

# Physical activity for children and youth with physical disabilities – a case study on implementation in the municipality-setting

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## BACKGROUND

- Children and youth with disabilities must experience equal opportunities for participation in physical activity (PA)
  - Compared to the population at large, this group participates less in PA, being 16-62% less likely to meet PA-guidelines
  - Previous studies showed that promoting PA for children and youth with disabilities is a complex task, requiring multidisciplinary approaches targeting several levels in the individual's life. However, not much is known about how this is actually handled and realised
- Therefore, this study aimed to assess how practices in local settings influence PA-implementation for children and youth with physical disabilities



## CONCLUSION

Noticeable political backing from the highest municipal level seems to support the performance in relation to the implementation of PA-possibilities for children and youth living with disabilities. However, the organizational structure of municipalities is a challenge.

- Missing shared goals and coordination across municipal departments
- Coordinating consultants could be key to implement PA-focus and -knowledge across the municipality
- Individual street-level bureaucratic behavior (front personnel) influences implementation

## DESIGN + METHODS

A qualitative multiple case study with two Danish municipalities:

Municipality 1 (M1)

Municipality 2 (M2) → 'the parasport capital'

Theory:

- Winter's integrated implementation model
- Lipsky's theory on street-level bureaucrats
- Gittel's theory on relational coordination

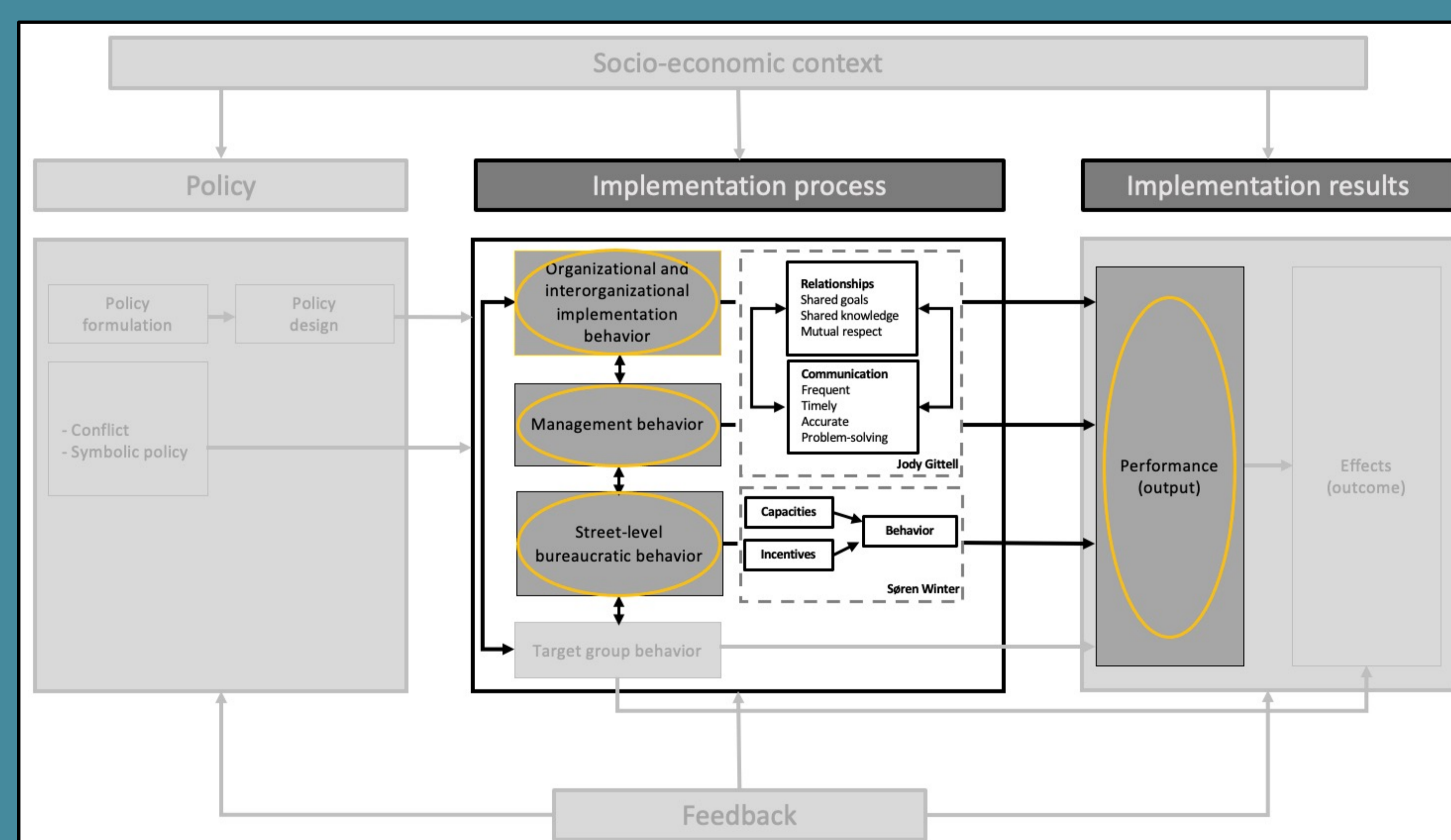
23 interviews with participants working within the municipality setting, across relevant departments and professions (municipal agents):

Managers

Street-level bureaucrats (SLBs): caseworkers, teachers, physiotherapists

Coordinating consultants: parasport consultant (M2), sports consultant, Pedagogical PE consultant

Local policy documents



Inspired by Winter and Nielsen (2008), The Integrated Implementation Model

## RESULTS

- Specific action plans on PA-participation for children and youth, AND a focus on how to implement these, are necessary
- Limited knowledge on local policies across departments and municipal agents
- Coordinating consultants are important municipal agents in increasing communication, knowledge-sharing, and in the work towards a shared focus across departments within the municipality
- SLB behavior affects PA-implementation:
  - + SLBs having positive attitudes towards PA and disability, and rate themselves as competent, incentivized, and as having reasonable conditions
  - SLBs experiencing a lack of time, resources, and knowledge tend to use coping strategies to explain why PA is not a significant focus within their department

"I do not remember them [the policies]. And if it states anything about children with special needs or children with physical or mental disabilities, I actually do not remember." (Pedagogical PE consultant)

"It is very much about being good in the communication flow and making your colleagues from other departments aware of the opportunities that exists." (Parasport consultant)

"I think I am maybe a bit like Pippi Longstocking. Even if there is something I have not tried before, I can probably do it. And then I seek guidance with the ones who know more, or I use the internet." (Teacher)

"We kind of have to put them into boxes, because you cannot go to both wheelchair hockey, football, basket, wheelchair everything." (Caseworker)