

Draft - Not for quotation without  
the authors' permission

## **Delegation, Discretion, and Implementation**

by

Vibeke Lehmann Nielsen

University of Aarhus

Søren C. Winter

SFI - The Danish National Research Centre for Social Policy

Thomas Pallesen

University of Aarhus

Peter J. May

University of Washington.

September 2009

Paper prepared for presentation at the Public Management Research Conference in Columbus,  
Ohio, 1-3 October 2009

## **Delegation, Discretion, and Implementation**

### **ABSTRACT**

Research on street-level bureaucracy has shown that street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) have substantial discretion and that their actions are often influenced by their own policy-preferences. This makes them important policy-makers. Prior studies have often been based on the assumption that the sheer amount of work at the front-lines makes it necessary to delegate wide authority to SLBs. But does delegation widen SLBs' discretion and allow their policy-preferences to guide their actions more than when decision-making is centralized? We examine this question in a study of SLB actions in the implementation of national policies towards vulnerable children and youth and employment of welfare clients in Danish municipalities. We use six national surveys with respondents from different hierarchical levels. Our findings show that SLBs' actions are mostly influenced by their own policy-preferences. With increasing centralization of decision-making, front-line actions are not more guided by local municipal policies and hardly less by SLBs' own policy-preferences. Neither does centralization compensate for SLBs' lack of knowledge in implementing national policies. The very character of street-level bureaucratic work and resultant information asymmetries seem far more important in shaping behaviors at the front-lines than formal delegation.

## **Delegation, Discretion, and Implementation**

Much has been written since Lipsky's (1980) seminal work, *Street-Level Bureaucracy*, about street-level bureaucrats' use of discretion in carrying out social and other policies. Several studies have shown that the use of discretion in interactions with clients makes street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) important policy-makers with important consequences for policy-implementation (see Meyers & Vorsanger 2003 for an overview). Lipsky focused on the similar behaviors in terms of coping that street-level bureaucrats apply across different policy areas and organizations due to their common conditions of work, e.g. use of discretion in direct encounters with clients, and chronic shortage of resources. More recent studies have focused on the role of street-level bureaucrats' policy-preferences in shaping their behaviors. According to Brehm and Gates (1997) street-level bureaucrats are generally supporting public policy objectives - not because they are managed - but because they share the main policy objectives. Other studies have questioned the extent to which street-level bureaucrats' policy-preferences and behaviors are in accordance with public policies. While Sandfort (2000) and Wilson (1989) focus on the role of collective norms among peers in fostering behaviors at the front-lines, May and Winter (2009 – see also Winter 2002; 2003) examine the effects of street-level bureaucrats' individual policy-preferences for their behaviors. This role of individual policy-preferences makes street-level bureaucrats even more important as policy-makers who seek to implement their own policy-preferences.

An obvious question, however, is the extent to which the choices made by street-level bureaucrats reflect their own values or are bounded by the scope of discretion that politicians and managers allow street-level bureaucrats to have. The findings of recent scholarship on public management indicates that “management matters” in the performance of public organizations (see Boyne 2003; Brewer and Seldon 2000; Moynihan and Pandey 2005; Nicholson-Crotty and O'Toole 2004). However, this broader literature does not specifically address the behaviors of street-level bureaucrats or the channels through which that influence occurs. Relatively few studies have examined controls over street-level bureaucrats and the ability to influence the behaviors of the frontlines of service delivery. These studies include consideration of signals by political superiors (Keiser and Soss 1998; Langbein 2000), organizational arrangements (Hill 2006),

administrative emphasis of policy goals (Ewalt and Jennings 2004; Hill 2006; Riccucci, Meyers, Lurie, and Han 2004), enhancements of staff capacity (Winter 2003), managerial supervision (Brehm and Gates 1997; Brewer 2005; Riccucci 2005), and delegation (May and Winter 2009). As a whole, these studies reinforce the well known lesson of implementation studies that the translation of higher-level goals into street-level actions is subject to a variety of influences, and the studies mainly suggest mainly muted influences of management.

Most of the SLB literature talks about discretion in the sense that SLBs have a set of choices when making situational decisions. SLBs have formally little discretion if they have delegated authority to consider and to take action in no or few tasks and/or if the rules or signals from superiors highly specify the content of the decisions that SLBs are making or preparing. This paper is about the impact of delegation vs. centralization of authority on behaviors at the front-lines. Discretion means little if SLBs do not have delegated authority to make decisions that are binding to citizens or firms. More specifically, we examine if greater delegation allows the policy-preferences of individual street-level bureaucrats to have a stronger impact on their behaviors, and if lesser delegation makes the behaviors of street-level bureaucrats more reflect the local policy of the implementing organization.

Despite the plethora of studies on street-level bureaucrats, there is a surprising lack of generalizable findings about the factors that shape their implementation behaviors. This paper draws upon the extant research and a new set of comparative research findings from studies conducted by the authors in Denmark to provide a stronger theoretical and empirical footing for examining the role of delegation for street-level bureaucratic behaviors.

We begin by discussing delegation and what it means with respect to delegation of authority for decisions to street-level. We suggest that delegation mainly has conditional effects on street-level bureaucratic behavior in shaping the effects of the policy-objectives of the implementing organization and of street-level bureaucrats' own policy-preferences and knowledge on their behaviors. We develop and examine these theoretical notions using parallel data in studying street-level behaviors in implementing national policies concerning employment and vulnerable children and youth in Danish municipalities. We take advantage of a

unique and extensive dataset comprised of the results of parallel national surveys of municipal councilors or chief executive officers, middle managers, and street-level bureaucrats who are involved in the day-to-day implementation of each set of policies among Danish municipalities. These data permit comparative analyses of the factors that we theorize potentially shape street-level behaviors for the two policies. The findings point to similar forces at work across the two policy settings and as such suggest the potential for us developing more generalizable findings about delegation and street-level implementation.

## CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

As we want to examine the role of delegation for street-level bureaucratic behaviors in hierarchical organization the most relevant literature on delegation is the Principal-Agent (P-A) delegation literature (Bendor et al. 2001; McCubbins et al. 1984; 1987) rather than the literature on delegation to independent agencies (Weingast 1993; Cukierman 1992; Majone 2001). The point of departure of the P-A perspective is that delegation of authority involves a potential loss of control. Due to basic informational asymmetries, delegation both involves well-known ex ante and ex post problems. Ex ante, the principal faces the adverse selection problem of choosing the best candidate to be delegated authority among a number of potential candidates that the principal has less than full information about. Ex post, the principal cannot oversee all the actions of the agent and cannot be sure that the agent loyally implements the policy of the principal, i.e. the problem of moral hazard. The P-A solution to the ex ante problem is to choose an agent with the same preferences as the principal, the so-called ally-principle (Bendor et al. 2001). Ex post, the P-A literature advises the principal to set up appropriate procedures to directly monitor and control the agent and/or install interested third parties that are able to monitor the agent on behalf of the agent (McCubbins et al. 1984; 1987).

