Child protection systems in Sweden

gaps and challenges in services to asylum-seeking and returning children in families

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May 2017
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This thesis is submitted for obtaining a Master’s Degree in International Humanitarian Action. By submitting this thesis, the author certifies that the text is from her hand, does not include the work of someone else unless clearly indicated, and that the thesis has been produced in accordance with proper academic practices.
Abstract

During the second half of 2015, Sweden experienced the largest inflow of asylum-seekers in its history. Almost 163,000 people sought asylum in 2015, whereof approximately 70,000 children. The influx challenged the reception system and severe child protection concerns such as disappearances and sexual exploitation of unaccompanied minors were identified. Half of the children that arrived in 2015 came with families but this group have received less attention so far. The aim of this study was to explore the child protection systems around asylum-seeking and returning children in families by identifying child protection concerns and existing gaps in the services provided to this target group.

Fourteen semi-structured interviews with twenty individuals belonging to various stakeholder groups such as staff at asylum accommodations, social workers, parents and, volunteer and staff from civil society organisations were conducted in two municipalities in Skåne, Sweden. The data was analysed using thematic analysis and the results are discussed in regards to the Protective Environment Framework. The results suggest that children in migration, with families, face multiple protection concerns in Sweden. Significant gaps exist in the services provided to these children and there are large disparities between accommodation centres. Many accommodations fail to provide a child-friendly environment and gender separated sanitation facilities. Furthermore, the results point out the importance of increasing competence of child protection among actors, and to increase preventive measure directed towards the parents in order to ensure a protective and safe environment for children.

Key words: child protection systems, child maltreatment, gap analysis, children in families, migration
Words: 22,710
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
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<td>LMA</td>
<td>Reception of asylum seekers and others Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>LVU</td>
<td>The Care for Young Persons Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSB</td>
<td>Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEF</td>
<td>Protective Environment Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMA</td>
<td>Swedish Migration Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swedish NAO</td>
<td>Swedish National Audit Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>The World Health Organization</td>
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1 Introduction

"Their ‘here and now’ is so much different than everyone else’s. [...] Their ‘here and now’ is so damn vulnerable [and unstable] compared to your and my ‘here and now’".¹

In 2015, more than 65 million people were forcibly displaced. That was an increase of almost six million since the previous year (UNHCR, 2016). During the second half of 2015 over one million people undertook an extremely dangerous journey to cross the Mediterranean Sea with the hope of reaching the shores of Europe. Europe was portrayed as a safe harbour and the sea was, for many, the only feasible way to get there. Greece and Italy were the two main arrival points; however, many migrants saw them as transit countries on their way to other European countries. The top three nationalities of Mediterranean arrivals were Syrian Arabic Republic, Afghanistan and Iraq. Twenty-five percent of the total arrivals to Greece, Italy and Spain were children (UNHCR, 2016). The sharp increase in the number of people seeking protection in Europe created chaos and an emergency situation with high demands on reception and asylum systems (UNHCR, 2016). Several European countries tried to stop the migrants or change the travel route by imposing greater restrictions on access, controls and fences along their borders (UNHCR, 2016).

In the second half of 2015, Sweden witnessed the largest migration flow in the country’s history. A total of 162,877 people sought asylum in 2015, including 70,384 children and about 35,000 of them were unaccompanied minors (Children’s Ombudsman, 2017a; RIR 2017:4). In two months, October and November, about 80,000 asylum-seekers arrived and at its peak it exceeded 10,000 persons per week. This rapid migration inflow can be regarded as a national challenge and it is officially called the ‘refugee situation’. The refugee situation urged the largest humanitarian action in the country since

¹ Translated from an interview with a social worker who is talking about asylum-seeking and returning children in families. Original quote “Deras här och nu är så mycket annorlunda än alla andras. […] Deras här och nu är så jäkla utsatt i förhållande till ditt och mitt här och nu”.
the second World War and imposed extraordinary demands on societal functioning’s at all levels (RIR 2017:4). In 2016, the total number of asylum-seekers arriving in Sweden reduced to 28,939 asylum-seekers due to national political interventions such as internal border controls, identity checks, and limitations for the right to a residence permit and family reunification, as well as international agreements and actions at EU-level (SMA, 2017a).

Children, especially separated and unaccompanied children, disappeared both before and after formal registration as asylum-seekers in Sweden and media reports highlighted the risk of sexual exploitation of children (see e.g. Svensson, 2016). The reporting regarding child protection concerns has mainly circulated around unaccompanied and separated children: authorities have launched guidelines and research directed towards this group (see further discussion in 2.5), and organisations have written reports, e.g. Human Right Watch (2016). 63 out of 290 municipalities in Sweden reported irregularities, with a so called ‘lex Sarah’ report, within the social services between October 2015 and January 2016 and many of these were linked to inadequate support or risks to unaccompanied minors (NBHW, 2016b).

Very little has been written about the 35,000 children who arrived in Sweden together with their parents. There is a notion that these children are not vulnerable because they have migrated and now stay together with their family or parts of their family. The needs of unaccompanied minors are often more visible than those of children arriving and living with their families and thus, easier for actors to address (Newbigging & Thomas, 2011). Unaccompanied minors will be under the Social Services radar from the start (SMA, 2015b) whereas children with families do not automatically engage with this child protection system. Nevertheless, it is known that forced migration imposes risks to children (UNICEF, 2016) and as the quote in the beginning stated, the ‘here and now’, i.e. the situation, of asylum-seeking and returning children in families differs from people who are not in the asylum-process. In Germany, another country where many people sought asylum in 2015, it was revealed that children who arrived with their families were vulnerable to become victims of exploitation and violence. This was particularly an issue in temporary accommodations and reception centres (UNICEF, 2016: 5). The assessment further shown that children, during their lengthy asylum-processes, did not always have access to psychosocial support of adequate quality, recreational activities and schooling (UNICEF, 2016: 5). Consequently, with the lack of reporting in Sweden and the learnings
from Germany in mind, child protection concerns of children with families need to become more visible in Sweden to ensure their right to be protected from all forms of maltreatment in line with article 19 in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

“States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child” (UN, 1989: art. 19 paragraph 1).

1.1 Aim and objectives

This research aims at examining the existing Swedish child protection systems, with focus on children in migration and more specifically asylum-seeking and returning children in families. The objectives are to outline the formal and less formal components of the systems in place to address concerns of child maltreatment, and to provide an informed picture of child protection concerns identified among children accompanied by their families during their asylum process. Moreover, it seeks to identify gaps in the actions taken to deal with child protection concerns as well as in the structures of the systems in the aftermath of the refugee situation in 2015.

The thesis does not intend to criticise single actors. Rather it aims to emphasize strengths and gaps within the systems. Thus, the research provides a basis for reflection and learning.

1.2 Research questions

Drawing upon the research aim and objectives, the overall research questions are the following:
• How did child protection systems in Sweden address child protection concerns brought on by the influx of asylum-seekers?
• What gaps exist in services to asylum-seeking and returning families with children to ensure children’s safety and protection in Sweden?

1.3 Relevance

Child protection is a relatively new field within humanitarian action and it is only in recent years that the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action were launched (CPWG, 2013). It is of great importance to address and prevent child maltreatment at all levels and among all children. It is a global problem and maltreatment in any form can have long-term consequences for children’s health and development. Maltreatment can affect early brain development, increase the risks for depression, high-risk behaviours and the child is at larger risk of using violence against others (WHO, 2016). Canavera et al (2016) emphasize a paradigm shift in child protection thinking: from addressing issues such as trafficking, abuse or corporal punishment separately to a more integrated systems approach. Knowledge about structures and interactions between components of the system can improve service delivery and help ensure the respect of children’s rights. The knowledge about child protection systems in different countries are still limited and this research aims to contribute to the knowledge about interventions to protect children in migration in Sweden.

1.4 Limitations

The research focuses on Sweden and does not deal with child protection concerns along the migration route or in the country of origin. The scope is limited to Skåne, a region in the south and the period researched is limited from 2015, which is when the inflow of asylum-seekers in Sweden had its peak, until March 2017. The research cannot, and does not intend to, draw causal relationships between the influx of migrants and child protection concerns. Rather the research of child protection concerns and systems is
conducted in the context of the refugee situation. Lastly, as stated in the introduction, the thesis is limited to asylum-seeking and returning children who arrived in Sweden with their primary caregiver given their absence in previous literature and reports. Unaccompanied children staying in kinship-care is another group that needs attention but lack of statistics, information and access to them make it extremely difficult to research their situation. Thus, it is an active decision not to address neither this group nor other unaccompanied minors in the research.

1.5 Key definitions

In accordance with the UN convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), children are defined as those below 18 years old (UN, 1989: art. 1).

Child maltreatment is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as “the abuse and neglect that occurs to children under 18 years of age. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power” (WHO, 2016).

In the Swedish context, the term physical abuse covers acts such as hitting, pinching, kicking or shaking a child, and all forms of corporal punishment. Mental or emotional abuse includes acts of persistent shaming, rejection, unreasonably severe punishment and forced isolation from social contacts or age-appropriate activities et cetera. Sexual abuse covers all forms of sexual acts forced on a child by another person. Neglect is to damage or endanger a child’s physical or mental health and development by failing to provide for, or secure for a child, their basic needs and an acceptable standard of care (SOU 2001:72). Violence is often used as an umbrella term for all abuses (Save the Children, 2007).

Save the Children defines child exploitation as “the use of children for someone else’s advantage, gratification or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful treatment of the child” (Save the Children, 2007). The main two types are sexual and economic exploitation (Save the Children, 2007).

Child protection is an overarching term and the definitions vary slightly between different actors. This thesis makes use of the definition provided by the Child Protection
Working Group (CPWG) in the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action. Child protection is “the prevention of and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children” (CPWG, 2013: 13). The goal of child protection is both to protect and prevent but also to promote the fulfilment of children’s rights to protection against the above-mentioned events as expressed in the CRC and other national and international legislation (Save the Children, 2007).

There is not one single definition of child protection systems but the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (from now on the Alliance), has compared definitions and conceptualised child protection systems as the following: “Child protection systems are collections of components – structures, functions, capacities – that are organised and connected to each other around a common goal, where the goal is to address child protection concerns” (The Alliance, 2016: 15). Capacity refers to the people, funding and infrastructure embedded within systems. Functions are what systems do and structures are the framework that forms agents’ interactions, relationships or describe features such as physical space. According to the Alliance, there is never one system but always systems nested within systems and consequently, child protection systems (The Alliance, 2016: 16).

An asylum-seeker is an individual seeking international protection whose claim has yet to be processed (UNHCR, n.d.). Sweden offers protection in line with the 1951 Refugee Convention on the Status of Refugees and the joint EU regulations about subsidiary protection. In exceptional cases people have been granted residence permits under “other protection”. This possibility is not available since 2016 (SMA, 2016a).

In the Swedish context, an unaccompanied child is a child who arrived in Sweden without parents or other primary caregiver. A separated child is someone who arrived without parents or caregivers but together with other adult relatives (Children’s Ombudsman, 2012). Both groups are often labelled “ensamkommande” in Swedish, thus this thesis uses unaccompanied children or minors as an overarching term.

Return: there are different words used for people returning to their country of origin or to a third safe country after their asylum application has been rejected. This thesis talks about return [återvändande] in general terms and does not involve in the discussion whether it is a voluntary return or forced deportation.

Reception centre [ankomstboende] is the housing offered to asylum-seekers upon arrival or the last days before voluntary deportation by the Swedish Migration Agency
(SMA). The housing provided by SMA to asylum-seekers while waiting for their decision is in this thesis referred to as asylum accommodation [anläggningsboende]. Asylum accommodations can either be run by SMA staff directly or through private actors. The other option is to arrange accommodation on your own (SMA, 2015a).
2 Background

This chapter aims to give a short background of the Swedish context in terms of legal framework, how reporting to the social services works, the procedure for seeking asylum in Sweden, crisis management, and lastly the child protection concerns that were identified in reports and media. As stated in the introduction, most of the reporting has been about unaccompanied minors. Thus, these concerns are brought up here because it provides an overview and these reports guided the decision to focus on children with families.

2.1 Legal framework and international standards

The right of children to be protected from harm is written down in multiple instruments such as international law, standards and national law. At international level, the CRC and its three optional protocols (OP-CRC-AC\(^2\), OP-CRC-SC\(^3\), OP-CRC-IC\(^4\)) are core documents. Sweden signed and ratified the CRC in 1990, but has not signed the third optional protocol to the CRC on a complaints mechanism for children’s rights violations (OHCHR, n.d.). The CRC has four guiding principles; article two about non-discrimination, article three about adherence to the best interest of the child, article six states the right to life, survival and development and lastly, article twelve about children’s right to be heard. These four underpin all the articles in the convention (Hammarberg, 2011: 10). There are many articles in the CRC that are aimed to protect children, so called


\(^3\) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

\(^4\) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.
protection rights (Save the Children, n.d). For example, article 19 that was quoted in chapter one which states that children should be protected from violence, injury, abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation; article twenty-two about giving protection to refugee and asylum-seeking children; and article twenty-four (3) about eliminating harmful practices (UN, 1989).

The CRC is not incorporated in Swedish law yet, but by an inquiry proposed to be so in January 2018 (SOU 2016:19: 51). However, as of 2017, national laws are adapted to correspond with the CRC (SOU 2016:19: 54). The core of the national framework for child protection is summarised in table 2.1. The table aims at providing an overview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Important §</th>
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| SFS 1949:381 Code on parents and children | § 6:1 - Children are entitled to care, security and good upbringing. No corporal punishment or other humiliating treatment.  
§ 6:2 – Caregiver is the main responsible to ensure 6:1.  
§ 6:2a - The best interest of the child in questions concerning custody, residence and contacts. |
| SFS 1982:316 Act prohibiting the circumcision of Women | This act prohibits circumcision of women. |
| SFS 1990:52 The Care for Young Persons Act (LVU) | § The act should complement the Social Services Act and regulates care for children and youth up to 20 years, if necessary according to 2§ or 3§, if care cannot be provided on a voluntary basis. The best interest of the child should be decisive.  
2§ Care in line with LVU shall be decided if it in case of physical or mental abuse, exploitation, negligence or some other condition in the home is a high risk that the young person’s health or development is being harmed.  
3§ Care shall also be decided if the youth puts his or her health and development at significant risk of harm.  
6§ The social welfare committee may decide to immediately take a youth into care under specific circumstances. |
| SFS 2001:453 Social Services Act (SSA), | § 1:2 – The best interest of the child  
§ 2:1 – Responsibility for everyone residing in the municipality.  
§ 5:1 – Social Service departments responsibility to support and protect children  
§ 5:11 – Ensure support and help to children subject for crime  
§ 11:1, - Responsibility to start an investigation after report.  
§ 11:1a - Responsibility to judge if a child needs immediate protection. Decision to investigate or not should be taken within 14 days after initial report.  
§11:10 – Child’s right to be heard  
§ 14:1, 1e – Duty to report concerns about children |

Table 2.1 Core child protection acts.
Because this thesis deals with children in migration, it is also useful to outline the specific legal framework regulating their status and right to services, see table 1.3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SFS 1994:137 Reception of asylum seekers and others act (LMA)</td>
<td>Regulates the right to economic allowances and housing for asylum-seekers and others. Changes were made in June 2016 but they do not apply to families with children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFS 2005:429 Act on Special Representatives for Unaccompanied Children</td>
<td>Establishes that children who arrive without a parent or caregiver should get a special representative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFS 2005:716 Aliens Act</td>
<td>Regulates immigration to Sweden. Parts are temporarily replaced by SFS 2016:752 from 20 July 2016 and where the two laws differ, the new law has precedence. § 1:10 – provision on the best interest of the child and that particular attention must be given to what is required with regard to the child’s development and health. § 1:11 – The child should be heard, unless it is inappropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFS 2010:800 Education Act</td>
<td>Children seeking asylum, returning or living without papers in Sweden have the right to education (§ 29:2) but they are not obliged to attend school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFS 2013:407 Act on health care to some foreigners who reside in Sweden without the necessary permits.</td>
<td>Children residing in Sweden without papers have the same right to health and dental care as other children according to this act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFS 2016:752 Act on temporary restrictions to the possibility of being granted a residence permit in Sweden</td>
<td>In place since 20 July 2016 and three years onward. Asylum-seekers can only receive temporary residence permit for 3 years (if granted refugee status) or 13 months (subsidiary protection). Family reunification is restricted to persons given refugee status.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 Important acts for children in migration (NBHW, 2016b; 2016c: 13).

