship roles, the conclusions made here can be used as a basis for further theory development at a later stage (George & Bennett, 2005 p. 76).

6.2 Comparative dimensions

My primary interest is in the differences between the institutional sectors of welfare institutions with respect to how they affect active citizenship. The design does, however, also open up the possibility for other analytic dimensions. Both country and service areas are therefore dimensions which I mapped in order to explain variations and similarities.

Country: Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. Within the Scandinavian model, Sweden and Norway have traditionally focused on strengthening the legal rights of citizens as users, while Denmark has in addition actively used nonprofit actors to enhance user choice as a tool for citizen empowerment (Andersen & Hoff, 2001). Lately, there has been some convergence, as all of these countries have prioritised greater user choice (Segaard, 2015), even though there has been increased divergence in terms of the composition of the welfare mix (Sivesind, 2016). Since the year 2000, Sweden has moved toward empowerment through marketisation, with a rapidly growing for-profit share in the welfare mix. Denmark has a relatively stable, large nonprofit sector, while Norway has a stable public dominance. In this way, one might say that the three Scandinavian countries currently have three different strategies when it comes to the promotion of active citizenship (Sivesind, 2013). The three Scandinavian countries thus represent some interesting institutional differences, even if they belong to the same welfare model. Methodologically, comparisons between the countries are useful for assessing the scope of the conclusions.

Service area: Schools and nursing homes are two policy areas that are suitable for comparison. As pointed out in the introduction, these two service areas have different positions in the Scandinavian welfare model. To compare them in light of the welfare mix and active citizenship is thus useful for understanding how changes in the welfare mix could potentially have different implications in different areas of the welfare model. At the same time, they are both core areas of municipal welfare services, with different positions in the current political debate. The school sector is experiencing a dilemma whereby liberal ideas about the rights of parents to choose schools with different content or better quality and to opt out of bad schools is challenging adherence to the 'unitary school' system, where equality and social integration is emphasised (Arnesen & Lundahl, 2006). In the nursing home sector, the debate has focused less on variations in the content of care and more on efficient means by which to obtain a sufficient capacity of care with an acceptable level of quality. In addition, the structure of governance between the school and nursing home sectors is different. In schools, there is considerable national regulation with regard to the content of services (Helgøy & Homme, 2006; Rönnberg, 2014); while for elderly care, more decision making regarding the content of care is left to municipalities (Vabo, 2012).

When findings about institutional sectors are consistent across all three countries and between both service areas, they are more robust; while differences across countries and between service areas call for caution and contingent conclusions.

6.3 The design and case selection

The data were collected in order to make comparisons across all of the comparative dimensions presented above. The institutions that were studied in all three countries are administered at the municipal level. The strategy was therefore based on selecting municipalities where pairs of public and nonpublic institutions could be compared. As such, the design was developed in three steps: (1) the selection of municipalities; (2) the selection of institutions; and (3) the development and implementation of a strategy for data collection and analysis.

27 institutions were selected in seven municipalities: three municipalities in Norway, two in Sweden, and two in Denmark. The most important criterion in the selection process was that the municipalities had providers from different institutional sectors in both nursing homes and schools. Consequently, many municipalities were not deemed suitable as cases – if, for example, they only offered public nursing homes. Although the institutions are my cases of interest, the municipalities serve as frames that can be used to control attributes other than the institutional sector of providers. I had no information about the outcome of active citizenship in any of the selected municipalities. In order to obtain findings that were as robust as possible, we therefore used a strategy incorporating a diverse selection of municipalities that is beneficial 'where different combinations of variables are assumed to have effects on an outcome' (Gerring, 2008 p. 651). In this case, variations were assessed in terms of geographic location and the status of municipalities as either urban or rural. In addition, we were conscious of the political leadership of each municipality and identified particular characteristics within the municipalities that were relevant to the investigation. We aimed for variation within each country while simultaneously applying the same principle for selection in each of them. That way, the profiles of the selected municipalities featured cross-country similarities.

In Norway, all municipalities and prospective interviewees gave their approval to be part of the research. In Sweden and Denmark, the researchers experienced that both municipalities

and interviewees did not want to participate, and it was thus necessary to select other suitable subjects along the same criteria. With only seven municipalities, we were forced to make some pragmatic choices, but the diversity between municipalities gave robustness to findings that occurred across dimensions (Flyvbjerg, 2006 p. 230). Table 3 provides the main characteristics for each of the selected municipalities. Since municipalities cannot be selected in a way that standardises all relevant characteristics, there are necessarily some idiosyncratic features of the municipalities that need to be reported. The column labelled 'Relevant characteristics' presents such idiosyncratic information for the different municipalities.

Table 3 *Characteristics of the selected municipalities*

Denmark	**Schools and nursing homes**	**Political affiliation (at the time of data collection)**	**Relevant characteristics**
Faaborg-Midtfyn **Population: 51,634**	13 public schools 15 nonprofit schools 10 public nursing homes 1 nonprofit nursing home	At the beginning of the data collection period, there was a social democratic majority. After the 2013 elections, a liberal-conservative (Venstre) majority came into power.	Faaborg-Midtfyn is situated on the island of Funen. It stands out as a municipality with a large share of students attending nonprofit schools (29 percent).
Herning **Population: 56,942**	31 public schools 8 nonprofit schools 10 public nursing homes 5 nonprofit nursing homes.	Liberal-conservative (Venstre) throughout the data collection period.	Herning is located on Jutland. Herning has a large number of nonprofit nursing homes.
Sweden			
Östersund **Population: 59,485 (2012)**	35 primary schools, 4 of which are private (2 for-profit, 2 nonprofit) 22 nursing homes, 15 of which are public and 7 of which are for-profit. Östersund has a municipal policy that 25 percent of nursing homes should be run by	Social democratic majority	Östersund is a small town in northern Sweden, but covers a large geographical area.

