

COLLABORATION BETWEEN PROFESSIONALS: AN EXPLORATION OF HOW CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN ARE MANAGED

A case study at a Swedish Children's Advocacy Center

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Main subject: Social work

Level: Advanced level

Points: 30 credits

Program: Master's Programme in Health
and Welfare: Social Work

Course name: Thesis in Social Work

Course code: SAA062

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Master's Programme in Health and Welfare: Social Work

Thesis in Social Work, 30 credits

Spring term 2018

ABSTRACT

This Master's project aims to investigate specific professionals' experience of collaboration in a Swedish Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) in order to evaluate how cultural aspects affect the various investigative objectives held by the various professionals. Furthermore, the project is investigating how enablers and barriers to the goal of delivering the best practices for vulnerable children. The project embraces a qualitative approach, including interviews with professionals' that are active in child; - consultations and interrogations at CAC. The project's analysis is characterized by three themes: *legislation in relation to collaboration, collaborative practice and developmental opportunities*. As a result, it is apparent that the different professional identities are affected by legal constraints but also cultural factors creating a hierarchy which automatically gives the juridical system precedence. It is expected that the health and welfare system must adapt and prioritize the criminal investigation before developing support measures. Furthermore; the results show a need of closer collaboration between all professionals and common measures of health and social services to achieve the best practices for children.

Keywords: CAC, domestically abused children, collaboration, legal constraints, work culture

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank everyone active in the studied Children's Advocacy Center, especially for those who helped me with their competent opinions and experiences to conduct this project. A special thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Anna-Lena Almqvist for her support and meaningful feedback throughout this Master's project. I would also like to thank my seminar leader Christian Kullberg, who helped me with the final version of this project.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Child Advocacy Center (CAC) model was developed in the US in the 1980s as a reaction to the failure of traditional law prosecution and child protection practices when dealing with child victims of physical and sexual abuse. The initial development stemmed from the usage of a frequently traumatic method, which resulted in further strain to the child from several repetitive and difficult consultations with various organizations (Yeaman, 1986). Over time, the model/approach has involved several professionals in many investigations with inadequate assessments, limited resolved prosecutions and the lack of psychological and other care services in relation to the criminal-, and child care investigation (Newman, Dannenfelser, & Pendleton, 2005). Furthermore, the model involves the distribution of main services (medical investigations, psychological support, and juridical services) in a separate child friendly environment, acting as a multidisciplinary and multiagency team who cooperate in the investigation of abuse.

The fact that children's vulnerability to violence increased during the last decade made the Police Services, the National Board of Forensic Medicine, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Prosecution Service in Sweden commissioned by the Swedish Government later in 2005 to contribute to the establishment, as well as monitor and evaluate a "Barnahus" (Children's Advocacy Center, CAC) spread in different county councils in Sweden. The main purpose of the establishment is to improve collaboration between the professionals working with investigations of children who are suspected of being victims of domestic violence, such as physical, mental and sexual abuse, by contributing to a partnership under one specific organization, (see Appendices 11.3).

The model is not only seen as a well-developed qualification association (the National Children's Alliance), but is also used widely across the United States and Europe. The CAC-model, however, has not been well investigated (Miller & Rubin, 2009). In the mid-2000s, sequences of articles were published in an evaluation of CACs (Jones, Cross, Walsh & Simone, 2005). The articles were the most significant investigations addressing the outcomes of established centers operating in the United States. A number of other smaller measure

evaluations are often cited (Jenson, Jacobson, Unrau & Robinson, 1996), other than a brief explained review, which was published by the Nation Children's Advocacy, there has been no systematic review of the evidence that exists for the model. The goal of CACs is to reduce systematic abuse and improve access to support services. Despite those stated goals, the evaluations in connection with the above - have primarily assessed the criminal justice outcomes of CACs instead of the efficiency of health qualities for the child or families.

In the Swedish welfare state, collaboration is a concept that has continuously had a positive value; therefore, it is considered to be an instrument for solving problems in the public sector's various organization segments, where organizational actors interact with each other let go of their professional boundaries (Hjortsjö, 2005). The discrepancies between the professionals and their objectives in CAC clearly illustrate how differences appear in both distribution of challenging tasks and that various professions are regulated by diverging laws (The social board, 2013).

Individuals with the objective of working in the best interests of the children can in many cases come out contradictory in comparison with other professions depending on the perspective of the professional (Lalayants & Epstein, 2005). Children and their families that have been victims of violence or abuse will interact with various professional actors, each with their own set of instructions and power. The purpose of multi-disciplinary work, similar to the above, is to strengthen communication and collaborations between relevant professional actors, which in turn will minimize the risks for misunderstanding, duplication as well as them acting on different purposes (Newman, Dannenfelser & Pendleton, 2005). The objectives of these professions are high (Cross, 2001), and they work towards increasing the rates of successful prosecutions of sexual and physical abuse against children (Miller & Rubin, 2009). However, despite the ambitions of the professionals, and the fact that many of them use advanced models, a lack of a coherent theory on how to reach these objectives is visible (Herbert & Bromfield, 2016).

CAC is presented as a holistic response to child abuse, as a gestalt that creates positive outcomes for children, their families, and the community. CAC is also an institution that serves as a national initiative of the Swedish government, which directly affects the professionals in the work area of children at risk. Thus, it is interesting to study how, and if, collaboration that includes a specific working culture in CAC works. Where society's positive

view of collaboration is contrasted with the lack of critical examination and evidence, it is considered important to study those engaged in practical collaboration in CAC when determining if the work contributes to the best practices for children suffering abuse.

1.1 Aim of the thesis

This study will explore professionals' experiences of collaboration within various specific professional actors involved in child-interrogations and consultations at a Swedish CAC. Aiming to investigate and analyze the professional collaboration in relation to identifying organizational culture and the professional's varying investigation objectives.

1.2 Research Questions

How do specific professional actors experience conditions as either enabling or as a barrier to collaboration within this specific organizational culture?

How do specific professional actors experience the capability to achieve their own goals within their profession, in relation to collaboration requirements with other professional actors that have differencing investigative purposes?

How do specific professional actors experience the CAC model goal of achieving the best practices for children exposed to child abuse?

2. DEFINITIONS

In this section, recurrent concepts are presented to give the reader a clearer understanding of the study area, since the specific concepts can be difficult to understand for one that does not work within the public sector.

2.1 Exposure to child abuse

Exposure to child abuse is often a pattern of actions that can range from subtle actions to serious crime. More concretely, it is all about being subjected to rape or serious threats, for example. There are often combinations of physical, sexual and psychological violence. The different characteristics of child abuse can be explained through the definition of domestic violence described below (The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2018).

- Violence of a *physical* nature: to be pushed, held tight, dragged in the hair, beaten or kicked.
- Violence of a *sexual* nature: rape or other forced sexual acts, which the victim does not dare to refuse.
- Violence of a *psychological* nature: direct or indirect threat or ridicule. Even violence or threats against pets can be considered to affect the mental vulnerability of the individual.
- *Social* vulnerability: freedom constraints, such as isolation by being prevented from meeting relatives and friends or from participating in social activities.
- *Material* or *economical* vulnerability: the abuser destroys the victim's personal belongings intentionally. It can also mean that the victim is forced to sign their signature to papers that have negative consequences in the long run. Individuals that are dependent on care in their daily lives may also be subjected to neglect, such as drug retention or lack of nutritional diet (The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2018).

2.2 Target group for CAC

Children exposed to physical and sexual violence, describe the children that are common victims for the professionals, characterized as the target group or ideal victims and who mainly come to CAC for participating in a criminal investigation including child-interrogations. According to Christie (1986) "ideal victims" are those that are affected by the crime are more commonly given the "legitimate status" of victim, which means that the more ideal a victim is, the more ideal becomes offender. Images of "nonideal victims" show that prosecutor's decisions reject or accept cases that are focused on, among others, factors related

to the relationship between the victim and the offender and the victim's behavior and life. Children who witness violence are a target group that some CAC's include, others not. Since these children are not considered as defendants in the sense of the law, the children are also not set as defendants in the police's preliminary investigation even though these children have the right to crime compensation related to the exposure. Therefore, the children who witness domestic violence in their home-environment are not included in the Police investigation's statistical data even though initially there was an ambition to document when the police or social services drew attention to the child's witness of violence related to CAC (Kaldal, Diesen, Beije & Diesen, 2010). These children will not be included in the conducted analysis and characterized as nonideal victims.

2.3 The best interests of the child

The child convention has in recent decades influenced the society's view that all children have their own right and the right to wellbeing. The Convention of the Rights of the Child has resulted in involving children in authorities' activities to a greater extent based on the child's perspective. The United Nations (UN) adopted in 1989 the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which opened the possibility for a common agreement of countries. The Convention took effect in 1990 (the same year that Sweden signed the Convention) including the principle concerning the best interests of the child that should always come first in children's actions.

Article 3 of the Convention provides that:

In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration (United Nations Human Rights, 2018).

In order to implement the Children's Convention in the Swedish legislation, the principle of the best interests of the child has been introduced into different types of legislation. The Social Services Act, chapter 1, section 2, paragraph 1 (SFS 2001: 453) clarifies that: "In cases of measures that involves children, the best interests of the child shall be taken into account ". The principle is one of the Social Services Act's portal paragraphs, which means that it must be applied, regardless of other regulations in relation to all of the Additional Acts. The principle of the best interests of the child is a central part of the Swedish CAC as it constitutes

one of the National Police Board (2009) criteria that must be met, in order to make collaboration under a common roof possible.

3. BACKGROUND

The background section gives a presentation of the social work change, related to the CAC's purpose, growth and structure. This section also gives a clarified presentation of the laws and regulations that are relevant within CACs characterized by the involved professions.

3.1 Social work and Children's Advocacy Center

From a historical point of view, social work has changed since the first half of the 20th century, and been recognized as a basic knowledge center characterized by ethical competence, optimistic solutions to social issues, the safeguarding of healthy families and societies, and the intervention between the excluded and usual. This, unlike the previous period when social work knowledge centre confronted a shifting social, political and economic climate, with innovative technical improvements, and professional responsibility which at that time was focused around the necessity to improve child protection interventions (Parton, 2008). As a result, social work practice has become an organization of service that now prioritizes protection, trustworthiness and standardization (Parton, 2008). The increased support of neoliberal principles has additionally consequences for clinical social work practice. Under neoliberal programs the significances of organizations change, which has an effect on social work. It has been experiences that neoliberal programs create rivalry instead of solidarity, budget constraints, reduced personal and limited management. For this reason, social work has become defenseless and vulnerable because of the reliance on the use of professional managers panning the activity, the decrease of the social welfare state, the requirement to fulfill the bureaucracy and limiting resources for managing risk (Rogowski, 2013). It can be stated that social work has been too engaged with risk, which creates significant consequences in practice, as risk management, risk assessment, and risk prevention have become unified in clinical social work practice. The increased anxiety about risk is seen

as a result of the ambiguity of the shifting social and economic background and is a managing response to these types of changes (Parton, 2008).

When a child becomes a victim of a crime, it is particularly important that the welfare system of social safety is working, which requires great responsibility on professionals working with this target group. This is important, not only on the basis of insight into what it means from a child's perspective to be a victim of a crime, but also from a legal and social perspective. Children have long been virtually excluded from court, which can be seen as both positive and negative. According to the Swedish legislation, children must be positively discriminated against the guise of being a victim or a perpetrator. It can be interpreted that Sweden has ratified the convention on the rights of the child (CRC) based on the best interests of the child by avoiding the child from being involved in court. However, this approach has resulted in the lowest solved crimes against children in Sweden in comparison to other countries in Europe (Diesen, 2005). Thus, CAC has an important role to play. Offering children a child-oriented environment will result in better interrogations, which could increase the chances of a case being taken to court (Nilsson, 2003).