During the asylum-process, families have the right to accommodation and economic support. The SMA is the authority responsible for providing it (SFS 1994:137). Children have the right to attend school and preschool and they are entitled to health and dental care on the same grounds as other children living in the country (SMA, 2016c). Health and dental care is the responsibility of respectively county council (SFS 2013:407). Each municipality has the responsibility to offer a child education and to ensure that a person residing in their area receives support from social services if needed (SFS 2010:800; SFS 2001:453). Until a child is deported, it has the same right to support and protection from the social services as any other child living in Sweden, apart from economic assistance which is regulated in the ‘Reception of asylum seekers and others Act’ (LMA). Moreover, a decision of deportation in accordance with the Aliens Act has precedence over a
decision of out-of-home care in line with the ‘Care for Young Persons Act’ (LVU). In practice this means that a child placed in out-of-home care to be protected from its parents may be deported together with his or her parents (Backlund & Malmsten, 2013).

In addition to the legal framework, it is relevant to know that there are standards developed for child protection in humanitarian responses. The thesis will not go into these in detail but the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action builds on international law and the Sphere Project. The Sphere handbook is a guide and reference book for humanitarian action worldwide. The minimum standards for child protection can be used in conjunction and as a complement to the Sphere handbook (CPWG, 2013: 17). “The standards set out a common agreement on what needs to be achieved in order for child protection in humanitarian settings to be of adequate quality” (CPWG, 2013: 21).

2.2 Reporting child maltreatment in Sweden

The caregiver/s have the main responsibility to ensure care, good upbringing and security for a child (SFS 1949:381, 6:1). The caregivers are usually the parents but it does not have to be. A guardian often has the responsibility to ensure that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children’s rights are fulfilled (NBHW, 2016a). The society should step in and provide support and protection if the caregiver is unable or unwilling to do so. The main responsibility to do so lies with the social service department in each municipality (NBHW, 2014). Family and friends are protecting factors for a child, as further discussed in chapter three, but these protection systems are often impaired among children in migration and other mechanisms are increasingly important. So, what is the process if there is suspicion or knowledge of child abuse, exploitation, neglect or violence against a child?

The first step is to report to the social services in the municipality where the child lives or resides. Authorities who work with children and youths e.g. police, schools, daycare and authorities within health- and social care as well as their staff have a duty to report. The duty to report further applies to private organisations working within the same sectors. Individuals and others such as CSOs are generally not obliged to report but encouraged to do so. If there are suspicions of crimes, the police should also be informed. When Social Services get a report, they need to make a security assessment the same day.
or latest the day after to see if the child needs immediate protection. It is followed by a preliminary assessment within two weeks to establish if a thorough investigation is needed. If yes, an investigation is started and can result in actions or no actions. The investigation follows a framework for assessment, planning and reviewing in child welfare, referred to as the BBIC framework [Barns behov i centrum], which puts the child in the centre. Common actions are to offer the child a contact person or family, outpatient programs or support to parents (NBHW, 2014). The process is illustrated in figure 2.1 below.

![Figure 2.1 Illustration of the process when Social Services receive a report (Based on NBHW, 2014).](image)

### 2.3 The asylum process in Sweden

The Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) is the authority responsible for the reception of people seeking asylum and the processing of their applications. SMA also deals with work permits, visas, returnees and questions about citizenship among other things (RIR 2017:4: 34). It is an executive authority within the framework of the Aliens Act, where parts of it are temporarily replaced by the ‘Act on temporary restricting the possibility of being granted a residence permit in Sweden’ in 20 July 2016, and the LMA Act which changed 1 June 2016 but these changes do not apply to families with children (Lundberg & Dahlquist, 2012; SMA, 2016b).

The first step in the asylum procedure is to register as an asylum-seeker at one of the Migration Agency’s application units. The second step is an application interview where the applicant describes who she or he is and give information about health, family, country of origin etc. The third step is a more thorough asylum investigation about the
individual’s protection needs (SMA, 2016c). When the investigation is done, SMA decides whether asylum or subsidiary protection is granted or not. If yes, the responsibility for that person is transferred from the SMA to the municipality where he or she resides. If rejected, the person is expected to return but he or she can appeal to the Migration Court (RIR 2017:4: 34).

Unaccompanied minors follow the same procedure as above, however, after initial registration the SMA contacts social services in the municipality where the child is located. The responsibility to ensure support and fulfilment of the child’s rights are then transferred to the municipality (SMA, 2015b).

2.4 Crisis management in Sweden

Sweden has been spared from major crisis but emergency preparedness at all levels is expected and national legislation exists e.g. Act 2006:544, Statue 2006:942; 2015:1052; 2015:1053 (Krisinformation, 2017). The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) has listed five goals to be the starting-point and priority if a crisis occurs: national sovereignty, environment and economical values, democracy, rule of law and human rights, the society’s functionality and lastly human life and health (MSB, 2016). The latter applies to all people in Sweden and Swedish citizens living abroad. Consequently, also people seeking asylum or transit through the country (RIR 2017:4).

Crisis management in Sweden builds on three main principles: responsibility, equity and proximity. The essence of the principles is that the agency responsible for an organisation in non-crisis remains responsible, although with an obligation to collaborate with others if necessary. The response should to the largest extent possible build on existing structures and the actor geographically closest to the events should work preventively and responsively (The RIR 2017:4: 28). Sweden is divided into three levels of government. The 290 municipalities are the local level and closest to the inhabitants and they have a high degree of self-governance (Government Offices of Sweden, 2015).

The last time Sweden experienced a rapid influx of refugees was in 1992 followed the breakdown of the former Yugoslavia. 84,000 people applied for asylum and at its peak during the summer it was about 5,000 applications per week. Many arrived to Ystad and Trelleborg (two cities in the south) by ferries from Poland (RIR 2017:4: 96). The
reception systems were already strained due to a few years of high numbers of arrivals, long waiting times and constraints to deport people with rejected asylum claims. The Swedish NAO (RIR 2017:4: 99) argue that the challenges met in 2015 have many similarities with those observed in the wave of migrants in 1992, despite technological development and a different legal context. It was hard to provide housing, register asylum applications and deal with them in a timely manner as well as to ensure basic protection to everyone. However, no official evaluation exists on how the authorities managed in 1992 which limits learning and comparisons with the situation in 2015 (RIR 2017:4: 115).

2.5 Child protection concerns in Sweden

Evaluations of the actions of main authorities in Sweden, conducted by the Public Inquiry Office and the Swedish NAO, argue that Sweden was not sufficiently prepared for the increased influx of migrants that took place in 2015 (SOU 2017:12; RIR 2017:4). There are different perspectives on how the refugee situation was dealt with and the impact of increased number of asylum-seekers varied between municipalities, as well as between authorities (SOU 2017:12; RIR 2017:4). This section gives an overview of child protections concerns that were brought up in light of the migration influx in documents from state agencies, CSOs and media.

2.5.1 Registration and disappearances

With increasing numbers of people arriving at the same time the SMA did not have the capacity to register everyone at their immediate arrival (RIR 2017:4). During a few weeks, several thousands of people were in Sweden unregistered (SOU 2017:12). If a child is unregistered, no authority knows where he or she is and cannot offer any protection or support. Many children, especially unaccompanied minors, disappeared both before and after they applied for asylum. This poses a risk for children who might fall into trafficking or smuggling and there are cases of unaccompanied children who left before registration together with strangers. Children may also have disappeared as a consequence of being subject to crimes (SOU 2017:12; RIR 2017:4). The police were
aware of this risk and unaccompanied minors were therefore a priority upon arrival. In 2015, the County Administrative Board in Stockholm initiated a project to increase efficiency and cooperation in cases where an unaccompanied child goes missing and in 2016 they mapped the situation after the government assigned them the task (Skr. 2015/16:192; SOU 2017:12). To speed up the registration process, the SMA opened more centres and simplified the process. But this also meant that children’s own asylum claims were often overlooked if they arrived together with their parents (SOU 2017:12).

Several municipalities had a hard time handling reports of child maltreatment correctly and within the timeframe prescribed by law. This was mainly due to lack of resources. However, for some of them this was the case even before the refugee situation (NBHW, 2016b).

2.5.2 Accommodation upon arrival

The great number of unaccompanied minors made it also difficult for municipalities to find housing for all of them and the normal routines and guidelines were sometimes side-stepped. Family homes were not always investigated and follow-ups were hard to keep up with (NBHW, 2016b; SOU 2017:12).

It was hard for the SMA to find shelter for all asylum-seekers but they managed to find shelter for everyone all nights except one (RIR 2017:4). New accommodations started on short notice and school gyms, tents and exhibition halls were used as temporary shelters. Few of these were child-friendly and many people stayed longer than expected in these temporary housings. An exhibition hall in Malmö that was used as an emergency shelter got a lot of attention and criticism for its low hygiene standards and perceived insecurity. Children with caregivers slept on the floor among hundreds of unknown people. Protection of health and life was threatened despite efforts from SMA and CSOs to relieve the most pressing needs (Save the Children Sweden, 2015; SOU 2017:12; RIR 2017:4). Another risk was that the urgent need of more staff limited the possibility to investigate applicant’s appropriateness with for example extracts from their criminal records (Children’s Ombudsman, 2017b).

Accommodations in general were emphasised as an unsafe place for a lot of people. Unaccompanied girls feel unsafe in housings with mostly boys. Families feel unsafe when there is violence, a lot of lonely asylum-seeking men in the same house or if they need to
share room with other families. During the autumn 2015, underage girls where placed together with their older husbands even though placements in cases of child marriages, according to Swedish law, should be assessed individually (Children’s Ombudsman, 2017b; SOU 2017:12). Moreover, a lot of children, both with caregivers and unaccompanied, have moved several times during their stay in Sweden. This creates stress and anxiety when they repeatedly are moved from a place where they settled with friends and maybe school (SOU 2017:12). Several municipalities struggled to give asylum-seeking children access to school within the recommended one month (RIR 2017:4; MSB, 2016). Currently, the SMA is closing down 183 asylum accommodations and a lot of children will have to move and lose the safe-zone they have established (Lundblad, 2017).

2.5.3 Access to support services

Many girls and boys might have been sexually abused during the flight and may need support or care (Children’s Ombudsman, 2017a). The Children’s Ombudsman (2017a: 9) emphasises that there are no good routines to deal with this within the health care system. Moreover, not all children have gone through a health examination since they came to Sweden and there are cases where asylum-seekers have been neglected care due to a knowledge gap or lack of information among staff. Poor mental health was reported as the biggest health problem in a report and it seems to worsen during the lengthy asylum-processes, at least among unaccompanied children. In response to these health gaps, some county councils have or have had mobile teams of health care staff. The same report emphasises that several children exhibit self-destructive behaviour, but do not feel that they get the support they need (Children’s Ombudsman, 2017a). The NBHW (2016c) states that asylum-seeking children’s health needs are not always assessed on equal terms with other children, which is in not in line with their right to health care.

The parents are the ones who are primarily responsible, in legal times, for nurturing their children. But they do not always have the capacity or tools to do so. Parents with poor mental health are a risk for young children since they may not be able to see to their children’s needs. Lack of information about how to support children in stress, and information regarding where to turn if any problem arises is a concern (Children’s Ombudsman, 2017a).
The review further emphasised that staff within health care, schools and housing are not always properly trained to recognise risks and signs of child maltreatment, which the UN committee on the rights of the child highlighted even before the refugee situation (NBHW, 2016c; UN committee on the rights of the child, 2015).
3 Literature review

This chapter constitutes the academic overview of three closely related topics; risk and protecting factors to child maltreatment, child protection and child protection systems. The purpose is to set the context of the study in the existing body of relevant knowledge. The majority of the articles have been achieved by purposive sampling in databases such as PubMed, Scopus and the general search engine online from Lund and Uppsala university which combines results from several of the most popular databases. Additionally, some articles are snowball sampled. Searches were made in English although, Swedish was used to search for national research.

3.1 Child maltreatment

This sub-chapter presents the main risk and protective factors that have been identified in previous research.

3.1.1 Risk factors

Child maltreatment occurs in all socio-economic contexts and it is well-known that certain factors increase the risk for children to be maltreated while other factors are protective. The risk factors can affect children’s mental health, and physical, emotional and social development (Jones et al, 2014). Factors identified in research can be clustered around the child, the parents/family/guardian, and the living environment (WHO, 2016). However, the presence of these factors does not mean that a child is maltreated.

5 Key words were ‘child protection’ ‘child protection systems’ ‘child maltreatment’ ‘child abuse’ with supplements such as ‘in emergencies’ ‘Sweden’ ‘humanitarian’ ‘crisis’ ‘migrants’ in various combination.
Research on risk factors identified among children are diverse. O’Donnell et al. (2008) argue that chronic health problems, disabilities, difficult temperament and externalising behaviours, are factors that make children more vulnerable to abuse and neglect. Nonetheless, LeBrun et al. (2015) reviewed 24 articles and none of them found evidence for disabilities or behavioural problems as important risk factors.

There are several risk factors linked to parents and family functioning. Scholars argue that children are at risk if the parents, or one of the parents, have psychiatric problems or abuse drugs or alcohol (Köhler et al. 2016; O’Donnell et al. 2008). Moreover, domestic violence, even if the child is not the target of it, is another risk factor emphasized by several authors (e.g. O’Donnell et al, 2008; Köhler et al. 2016; LeBrun et al. 2015). Other risk factors brought up by researchers are residential instability or mobility (Köhler et al. 2016; O’Donnell et al, 2008), separation from family (Jones et al. 2014; Ager et al. 2011; Macdonald, 2009) and shocks due to forced migration (Richards, 2016; Losoncz, 2016). Following the latter, LeBrun et al (2015) claim that a child or a family’s immigration status is a risk factor if not granted permanent residency, and especially undocumented migrants, due to the uncertainty, stress and living conditions that comes with their status. Losoncz (2016) further emphasises the cultural differences, such as language barriers and social norms, and the additional support that might be needed for parents, with asylum claims or a refugee status, due to the exposure to multiple stressors.