In this paper, we examine the impact of delegation from local politicians to SLBs in two policy areas, employment policy and policy towards vulnerable children and youth. In both cases, it is a question of delegation within the local government hierarchy. This has two implications: First, local politicians unilaterally decide whether and to what extent they want to delegate authority to their public servants.

Second, whether local politicians decide to delegate or not, and in case they choose to do it, they still have ultimately the legal and political responsibility for the actions (or non-actions) taken. In addition, being ultimately responsible for the actions of their subordinate public servants, local politicians have a strong incentive to try to make sure that the policy implemented by the public servants are line with their own policy preferences. That is likely to mean that local politicians ex ante along with the delegated authority issue directions to be followed by the public servants and ex post in various ways seek to monitor and control how the public servants handle the delegated authority.

However, in neither policy area is it possible to issue a detailed manual for all kind of situations and decisions. In other words, the decisions involved in both policy areas require the public servants to exercise discretion. This implies that there is room for the impact of the personal policy preferences of the SLBs on their decisions. This is hardly any news in the SLB literature. However, what has been given much less consideration in this literature is whether the degree of delegation, i.e. ‘formal level of discretion’ matters for the impact of SLBs’ personal policy preferences. Nevertheless, the SLB literature seems to share the P-A literature’s rather skeptical regard of the impact of formal delegation.

On the other hand, SLBs are not without any influence when decisions are not delegated to them but are centralized to superiors. Even then, SLBs may influence the centralized decisions by the way they prepare these cases and present them to their superiors. They still have some informational advantages in how they frame the case based on their intimate knowledge of the case, the client, and the circumstances. Furthermore, SLBs may sometimes ‘cheat’ by not referring decisions to higher levels – e.g. by non-decision making. For example, might a SLB look the other way when clients stay away from required employment promoting measures without any good cause, or the SLB might be quite liberal in evaluating when causes are good enough rather than start preparing a sanction case. SLBs might also be able to ‘cheat’ in how they implement case decisions that are made by superiors but with which they disagree.

Although politicians may influence delegated decisions and although SLBs may influence cases in which decision-making is - or should be - centralized, we would expect that politicians influence decisions more when they are decentralized than delegated. By the same token, we would expect that SLBs influence

decisions more when these are delegated. Information asymmetry makes it harder for local politicians and managers to control decisions that are made at the frontline compared to more centralized decision-making.

A study by Pallesen (2006) shows that placement of children and adolescents into foster care is applied more in Denmark when conservative majority coalitions of municipal councilors delegate decisions to SLBs than when decision-making is centralized. Yet no difference is observed for socialist or left wing majority coalitions. This seems to indicate that local politicians and SLBs have more different policy preferences in conservative municipalities. Thus, delegation empowers SLBs to take actions that may be – or may not be – consistent with higher level policies and rules. How these play out depends on a variety of factors. Accordingly, our first two hypotheses are, all else equal:

H1: With increased degrees of delegation, the policy-preferences of local politicians will be weaker in shaping SLBs' actions towards clients

H2: With increased degrees of delegation, the personal policy preferences of SLBs will be stronger in shaping actions

However, it is not likely that formal delegation and SLBs' personal policy preferences are the only factors that matter for policy. In both policy areas under consideration here, the formal rules are substantial in numbers, often quite complicated, and growing in both numbers and complexity. Also the relationships between the problem, causes, consequences, and measures are relatively complex in the two areas. Of course, SLBs are expected to be aware of the rules and the field, but in the real world SLBs' are sometimes unaware of some formal rules of the policy or some aspects of the professional field. Thus, delegation to SLBs is less likely to bias the implementation of national policies if workers have a good professional knowledge of the rules and the field as shown by May and Winter (2009) in their study of the implementation of Danish employment policy with a strong job emphasis. Accordingly, in our third hypothesis we expect:

H3: With increased degrees of delegation, the knowledge of rules and how to act of SLBs is more important in shaping actions that are consistent with national policy

## THE CONTEXT

In order to test the explanatory power of the expectations above and to consider the generalizability of our findings, we have found it fruitful to examine the implementation of two different social policies, the policies on employment of unemployed welfare clients and vulnerable children and youth. The two policies differ in their political characteristics. Vulnerable children are not a very popular policy area among voters. Policy makers are seldom given credit for good management of the field. On the other hand, there is fierce public critique and negative media attention of (the allegedly few cases) of mismanagement when children are mistreated, either because of lack of local government intervention or because local government is accused of intervening too much. At the same time, it is an extremely expensive policy area. The relatively few children placed outside their homes (app. one percent of all) cost on average 150,000 USD a year.

In comparison, employment policy is also expensive but involves a much broader segment of the population. Thus, public expenditure on each recipient is much smaller than on vulnerable children. Labor market politics rarely reach the headlines and seldom fosters strong media critique. On the other hand, labor market policy is considered to be very salient to the national economy and in this respect it is considered to be a very important policy area for the policy makers. In sum, both areas are important and expensive, but in quite different ways, and this differences may also have an impact on policy makers' inclination to delegate authority to SLBs and how they monitor and control the delegated authority. Thus, if we are able to find common explanations of the impact of delegation on these important but different policy areas, it may indicate that the results can be generalized to other settings.

However, as municipalities in Denmark are delivering both policies, the methodological design for these policies minimizes the influence from other contextual variables, particularly organizational designs. The 268-275 municipalities that existed at the data-collections are semi-autonomous local governments that are headed by an elected municipal council and its subcommittees that oversee the work of the administration. An appointed civil servant CEO of Social Affairs and Employment Services typically directs the middle managers and caseworkers for each policy.

## **Employment Policy**

A visible national employment reform, 'Putting More People into Work,' was enacted in 2002. According to the general remarks of the bill introducing the reform: 'The two main objectives of changing the employment policy are a better and worthier effort towards unemployed people taking departure from the situation of the individual person and an effort that is targeted towards the fastest and most direct way to normal jobs—and to achieve the objective of getting more people into employment.' A related major focus of the reform is to clarify and tighten the rules of availability to work and sanctioning.

