Introduction

In Denmark – as well as in other countries – there is an increasing focus on 'mixed economy of welfare', referring to new types of involvement of both private and nonprofit actors in welfare provision (Powell 2007; Anheier 2009; Dølvik, 2015). In spite of this development, not much attention has been paid to the specific characteristics of nonprofit providers and their relations to local government across different welfare fields. Also in the international literature, a lot of attention has been paid to various types of welfare mix across countries and welfare regimes (Gidron et al. 1992; Seeleib-Kaiser 2008; Alber 2010; Henriksen et al. 2012), while the literature on variation *within* countries, across welfare fields, is more limited.

The Danish case is of specific interest because of its government-dominant characteristics (Gidron et al. 1992, p. 18; Smith and Grønbjerg 2006, p. 233). According to theories on welfare state regimes, Denmark can – together with the other Scandinavian countries - be characterized as a textbook example of a social democratic welfare regime (Esping-Andersen 1990). One could therefore expect that nonprofit provision of welfare would be limited, and that the share of nonprofit providers would be rather similar across fields (Salamon and Anheier 1996). However, none of this is the case. Nonprofit providers have always played an important role in the Danish welfare state across welfare fields. Historically, many social services have been initiated by nonprofit organizations and later on, these tasks were taken over by the state. However, a lot of nonprofit organizations have maintained their role as welfare providers – often in close collaboration with the public sector (Henriksen and Bundesen 2004; Andersen 2008). If we look at the size of the nonprofit sector, the nonprofit employment rate in Denmark accounts for 13 % of total employment (Sivesind and Selle 2010). Nonprofit providers are present in many different welfare fields, including leisure and culture, childcare, schools, elderly care and services for socially deprived.

The sparse available statistical data in the Danish case shows large differences in the share of nonprofit providers across welfare fields (Thøgersen 2013). In light of the increasing focus on different types of

welfare providers and involvement of nonprofit organizations, it is important to understand reasons for and consequences of these various welfare dynamics. The main aim of this paper is to describe and explain the impact of differences in the institutional environment of nonprofit providers through an in-depth analysis of two welfare fields: Primary schools and nursing homes. These fields are strategically selected as they represent maximum variation with respect to the characteristics of the institutional environment – e.g. regarding the degree of regulation and competition. This variation is essential for analyzing the impact of the institutional environment, and will be unfolded in the first part of the analysis.

The purpose is to provide knowledge on the links and mechanisms between the characteristics of the institutional environment and perceptions and actions in the local institutions, with specific focus on the degree of collaborative activities (providers' relations to municipality and other providers) and commitment (organizational involvement and voluntary work) in the nonprofit organizations. In the new political climate where collaboration between sectors and hybrid constellations have become more common (Evers 2005; Smith 2010), it is important to investigate how collaboration within and between sectors actually unfolds, and how the institutional environment affects this collaboration. Moreover, in light of sparse financial resources and increasing focus on voluntary work, it is important to analyse how the institutional environment affects organizational commitment, - corresponding to the notion of active citizenship (Hvinden and Johansson 2007; Boje 2011) – a concept with political focus in many Danish municipalities – including the case municipalities in this study.

The paper addresses the following research questions:

1) *What are the characteristics of the institutional environment of nonprofit welfare provision in the two selected fields?*

2) *How does different institutional environments affect collaborative activities and commitment in nonprofit welfare organizations?*

The analysis adopt a top down perspective moving from the characteristics of the institutional environment of nonprofit nursing homes and schools towards the degree and characteristics of collaboration and commitment within nonprofit organizations, bearing in mind that nonprofit organizations also to some extent shape their own institutional environment, and that agency plays an important role (Hardy and Maguire 2008). On a more general level, the intention is to provide a contribution to the explanation and understanding of *within* country differences in the nonprofit sector.

The nonprofit providers in the study can be described by the Danish term 'selfgoverning institutions', comprising private/non-public, selfgoverning organizations characterized by the nondistributional constraint (Ibsen and Habermann 2005, p. 11). It is chosen not to focus on forprofit providers in the analysis. First of all, because forprofit schools does not exist in the Danish case, and forprofit nursing homes accounts for a very limited share. Secondly, because the impact of nonprofit welfare providers have received limited attention in the Scandinavian context and needs a thorough focus in the analysis.

The following section provides a context description of the Danish welfare state and the role of nonprofit providers with specific focus on schools and nursing homes. Afterwards, the analytical framework as well as the case study design is presented. The empirical part of the paper starts with a background analysis of the characteristics of the institutional environment in the two welfare fields (research question 1). This section is followed by an indepth analysis of links and mechanisms between the selected institutional factors and collaboration and organizational commitment (research question 2). The paper concludes with a summary of the findings and discussion of the results.

The role of nonprofit organizations in the Danish welfare state

In spite of recent trends towards increasing marketization, the Danish welfare state is still characterized by a high degree of universalism in core welfare areas. Compared to other countries there is a high level of

taxation and extensive public services (Andersen 2008; Kvist and Greve 2011; Henriksen et al. 2012; Dølvik et al. 2015). Another important characteristic is a profound decentralization where a large part of the welfare tasks is carried out by the municipalities (Bogason 2001, p. 63; Kersting and Vetter 2003, p. 23; Baldersheim and Rose 2010).

In spite of the extensive public *financing* of welfare services, there are variations across fields according to who *decides* and *provides* the services (Andersen 2012). Each field is regulated by overall national legislation, but the degree of regulation varies, leaving varying room for of local self-determination and responsibilities. In social democratic welfare states, like Denmark, nonprofit organizations typically work in areas where responsibilities for solving tasks lies within the public sector, and where public providers dominate. Nonprofit providers are primarily financed by public money and are therefore subject to different types of regulation and requirements (Ibsen and Habermann 2006, p. 16). This involves both overall legal rules as well as contracts between municipalities and nonprofit providers.