The environment where children live and grow up cannot be completely separated from the risk factors discussed above, but a few risk factors affect children in a community rather than single households: poverty, culture, disasters and displacement (e.g. O’Donnell et al, 2008; Losoncz, 2016; Ager et al. 2011). Disasters, regardless of the type, can impose additional child protection risks. Both formal and informal protective structures and networks in place break more easily in emergencies, creating increased vulnerability and possibly causing displacement and family separation (Macdonald, 2009; Ager et al, 2011). Culture, on the other hand, is more about social norms and traditions that from a child protection perspective are regarded as harmful. For example, early marriages, female genital mutilation and corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure (Richards, 2016; Losoncz, 2016).

Most factors apply to children in general, with contextual adaptation, but there are additional risk factors for children who are or have been on the move or have immigrant parents as mentioned above (e.g. LeBrun et al, 2015; Jones et al, 2014). LeBrun et al.
(2015) researched if immigrant and refugee children are at higher risk for maltreatment in Australia and concluded that they are not at higher risk per se, but they have specific characteristics and needs that child protection systems should be aware of. Other scholars have argued that children to immigrants and refugees more often experience emotional and physical abuse than children to “native-born” parents (Richard, 2016). On the other hand, these children are less likely to experience neglect and sexual abuse (Richard, 2016; Jones et al, 2014).

3.1.2 Protective factors

Protecting factors are things and processes that prevent children from harm and promote resilience. Most of the factors mentioned above can be mirrored and presented as protective e.g. positive social norms, living in a safe family environment, better economy and having a social network and community social support (e.g. LeBrun et al 2015; Jones et al, 2015). However, research emphasises two factors that are not yet mentioned. Firstly, school for children and education of parents. It is well-known that access to school provides protection for children (Ager et al. 2009; Landgren, 2005), and in many countries, Sweden included, the staff is obliged to report child protection issues (Cocozza, 2011; Steen & Duran, 2014). LeBrun et al (2015) further claim that child maltreatment among migrant families in Australia is less common in families were the parents have a higher level of education. Secondly, Richards (2016) argue that a protecting factor among immigrants can be ‘a sense of responsibility’. However, this claim is not supported by any of the other reviewed articles.

3.2 Child protection in emergencies

The existing academic research on child protection is scarce, although, Rubenstein and Stark (2017) have noted a spike during the past five years on research on violence against children in humanitarian settings. Much is written about the risks that children might face but less deals with the measures taken to prevent, protect and respond to child protection
issues. Humanitarian and development agencies, on the other hand, have been on the forefront and have produced reports and evaluations on the topic.

Academic research has dealt with features of child protection such as child friendly spaces and psychosocial support (e.g. Wessells & Kostelny, 2013), comparative studies on child protection assessments in emergencies (e.g. Ager et al, 2011) and challenges to child protection arising in emergencies (Jones et al, 2014; Canavera et al, 2016; Macdonald, 2009). Common challenges to effective child protection in emergencies appear to be timeliness of assessments and actions, coordination, lack of preparation and inadequate funding and resources in terms of staff and knowledge (Ager et al, 2011; Jones et al, 2014; Canavera et al, 2016). Scholars also note the difficulty to identify, report and prevent violence against children in emergencies when informal and formal networks are in imbalance (Rubenstein & Stark, 2017). The research reviewed on child protection in emergencies were all situated in less-developed countries and the challenges in a European context is unknown. Nevertheless, as Macdonald emphasises “the child ought to be treated and seen as a child first and a refugee or migrant second” (Macdonald, 2009: 2) in a discussion about the universality of children’s right to protection from violence. Finally, it is important to recognise the fact that both boys and girls are affected by violence but often in different ways (Rubenstein & Stark, 2017).

International child protection has lately experienced a paradigm shift: from addressing child protection concerns thematically to a promotion of system strengthening with focus on the complexity and cross-cutting issues that increase children’s vulnerability to violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation (Canavera et al, 2016). Child protection systems are discussed in next sub-section.

### 3.3 Child protection systems

Child protection systems are very diverse. Most current research examines different countries’ national child protection systems, either formal, informal or both, as single case studies (e.g. Munro, 2010; Jones et al. 2014; Canavera et al, 2016) or as comparative multiple case studies (e.g. Gilbert et al, 2011; Kreuger et al, 2014). Internationally, it is problematic to define child protection systems and Kreuger et al (2014) point out a discrepancy between academia’s narrow understanding of child protection systems as
dealing with solely child welfare and maltreatment, and development agencies broader perspective including sectors of social welfare, health, security, education and justice. Moreover, the academic research on child protection systems is mainly Anglo-American and from continental Europe (e.g. Steen & Duran, 2014; Gilbert et al, 2011), which impose a westernized picture of how formal and informal child protection systems ought to work. Nonetheless, a few scholars have addressed the systems with emphasize on local culture and informal systems in other parts of the world. For example, Jones et al. (2014), Canavera et al. (2016) and Kreuger et al. (2014) all situated their research in an African context.

The research conducted in developed countries is mostly about the formal child protection systems in place with emphasis on national social service efforts. Commonly identified components are national legislation, community support services such as social services, health care and school and the family. Munro (2010) emphasises the plurality of actors involved in the British child protection systems and hence, the importance to apply a more holistic systems approach to effectively deal with child protection concerns. Two main orientations were historically identified by Gilbert et al. (2011): the child saving approach (called child protection by Gilbert et al.) and a family service orientation. Sweden was classified with a family service orientation with mandatory reporting mechanisms. The difference is that the child protection approach focuses primarily on individuals’ rights and protection, and the Swedish approach is more focused on family relationships. In Sweden, risks are rather seen as the result of dysfunctional relationships than harmful parental behaviour (Gilbert et al, 2011; Leviner, 2014).

Sweden has been portrayed as a paradise for children and the success of the country as a welfare state is well-researched while less research is conducted about children in the margins; an increasingly important issue due to the development of more restrictive immigration policies and surveillance norms (Cocozza, 2011: 90). In Sweden, child protection is generally included in family welfare services at the municipal level and regulated by laws. Some professionals (e.g. health care workers, social workers, school staff and the police) are obliged to report in case they are informed of or suspect child maltreatment in any form. Most referrals are done by the police, school and social services. It is possible but unusual for citizens to report (Cocozza 2011: 96). Similar patterns are observed in both UK and USA. A legislative mandate to report are perceived as the primary reason for reporting (Steen & Duran, 2014). However, in Sweden health
care staff have a mandate to report but are less likely to do so compared to other groups with the same obligation. This is presumably due to a knowledge gap (Köhler et al., 2016). The social services are gatekeepers and decide what reports that requires an initial assessment, investigation and lastly intervention. Few cases go through all steps, a common feature in both the Swedish and the British system of referrals (Cocozza, 2011: 96; Munro, 2010). The social services in Sweden needs to balance the right to protection with the right to private and family life which impose a legal dilemma research by Leviner (2014).

Several scholars highlight challenges to the functioning of child protection systems: increased numbers of children in need of child protection services, increase of formal procedures, media as portraying a false reality, financial constraints, knowledge gaps and crises (O’Donnell et al., 2008; Kreuger et al. 2014; Gilbert et al. 2011: 245; Munro, 2010). A crisis, in any form, may extensively affect child protection systems (Gilbert et al. 2011: 251). According to O’Donnell et al (2008), media in Australia mainly portray child protection issues as physical and sexual abuse even though neglect and mental abuse is a bigger problem. However, the authors agree on the need for a systems approach as used in education and health sectors already but little research has been conducted on the functioning and performance of these systems. Moreover, the users’ perception, primarily the children’s, are missing in the research about child protection systems.
4 The protective environment framework

This research has its starting-point in children’s rights as formulated in the CRC. Children are right bearers and all children have the same right to protection, provision and participation. This starting-point guided the decision of the theoretical framework applied in this thesis; the protective environment framework (PEF). It was chosen because it provides a way to conceptualize the features that should be in place in order for children to live in a protective environment.

The PEF is a conceptual framework used to identify key elements to child protection and factors that strengthen or undermine available protection. It was first proposed by Karin Landgren in 2005, who at the time was UNICEF’s chief of Child Protection (Landgren, 2005). The PEF outlines eight features, strongly interlinked, that determine children’s protection from violence, exploitation and abuse (Landgren, 2005). Together they form a strong protective shield around children. The shield does not eliminate vulnerabilities or risks but helps children to cope with and mitigate threats (Boothby & Ager, 2010: 105). The eight elements are: legislation and enforcement; government commitment and capacity; culture and customs; open discussion; children’s life skills, knowledge, and participation; capacity of families and communities; essential services; as well as monitoring, reporting and oversight. These elements have many similarities to the risk and protective factors emphasised in 3.1, but below follows a short description of each element as presented by the PEF.
Government commitment and capacity to respect, protect and fulfil child protection is essential for a protective environment. This includes ratification of international conventions, child friendly policies, budgetary provisions for child protection and public declarations of commitment (Landgren, 2005).

Legislation and enforcement deals with the incorporation of relevant international standards, legal framework for child protection and legal procedures to deal with violations and prosecution. The authorities’ capacity and commitment is often reflected in this element (Landgren, 2005).

Protective culture, customs, attitudes, traditions, behaviour and practices form the third feature of the PEF. A protective environment would be where children face no discrimination, no corporal punishment, no female genital mutilation, no harmful gender norms nor early marriage. The list can be made long but shortly explained, no harmful practices and an environment that treats children with respect and dignity (Landgren, 2005). Emergencies may challenge traditional culture and customs, even values regarding childhood, but they may also exacerbate for example early marriages, child labour and domestic violence (Boothby & Ager, 2010: 112).

Open discussion about protection issues at all levels fosters a protective environment. Media, civil society, parents, children and all other members of society should be able to speak up about child protection concerns affecting them or other children and be safe.
while doing so (Boothby & Ager, 2010:112-3). The taboos for talking about abuse, neglect and violence should be addressed since information is key and stigmatization can hamper protection efforts. Children have the right to receive information about these topics and should be offered ‘safe-spaces’ to discuss and seek help (Landgren, 2005).

Children’s life skills, knowledge and participation includes children’s right to information, participation and right to be heard (Landgren, 2005). Access to education provides protection if the school is physically safe and emotionally safe for the child. This can be assessed by three core factors which are adequate teacher-student ratios, no corporal punishment, humiliation or bullying and safeguards in place against sexual abuse and exploitation. Child-friendly spaces, children’s clubs or other structured activities have the potential to offer similar protective environment as schools (Boothby & Ager, 2010: 114-5).

The capacity of community and family to identify and respond to child protection concerns is crucial in PEF. It includes caregivers’ childrearing practices, support for child-care and community support (Landgren, 2005) A crisis can hamper a family’s capacity to provide material and emotional support for their children and other people may need to step in (Boothby & Ager, 2010: 116).

The essential services involve rehabilitation, basic education and health care to all children (Landgren, 2005). Boothby and Ager (2010) on the other hand argue that this feature is only the direct services to children where prevention activities have failed i.e. recovery and reintegration services.

The last protective element is monitoring, reporting and oversight which would include systematic collection and distribution of data of child protection concerns as well as transparency (Landgren, 2005).

The PEF can be used to discuss child protection in any country even though, both Landgren (2005) and Boothby and Ager (2010) discuss it from a “less developed” context. Moreover, Ager et al. (2009: 566) used the framework to analyse children’s protection needs in Darfur, Sudan, and found the framework very useful for situational analysis of child protection issues in humanitarian settings. Sweden provides a very different context compared to for example Darfur as researched by Ager et al. (2009). However, the elements of PEF are relevant in the Swedish context as well. The framework offers a holistic approach to child protection, emphasising the need for both preventive and responsive actions to ensure children’s protection and systematically address child
protection concerns (Boothby & Ager, 2010: 106). The framework encourages an analysis of multiple aspects: legal, socio-cultural, physiological and political. Ager et al. (2009: 567) considered this approach highly valuable in Darfur because it identified possible actions among various actors such as government and NGOs, both in the short-term and for long-term improvement. But there is a so called “good practice paradox” which means that if an agency wants to promote systemic solutions to child protection needs at the same time as short-term protection services, they will fail doubly. However, this may be resolved through a good understanding of other agencies working with similar issues, a shared understanding of needs and goals as well as coordination of complementary actions (Boothby & Ager, 2010: 117).

Nevertheless, a few drawbacks of the framework exist. One of them is that the framework assumes that the government is responsible for child protection (Ager et al. 2009: 567). Ager et al. (2009) argued based on their research in Darfur that mobilising humanitarian actors for protection of children may be a priority in some settings where the government is malfunctioning. Another critique of the framework is that it does not assist in prioritisation (Ager et al. 2009: 567). The eight components are not hierarchical in any way and all eight are needed to sufficiently protect children (Landgren, 2005).
5 Methods and material

This chapter provides an overview of the design of the study, the methods to collect data, as well as the thematic analysis undertaken to analyse the material. Lastly, it addresses ethical considerations.

5.1 Research design

This thesis is a qualitative study focusing on child protection systems and concerns in Sweden. A qualitative approach was chosen because it offers a possibility to capture individual’s perceptions and experiences of the child protection systems and their functioning. The basis for choosing Sweden as the country for this study was twofold. Firstly, the large number of asylum-seekers and especially children who arrived in 2015 and secondly, an internship at Save the Children Sweden in Malmö which emphasised the need for more research in this field and facilitated contacts to key actors.

5.1.1 Study setting

Two municipalities in Skåne, Malmö and Ängelholm, were selected as cases after the initial review of previous research and available written material on a national level. Sweden has a high level of municipal self-governance. Thus, in order to understand the existing child protection systems closest to children, it was deemed necessary to select a few municipalities and from each municipality interview different groups to capture multiple perspectives. The selection was based on 1) type of accommodation for asylum-seekers i.e. reception centres or asylum accommodation, 2) housing being up and running for at least a year and not currently closing, 3) housings with families, 4) distance, because it had to be feasible to travel to conduct interviews. Malmö and Ängelholm are two municipalities of different size, location and experiences of the refugee situation.
Malmö is Sweden’s third largest city with about 330,000 inhabitants and is in the very south of Skåne (Nationalencyclopedin, 2017). In 2015, the city was a hub for migrants and the center of attention. It has reception centres and a lot of families live in accommodations that they have arranged on their own, see table 5.1. Ängelholm, on the other hand, is a small town in the north-west of Skåne with about 41,000 inhabitants (Ängelholms kommun, n.d.). Compared to Malmö, the municipality has a lot of children in asylum accommodations but very few in the other categories. Other in table 5.1 refers mostly to housing provided to unaccompanied minors.

<table>
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<td>41</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1 Number of children in the asylum system according to age and type of housing as of 2017-01-01 (SMA, 2017b).

Due to initial struggles to access interviewees, one actor from a surrounding municipality has participated and additionally, unpublished documents from Save the Children Sweden are included as complements to the interviews. Consequently, parts of the material are from outside these municipalities although still within the region of Skåne.

## 5.2 Material and data collection

This sub-chapter sets out the way interviewees were selected, the interview process, as well as the selection of documents that were provided by Save the Children Sweden.

### 5.2.1 Sampling and recruitment of interviewees

The interviews were conducted with actors assumed by the researcher to be part of children’s protection systems. Three main groups were identified: caregivers, personnel
at accommodations for asylum-seeking or returning families and the local Social Services. The selection was based on the criterion of closeness to the children because children’s direct participation was restricted (see ethical considerations 5.4). Additional actors that appeared to be important, such as different civil society organisations (CSOs) including faith based organisations and an open pre-school, were contacted and asked to participate along the way. This is a non-probability form of sampling and what Bryman (2012) calls purposive sampling.