It was not until the 1940s that researchers began to focus on victims. The emergence of the victim discourse has dominated the Swedish debate about criminality since the 1980s and has played a major role in crime policy (Nilsson, 2003). The focus in victimology has mainly revolved around the "most" vulnerable groups in the society, one of which is children. In recent years, the focus has also included "new" groups that are affected by the crimes as indirect victims, such as children who have witnessed domestic violence. To be a child and a victim is complicated from several aspects. As a child, the individual is weak in several situations. The child is directly dependent on the adults around them from many aspects, such as from a verbal and social standpoint and from a legal aspect due to their lack of legal capacity (Diesen, 2005).

Unlike the past, collaboration is not considered optional but rather as necessary. It has emerged a dependent relationship between the welfare state's various parts. The legislation in some cases emphasizes the importance of working together (Danermark & Kullberg, 1999). Danermark (2000) describes that collaboration can take various forms, depending on what the collaboration revolves around. It refers to a collaboration concerning people shaped by aspects other than, for example, technical work. It is partly about individuals having emotions that could affect the character of the collaboration. Professionals within the human services

interact with people to a greater extent than other industries may do, which means that people have different opinions and views on how to define the same problem. It is assumed that these professionals highlight different perspectives which can be enriching and rewarding when it works because people can see entirely different factors. However, the different perspectives also pose a risk for difficulties due to the fact that in practice, different competence can take precedence because of the educational status, which may lead to a lack of respect or sensitivity between the parties (Danermark, 2000). Further, the holistic approach is something that speaks of interdisciplinary cooperative teams that many times is pursued institutionally. A positive aspect of the teams is an increased knowledge dissemination followed by increased skills for all professionals involved (Thylefors, 2007).

Multi-disciplinary child abuse teams (MDT) include a variety of cross-disciplinary corporations between professional groups responsible for parts of the reaction to child abuse, characteristically constructed to advance information contribution and management between professional actors. MDT is an approach initially established out of a longing to reduce the negative influences of the criminal justice on children (Yeaman, 1986) laterally with improving criminal justice results and a concentration on increasing the distribution of support services (Jones, Cross, Walsh & Simone, 2007). Although there is a significant disparity across CACs, there are some similar approaches across centers, internationally (Jackson, 2004). Children's Advocacy Center or the Swedish name, Barnahus developed from the CAC model, adapted to fit the social welfare tradition of the Nordic countries that approved this approach. CACs involve a consultation under the supervision of a court judge that is observed by each of the professional actors involved in responding to the case (Kaldal, et al., 2010). This consultation is considered equal to court witness for any future court proceedings, which means that the child does not need to testify another time. MDTs are institutionalized within the standard legal response to physical and sexual abuse, with frameworks for different professional actors to share information and collaborate on casework (Rasmusson, 2011).

3.2 Laws and regulations

When a crime against a child is committed or suspected of being committed, there are several professionals within the public sector involved in Sweden. Cases related to CAC are

characterized of a more serious nature, such as suspicion of physical, mental or sexual abuse (Åström & Rejmer, 2008). The cooperating authorities have different starting points and governance based on legislation, which affect the work of the respective professional in CAC. While some professionals are responsible for investigations concerning the committed crime, others are responsible for ensuring the child's health, safety, development and well-being. The work of the social services is governed by, for example, the Social Services Act (2001:453) and the Administration Act (1986:223), while the judiciary's work is regulated by the police act (1984:387) and the Swedish Code of Procedure (Kaldal et al., 2010). CAC has no legislation or regulation that is specifically designed for the CAC as an organization. However, confidentiality provisions (2009:400) give the different professionals the opportunity to share relevant information in children's cases (Kaldal et al., 2010). Among other things, the Social Services Act, Chapter 5, 1a§, such as the Health Act 2f§ (1982:763), the Administration Act 6§ and the Police Act 6§ contain the concept of required collaboration especially when a child is suspected of being a victim of child abuse.

4. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Collaboration within social care services and health care can be theorized with a swarm of perspectives and there are some theories related with collaboration. The main concepts that occur related to the complex social phenomenon of collaboration within CAC are in this section presented in the terms of: *collaboration between justice and care, concerns about role conflicts, improvement areas and organizational culture.*

4.1 Justice and care

Research proposes that it is of great importance to understand how each CAC operates internationally. A study conducted by Jenson, Jacobson, Unrau and Robinson (1996) observed three CACs in the state of Utah and in what way collaboration amongst service workers affected client experience and involvement. The authors interviewed non-offending parents directly after they had been at a CAC as well as three months later. The reports indicate that

parents initially felt well supported by CAC professionals and the services they established, but the parent's gratification and emotional state of support decreased in the following interview (Jenson et al. 1996). The study recommended that more complete follow-up services might be needed if the violence is confirmed allowing care for families during the extended and multifaceted investigative and criminal justice process (Jenson et al. 1996). Researchers also studied child satisfaction in this study, and 64% of children conveyed high fulfillment with CAC support and services, while 28% reported reasonable satisfaction and 8% reported emotion "bad" or "very bad" after visiting the CAC (Jenson et al. 1996). This is one of the earliest studies investigating the effect of CACs on the clients they assisted.

International literature plays an important role towards collaboration between justice and care, referring to the dissolution of professional confidentiality. Professionals within CAC often feel powerless when they are limited to their own methods. This is as a result of insufficient information and decision alternatives (Opdebeck & Put, 2017). However, the study of Opdebeck and Put (2007) also highlights that the decision-making process has seen an enhancement manifested in the sharing of information, expertise, experience and responsibility among the relevant professionals. The deliberation, however, is not free from faults, as it suffers from something Opdebeck and Put refer to as a number of "child diseases". Possibilities to breach the strict sets of rules regarding professional confidentiality are very limited. There are, however, "grey areas", in which the professional integrity of involved parties is risked. In particular, this affects the prosecution as information shared from the juridical system is of very precarious nature, and could be ruled as a procedural mistake in a court case. Although care workers are not per se crossing the legal boundaries of their profession by participating, it can have a damaging impact on their relations with clients, as there is neither a prescribed nor shared understanding on the core information-sharing ethics, but rather a condition of the need to know. The lack of a flawless information sharing structure can further produce the planning to develop a subjective process. Another important issue is the lack of feedback after the planning, something found to be problematic in Opdebeck and Put's (2017) project – particularly feedback from the prosecutor to care workers, because of the care workers' need of supplementary information to enable the adaption of care measures taken in judiciary level.

Goodwin and Wright (2009) describe the process of decision-making as something deriving from a decision-making methodology. If such a methodology were to not exist, the process could be exposed to human influences. These human influences could lead to human mistakes

or procedural errors, which in turn may have an effect on the closing decision, or at least the perception of the closing decision to a person that does not belong to the group. According to Opdebeck and Put, relevant professionals' collaboration will lead professionals to more quickly establish safety for involved children. Wolfteich and Loggins (2007) have examined a large number of child abuse and malnutrition cases in their quantitative study. Cross-professional working models, including different professional competences showed more effectiveness in investigations and completion of investigations than traditional child protection models. The researchers emphasize that this may be due to the faster process that takes place in interviews and gathering information in cases where the work is organized with various professional influences. However, the researchers argue that it does not necessarily lead to more concrete decisions, which would improve the results for families in the long run. According to the researchers, it is important to study cross-professional processes in general, rather than the success of the CAC-model in itself (Wolfteich & Loggins, 2007). Kaldal et al. (2010) also points out that it is not the CAC-model itself that occurs to be the significant factor, but rather the collaborative form with different skills and practices under a common roof that determines the quality.

4.2 Concerns about role conflicts

Mental health professionals involved in CACs serve multiple roles, both providing children with mental health treatment and also serving as (a) forensic evaluators of reports of abuse and (b) collaborators with criminal justice and child protection professionals on gathering evidence for court actions. This has proven to create a role conflict, since the mental health professionals are treatment providers. The court actions referred to include criminal prosecution of child abuse and civil court actions regarding child placement, custody, visitation, and other decisions about the child (Melton & Kimbrough-Melton, 2006). Connell (2008) also argue that role conflicts interfere with mental health professionals' responsibility to provide effective and ethical mental health services.

Melton and Kimbrough-Melton explain their concern about role conflict as follows:

Because of their presumed skill in interviewing children, the mental health professionals may conduct many or all of the investigatory interviews on which CPS [child protective services], police and prosecutors rely. Even when mental health professionals in such settings do not themselves conduct the investigatory interviews, they are likely to participate as team members in prosecutorial decision-making, and information that they gather in therapeutic interviews may be used in the team process. Thus, clinicians directly or indirectly participate in the gathering of evidence to determine, among other possible

decisions, whether child maltreatment has occurred, a dependency petition will be filed in family court, criminal or juvenile charges will be brought against a suspect, the child will be placed into an emergency shelter or foster care, restrictions will be placed on the child's contact with parents, or both. Besides often acting directly as therapists and advocates to help alleviate a crisis, mental health professionals become actively engaged as prosecutorial investigators and decision makers. (p. 36)

Kimbrough-Melton (2006) expresses concerns about two different possible consequences of role conflicts: First, if a mental health professional becomes concerned with gathering evidence and helping the prosecution make its case (whether for conviction and incarceration of an incestuous father or civil adjudication of abuse, placement of the child in foster care, and ultimately termination of parental rights), will the clinician's ability to function as a therapist for the child or the family be compromised? Indeed, will law enforcement activities compromise that mental health professional's ability—or even other professional's ability—to help other children and families? Second, will the adoption of a clear stance of children's advocate compromise mental health professionals' ability to act as unbiased experts? Fallor and Palusci (2007), express that more results in prosecution is a primary goal of the CAC movement. Connell (2009) then warns of the conflict between mental health professionals' need to be neutral and objective regarding the questioning of alleged abuse and CACs' interest in prosecution. Cornell (2009) highlight that there may be an inherent bias toward perceiving children as victims of abuse in an environment charged with protecting children by increasing prosecutions. If this bias exists, a child who has not been abused may be caught in a situation where denial of abuse is less likely to be believed. The central concern with the CAC model is the fundamental problems of diverse goals of the disciplines represented in CAC. As Melton and Kimbrough-Melton (2006) noted, there may be inherent problems in combining advocacy efforts with truth seeking, particularly when increased prosecutions measure the success of working for the best practices for children.

In conclusion, it seems that CAC multidisciplinary models remained related with a greater occurrence of validated child neglect than the traditional child protection model. This result is not unexpected assumed that these models contain more complete, interdisciplinary investigations. Studies show that when professionals collaborate during child abuse investigations, there is a testified increase in the sharing of information and a wider variety of studied perspectives which eventually leads to more cooperative decision making on cases regarding consequences such as evidence, child placement and treatment alternatives (Kolbo & Strong, 1997). In totaling, it should be acknowledged that only the most unembellished and

multifaceted cases are qualified for CACs and these cases may be more effortlessly verified due to the probability of physical findings and stronger evidence in overall.