In recent years, there has been an increasing political focus on choice and a plurality of different types of welfare providers (Dølvik et al. 2015). Simultaneously, there is a trend towards increasingly detailed regulation on both national and local levels, which has contributed to blurred boundaries between public and nonprofit providers. The increasing focus on democratic structures and user involvement in public institutions has also decreased differences between public and nonprofit providers (Hansen and Henriksen 2001, p. 14; Ibsen and Habermann 2005, p. 16; Henriksen et al. 2012). However, the boundaries are not equally blurred across welfare fields. Moreover, in spite of the relative high share of nonprofit providers, combined with high political expectations to the voluntary sector and voluntary work in general (Thøgersen 2012), the discussion of new types of welfare mix mainly concentrates on forprofit providers (Petersen and Hjelmar 2014). This is also evident in recent publications from the Commission for Productivity, formed by the government, where nonprofit welfare providers are hardly mentioned (Produktivitetskommissionen 2014).

Table 1 gives an overview of the share of nonprofit providers in selected welfare fields as well as recent development trends. Regarding primary schools, nonprofit providers account for about 15 % of all pupils, and this proportion is growing. In the area of nursing homes, nonprofit providers account for 20 %, and this proportion has been stable during the last 10 years. As the table shows, variations are not limited to the two areas in focus in this paper.

[Table 1 here]

Primary schools

The area of education covers a large part of Danish nonprofit organisations. However, in this paper the focus is limited to nonprofit primary schools, also called independent and private primary schools. According to the Danish constitution, there is no compulsory school attendance but compulsory education. This is an important precondition for the rise of nonprofit schools. Parents are free to choose how to fulfill the standards for compulsory education, which makes it possible to establish alternatives to public schools (LOV 169).

Nonprofit schools cover a large diversity of schools with different types of core values of either religious, pedagogical or cultural character. The amount of nonprofit schools and the proportion of children attending these schools vary significantly across municipalities, suggesting that local culture and historical characteristics play an important role (Thøgersen 2013). Nonprofit schools is an example of a nonprofit field in growth: In the period 2000-2011, the number of nonprofit primary schools rose from 460 to 526 while the number of public schools dropped from 1673 to 1388. This development should be seen in light of the increasing tendency for closing small public schools – particularly in less populated areas (Feilberg and Hovgaard 2012). The nonprofit share in 2011 was about 27 % when it comes to number of schools. However, as nonprofit schools tend to be smaller than public schools, the proportion of children attending

nonprofit schools, which has risen from about 10 % in 1990 about to 15 % in 2011, is a more adequate measure (Thøgersen 2013).

Nursing homes

Nonprofit providers have a long history when it comes to nursing homes for elderly. Today municipalities run most of the nursing homes, but nonprofit providers still play an important role (Henriksen and Bundesen 2004). Many of them are based on certain core values – a large part on Christian values. This is for instance the case for nursing homes run by Danske Diakonhjem: a nonprofit organization, based on diaconal principles. Most nonprofit nursing homes have contracts with the municipality, regulating the financial support (Thøgersen 2015). During the last decades, there has been a shift in housing forms offered to elderly people. Since 1987, it has not been possible to build new nursing homes, and the total amount of housing units in nursing homes has dropped with 42.200 units. Instead, focus has been on sheltered housing units for elderly. In spite of this significant decrease in the the total amount of nursing homes, the nonprofit share has remained stable around 20 % between 2000 and 2010 (Statistics Denmark)[1] [2].

Analytical framework – a policy field approach

Based on insights from the policy fields framework (Stone and Sandfort 2009), the paper seeks to identify endogeneous and exogenous factors of nonprofit organizations, which can explain different outcomes across welfare fields – with nonprofit schools and nursing home as examples. The assumption is that welfare providers are embedded in their institutional environment (Smith and Grønbjerg 2006, p. 235), covering both formal institutions (e.g. rules and regulations) and informal institutions (e.g. norms and perceptions) (Scott 2001).

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[1] As mentioned earlier, the available statistical data is very limited, and subject to a certain amount of uncertainty. Therefore, only a short time period is reported.
[2] In 2007, an amendment made it possible to establish a new kind of institutions, labelled free nursing homes. The law opened for for-profit providers, and gave the possibility to distribute surplus. In spite of the for-profit possibility, most of the free nursing homes are run as nonprofit organizations but have a freer status without contracts (Ramböll, 2012).

According to Stone and Sandfort (2009), a policy field can be defined as *'an identifiable set of elements in a specific environment that directly shapes local public service provision'* (Stone and Sandfort 2009, p. 1056). The framework builds on a number of theoretical perspectives – in particular new institutional theory - and takes different levels of analysis into account. It is a theoretically informed conceptual framework aimed at understanding and explaning structures and processes within particular fields by defining institutional elements in a field and analyzing dynamics between them (Stone and Sandfort 2009, p. 1071). The framework is therefore suitable for this paper, where the aim is to investigate the impact of different institutional environments by analysing processes and mechanisms in selected fields. The table below summarizes the selected institutional elements, which will form the analytical framework of the paper.