	nonpublic providers.		
Sollentuna **Population: 66,859 (2012)**	36 primary schools, 17 of which are private (only 2 are nonprofit; the rest are for-profit). 27 percent in private schools. 10 nursing homes, 7 of which are for-profit and 3 of which are public. The public nursing homes are run by a publicly owned company that is intended to function as a private unit.	Conservative majority for a center-right majority in the city council.	Sollentuna is one of the municipalities in Sweden that has gone the furthest toward introducing market mechanisms in the care sector and adheres strictly to an ordering–performing model. Sollentuna is a suburb of Stockholm, Sweden's capital city.
Norway			
Asker **Population: 59,571**	24 public schools 3 nonprofit schools 4 public nursing homes 1 for-profit nursing home	Conservative majority	Asker is a wealthy municipality in the suburbs of Oslo, Norway's capital city. Asker is one of the first Norwegian municipalities to have a for-profit nursing home.
Steinkjer **Population: 21,650**	12 public schools 1 nonprofit school 3 public nursing homes 1 nonprofit nursing home	Center-left coalition	Steinkjer is a small town located in the Trønderlag region in central Norway.
Løten **Population: 7,546**	5 public schools 1 nonprofit school 1 public nursing home that was not included in this study.	Labour Party majority	Løten is a rural municipality with no variation in terms of the nursing home sector; therefore, only schools were investigated.

Within each municipality, we applied the matching case design strategy (Dunning, 2010 pp. 289-290). We selected two institutions from each service area: one public and one nonpublic. These institutions are complex organisations comprising a number of attributes that can

together produce a given outcome. Therefore, we tried to minimise diversity between the institutions we selected within each of the municipalities. In order to achieve a control effect for such attributes to better grasp variations stemming from the service sector, we limited diversity in terms of size, the socioeconomic circumstances of users, and geographic location. Obviously, in real life, no two institutions are sufficiently similar to achieve complete control, and I must consider this in the qualitative case analysis. Table 4 lists the municipalities and institutional sectors of the selected institutions.

Table 4 *Selected municipalities and institutional sectors of the nonpublic institutions*

Country	Municipality	Nursing home	School
Denmark	Faaborg Midtfyn	Nonprofit and public	Nonprofit and public
	Herning	Nonprofit and public	Nonprofit and public
Sweden	Östersund	For-profit and public	For-profit, nonprofit and public
	Sollentuna	For-profit and public	For-profit and public
Norway	Asker	For-profit and public	Nonprofit and public
	Steinkjer	Nonprofit and public	Nonprofit and public
	Løten	N/A	Nonprofit and public

6.4 Data collection

The data are derived from three types of sources: (1) interviews with users, staff, and leaders at the institutions, and interviews with the political and administrative leadership of the municipalities; (2) local user surveys; and (3) local strategic documents. I collected the Norwegian data; Malene Thøgersen, from University of Southern Denmark, collected the Danish data; and David Feltenius, from Umeå University, collected the Swedish data. Before collecting the data, we developed a field guide[1] that specified which sources of data were relevant. The field guide detailed what kinds of documents and local user surveys should be

[1] The field guide is found in an appendix 1. It is written in Norwegian.

collected and analysed, as well as who to interview. It also contained interview guides that were used to conduct semi-structured interviews with all groups of interviewees. When appropriate, one could add extra question in each country. The interview guide was developed in order to obtain information about the capacity for active citizenship in each institution. Existing literature, which was presented in the preceding sections, gave us guidance about which topics were relevant to pursue during interviews. The field guide was thus a tool for making the data collection more structured by pre-establishing the same set of questions for all cases and focusing on the issues relevant to active citizenship (George & Bennett, 2005 ch. 3). The field guide was developed by the research team at the Institute for Social Research, with input from our colleagues in Sweden and Denmark. As the only member of the team dedicated to the project full time, I played an active role in making the guide, under the supervision of the project leader.

In all cases, the interviews were conducted with one or two administrative leaders in the municipalities and with one or two political leaders. Because of this, we were not always able to cover the whole range of political views, but we nonetheless tried to select key informants with the best insights about the institutions from the perspective of the municipality. In all cases, we interviewed the leader of the institutions in question. From the staff, we selected the safety representative or leader of the local union. This was done in order to avoid self-selection, or that the leader of the institution could pick who should be our interviewees, and was based on the expectation that these staff members would be more informed than the average colleague. There were few signs of conflict between staff and leaders at the institutions, an observation that indicates that bias stemming from selecting union representatives was not too strong. To gage user opinions, we formed focus groups with either parts of the user boards or the user boards as a whole. Again, this was done in order to select individuals who were better informed than the average user. We tried to be conscientious of the fact that these users by virtue of their seat in the user board possibly had more personal resources than the average user. It must also be pointed out that the user boards in nursing homes mostly consisted of the users' relatives, not the users themselves. The same situation occurred in the investigated schools, where parents constituted the majority of users on the user boards. In some instances, people who the case study revealed to have potentially interesting perspectives were also interviewed. For example, the leader of the council for the elderly in one municipality was interviewed, as was the leader of a municipal-level council for school parents in another municipality. In total, we conducted 35 interviews in Denmark,

21 in Sweden, and 57 in Norway. Some of the interviewees were interested in conveying a particular message. For example, the leaders of the nonpublic institutions underlined their distinctiveness from the public option, which is logical given that they are in some way challenging public dominance in the welfare model. In cases like this, the interview data were evaluated in connection to other informants, and I report discrepancies in the articles. Based on all available data I try to pin down well-founded inferences that in some cases diverge from the impressions left by some of the interviewees.

Local user surveys were conducted by the municipalities. They were designed differently for each municipality, and some municipalities did not have them at all. The surveys also varied with respect to what degree they covered aspects of the services relevant to our active citizenship perspective. They are therefore not useful for making comparisons between municipalities, but in some instances, they are useful for making comparisons *within* municipalities. The surveys were thus used as background information before conducting interviews, but also served as an independent source of information about user views. This is the only data source where the opinions of large numbers of users are represented.