The multidisciplinary model was examined and closed more hastily than the traditional child protection model even when controlling for abuse brutality. One hypothesis is that investigations progress more quickly when the consultation and data gathering process is efficient with little repetition of services through organizations. Although decreasing the quantity of period children and families remain in the child protection system is important, this study did not state whether faster case-closure unavoidably leads to more correct results and enhanced positive endings for families (Wolfteich & Loggins, 2007)

4.3 Proposed developments in CAC's

It is proposed that a new regulation should be introduced regarding the confidentiality legislation of CAC's professionals to facilitate collaboration, also to review the confidentiality of the different authorities (Landberg & Svedin, 2012). Johansson (2011) also highlights the confidentiality legislation as a factor that separate professions in CAC though the professionals are governed by specific legislation of their own organization. The confidentiality legislation has different strengths, which implies another stress ratio, in this case, linked to the provisions governing collaboration. The confidentiality prevents in that way disclosure of documents as well as information transformation (Johansson, 2011; Åström & Rejmer, 2008).

In accordance with the Public and Privacy Act (SFS: 2009: 400), each case must be tested when an information exchange is planned in advance. Thus, the confidentiality prevents professional actors within CAC from generally exchanging information with each other. Therefore, confidentiality assessments must always take place before information exchanges between organizations during consultations. Åström and Rejmer (2008) found that different CACs in Sweden have different views and interpretations on whether regulation and confidentiality are perceived as a collaboration problem. Another stress ratio in the work of vulnerable children that Johansson (2011) addresses is the duty of social services to provide protection and support for children in relation to the responsibility for cooperating with the juridical system to provide conditions for speeding up the criminal investigation. Thus, the researcher eliminates assessment difficulties when the best interests of the child must be met, which is important to clarify since it is a leading principle for all involved professions in CAC

but also because of proper legislation (Johansson, 2011) Åström and Rejmer (2008) also stress that a challenge in the judicial system is a lack of focus on the child. The authors describe that there is a difficulty in enabling the child to speak, and thereby being able to convey his or her rights. Improvement areas that turned out to be important for CAC resulted in improving the police education, which included child-interrogation, and requiring prosecutors to be continuously educated in dealing with child abuse cases (Åström & Rejmer, 2008).

Newman et al. (2005) points out that CAC facilitates collaboration in the form of direct communication between different authorities. In Rasmusson's (2011) study, parents describe the same experience of communication. Their views on professionals' collaboration in the same environment were generally perceived as positive. The parents, however, pointed out how professionals' relations to each other were experienced as insecure in cases where authorities took different positions because of their different perspectives (Rasmusson, 2011).

Newman et al. (2005) shows that a good effect of professional experience of CAC was good working relationships and continuous consultations. A positive aspect of the team consultations was a continuous improvement in the working methods, which was found to result in quality assurance (Newman et al., 2005). Through qualitative telephone interviews, police and social workers, have reported another important factor that proved and significant for the professionals' positive view of the use of CAC, which was its child-friendly environment. It was motivated, inter alia, that in addition to the child's increased comfort or reduction of the trauma, the chances of true information in the interviews could be enhanced (Newman et al., 2005). The importance of a child-friendly environment can be found in Rasmusson's (2011) qualitative study where children and parents interviewed their experiences of CAC in Sweden. The study describes how children described the environment at CAC better and safer than in previous interviews at police stations (Rasmusson, 2011). The more relaxed environment gave the children the opportunity to more easily communicate about their experiences, which can be regenerated in (Cross et al. 2008; Faller & Palusci, 2007) results. The study focused on whether or not disclosure of abuse was related to services for children that were victims of abuse. However, it was revealed that age was the most important aspect as to whether children disclosed abuse or not, whose results showed that both the youngest and the oldest categories of children were more probable to disclose abuse than other children (Cross et al. 2007). This was a significant finding since disclosure is vital to child sexual abuse investigations where there is regularly no witness and no physical

evidence of abuse (Cross et al. 2008). Forensic interviews are another important process of CAC, where specialized professionals' interview and validate the truth to a claim of child abuse (Cross et al. 2007). A starting point is to minimize the number of interviews that children are required to partake in. Forensic interviews were specifically analyzed rather than child welfare risk assessments of primary disclosure of abuse in order to define the specific types of interviews that are conducted at CACs. The findings showed that there was no unique difference between the amount of time children were interviewed at CACs and in comparison with other children in similar situations (Cross et al. 2007). The results were also reliable with earlier literature which highlights that it is best practice to use the same interviewer if more than one interview with a child is needed (Cross et al. 2007). It is extensively known that there is a risk of re-traumatization because of repetitive interviewing (Cross et al. 2008). However, it is important to separate that using numerous interviewers may do more damage than numerous interviews with the same interviewer because the second can be seen as a furtherance of the same initial interview (Cross et al. 2007).

Child-friendly environment has according to Newman et al., (2005), an advantage over traditional working models, since it is characterized by cross-professional working structures and methods for children. A cross-professional approach can create quality advance in investigations, decrease trauma and increase the capabilities for families' struggles. The interview expertise and the overall professional expertise are other benefits of CAC that contribute to efficient efforts , consequently decreasing the risk of developing issues between community organizations (Newman et al., 2005).

Tavkar and Hansen (2011) studied the effect that child abuse investigations have on child victims and their non-offending caregivers, in order to recommend support services that CACs should offer. The authors found that mental health supports for victims of child abuse play an important role in CACs, since they create a relationship and build connection with service receivers (Tavkar & Hansen, 2011). The results showed that victims of child abuse and their families are more likely to use mental health supports when recommendations are made from a familiar source (Tavkar & Hansen, 2011). Another notification was that mental health services are ideal since CACs are designed to have a child-friendly environment. One recommendation was that mental health services should be provided at all CACs and that collaboration between mental health professionals at CACs and other mental health organizations must be reinforced (Tavkar & Hansen, 2011). However, it must be highlighted that a lack of a cooperative approach in relation to a careful attitude of the professionals

involved, as well as the built-in collaboration requirements, can prevent the formation of an alliance too strong between justice and care (Opdebeck and Put, 2017).

4.4 Organizational culture

In organizational literature, organizational culture and climate have their distinct definitions but became frequently indistinguishable in their application in the 1990's (Glisson, 2007). However, the concepts have had a function in the social context of an organization; climate is explained as the eldest form of these two concepts - as an observable measurable phenomenon (Glisson, 2007), and organizational culture is understood from its explanations about the underlying systems that contributes to the organization's function (Schein, 1990). Instead of basically concentrating on the process, individuals become conscious of their work environment, as organizational climate is understood (Glisson, 2007). Organizational culture signifies to shared beliefs, norms and behavioral expectations that motivate performance or behavior and highlight the main values in organizations. These beliefs and expectations are the starting point for socializing colleagues in how to behave and interact within an organization and create a social environment that forms the attitude, the state of satisfaction, and the objectives of the work achieved within the organization (Hemmelgarn, Glisson & James, 2002).

Previous research shows that organizational culture has a predominant influence on social workers in the public sector (Hemmelgarn, Glisson & James, 2002). The significant aspects of organizational culture contain: character or role expectations and processes, organization undertaking reports, organization policy and working hours (Project Management Institute, 2004). It is stressed that some factors of culture will lack, like working instruction, policy document or mission state. For this reason, specific individuals within the organization often hold these factors. Regardless of the assessment of subjectivity, individual perceptions and meaning are important in the sense it gives an understanding of an organization's culture (Glisson, 2007). The concept of culture is peculiar in the sense that much of it occurs in the hidden room and produces powerful implications and influence (Schein, 2010). Furthermore, an organization's culture can also be understood by interactions/communications between subcultures; a group within the larger culture, frequently explained as having different beliefs than the individuals that are included in the larger culture or a group characterized of similarities in the organization's group members, with shared responsibilities or

organizational experiences. Subcultures, thus demonstrate complexity as they show discrepancy and distinction from the larger culture (Schein, 2010).

As an alternative of stressing hierarchical and bureaucratic constructions, many researchers mention organizational culture, norms and identity as a system of control (Kärreman & Alvesson 2004). Maanen and Kunda (1989) also focus on how culture can perform as a control mechanism

For many, 'culture' replaces 'structure' as an organizing principle and is used both to explain and guide action [...] In essence, we regard conscious managerial attempts to build, sustain, and elaborate culture in organizations as a relatively subtle yet powerful form of organizational control [...] It is powerful because it seemingly aims at a deeper level of employee compliance (i.e, emotional) than other forms of control (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989:72, 88).

However, the researchers stress that culture as a control mechanism does not repeatedly have to change other systems, such as bureaucracy, but can occur similarly in other systems of control. Alvesson (2004) highlight that though the theoretical discourse of knowledge-intensive organizations in general expects flattened living organizations over hierarchy and bureaucracy, empirical evidence show that this does not usually characterize the reality. There are visibly separated responsibilities in strong hierarchical systems that can lead to an intellect of identity awareness. One characterization is that it can generate security for the specific individuals in the organization (Ekstedt & Jönsson, 2001; Fayol, 1950). There are other researchers who state the opposite, even if the above explanation can be categorized as positive. Lind and Svärd (2004) stress that the hierarchical systems are now substituted by other organizational systems or structures working in a more counterproductive horizontal direction rather than a vertical direction which effectively helps the client. This, mostly since the organizations are slow since employees unclear of their role and responsibility as a part of the broader picture, issues are passed on higher in the hierarchy, which can lead to information loss when passing through several levels in the professional order. There is limited movement left beyond the determined role, since the individuals in strict hierarchical organizations have specific responsibilities. Thus, organizations are flatter with less decision levels and less executive roles, which means that new responsibilities of the employees' have to be developed for the organization to survive. This means that flat organizations create opportunities for employee role development (Ekstedt & Jönsson 2001). Notably, the concepts of flat organizations are characterized by lack of vertical hierarchy levels (Bruzelius and Skärvad, 2017).

Flat organizations can thus be described as an organizational form with limited hierarchical levels involving unilateral information; lines of communication between different parts of the organizational form are decentralized and limited creating an indistinct flow of information (Ekstedt and Jönsson, 2001; Lind and Skärvad, 2004). The participants of organizational forms similar to this are generally characterized as higher educated and require that the individuals take on greater demands. The professional actors are normally bounded at another organizational place, but frequently involved separately in different impermanent project or with what Packendorff (1995) define as permanent-focused temporary organizational forms. Temporary projects are from Ekstedt and Jönssons (2001) view, effective since they allow for an expansion of expertise, which supports efficiency and even development. For the system to function, it requires another type of leadership in comparison to what hierarchical organizations use.

5. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

In this section, theoretical concepts are presented based on the main chosen theory - new institutional theory, characterized by the sociological institutionalism with selected parts because the whole theory is not suitable for the studied area.

Starting with (Hudgson, 2006) definition of institutions as socially systems of rules, it is evident that organizations are a specific kind of institutions with supplementary structures. Organizations are special institutions that include principles to create their boundaries and to decide their members from nonmembers, values of dominance concerning who is in charge, and limitations of expertise defining responsibilities within the organization. CAC in this Master's project is defined as a specific organization; a kind of institution with specific professional members holding certain expertise for working against child abuse, therefore it is considered relevant to interpret the organizational structure will be interpreted on the basis of the sociological new institutional theory.