[Table 2 here]

The legal rules regulating the welfare providers, can be seen as one important factor, for the understanding of differences and similarities across areas (Galaskiewicz and Bielefeld 1998; Stone and Sandfort 2009). This concerns both rules related to the formation of the organizations but also rules for day-to-day operations. Moreover, both national legislation and rules at the municipal level are important. Together they shape the context for the actions of local welfare providers. It is also important to note that nonprofit and public providers are not always subject to the same legislation although they operate within the same field (Thøgersen 2015). Apart from the specific content of rules, an important aspect is the *degree* of regulation – and the differences between public and nonprofit providers in this concern.

Closely related is the level of funding and funding sources (Stone and Sandfort 2009, p. 1064). In Denmark, welfare provision is to a very large extent financed by the public sector (Andersen 2012). This implies a high degree of resource dependency between the public and the nonprofit sector (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). However, it varies which level of government the public funding comes from. Moreover, in some cases, user payment supplements public funding. Finally, funding comes with various types of requirements to the service provision.

Apart from the formal factors described above, informal factors such as norms and perceptions are central as they affect legitimacy of the providers (Deephouse and Suchman 2008; Stone and Sandfort 2009, p. 1069). Some nonprofit providers work within a certain moral niche in which their specific competences are valued (Garrow and Hasenfeld 2014). However, in other fields, the recognition of specific nonprofit competences is less evident, and differences between public and nonprofit providers are limited (Thøgersen 2013). In spite of this, norms and expectations seem to play a role for the perceptions of differences between public and nonprofit providers. The strong Danish tradition for universal principles and public service provision can be one important factor affecting the normative perceptions of different types of providers (Andersen 2012). However, when it comes to norms and perceptions across fields, the moral niche in which the providers operate can be important. It is also important to note that there is often a complex interplay between formal and informal elements of the institutional environment, e.g. between regulative rules and normative perceptions (Scott 2001).

The degree of competition is a fourth explanatory factor, which has particular focus in the niche theory (Galaskiewicz and Bielefeld 1998, p. 22). The extent to which nonprofit organizations compete for users, resources etc. with other providers from the public or the private sector varies between fields. However, also local characteristics such as density of providers and geographical distance between them play a role. The degree of competition can affect the extent to which providers are influenced by institutional logics from the market (Thornton et al. 2012).

Apart from analyzing each of the elements in the institutional environment, the analysis also takes the dynamics between the different elements into account (Sandfort & Stone 2009, p. 1071). These dynamics are central, - both for the explanation of differences between welfare fields, but also for the explanation of links between the institutional environment and collaborative actitivies and commitment at the organizational level. Finally, to understand differences across fields, it is important to look at the institutional environment for both public and nonprofit providers. Part of the institutional environment will

be the same, but in some cases, it varies across organizational forms. Moreover, other types of providers are in themselves an important part of the institutional environment of nonprofit providers.

Data and methods

The empirical analysis is based on data from case studies in two Danish municipalities combined with national legal documents. The selected case municipalities were chosen because of their distinctive high shares of nonprofit providers in the two selected fields, and can be characterised as extreme cases (Seawright and Gerring, 2007, p. 9). This choice was made in order to study nonprofit welfare provision in contexts where respectively nonprofit nursing homes and nonprofit schools constitute a substantial part of the local welfare provision. In sum, the selected municipalities are not representative, but chosen as cases where the particular characteristics of nonprofit providers are assumed to be most evident (Stake 1995).

Regarding providers, the intention was to select providers with similar characteristics due to size, type of local community and valuebased principles, aiming at a most-similar design (Gerring 2007, p. 131), in order to identify the possible significance of organizational form. However, due to the limited number of nonprofit providers, not all relevant factors could be kept constant. An overview of selected providers is avaiblable in in the appendix (table 5 and 6). In each of the municipalities, qualitative interviews was conducted with politicians, administrative leaders and - if present – representatives from civil society organizations. At the provider level, leaders, employees and board/council representatives (users/relatives) were interviewed (table 7 and 8 in appendix). Altogether, 35 semistructured interviews were conducted. The main themes of the interviews were perceptions of different types of providers, the impact of legal rules and funding, perceptions of competition, possibilities for influence on the welfare provision, perceptions of possibilities for selfdetermination, the role of the board/council and voluntary work in the organization. All interviews were transcribed and coded in the software programme, NVivo.

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The main focus of the analysis is structured comparisons of the two welfare fields, and within them comparisions of public and nonprofit providers (Sivesind 2007). The strategic selection of case municipalities and providers makes it possible to apply a comparative approach where the impact of both organizational form (public/nonprofit) and welfare field (schools/nursing homes) are taken into account when analyzing the impact of institutional environments. The perspective on causality is inspired by critical realism, focusing on the impact of underlying mechanisms and structures, which work differently in different contexts (Bhaskar 1975, p. 145; Maxwell 2010, p. 156).

The institutional environment of nonprofit schools and nursing homes

Based on the analytical framework, the following section identifies and describes the characteristics of the institutional environment of nonprofit welfare provision in the two selected fields.

Rules and regulation

Nonprofit schools have special privileges, which are distinct from most other nonprofit welfare providers: Parents have a right to establish a new school and to achieve public funding, as long as the school fulfills legal requirements. Moreover, nonprofit schools do not have contracts with municipalities, which is the case for most nonprofit nursing homes as well nonprofit providers in many other fields. The schools are regulated by the 'law of independent and private schools' (LBK 917), and are obliged to be consumerate with public schools. However, there is still plenty of room for self-determination. For instance, nonprofit schools have the right to decide, which pupils they accept, and there is a considerable degree of freedom related to the content and structure of teaching and running of the school in general (LBK 917). Contrary to nonprofit schools, public schools are highly regulated through the 'Law of public schools' (LBK 665). Both from national level – where the degree of regulation has increased significantly in recent years, e.g. through national tests – and from municipal level (Public school leaders, municipality 1 & 2).