The local strategy and policy documents include municipal documents that cover municipal policies pertaining to the service areas or general approaches to user influence. In addition, I obtained the corresponding documents at the welfare institutions. Together with the manifestos of the local political parties, the municipal documents were used to reveal if and how the municipalities approach user influence and active citizenship. Not all of the institutions had formal steering documents; but when they did, this information was used to triangulate with interview data and user surveys. In the analysis, concurrence between different sources gave robustness to the observations, while divergence between different sources indicated that further investigation was needed; for example, by including specific questions about the contested topic in the interviews.

6.5 Data analysis

All of the data collected at 27 institutions in seven municipalities served as the basis for this dissertation. The analysis took place in three steps. First, the data were organised and the interview recordings were transcribed. In that process, the data were coded with theme codes (Sivesind, 2007) in order to facilitate the next analytical steps. The themes were based on the

indicators of the dimensions of active citizenship. The second step involved making the initial comparisons. This was done in reports that summarised the findings from each municipality.[2] Here, the text-bits representing the different codes were presented and analysed. The matched institutions were compared along the relevant dimensions of active citizenship in addition to other aspects that were deemed relevant for evaluation of small-scale democracy. This is the process Gerring and McDermott (2007) called *spatial comparison*. This type of comparison is spatial since there is no longitudinal dimension that gives leverage, but rather the contextual control in the quasi-experimental template with a matching design supports the internal validity. In addition, concurrent evidence from different interviewees and alternative data sources provided a triangulation effect that made the inferences better founded (Yin, 2003).

The reports also made explicit comparisons between the service areas, which makes up a relevant and interesting analytic dimension in its own right. Each report documented, analysed and compared the findings from two schools and two nursing homes (except for Løten, Norway, which had only schools). The analysis was based on the comparative logic found in Ragin (1994, 2008), where the aim is to identify similarities among cases within a type and differences between cases belonging to different types. The local researcher who collected the data wrote the reports; as part of the writing process, the results were shared and discussed, as were understandings regarding the underlying concepts so as to achieve a shared understanding and avoid conceptual stretching (Collier & Levitsky, 1997).

In the third step, the resulting reports were used as the basis for a comparison of institutions across municipalities and countries. For two of the articles, only the three Norwegian reports were used, while the remaining reports were used in the third article. Since all of the reports were structured to enable comparisons about active citizenship and to have comparable data, they were ideal for further analysis. The researcher who authored the Danish and Swedish reports commented on the use of the data collected in order to avoid misunderstandings.

[2] For the Norwegian reports, see http://www.samfunnsforskning.no/Prosjekter/Paagaaende-prosjekter/Utkontraktering-av-skandinaviske-velferdssamfunn. The Danish report is available at http://www.cifri.dk/Webnodes/da/Web/Public/Forskning+og+projekter/Outsourcing+of+welfare+societies. The Swedish reports will be made accessible upon request.

6.6 Reliability and transparency

Reliability measures the credibility of inferences. Inferences based on qualitative data like those presented in this dissertation cannot be easily replicated by obtaining access to the dataset. There is, however, general agreement about the need for researchers to make their analyses transparent and to report how the data were collected (George & Bennett, 2005 p. 106; King et al., 1994 p. 51). In addition to being tools for handling data, case reports from the municipalities also serve this purpose in this study. The case reports contain the presentation of data and the analysis, but they also provide information about the number of interviews conducted, at which level of which institution they were conducted, characteristics about each municipality and institution, and other contextual factors deemed relevant. The reports are available on the Internet and are thus available to anyone to evaluate in terms of whether the inferences based on the reports are reasonable. A full replication of the entire study is impossible for practical and ethical reasons, but this approach is an attempt to remedy some of the inherent difficulties of qualitative studies.

6.7 Ethics

This project was carried out in accordance with Norwegian legal and ethical guidelines regarding data collection, analysis and publication. The research design and interview guides were approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD), which is the Data Protection Official for Research.

The primary ethical concern in this research was the integrity of the interviewees, welfare institutions and municipalities. Each of these entities were given written information about the project before agreeing to participate. The information provided an outline for the project and made it clear that their participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time. Municipalities and institutions gave their consent to be described without anonymity. Persons in leading positions were made aware that as long as the name of the municipality and institution were not anonymised, it would be possible to identify them. They were also given the opportunity to double check their quotations. The general public cannot identify care workers and users. Since the interviews took place at the institutions, their leaders and some staff members know the identities of the interviewees. This reality was orally presented to interviewees, and controversial quotations do not appear in the reports.

6.8 External validity

I based my findings on an investigation of only a handful of the many schools and nursing homes in Scandinavia. Statistical generalisation to a broader population is therefore not possible. I nevertheless wish to make some inferences that have wider implications beyond the confines of this study. There are two ways to justify such wider inferences.

First, a fundamental assumption about case studies is that '… the purpose of the study – at least in part – is to shed light on a larger class of cases (a population)' (Gerring, 2007 p. 20). In other words, one should be able to generalise the findings to a wider set of cases. In case-oriented research, a relevant causal feature can be treated as 'either a condition for the operation of a cause or as a cause' (Ragin, 2004 p. 48). If the feature is treated as a condition, it will be part of the definition of the population and will thus be involved in deciding the scope of the generalisation. As an example from this study, the manner in which municipalities allocate users to institutions, user choice or through a placement by a municipal bureaucrat, can be considered a cause which explains active citizenship. At the same time, user allocation can also be considered part of the definition of a population, meaning that the inferences are valid in institutions which share this particular trait. Generalisations to the class of cases that belong to this group can often be regarded as advisable when alternative explanatory factors are shown to be irrelevant. George and Bennett (2005 p. 110) pointed out that generalisations about the functioning of mechanisms and concepts to a wider set of cases can also be considered, but that the risk of overgeneralisation makes a thorough justification for such inferences necessary. If generalisations are to be made to a wider set of cases, it is necessary to be explicit about the scope of conditions for the generalisation.

