

Planning of sports facilities - The Ringsted Case

Author: Jens Høyer-Kruse

Institution: Institute of Sports Science and Clinical Biomechanics, University of Southern Denmark

E-mail: jhkruse@health.sdu.dk

Abstract keywords

Sports science, sports facilities, network governance theory, decision-making, implementation

Theoretical background

Danish sports policy is characterized by a clear division of responsibility between government and municipality. While the government is responsible for the economy of the national organizations, the municipalities have the primary responsibility for local sports activities and sports facilities. Another characteristic of sports policy in Danish municipalities is the perception that the municipality must create the settings that the local sports clubs then should fill in without intervention by the municipality. And the municipal subsidy to sports goes mainly to establishing and maintaining sports facilities (about 90% of the municipal expenses to sport in general are consumed by sports facilities) (Ibsen, 2008).

Even though the role of government in Danish sports policy historically has been seemingly unobtrusive and consensus-seeking, there are signs of the old corporative structures between the local sports clubs and the municipalities are being replaced with other kinds of networks (partnerships, less formal networks and often put together for the specific occasion). In a long historical perspective the roles of the local sports clubs and the municipalities are thus going through considerable transformation processes in regard to the planning of sports facilities and how they are being managed (Bergsgard & Norberg, 2010).

This research project is part of a PhD-project put through in four Danish municipalities: Høje-Taastrup, Ringsted, Slagelse and Syddjurs. The purpose of the PhD-project is to attain knowledge about the correlation between sports facilities and participation in sports and physical exercise. The empirical part of the PhD-project includes:

- 1) a mapping of all sports facilities in the four municipalities,
- 2) an analysis of the changes of the sports facilities in Ringsted Municipality (1980-present), and
- 3) a study of children's and adults participation in physical exercise and sports, which localities is used and peoples position and wants toward these localities.

Aim of abstract

Within the field of sport management the role of government is evident as a regulator of the sport sector environment and as an actor in the distribution and redistribution of publicly controlled resources e.g. sports facilities. However, there is still a relative shortage of analyses of the motives for

government intervention and the consequences of the enacted sport policies.

This analysis therefore aims to shed light on the changes in sports facilities from 1980 to today, and what can explain these changes. The analysis will focus on two competing hypotheses. The first is that the development of sports facilities is the result of the (changing) needs and interests of sport and exercise participation has undergone, i.e. a relatively rational decision given by the citizen's interests and desires (logic of consequentiality). The competing theory is that the expansion is more a result of the present dominant organizational and institutional interests (especially sports), interaction with other interests (e.g. local interests) and the dominant idea of sport (sports discourse or the logic of appropriateness)

Research question

How did Ringsted Municipality conduct their policy in regard to the changes in sports facilities from 1980 and up to today?

- Which actors were involved in the decisions – and which networks do they participate in?
- How did the actors influence the decision process?
- Who acted as meta-governor and how?

Methodical approach

This part of the study is limited to Ringsted Municipality. Firstly, the mapping of the sports facilities in Ringsted Municipality will be compared with a corresponding mapping of the sports facilities in the same municipality, which was done in 1980 (Jespersen & Riiskjær, 1980) whereby an assessment of development for 30 years can be made. Secondly, the analysis of adults' sports participation in the same municipality in 1980 will be used as a basis for evaluating the degree to which this knowledge on sport participation was used in the development of sports facilities. Thirdly, selected sports facilities in the municipality, which has been build since 1980, are examined to clarify the decision-making and implementation, i.e. interests and arguments for the facilities location and character (what activities they were build for). This analysis will draw on available sources (municipal policy decisions, policy memos, reports, newspaper articles, etc. from local historical archives in Ringsted) supplemented with interviews with former key decision makers behind these sports facilities. This is also called 'output-based backwards mapping':

"A policy output can be a specified policy report, action plan, project, regulation or initiative (...) policy outputs are much easier to identify and trace back to a host of policy actors who, in one way or another, are responsible for their form and content." (Bogason & Zølner, 2007)

Theoretical approach

The analysis is made from a governance perspective. Both the sociological organization and interdependence theoretic approach to governance networks are expected as valuable contributions to the analysis.

Results

Data is currently being collected and results will be available by the time of the conference.

References

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