5.1 INSTITUTIONAL THEORY - general elements

Johansson (2006) describes that the sociological new institutionalism has been founded by, inter alia, John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan, defining institutional requirements. The Swedish design of organizational analysis in the field of new institutionalism will be further described based on the reasoning of Grapes (2006) and Johansson (2002; 2006). Unlike Meyer and Rowans (1977), the Swedish development of theory has, to a certain extent, retained the importance of the American sociological new institutionalism the individual organization as an actor. Unlike the American view of the theory, the Swedish development has also taken into account actors' possibility for action, although it is still considered as limited. This compared to the American design of the theory that completely disregards this (Johansson, 2002). The sociological new institutionalism is not entirely consistent when it comes to finding a definite concept of institution or what constitutes an institution's most central feature. On the other hand, the concept of institution is in one overall way expressed as an established and organized procedure, or structure considered to be founded by rules, conscious as unconscious as in principle taken for granted. The existence of an institution implies that it is an accepted way of dealing with and implementing what the institution intends to accomplish. Thus, it is a given approach that is not in principle questioned (Johansson, 2002). In selecting theoretical starting points, the focus was on finding suitable theory that concerns organizations and interaction in relation to the purpose and research questions of the study. When CAC consists of a number of cooperating organizations concerning a specified area, the sociological new institutional theory and the Swedish design of the theory seemed appropriate. The concepts chosen from the theory, institutional requirements, organizational fields and organization domains were considered relevant because they illustrate what influences an organization's structure as well as the processes that take place between organizations like those in CAC.

The theoretical framework of new institutionalism focuses on principles identified as rules in organizations and informal links that shape decision-making, Grubovic Liljana argues (2004). Such focus demands an increase measure of the formal or legal analysis of organizations to embrace the informal characteristic that manages and identifies them. This can be further explained from Lowndes (2001) argumentation:

The institutionalists concern themselves with informal conventions as well as formal rules and structures, they pay attention to the way in which institutions embody values and power relationships, and they study not just the impact of institutions upon

behavior, but the interaction between individuals and institutions. (Lowndes, 2001 p. 1953)

5.2 Institutional requirements

Meyer and Rowan (1977) assume that institutionalization is a social process that creates a definition of the social reality which individuals are influenced by. The individuals in organizations are thus shaped by the surroundings. This overall view of reality, in turn, contributes to the fact that different social contexts are surrounded by rules, both informal and formal, which determines the actions being acceptable. Furthermore, the rules are described as factors that affect structures in organizations when organizations correct and conform to institutional requirements, ie institutions are formed when they adapt to cultural and social requirements. The institutional requirements arise in the environment around organizations because of specific documents that are expected to be carried out in the most appropriate way within a certain organizational structure. These include legislation, politicians and public opinion flows that may affect what the institutional requirements are about. This means that the kind of organizational structure that follows the requirements is considered legitimate, almost regardless of what a review would show of the effectiveness of practical work. It is thus important for an organization to aim for achieving one structural equality with the so-called institutional requirements. Structural uniformity is of importance to the organization as it gains greater legitimacy and increases its resource and survival capacity (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

One element used in the analysis of institutions is the regulative element, which is associated with the legally enforced and systematic aspects of institutions. This element provides the regulatory guidelines, procedures and rules. Scott (2008) adds that the regulative pillar deals with the processes of rule setting and monitoring and sanctioning activities. The regulations shape or provide directives for decisions that about to be taken during the enforcement of an action. In the provision of directives strict rules might be established at the same time as rewards for passivity and sanctions for non-passivity might be induced. Enforcement for compliance might come from within the institution or from an outsider who has the responsibility for making sure that things are done according to the rules.

The normative aspect is the second element for analyzing institutions, which act with the role of values and norms relation to prospects and duties. Values comes from the sense of what is

ideal or necessary composed with the structure of existing standards or actions that can be competed to and measured by (Scott, 2008). In comparison, norms identify how actions should be performed and define how legal aspects follow valued results. Obligation is thus the main fundament of an institution in the definition of the normative pillar, though the normative element defines objects and projects suitable ways to practice them (Scott, 2008).

The third element is the cultural-cognitive one, which draws on the idea that social actors act because they attach meanings to their actions. This element considers the social reality and how culture in one way or another influences our knowledge and actions (Scott, 2008). In addition to the objective approach to institutions there is another subjective view concerning those who are within the organization. Individual actors within institutions bring different meanings into the organization through interaction within the society. According to Scott (2008), meanings arise in interaction and are maintained and transformed as they are employed to make sense of the ongoing stream of happenings. It is possible that the meaning brought by the individuals may interfere with actions within an organization.

5.3 Organizational arenas

In a development of the sociological new institutional theory, focus was shifted from individual organizations to organizational fields (Johansson, 2006). In the Swedish context, it is described that an organizational field is not based on a fixed existence but is created by the notion that some organizations belong in any way, usually because of a common area of work. The different organizations work in a common area of activity while forming their specific part of the institutional area. An organizational field can therefore be described as organizations with a coherent view that they are active in the same institutional activities. The advocates of the organizational analysis of new institutionalism emphasize that organizations do not lose the importance of the organization as their own actor, unlike how the American school has been designed. However, they think, like the American school, that there is a search for a similarity with other organizations, still, they argue, unlike the Americans, that organizations also strive to be unique. This means that organizations within organizational fields can differ from one another despite a relationship (Johansson, 2002; Johansson, 2006). Johansson (2002) has focused on the different organizations within the same field with the Swedish design of the new institutional theory, which emphasis on which processes, among other things, contribute to the organizations being either in agreement or variation within the

field. In that way, it determines which field one organization belongs to characterized by the specific work. The organizational field thus constitutes a collective frame of reference where the coherent view of the different organizations in the same area is what determines whether the field is held together. As the organizational fields can be viewed as socially designed, there are no given limits. They may therefore adjust accordingly, new fields may arise and old ones may desolve. What's changing is not about interaction, but about ideas and notions that some organizations seem to have a relationship. Field formation can take place on different premises and through different features, a more compelling premise for creating a field is through legislation (Johansson, 2002).

Grape (2006) highlights that organizational fields may contain business areas underlying organizational collaboration based on organizational analysis in new institutionalism. This common denominator of collaboration is referred to as a domain of activity and within the organizational fields there may be actors in organizations based on different premises. Organizational actors can deal with different wishes, hopes, laws, sets of goals, and different conditions that create different approaches within the same organizational domain. These various claims may in turn be contradictory to each other, which are then referred to as a domain conflict. If, on the other hand, there is a correspondence between the different organizations within the same area of activity, it is referred to as a domain consensus. In order to reach a domain consensus, certain barriers must be dealt with. It is partly about how a collaborative organization should achieve a common view of different domain languages. This consensus is thus considered as a promotional factor for success in the integrated work (Grape, 2006).

Johansson (2002) emphasizes that the critical attitude that accompanies the sociological institutional theory primarily refers to the fact that, in principle, unconscious beliefs are thought to be deciding actions within organizations. This entails a passive view of the actors in organizations, which in turn are not considered as having space for their own interests, strategies and conflicts of interest. Thus, there will be no subjective action within organizations without the theory of consequences of organizations taking place automatically without the own influence of the actors, as the Swedish design has taken into account. Another criticism is that the theory is multidimensional, which implies difficulties in definitions, for example in the concept of the institution (Johansson, 2002).

6. METHOD AND MATERIAL

In the method section, the approach that forms the basis for the study's design, structure and how the study was conducted is presented under the headings below. Strengths and limitations of the study are also discussed in this section.

6.1 Philosophical stance

The current Master's project is inspired by a phenomenographic research stance as a complement tool for the analysis of the professionals' experiences of collaboration, specifically in multi-disciplinary professional practice. The main objective of the research approach is to analyze and understand the nature of the differences of experiencing a certain phenomenon. Phenomenography focuses on individual's qualitatively varied ways of thinking about the phenomenon itself through individual perceptions (Dahlgren & Fallsberg, 1991; Marton, 1997). Furthermore, an individual's understanding and experience of a certain phenomenon are related with the ability to act, and individuals are seen as —characters of opposing ways of experiencing that phenomenon (Marton & Booth, 1997). Processes that contribute the choice of a research approach may vary likely on a number of problems counting the philosophical statements about knowledge generation. Authors may approach a study qualitatively or quantitatively, and this study is characterized by a qualitative approach though exact quantitatively characteristics of the social phenomena stated in statistics are missing (See King and Hoorocks, 2010). From an ontological and epistemological view, it is relevant, firstly, on what we think exists “out there” to be exposed and, secondly, on what phenomena we choose to separate and legitimate as facts. This is important to take into account since there is a lack of evidence that is wealth and social inequalities, which create health inequalities for vulnerable children being exposed to crimes such as physical, mental and sexual abuse. The paper conveys the message that words and ideas, and the discourses that deliver them, matter. Words matter since we use them to imagine and express a language that turns into a sociological reality. They matter because the way we name things and discuss what shape our feelings, judgments, choices, and actions. Also, words and ideas can create a critical discussion that prevents demagoguery from occurring and prevailing in society (Reich, 1988).

6.2 Preunderstanding

It is important to consider the own preunderstanding when formulating the main problem of the study (Hartman, 2003). The author describes that all research is characterized by the researcher's previous knowledge of the subject and it is therefore important to strive for a nuanced subjective approach built on relevance in the choice of the phenomena being studied, the pursuit of validity in conclusions, neutrality and balance between respecting other perspectives beyond the author's own. An advanced knowledge on the subject can lead to a lack of research in the subject area (Hartman, 2003). Before the start of the study, the author undertaking the study has in various contexts been in contact (CAC) activities. During the previous visits, CAC was emphasized in positive terms when presented by those who worked there, however, improvement areas were also highlighted -which pre-knowledge may have affected the pre-understanding related to this current Master's project. Overall, with the reading done around the research area, it has been preferable to have pre-knowledge about the subject though it facilitated the search for empirical material and previous research. The participants' answers could easily be understood, since the author is familiar with the subject; however the author did not let the subjective view of the problem affect the participant's answers, which mean that the author could adopt a nuanced subjective approach when conducting the study; meaning they knew how to both use their knowledge of the subject area but also how to disengage their opinions and views on this subject.

6.3 Design

This section defines the methods acknowledged in the present study in order to achieve the aim and the answer the research questions of the thesis. To accomplish it, this Master's project is conducted by a qualitative approach and is characterized as a case study that aims to investigate perceptions of collaboration in the context of a Swedish Children's advocacy center. A case study means that a specific event or a specific phenomenon is examined, which processes an event, social group or institution (Merriam, 1994).

As the study aims to investigate the experiences of the professions involved in how collaboration work, it was considered relevant to interview all the professions concerned, the coordinator included. The intention was to create an understanding of the experiences of the professionals, which in turn can generate a holistic view of how the interaction works in the studied CAC. CAC consists of co-operation actors with different responsibilities the police

are responsible for the crime, the social services for protection, the physician for physical health, the psychologist for mental health, the prosecutor for the judicial process and the coordinators are responsible for coordinating the activities (Landberg & Svedin, 2013). However, since it was difficult to find respondents, the study is missing perceptions of a medical doctor, police and a lawyer. The empirical data was thus completed with interviews of three social workers, two prosecutors, one coordinator and a psychologist. However, the empirical data could still contribute to a holistic view since the professionals from the mental health services, social services and the juridical system with different investigation objectives were included, which concluded the differences of professionals experiencing certain issues affecting collaboration.

A distinction was made to seven semi-structured interviews with a variation of the questions' order (Bryman, 2012). Since the included professionals were working within the judiciary, mental health sector and the social services – the main different investigative objectives that obligates the professionals' certain responsibilities in CAC, were still covered. Jacobsen (2012) highlights the importance of the useful information in relation to the study's problem formulation as of greater relevance than the quantity of interviews. Kvale and Brinkmann (2014) also state that the quality is of greater importance than quantity when it comes to the quantity of interviews in studies like this. Based on these premises it was considered appropriate to ensure that the selected respondents possess the knowledge sought in relation to the purpose of the study (Bryman, 2011).