In nonprofit schools – school boards have the full responsibility. The school board is responsible for finances, employment of the school leader and general running of the school (LBK 917). School boards, with representatives of parents, are obligatory in all public schools to secure user involvement, but their formal competences and responsibilities less comprehensive, as their role is primarily advisory (BEK 28).

When it comes to nursing homes, the same law regulates public and nonprofit providers: The Social Service Act (LBK 150). At the municipal level, the perception is that public and nonprofit nursing homes are regulated in similar manners. Contracts between municipalities and nonprofit nursing homes provide the same economic conditions and requires the same standards of service and quality as in public nursing homes (Administrative and political leaders, municipality 1 & 2).

Nursing homes do not have a local board in the same way as schools. However, most nursing homes have a council for users and relatives although it is no longer a legal requirement[3]. Municipalities are still legally obliged to secure user involvement, but are free to decide the character of the involvement (LBK 150). Councils for users/relatives have an advisory status related to internal issues at the nursing homes, but also often serve as channels between users at the nursing home and the municipality (Thøgersen 2015).

An interesting aspect of the regulative environment is the possibility to establish free nursing homes. For instance in municipality 2, the municipality chose to cancel the contract with a nonprofit nursing home, and the organization, Danske Diakonhjem, decided to carry on with a new legal status as a free nursing home. This example shows that the new law has weakened the steering possibilities of the municipality. Although, the intention was to cut down expences, the result turned out to be the opposite. In spite of this, there is broad political support for the possibility of different types of providers (Local party programmes[4], Political and administrative leaders, municipality 2). Apart from this example, the degree of regulation between

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[3] After an amendment in 2010 councils for users and relatives are not compulsory anymore. However, apart from the nonprofit nursing home in municipality 1, where two volunteers work as representatives for the users, all nursing homes in the study have a council

[4] In each of the case municipalities, local party programmes were collected from websites of the local party organizations to provide insight into the political focus on different types of welfare providers.

public and nonprofit providers of nursing homes does not vary as much as it does for schools. The fact that nonprofit schools have their own law, giving them special privileges, play an important role for the differences between the two welfare fields.

Funding

In the Danish case, income from donations and other external sources generally play a very limited role, and both nonprofit nursing homes and schools are dependent on public funding. However, the funding characteristics vary significantly across the two fields.

Nonprofit schools receive public funding from the state based on the number of pupils. In later years, the size of funding has been reduced significantly, and now corresponds to 71 % of the average expences per pupil in public schools (www.friskoler.dk). To be able to receive public funding, schools have to receive parental payment but are free to decide the level. The school board is responsible for the operation and finances of the schools – including responsibility for personel and buildings. It is important to note that nonprofit schools receive their funding from the state level. Thereby formal relations between municipalities and nonprofit schools are rather limited (LBK 917). On the other hand, municipalities have the full responsibility for public schools (Bogason 2001).

The funding of nursing homes is very different from funding of schools. Expences related to care is a municipal task, and nonprofit nursing homes receive subsidies from the municipality equivalent to the level of expences in public nursing homes. Residents pay their own rent for housing. However, this does not differ between public and nonprofit providers (LBK 150). The central difference between public providers

and nonprofit nursing homes is that municipalities always have the possibility to cancel contracts with nonprofit providers. However, as mentioned above, nonprofit providers have the possibility of establishing free nursing homes without municipal contracts (LBK 897).

Norms and perceptions of welfare providers

Regarding norms and perceptions of welfare providers, the case study shows that the specific content of welfare provision as well as differences between providers, receives far more attention in the field of schools than in the field of nursing homes. These differences might be both explained and affected by the nature of the welfare tasks and the different legislative frameworks described above. Regarding elderly, the debate concentrates on forprofit versus public providers in home care, but is limited when it comes to nursing homes (Local party programmes; Political and administrative leaders, municipality 1 & 2).

In the case municipalities, normative factors play an important role for the perception of different types of providers. In general, there is a relative broad support for liberty of choice and different types of welfare providers (Local party programmes). However, there is also skepticism towards the special privileges of nonprofit schools. At the municipal level, many interviewees have the opinion, that when nonprofit schools want to have their free status, they cannot expect the same privilegies as public schools (Administrative leader, municipality 1, political leader, municipality 2). Regarding nursing homes, the situation at the municipal level is different - primarily because the distinction between public and nonprofit nursing homes is less evident, as nonprofit nursing homes are perceived as an integral part of municipal provision.

Summing up, the normative perceptions of differences between nonprofit and public welfare providers vary between the two fields. The analysis also shows that normative attitudes towards nonprofit and public providers are closely related to regulative and funding issues, indicating dynamics between the elements of the institutional environment (Stone and Sandfort 2009, p. 1071). Finally, the normative attitude towards nonprofit providers is skeptical when it comes to schools, and less so when it comes to nursing homes.

Degree of competition

Users have liberty of choice in both fields. Regarding schools, all children belong to a public district school and have a right to attend this school, but it is possible to choose another public school within or outside the municipality, or to choose a nonprofit school. However, the choice can be restricted due to limited availability (LBK 665). The same is the case for nursing homes where it is possible to choose between nursing homes within and outside the municipality (BEK 1324). This overall liberty of choice per definition gives rise to a certain amount of competition between providers, but other factors also play a role.