Initial contact with social services and personnel at the accommodations was established through phone or e-mail and followed by a letter of information in Swedish (an English version is found in appendix I). In total, the invitation to participate was sent to six social services offices, two reception centres, three asylum accommodations whereof one private and two run by the SMA, and about a dozen of CSOs in both municipalities. A few of the interviewees were contacted by the help of other respondents, i.e. by snowball sampling. One reception centre declined due to time constraints but stressed the sensitive nature of the residents and emphasised that anxiety and aggressive actions are part of their everyday life. Other actors promised to get back but did not despite multiple reminders. One CSO declined the invitation to an interview because they felt that they did not have enough knowledge about the children’s safety nets due their sporadic contact with the target group, despite their weekly activities for children in one accommodation. Likewise, two social services offices declined due to time constraints or little contact with asylum-seeking children with families.

Access to parents was difficult. As a researcher, I lacked access to forums to meet parents within the target group and therefore, I asked for permission at SMA’s housing to contact parents living there. All but one rejected. However, that one was truly helpful and linked me to a few parents who knew English. Consequently, the sample within this target group is unfortunately limited to one interview with a couple.

5.2.2 Interviews

The main material was collected through fourteen interviews with stakeholders in child protection systems. The interviews were carried out during March and early April 2017. The length of the interviews varied between 20 and 60 minutes with an average of 33 minutes. Interviews are widely-used in qualitative research because it is flexible, yet time-
consuming (Bryman, 2012: 469). This thesis used semi-structured interviews and the reason was to make sure that specific topics were covered while still allowing for flexibility and additional follow up questions, which proved to be very important. For this purpose, two interview guides with mainly open-ended questions were written (see appendix II and III). The first guide was for key actors and covered five themes: identified child protection concerns, their role as safety net, capacity and knowledge, their view on other actors within the protection systems, and cooperation. The second interview guide was written for parents and with focus group discussions in mind and it covered three themes: child protection concerns, how they and their children deal with worries, and support from society. However, no focus group discussions with parents took place and in the interview the questions were adapted.

Eleven interviews were individual interviews, two were conducted in pairs (parents and accommodation staff), and one interview was with five people from Social Services. A total of twenty persons were interviewed. Appendix IV summarises the interviewees but to avoid problems with confidentiality, no locations are presented. The rationale for conducting group interviews was to capture multiple views within a limited time. The respondents themselves asked to conduct the interview in pairs or in group and thus, they could help each other out to answer the questions. In one interview with two people, one of them partially helped to translate for the other. Less focus was given to the interactions between the respondents, thus according to Bryman (2012: 501), it was rather a group interview than a focus group discussion.

All interviews took place at locations picked by the respondents. Mostly at their workplaces but occasionally at public places or at their homes. The respondents were asked to sign a consent form and all agreed to be recorded.

5.2.3 Documents

The review of official documents and reports summarised in 2.5 highlighted shortcomings in accommodations as a concern. As an intern at Save the Children Sweden, I got permission to read and analyse documentation from visits to different accommodations within Skåne as part of this thesis. The material was a total of thirteen documents, one to three pages each, about general concerns brought up by staff in 2016 and January 2017. Due to confidentiality, the locations were not revealed. The inclusion criterion was
documents regarding accommodation for families. Exclusion criterion was unaccompanied minors and adults without children. The documents are in the following text referred to as unpublished documents. The rationale to include this material was because it gave an extract from reality, a detailed overview of what shortcomings the staff observed and how Save the Children in Malmö dealt with these child protection concerns. Moreover, it was used to crosscheck information given in interviews.

5.3 Thematic analysis

A thematic analysis, as indicated by Braun & Clarke (2006) was used to analyse the data. Thematic analysis is a common approach to qualitative data analysis, although there is not a set way to do it (Bryman, 2012: 578). It is a very useful method to identify, analyse and report themes within data since it is flexible and not tied to a theoretical position. The process of thematic analysis contains six phases and the first is to get familiar with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was done through transcribing the recorded interviews word by word, including pauses and non-verbal utterances. The about 120 pages of transcripts were read and checked against the recordings to make sure they were correct. Thereafter, a short memo of each interview was written to summarise important points and initial analytical thoughts.

The second step was to generate initial codes and a ‘data-driven’ approach was applied, i.e. inductive coding. Extracts from the transcripts were manually given a code, an index phrase, as close to the data extract as possible. The process was time-consuming and produced large amounts of codes which were gathered in an excel file. An extract is provided in appendix V. Examples of codes were: ‘children use bad words’, ‘no place to play’, and ‘reported to Social Services’.

In phase three the lists of codes were checked for similarities, links and organised in mind-maps to find broader themes and sub-themes. Followed by a phase four in which the themes were reviewed and summarised in a thematic map, see figure 5.1. Sub-themes are not included in the thematic map to increase readability. Those codes that did not fit were gathered in an ‘miscellaneous’ category. Lastly, the themes were defined and the final chapters were written. All except one interview were conducted in Swedish, thus the
quotes from interviews are in the thesis translated by the researcher. The original quotes are presented as footnotes.

Child maltreatment can be a sensitive issue to discuss. It was a conscious decision not to interview children even though it was highly desirable. The benefit of interviewing children did not outweigh the potential emotional harm that it could cause children. I did not feel that I had the professional experience to give the children support if they would need it and there was no budget to bring in others to help.

The interviewees got a letter of information and signed a consent form agreeing to participate. They were informed that their names and any information that could identify them would not be disclosed in the thesis. The information was also presented verbally before the interviews started. Consequently, names of people, accommodations and working places are not presented in the thesis. It does not add anything to spell out this information and it may put the participants in a vulnerable position for sharing their thoughts and experiences.

Figure 5.1 Thematic map of main themes

5.4 Ethical considerations
6 Findings

This chapter presents the research findings. Six different themes and several sub-themes were identified. Each of the themes are presented and exemplified with a few data extracts. The findings cover a wide variety of factors, some more directly linked to child protection than others.

6.1 Many actors in children’s lives

The first theme is the fact that multiple actors are in contact with asylum-seeking children and to some extent with returning children. All actors have the possibility to be a safety net for children and react to protect children from harm. The interviews emphasised the need for collaboration among the various actors to ensure children's protection and safety. However, the findings suggest that only a few actors have regular contact with these children and for those that do, child protection is often not their primary focus.

6.1.1 Actors and cooperation

Figure 6.1 below illustrates the actors brought up during multiple interviews as part of children’s protection systems or referred to as actors within the children’s safety nets. But as one participant said that the systems include “everyone who comes near the children really...”6. The figure is based on children staying in reception centres and asylum accommodations, but not apartments. Children living with their families in own arranged housing do not have the same contact with CSOs. The variations between Malmö and Ängelholm were small. The number and type of CSOs mentioned during the interviews

6 "Alla som kommer i närheten av barnen egentligen..."
differed between the two municipalities. In Ängelholm, a lot of small local CSOs visits the asylum accommodation. In Malmö, it varied between reception centres but in general more CSOs are present in the city. Moreover, open pre-schools and networking platforms for actors working with migrants were mentioned during a few interviews in Malmö but not in Ängelholm.

The parents are naturally seen as one of the most important actors. The personnel at accommodations were careful to point out that the parents have the main responsibility. Many interviewees said that parents often manage a lot themselves, however cultural differences such as appropriate bedtime for children has led to disagreements between staff and parents. Interviewees had experiences of older siblings taking care of younger and residents helping each other:

“The positive aspect there at X [reception centre] is like that there are, become natural self-help groups. Parents help each other to look after the children, finding mates, and so in the short time they are there. It's something positive”.

Figure 6.1 Overview of actors being part of children's protection systems

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Note: Det positiva där på X [namn på boende] är väl att det finns, blir naturliga självhjälpgrupper. Att föräldrarna liksom hjälper varandra att passa barnen, att hitta kompisar och så under den korta tiden de är där. Det är ju någonting som är positivt.”.  

41
All people interviewed thought cooperation between different actors were important to protect children but their experiences of it stretched from very good to non-existent. In general, the social workers and personnel at accommodation centres considered the cooperation among the two groups to be good. The interviewees from CSO were a bit more diverse in their answers arguing that it is sometimes hard to get in contact with people and that cooperation is very much based on individuals’ wills:

“It is a little bit up to me, the person who works, to create routines and collaboration and structures, but I think it is welcomed as we do so”.

The lack of cooperation was also brought up by a few as a risk to either work double or to end up in a situation where everyone thinks someone else is taking care of the problem. Many participants discussed the issue of responsibility for these families, feeling that no one really had it, and asking for the SMA to take on greater responsibility:

“The Swedish Migration Agency should have a greater responsibility, but they are still a key actor”.

6.1.2 School as prime protection

A majority of the interviewees mentioned school, pre-schools and open pre-school as very important in children’s protection systems because the staff spend much time with children and are used to recognising deviations. Several participants said that school was the first thing parents asked about and that they have experienced a very positive change in children’s wellbeing after they started school. In Ängelholm, where all children attend school, one participant said the following:

_____________________________

8 “Det är lite grand upp till mig, eller den personen som jobbar, att skapa rutiner och samarbeten och strukturer men jag tycker det är välkommen när vi gör det”.

9 “Migrationsverket borde ha ett större ansvar men de är en viktig aktör”.

42
“As soon as they started school, they were children, did homework and studying, got computers, started painting, started singing songs and the kids got to be kids so you noticed a very big difference in a short time there when they started school”.10

Parents had the same experience:

“They are very happy when they go to their school”.

Everyone was aware of children’s right to school but it was evident that not all children have had access to school or pre-schools. An actor in Malmö said the following about asylum-seeking children in general:

“...the problem is also that there are very, very, very many children outside of this system”.11

The interviews and an unpublished document reveal details of children not having access to preschools and school for months, although most cases are from last year, 2016, and several interviewees perceived the situation as better now. At least for asylum-seeking children.

6.1.3 Limited contact

A trend in the interviews with personnel from social services was that they all had little experience of contact with asylum-seeking and/or returning children with families regardless of where and how the families stay. They are dependent on other actors reporting concerns and before that they argued that they have nothing to do with these children. Several compared it to unaccompanied minors:

10 "Så fort de började i skolan så blev de barn, fick läxor och plugga, datorer, började måla, började sjunga låtar och barn fick vara barn så man märkte väldigt stor skillnad på kort tid där när de började i skolan”.

11 ”…problemet är också det att det är väldigt väldigt väldigt många barn som ligger utanför det här systemet”.

43
“Thus, if you'd like to compare, you have more eye on the unaccompanied children because there are the investigations, there are the placements, there are forced follow-up care, and so”.

A few social workers and CSOs argued that they do not reach the children with families at all:

“They are totally omitted”.

The personnel at accommodations have some contact with the children but they rely a lot on parents taking their responsibility and the CSOs who have activities for children. On the other hand, some people running activities argued in interviews that they are there a few hours every week and have limited time to see the children’s needs. Moreover, they argued that the power of CSOs as safety net is depending on their knowledge of child protection.

“No, I think it is, no it is the CSOs if there are wise people there. If there are wise people educated in the CSOs but it cannot be counted on”.

6.2 Accommodations have different standards

All interviews and a majority of the unpublished documents referred to factors in the families’ housing environment that directly or indirectly influenced children’s safety and their perceived safety in both positive and negative ways. There was an extreme demand for shelter and a many new accommodations opened as a result of the inflow of asylum-seekers:

12 ”Alltså om man skulle liksom jämföra, så har man mer koll på dem ensamkommande barnen för där finns ju utredningar, där finns ju placeringar, där är ju tvång på uppföljning av vård och så”.

13 ”De är helt utlämnade”.

14 ”Nej jag tycker det är, nej det är frivillig organisationerna om det finns kloka människor där. Om det finns kloka utbildade människor på frivilligorganisationer men det kan man inte räkna med”.

44
“...when the flow of refugees was at its worst, and we had a lot of people then it was very difficult to find accommodation and they signed an agreement with anyone basically as long as the people got shelter and many of these housings are still in the system...”\(^\text{15}\)

The theme emphasises that accommodations give and have different standards for children’s safety. Some things depend on decisions taken by actors and others are due to location, for example closeness to the sea or schools. There are large variations between the accommodations and some were perceived as very good while others were perceived as catastrophic by a CSO and staff at accommodations. Some asylum accommodation are apartments, others old hotels, or old military facilities. The reception centres in Skåne are in hotel buildings and moreover many families, especially in Malmö, find their own accommodation. The variations were a recurring theme in the interviews, although, most actors only had experiences from asylum accommodations and reception centres. However, many actors said that most children, and parents, wish to move out from these accommodations and parents confirm, even though these parents felt safe in the camp:

“Everyone wait, go out from here. Like we are here as prisoners”

6.2.1 The staff’s views on their mission and responsibility

The most common expression in the transcripts was “roof over head, and food on the table”\(^\text{16}\). This referred to the mission and responsibility of the SMA and accommodations run by private owners. All staff at accommodations interviewed for the thesis reflected upon this. One person said that according to the constitution, the SMA should provide a decent living which means that “if you are asylum-seekers you only have the right to a decent living, and it really means shelter, heat and food for the day”\(^\text{17}\), while the social

\(^{15}\)”...när flyktingströmmarna var som värst och vi hade jättemycket personer då var det jättesvårt att hitta boende och man tecknade avtal med vem som helst i stort sett bara personerna fick tak över huvudet och många av dem boendena är ju kvar i systemet...”.

\(^{16}\)”tak över huvudet och mat på bordet”

\(^{17}\)”Är man asylsökande så har man bara rätt till ett drägligt leverne och det innebär egentligen tak över huvudet, värme och mat för dagen”.

45
services should provide a reasonable living which is a higher standard than decent. The staff said that they are restricted in what they can do as personnel:

“**We have very clear guidelines for where our responsibility extends so it is society that can make the difference...**”\(^{18}\)

But they also argued that they do a lot that is not part of their job description such as helping to translate documents, scheduling appointments and organise with CSOs so they can come and hold activities. How the staff in general perceive their mission and responsibility for the children vary according to the staff and CSOs. One staff said:

“**That said, it’s a bit like these kinds of accommodation also, you have the guidelines for how to manage, how it should be run but it is also a bit about what vision you have, what are the goals with this? If you want to have a purpose or you just want people to look after themselves and that can vary greatly depending on who is there, who is working and what they want**”\(^{19}\)

The same person highlighted that there is a great difference between private accommodations run by people wanting to help other people and those run by a profit interest, were the latter was perceived as being stricter about tasks outside the mission of shelter, food and heat.

The interviews with representatives from CSOs contained more scepticism towards the staff’s willingness to take responsibility for anything except shelter and food. This can be illustrated by the following extract:

“**But I can add that without civil society these asylum accommodations would not look like they do today. [...] The Authority provides almost nothing**”\(^{20}\)

Lastly, the staff is an actor in the children’s lives. The staff interviewed argued that they see the children regularly and notice when something is wrong. However, according to the interviews, it is not certain that there are staff speaking the residents’ languages or staff that take concern coming from parents or children seriously.
6.2.2 Living environment

Three things stood out in the discussion about the indoor living environment: overcrowding, toilets and showers, and the space as not being child-friendly. Regarding the surroundings, the participants mainly discussed child-friendliness, proximity to services and traffic. One of the staff in an accommodation explained the allocated space for a family.