According to the reform PES and municipal caseworkers must conduct repeated contact-course conversations with clients who are available for jobs. The reform places a strong focus on caseworkers urging clients to quickly find a job, invoking employment-training measures that promote employment prospects, testing that clients are available for work, and sanctioning non-availability e.g. clients that fail to participate in required meetings or employment-training schemes. According to law, first time absenteeism without good cause must be sanctioned by reduction of benefits while repeated absenteeism – which is equivalent to refusing participation - must be sanctioned by stopping benefits. Danish municipalities are on the frontlines in the delivery of employment services. They deliver employment services to unemployed persons who are not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits but for social assistance. Our study focuses on casework for clients that are available for work. When the survey was administered in 2006, Denmark had a relatively low unemployment rate of 4.5 percent implying that providing firms with enough labor was a key challenge.

Municipal employment services are headed by an elected municipal council and its committee for social affairs and employment that has direct supervision of employment services. The daily work is typically performed within a department of social affairs and employment the CEO of which normally attends the meetings of the committee, gives administrative support and advice to its chairman, and manages the administration. The relevant employment functions for our study are typically overseen by a middle-manager who is responsible for employment services. Danish municipalities are autonomous within the boundaries of law and administrative rules issued by the Ministry of Employment. They collect their own

taxes but do also receive block grants and matching grants for social assistance and employment services from the central government. Most caseworkers have professional training in social work.

### **Policy for Vulnerable Children and Youth**

The policy for vulnerable children and youth is part of the Danish Social Service Act. These children and youth have special needs due to physical handicaps or psychological or social problems, e.g. parental abuse or neglect, and behavioral maladjustment on behalf of the child or adolescent. Cases are initiated by parents contacting the social authorities or by reports from other relevant persons, e.g. doctors, teachers, child welfare workers, police, or neighbors, or other persons being in contact with the child or adolescent at risk. When serious cases are initiated, a thorough investigation must be undertaken according to the act. Based on interviews with the involved parties, the child/adolescent, parents, and other relevant persons, the caseworker must consider the case and select or propose relevant measures if those are needed. Such measures can be e.g. a regular contact person for the child/adolescent, assistance in the home, or voluntary or forcible removal of the child/adolescent to foster care. When adolescents in foster care turn 18, the Act recommends municipalities to establish some sort of after-care in order not to leave a vulnerable person behind.

The problems of vulnerable children and youth are differentiated and also often quite serious, and 'wicked' implying that no optimal solution is at hand, and that any solution can create other problems for the involved persons. E.g. foster care can rarely compensate for the problems of the child or adolescent (Egelund et al. 2008). Foster care is also extremely expensive with annual costs per child that can easily exceed several hundred thousands Euros. Because of the increasing expenditures for foster care, many municipalities are attempting to reduce the number of foster care placements.

The policy for vulnerable children and youth is implemented and funded by municipalities. They do, however, receive a 50 percent matching grant from the government. Budgetary allocations are the responsibility of the municipal council while its committee of social affairs oversees the administration assisted by a CEO and a middle manager (Lindemann and Nielsen 2006). To a varying degree decisions are delegated to caseworkers (Pallesen 2006). Forcible removal of children and youth cannot be delegated and must in fact be

decided by at least four out of five votes in a special Committee for Children and Youth, which is chaired by a judge and has three representatives from the municipal council and one pedagogical-psychological expert. Removal of children is predominantly made on a formally voluntary basis as parents are persuaded to do so by caseworkers for the sake of their child or in order to keep more privileges in relation to the child in the future.

The policies for employment and vulnerable children and youth represent both similar and different implementation contexts. As indicated above, both policies are implemented by municipalities, in most instances by the same political subcommittee and CEO of Social Affairs and Employment, while middle managers and caseworkers tend to be different. The two policy areas are regulated by different ministries and by different legislation focusing on different target groups. However, whereas one – employment – focuses on adults and the other on vulnerable children and youth, several of these children and adolescents have parents who are also on welfare. Whereas both policies have strong procedural requirements, vulnerable children policy focus relatively more on procedural regulation and employment policy more on regulation of substantive policy contents. Although the two policies differ in several respects, we expect that the same forces are at play in terms of how delegation affects street-level practices, which would make our findings more robust and generalizable in relation to other settings.

## **DATA AND MEASURES**

### **Data**

#### *Employment policy*

Three primary data sources are used in the employment policy analyses that follow. One is a survey of municipal caseworkers who are responsible for implementing the laws and intentions from the reform “Putting More People into Work.” Our analyses are based on 389 internet-based survey responses from municipal caseworkers. These respondents were selected by the municipal middle managers according to specified selection criteria that require respondents to have at least three months experience with individual

contact-course conversations with clients that are available for work. The internet-based survey was collected from early May until the end of June 2006.

The response rate is 88 percent in relation to the sample of caseworkers who were selected as respondents. We sent two e-mail reminders and a third telephone follow-up reminder. The responding workers are from 189 of the 268 Danish municipalities, thereby providing representation of 70 percent of the municipalities. Municipalities with less than 10,000 inhabitants and few employment services clients are slightly underrepresented among the survey respondents making up 42.3 percent of our sample compared to 47.4 percent of all municipalities. This under-representation of municipalities is counteracted by the fact that our selection criteria of caseworkers provided an over-representation of those from small municipalities (i.e., relatively more per municipality).

The second and third data sources are surveys of chief executive officers and municipal middle managers of employment functions. Our analyses are based on 198 CEO survey responses and 204 municipal middle manager responses collected from mid December 2005 until the end of May 2006. Relevant CEO and middle manager respondents were identified by telephone calls to each municipality. Two follow-up reminders were sent by email and one through telephone contact.

The response rates are 73 and 75 percent for the CEO and middle-manager surveys, respectively. The distribution of respondents reflects that of Danish municipalities in terms of population size (a measure for which we have census-like data) and difficulty of the employment task (calculated based on register information). Responses for middle managers from municipalities with less than 10,000 inhabitants are marginally underrepresented by 3.8 percentage points in comparison to census distribution, while those from municipalities with between 20,000 and 45,000 inhabitants are slightly overrepresented by 3 percentage points. The street-level bureaucratic and municipal CEO and middle manager data are supplemented with secondary data based on register information. These include census data about population size and data concerning the difficulty of the employment task conditions.

### *Vulnerable children.*

Our data for the implementation of policy towards *vulnerable children and youth* are also based on three national surveys that were administered as mail-out questionnaires in 2004. One was sent to one randomly selected caseworker per municipality for a response rate of 81 percent. A second survey was administered to the chairman of the political subcommittee for Social Affairs in each municipality for a response rate of 58 percent, and a third survey had the CEO of Social Affairs as respondents for a response rate of 75 percent. The survey samples are representative in terms of population size, tax-base, and task environment with respect to the municipal concentration of social problems in general (Lindemann and Nielsen 2006; Hestbæk et al. 2006).