A very important factor for the selection of schools and nursing homes is geography (Thøgersen 2015). Although there are examples of both parents and elderly choosing schools and nursing homes in spite of a long geographical distance (Boards/user councils, municipality 1 & 2), this is not the general picture. Many elderly prefers to stay in the local area, when they are visitated to a nursing home. In line with this, many parents prefer a school in the local neighbourhood. Therefore, the degree of competition can vary between local communities according to geographic conditions. In general, the degree of competition between public and nonprofit providers seems to be higher for schools than for nursing homes, - partly because the geographical distance between schools is often shorter than the distance between nursing homes. However, this varies significantly between local settings. In municipality 1, the distance between the chosen schools is very limited. This implies that most parents make an active choice between the two schools, and therefore competition is more evident (School boards, municipality 1).

Table 3 summarizes the first part of the analysis, focusing on similarities and differences in the institutional environment across the two welfare fields and types of providers:

[Table 3 here]

Summing up, the most important point regarding regulative issues is that nonprofit schools are regulated by their own law, while nonprofit nursing homes are regulated through the same law as public providers (LBK 917; LBK 665; LBK 150). Therefore, regulative differences between public and nonprofit providers are larger for schools than for nursing homes. Regarding nursing homes, contracts provide similar conditions for both types of providers. This is reflected in the normative perceptions of nonprofit providers as being an integrated part of the municipal provision. In general, the differences between public and nonprofit providers are perceived to be larger for schools than for nursing homes. However, the perceived differences are closely connected to regulative and funding issues. Moreover, nursing homes seem to be less regulated than schools regarding the specific content of care, although it is difficult to compare the two areas contentwise. Finally, the degree of competition is larger for schools than for nursing homes, - primarily because of the shorter distance between schools. However, the degree of competition also varies with the characteristics of local communities.

Linking institutional environment to outcomes: The impact on collaboration and commitment

The aim of the following section is to identify links and mechanisms between the characteristics of the institutional environment and perceptions and actions in the organizations. Whereas the chosen elements in the institutional environment were derived deductively, the inductive element has played are larger role in this part of the analysis. Two important dimensions were identified: Collaboration and organizational commitment. Both elements are highly relevant for the increasing political focus on collaboration across sectors and organizations, as well as for the increasing focus on active citizenship, user involvement and voluntary work (Boje 2011; Thøgersen 2012; Produktivitetskommissionen 2014). Collaboration is operationalized as the welfare providers' relations with other providers as well as with the municipality. Commitment can be defined as *'the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement*

in an organization' (Arnold 2005, p. 625), with is here operationalized by organizational involvement (of leaders, employees and users) and voluntary work in the organization.

Collaboration

The empirical analysis shows that the characteristics of the selected elements of the institutional environment in the analytical framework have an impact on welfare providers' collaborative activities with municipalities as well as with other providers.

Collaborative activities in schools

In the field of schools, legal rules and funding seem to play a role for the collaborative activities with the municipality. This holds particularly for nonprofit schools, where the primary funding comes from state level, and municipalities can decide to add supplementary funding – e.g. to after school care (LBK 917). However, in municipality 1, the contact between the nonprofit school and the municipality is limited. There are no formal meetings, and no extra financial support is provided. Also in municipality 2, relations between the municipality and the nonprofit school are limited (Nonprofit school leaders, municipality 1 & 2)

Normative perceptions of different types of providers can also play a role for collaborative relations. However, normative perceptions are closely related to the legal framework, giving nonprofit schools special privileges, which not everybody approves. Particularly the right of nonprofit schools to reject pupils is perceived as problematic by many municipal actors – for instance as stated below:

> *"They can reject to accept a child or to cancel the collaboration with a family, and then it is our obligation to take over with short notice."*
>
> (Administrative leader, municipality

One of the main arguments is the fear of draining public schools for socioeconomically advantaged pupils. Although all of the interviewees approve the possibility for nonprofit schools, this rather skeptical notion of some of their special privileges is reflected in collaborative activities. For instance in municipality 2, nonprofit schools could only attend a course programme, if public schools did not fill it up. In municipality 1, the nonprofit school leader struggles to get sufficient information from the municipality, even in areas very relevant for the school – e.g. regarding timetables for the school bus (Nonprofit school leader, municipality 1 & 2). For the municipalities, the primary focus is on further development of public schools, and to secure they are not deselected in favour of nonprofit schools (Political and administrative leader, municipality 1 & 2). On the other hand, nonprofit schools argue they ought to have more political attention because they – as well as public schools – solve an important welfare task for a considerable number of citizens (Nonprofit school leader, municipality 1 & 2).

The degree of competition also contributes to the explanation of the limited degree of collaboration between providers. Leaders from both the nonprofit school and the public school in municipality 1, state that the competitive situation prevents close collaboration between the schools. The same picture holds for municipality 2. The leader of the nonprofit school attends a school leader network, but apart from this, collaborative activities are very limited (School leaders, municipality 1 & 2). However, competition seem to be higher in municipality 1, where the schools are situated very close to each other in a rather small local community. This suggests that not only the selected institutional elements but also geographic conditions play an important role for the degree of collaboration.

Collaborative activities in nursing homes

In the field of nursing homes, nonprofit providers have rather close relations to the municipality. As described above, nonprofit and public nursing homes are subject to the same law, and at the municipal level, contracts give nonprofit nursing homes the same financial conditions as public nursing homes. The interviewees state directly that they see no major differences, and that nonprofit nursing homes are perceived as an integral part of the municipal provision:

> *"We have a collaboation agreement with Danske Diakonhjem, and they have the same budget as the other care homes […] The citizens do not notice the difference. It is a service on equal terms with the other care homes"*
>
> (Political leader, municipality 1)

This non-distinction is an important reason why nonprofit nursing homes are invited to participate in meetings with the municipalities on equal terms with public providers, although they are free not to do so and often choose meetings and professional discussions with other nonprofit nursing homes instead. For instance, in municipality 2, leaders of the nonprofit carehomes meet on a regular basis, and have common events for the employees (Leader nonprofit nursing home, municipality 2).