To begin with the author conducting this study contacted the coordinator of the proposed CAC in the initial phase of the study. The coordinator was attached an informational letter explaining the purpose of the study and the ethical aspects (see appendices 11.2). Further, the coordinator helped the author conducting this study to send a participation-request to professionals within CAC, which resulted in seven interviews. The professionals consisted of 1 man and six women. The study's selection of professionals is very similar to a targeted selection. A targeted selection means that significant interviewees are selected by the researcher, who will answer the study's questions (Bryman, 2012). The purpose and issues of the present study focus on a specific CAC for vulnerable children, so a targeted selection must meet certain criteria for the specific field of study. A criterion in the present study is that the participants would work on the specific CAC. A targeted selection is therefore a "non-probability selection", which means that everyone does not have the same opportunity to participate in the study, (Bryman, 2011). By examining only a specific working group in an

organization, based on a targeted selection, the result cannot be statistically generalized, but analytical generalized since the organization can be compared to another organization with the same structure.

6.4 Data collection

The interviews were characterized by main themes and follow-up questions (see Appendices 10.1). Interview questions varied between interviews, the order was changed and questions were asked to get deeper and clearer answers. The Interview Guide was designed by specific themes based on the present purpose and issues that the empirical material intended to answer. Kvale and Brinkmann (2014) explain that thematization can be based on how the research questions have been formulated, as well as how the results of these are presented. The study guide included supplementary questions specified under each theme, which was formulated on the basis of the understanding of the chosen previous research that highlighted main core problems that were reformulated to themes. The design of the interview guide, and its suitability and intelligibility was examined through a "pilot interview" with a colleague who is active in social work. Kvale and Brinkmann (2014) highlight the benefits of a pilot interview, enabling the researcher to practice the interview method and to increase the sense of security for the upcoming interview. An additional advantage is that the researcher has the opportunity to reformulate the order of research questions (Bryman, 2011). Following the implementation of the pilot interview and the supervisor's guidance in the design, some adjustments were made before it was completed prior to the forthcoming interviews. Most professionals chose telephone interview due to workload, others picked the environment themselves for conducting the interview.

6.5 Procedure and analysis method

The empirical material was recorded in order to reproduce the answers of the participants correctly and truthfully. This contributed to the fact that notes were not required, which facilitated the interview process and made it possible for the author to concentrate more on the participants' stories as well as post-follow questions. The recording also provided an opportunity for a thorough and accurate analysis of the empirical material. After recording the interviews were transcribed. When transcribing was completed, the participants' answers were

presented verbatim to create real picture as possible. Bryman (2012) highlights the importance of the transcription being characterized by equivalence with what the participants have conveyed. Bryman (2011) further explains that people uses words with no exact meaning when they communicate where certain sentences can be perceived as incomplete. Therefore, such expressions were chosen to simplify and create a better understanding of the reader about what was conveyed in the sentence.

The result of the empirical data was as mentioned above; inspired by a phenomenographic approach in order to expand the interpretation of the material and in order to not be too much affected by the authors pre-understanding of the studied phenomena, since pheomenographic approach strive to present the result of the study, nothing else (Sjöström & Dahlgren, 2002). However the analysis was processed through meaning concentration and thematization. Kvale and Brinkmann (2014) illustrate that meaning concentration conveys long explanations to shorter sentences with the purpose of distinguishing main themes. The categories that could be read based on the empirical that was characterized by the study guide were: legal obstacle in relation to collaboration, work culture and development opportunities. In the analysis, the empirical material was sorted and coded based on these main themes that were highlighted based on the study's questions.

Based on the purpose of the study, an abductive final form is chosen. According to Alvesson & Sjöberg, (2008) an abductive final form is about interpreting underlying patterns that influence the investigated phenomena using concepts, theories and models. This abductive approach was in this study presented in a movement between empirical data and theory in order to create a better understanding with the help of new theoretical dimensions for interpreting the phenomenon of the study. The analysis of the results presented that the theories were appropriate and generated an interpretation of the empirical data, which alternately affected the comprehension of the chosen theories. The theories were chosen to correspond the empirical material, at the same time as, the empirical material corresponded the theories, which resulted in the possibility to discuss the validity of the presented results of the study.

6.6 Reliability and validity

Reliability is in qualitative studies defined as of trustworthiness, which will assess the quality of the study based on selected methods that have been reviewed, which accurately describe how the process has been done during the period of the study. It assumes that another study can be replicated on another occasion of time by another researcher, and give the same result (Bryman, 2011). As the method section describes the research approach, it helps other researcher to replicate the study. An additional opportunity for someone else to replicate is by using the interview guide and the information letter that is attached. This should therefore strengthen the reliability of the study. The study's results may have been influenced by the conditions of the studied CAC, for example, from how the actions are formed and based on the workers within the organization. Reliability can thus be adversely affected by the specific conditions prevailing in the organization. The study lacks a description of the specific CAC, in order to not recognize such a sensitive organization, which is something that may decrease reliability and the opportunity of replicability. However, the characterization of the organization is explained and thus enables other researchers to investigate another CAC with similar conditions. An activity is, however, changing - new professionals can be employed and new guidelines can be added. The interviewers may also change their opinions overtime, which can be problematic in qualitative interview and research. Bryman (2012) describes inter-assessment reliability, which means that the researcher who complete the study have a clear view of the purpose of the study, which can affect the reliability. The purpose has however been formatted by one researcher conducting the study, which may affect the inter-assessment reliability, as the interviews are interpreted only in my own way as the only author.

Validity means that the researcher investigates what he or she intends to investigate, based on for examples the content validity, which is characterized by the theoretical framework of the study and its analysis questions (Patel & Davidson, 2003). This has been sought in the study based on an interview guide formatted by a specific structure. The validity was problematized when designing the interview guide and was thus adapted to the purpose of the study in order for the empirical material to answer the research questions presented. The content of the present study is based on empirical material, previous research and theoretical framework that generated the conclusions of the study and should hence increase the validity of the study.

Validity can be characterized as "measurement validity", which means that the concepts of the study characterizes what the study intends to investigate (Bryman, 2012). Measurement

validity is thus increased by clearly defining the central concepts of the study. In the present study, concepts have been developed through previous research and literature that are relevant to the purpose of the study. External validity aims to generalize the result to a larger population or other cases (Bryman, 2011). Qualitative research is mainly based on a deeper understanding of the study, which means that statistical generalization is not the main purpose (Kvale & Brinkman, 2014). For this reason, the statistical generalizability of the study can be considered as low, as the purpose is to investigate the professionals' experiences of cooperating with a specific activity dealing with children exposed to violence. On the other hand, similarities can be found with other CACs nationally or internationally, which means that the result could thus be generalized based on common experiences of such working groups. The fact that certain parts of a phenomenon are generalized can be explained by Bryman (2011) referred as "moderate generalizability". This generalization could thus include activities characterized by the same structure of the studied CAC.

6.7 Ethical considerations

Swedish social science is based in the basic principles of research ethics, which are: the consent requirement, the information requirement, the utility requirement and the confidentiality requirement (Swedish Research Council, 2018). The professionals in the present study were informed about the purpose and conditions of the study for their participation, as well as the participants voluntarily participation and their opportunity of interrupting their participation at any time due to the information requirement (Swedish Research Council, 2018). The empirical material will be used solely for the purpose of the study and will be treated confidentially, which means that the utilization requirement is taken into account. According to the Swedish Research Council (2018), the utility requirement means that the empirical material from the professionals is only used for research purposes. Considering confidentiality requirements, the identities of the participants will be identified by their professional occupation. The confidentiality requirement aims to avoid disclosing information that could reveal the identity of the interviewees (Swedish Research Council 2018). Participants were received a consent form for participation and were asked to sign for clarification of the consent requirement. According to the Swedish Research Council (2018), the researcher will obtain the consent of the interviewees for their participation in the study. Furthermore, consideration was given to not interviewing the vulnerable children on the specific CAC, since they are minors and in a very vulnerable situation, which mean that their

own experiences of the work within CAC will not be presented. Further it was taken into account that sensitive questions was asked, though an ethical dilemma was discovered since the professionals at CAC could feel unsafe about the information they provided, as their working requirements are the main topic of the discussion. It could be thought that the professionals feel unsafe or insecure to share information about inadequate routines as their work contains an obligation to provide the best conditions for the vulnerable children that enter CAC. Thus, it can be perceived that the present study aims to question CAC's practical work. Precautions have therefore been applied, in a way where the interview questions were formulated in an open, non-judicial manner, which also characterized an open dialogue and anonymity of the specific activities.

6.8 Strengths and limitations

Since the study has been carried out for a limited period, delimitations have been made to a specific CAC and its involved professionals. Despite a common working basis, the different municipalities' have different routines and conditions than others that cooperate within one CAC, including the whole county council. With a broader study including several CACs, the results could be assumed to be of greater importance as more professionals from equal multi-professional disciplinary groups would be represented. Although the study focuses exclusively on the studied activity, it is possible, with the clear contextual description in the background section and through, for example, citation to apply parts of what appeared in the study to other similar groups and contexts. Newman et al. (2005) have shown in their research that the geographical distance to a CAC can constitute as an obstacle in collaboration. The workplaces of the professionals being interviewed are all located in the same place as the studied CAC. It is important to take into account if the geographical location influenced the professional's experiences and attitudes towards collaboration, since there are no geographical obstacles for the professionals at the studied CAC. Another crucial factor affecting the experiences of collaboration may be due to an even or uneven distribution of variations of professionals participating in CAC. Nevertheless, the empirical data is assessed to be profound for analyzing the findings. However, As Jacobsen (2012) highlights, the environment and the interviewer can also influence what appears in the interviews. Most professionals chose telephone interview due to workload, which may have resulted in unnatural responses since the conversation did not occur in a common environment,

especially though an interview situation itself may be considered as unnatural for the interviewer.

The researcher conducting this Master's project had a pre-understanding of the organization, which could affect the results in various ways. A great awareness of this prior knowledge may, therefore, have contributed to the maintenance of a neutral approach, as the professionals' view of the problem had precedence. It is further of importance to mention the aspect of being a single writer, which could be seen as a disadvantage, since two writers or more may enrich different angles of approaches – something that may have resulted in broader and more nuanced reasoning than the single writer achieved.

As described earlier in the method section, transcription can be handled in different ways (Kvale & Brinkman, 2014). The choice of omitting emphasized, such as “hmm” as well as other irrelevant expressions can be motivated based on the interest of fulfilling the aim of the study by identifying themes based on the professionals' perceptions of collaboration. The professionals' meaning of their saying was, therefore, more relevant, not primarily in the way the professionals' expressed it. This may have led to a loss of certain contexts in certain situations. Some expressions may include how certain statements are interpreted, but it is not considered to be of decisively important when analyzing empirical data. With this description of how the transcriptional approach has been taken into account, the reliability of the study can be strengthened. Even before the interviews were conducted, the researcher conducting the study had a specific focus on collaboration, since collaboration in the initial phase of the study proved to be the main purpose of CAC. To gain insight into the field of research, it seemed natural to read about collaboration as a phenomenon, which could have influenced the interview guide, and capacity to ask supplementary questions during the interview and interpret the professionals' responses. However, it may be necessary to have a clear entrance of the studied field to consequently narrow the subject to fulfill the aim of the study. The professionals' statements about their experiences characterized the codes that came up in the analysis, which may indicate that the researcher's pre-understanding did not play an important role when designing the themes of the study. The credibility of the study can be assessed as strengthened as the analysis process was chosen based on the guidelines recommended by Lindgren (2014) also since the professionals' have received feedback on the results.