### **Measures**

Table 1 provides an overview of the concepts and measures that we use. The latter are explained in more detail in the methodological appendix. The set of dependent variables, *policy priorities*, is what caseworkers emphasize when working with clients and indicate the extent to which caseworkers take actions that are consistent with two key mandates in each of the two national policy reforms. All four variables are based on surveys of street-level bureaucrats. For employment policy these mandates are a strong job focus and sanctioning clients' non-compliance with regulations. The *Job Focus* index is based on respondents' rating of the emphasis they give to finding jobs, getting clients into jobs quickly, and demanding that clients seek work. Higher scores indicate policy emphases that are in line with the national employment reform mandate and goal. As such, the index indicates how caseworkers carry out policies they are being asked to implement. Although the index has a lower reliability than ideal (Cronbach alpha of .60), deletion of any one or combination of index items resulted in lower reliability. The *Use of Sanctions* variable indicates the extent to which caseworkers use sanctions towards clients that are unemployed and found available for work. It is an additive index for caseworker respondents' rating of their reactions to clients' first and second absence from required participation in employment enhancing measures with no good cause. The rating indicates higher values for stronger reactions with 'wait and see' as the weakest and 'stopping benefits' as the strongest reaction. Caseworkers' reactions at first and second absence count equally.

**Table 1. Key Concepts**

---

**Dependent Variables: Policy Implementation by Caseworkers**

- *Policy Priority*—The extent to which caseworkers take actions that are consistent with national goals in the employment policy of a) a strong *Job Focus* (emphasizing jobs, getting clients into jobs quickly, and making demands on clients), b) *Use of Sanctions* (reactions to clients' repeat absenteeism from employment promoting measures with no good cause) and in vulnerable children policy of 3) *Involvement of Family and Friends* in case examination and treatment, and 4) *Use of Aftercare* when young people in foster care turn 18.

**Explanatory Variables:**

**Municipal Delegation and Policy**

- *Delegation*—For employment policy: Summated index measuring whether or not caseworkers are delegated authority to decide each of seven actions concerning handling of different client circumstances. For vulnerable children policy: Additive index measuring mean level of authority to decide each of 18 actions concerning different client circumstances with the highest score (5) indicating delegation to caseworkers.
- *Municipal Policy Support of National Policy in General*—Measures degree of local politicians' support of national policy reform changes in general. For employment policy: chief executive officer rating of the extent to which local politicians support the goals of the national policy reform of 'Putting More People to Work.' For vulnerable children policy: Index based on ratings by the chairman of the political subcommittee for social affairs of the extent to which she perceives the policy reform to be beneficial.

**Caseworkers' Attitudes and Knowledge**

- *SLB Support for Policy Tool*—Index for caseworker mean ratings of the extent to which they positively evaluate the specific policy tool mandated by the national reform acts for employment and vulnerable children. For aftercare an index for caseworkers' general support for the policy reform is employed.
  - *SLB Knowledge*—For employment policy: Caseworker rating of their degree of knowledge of employment service rules and of their professional preparation. For vulnerable children policy: Caseworker rating of the extent to which they have unfulfilled need of training on the policy reform changes (reversed)
-

For vulnerable children policy, we similarly employ two dependent variables tapping 3) caseworkers' Involvement of Family and Friends in case examinations and of 4) caseworkers' Use of Aftercare when young people who have been in foster care turn 18. The measure of *Involvement of Family and Friends* is an additive index based on respondents' mean rating of the extent to which the caseworker involves the non-custody parent, grandparents on both sides, siblings, uncles, aunts, and other family, and close friends, and acquaintances (but not professionals) in the case examination and treatment. Caseworkers' *Use of Aftercare* indicates the extent to which the caseworker prior to the end of young persons' foster care has made a plan on the future support and guidance for the client.

The remaining entries in Table 1 include the following sets of explanatory base variables at the organizational level of analysis, Delegation and Municipal Policy Support of National Policy in General. The *Delegation* indices are based on middle manager survey data on the delegation of a set of specific types of decisions (listed in the technical appendix). The summated index for employment policy measures if each of seven specific decisions is delegated to caseworkers, while the additive index for vulnerable children policy measures the mean level of decision-making authority for each of 18 tasks with the score of 5 indicating delegation to caseworkers. The indices are tapping the general delegation environment of the agency and not merely delegation for the particular functions that we are studying. This should provide more robust and reliable measures but might not as precisely tap delegation of the specific decisions.

The variable, *Municipal Policy Support of National Policy in General*, is defined as local politicians' general support for the national policy reform. As our focal municipal services are directed by elected local councilors, the policies that manifest themselves among local politicians are the appropriate identification of the policies at the municipal agency level. The chairman has a substantial influence on municipal employment and social services, but she does not always represent the political majority in the municipal council. For vulnerable children policy we use an index based on the mean agreement of the chairman of the political subcommittee for social affairs with 8 statements on advantages and disadvantages of the policy reform to be beneficial. For employment policy the variable is measured by ratings by the chief executive officer in a survey of the extent to which local politicians support the goals of the national policy reform of 'Putting More People to Work.' For employment policy, survey data with politicians as respondents are not available, but the CEO is a close and

excellent source. She normally participates in the meetings of the political subcommittee and has a close interaction with the chairman of the committee.

Table 1 also includes a set of explanatory variables at the individual caseworker level. These are all based on SLB surveys. *SLBs' Support for Policy Tool* indicates caseworkers' policy preferences. For three of the four variables, we measure SLBs' support for the particular policy mandate or tool. For employment policy the variable measuring support for the job focus mandate is an additive index indicating a) the extent to which caseworkers personally think that the main municipal policy objective should emphasize fast placement in jobs in conversations with clients compared to improving the client's chances for work over their lifetime, the extent to which caseworkers perceive that emphasizing job-search over employment promoting measures is effective and that emphasizing normal jobs in conversations with clients is effective. The variable for SLB support for the sanction mandate is an additive index based on two items indicating mean caseworker ranking of the extent to which they perceive threatening sanctions and the actual application of sanctions as effective.

For vulnerable children policy the specific SLB support variable for the policy mandate of involving family and friends in casework is an index indicating the mean extent to which caseworker respondents agree with five statements about advantages and disadvantages of such involvement (cf. the technical appendix). Finally, our data do not allow us to measure caseworkers' specific support for the policy recommendation of aftercare for young people of the age of 18 after they have been placed in foster care. Instead, we employ a measure tapping SLBs' general support for the policy reform, which includes aftercare as one of its several components. It is an index indicating caseworkers' degree of agreement with each of 8 statements on advantages and disadvantages of the reform. As previous research indicates that SLBs' behaviors are more influenced by their preferences for specific policy tools than by their general support for a policy reform (Winter 2003; Heinesen et al. 2004), the support for aftercare variable is expected to affect the particular SLB behavior less than the other policy support variables – due to the different operationalization.