In both municipalities, nonprofit nursing homes experience good collaborative relations with the municipality, and consider themselves fully accepted as providers (Leaders, nonprofit nursing homes, municipality 1 & 2). The fact that nonprofit nursing homes and public nursing homes are subject to almost the same rules and regulations as public providers, seem to play a positive role for collaborative relations towards the municipality and other providers, contrary to the situation of nonprofit schools. Nonprofit nursing homes do not feel excluded, and the normative perception of nonprofit nursing homes is rather positive:

"If we have something special to offer – for instance a seminar on dementia - the nonprofit care homes are also invited. They are not kept outside – not at all."

(Administrative leader, municipality

In addition, the degree of competition is much lower for nursing homes than for schools. Nor at the public or at the nonprofit nursing homes, leaders or employees perceive competitive relations toward other nursing homes. A contributing factor to the lack of competition is that geographical location is considered as the most important cause in the selection of nursing homes (Thøgersen 2015)

Altogether, the analysis indicates that all selected elements of the analytical framework; rules and regulations, funding issues, norms and competition, play a role for the extent to which nonprofit providers collaborate with municipalities and other providers. Regarding schools, the limited formal bonds between municipalities and nonprofit schools seem to have an impact, but also the normative perceptions affect the degree of contact and collaboration between the parties. On the other hand, there is a higher degree of collaboration across the public and nonprofit nursing homes, where the different types of providers are subject to the same law, the degree of competition is lower, and where normative perceptions are less sceptical.

Summing up - collaboration

Summing up, elements in the institutional enviroment can either promote or prevent collaborative activities between nonprofit providers and municipalities as well as between providers. This is an interesting result in light of the increasing focus on collaboration and different types of welfare mix (Anheier 2009; Dølvik et al. 2015). However, the analysis also shows that a number of other factors play a role for collaborative activities – e.g. the geographical distance between providers.

Organizational commitment

The institutional environment also affects organizational commitment among leaders, employees and users – operationalized by organizational involvement and voluntary work which are important aspects of active citizenship (Hvinden and Johansson 2007; Boje 2011). Among the selected institutional elements in the analytical framework, results show that legal rules, the degree of regulation and the characteristics of funding are of particular interest: These factors affect possibilities for self-determination, which again affects the degree of organizational commitment among leaders, employees and users.

Organizational commitment in schools

In the field of schools, there is a higher degree of regulation of public schools than of nonprofit schools. According to the law, nonprofit schools have to be consumerate with public schools, but still have profound leeway to run the schools and to decide how to reach the overall goals. For instance, they are not obliged to offer final exams. This freedom is highly valued among the interviewees from nonprofit schools – in particular the possibilities for working with specific pedagogical approaches and values (nonprofit schools, municipality 1 & 2).

According to interviewees from nonprofit schools, the full responsibility for buildings and finances plays and important role for organizational commitment. In both nonprofit schools, parents and pupils are actively involved in cleaning and lighter forms of maintenance. According to the leaders, this implies that they take better care of the school (Leaders nonprofit schools, municipality 1 & 2). In line with this, the public school leader in municipality 1, underlines that the increasing degree of regulation from the municipality decreases organizational commitment at the school. As an example, the caretaker function has recently been taken over by the municipality, leaving the school leader with less influence on maintenance of buildings and surroundings:

> *"Pedagogical leadership also includes the physical environment, and now we can see that they let the place run down. We had a very nice new wooden terrace, but now it is full of water and leaves. Something that you would never accept at home without doing something about it, but all I can do is to call and call [...] It is bad pedagogy towards the children. Why should they clean up, then?"*
>
> (Public school leader, municipality 1)

Related to this, municipal funding of the school is increasingly earmarked for specific purposes, leaving the school leader with far less space for action when it comes to financial prioritization (Public school leader, municipality 1). However, it is interesting to note that the public school leader in municipality 2 perceives a rather large room for self-determination in spite of increasing, national regulation. According to her, the schools have a relatively large degree of freedom to decide how to reach the national goals. This suggests that although the degree of regulation from national level is objectively the same for all public schools, perceptions of regulation can vary across schools and school leaders. Moreover, local autonomy gives room for varying degrees of regulation across municipalities.

The high level of self-determination in nonprofit schools is also evident in the role of the school board. As mentioned earlier, school boards have a far more comprehensive formal role in nonprofit schools than in public schools, which naturally affects organizational commitment. In both nonprofit school boards in the study, the sense of responsibility for the school is very distinct, - specifically because of the responsibility for the financial running of the school (School boards, nonprofit schools, municipality 1 & 2):

> *"Actually, this is one of the things that has been most surprising to me: That we as members of the board are so involved in all major decisions. In many ways it is a very big responsibility."*
>
> (Nonprofit school board, municipality 1)

It is important to note that school boards in public schools also feel committed. However, their limited formal competences and responsibilities naturally limits the sense of ownership. An interesting difference between nonprofit and public school boards in the study is that nonprofit school boards are to a large extent focused on internal affairs, while boards in public schools tend to be more active on external relations – particularly when it comes to interest representation towards the municipality. In the nonprofit schools, this critical role is primarily played by the school leader (School boards, municipality 1 & 2; Thøgersen 2015)