A lack of consistency across cases is a general challenge for low N studies. To differentiate between natural variations and causal patterns, a certain level of consistency is needed. In this study, the three analytic dimensions – countries, services areas and institutional sectors – are natural attributes that can give leverage to contingent inferences and help identify their scope. If findings about variations between different institutional sectors are consistent across countries and municipalities, then the inferences are more generalisable than they would be if they were only found in one country or service area. The same is true for variations between service areas found in all municipalities in the three countries. The design thus gives an opportunity to make comparisons across various dimensions and to infer about the scope

condition of the cause. For findings that are specific to only one municipality, the limited number of matched cases makes it difficult to conclude that the findings are valid for a wider population beyond the context where they were generated. The design thus gives leverage to inferences that are more inclusive in scope, but makes it more difficult to arrive at more narrow, contingent generalisations (Collier & Mahoney, 1996 p. 68). In the discussion of my findings, I will return to the issue of the scope of generalisations. At this point, I will mention that the limited set of variations in important conditions in this study calls for caution in making inferences to a wider set of cases.

Therefore, a more promising approach is to look at the second perspective on external validity which claims that generalisations can be made strictly 'to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes' (Yin, 2003 p. 10). Implicitly or explicitly, all scientific work strives to use theory to inform a case study, generate a new theory, refine an existing theory, or test a theory (George & Bennett, 2005 p. 75; Lijphart, 1971). Using thick description, case studies can uncover causal mechanisms, develop concepts, and add to or modify theoretical models (Blatter & Blume, 2008; Brady et al., 2010 p. 25). The goal of this work is to contribute to theory refinement in two separate research frontiers (Mjøset, 2006) and to show how they are linked. The research about the welfare mix and differences between public, for-profit and nonprofit providers includes a number of studies which elucidate variations and commonalities along a number of dimensions. However, differences in the capacity for active citizenship are not well understood, and thus it is here that I will contribute. Likewise, studies of what happens at the intersection of public welfare and citizenship in small-scale democracy have to a limited degree dealt with the issue of the welfare mix. The combination of these two research frontiers thus represents an opportunity to make important theoretical contributions in these areas.

7 Presentation of the different articles and findings

All three articles investigate the relationship between the welfare mix and active citizenship. The different articles are, however, focused on different aspects of the three dimensions of active citizenship: *choice*, *empowerment* and *participation*. Each article seeks to explain differences between providers from different institutional sectors but with respect to different aspects of active citizenship. The emphasis on rights versus duties is also different in the three articles.

The first article includes data from all of the Scandinavian countries and analyses all three dimensions. This article is more focused on the rights of users and gives less attention to duties. Unlike the other articles, this article also compares the different countries. By identifying mechanisms for enhanced active citizenship that are consistent across Scandinavia, the findings become more robust than they would have been had the data pertained only to Norway.

The second article expands the analysis of active citizenship by looking at the possible negative effects of market mechanisms. Some citizens may be unwilling or unable to be active citizens, and certain situations may increase this powerlessness. These issues are analysed in this article. Since the possible negative effects are more acutely felt at the institutional level, the relationship between the dimensions of choice and empowerment, and of the user choice and public tenders market mechanisms, are scrutinised. Participation, which refers to the relationship between the user and the municipality, is thus not considered in this article. The tension between taking steps to enhance citizens' control over services and the burden users can experience when they are given more responsibility is given particular attention.

The first two articles reveal that the choice mechanism, and especially the issue of the distinctiveness of the institutions which belong to different institutional sectors, are fundamental for active citizenship. The third article addresses this topic by exploring mechanisms by which the three different institutional sectors develop unique qualities. More than the other articles, this article sheds light on the governance of the institutions. Table 5 gives an overview of the three articles in the dissertation.

Table 5 *Overview of the three articles in the dissertation*

Name of article	Empirical scope	Research question	Relevant aspects of active citizenship
Active citizenship in Scandinavian schools and nursing homes	Scandinavian	Do public, for-profit, and nonprofit providers have different potentials for users to exercise active citizenship? If so, what condition(s) can explain it?	Covers choice, empowerment and participation and is concerned more with citizens' rights than duties.
User Democracy in Schools? Comparing Norwegian Schools with Nursing Homes	Norwegian	What is the relationship between different forms of market organisation and user influence? Do users have different degrees of influence in public, for-profit and nonprofit service provider situations?	Covers choice and empowerment and is also concerned with the duties of users as well as how responsibilities can be shifted from the state and municipalities to users.
Public, For-Profit, and Nonprofit Welfare Institutions in Norway: Distinctive Goals and Steering Mechanisms or Hybridity in a Dominant State	Norwegian	In what circumstances [do] nonprofits [schools and nursing homes] operate with distinctive goals and steering mechanisms?	Covers choice and investigates the conditions that allow nonpublic institutions to be distinctive from the public option. Local governance is a central theme.

7.1 Short presentation of the different articles

Article 1: Trætteberg, H.S. (Forthcoming). Active citizenship in Scandinavian schools and nursing homes. In K. H. Sivesind & J. Saglie (Eds.). *Promoting active citizenship? Markets and choice in Scandinavian welfare.* London: Palgrave.

This article is a book chapter in an integrated anthology. Some basic information regarding case selection and methodology are absent in this chapter since they are presented in other parts of the book. The section about research design, methodology and data in the introductory section covers these issues.