Finally, we define *SLB Perceived Knowledge* as SLBs' perceived professional knowledge of rules and the policy field. For employment policy it is measured by an index indicating the mean extent to which caseworkers perceive that they have a good knowledge of employment policy rules and feel professionally

well prepared for their work with clients. For vulnerable children policy our variable measures the extent to which caseworkers report having an unmet need for further training for being able to implement the policy reform. In the latter case the values are reversed to indicate higher scores for more knowledgeable caseworkers.

## FINDINGS

A relevant starting point is comparing descriptive statistics for the delegation variables at the municipal level as shown in Table 2. As the indices have been created in different ways and have different ranges for the two policies, they cannot be directly compared. However, the table indicates that there is a substantial degree of delegation, not all decisions are delegated, and as shown by the standard deviation there is variation in the degree of delegation in each policy setting. This allows us to examine the effect of the degree of delegation on the actions of caseworkers in the following.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Extent of Delegation**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Std. variation</b>
<b>Delegation – Employment Policy</b>	204	5.26	5	0 - 7	1.38
<b>Delegation – Vulnerable Children Policy</b>	194	3.54	3.61	1 - 4.76	0.62

Our examination of the effects of delegation on SLBs’ actions is shown in Table 3. We apply OLS regression analyses with one model for each of the four sets of SLB actions as dependent variables. For employment policy one model has caseworkers’ emphases on job focus as dependent variable while the other one has caseworkers’ use of sanctions. For vulnerable children policy the dependent variables are caseworkers’ involvement of family and close friends in case-examinations and caseworkers’ use of aftercare. All our three hypotheses focus on contingent - not direct - effects of delegation. For increasing degrees of delegation we expect 1) politicians’ support for national policy to have lesser influence on SLB actions, while we expect 2) SLBs’ personal policy preferences, and 3) their knowledge to have more influence on their actions.

Table 3. Effects of Formal Delegation on SLB Behaviors

	Unemployment		Vulnerable Children and Youth	
	Job Focus	Use of Sanctions	Involvement of Family and Friends	Use of Aftercare
<b>Explanatory Variables</b>				
<i>Constant</i>	(6.56)	(4.88)	(1.50)	(.70)
<i>Delegation</i>	.03 (0.45)	-.08 (0.68)	.02 (0.15)	-.73 (0.55)
<i>Municipal Policy Support of National Policy in General</i>	.10* (1.58)	.09* (1.39)	-.16* (1.43)	.00 (0.01)
<b>Interaction variable: Delegation* Municipal Policy Support in General</b>	-.04 (0.64)	-.03 (0.43)	.04 (0.39)	.02 (0.14)
<i>SLB-Support of Policy Tool a)</i>	.33*** (5.37)	.08 (1.24)	.29*** (2.59)	.32*** (2.43)
<i>SLB Perceived Knowledge</i>	.05 (0.73)	.07 (1.12)	.02 (0.14)	.17* (1.35)
<b>Interaction variable: Delegation* Negative SLB Support for Policy Tool</b>	-.02 (0.36)	-.15* (1.42)	.04 (0.31)	-.03 (0.24)
<b>Interaction variable: Delegation* SLB Perceived Knowledge</b>	.08* (1.36)	.02 (0.27)	.01 (0.12)	-.01 (0.05)
Model statistics:				
N =	236	236	74	53
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.12	.01	.01	.03
F-value of full model	5.76***	1.21	1.33	1.30

Note: \*\*\* =  $p < .01$ ; \*\* =  $p < .05$ ; \* =  $p < .1$  (one-tailed). Cell entries are standardized regression coefficients with the absolute value of t-statistics in parentheses.

a) For all models SLB support of policy tool is measured through variables measuring the SLB rating of her support for the very tool in question ('job focus,' 'use of sanction,' and 'involvement of family and friends' – except for the model explaining 'use of aftercare.' As the available data did not contain an item measuring SLB support for use of aftercare specifically, the measure used is an index indicating the SLB support for the policy changes in general, changes that also included more use of aftercare.

The appropriate modeling of such contingent effects is using interaction terms. So, the key explanatory variables in our modeling are Delegation x Municipal Support of National Policy in General, Delegation x Negative SLB Support for Policy Tool, and Delegation x SLB Perceived Knowledge. We also include the base variables in the regression models. To address problems of multicollinearity from having both base variables and interaction terms in the same model, we have rescaled the variables that we use in the interaction terms by transforming the values to deviations from the mean. We have reversed the scores for SLB Support for Policy Tool in the interaction terms, but not in the main variables, to clearer indicate the

potential bias in relation to the implementation of national policies which delegating authority to critical SLBs might have. This would be indicated by a negative sign for these interaction terms.

One problem is that except for the Job Focus model, the models do not explain much of the variation as indicated by the low adjusted  $R^2$ . If we start looking at the base variables, as found in earlier research (May and Winter 2009; Winter 2003; Heinesen et al. 2004) SLBs' support for specific policy tools has a positive influence on implementation of these policies at the front-lines. The relationship is significant at a high level for three of the four SLB actions, i.e. Job Focus, Involvement of Family of Friends, and Use of Aftercare - but not for Use of Sanctions for which the coefficient is after all positive. For the former three actions no other variable is significant at the same level, and as the standardized regression coefficient allow a first rough estimate of the relative influence of the variables, these variables seem to be the far most important ones. As expected, SLBs' greater perceived knowledge of rules and the professional field provides higher levels of compliance with national policies, but the relationship is only significant for use of aftercare.

In comparison to the positive effects of SLB Support for Policy Tools, the extent of Municipal Policy Support for National Policy in General does only lead to higher implementation for the two employment policy actions - and at low level of significance. Municipal policy support does not affect Use of Aftercare for vulnerable youth. And it is even negative for caseworkers' Involvement of Family and Friends, which is difficult to give a meaningful interpretation. Based on these preliminary findings, the personal policy preferences of SLBs seem to be more important than municipal policies as formulated by local politicians in shaping the front-line actions of SLBs. This is also in line with some earlier research (May and Winter 2009; Winter 2003; Heinesen et al. 2004). One caveat is that we examine the effect of the municipal support for the policy reforms in general for local politicians whereas we examine the effect of support for a specific policy tool for SLBs. Both politicians and SLBs may have one view on the national policy reform in general and another one on some of the specifics of the reform. Generally, however, we do not expect that politicians would have as detailed opinions on specific policy tools as SLBs who are supposed to use these tools or procedures in their daily work. Politicians are likely to offer broad policy signals rather than detailed

prescription. Another caveat is that we have not yet examined the impact on the degree of delegation vs. centralization of decision-making.