Regarding voluntary work outside the school board, which is also seen as an indicator of organizational commitment, there are interesting differences between public and nonprofit schools in the study. Commitment and engangement of parents is higher in nonprofit schools, where they are made aware of the expectation of active involvement, before the children starts school:

"When they come to enroll their children, I always tell them that they actually enroll the whole family. And then they get worried. But we do expect them to take an active part in the lives of their children, and the children spend a lot of hours here. Therefore it is important that the parents are committed as well"

(Nonprofit school leader, municipality

As mentioned, parents solve a number of practical tasks in both nonprofit schools in the study, and the active involvement of the parents is a deliberate focus point, closely related to the focus on community, which is one of the core values of both schools. Hence, the norms and values of the schools play and important role for the degree of commitment. Moreover, the voluntary work of the parents also has a financial value for the schools. However, many of the interviewees underline that not only the legal status but also the size of the schools are important in relation to organizational commitment. The limited number of pupils enhances the possibilities for creating a sense of community, which also affects commitment. However, in both nonprofit schools it is perceived that the active involvement of parents has decreased in

recent years (Leader and teachers, nonprofit schools, municipality 1 & 2). Meanwhile the focus on parents'
involvement in public schools has increased. As an example, both public schools in the study have
established 'class councils' which is a group of parents in each class, solving minor practical tasks and
discussing common issues with the class teacher. However, a representative from a public school board
underlines that active involvement of parents is a point where public schools can still learn from nonprofit
schools (Public school board, municipality 1).

Organizational commitment in nursing homes

In the field of nursing homes, the degree of regulation does not differ significantly between public and
nonprofit providers. In one of the municipalities, it is not even possible to distinguish between different
types of providers in the list of nursing homes at the municipal website. The perception is that differences
between various public providers in the field are just as large as differences between public and nonprofit
providers. All nursing homes have rather free hands to organize and plan locally, as long as they live up to
the overall rules and quality standards:

> *"The level of services is politically set every year, but nobody interferes with how they implement
> it locally at the nursing homes"*
>
> (Administrative leader, municipality 1)

However, within the nursing homes there seem to be a somewhat different perception. Although leaders
and employees in the public nursing homes agree that they have a rather high degree of self-
determination, one of them explicitly, states that she would like to have the same possibilities as the
nonprofit nursing home (Leader public nursing home, municipality 1). In the nonprofit nursing homes, the
degree of freedom is highly valued. In one of the nursing homes, the leader was considering buying sheep
for the green areas, and he valued the possibility of being able to do so without having to ask anyone.

Moreover, in both nonprofit nursing homes, it is underlined that possibilities for making fast decisions contributes to the promotion of commitment (Leaders nonprofit nursing home, municipality 1 & 2).

Also at the level of the employees, the perception is that nonprofit nursing homes to some point have a larger degree of freedom (Employees, nonprofit nursing homes, municipality 1). However, at the lower levels in the organization it is more difficult to identify direct links between this higher level of self-determination and organizational commitment. The financial regulation and recent cutbacks might be possible explanations for this. Another possible explanation is that both public and nonprofit nursing homes in the study work with the same principles for care, focusing on room for flexible planning, self-determination in smaller teams and user involvement, which in itself adds to commitment. Moreover, it is evident that local leadership is an intermediate factor between the institutional environment and the commitment of the employees. For instance, at the nonprofit nursing home in municipality 2, local leadership and not organizational form is mentioned, when explaining the level of self-determination:

"I think the degree of freedom is closely related to local leadership. Here we have a high degree of co-determination, but if we had another leader, I think we could have had the opposite"

(Employee, nonprofit nursing home, municipality 2)

However, there is also a very high commitment and sense of ownership among the interviewees at the public nursing homes, and the employees perceive a large room for self-determination in their daily work, which is also linked to local leadership. This indicates that when regulative elements in the institutional environment are almost equal for different types of providers, differences in local leadership can play a larger role for commitment than organizational form, - in particular at lower levels of the organization.

As mentioned earlier, nursing homes do not have a local board in the same ways as schools. However, most nursing homes have councils for users and relatives, working as important links between user and management level as well as between nursing homes and the municipality (Thøgersen 2015). However, the

role of the councils does not seem to vary significantly between public and nonprofit nursing homes in the study (User councils, municipality 1 & 2).

A lot of voluntary work is carried out outside the user councils. Compared to schools, where parents carry out the major part of the work, voluntary work in nursing homes is primarily carried out by other citizens from the local community. An exception from this is the nonprofit nursing home in municipality 2, who also arrange working days for relatives. Both at the nonprofit and public nursing homes in the study, volunteers play an important role for leisure activities at the nursing homes (Leaders and employees, nonprofit and public nursing homes, municipality 1 & 2), and it is not possible to identify differences between different types of providers in relation to commitment of volunteers.

Summing up - commitment

The degree of self-determination, closely related to legal rules and funding characteristics, seems to be important for organizational commitment. Both in nonprofit schools and nursing homes, leaders perceive a higher level of self-determination than their public counterparts. The perception is that this freedom enhances organizational commitment. In nonprofit schools, the connection between self-determination and commitment is also evident at lower levels of the organization, - specifically in relation to parents' commitment in the school. However, when it comes to nursing homes, the differences between nonprofit and public providers seem less evident at lower levels of the organization. Hence, at this level local leadership can play a larger role for commitment and ownership than legal rules and organizational form. One reason for this might be that the different types of providers work under the same overall legal rules. Summing up, elements in the institutional environment can have an impact on the degree of organizational commitment. However, also other factors – such as size and local leadership - needs to be taken into account, indicating that agency also plays an important role.