The chapter assumes the task of assessing the capacity for active citizenship along all three dimensions of the concept and uses data derived from studies in all three Scandinavian countries. For the purpose of this study, the concept of active citizenship is developed and situated in the relevant literature (Andersen et al., 2005; Boje & Potucek, 2011b; Evers & Guillemard, 2013b; Newman & Tonkens, 2011). The research question is broad: Do public, for-profit and nonprofit providers have different potentials for users to exercise active citizenship? If so, what condition(s) can explain it? The chapter thus represents an overall approach to the main issues presented in this dissertation. The chapter is based on all the data collected for this project, which includes data from seven municipalities and 27 institutions summarised in case reports covering the different municipalities. In total, the data includes 113 interviews with users, staff and leaders at the institutions, as well as political and administrative leaders in the municipalities, local user surveys, and local strategic documents.

The chapter identifies small differences between nursing homes across both institutional sectors and countries. The user experience concerning active citizenship is remarkably consistent. In the school sector, there is more variation, especially between the institutional sectors. The nonprofit schools stand out as enhancing active citizenship, particularly along the dimensions of choice and empowerment. For participation, public schools provide more access to influence than their nonprofit counterparts.

To explain these differences, the chapter shows how administrative freedom and user choice are decisive factors for establishing distinctiveness for public, for-profit and nonprofit

institutions. This distinctiveness is an important factor in its own right because it is essential for real choice, but it has additional implications. When institutional arrangements allow for diversity, institutions have more flexibility in terms of how they are run. This flexibility can be used to make the institutions more responsive to users. This makes the potential for obtaining change through arenas for empowerment greater in institutions that operate within regimes that are more flexible. The potential for obtaining real changes through arenas for empowerment is therefore greater. The potential negative outcomes that can result from conditions that enable active citizenship are not prominently discussed in this chapter.

Article 2: Trætteberg. H. (Forthcoming). User Democracy in Schools? Comparing Norwegian Schools with Nursing Homes," Accepted for publication in the *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*.

This article is based on data from Norwegian municipalities. The research questions are: What is the relationship between different forms of market organisation and user influence? Do users have different degrees of influence in public, for-profit and nonprofit service provider situations? Since this article is focused on the relationship between the user and the institution, it involves the dimensions of choice and empowerment. Accordingly, participation on the municipal level is less relevant in this particular case.

This article somewhat expands on the conception of active citizenship from the first article as it specifically addresses situations in which users do not wish to be active or may be otherwise unable to exploit the potential for active citizenship. By introducing the term *burden shift,* the article demonstrates how certain measures that can be perceived as shifting power to users actually shift the burden of responsibility onto them instead, and thus represent the negative pole of active citizenship (Goertz, 2006 p. 31). The article also makes explicit comparisons between the most commonly used market mechanisms in Scandinavian welfare: user choice and public tenders.

Earlier work on user choice focused on changing power relations as the predominant mechanisms for empowerment. In this case study, this effect was shown to be of little relevance to Norwegian schools. However, user choice does have an important empowering effect in that it provides users the means to find a service which suits them. User choice in schools empowers families since it gives them a more complete range of services to choose from. Nursing homes do not have user choice, and thus nursing home users do not experience

the supposed benefits of alternative forms of contract allocation. Rather, these users are more vulnerable to burden shift than school users. At the same time, an inherent dualism exists because a prerequisite for enhanced plurality is that the public takes less responsibility for the content of the service. Parents replace the retrenchment of public responsibility as the public has less oversight over and knowledge about nonpublic schools. There is a tradeoff involved here: Less public interference means less public responsibility. Thus, user empowerment and burden shift go hand-in-hand. The users who have been the most empowered also take the most responsibility for the service. When users assume responsibility for aspects of the service, it can be an opportunity for them to influence the service, but it can also be a burden. This effect is also evident when different types of schools are compared. Nonprofit schools where parents have more influence also have the highest expectations in regards to parental contributions. Empowerment and the increased burden on users and their next of kin therefore go together when service areas and public and nonpublic providers are compared. There are important differences between how this is experienced in the different service areas, since schools expect more effort from the relatives of users than do nursing homes; however, parents in schools do not consider such expectations to be as burdensome as relatives of nursing home users.

Article 3: Trætteberg, H. D. (2015). Public, For-Profit, and Nonprofit Welfare Institutions in Norway: Distinctive Goals and Steering Mechanisms or Hybridity in a Dominant State. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, 26*(5), pp. 1620-1638.

The third article is also based on data from Norwegian municipalities. The two preceding articles demonstrate the importance of distinctiveness for active citizenship. Therefore, the third article is devoted to this issue alone. The article is focused on nonprofit providers in a Norwegian regulatory framework. The goal is to understand when and why nonprofits operate with distinctive steering mechanisms. Based on the framework of hybrid organisations, I analyse institutions in the public sector that have democratic legitimacy via a hierarchical organisation; institutions in the for-profit sector that seek efficiency in order to compete in the market; and institutions in the nonprofit sector that operate according to a civil society logic. The study revealed how more detached user choice-based regulation of nonprofit schools gives them more room to pursue goals different from those of their public sector counterparts; this finding can be contrasted with the hierarchical, public tender-based regulation of nursing

homes that have far less room for steering independent from the municipalities. Surprisingly, the results also suggest that small, close-knit communities influence institutions in ways that diverge from hierarchical steering. Institutions in small, close-knit communities exploit local networks to promote volunteering and a sense of ownership in the institutions. Members of the community who are already part of organisations and associations are recruited to make important contributions to the institutions. These mechanisms transcend the institutional sector split, since nonprofit and public institutions have the same access to these local networks. This effect was not considered at the outset of the investigation and shows how it is not possible to consider all the possible dimensions in a comparative design. Some mechanisms can only be accounted for on a case-by-case basis.

8 Conclusions

All three articles make conclusions related to their particular research question, but the first article involves broad research questions that encompass many of the inferences relevant for the dissertation. Yet, when looking at all the articles together, some wider reflections can be made. As mentioned, the explicit connection between small-scale democracy and the welfare mix is not well explored in Scandinavia. This connection is implicitly addressed in the articles, but in this concluding section I will make some explicit observations. However, before doing so, the research questions formulated in the introduction must be answered. The first research question concerns fundamental differences between public, for-profit and nonprofit providers with respect to active citizenship.