Delegation in itself does not have any significant impact on SLB actions, although we note that the coefficients are negative for two of the four actions, implying that delegation might decrease the implementation of national policy mandates. As we hypothesized, we would expect delegation to have stronger conditional than direct effects, but these conditional effects are actually much smaller than expected as evidenced by the coefficients of the interaction terms. Increased degrees of delegation do not as expected in our first hypothesis lead to stronger effects of Municipal Support for the National Policy on SLB actions. For the two employment policy actions the sign of the coefficients is negative as expected, but none of the four coefficients are significant.

Also the conditional effect of delegation on the impact of SLBs' Negative Support for Policy Tool on SLB actions is weaker than expected in our second hypothesis. While three of four coefficients for the interaction terms - Delegation x Negative SLB Support for Policy Tool - are negative as expected, only one - for Use of Sanctions - is significant and merely at a relatively low level. In municipalities with more delegated decision-making the use of sanctions at the front-lines reflects the personal policy preferences of the caseworkers more than when decision-making is centralized. It is surprising that centralizing decision-making does not seem to limit caseworker discretion more strongly and more consistently. The implication of the combined findings for the base variable of SLB support for Policy Tool and the interaction term where its effect is conditioned by Delegation appear to be that SLBs have a wide discretion that is influenced by their own personal policy preferences, and that the extent of delegation does not make much of difference to this situation. Even in organizations with more centralized decision-making, SLBs find ways to let their own policy-preferences affect their actions.

Finally, also our third delegation hypothesis on how more delegation is expected to enhance the effect of SLBs' knowledge on their actions finds weak support. While three of four coefficients have the expected positive sign, only one - for SLBs' Job Focus - is significant but at a low level. The latter coefficient con-

firmly the findings by May and Winter (2009) for the same action but with different modeling. However, it is surprising that we do not find more consistently that delegating authority to workers who know the rules and the field improves the implementation of national policy compared to delegation to less knowledgeable workers, and that centralizing decision-making could be a way to compensate for workers' lack of skills. Several municipalities have sought to remedy a shortage of children specialists by referring decisions on vulnerable children and adolescents cases to middle managers or caseworkers with special expertise. However, such strategy does not seem to help the implementation of national policy mandates on involving family and friends in casework and using aftercare.

## CONCLUSIONS

The SLB-literature and the P-A-literature share a rather skeptical view of the ability of the elected political masters to control the actions (and non-actions) of their subordinate SLBs. The cards are stacked against those that are formally in charge of formulating public policies because informational asymmetries de facto hinder direction and control of SLBs. In effect, following these strands of literature, the SLBs are the real policy makers in modern democratic societies. This implies that the individual characteristics of the SLBs, e.g. notably their support and knowledge of the formal policy, are more important than the official policy goals if there is a conflict in this respect.

Recent public management literature presents us with a different view of the impact of formal political authority. They put hierarchy back in place and argue that management matters. Obviously, there need not to be a conflict between these different scholarly positions. SLBs may support the official policy goals (as they often do (Brehm and Gates 1997) and have every intention and do their utmost to implement official policies. Also, the politicians in charge may for a number of reasons want SLBs to have discretion to take the actions they find appropriate. However, in case of conflict between SLBs and their political masters, the literature provides us with different conclusions regarding their relative strength.

In this paper, we aim at beginning to fill this gap in the literature. We study whether SLBs' individual characteristics and policy preferences are more important when they are delegated more formal authority.

Following the skeptical SLB-cum-PA strand, we should not expect the degree of formal delegation to have a significant impact on policy making. On the other hand, taking the “management matters” position, we should expect SLBs’ individual characteristics and policy preferences to have a stronger impact on policy making when formal delegation increases.

The study shows that SLBs’ policy preferences and their knowledge of the rules are the most important policy determinants regardless of the level of formal delegation. In other words, the degree of formal delegation has no significant impact on policy making. Taking this result at face value, the SLB-cum-PA position gets more support than the claim that ‘management matters.’ The fact that our findings are rather similar across two different policies as policies towards employment and vulnerable children and youth makes it more probable that they apply to other settings as well.

Of course, in order to substantiate this conclusion further, we need to be able to take in to account the possible impact of the wrapping of the delegation in more or less formal ex ante and ex post political directives. At the same time, along with this need to refine the impact of delegation, this study simultaneously raises the question why policy makers’ formally in charge of policy-making delegate authority to a varying degree to their subordinated SLBs when it seems to have marginal importance for actual policy implementation. One answer is that the elected politicians are unaware of the loss of policy direction when they the delegate authority to SLBs. Another, perhaps more plausible hypothesis is that elected politicians are aware that delegation may mean policy misdirection and consciously dose the degree of delegation to the extent they consider their subordinate SLBs to be in line with their own policy preferences.

## REFERENCES

- Beer, F., S.C. Winter, M.H. Skou, M.V. Stigaard, A.C. Henriksen, and N. Friisberg. 2008. *Statslig og kommunal beskæftigelsesindsats. Implementering af “Flere i arbejde” før Strukturreformen*. Copenhagen: SFI – The Danish National Research Centre for Social Research: 08: 19.
- Bendor, T., A. Glazer, and T. Hammond 2001. “Theories of Delegation.” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 4: 235-69.
- Boyne, George A. 2003. “Sources of Public Service Improvement: A Critical Review and Research Agenda.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 13 (3): 367-94