The sociological new institutional theory and organizational analysis in the new institutionalism focus, among other things, on the environmental influences of organizational

structures and processes between organizations (Johansson, 2006). The theory was thus assessed as an appropriate theory to use for analyzing the collaboration within CAC, as collaboration can be seen as a result of the environment's established norms and performances. The theory has influenced what has emerged in the study since the focus of the study is primarily on an organizational level. Although the theory seems appropriate for the study, other choices of theoretical starting points could have formed the study in another way, which means that maybe important aspects of collaboration is lacking because of the chosen theory. However, the concluding assessment is that the institutional theory combined with previous research resulted in influencing factors at an individual and group level, as well as on a social level.

7. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the themes which occurred in the empirical data: legislation in relation to collaboration, collaborative practice and development opportunities. The professionals' that were interviewed are named based by their professional occupation: prosecutor, social worker, coordinator and psychologist.

7.1 Legislation in relation to collaboration

Collaboration is described as a central part of the social worker's every day work for contributing to the function of the welfare system for children in need of measures from the public sector. CAC clarifies collaboration requirements between the municipality, county council, police and the public prosecutor. However, the need for collaboration does not always characterize the reality; the social worker describes one issue:

The prosecutor sets obstacles based on the profession and the purpose of investigating the crime and conducting the preliminary crime investigation. Pre-trial secrecy does not support the requirement of collaboration all the way, as we often miss the overall picture of the police case, which is important for our continuing legally security and risk assessment for children or families in protection (Social worker).

The interpretation is that the Social worker is governed by legislation which clarifies the need for action for children who are exposed to child abuse. It undertakes that collaboration is a functional requirement so that components would not fall or affect the child or other co-workers negatively. Kaldal, Diesen, Beije and Diesen (2010) argue that the ability to share information is the basis of collaboration, but confidentiality regulation is a common problem that arises in CACs. The authors describe that it may be problematic for a police officer or a prosecutor to act if the social services finds that there is suspicion of crime before the police have not been informed in time. This is line with what Johansson (2011) who describes that there is a tense relationship between social workers and juridical investigators since the professions have different space at work and different discretion as they come from different organizations. This leads to assessment difficulties and the best interests of the child may therefore be in different focus because the professionals have different purposes with their work, which affects the interaction. Based on a new institutional approach, the current study shows that organizations are affected by and adapt to institutional requirements, such as legislation or different professional groups. One interpretation is that CAC is inspired by the theory, since different professions need to adapt to their own and the other professionals' rules, as an interaction form.

This is a transparent problem, which the prosecutor is highlighting in the juridical process from a similar viewpoint:

Sometimes children are taken into care by the social services directly in connection to the child-interrogation, after a while, the risk assessment changes and the child returns home.../ Mostly, the change has already occurred before the police or the prosecutors have been informed. It makes it difficult for us to act on time, for example, arresting a parent for the security of the child. Sometimes it fails (Prosecutor).

Several interviews address the problem of confidentiality legislation and the personal interpretations of how legislation can be used in child-matters based on each professional's knowledge about the case. It is described that there may be situations and cases where an individual professional is aware of a specific matter concerning the child or the family that the others lack knowledge of. It is then emphasized that the professions do not agree on what information can be given:

On professional consultation at CAC, other professions, usually the police and prosecutors may request detailed information that is not decisive to the crime investigation, for example, the families' social register (Social Worker).

The problem that some professionals ask for “detailed information” that is according to the social worker not decisive to the crime investigation is from a juridical view experienced different:

I do not always receive information from the social service due to confidentiality legislation. It cannot be applied that way when crimes against children are being investigated. This means that I can't work so fast in all situations. Sometimes it is the personal chemistry that doesn't work, which means that you cannot work together (Prosecutor).

It can be interpreted that the issue is something that affect the work load or the ambition of cooperating with other professions, depending on how the legislation is interpreted in specific contexts, which according to Åström and Rejmer (2008) is not obvious whether confidentiality regulation is perceived as the main collaboration problem. Another issue is the duty for the social services to provide protection for children and at the same time provide conditions for speeding up the criminal investigation for the juridical system.

The coordinator for CAC has investigated the legislation issue further:

There is confidentiality violating provisions when reporting child crimes. We have investigated the problem with lawyers. The social services can say almost anything to the firstly notified authority if it's relevant for the matter, when it comes to crimes against life and health. The uncertainty comes when all different professions consult and belong to different organizations with different objectives (Coordinator).

One interpretation is that the dissimilar handling of legislation could lead to role-conflicts based on the fact that the professionals compete in the knowledge of the matter. This is in line with Connell's (2009) theory about conflicts between mental health professionals' need to be unbiased and impartial concerning the question of unverified violence and CACs' interest in prosecution. Cornell (2009) highlight that there may be an inherent bias toward perceiving children as victims of abuse in an environment charged with protecting children by increasing prosecutions. If this bias exists, a child who has not been abused may be caught in a situation where denial of abuse is less likely to be believed. The psychologist participating in the study describes that legal obstacles could affect the professional influence and role during collaborative consultation with all the different professionals involved in CAC, preparing for the child-interrogation. The psychologist state that it is unclear how the issue is being managed nationally in Sweden and if an opportunity to transparent information could lead to better medical assessments:

Consultations are anonymous for me. I don't know much about the child. If I have access to a

medical record, I can provide better information with the doctor. CAC's manage the issue different nationally, some have access to medical journals, and others don't. The confidentiality legislation is unclear. A solution of the problem could give me a greater role during consultations and maybe contribute to better assessments... development issues remain and I'm only employed for 40% of my time at CAC. (Psychologist)

All respondents highlight the confidentiality legislation as an obstacle for collaboration from different perspectives depending on the professional needs in relation to the investigation of child care, criminal investigation or the medical investigation. However, it is clear that there is an uncertainty for all respondents about how the law can be applied, as the legislation constantly is interpreted in the different ways depending on whether the social services or the prosecutor interprets the law. It is therefore important that in an additional part, further discuss how the uncertainty affects collaboration in the organizational structure or the effectiveness when deciding the right measures for the child or result of the crime investigation. The issue can be interpreted by the definition of Meyer and Rowan (1977) that highlights the importance for an organization to aim for achieving structural equality with so called institutional requirements, including legislation.

7.2 Collaborative practice

The coordinator describes that CAC was initially characterized by the judiciary with a great focus on the police investigation. The coordinator is uncertain if the person is home-blind, but does not feel that it works like that today. From the coordinator's perspective, the work within CAC, is nowadays guided by the principle of the best interest of the child. The coordinator thinks that the police and the prosecutors have changed their power-influenced behavior and describes that new prosecutors who have entered the organization, also strives for the same working culture that increase the children's perspective. The coordinator believes that it is not easy for prosecutors that don't embrace this culture to pay much attention to the psychologist that speaks of trauma and crisis assessments and relate to how everything is connected if the only focus is the crime. Here is a summarized opinion of the coordinator:

I don't feel that there are any unbalanced power relationships in the organization. Perhaps it's because I've been working for so long. From the beginning, the justice system had preference. The professionals' had great respect for the prosecutor, which ruled the work and limited the opportunity for others to ask questions. It's not like that nowadays (coordinator).

My interpretation of the coordinator's experiences that power relationships is lacking in the

organization is in line with Glisson, et al., (2007) conclusion about professionals' meaning and perception gives an understanding of the organization's culture and occurs much in the hidden room and produce powerful consequences and influence. The coordinator may not be aware of the different perceptions of power relationships related to invisible factors that affect the meaning, since the social worker has the opposite perception from the coordinator:

When the child interrogation is ongoing, the social services have the least power to influence. Power is regained when the interrogation is over. We act for the safety of the child if we must do it, but we also adapt to the prosecutor. Indirectly, I think that we await to act because of the working culture and the power imbalance based on the prosecutor's dominant role (Social Worker).

The social worker's perception can be understood from Johansson's (2011) study that state the social services requirement to deliver protection for children in need. This requirement is challenged when the social services must cooperate with the juridical system in order to give the criminal investigation precedence, something that can obstruct the aim of working towards the best interests of the child. My interpretation is, therefore, that the social service is in a dependent position in relation to the prosecutor or the juridical system, even though the social worker have the power to make crucial decisions about the child, the culture within the organization gives the prosecutor precedence due to organizational hierarchy. However, the hierarchal imbalance is described as necessary from the psychologist perception:

Sometimes it's hard to know whose word is most important. It is easy for the prosecutor to decide for others, which is also right based on the prosecutor's role. Obviously, there is a hierarchy. I still participate as much as I need and share my psychiatric skills (psychologist)

The hierarchical form, still being characterized by the opportunity to participate within the CAC can be understood from Packendorff (1993) definition about permanent-focus temporary organizational form, which allows an extension of knowledge from various professionals through participation that supports efficiency in general such as development. However, Ekstedt and Jönsson (2001) highlight that this system requires another type of leadership in contrast to what hierarchical organizations uses. My interpretation is that the organizational form that illustrates CAC is perceived to be in need of clearer leadership, since the prosecution takes over the leading role and may adversely affect the experience of the collaboration and effectiveness. The prosecutors leading role, may contribute to general role conflicts, since mental health professionals gather evidence and help the prosecution to make its case while another function is to act as a therapist for the child or the family (cp. Kimbrough-Melton, 2006). The psychologist expression about her/him participating as much

as needed related to the hierarchy system, may mean that the psychologist master the issue and empower through the participation in itself (cp. Adams, 2008).

The prosecutor states that there are different opinions regarding assessments, which may complicate the collaboration. The prosecutor describes that prosecutors and the police may need to talk without the social services hearing after interrogations, which is not always understandable for the social services. However, the prosecutor believes that collaboration is important and that everyone's goal is to contribute to the best interests of the child:

We have different starting points, since different professional resources work in different ways. We may think differently but basically we work for the best interests of the children. We try to find favorable working methods in each case, which is the absolute starting point. We can for example have different perceptions of how urgent something is (prosecutor).

The fact that there are different opinions about how urgent something is, can be understood from Parton (2013) study about the social service's being too much engaged with risk, which has shaped important consequences in practice, something related to ambiguity based on the shifting social and economic background. One interpretation is that, the social services focus on risk can, except from legal requirements, depend on the fact that social workers work with the families for a longer time frame, which means that risk assessments and reflection of consequences are important for contributing to better practices for children and families.

7.3 Development opportunities

The professionals highlight development opportunities based on the collaborative form that prevails today and takes into account how the measures can be as good as possible when the child return home. It is clear that the professionals share a common concern about how it will be for the child after the visit at CAC and, in common, they want to find good solutions that are based on the best interests of the child. Some of the professionals explain the effects of a new measure that the social services began with:

The police and prosecutors are very happy that the social services have developed a crisis support team to make sure that it is safe for the child to stay home; if the child is not placed into care...It benefits everyone who works, to see that we have successful support measures for the child (coordinator).

The social worker emphasized the importance of making parents involved from the very beginning in order to contribute to a long-term change in the family. The social worker believes that it is difficult to maintain collaboration with parents when there is no opportunity

to talk about the problem itself, which also affects the family's trust to the social services. The silence that the social services must relate to creates an unbalanced power relationship between professionals and clients or between the professionals themselves depending on the possibilities to be professionally involved:

I find it best for the child when the parents are interrogated on the same day as the child...not to initiate a process where the parents know that a crime is being investigated but has no access to detailed information. This makes it difficult to contribute to positive change in the family. A good support would be to bring the psychologist to an increasing extent to pay attention to the child's reactions that may be in a crisis (social worker).