Summary of findings and implication of results

Through an analytical framework inspired by the policy field approach (Stone and Sandfort 2009), this study has provided empirical insight on nonprofit providers in two welfare fields – primary schools and nursing homes. The primary aim was to analyse the institutional environments across sectors and welfare fields, and to identify links between the institutional environments and outcomes, with specific focus on collaborative activities and organizational commitment. The case study data was collected in two municipalities in Denmark, which in line with the other Scandinavian countries, represents a text book example of a social democratic welfare regime (Esping-Andersen 1990).

The first part of the analysis identified and described important elements in the institutional environment of nonprofit schools and nursing homes, and the differences and similarities across nonprofit and public providers within these fields. With focus on legal rules and regulation, funding, norms and perceptions and degree of competition, the analysis showed important differences across fields and organizational forms.

Regarding regulation, nonprofit schools are considerably less regulated than public schools. On the contrary nonprofit and public nursing homes are regulated by the same law. Nonprofit schools are financed by the state supplemented with parental payment, while both public schools, public nursing homes and nonprofit nursing homes are financed by municipalities. Regarding norms and perceptions, the perceived differences across public and nonprofit providers are limited for nursing homes but profound for schools. In addition, the normative perceptions of nonprofit schools are more skeptical than the perceptions of nonprofit nursing homes. Finally, the degree of competition between providers is higher for schools than for nursing homes. The analysis also illustrated important dynamics between the institutional elements (Stone and Sandfort 2009). For instance, the legal environment of nonprofit schools gives the schools special privileges, affecting both steering possibilities of the municipalities and normative perceptions in the field. The analysis illustrates that not one but a constellation of factors in the institutional environment adds to the explanation of differences across fields and types of providers. The second part of the analysis showed that

the differences in the institutional environment identified above, have an actual impact on outcome – with specific focus on collaborative activities and organizational commitment.

The empirical analysis showed that both legal rules, funding characteristics, normative perceptions and the degree of competition play an important role for collaborative activities of welfare providers. Collaboration between nonprofit welfare providers and the municipality, as well as between different types of providers is more limited for schools than for nursing homes. Specifically the fact that nonprofit schools have their own law and are financed by the state, play an important role for these differences.

Regarding organizational commitment, the analysis showed interesting links between possibilities for self-determination, funding characteristics and organizational commitment. The possibilities for self-determiniation regarding financial prioritization and other important decisions in local welfare organizations tends to promote commitment, reflected in organizational involvement and voluntary work. However, it is also evident that the nonprofit form does not automatically create commitment. Local leadership and size of the organization also matters. The results of the analysis of collaboration and commitment are summarized below.

[Table 4 here]

The strength of the analysis is the insight into the mechanisms at the organizational level, made possible through the case study approach, combined with the institutional perspective. Many studies of new types of welfare mix and marketization tend to focus on consequences for effectiveness and quality of services, while the outcome variables in focus here get less attention (Petersen and Hjelmar 2014). However, in a time with increasing political focus on partnerships across sectors and institutions, it is important to be aware that characteristics of institutional environments can either promote or limit collaboration between

providers and municipalities, as well as between different types of providers. This is also the case for promotion of commitment, which is closely related to the increasing political attention on active user involvement and voluntary work. The analysis showed that a high degree of self-determination and wide influence on financial prioritization tend to increase organizational commitment. This result can be related to research on public schools, showing that control systems are negatively associated with employee motivation (Jacobsen et al. 2014).

The analysis also shows that acting in the blurred boundaries of the 'mixed economy of welfare', nonprofit organizations are influenced by logics from both market and government (Thornton et al. 2012). However, the influence from government and market logics is more evident in some fields than others, depending on the characteristics of the institutional framework, and the degree of competition in the local community. In the analysis, this is particularly evident in the field of schools, where competition seem to play a larger role than it does for nursing homes.

The analysis provide empirical insight in the Danish case, which as mentioned can be seen as an example of a socialdemocratic welfare state. Therefore, it could be expected to find similar results in other Scandinavian countries. Case studies on active citizenship in Norway and Sweden give evidence of similar trends when it comes to differences between schools and care homes as welfare fields, indicating similarities within welfare regimes (Feltenius 2014; Trætteberg 2014). However, in spite of overall similarities there are also important differences between the countries when it comes to organizational forms. According to a legislative study, nonprofit providers in Denmark have a freer legislative status than is the case in Norway and Sweden, giving room for a higher degree of self-determination (Segaard 2015). These comparative perspectives between Scandinavian countries still needs further empirical focus. However, the tendencies above add too the main arguments of this study: The institutional environment matters, and within country studies across fields and organizational forms can be a fruitful way of linking the institutional environments to outcomes.

Summing up, the results confirms the classic trade off between room for engagement on the one hand and a legitimate system of accountability on the other hand (Smith and Grønbjerg 2006). It also opens for the overall discussion of different types of governance styles and the following consequences for outcomes (Bryn & Bull 2006; Peters 2011). Through the analytical framework, the study underlines the importance of paying attention to the impact of legislation, funding, normative perceptions and degree of competition, when trying to promote collaborative activities and organizational commitment. It is argued that both of these outcome variables are relevant in the further discussion and implementation of new forms of welfare mix and governance styles. The specific results of the case analysis cannot be generalized, the analytical approach is generalizable, and constitutes an attempt to explain and understand the differences in nonprofit welfare provision *within* countries, which only have had limited attention in nonprofit research so far. However, there is a need for exploring the analytical framework in other welfare fields, and a combination of the qualitative approach and quantitative studies could be a fruitfull way forward.

Appendix

[Table 5 here]

[Table 6 here]

[Table 7 here]

[Table 8 here]

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