- Brehm, John and Scott Gates. 1997. *Working, Shirking, and Sabotage: Bureaucratic Response to a Democratic Public*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Brewer, Gene A. 2005. "In the Eye of the Storm: Frontline Supervisors and Federal Agency Performance." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 15 (4): 505-27.
- Brewer, Gene A. and Sally Coleman Selden. 2000. Why Elephants Gallop: "Assessing and Predicting Organizational Performance in Federal Agencies." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 10 (4): 685-711.
- Ewalt, Jo Ann G. and Edward T. Jennings, Jr. 2004. "Administration, Governance, and Policy Tools in Welfare Administration." *Public Administration Review* 64 (4): 449-62.
- Heinesen, Eskil, Søren C. Winter, Ina Risom Bøge and Leif Husted. 2004. *Kommunernes integrationsindsats og integrationssucces*. Copenhagen: AKF Forlaget.
- Hill, Carolyn J. 2006. Casework Job Design and Client Outcomes in Welfare-to-Work Offices. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 16 (2): 263-88.
- Keiser, Lael R. and Joe Soss. 1998. "With Good Cause: Bureaucratic Discretion and the Politics of Child Support Enforcement." *American Journal of Political Science* 42 (4): 1133-56.
- Langbein, Laura I. 2000. Ownership, Empowerment, and Productivity: Some Empirical Evidence on the Causes and Consequences of Employee Discretion. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 19 (3): 427-49.
- Lipsky, Michael. 1980. *Street-Level Bureaucracy. Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Majone, G. 2001. "Nonmajoritarian Institutions and the Limits of Democratic Governance: A Political Transaction-Cost Approach". *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* 157: 57-78.
- May, Peter J., and Søren C. Winter. 2009. "Politicians, Managers, and Street-Level Bureaucrats: Influences on Policy Implementation." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 19(3): 453-76.
- McCubbins, M. and T. Schwarz. 1984. "Congressional Oversight Overlook: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarm". *American Journal of Political Science* 28: 165-79.
- McCubbins, M, R.G. Noll, and B.R. Weingast. 1987. "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control". *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 3: 243-77.
- Meyers, Marcia K. and Susan Vorsanger. 2003. Street-Level Bureaucrats and the Implementation of Public Policy, pp. 245-55 in B. Guy Peters and John Pierre (eds.) *Handbook of Public Administration*,. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing Company.
- Moynihan Donald P. and Sanjay K. Pandey. 2005. "Testing how Management Matters in an Era of Government by Performance Management." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 15 (3): 421-39.
- Nicholson-Crotty, Sean and Laurence J. O'Toole, Jr. 2004. "Public Management and Organizational Performance: The Case of Law Enforcement Agencies." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 14 (1): 1-18.
- Pallesen, Thomas. 2006. *The Impact of Street-Level Bureaucrats' Discretion: The Case of Out-of-Home Placement of Children and Youngsters in Danish Localities*, Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in Philadelphia, 31

August – 4 September 2006.

- Riccucci, Norma M. 2005. *How Management Matters: Street-Level Bureaucrats and Welfare Reform*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Riccucci, Norma M., Marcia K. Meyers, Irene Lurie, and Jun S. Han. 2004. "The Implementation of Welfare Reform Policy: The Role of Public Managers in Front-Line Practices." *Public Administrative Review* 64 (4): 438-48.
- Sandfort, Jodi R. 2000. "Moving beyond Discretion and Outcomes: Examining Public Management from the Front Lines of the Welfare System." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 10 (4): 729-56.
- Weingast, B.R. 1993. "Constitutions as Governance Structures: The Political Foundation of Secure Markets." *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* 149 (1): 286-311.
- Wilson, James Q. 1989. *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. Basic Books.
- Winter, Søren C. 2002. *Explaining Street-Level Bureaucratic Behavior in Social and Regulatory Policies*. Paper prepared for the 2002 Annual Meeting of the American Science Association in Boston. 29 August – 1 September 2002. Danish National Institute of Social Research, Copenhagen.
- Winter, Søren C. 2003. *Political Control, Street-Level Bureaucrats and Information Asymmetry in Regulatory and Social Policies*. Paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Association for Policy Analysis and Management held in Washington D.C. 6-8 November 2003. Danish National Institute of Social Research, Copenhagen.
- Worsham, Jeff and Jay Gatrell. 2005. "Multiple Principals, Multiple Signals: A Signaling Approach to Principal-Agent Relations," *The Policy Studies Journal* 33 (3): 363-76.

## Appendix: List of Variables

	Vulnerable Children and Youth		Unemployment	
	Source Mean (s.d.)	Measures	Source Mean (s.d.)	Measures
<b>Explanatory variables:</b>				
Delegation	CEO survey 3.54 (.62)	Index based on responses to the following question: ‘Who must approve the following decisions before the action is implemented?’ 1) Forcible removal of child 2) Voluntary placement in foster care 3) Implementation of forcible measures 4) Decision that hitherto voluntary placement in foster care is maintained even if the custody parent wants to have the child back home 5) Practical and pedagogical assistance in the home 6) Financial support to avoid placement in foster care 7) Family treatment – not 24-hours care but group conversations, individual conversations and e.g. family workshops 8) 24-hours stay for family 9) Relief care/weekend care 10) Financial support for participation in continuation school or boarding-school 11) Informing the custody parent’s new municipality about removal 12) Procuring trainee place 13) Permanent contact for the whole family 14) Support person for parents 15) Changing foster care placement without consent 16) Maintaining personal counsellor, contact and/or foster care beyond the age of 18 17) Establishing mainstreaming for young persons hitherto placed in foster care 18) Assignment of personal counsellor or contact	Manager survey 5.26 (1.38)	Summated index of whether or not caseworkers are delegated authority to decide each of seven actions: 1) Categorization of social assistance clients as being ready or not ready for the labor market 2) Referral of clients to wage subsidies in private firms, 3) Referral of clients to wage subsidies in the municipality 4) Referral of clients to practice periods/employment training in a municipal service institution, 5) Referral of clients to a short and cheap vocational training course (around DKK 9,500), 6) Referral of clients to a more expensive training course (DKK 30,000), 7) Cut off of social benefits due to client’s non-compliance with availability for work duties.  Cronbach alpha = .68. Squared values used to meet linearity assumptions.

		<p>person if the young person has been in foster care till the age of 18.</p> <p>Scale from 1 to 5:  5 = No approval is required  4 = Middle manager  3 = CEO  2 = The Subcommittee for Social Affairs/ The Subcommittee Chair  1 = The Committee for Children and Youth</p>		
<p>Municipal Support for National Policy in General</p>	<p>Chair of Political Subcommittee for Social Affairs  3.20  (.58)</p>	<p>Local politician's extent of support for National policy reform</p> <p>Measured by index of responses to the below question. Scale of 1 to 5 with endpoints indicating 'Agree very much!' and 'Disagree very much.' Scale has been reversed to indicate higher values for more positive responses.</p> <p>'What is your immediate attitude to the amendments to the acts introduced in 2001 by Parliament? Please mark to which extent you agree with the statements below.'</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. They gave us some instruments that we did not have before, especially in relation to children and youth with special needs</li> <li>2. They only emphasize what we were already doing</li> <li>3. They are naive and unrealistic in relation to the problems that we are actually facing</li> <li>4. I believe that in the course of time they will lead to measures that are more well-founded also professionally</li> <li>5. They will not change our measures towards children and youth with special needs</li> </ol>	<p>MCEO survey  3.65  (1.01)</p>	<p>How do you rate the goals of the employment act reform "<i>Putting More People to Work</i>"? Below are a number of different statements about these goals listed. Please rate your sense of the goals on the horizontal scale of 1 (agree with A) to 5 (agree with B).  <i>Tick one box for each item.</i></p> <p>A= Supported by the local politicians</p> <p>B = Not supported by the local politicians</p>