“During crowding, you were assigned three square meters. A family could, five people, could live on 15 square meters. 15 square meters for a five-piece family, it could be three children and two adults. Later it changed back to five square meters as it was earlier, earlier then to when it still was 25 square meters per person [family] and it is still small for a five-piece family, 25 square meters”.

Crowding happened during the refugee situation. Many interviews discussed living crowded and not having their own space as very challenging and debilitating for the families. Overcrowding came up as a problem also for asylum-seeking families fixing their own housing because they often stay with relatives or friends.

Some places have common toilets and showers shared between many people. Criticism towards this was well-known by the interviewees and confirmed by parents who complained about the number of people sharing:

“Now about 20 persons to one toilet. Why? We have four toilets and ten families. Every family about six to seven persons”.

In one place locks have been missing in showers and toilets causing violations against children and a lot of distress. Some housings have gender separated bathrooms and others not. In another asylum accommodation, the staff left it to the residents to decide.

Another identified risk factor at accommodations was the lack of places for children to play, and a few mentioned that the accommodations were not adapted to the needs of children with special needs. The parents who were interviewed said that their children

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21 "Under förtätning man tilldelades tre kvadratmeter. En familj kunde, på fem personer, kunde bo på 15 kvadratmeter. 15 kvadratmeter för en femmanna familj, det kunde vara tre barn och två vuxna. Som senare ändrades till fem kvadratmeter som det var tidigare igen, tidigare då till då skulle det vara 25 kvadratmeter per person [familj] och det är fortfarande lite för en femmanna-familj, 25 kvadratmeter".
always play in their beds because they have nowhere else to be and a social worker said the following about another place:

“There are no toys, no place to be with the children”.

Many accommodations have a room for children to play but it is only open when CSOs or other persons are there to keep it open under supervision. One staff member explained that they had to close their play room after two days due to destruction in the room.

The outdoor environment around accommodations in both Malmö, Ängelholm and other parts of Skåne were also criticised by many for not being child-friendly. A person from a CSO described the outdoor as “...mostly parking spaces. Asphalt. Very little green. Some individual trees”.

One staff member says that it varies between places and that it depends very much on location.

“Some accommodations have had play equipment from before and have a lot and others may have nothing”.

Visits by the researcher to accommodation centres confirmed that playgrounds are rare and in most cases non-existent in the closest surroundings.

The closeness to services such as preschool, bus stops, and health services are addressed by a few participants as things which improve conditions for families. Lastly, traffic close to the accommodations was indicated as dangerous by staff and CSOs. Some places have less heavy traffic but the speed limit is not always respected which impose a risk if children run around or bike unattended. In Ängelholm, the staff says that it has improved since they opened a year ago:

“Here could be cars running very fast but now they have marked playing children and yes, so there is a lot that has changed”.

22 ”Finns inga leksaker, finns ingenstans att vara med barnen”.


24 ”Vissa boenden har haft lekställningar sen innan och har jättenycket och andra har kanske ingenting”.

25 ”Här kunde ju bilar köra hur snabbt som helst liksom men nu har de liksom markerat lekande barn och ja, så det är en hel del som har ändrats”.
6.2.3 Residents

Another major difference is whether an accommodation is only for families or if it is a mix of people coming with family and without. The general observation from all interviews and documents were that there have been more severe incidents with children involved at mixed accommodations and more worries. The SMA has no guidelines regarding this but one staff member commented that it was an active decision to only have families at one accommodation:

“...we decided to focus on families with children only, actually. So the entire accommodation consists of families. We thought it would be the least problematic...”

A number of people also discussed how the harmony between the people staying in a house influences their perceived safety. There are many people, and with different nationalities, living under one roof which is not unproblematic and disagreements and even violence occurs. A person from a CSO argued that perception of safety also depends on the families own nationalities due to discrimination:

“I would say that the Afghan children feel extremely much more vulnerable and unsafe. They are more discriminated in general”.

Others did not talk about discrimination although, tensions between especially Arabic-speaking families and Dari-speaking families were mentioned by a few.

6.3 Parents influence children

This theme is about the influence the parents have on their children. The findings suggest that parents are a protecting factor but many parents are not feeling well which influences children negatively.

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26 ”...vi valde att inrikta oss på barnfamiljer enbart faktiskt. Så hela boendet består ju av barnfamiljer. Vi trodde att det skulle vara minst problematisk…”.

27 ”Jag skulle säga att de afghanska barnen känner sig extremt mycket mer utsatta och otrygga. Att de är mer diskriminerade generellt”.
6.3.1 Parents as support and safety

A number of interviewees emphasised that children find safety in their parents and are doing well as long as the parents are there. To what extent they are doing well differs depending on age but the youngest children were perceived as okay if they had good attachment to the parents.

“For those children who do not have trauma of the war and so are of course those who have good attachment with their parents. They are not traumatized as often as those who do not have it”.

A couple of others highlighted the children’s ability of adaptation in the presence of parents.

“Yes, and then you can surely say that I believe that many children can handle this much better than adults. Because they have also a completely different way to adapt”.

If parents feel well, they are considered an important support for children in all questions. However, as next sub-theme discusses, many parents are not at their best.

6.3.2 Parents who are unwell/worried

A recurring topic in the interviews was experiences of parents’ poor mental health and worries. Worries about the accommodation, their future, and their children. Many highlighted that the parents, and children, live under huge stress and often carry emotional baggage from the flight and their migration process. The situation may affect their parental ability and consequently, their children. An extract from an interview with a social worker gives an example:

“I mean, it's really tough for the parents. For all parents who struggle with different things, whatever it may be that affect their parenting skills, have it difficult in one way or..."
another. But parents may well be traumatized and not know themselves whether they should build their lives here or not, and it affects the children a lot”.30

Several points out risks for children when the parents have poor health.

“It is a high risk to children that parents often feel so bad in this process, they may not be sufficient for the kids...”.31

Interviewees account for parents not being able to fully see the children and their needs, leaving the children very lonely and vulnerable. In an interview, the following example came up:

“They let go of their children's upbringing and there I also see risks such as the kids have been out very late, and we met a daughter who was not in school for some time, eleven years old. So I talked to the parents and they just; yes, but we cannot take it any longer, we are just at our place and now we do not go out and eat, and then the children become very lonely”.32

Lastly, in interviews it was proposed that children sometimes want to solve the whole situation themselves when they see or know that their parents have a tough time. Consequently, children step forward and take on responsibility for themselves and siblings.

“So many of the kids have got to grow up very quickly, even very young children actually”.33

6.4 Child maltreatment and shortcomings in wellbeing

30 "Jag menar det är jättekämpigt för föräldrarna. För alla föräldrar som kämpar med olika saker, vad det än kan vara som liksom påverkar deras föräldraförmåga har ju svårt på ett eller annat sätt. Men föräldrar kan ju vara traumatiserade och inte själva heller veta om de ska bygga sitt liv här eller inte och det påverkar ju barnen väldigt mycket”.

31 ”Det är en stor risk för barnen att föräldrarna oftast mår så dåligt i den här processen att de kanske inte räcker till fullt ut för barnen…”

32 ”Man släpper taget om sin barnuppostran och där ser jag också risker liksom att barn har varit ute väldigt sent och vi träffade någon dotter som inte var i skolan på ganska länge, elva är gammal. Så pratade jag med föräldrarna och dom bara; ja men vi orkar inte mer och vi är inte ute, vi är bara på vårt rum och nu går vi inte ut och åter, och då blir barnen väldigt ensamma”.

33 ”Så många av barnen har ju fått växa upp väldigt fort, även väldigt små barn faktiskt”.

51
A majority of the interviewees narrated events that were harmful for children and their development. This theme is divided in four sub-themes based on the type of violence against children that were discussed. Although, a few participants did not talk about occurrence of child maltreatment at all. In fact, a few actors said that their perception was that there have been no or little violence occurring among the asylum-seeking or returning families they have met.

6.4.1 Physical abuse

The most common concern was physical abuse and it was brought up by multiple actors. A social worker told the following:

“I know that there was a situation when there was someone who had been in Sweden for two days and had hit her child sort of, and was reported to social services. But did not know that you were not allowed to here sort of”.

Much of the discussion about physical abuse against children circulated around parents hitting their children. As the social worker noted, parents sometimes seem to be unaware of the ban against corporal punishment that exists in Sweden. Another participant from a CSO who are in regular contact with the target group followed the same argument:

“And yes that is, what we have seen most is many cases is what we in Sweden regard as physical abuse because you come from other cultures and you may have other methods of upbringing”.

But parents hitting their children was not the only concern. The use of physical violence has also occurred between staff at accommodations and residents, and between residents. Consequently, cultural differences in upbringing cannot be the only reason. The participant from the CSO continues:

34 ”Jag vet att det var någon situation när det var någon som hade varit i Sverige i två dagar och hade slagit sitt barn liksom och blev anmäld till socialtjänsten. Men inte visste om att man inte fick det här liksom”.

35 ”Och ja så det är väl det vi har sett mest är väl mycket fall av det vi i Sverige ser som misshandel för att man kommer från andra kulturer och man kanske har andra uppföringsmetoder”. 
“And it [the violence] has been both from personnel to residents, residents in between, thus other adults who have beaten children, there have been personnel beating children”.

The parents interviewed did not mention any violence between staff and children. But they mentioned that children are constantly fighting with each other which they regarded as a big problem for their children.

6.4.2 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse against children was mentioned by several interviewees from CSOs. It includes sexual assault, sexual harassment of children and their mothers, and attempted rape against children. The participants have received information about this directly from children, parents and staff. It is third-hand information thus, a bit more uncertain but the pattern is highly worrying. The cases brought up during the interviews happened in mixed accommodations where both families and single migrants, who are mostly men, stay. The perpetrators or suspected perpetrators have been single men staying in the same accommodation but also a child. An interviewee told the following:

“There is one, one girl coming from X [country], and there is boy coming from X [country]. He entered her room and tried to rape her. Her father and mother, they took him away, the boy but they did not tell [anyone]”.

It becomes evident in the interviews that there are large variations between asylum accommodations. None of interviews conducted with people in Ängelholm brought up this issue while people with experience from other accommodations in Skåne, including Malmö raised it several times. For example:

36 "Och det [väldet] har både varit från personal till boende, boende emellan, alltså andra vuxna som har slått barn, det har varit personal som har slått barn”.

37 "Det finns en en tjej som kommer från Syrien, det finns kille kommer från Afghanistan. han gick in hennes rum och försökte att våldta henne. Hennes pappa och mamma de ta bort honom, den killen men de berättade inte”.
“...there have been very many cases of sexual abuse and then, it has not been only individuals but then, there has been like many times because there have been no locks on the toilets and showers”. 38

6.4.3 Inadequate supervision

A number of interviews discussed parents lack of supervision of their children.

“One family I think one child, her father and mother maybe go out from the camp, I don’t know. From X [country]. The child go out from the window down [Sic!] ”.

According to this interviewee, a child fell out from a window and got injured due to the parents’ lack of supervision. However, few said that parents lack of attention had caused any severe harm for children but that they had seen major risks linked to lack of supervision or parents leaving the children on their own. One social worker explained that she saw a four-year-old boy climbing the banisters on the second floor unattended when visiting a reception centre. Children, even very young children, are left unattended and are running around in the buildings or outside which surprised several of the interviewees. For example;

“...we are very surprised about how children are allowed to run around alone there. It is a hotel for, 500 people can live there and that is many, other words there are so many different people coming and going there”. 39

Of course, the living environment and surroundings influences the risks but in general the interviewees were concerned about children’s safety when left unattended.

6.4.4 Other concerns for children’s wellbeing

There are a wide variety of other concerns that the interviewees brought up. Children’s health is one. A few actors mention that children are not feeling well, having either poor

38 "...det har varit väldigt många fall av sexuella övergrepp och då har det inte varit bara enskilda individer utan då har det varit liksom många gånger för att det har saknats lås på toaletter och duschar”.

39 "vi förvånas mycket över hur barnen får springa själva där. Det är ett hotell för 500 människor kan bo där och det är många alltså det är så mycket olika människor som kommer och går där".
mental health or physical health, but not receiving adequate help. A social worker elaborates on what they have met during the last years:

“We have had children who are clearly traumatized, five, six-years-olds and they were traumatized by what they experienced in Aleppo, for example, but also by the migration process itself. And when they come to preschools or pre-class class, they very quickly are stamped as difficult. Unfortunately”.

There are also cases presented by a CSO where children do not get professional help although clearly needed or even when recommended by a doctor:

“When the doctor visited the accommodation a couple of weeks before we were there, it is judged that the boy need to be admitted to hospital for treatment but there has not been any help”.

Others talk about children being scared and feeling unsafe and therefore not wanting to go to school, the bathroom and even hiding in their rooms. Moreover, parents and CSO have been worried about children not eating the food provided at accommodations and people smoking in small rooms where there are children. The latter also emphasised by personnel at asylum accommodations.

A few actors mentioned returning children disappearing from accommodation. One child showed signs of distress and depression before departing, although, limited support was put in place.

Mental abuses have occurred in the forms of harassments, bullying between children, and threats between residents and between staff and residents, which consequently influences the families’ feeling of protection and safety.

6.5 Routines and (in-)actions

40 ”Vi har ju haft barn som är klart traumatiserade just fem, sex åringar och de var traumatiserade dels av det dom varit med i till exempelvis Aleppo men även av just själva migrationsprocessen Och när dom kommer till förskolor eller förskoleklass så väldigt snabbt stämplas dem som svåra. Tyvärr “.

41 ”I samband med att en läkare besökte boendet ett par veckor innan vi var där så görs bedömningen att pojken behöver läggas in på sjukhus för behandling men det har inte kommit någon hjälp”. 
As previous themes have highlighted, and especially 6.4, there are times when action needs to be taken to protect children from harm or further harm. Some interviewed actors have a duty to report to social services and others do not. This theme covers five sub-themes identified in the data: decision to report, families’ decision to tell or not, provided support, routines or lack of routines and lastly, how transfers effect support to children.

6.5.1 Decision to report or not

As stated earlier the interviewed social workers said that they only meet children with families after they receive a report from someone. Consequently, they are relying on people to report suspected child maltreatment. The staff at accommodations all pointed out their obligation to report.

“If we suspect that the children are mistreated then we also make a notification of concern which we are required to do to the social services”.42

However, they first consider if there is something they can deal with themselves. If it is something serious they contact social services. CSOs do not have a legalised responsibility to report, yet, but one interviewee said that her organisation does it anyway;

“But we do it because we argue that it helps to protect children”.43

Other interviewed persons from CSOs argued that they would do it as individuals and fellow human beings.

How well this works seems to vary between municipalities and individuals. In Ängelholm, the interviewed social worker and staff at accommodation described a well-functioning dialogue between the two groups on what to report and not. In Malmö, the social workers talked about limited contact with staff at the reception centres. One person from a CSO with experience from several accommodations in Skåne argued that personnel do not report enough:

42 ”Misstänker vi att barnen far illa så gör vi också en orosanmälan vilket vi är skyldiga att göra till socialtjänsten”.

43 “Men vi gör det för att vi menar att det hjälper att skydda barnen”.