8.1 There are differences between public, for-profit and nonprofit providers

All three articles make unique contributions by showing that there are different potentials for active citizenship between providers in the welfare mix. The recurring finding is that a subset of cases constituted by nonprofit schools has the greatest level of active citizenship, at least along the dimensions of choice and empowerment. The Swedish for-profit schools function at about the same level as public schools when it comes to active citizenship. The generalisability of increased potential for active citizenship in nonprofit institutions depends on the consistency of these features. Three factors, however, warrant caution.

First, in the first article, it is shown how a Swedish public school that has a ‘parent-run’ governance structure is empowering in much the same way as nonprofit schools. In this school, the parents are members of the school board, which is more competent than those in other public schools, similar to what we see in nonpublic schools. Yet, even if the potential for active citizenship also exists within the public structure, it seems like it is harder to achieve here than it is in nonprofit institutions. This Swedish public school is an exception, since municipalities in most cases want to keep a level of control over their schools that limits room for alternative sources of influence, such as parents.

Second, the findings from the nursing homes warrant caution in the interpretation of nonprofit advantage when it comes to active citizenship. A consistent pattern for nursing homes in all

countries is that there are no differences between institutions from different institutional sectors in terms of active citizenship. This means that the findings about differences between different providers in the welfare mix is context-dependent and cannot be generalised to other service areas other than schools without further research. The consistent lack of variations among the nursing homes suggests that they operate within a context that allows little differentiation, even if the potential for differentiation exists. Other studies from different contexts have shown that there are differences between different types of nursing homes when looking at different aspects of their operation (Comondore et al., 2009; Stolt et al., 2011), a finding which suggests that differences in active citizenship can occur in the context of nursing homes if they are allowed to develop.

Third, for the dimension of participation, users of nonprofit schools have fewer opportunities for active citizenship than users of public schools. The three dimensions of active citizenship have the same significance as they together constitute the concept. For different users, however, the various dimensions may have different levels of importance. Parents in public schools may value their increased opportunity to participate, whereas parents in nonprofit schools may not. Integration in the public structure places greater emphasis on the opportunity to participate than it does on users who are more detached from the public structures. At the same time, the lack of an opportunity to participate is something users of nonprofit schools regret.

If the variations documented in this study stemmed from the personal attributes of users, leaders or staff, then one would expect there to be no consistency in the variations. I found, however, two clear patterns: little variation in the nursing home area, and consistent variation in the school area. This suggests that personal attributes, albeit important when looking at variations between individuals, cannot explain variations and consistencies between institutions. The variations between the service areas shows how differences between different institutional sectors are dependent on other factors, such as public governance. The one kind of institution that stands out are nonprofit schools, which demonstrates their potential to facilitate active citizenship when the conditions allow for it.

8.2 User choice and administrative freedom influence variation in the welfare mix

Service sector differences are no surprise, as citizen actions in small-scale democracy have earlier been demonstrated to be largest in elementary education (Andersen & Rossteutscher, 2007). Earlier studies have documented this relationship beyond what I have done in this study. In answering why these differences occur, these studies used surveys to determine what motivates users to take action (Kriesi & Westholm, 2007). In this study, I have been able to explore the institutional frames that may make it easier or harder for users to influence the service. By focusing on features of the providers and their contexts, I give a more nuanced view of potential routes for action.

This brings us to the second and third research questions, which address conditions that increase or decrease differences between providers when it comes to active citizenship, and how market mechanisms in the governance of public services influence the active citizenship of users, respectively. Two key features are decisive for explaining consistencies between nursing homes and variations between schools: user choice and administrative freedom.

In no nursing home in this study did users find that they had power to demand changes based on an opportunity to exit the institution. Moreover, there are no differences between the nursing homes stemming from their institutional sectors. In Article 1, I show how a lack of user choice and administrative freedom are central explanations for these circumstances.

In principle, all three countries have some level of user choice in the school sector. In all instances, nonprofit schools were distinctive from the public option and thus represented a broadening of services. In Sweden, for-profit schools are to a lesser degree different and their lack of an alternative vision is explicitly explained through the non-ideological status of the for-profits. The for-profits seem to contribute more than the nonprofits, however, in stimulating competition between schools. This is the only place where students can use the possibility to exit as a bargaining chip with the schools. In Denmark, nonprofit schools and public schools do experience competition, but students do not threaten to change schools. This point about for-profit schools must be qualified, however, since for-profit schools are only found in Sweden. There is thus a possibility that alternative institutional factors operating in the Swedish context confuse the importance of the institutional sector of the for-profit schools with alternative variables.

Both schools and nursing homes are mainly financed and regulated by the public; and yet, there are differences in terms of how much freedom the providers have. In the school sector, nonpublic schools are regulated at the national level, while nursing homes are contracted to municipalities. The latter contracts are given after a public tender, or are part of a longstanding cooperative arrangement whereby municipalities have ample room to intervene in detailed aspects of their operations. This gives nonprofit schools more room to set their own goals, establish their own unique organisation, and allocate their resources as they wish. This also gives them the opportunity to create distinctive services and involve users in them to a greater extent. The combination of user choice and administrative freedom is important for nonprofit schools, since students who attend nonpublic schools actively seek to join them, something that makes their distinct operation possible.

The identification of administrative freedom and user choice as decisive for explaining differences between providers in the welfare mix is in line with the existing literature. Together with different rationalities and identities, governance is essential for explaining differences or hybridities between the actors in the welfare mix (Bossy et al., 2015; Skelcher & Smith, 2014). Article 3, however, documents another condition: that institutional sector plays an important role in producing some of the distinctiveness one would expect to find in nonprofit institutions. In this article, I document how the location of the institutions, in small close-knit communities with strong network effects, is important. It is particularly interesting in this case because this effect produces what I call a *civil society logic* in the operations of the institutions, even in the ones that belong to the other institutional sectors. This entails that anchoring operations in civil society is also possible for institutions from other institutional sectors, and that there are limits to what steps policymakers can take to obtain some beneficial attributes for active citizenship.