		<p>6. They can definitely contribute to improving our measures so that they can be carried out earlier and more coherently than before</p> <p>7. They take care of some of the problems we have been struggling with in the past</p> <p>8. They are more hot air and big words than giving us new specific scopes for action</p>		
SLB Support of National Policy in General	SLB Survey 3.35 (.74)	<p>Index of responses to the following question and items. Scale of 1 to 5 with endpoints indicating 'Agree very much!' and 'Disagree very much.' Scale has been reversed to indicate higher values for more positive responses.</p> <p>'What is your immediate attitude to the amendments to the acts introduced in 2001 by Parliament? Please mark to which extent you agree with the statements below.'</p> <p>Scale of 1 to 5 with endpoints indicating 'Agree very much!' and 'Disagree very much.' Scale has been reversed to indicate higher values for more positive responses.</p> <p>1. They gave us some instruments that we did not have before, especially in relation to children and youth with special needs</p> <p>2. They only emphasize what we were already doing</p> <p>3. They are naive and unrealistic in relation to the problems that we are actually facing</p> <p>4. I believe that in the course of time they will lead to measures that are more well-founded also professionally</p> <p>5. They will not change our measures towards children and youth with special needs</p> <p>6. They can definitely contribute to improving our measures so that they can be carried out earlier and more coherently than before.</p>		Does not apply

		<p>7. They take care of some of the problems we have been struggling with in the past</p> <p>8. They are more hot air and big words than giving us new specific scopes for action</p>		
SLB Support of Policy Tool	SLB-Survey 3.26 (.44)	<p>Support for national mandate on involvement of family and friends:</p> <p>‘Below, some statements are listed about the involvement of persons in the close environment of the child/adolescent in the examination/treatment of the problems of the child/adolescent. Please report the extent to which you agree with the statements’</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Close persons better understand the problems of the family and can therefore better help solving them</li> <li>2) Close persons do not realize the problems to the same extent</li> <li>3) Close persons are more accepting the family the way it is</li> <li>4) Close persons do not have the skills to solve so heavy problems (reversed)</li> <li>5) It takes too much time to involve close persons as much as they should (reversed)</li> </ol>	SLB survey 3.58 (.66)	<p>Support for national policy mandate on keeping a strong job focus in conversations with clients:</p> <p>Index based on the following three items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Caseworker evaluation on a scale of 1 (full agreement with the first item) to 5 (full agreement with the second item) of what ‘you personally think should be the goal for the municipal employment service’ in choosing a balance between ‘helping clients improve changes for jobs over the course of their work life’ versus ‘getting clients into jobs more quickly.’</li> </ol> <p>‘How effective do you consider the following instruments to be in order to ensure that most unemployed recipients of social assistance who are available for work will get an ordinary job? 1 (very ineffective) to 5 (very effective)’</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2) Emphasizing job search compared to employment promoting measures</li> <li>3) Emphasizing concrete jobs in conversations with unemployed clients</li> </ol> <p>Cronbach Alpha = .63</p>
			SLB survey 2.61 (.97)	<p>Support for national policy mandate on use of sanctions:</p> <p>How effective do you consider the following instruments to be in order to ensure that most unemployed recipients of social assistancethat are available for work will get an ordinary job? 1 (very ineffective) to 5 (very effective)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Use of sanctions</li> <li>2) Threatening to reduce social assistance benefits if the client does</li> </ol>

				not comply with his/her availability Cronbach Alpha = .84
SLB Perceived knowledge	SLB Survey 3.78 (1.63)	'Do you have an unmet need for in-service training for being able to implement the amendments from 2001 in daily work?'  Scale from 1 to 6 with end points indicating 'To a very large extent' and 'No' respectively	SLB survey 4.24 (.80)	Mean of SLB agreement on a scale of 1 (disagree completely) to 5 (agree completely) with two items: (1) 'I feel I have good knowledge of the rules in the area of employment service' and (2) 'I feel professionally well prepared to carry out my work with clients.' Cronbach alpha = .85
<b>Dependent variables:</b>				
	SLB Survey 1.96 (.75)	Involvement of Family and Friends in Case-Examination  Additive index based on following question and items: 'How often do you involve the following persons from the immediate environment of the child /adolescent in examining/treating problems of the child/adolescent ?' ➤ Non-custody parent ➤ Grand parents, mother's side ➤ Grand parents, father's side ➤ Siblings of the child/adolescents ➤ Uncles/aunts and other family ➤ Close friends/acquaintances  Scale from 1 to 5 with endpoints indicating 'In no/a minor part of the cases' and 'In all/by far most cases.' Cronbach Alpha = 0.82	SLB survey 3.70 (.66)	Job Focus  Mean caseworker rating on scale 1 (full agreement with first item) to 5 (full agreement with second item) of priorities given to: (1) 'Emphasizing gradual acquisition of skills' vs 'Emphasizing actual jobs in the conversation with the client' (2) 'Improving the client's chances for jobs over their work life' vs. 'Getting the client into any job quickly' (3) 'Taking the client's problems into consideration' vs. 'Making demands on clients.'  Cronbach alpha = .60. Scales are reversed to indicate higher scores for greater Job Focus.

	<p>SLB Survey 2.65 (1.03)</p>	<p>Use of Aftercare</p> <p>'How often have you prior to the end of young persons' foster care made a plan on the future support and guidance for the client.'</p> <p>Scale from 1 to 5 with endpoints indicating 'In no/a minor part of the cases' and 'In all/by far most cases.'</p>	<p>SLB- survey 17.86 (6.48)</p>	<p>Use of Sanctions</p> <p>Index based on caseworkers' responses to two questions, both related to their use of sanctions when their clients have been absent from activation without any good cause: 1) 'What do you do the first time?' and 2) 'What do you do the second time?'</p> <p>In responding to both questions caseworkers have chosen between the following 5 actions with the progressively increasing values listed in parentheses: 1) "I wait and see whether the problem will solve itself" (1), 2) "The client is contacted and told that he/she must attend activation, but no further action is taken at this moment" (2), 3) "The client receives a warning that next absenteeism will be met with reducing benefits" (4), 4) "Social assistance benefits are reduced" (8), 5) "Social assistance benefits are stopped" (16). The index is the sum of scores on the two items, with actions taken at the first and second time absenteeism counting equally.</p>
--	---------------------------------------	--	---	--