The professional opportunity to participate in the child's whole process has a major influence on the child's future mentally, especially when the psychologist lacks the same opportunities as other professionals to participate in the same way. The psychologist is limited based on the current confidentiality legislation, also since the psychologist has another role in the investigation work that causes the psychologist not to be involved in the child's reactions during the interrogation in the same way as the others. However, it can be interpreted that this situation is best handled if the justice can use the same interviewer if more than one interview with a child I needed to not risk re-traumatization (Cross et al. 2008) and to trust the child's lawyer:

The doctor and psychologist should not attend in child interrogations; since their role does not matter in the interrogation situation...Nobody takes responsibility for the child's crisis response and unwillingness to cooperate during the interrogation. The child's lawyer must break the interrogation unless the others have already done so. The lawyer is in charge of the parental guardian's role. However, as a prosecutor, I do not have the responsibility to look after the child's reactions but I see it as a human responsibility (prosecutor).

My interpretation is that there may be a great risk to exclude the psychologist during the interrogation since it is easy to undertake the hypothesis that a crime has been committed based on the suspicion that prevails, which makes it difficult to readjust that it might not be the case. This is in line with (Kaldal et al., 2010) study that highlights the difficulty children may find to achieve status as ideal victims if the children refuse to cooperate with the police and the social workers. However, Nordenfeldt (2006) argue that professionals must consider that small children have limited awareness of their situation and may not know how to adapt and behave in situation which is not standard or what society deems as usual. This means it can be hard for them to see the professional collaborative goals and realize them as their own.

The psychologist can like the other professional's highlight the need for common change measures, which is based on closer collaboration and equal professional participation in order to strive for the best interests of the child:

We need to become even tighter with a closer collaboration with the police and social services in some way. We need common measures with the social services, example family treatment. We need a closer dialogue with the police, have a clue about where in the legal process children are, if the investigation is completed. I need to follow each case a little more. I do not participate in the whole process. The situation for children could be facilitated with a clear beginning and an end, so that they don't have to wait 7 years for a trial or for various trauma interventions (psychologist)

The social worker states that there is a great need of competence development within the social services to address these cases:

The Social services must have more knowledge about children's reactions, parents' responses about violence, and its mechanisms regarding children, how they react and act against the violent practitioner. Everything is not obvious (social worker).

My interpretation of the expression that *everything is not obvious* is related to the fact that general standardized risk assessments takes over when conducting the child care investigation, something that may decrease focus on the individual child when deciding proper measures. It is possible to interpret that each child that is a victim of child-abuse has the goal of living in a nonviolent environment without their parents, which may not be the fact and can be difficult to understand since it's from a societal perspective, not an ideal environment for children to live in. This can be understood from Nordenfelt (2004) who describes that regardless of the child's wish, difficulties can stand in the way of the goal of living in a nonviolent environment that takes away the second-order ability to live in freedom from violence. The child's actions can be characterized as fear that results in silence, however, the child and the professionals must know where the child is in this awareness process to help the child to consciousness and from being exposed to violence. To sum up, the roles of the professionals and the service users are characterized by constructions where the professional is perceived as the expert and the service user as a receiver. In this context, the welfare system is defined as a control-society that can steer the individual resources and the direction of their own lives (Ds, 2002). A conclusive interpretation is that professionals need to be aware of and try to understand what the silence of the child stand for in child interrogations when professionals can't move forward with their investigations. The professionals are however limited to contribute to change as long as the professional

competence is lacking.

In general, the involved professionals are considered to have a positive but critical attitude towards collaboration and a high ambition and commitment to issues related to children suspected of being subjected to child abuse. From some interviewed professionals' descriptions, it is precisely the attitude of CAC as an organizational form of work that can complicate collaboration. It is also highlighted that a qualification for good collaboration is based on interest and a willingness to work with children but also to be specifically educated in these types of cases:

I want to see that there is a violence group, where there is expertise in the field of violence within the social services. Today anybody or anyone who likes working with these matters can be responsible for the case. We have a vision of developing a violence group, but it will not happen in a short future due to recruitment difficulties (social worker).

I want the social services to be readily read when they come up with a case that has been reported. We often hear that, I've received this matter in the morning or I do not know much about the matter. All other professions come there and have set aside working hours, in order to get information, otherwise I do not need to be there (prosecutor).

The empirical data shows that the social services are self-critical at the same time as the judiciary expects more competence from the social services; my interpretation is that the judicial system needs to reflect over its role in interaction barriers. This is because research (Åström & Rejmer, 2008) shows that the police and prosecutors should continuously be educated in dealing with child abuse cases for contributing to the best practices for children that come to CAC.

It may be thought of how the studied CAC would work if it consisted of other coordinators and other professionals than the interviewees cooperating, since, competence, ambition and attitude or interest was described as significant factors for a good result. A reflection on this is that it may be important for CAC to have professionals with similar characteristics to those described above. This is important, to finally achieve a way of working for the best interests of the child in focus according to the government's requirements. The personal qualities were also highlighted as an important factor in why the coordinators were considered to be a decisive key to successful collaboration. The citation below illustrates how the coordinator fulfills an important function as the coordinator investigates issues that all professionals have encountered as barriers to collaboration:

The child psychiatry and child clinic do not have access in children's journal, though they are not mandated to do so at the moment. We are investigating the question whether the social services should legally request information from the child clinic or child psychiatry before the consultations. The child may have been at the children's clinic 5 times with injuries without us knowing about it (coordinator).

One interpretation is that the personal characteristics of the coordinators are meaningful impacts on collaboration and development, which is not evident in previous research. In relation to how Kaldal et al. (2010) problematizes the CAC-model and instead emphasizes competence and routines under a common roof as crucial factors for the quality of CAC, can thus be further discussed. Wolfeich and Loggins (2007) also reinforce the thinking about what personal contributions affect the impact on collaboration, as they argue that CAC's efficiency is more about successful coordination than the CAC model itself.

8. DISCUSSION

In this section, the study's findings are further discussed within the theoretical perspectives presented earlier and previous research in relation to the research questions. In order to develop clear results, discussion is formed within these specific themes: collaboration structure, ambiguity in confidential legislation, considerations for CAC's future practice ended with conclusions, implications for social work practice and recommendations for future research.

8.1 Collaboration structure

Attention should be paid to the risk that CAC activities may involve bureaucratization and long decision management. When several professionals get together, there will often be many meetings and discussions. The findings of the study that highlights the professional's experience of collaboration show a positive, but mainly a critical attitude towards interdisciplinary professional collaboration teams. The professionals are critical towards the current organizational structure due to legal constraints and lacking competence but have a positive attitude towards the overall concept of CAC and strive for developing the organization with favorable working methods. Effectiveness has also been described by the

National Board of Health (2013) as difficult to determine. However, collaboration could be considered as legitimate, regardless of what an impact study would show. The collaboration form could be compared to the institutional requirements - described by Meyer and Rowan (1977) - that affect how an organizational structure is defined. CAC is in this sense, adapted to a socially and culturally created environment characterizing collaboration as a goal for successful work. The parallel between collaboration and the institutional requirements can also be interpreted using Johansson (2011) who emphasizes that there is an established positive view of collaboration and that Swedish legislation emphasizes collaboration. The professionals' statements also proved to have a common positive experience of collaboration over time, since CAC was first established. It is however apparent from the professionals that there may be power structures that affect collaboration and a misunderstanding of the various roles of the professions, that creates role conflicts and affects the collaboration structure. Collaboration is a process supported by Åström and Rejmer (2008), who also argue that it takes a long time to achieve effective collaboration, which may prove to be consistent with the professionals' experiences. A number of professionals' emphasized that the interaction has evolved and that there are still measures to improve in order to achieve a successful result in the organization.

The professionals' like Newman et al. (2005) highlighted the collaboration within a specific forum where direct communication was possible as a positive factor, which was unlike the previous collaboration structure. In response to the research question about the professional actors experience as enabling to collaboration, professionals involved in CAC's are now mandatorily included in the consultations, which has resulted in a more comprehensive approach for the vulnerable children. There is now a specific time scheduled for collaboration and a system for the process. The professionals, similar to Cross et al. (2007) and Rasmusson (2011) have a common view that CAC's collaboration is viewed positively in the way it supports children especially compared with the way it used to be. A factual barrier is that, the prosecution finds that the social services are not always prepared for the consultation which is experienced as lost time, something that the social services themselves highlight as a problem referred to lack of knowledge and recruitment difficulties - affecting difficult cases to suffer, such as collaboration. However, an important result is the cultural factors creating a hierarchy which automatically gives the juridical system precedence. It is thus expected that the health and welfare system must adapt and prioritize the criminal investigation before assessing

support measures, an approach that may be accepted from the social services since the social workers are self-critical to their own working resources.

8.2 Ambiguity in confidential legislation

The first research question concerns the professionals' experiences of barriers related to collaboration within the specific organizational culture that characterize CAC. Collaboration has in this study shown to create investigation obstacles due to legislative ambiguities which explain how collaboration should take place; while at the same time demanding that collaboration must exist but not how, which of course affects the child support investigation, psychiatric and mental investigations, and likewise the criminal investigation. Strategies that are implemented in the Government of Legislation, *inter alia*, to strengthen the best interests of the child (Government Offices, 2012; Ministry of Social department, 2010), makes the professionals' experiences highly relevant. From what appeared in the results regarding attitude and hierarchical relations as impact factors for required collaboration, however, it may be considered whether it becomes too narrow in the discretion of legislation if it is too precise and leading. This could be the case since CAC consists of different individuals in a group of interactions with varying constellations of people, which may presumably possess different conditions for creating successful collaboration. However, based on what the results emphasized regarding commitment, attitude, and ambition, it is relevant to consider if clearer legislation is of major importance in comparison with collaboration characterized with a positive character and with fewer power influences that do not include all the professionals that could contribute to positive results for the child. The results conclude that the professionals' experience an obstacle because of local formalia needs to be performed in a respectable and in an efficient manner, which facilitates the work despite unclear legislation. The different conditions of collaborative groups could then be interpreted in agreement with what Mallander (1998) state about jointly created frameworks and goals, which in turn contribute to the structure of the organization. This subjective and relational creation of organizational structure is thus not consistent with what Meyer and Rowan (1977) emphasize regarding the institutional requirements that arise in the environment of the organization, where the requirements determine what actions are considered appropriate and not their own actors in the organization.

The results of the professionals' perceptions of the legislative pressure for collaboration can

also be highlighted on the basis of (Danermark & Kullberg, 1999) statement that collaboration as absolutely necessary on a structural level, since laws and common strategies are decided on different higher levels. This delegation must be clear in order for the collaborative professional group to have positive results. This could also be understood from what Johansson (2002) describes as organizational field formation through legislation. Organizational research in Sweden has been dominated by new institutional theory, which emphasizes that organizations are not only technical but also institutionally dependent on the environment. Organizations should thus be understood as open systems, consisting of coalitions of varying interest groups that develop goals through negotiations and governed laws. The coalition's structure, processes and results are therefore to a great extent affected by environmental factors (Scott 1991). Based on this, it is possible that the development of CAC's stems from organizational fields, since the results revealed that differs from the way CAC was originated with mandatory consultations for each professional involved to be able to make the right decision regarding the child within the field of CAC. This is similar to Johansson (2011) argumentation that a possible development of a common child protection field may have occurred in CAC. In addition to the legislation - collaboration could be seen as a response to the welfare states search for favorable working methods (Danermark & Kullebrg, 1999) and therefore also a factor in the field formation. A number of the professionals emphasized that, in the course of the collaboration process, a consensus was reached on CAC's purpose and goals, despite the fact that the different professions maintained their perspective, which means that CAC's various actors can take a holistic approach to the vulnerable children. By assuming CAC as an organizational field, the common purpose of the organization can be reflected in what Johansson (2002; 2006) describes regarding the perception that the organizations have a coherent area of activity. Retaining various perspectives of CAC organizations can be interpreted as an endeavor to remain as a unique actor in the organizational field (Johansson, 2002; Johansson, 2006).