56
“I think there are very few residential staff who report even though you have seen that it has been quite severe forms of abuse, openly in the street, and even though you were informed about suspicions of sexual abuse”.44

It is also argued that schools decide to report concerns more often than staff at accommodations because they have the knowledge of reporting. Once a staff member said the following to the person about reporting a suspected sexual assault:

“Okay, but how, oh, you should file a police report today? It's Friday, and then it will be so messy here this weekend and we don’t have much staff”.45

Moreover, most participants argued that they, when they themselves are unable to help and they think there is no need to report, link the children and parents to other organisations, health care and so on that they think are better equipped to provide support.

6.5.2 Remain silent or speak

Many participants brought up the issue of parents and children not wanting to or not being able to express concerns.

"They are there, the children they exposed, but they do not tell about it".46

Even grave conducts such as an attempted rape against a child, which is a criminal act, was according to an interviewee never reported because the parents did not want to talk about it and the person promised not to tell.

“Then say that it is bad to talk about their daughter. It, they think it is really a shame. A shame to tell about about...”.47

In another case an investigation on sexual assault against children in an asylum accommodation closed down because the victim refused to talk to the police. This reflects two things, firstly, that children and parents not always want to or dare to talk and

44 “Jag tycker det är väldigt få boendepersonal som anmäler trots att man har sett att det har varit ganska grava former av misshandel, öppet ute på gatan och trots att man fått till sig misstankar om sexuella övergrepp”.

45 “Okej men hur, oj ska du göra polisanmälan idag? Det är fredag och då kommer det bli så stökigt här i helgen och vi har inte så mycket personal”.

46 “De finns där, barnen de utsatt, men de berättar inte om det”.

47 ”De säger att det är dåligt att prata om deras dotter. Det, de tycker det är jättesynd. En synd att berätta om om...”
secondly, the essence of trust. As stated in 6.4.2, sexual abuse was stressed as a child protection concern by CSOs and they had experience from children telling them about these events. It might be a coincidence but much indicates that they through regular contact with children builds a relationship and gain trust. One interviewee specifically reflected upon trust;

“It is obvious that we listen because it also depends on, then we refer of course, but on the other hand you may not tell everyone but you want to have a relationship first before you talk, so sometimes it may not help to refer further because you have no relation to the human, to this person so it will not be the same”.

Many participants reflected upon the fact that children and families rarely ask for help or support to deal with concerns regarding their children or in their role as parents due to lack of knowledge. Lack of knowledge of the Swedish society i.e. their rights, the prohibition of corporal punishment and where to turn for support. Not least the Swedish language. However, some argued that parents hit their children secretly because they know it is illegal and tell their children to remain silent about it which makes it hard to report. One participant argued that children are more inclined to tell after they learned about their rights in school:

“Children attend school and their rights, they tell about it. But before no. They do not dare to”.

On the other hand, a few interviews argued that actors meeting the children do not always have adequate knowledge or experience to ask the right questions or see signs when children do not talk.

Conversely, something that was less prevalent but still relevant to reflect upon is that several actors, independent of each other, emphasised that everything that is told is not true. According to some people arguments about children’s safety can and have been used to bring about changes. An unconfirmed hypothesis from one interviewee is that some families, in despair, puts into system to be reported to social services and police in order

48 “Det är ju klart att vi lyssnar för att det beror ju också på, sen slussar man ju vidare såklart, men å andra sidan så berättar man kanske inte för vem som helst utan man vill ha en relation först innan man pratar så ibland kanske det inte hjälper att slussa vidare för har man ingen relation till människan, till den här personen så blir det inte samma sak”.

49 ”Barnen går till skolan och deras rättigheter de berättar om det. Men innan nej. De vågar inte”.
to postpone an expulsion order, which is in line with single statements of families sometimes falsely reporting incidents.

6.5.3 Support and protection

During the interviews a question was asked regarding what support they have or give to children when they have concerns for their safety, protection and wellbeing. The discussions during the interviews complemented by the unpublished documents gave an overview of common responses. Social services made it clear that these concerns were dealt with in normal structures, and have so been during the whole refugee situation. They emphasised that these children with families have the same right to their support as any other child residing in their municipality.

“It's really the same support as a Swedish child or another child, it could be anything from having to be emergency placed [in out-of-home care] because it is really bad or because the parents hit them to that they need help in their cooperation with the school or the need of a contact person who can do stuff with them”.

However, “You cannot grant assistance to parents but you may grant assistance to the children”.50 Or, as other interviewees emphasised, the social services cannot assist if the problem is in the living environment and not within the family.

The CSOs have activities at accommodations for residents, further discussed in 6.6, but in case of worries for children the interviewed people and unpublished documents from Save the Children Sweden showed that they, in addition to notification to the Social Services in some cases, have talked to personnel about concerns, explained rules and educated parents and personnel.

The staff mostly said that they contacted the social services and made residents aware of rules. Although, the data reveals several cases where staff has changed rooms of

50 “Det är egentligen samma stöd som ett, ett svenskt barn eller ett annat barn det kan ju vara allt ifrån att man behöver akut placeras för att det är riktigt illa eller för att föräldrarna slår dem till att de behöver hjälp med i samarbetet med skolan eller de behöver en kontaktperson som hittar på grejer med dem”.

51 ”Man kan inte bevilja bistånd till föräldrar men man kan bevilja bistånd till barnen”.

59
families or where the SMA has offered families to move to another accommodation after discussions about children’s safety.

6.5.4 Routines vary

A number of informants reflected upon their and other actors’ routines to deal with child protection concerns. Many, but not all informants, argued that they have routines on how to handle these situations. A few had none or were unsure on how they would act if they faced a situation of violence against a child. There have been large variations in the routines and structures in place at accommodations to address child protection concerns. Consequently, some accommodations have had several incidents of e.g. sexual abuse. A person with experiences from many accommodations argued that the SMA has had problems ensuring the quality of private owned asylum centres:

“As said, the private accommodation we have not had so much insight into their daily lives and what happens, and what do they do and what conditions they have”.

A CSO wanted to report a private owned asylum accommodation for recurring shortcomings but realised there were nowhere to turn:

“there is no instance at the Swedish Migration Agency for reporting an accommodation”.

However, the CSO experienced that staff have been very thankful for support to develop routines which have prevented abuses, especially cases of sexual abuses.

6.5.5 Moving effects children’s safety and protection

Currently, the SMA is closing hundreds of temporary asylum accommodations around Sweden. A majority of the interviewees talked about how families often move more than once during their migration process and how that influences their work and the children’s

52 “Som sagt på dem privata boendena så har vi inte haft så mycket inblick i deras vardag och vad som händer, och vad dem gör och vad dem har för förutsättningar”.

53 “Det finns ingen instans hos migrationsverket där man kan anmäla ett boende”.
wellbeing. Sometimes families wish to move, especially if they are unsatisfied with the place where they stay, but according to most interviewees multiple transfers are a risk factor for children’s safety and wellbeing.

Personnel at accommodations highlighted that decisions about transfer may come with short notice and that families sometimes move multiple times, even though they argue it is less so now than earlier.

“Applicants [Asylum-seekers] are moving quite a lot because it is, they go from one accommodation to another and then it closes down, so you should move there, and you can move up to northern Sweden and then you can move back again.”

Several interviewees argued that it hampers children’s development and creates unnecessary additional stress to children.

“That they are moved again and again and again, then we notice very clearly that there are children who have much difficulty finding peace”.

This brings up questions of the presence of a child perspective in the decision making. However, the SMA has notified one CSO that the child perspective is not priority in the decision to close accommodations and force families to move, rather the tax payers’ interests.

The most pressing issue with transferring families brought up by a number of interviewees, especially the social services, was the fact that they lose contact with children. Consequently, it makes it hard to follow up on actions taken and ensure that efforts continue, if needed, in the new municipality or in the country to where the child is transferred. Some of the social workers interviewed argued that the contact with the SMA was sometimes lacking and that families they had contact with suddenly have been transferred. For example:

54 “Sökande flyttar ganska mycket för det är, de ska från ett boende till ett annat och sen läggs det ner, så ska man flytta dit, och man kan flytta upp till Norrland då och man kan flytta tillbaka igen”.

55 “Att de flytta gång på gång på gång, då märker vi väldigt tydligt att det är barn som har väldigt svårt att hitta ro”.
“I think we had one where we were about to start up an effort rather quickly since but then they [the family] were the suddenly gone”.\textsuperscript{56}

Interviewees from CSOs mentioned similar problems to follow up and ensure that children they identified as in need of help received it.

The few interviewees with experiences of returning children in Malmö felt that the possibilities to support these children were even more limited. A volunteer said that these children “... do not count in anyway”\textsuperscript{57} and social workers felt powerless since an expulsion order goes before the social services act and LVU. Consequently, they can only help temporarily. A social worker in Malmö gave an example of the conflict between the laws:

“We have placed children in emergency foster homes just weeks before, and then they will be deported so then they are reunited with their parents even though we have determined that the parents are very unsuitable. So that’s really hard cases, and we are powerless”.\textsuperscript{58}

In general, the interviewees felt that there was no real protection for returning children, only risks.

### 6.6 Limited preventative support

An obvious pattern in the data was the wish for more preventative support to parents and children. Nowadays, the interviewees felt that CSOs take a huge responsibility for activities for asylum-seeking and returning families in both Malmö and Ängelholm while authorities do very little.

\textsuperscript{56} “jag tänker vi hade ju någon där vi skulle starta upp någon insats ganska snabbt sen var de ju plötsligt borta”.

\textsuperscript{57} “...inte räknas på något sätt”.

\textsuperscript{58} “Vi har ju jourhems placerat barn precis veckorna innan och sen ska de utvisas så då får de återförenas med sina föräldrar när vi ändå har bedömt att föräldrarna är jätteolämpliga. Så att de är jättésvära ärendena och vi är maktlösa”.
There is a will to treat asylum-seeking and returning children who stay with their families as any other child. The interviewees from Social Services emphasised over and over that they have the same responsibility and that all children have the same right to support. But many interviewees emphasised that children in migration are a risk group and that there are a lot of research and knowledge about this. Nevertheless, interviewees argued that the child protection systems in Sweden are good for children registered in the country but not adapted enough to the needs of children in migration. The knowledge of what to ask or look for does not really transfer to the people working on the ground:

“It is this usual, there is both knowledge and it is on paper and you are very aware of the dangers that like exists and are booked in the asylum process or immigration processes at all. But in practice, on the floor, unfortunately it works much worse”. 59

“...we do not have the right glasses” 60 and consequently, the systems miss the children for whom routines, daily life and access to school are not enough to ensure protection and wellbeing. According to a social worker, the society wants to regard everyone as equal and thus, failing to give equal preconditions to a safe life:

“They throw around terms that cover the differences actually instead of filling them with content. I think”. 61

What a majority of the interviewees discussed during the interviews was the need for more general support for all children and especially for their parents. The interviewees acknowledged a need to provide support to them before anything bad happens to their children and not just afterwards. The interviewed persons at the social services said that their preventative work was limited to information sharing. One of the reasons presented was that preventive measures are not statutory in the same way as their responsibility to act on notifications of concerns. A number of people highlighted the fact that not all people need specialized help and for many it is enough just to see them, have a chat and

59 “Det är det här gamla vanliga det finns både kunskap och det finns på papper och man är väldigt medveten om de faror som liksom ligger och är inbokade i asylprocessen eller migrationsprocesser överhuvudtaget. Men i praktiken på golvet så tyvärr fungerar det mycket sämre”.

60 “…vi har inte rätt glasögon”.

61 ”Man slänger sig med begrepp som täcker över skillnader faktiskt istället för att fylla dem med innehåll. Tycker jag”.
to ensure they have adequate information. A simple question might help the parents to be attentive of their child:

“...only this that you ask, to put eye-opener of a parent that maybe I should look at the kid again, or try to”.62

But most of the interviewees expressed that this basic support was limited.

A few actors, not working in accommodations, emphasised the need for services to be close and easily accessible for families. They argued that today, services are not enough adapted to and accessible for asylum-seekers or returning families. In Malmö, there are a number of CSOs, open preschools and so on having activities and counselling for children and their parents. The city even started an open preschool for asylum-seekers after the refugee situation, but proximity is regarded as the key word for the interviewees because the families do not travel to e.g. other parts of Malmö to attend activities or open preschools.

“Most do not want to get so far but they happily go to, the proximity principle is very important to have. If you have the whole head full of worries and lots of other things then it’s nice if it is close and you do not need take many buses or think about, but you just go there”.63

It is also seen as favourable when more than one service is under one roof such as the family centrals providing open preschool, social counselling and child health care. Another reason for families not being able to access services was presented in an interview with a social worker:

62 “...bara det här att man frågar att sätter tankeställare hos en förälder att jag får kanske titta på ungen en gång till eller försöka”.

63 ”De flesta vill inte ta sig så långt utan man tar sig gärna till, närhetsprincipen är jätteviktig att ha. Har man hela huvudet fullt av oro och massa andra saker så är det ju skönt om det ligger nära och man slipper ta många bussar eller tänka på, utan att man bara går dit”.

64
“Then it is of course also an economic issue and many people cannot afford to learn how to ride the bus as asylum-seekers. It is actually catastrophic that people do not have money to take the bus”.

At accommodations, the activities are often at the area, thus proximity is there. Many activities are much appreciated by both the staff and families. Still, one accommodation said they sometimes have had troubles to get the residents to participate. A majority of the interviewees were very positive to CSOs providing different activities, mostly to children and women. However, almost all except the residential personnel brought up the issue of mostly being volunteers and CSOs organising these activities and wished for more professional personnel.

“I think there must be a special staff, not X [CSO], for children's health and mental state, and they must also be a place for activities. Always. Not just be a volunteer”.

The volunteers were regarded as important adults who see the children but a few identified that the knowledge of child protection and child development among volunteers vary greatly. Consequently, the risk is that the activities in themselves cause further harm despite good intentions.

6.7 Remarks

These findings represent the perceptions of the interviewees, supported by information from unpublished documents from Save the Children Sweden. It is their personal thoughts and opinions thus, statements may not necessarily reflect the position of their organisation or authority. The six themes that were distinguished through the thematic analysis are further discussed in the next chapter.

64 ”Sen så är det klart också en ekonomisk fråga och mycket folk har ju inte råd att lära sig åka buss som asylsökande. Det är faktiskt katastrofalt att folk har inte pengar för att åka buss”.

65 ”Jag tror att det måste vara en speciell personal, inte x [organisation], för barnens hälsa och psykiska situationen och de måste också vara en plats för aktiviteter. Alltid. Inte bara vara volontär”.

65
7 Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings in chapter six in relation to the protective environment framework and previous literature. As a reminder, the two main research questions set out to answer in this thesis are: how did child protection systems in Sweden address child protection concerns brought on by the influx of asylum-seekers? And, what gaps exist in services to asylum-seeking and returning families with children to ensure children’s safety and protection in Sweden? The discussion is structured around the two research questions.

7.1 Child protection concerns and actions

The actors identified a number of child protection concerns among asylum-seeking children and returning children with families. The concerns varied from children being exposed to abuses to general concerns of the safety and living environment at accommodations and parents’ health. The findings presented experiences of child maltreatment including physical, mental and sexual abuses as well as children not getting access to health care when needed. As shown by Richards (2016) and Losoncz et al. (2016), in the USA and Australia, reports of physical abuse as a result of parenting discipline was more common among recently settled families coming from cultures where corporal punishment is accepted. This was also discussed as a child protection concern by the participants in this study. Other concerns brought up were returning children disappearing, families experiencing discrimination in accommodations due to nationality, and parents not being able to ensure their children’s physical and mental health. Many of the concerns expressed in the findings are in line with the child protection concerns in Sweden that were identified in chapter two. The findings confirm that issues emphasised by the Children’s Ombudsman (2017a) among unaccompanied minors such as poor
mental health which worsen due to a lengthy asylum process is present also among families.