From the existing research on Norwegian nonprofits, member-based democracies of nonprofit providers has been identified as mechanisms that provide autonomy from public and market forces (Eikås & Selle, 2002 p. 52). In a recent publication, Selle (2016) argued that these mechanisms have been weakened, which has in turn also weakened nonprofit distinctiveness. The empirical investigation presented in this dissertation is insufficient to draw conclusions about this effect. There does seem, however, to be an ability and willingness on the part of nonprofit schools to involve users in the governance of the institutions. The distinctiveness of the institutions is the reason why users have chosen them, and they thus look to safeguard this

distinctiveness when they are able to influence the operations of the schools. In these cases, users therefore function in a comparable manner to members in the abovementioned studies. At times, users can be both members and users, but by involving stakeholders other than members, nonprofits are able to preserve their distinctiveness. Again, this effect seems dependent on user choice, as user choice is necessary for stakeholders to be sufficiently entrenched in the ideas behind the distinctive features of the institutions.

The theory of interdependence previously discussed holds that a welfare field functions best if all providers in the welfare mix are present, since each complements the others. The Scandinavian nursing home sector has been an outlier in this sense, since up until 25 years ago there were hardly any for-profit nursing homes and in Sweden it was also few nonprofits (Meagher & Szebehely, 2013b). This has changed considerably since then, but it looks as if municipalities have not yet been able to reap the potential benefits of a differentiated provider structure for active citizenship. The municipalities have arguably made some economic and administrative gains from the use of open tenders (Feltenius, Forthcoming). Yet, because I found no such effects for active citizenship, there seems to be an unused potential for active citizenship. The lack of differences between the different providers reinforces the principle of equality that is a basic value in the Scandinavian welfare model, but the downside is that it reduces the possibility for services to be adapted to a more multifaceted population. A prerequisite for a successful welfare society is the ability to adapt to changing conditions. It remains an open question if the lack of ability to use the welfare mix represents an unused opportunity in the context of Scandinavian elderly care.

At the same time, the findings of this study may challenge the presumption that the state and nonpublic providers are interdependent (Salamon, 1987; Steinberger, 2006). The lack of available spaces in nursing homes is not the result of administrative inability to expand the capacity, but rather the result of economic consideration in a system where the public is almost solely responsible for financing the development of new nursing home places. The state is also in charge of allocating users to institutions. In this way, the ability of for-profits to rapidly expand their service is not interesting. The nonprofit's ability to cater to niches is also superfluous as there is no way for users to seek what these niches offer. This implies that user choice and sufficient capacity or diverse sources of financing may be scope conditions that limit the generalisability of the theory of interdependence. Further research within a Scandinavian empirical reality may add robustness to such a conclusion.

8.3 The welfare mix and Scandinavian citizenship

When the leaders of the Danish and Norwegian power studies were invited to reflect upon why Danish conclusions about democracy were more positive than those of their Norwegian counterparts, they agreed that the stronger Danish emphasis on citizenship and 'democracy from below' were part of the explanation (Togeby, 2005 pp. 57-58; Østerud, 2005). An element of the democracy from below approach is that it allows increased emphasis on the interests of weaker groups and individuals in society. The design of the research presented in this dissertation does not allow for particular attention to be paid to weaker groups, although some reflections are still pertinent.

Article 2 documents tension in the dimension of empowerment and the relationship between responsibility and power. To give more power over care content to citizens means reducing the power of public administrators and politicians – with power comes responsibility. When users have increased power and influence over services, they also have more responsibility for how the content of care functions. Verhoeven and Tonkens (2013) showed that the British government attempts to encourage citizens to take more responsibility for services by emphasising its empowering effects; while in The Netherlands, emphasis is placed on the duties and responsibilities of citizens. This study takes the perspective of citizens, not governments, and the findings indicate that both experiences exist in the same welfare regime. In schools, parents feel empowered and in control when the state reduces its level of control; while in nursing homes, users find themselves disempowered. In the first case, users feel they can decide the content of the service; in the second, they feel they must perform the service themselves. In much of the research literature, inequality is regarded as the most likely drawback if power is transferred to individuals (Rothstein, 1998 pp. 31-32). My research does not undermine this point, but complements it by identifying powerlessness and the burden shift as other possible side effects.

Articles 1 and 2 give one constant finding across countries and service areas: that increased responsibility is felt only when power and responsibility are transferred to individual users. In cases where users are collectively empowered, like in nonprofit schools, the state reduces its burden of responsibility the most. Still, in these cases, users do not find that responsibility has been unduly shifted to them. This is partly a function of users actively seeking this position, but in any case, it demonstrates the context-specific effect of government involvement or

retrenchment. That said, the most important form of power is the influence individual users have in their interactions with staff. This also holds true for institutions that have transferred the most power to the collective arena for user influence. This is in line with earlier research on user influence in Nordic public services (Andersen, 2000; Möller, 1996).

National differences, between Sweden on the one hand, and Norway and Denmark on the other, regarding choice in the school sector suggest tension between different aspects of choice. The effects of distinctiveness and power alteration stemming from user choice pull in opposite directions: organisations that are more distinctive undermine exit options, since distinctive organisations cater to niches that want the distinguishing option. Less distinctiveness thus generates more competition and a more credible threat opportunity. These two indicators are logically related but are developed from different literature on different topics. The issue of power change can be traced to the literature on market mechanisms and how to rein in street-level bureaucrats (Le Grand, 2007; Rothstein, 1998). Here the power balance between users and public bureaucrats is the central issue. The indicator about distinctiveness is developed from the literature about nonprofit organisations and the three failures of the different institutional sectors (Salamon, 1987; Weisbrod, 1978). The basic argument is that different sectors in the welfare mix have unique qualities that make the range of public services more complete when they are all present (Smith & Grønbjerg, 2006), something that is beneficial for a diverse population (Phillips & Smith, 2011b). Both aspects of choice are important for citizens who use public services, and to make one a priority over the other is inconceivable based on the existing data; however, the tradeoff says something about the compromises that occur in small-scale democracy.