There were also significant discussions in the interviews about multiple transfers between accommodations as hampering the possibility to offer support and as a great risk factor for children’s safety and protection. Similarly, the Public Inquiry Office (SOU 2017:12) emphasised that moving people around created stress and anxiety. This issue is brought up as risk factors for child maltreatment in academic literature (O’Donnell et al., 2009; Jones et al., 2015) because it creates instability and loss of social networks and extended family that normally would work as protective structures for the child. Thus, it is arguable that multiple transfers limits both families’ access to essential services and the capacity of community in family as set forward as two important protective features of the PEF (Landgren, 2005).

In the beginning of the refugee situation a lot of the temporary shelters were not child-friendly (SOU 2017:12). The findings tell that the challenge of non-child-friendly accommodations continues to exist and little has been done by the SMA or other private accommodations to address this. The SMA is a state agency and it is arguable that the government commitment to mitigate this specific issue is limited. As proposed by Lebrun et al. (2015) post-migratory experiences can provide re-traumatizing stressors imposing increased risk for child maltreatment. Examples provided of such stressors are inconvenient housing, prolonged procedure and, uncertainty about refugee status (LeBrun et al. 2015). All these factors were identified as risk factors in this study. Another example, apart from accommodations, is that the changes in the Alien’s Act is perceived as exacerbating anxiety and stress.

According to the findings, concerns about child maltreatment were dealt within the usual formal child protection structures, i.e. the social services, and the police in case of criminal acts such as sexual abuses. This was according to the interviewees not affected by the refugee situation. Several actors referred to their duty to report and act according to the social services act (SFS 2001:453). Cocozza (2011:96) stated that few citizens report if they are not obliged to. The results partly confirm, like the case when an individual kept silent because it was the wish of the parents, but most CSOs still argue that they would or even have reported to the Social Services.

Some concerns were perceived to have been mitigated by information sharing and discussions with staff at accommodations and parents, and others through linking families
to other actors. How the child protections systems addressed child protection concerns have varied between municipalities and actors. Much seems to be based on individuals’ good will, even though efforts to improve structures and routines have been put in place.

During the initial phase of the refugee situation many social services announced that they were unable to deal with concerns and investigations within time (see e.g. NBHW, 2016b). The findings did not suggest that the social services have had problems to deal with notifications of concerns regarding children in families within the legalised time-frames. But on the other hand, the findings suggest that concerns about children in families are not always reported to the social services. There seems to be a lack of an adequate system to monitor and collect data about child protection in Sweden. Landgren (2005) indicated in her article about the PEF that monitoring of child protection is universally weak, even in states where capacity and commitment exists. This seems to be true in the case of Sweden as well.

Not all concerns identified in the study are addressed and new issues have emerged or become exacerbated during the last years that indirectly influences children’s safety and protection.

7.2 Identified gaps to ensure safety and protection

The second research question dealt with existing gaps in the services to children to ensure their protection needs. This section is divided in two were the first part discusses gaps to prevent child maltreatment and the second part gaps in the responses to child protection concerns.

7.2.1 Preventing child maltreatment

Drawing upon the PEF, two essential factors to protect children are government commitment and capacity, and legislation and enforcement (Boothby & Ager, 2011). They are closely related (Landgren, 2005). Sweden has signed and ratified international conventions such as the CRC and two of the optional protocol (OHCHR, n.d.). An inquiry regarding incorporation of the CRC in to Swedish law suggested it to enter force in
January 2018 (SOU 2016:19: 51). Contrary to the findings by Ager et al. (2009), who in their study of Darfur found the government denying child protection issues, the Swedish government has acknowledged some of the problems and given authorities missions to investigate further. For example, the County Administrative Board of Stockholm who was assigned to map unaccompanied minors who had gone missing (County Administrative Board of Stockholm, 2016). However, their mission did not include children in families. In addition to the ratified international conventions, Sweden has laws in place aimed to provide protection to children, for example the Social Services Act and LVU. Boothby and Ager (2011) argued that a crisis may disrupt justice systems, but, apart from some interviewees who told about events where sexual abuses did not result in prosecution, there was no reported lack of confidence in the legal system’s capacity to deal with sexual abuses.

Nevertheless, some social workers in Malmö expressed frustration over the fact that their efforts to protect children are sometimes hampered by the Aliens act and the actualization of deportations. The social services felt powerless and their protection could most of the time only be temporarily. Thus, the findings propose that it is not enough to have legislation and enforcement as outlined in the PEF by Landgren (2005) if not all children despite legal status can benefit from the protection. It must be adapted. This problem was also emphasised in findings by Backlund and Malmsten (2013). The Aliens Acts’ precedence over decisions taken by social workers to protect children questions compliance with the CRC, as suggested also by Backlund and Malmsten (2013). For example article two in the CRC, non-discrimination; can the social services really provide services to asylum-seeking and returning children on equal terms? Backlund and Malmsten (2013) findings suggested that asylum-seeking children risked facing structural discrimination. Likewise, the findings of this study suggest that the social services possibilities to protect especially returning children are restricted. Furthermore, according to the findings, children in families are only entitled to a decent living while the social services should provide a reasonable living: i.e. the standard that the SMA should provide in their accommodations is lower than social services. As shown by several studies (Jones et al. 2014; Kreuger et al. 2014; Köhler et al. 2016; O’Donnell et al. 2008), poor socio-economic status is a risk factor. Without legal expertise, the thesis cannot go further into the legal debate but, the perception of several participants was that unaccompanied children automatically are entitled to a higher living standard than children who are in the
asylum process together with their parents. Hence, even if there are laws in place to protect all children in Sweden, as suggested in the protective environment by Landgren (2005), protection may not be on equal terms or adapted to children in migration.

A third essential feature according to PEF relates to culture, customs and traditions (Landgren, 2005). Sweden has laws prohibiting for example female gender mutilation (SFS 1982:316) and corporal punishment (Landgren, 2005: 231), which were set out by Landgren (2005) as examples of harmful practices. The PEF further emphasises that the aim of such legislation can be to change attitudes and during a legal reform they need to be accompanied by awareness-raising and advocacy efforts (Landgren, 2005). The situation for resettled families can be compared to a legal reform when they move from one legal framework to another. The findings suggest that many families experience a clash in cultures if they come from a country where hitting children is part of upbringing. This was also acknowledged in an Australian study by Losoncz (2016) whose findings showed that parents were aware of the ban against corporal punishment but reluctant to abandon it because they believed it was part of their role as responsible parents. Thus, children may continue to live in an unprotective environment until the parents understand and accept the ban and the consequences physical abuses have on children’s development.

As shown by Losoncz (2016) and Richards (2016), it is not enough if parents are informed of the laws but they need active support to develop skills and confidence in alternative parenting practices. Otherwise, as also suggested by the findings in this study, parents continue to use violence as disciplinary measures in “secret”.

Some interviewees argued that they are unaware of any incidents of violence towards children. Nevertheless, just because there are no known incidents it does not mean that it does not exist, rather that problems may be ignored or silenced as suggested by Boothby and Ager (2010: 113). For example, the story about the parents not reporting sexual abuse due to shame. Shame and stigmatization, i.e. a lack of an open discussion in the society, are according to the PEF reasons for children being deprived of protection (Landgren 2005). Some issues are easier to discuss openly, while sexual violence and exploitation are found to be difficult topics to address (Ager et al. 2009). To create awareness and address silenced problems the framework talks about offering children a safe-space to talk about abuses, and a place where they can seek respite and help (Landgren, 2005). As reflected in the findings children and parents may not always want to or dare to talk, and as suggested by Ager et al. (2009), sexual abuse was seen a sensitive topic. To some
extent safe-spaces, as discussed by Landgren (2005), have been offered by staff, child-friendly spaces and activities but for many interviewees, child protection was not something they had reflected much upon because it was not their primary task, except the social services staff. Thus, even when a safe-space and trust are in place, the capacity by key actors to respond and identify concerns may be limited. Links can be drawn to an international humanitarian context where it was argued by Boothby and Ager (2011: 116) that the presence of international actors and the services they provide are a protective factor, but that presence without capacity to respond or willingness to engage in child protection concerns limits protection.

Gaps were also noted in the field of preventive measures such as giving children and parents psychosocial support and ensuring access to school. Responding to abuse when it occurs was considered more important than measures to prevent harm, which shows the lack of a protective environment for children. Similar argument can be found in research from other countries; Boothby and Ager (2011) claimed that preventive measures are not priority in emergencies and Losoncz (2016) found that child protection systems in Australia lack focus on preventing maltreatment. Many people go through a long migration process and studies show that families often carry trauma from pre-migration, migration, and post-migration which can increase the risk for children (LeBrun et al. 2015; Richards, 2016). Moreover, as shown by Richards (2016), refugee parents are reluctant to seek agency support. Likewise, the findings indicate that only a few asylum-seeking families seek contact with the social services or others to ask for support, presumably due to limited knowledge of the Swedish society and language.

In Sweden, some CSOs have engaged in efforts to give psychosocial support through activities at accommodations but the findings suggest that more efforts are needed in terms of parental support, education and positive parenting. Support for parents is overlooked even though research (e.g. Richards, 2016; Ager et al. 2009) strongly points to a link between parents’ poor mental health and children’s risk to experience violence. The interviewees accounted for multiple cases of parents full of worries and stress who were neglectful or used violence towards their children. Others were unable to be an attentive and supportive parent which indirectly brings risks for the children’s health and development (Richards, 2016). But, according to the findings little parental support is offered in the Swedish context. The PEF emphasises that the most influential factor for a child’s positive psychosocial development is to have a strong relationship with a caring
adult (Landgren, 2005). This is in line with what the findings told about parents as a support. However, Landgren (2005) emphasises that the state should give appropriate assistance to parents to ensure the children’s wellbeing. But in the interviews, the social services argued that they were limited in what they can offer parents and the general view was that parents have had a hard time to get help with their physical and especially mental health. As stated, earlier research points out that parents who have poor mental health are a risk factor for child maltreatment (Köhler et al. 2016; O’Donnell et al. 2008). Therefore, it is surprising how little authorities reflect on parents’ mental health and instead increase the mental stress of parents and children by moving them around and changing a law to only provide temporary residence permits and limit the possibilities to family reunification. As temporary residence permits, separation from family and residential instability are factors pointed out by previous research as a risk for children’s safety (O’Donnell et al., 2008; LeBrun et al., 2015).

The school was presented as a prime protection system which is similar to what Ager et al. (2009) said about education as a main protective factor for children. The findings suggest that the school is a prime protector not solely because there are trained adults and it gives a meaningful time to children, but also because it gives children information and knowledge. This claim is supported by the PEF which says that children are agents of their own protection and awareness of risks, rights and support can make them less vulnerable (Landgren, 2005; Boothby & Ager, 2011). Moreover, the school is protective as long as there are safeguards in place to protect children from harm (Boothby & Ager, 2011) which interviewees highlighted that there are, and the claim that school personnel report abuses is strengthen by Köhler et al. (2016). Therefore, it is highly worrying that interviewees still encounter children who are or have been outside of the preschool or school systems in Sweden for months. This gap was more evident in Malmö and especially among returning children staying in reception centres.

The findings emphasise that there are differences between the accommodation facilities and that a few things impact perceptions of safety. Housings where there are only families and no other migrants are perceived as safer for the children by many of the interviewees, including the parents. The same for rooms where the families have their own toilet and shower. The PEF does not mention anything about housing conditions more than the fact that shelter should be adequate (Landgren, 2005), and references in the reviewed literature are scarce. Nevertheless, Lebrun et al. (2016) emphasised
inconvenient housing as a source to post-migratory trauma and the identified gaps provide examples of this. Shortcomings were identified in the living conditions for those children staying at reception centres or asylum accommodations. There was too little data that deals with families staying in their own accommodation and thus, no conclusions can be drawn about the living standards for these families. One risk in accommodations is the use of shared non-gender-separated toilets and showers. The Sphere standards, that are often referred to internationally and applied in for example refugee camps and humanitarian settings, state that toilets should be either gender separated or per household and safe to use (Sphere project, 2011: 108). This is not the case for many of the accommodations discussed in this thesis. Furthermore, the lack of appropriate locking mechanisms compromises safety. Interviewees also question why families stay together with other migrants without family, especially single men. Based on the data there have been more known incidents in these accommodations thus, the risks for children are likely higher in mixed accommodations.

Another gap linked to the living conditions is the fact that children stay long in facilities that are not built or adapted to the needs of children. The Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action provides key actions for shelter and settlement actors (standard 24) and highlights the need to not increase dangers for children, identify adequate collective spaces for children and provide spaces available for children’s activities etc. (CPWG, 2013: 197, 199). Regardless of the fact that the accommodations and situation in Sweden today may not be the regarded as an emergency, the standards can be guiding. According to the findings, there are limited possibilities at accommodations for play and recreational activities, except for when CSOs are there, and there was agreement among the interviewees that the SMA’s mission of ‘food, shelter and heat’ limits the accommodations’ responsibility to provide it. From a child perspective, it is arguable that many of the accommodations do not fulfil the requirements of an adequate shelter for children. The CRC emphasizes children’s right to education (art 28) and, play and leisure (art. 31), but many of the accommodations provide limited physical space for children to play and the multiple transfers affect children’s access to education. According to the CRC, the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration in decisions regarding children (UN, 1989: art. 3). Nevertheless, multiple interviewees felt the best interest of the child was often overlooked and wished for
increased child perspective in decision making, especially regarding housing and transfers.

In general, there are very little preventative support to protect children in families. A lot of research exists saying that children in migration are a risk group, but Sweden's system is not adapted to it, so one does not act until something has happened.

7.2.2 Responding to child maltreatment

To respond to child maltreatment, the PEF states that essential services to provide recovery and rehabilitation should exist and be accessible (Landgren, 2005). Likewise, the CRC mandates services for recovery and reintegration (UN, 1989: art. 39). The findings did not discuss a lack of these services. However, a gap identified in the findings when it comes to responding to child protection concerns was the varying knowledge of what to report and to whom. Some interviewees had clear routines based on a legalised duty to report, while others are not obliged to report to social services. Previous research emphasised that a duty to report is often a main reason to refer to social services and that it is rare for citizens to report (Cocozza, 2011: 96). The findings partly strengthen this assumption as pointed out in 7.1, although, it also pointed at cases where action has been slow and knowledge missing among staff with an obligation to report. This is similar to the findings of Köhler et al. (2016), who found a lack of knowledge among health care workers while researching their reporting patterns. The experiences among the interviewees themselves and among others they have met while working with children in migration suggests that many do not have appropriate training to be able to identify and respond to actual or emerging protection concerns nor effective routines. Appropriate training to identify and respond to child abuse among those providing services to children is a requirement for a protective environment (Landgren, 2005). But to be a volunteer does not require professional expertise and thus, some actors in children’s surroundings do not necessarily perceive themselves to be a safety net or to have enough knowledge about child protection and routines to act.

As shown in Canavera et al. (2016) and Ager et al. (2011) coordination was a major challenge in child protection systems and assessments in emergencies. Similar to these findings, collaboration and communication between the different actors in the study varied and were perceived as challenging by some actors. There was a lack of common
guidelines for actors meeting children at accommodations which may lead to several CSOs referring the same child or not referring at all to the staff and social services if needed. Information sharing is a key to avoid duplications of services and ensure coverage (Canavera et al. 2016). The challenge with coordination and monitoring of child protection systems applies to both preventive and responsive actions in this study and in line with the feature of PEF, monitoring, reporting and oversight, there needs to be systematic collection and distribution of data of child protection concerns among actors (Landgren (2005).

7.3 Limitations

The results of this study depend on the research design and methods and a few limitations need to be highlighted. The sampling of contexts, respondents and documents have been purposive to capture how the child protection systems work. Parents’ participation was very limited due to problems of access and children were not included at all. This is problematic because the asylum-seeking and returning families are the experts of their situation and experiences. The thesis can therefore not truly capture some aspects and further research is needed. Moreover, the data can be skewed depending on who I encountered. The number of interviews gave each of them a major impact, which can be misleading for how the crowd feels. To limit this, efforts were made to capture perspectives from multiple actors and to provide a thorough description of the methods. Hence generalisability of the findings is limited.

It is also necessary to reflect upon my role as researcher because the researcher is active in the interviews, the coding and the analysis. The methodology chapter intended to provide credibility and transparency to the process and clarify the decision I, as researchers, have done and why. Nevertheless, the fact that I am an intern at Save the Children Sweden and have experiences as volunteer from one reception centre have certainly influenced both my ideas and how people perceive me. I started this research with the notion that child protection is inadequate for children in migration. Even though I have tried to distance myself from preconceived ideas, I can never completely start from zero. Moreover, the thesis will also contribute to an analysis for Save the Children Sweden and this information was presented to the interviewees.
8 Conclusion

The discussion above has pointed out the main gaps and child protection concerns. It is noteworthy that much seems to be about ad-hoc measures instead of having a more long-term and preventive focus. Very little action is directed towards parents even though the findings draw attention to the important role of working with parents to protect the children. If we want to give the children a good upbringing, free from abuses and exploitation, the systems need to secure a safe living environment and be attentive to the fact that these children may need additional support.

The aim of this research was to examine the Swedish child protection systems for asylum-seeking and returning children in families, and child protection concerns among this target group after the influx of asylum-seekers in 2015. The essence for this focus was a notion of these children as a forgotten group when most previous reports and research in Sweden had focused on unaccompanied minors. The two research questions were the following: How did child protection systems in Sweden address child protection concerns brought on by the influx of asylum-seekers? And, what gaps exist in services to asylum-seeking and returning families with children to ensure children’s safety and protection in Sweden?

The results of this study underscore the multifaceted challenges faced by children with families in migration and it partially confirms the notion of children in families as falling between the cracks. The main child protection concerns identified by the interviewees were physical and sexual abuses, but there were also other concerns and identified risks. A majority of them linked to insecure and non-child-friendly living spaces. The child protection systems have addressed the concerns within normal structures, which means that the social services in each municipality are the ones who should be contacted when there are suspicions of child maltreatment. The findings suggest that success varies between municipalities and between individuals. A main reason for this was lack of knowledge on what to report and to whom. Child protection concerns of a more general character such as access to school, lack of recreational activities and need for health care
have either been addressed by the actors themselves, by linking families to others with better knowledge or the concerns have been left unaddressed. One of the things that is often left unaddressed is the parents’ poor mental health.

Significant gaps exist in the services provided to children migrating with their families. There are large disparities between where one stays and the findings point out the failure of many accommodations to provide gender separated sanitation facilities, child friendly environments and places for children to play. Other gaps in preventive measures were limited psychosocial support, limited access to school for returning children in reception centres, lack of positive parenting efforts to reduce the use of violence against children and lastly, lack of information on the asylum process and transfers on a short notice which creates instability and insecurity. Moreover, the findings identified a taboo and stigma to talk about abuses. Thus, there is a need for a more open discussion. Identified gaps in responsive services were lack of properly trained staff and volunteers to respond to and identify early signs of maltreatment, lack of knowledge of referral ways and routines among the actors and the social services felt that their protective measures were hampered by deportations.

The findings complement reports and research about child protection, both in Sweden and internationally with its focus on children in migration in a welfare society. Nevertheless, more research is needed from the target group’s perspective to explore how they feel about the services provided and their needs. This research has provided an in-depth overview on how key actors perceive the concerns, actions and services, but they cannot account for the users’ experiences. Nor does it cover all legal aspects. Due to the design of the study, generalisability of the results is limited. Nevertheless, the results provide an indication on aspects that need further research and contribute with valuable insight on challenges faced by children in families.

8.1 Recommendations

By identifying risks among children in families and the gaps in the services to ensure the children’s safety and protection, one can learn and improve. The results have parallels to research on child protection in other countries and I believe much can be learned by looking at international guidelines for child protection. However, based on the gaps and
risks identified in the research some recommendations to national and local actors are suggested below.

- At the legal level, Sweden should first and foremost incorporate the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Furthermore, investigate the possibilities to strengthen the laws protecting children in migration and ensure that the national asylum laws are not in conflict with the UN convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The Swedish Migration Agency should ensure that a child perspective is applied in practice in all decisions regarding a child. This includes a stop to transfers on short notice and multiple times during their asylum process. If an accommodation closes, efforts should be taken to find alternatives in the same municipality to facilitate continuation of education, health care and efforts from the social services.
- The Swedish Migration Agency, or other appropriate agency, needs to be given a clear mandate to ensure child-friendliness at accommodations and to create, as well as maintain, child-friendly spaces inside and outside all accommodations so the children can enjoy safe areas for play, recreation and homework. The latter is preferably done in dialogue with children, CSOs and other relevant actors with expertise on children’s needs and child protection.
- The Swedish Migration Agency should establish guidelines for placements of families together with single migrants and to the largest extent provide separate housing for families.
- The Swedish Migration Agency should address the issue of shared hygiene facilities that was identified in this study as an increased risk of violence and abuses against children. International standards and guidelines on gender-differentiated sanitation facilities should be applied and safe locking mechanisms provided.
- The Swedish Migration Agency, or an independent agency, should establish an accountability mechanism for accommodations to which residents, staff and other actors should be able to direct complaints if an accommodation severely imposes a threat to children or other residents’ life and development.
- The Swedish Migration Agency should make efforts to limit the time in reception centres for returning children to a couple of days so that the children can stay in
school until departure. Especially as schools were identified as the prime protection.

- The municipalities should strive for all children to go to school within one month after arrival and make sure that the children can safely get there and home. This requires a well-functioning dialogue between the Migration Agency and the municipality.

- The head of each accommodation should in collaboration with relevant actors establish and require all CSOs and private persons organising activities to adhere to safeguards and common guidelines for reporting child protection concerns.

- All actors should ensure adequate training of their staff and volunteers in direct contact with children in migration, so that they have knowledge on how to identify signs of early maltreatment, what should be reported and ways of referring. This is especially valid for CSOs who do not have a legal responsibility to report.

- Encourage actions to facilitate open discussions on protection issues, and especially sensitive issues such as sexual abuse, at all levels and among all actors. This may include having workshops with parents or children about potential dangers and concerns, discussing ‘bad secrets’ and ‘good secrets’ with children or increase the discussion about these topics in newspapers, radio and television.

- Relevant actors, such as the social services, the health care and CSOs, should increase support for parents, including psychosocial support, positive parenting efforts and health checks, and ensure persons offering support are adequately trained.

- Further research should be directed towards how the children and parents themselves perceive their needs and, safety and protection, and the results shared.
9 References


83


SFS 1949:381 *Code on parents and children* [Föräldrabalken].

SFS 1982:316 *Act prohibiting the circumcision of Women* [Förbud mot könsstypning].
SFS 1990:52 The Care for Young Persons Act (LVU) [Lag med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga].

SFS 1994:137 Reception of asylum seekers and others act (LMA) [Lagen om mottagande av asylsökande m.fl.].

SFS 2001:453 Social Services Act (SSA) [Socialtjänstlag].

SFS 2005:429 Act on Special Representatives for Unaccompanied Children [Lagen om god man för ensamkommande barn].


SFS 2008:344 Act on health care for asylum seekers and others [Lag om hälso- och sjukvård åt asylsökande m.fl.].

SFS 2010:800 Education Act [Skollag].

SFS 2013:407 Act on health care to some foreigners who reside in Sweden without the necessary permits [Lag om hälso- och sjukvård till vissa utlänningar som vistas i Sverige utan nödvändiga tillstånd].

SFS 2016:752 Act on temporary restrictions to the possibility of being granted a residence permit in Sweden [Lagen om tillfälliga begränsningar av möjligheten att få uppehållstillstånd i Sverige].


Swedish Migration Agency (SMA), 2017a. Migrationsverket – mitt i världen 2016. [Electronic] Available at: https://www.migrationsverket.se/Om-


UN committee on the rights of the child, 2015. *Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Sweden*, CRC/C/SWE/CO05.05


Information about the study on child protection systems around children in migration

You are hereby asked to participate in a study that aims to examine the existing safety nets, in the context of the last years “refugee situation”, around asylum seeking and returning children who are in Sweden together with their families.

The purpose of the study is to get an overview of what support is available and offered to these children as well as how it is perceived by children and parents. The focus is on children’s safety and protection. Thus, questions will involve risks, actions if you suspect child maltreatment and if/how it has been affected by the increased number of asylum seekers.

Two municipalities have been selected, Malmö and Ängelholm, as they have large reception centres respectively agency accommodation. You who are asked to participate are people who, in your profession or as a parent, have detailed knowledge about your role in the protection system.

Participation will be in the form of an interview, alternatively a group interview if maximum one hour. Together we decide time and place. Your participation is voluntary and no information regarding your identity will be revealed during any part of the study. You may withdraw at any time without giving any justification. The interview will be recorded and transcribed by me, Joanna, and no one else will have access to the files. The collected material will be analysed and published in a master thesis at Uppsala University and in a report for Save the Children.

My name is Joanna Ericson and I am a student at Uppsala University and an intern at Save the Children. The study is part of my master degree in international humanitarian action.

If you have questions you are welcome to contact me.

Thanks in advance!

Joanna Ericson
070 216 88 70
Joanna.ericson@rb.se

Supervisor:
Soorej Jose Puthooppambil
soorej.jose@khh.uu.se
Uppsala University
Appendix II

Interview guide for parents

- **Introduce myself**
- **Presentation of interviewee/s:** ask them to introduce themselves. E.g. number of children and their age, when they arrived in Sweden, how long have they lived at this place and if they lived elsewhere in Sweden.

- **Topic: Concern/risks**
  - How do you feel about your child’s/children’s safety and wellbeing?
    - What are the current risks or concerns? – according to the parents
    - Has it changed? – if they stayed here for some time
  - Do the children express concern for anything and if so, what?

- **Topic: The closest protection system (Yourself, family, friends)**
  - If the children expressed concerns, how do the children handle their worries/experiences?
  - How do you help your child/children deal with anxiety/concerns/experiences?
  - What would you do if you suspect a child experiences violence, is sexually abused or treated in a way that might harm the child physically, mentally or emotionally?
    - Do the children know who to contact?

- **Topic: Support from society**
  - What support or help, to ensure safety and protection, can your children or you in your role as parent(s) get at the accommodation?
    - Do you use it and if yes, how?
  - What support or help is available for your children and you as parent(s) in the surrounding area?
  - What do you think of the support and help offered to you as a parent and your children?
    - What have been good?
    - What is missing?
    - Enough?
  - Do the children go to school? (If yes, since when? If no, why not?)
  - Have the kids done a medical examination since you came to Sweden?

- **Final questions to end on a positive note**
  - What do the children think is the best about living here?
  - What do you see as positive in your child’s life right now?
  - Do you have anything else that you would like to add or something important that I haven’t asked about??
Appendix III

Interview guide for key-actors (in Swedish)

- **Presentera mig**
- **Introduktion:** Be respondenten berätta kort om sin yrkesroll, hur länge hen jobbat som det.
- **Risker**
  - Hur ser ni på asylsökande/återvändande barn i familjs trygghet och skydd på ert boende/ er kommun sedan flyktingsituationens början?
    - Vilka fotoner tar ni hänsyn till när ni planerar ert arbete?
    - Vilka utmaningar har ni?
    - Vad kan förbättras?
- **Er roll som skyddsnät**
  - Hur arbetar ni för att identifiera barn i risk som kan behöva extra stöd?
  - Hur hanterar ni information om eller misstankar om att ett asylsökande/återvändande barn har blivit utsatt för våld, utnyttjande, exploatering eller försammelse?
    - Vilka rutiner finns?
    - Hur har flyktingsituationen påverkat ert hanterande av anmälningar av oro? Ge gärna exempel.
  - Vilka stöd (förebyggande eller skyddande) erbjuder ni asylsökande/återvändande barn och deras föräldrar vid misstanke om försammelse, utnyttjande, våld, exploatering?
  - Vad händer med information/insatser om ett barn flyttar?
- **Kapacitet & Kunskap**
  - Känner du att du och dina kollegor hade kunskap och beredskap för att hantera det ökande antalet asylsökande barn (i familj) som kom till Sverige?
    - Vilka områden/frågor var hanterbara?
    - Vilken kunskap kände du att du/ni saknade eller hade behövt?
  - Hur förhåller du dig till lagar, policys och standards om barns rätt till trygghet och skydd i ditt arbete?
- **Syn på barnens närstående skyddssystem**
  - Hur pratar barnen själva om sin trygghet eller välmående?
  - Vad efterfrågar barnen eller deras föräldrar för stöd och hjälp från er i frågor som rör trygghet, skydd och välmående?
- **Syn på övriga samhällets skyddssystem för barn**
  - Enligt dig, vilka andra aktörer i kommunen fungerar som skyddsät för asylsökande/återvändande barn som riskerar att fara illa eller far illa och på vilket sätt?
- **Samarbete/kopplingar mellan ert skyddssystem och andra skyddssystem**
  - Hur samarbetar ni med andra aktörer inom kommunen i barnskyddsärenden?
  - Vad fungerar bra/dåligt?
- **Avslutande:**
  - Har ni några lärdomar från de senaste åren att dela med er av?
  - Har ni något annat ni vill berätta som ni tror är viktigt som jag inte har frågat om?
## Appendix IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Social workers</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>CSO</td>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Accommodation staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2017-03-21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Social worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2017-03-21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CSO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2017-03-23</td>
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</tr>
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<td>2017-04-08</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
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Appendix V

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview extract</th>
<th>Coded for</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When they go to the school they are the best time in school. And then when go, come to here it is ahhh and ahri in Svenska.</td>
<td>School the best time</td>
<td>Many actors in children’s lives</td>
<td>School as prime protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But here nothing. Just bicycles. and just if we go...</td>
<td>Nothing in camp</td>
<td>Accommodations have different standards</td>
<td>Living environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child, he can't eat, eat from the restaurant.</td>
<td>Child doesn’t eat</td>
<td>Child maltreatment &amp; shortcomings in wellbeing</td>
<td>Other concerns for children’s wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They want a place to play. Like uhm, example, my daughter X [Name] make her bed like city, city toys. [laugh] She can't sleep in her bed.</td>
<td>No place to play</td>
<td>Accommodations have different standards</td>
<td>Living environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>