Earlier studies from Denmark have shown that there are less differences between different groups in society when it comes to actual actions taken in small-scale democracy as compared to large-scale democracy (Andersen, 2004 pp. 183-184). These studies have, however, looked at the general use of tools for user influence in small-scale democracy. The research focused on the welfare mix and market mechanisms is more cautious, as it is unclear how it is possible to obtain distinctions in the substance of services at the same time as equal quality is assured. The Danish case shows how nonprofit schools reluctantly made changes in the face of what they perceived to be increased competition from public schools when the latter increased the number of lessons per week. This reluctant move was done in order to avoid falling behind in terms of quality. One can envisage that increased freedom for nonpublic providers can lead to

increased deviations in quality, something that is regarded as unacceptable in the Scandinavian welfare model.

User choice in Swedish schools seems to create larger differences in results between high- and low-performing schools (Böhlmark & Holmlund, 2012; Lindbom, 2010). Moreover, the fragility of some elderly care users makes it difficult to envision that the benefit of user choice is the same for all groups. In a study based on Swedish data, Meinow et al. (2011) concluded that 'those elderly people who are most dependent on care services and who could benefit most from a 'good choice', are also those who have the highest prevalence of cognitive and physical limitations associated with the capacity to act as a rational consumer of care services'. This implies that choice mostly benefits the ones who need it the least and thereby perhaps increasing differences in elderly care since the ones who are weakest and least able to formulate their wishes do not enjoy the benefits from a choice opportunity.

In a study of Danish home care, Rostgaard (2006) found that new consumer citizens can have more influence over services, but that it leads to differences in the ability of users to exploit this opportunity. This issue is not possible to answer satisfactorily in this study, and further research on the topic in Scandinavia is needed. What this study does demonstrate, however, is the broad range of options that exist when designing welfare services and some of the mechanisms involved in determining outcomes for active citizenship. Governments can regulate shares of providers in the welfare mix and the activities of the providers in the welfare mix. The latter dimension concerns regulating user involvement at institutions, including users in policy processes, and allowing nonpublic institutions to develop along a different path than public institutions. The division between strictness and lenience on the two dimensions is decisive for active citizenship.

8.4 So what? Lessons for the real world

An Official Norwegian Report (NOU 2011: 11) explained that as society becomes more heterogeneous, welfare sectors will suffer from an increasing lack of labour and more demanding citizens; thus, more diversity in services is needed, especially when it comes to the institutional sector of the providers. The report goes so far as to suggest that by 2025, nonprofit providers should run 25 percent of the care sector. Although unwilling to support this ambition, the Norwegian government followed up by declaring that user influence, active

citizenship and local democracy will be key features of the future care sector (Helse & omsorgsdepartementet, 2013 p. 12). In these reports, the connection between service providers, citizenship roles, and services is assumed. However, the mechanisms that will supposedly produce the desired outcome received little attention.

The concern in these public documents is reaching governmental goals. In this dissertation, I instead focus on how individual citizens can maintain control over their lives when using public services. What is shared between the public documents and this dissertation is the interest in the importance of the institutional sector of institutions. The public policy thinking described above reveals faith in the independent importance of institutional sectors. This dissertation suggests that the institutional sector of the provider alone will not produce effects like the ones suggested in the public policy documents. To obtain changes through strategic use of providers from different institutional sectors, changes in institutional sectors must be combined with other changes to the organisation and governance of the institutions. The substantial differences between service areas demonstrate how looking at the provider alone elucidates only part of the picture. The third article illuminates how detachment from public steering, regulation and financing is what makes institutions from different institutional sectors distinct. It is unclear if this distinctiveness will produce the effects policymakers want, but without distinctiveness, it is difficult to believe that active governance of the welfare mix can achieve anything at all. Providing frame conditions that enable the distinctive operation of institutions is therefore a first step in actively using the welfare mix to obtain societal goals. This has implications for how policymakers approach their steering of the public sector. For a government wishing to reach goals such as social investments in schools (Jenson, 2013; Morel et al., 2012) or limiting public expenses in elderly care (Brennan et al., 2012; Christensen, 2012), it is natural to increase the level of public steering as a means to reach them. Such public steering undermines the opportunities institutions from different institutional sectors have to develop distinctive services, which is fundamental for reaping some of the benefits of active citizenship.

8.5 The welfare mix and active citizenship – next steps in research

Until now, much of the research done on small-scale democracy has been based on surveys and has thus been very useful for making generalisations (Andersen, 2004; Strømsnes, 2003;

Van Deth et al., 2007b); that said, they were not designed to capture differences between providers in the welfare mix. This dissertation has explicitly explored variations in the welfare mix from a citizen's perspective. This makes it somewhat of a pioneering work, as this combination has not been studied much in Scandinavia, but my use of a qualitative approach makes it difficult to offer more general inferences. A natural next step for this research would thus be to make quantitative comparisons between citizens with experiences from different providers in the welfare mix. This will yield more fruitful knowledge about the connection between small-scale democracy and the welfare mix. Moreover, such an approach will present opportunities to embed the research in existing operationalisations that have been achieved in earlier statistical studies. Due to the design of this investigation, some alternative operationalisations were necessary.

A complementary path forward is to expand the empirical scope of this study to include other welfare regimes the Scandinavian by comparing the Scandinavian experience with the liberal and continental regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Differences in the welfare mix is one of the main differences between the different regimes (Salamon et al., 2004) and investigating how the capacity for active citizenship plays out in these different contexts is a natural next step for this research.

9 Literature

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