The results highlight the professional conditions as either enabling or as a barrier to collaboration, since professional personal assessments of how information should be disclosed to other collaborators is a relevant factor for the collaboration and the separated investigations. One conclusion - that also is related to the research question about the professionals' capability to achieve their own goals within their profession in relation to collaboration requirements with differencing investigative purposes - is that a professional dilemma can occur since social services can argue that their assessment is based on legislation

and the prosecutor can argue that the social worker's assessment lacks based on unclear legislation. It thus depends on what perspective is leading and of greater value, which could thus create power relationships when the prosecutor controls the investigation regardless, due to hierarchy – something that falls naturally since the results show that the organizational culture is characterized by a the prosecutor's control function, which according to the health services is right in one way because of the prosecutor's role.

8.3 Considerations for CAC's future practices

The last research question concerns the professional actors' experience of CAC's goal for achieving the best practices for vulnerable children. The results highlight that it is important for professionals within CAC, to be true and fulfill the CAC's mission based on professional collaboration, to expand their focus and provide basic welfare resources and abilities to increase a child's potential to recover from abuse and live a full and healthy life. The results has shown that full professional comprehension of CAC's legal uncertainties - as well as impact of - childhood health inequalities related to exposure to child abuse is vital in order to be successful in meeting CAC goals fully. Additionally, it is likewise of importance to fully understand the most effective interventions for treating the sequence of poor health that could be a result of previous experiences of violence. It is important to consider proper aftercare, such as health services for children, when professionals cooperate in these cases. This means that the professional collaboration within the CAC is not just about partnership, stable relationships and sensitivity to one and other (Mallander, 1998), but in the very highest level, there is a need for knowledge about *health* and how to work with violence prevention to contribute to better health for the child in the long term.

Nordenfelt's (1994, 2004) definition from the science of human health and welfare describes one concept of health as an ability to realize vital goals.

Definition Health: when the individual A is in a bodily and mental state which is such that A has the second-order ability to realize all his or her vital goals given a set of standard or otherwise reasonable conditions (Nordenfedlt 2006, p. 147)

The second-order ability has to be understood as the possibility of achieving a certain goal (Nordenfelt, 2004). For example, if a child has the goal of living in a nonviolent environment, difficulties can stand in the way of that goal but not take away the second-order ability to live in freedom from violence. Fear resulting in silence, on the other hand, takes away the second order ability. Vital goals may be understood as basic needs or goals of the highest priority. The child need not be conscious of these goals, if not; it must be the professionals' goal, in collaboration, contribute to consciousness and help the child from being exposed to violence. For example, children can avoid disclosure and find their own protection options, which means that the child may be at risk for further exposure of violence. The child may still feel healthy even though the child's goal of being "protected" in its home-environment is disturbed by severe circumstances. However, according to Nordenfeldt (1993), health is a very specific kind of capability related to a specific set of goals. This means that a child is unable to realize his/her goals if he/she is not healthy. Thus, professionals must take this into account based on the best interests of the child when to decide on support measures for children exposed to domestic violence. This can be related to Nordenfeldt's (1993) explanation regarding health or well-being characterized by the distinction between *external welfare*, which is the phenomena that surround us and constantly affect us, on the other hand, our *inner wellbeing*, which are our reactions to the external world and our overall experience to it. Consequently, professionals within CAC can face dilemmas when a child doesn't behave as expected, since the results show conflict between differencing investigative purposes and the concepts of best interests of the child are not always compatible. It is therefore of great importance to decide, whose perceptions of the investigation is most important, the criminal justice or the child care investigations focusing on the child's health and safety. This dilemma is highlighted by Cornett (2009) that conclude that there may be an essential preference toward perceiving children as victims of abuse in an environment charged with protecting children by increasing prosecutions, though a child who has not been abused may be caught in a condition where rejection of abuse is less likely to be believed. Based on what controls the differencing investigations due to legislation, I believe that there is a need of a clear definition of which investigation should take precedence in CAC, though it sets the fundamental rules for how to fulfill the CAC's goals of achieving the best practices for children who are victims of child abuse and thus facilitate collaboration.

8.4 Conclusion

This Master's project has provided that the work within CAC contributes to a holistic approach from the professionals and has mainly shown positive collaborative results from a historical view. There is however a tense relationship between social workers and juridical investigators, since the professions have different space at work and different discretion as they come from different organizations. This leads to assessment-, and collaboration difficulties and the best interest of the child may be in different focus because of dissimilar investigative objectives.

An important conclusion is that the dissimilar handling of the confidentiality regulation creates structural problems and has shown to lead to role conflicts due to hierarchical or cultural factors that give the juridical system precedence in relation to health and social services because of professional status. This phenomenon has shown to increase the criminal interest and limit the best interest of the child based on support measures that is crucial for children's future health and safety. Since confidentiality violating provisions when reporting child crimes are not clear for all professionals - the issue is responded with lacking collaboration, characterized by social services insufficient competence with too much focus on risks and difficulty in prioritizing, as well as lacking resources from all professionals - as a result of not being able to master the problem fully.

Another conclusion is that the professional's opportunity to participate in the child's whole process has a major influence on the child's future mentally, especially then the psychologist lack same opportunities as others to participate on interrogations in order to handle children's reactions. However, the fact that the psychologist is not employed full time, question the importance of the child's health. The health and social professionals, as well as the juridical professionals want to facilitate the work for the best interests of the child by increasing transparency in different investigations. The result show that the lacking insight into the social services assessments as into the criminal work can complicate the goal for achieving the best practices for children.

The overall conclusion is that the organization of CAC is in need of a closer collaboration between the juridical professionals and the health and social services to have a common view of how the task must be distributed. It is suggested that the studied CAC is in need of common measures from health and social services and there is a common professional interest about knowing the child's time frame in the legal process, to contribute to successful

collaboration the whole way. A new introduction to the confidentiality regulation may also be needed. The coordinator's role must not be underestimated, since the coordinator is described as a decisive key for further development of achieving the best practices for children who are exposed to child abuse. The results show, as the results of Keldal et al. (2010) that it is not the CAC-model itself that ensues to be a significant factor, but relatively the collaborative form with various competence and practices under one organization that defines the quality.

8.5. Implications for social work practice

The Swedish CAC (Barnahus) is a new mission in Sweden, whereupon there is a need for further research in this area. There is more research on American CAC, but research about the Swedish model is lacking. It is important that the child exposed to child abuse is in focus where all possible consequences for the child are investigated and taken care of by the professionals. In social work, social services have a major responsibility for the children where protection is at the forefront. The social workers in this study highlight the uncertainty for which legislation should prevail in collaboration with the judiciary. CAC in Sweden has an important mission - helping children to a better and safer everyday life and since child safety must never be suffering - this research area has major importance for social work. Increased research on the Swedish model of CAC also gives the organization a chance to understand and develop how legislation and other cultural factors that govern the work must be applied for a successful result. The author conducting this study assess from a scientific level that it is important to apprehend how collaboration between the professions is developing further for improvement to be achievable, since vulnerable children is the heart of social work.

8.6 Recommendations for future research

Collaboration is an area of development in terms of knowledge and research. The result suggests that the experience of a well-functioning interaction arises as a result of factors, both at individual, group and social level. This, because of the exchange of knowledge and competences, as well as legislation, is some of the factors that affect the functioning and legitimacy of collaboration within CAC. Furthermore, a good synergy seems to be achieved

when the differences of the professionals are preserved while the pursuit of the best interests of the child is a common focus. Likewise, it appears that well-functioning forms of collaboration can develop favorable working methods for vulnerable children. The critical attitude of the professionals' experience of factors affecting the culture within CAC and its interaction thus shows that continued research on collaboration is of high relevance, especially when a new introduction of the confidentiality legislation is suggested. Further research on how mentioned difficulties can be solved is according to the author conducting this Master's project, seen as an important working step towards the best practices for children. The author also finds that it is important to conduct further research on other CACs in Sweden to see if there are similar or other difficulties in the organizations to learn from.

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10. APPENDICES

10.1 Interview guide

Tasks and demands

What is the task of your original organization?

What clients do you work for? What does a victim mean for you?

What types of interventions/services do you provide in your role/in your own unit/organization?

What are your opportunities to affect the work at CAC based on your professional position
(Opportunity of practice describes the procedures, actions, and processes that professionals are permitted to undertake)

What are the administrative and/or juridical supervision policies within CAC?
(Promoting questions: is supervision provided? is it scheduled consistently and regularly? what is it used for? if there is no supervision, what does the organization expect from the professionals?)

Organizational collaboration and culture

How would you describe the organizational culture at the organization?
a) Are there dominant discourses (institutional logics) that inform these values and beliefs, if so can you describe them?

How do you understand collaboration requirements and where does that come from?

Did you come into this organization with experiences of collaboration practices?

How do you use collaboration practices in your current role?

- a) Is this a required part of your role?
- b) Are collaboration practices generally practiced or individually used in the organization?
- c) Are there rules, laws/policies that support or do not support collaboration practices? (Obstacles and opportunities? *Different professional positions and investigations that controls the work*)

Can you describe how your agency's organizational culture supports collaboration practices? Shapes collaboration practices that contribute to better qualities for children that come to CAC?

Improving practices

If you could change one thing about the relationship between CAC's organizational culture and the use of collaboration practices what would it be?

Ending question: Is there anything I haven't asked you that you think is important to say or include?

10.2 Information letter

Hello!

My name is Tringa Miftari and I am finishing my Master's degree in Social Work at Mälardalen University. As a part of my degree, I am completing a thesis. My research is striving to understand professional collaboration in the context of Children's Advocacy Center (Swedish, Barnahus). I invite you to participate in this research project!

I am conducting this research due to my own experience of improvement areas and also because of lacking literature about the subject. There is therefore of interest to study professionals' experiences of collaboration practices and organizational culture within this organization. I am also interested in finding possibilities of contributing to better practices for children being victims of domestic violence.

The interview will take 45 minutes to 1 hour to explore these questions. Interviews can be conducted in person, over the phone, or through Skype and in whichever place is the most convenient for you. The results of this research will be submitted for publication in academic journals. Any informants who would like a final copy of the report can request one.

I hope we can get a chance to talk about this topic. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Tringa Miftari

Mälardalen University (Candidate)

10.3 The Swedish Government's decision about CAC (Barnahus)



Justitiedepartementet

Kopia

Regeringsbeslut 10

2005-02-03

Ju2005/1181/KRIM,
Ju2004/9550/KRIM,
Ju2004/6191/KRIM,
Ju2004/4230/KRIM,
JU2001/6286/KRIM

Åklagarmyndigheten
Rikspolisstyrelsen
Rättsmedicinalverket
Socialstyrelsen

Uppdrag att medverka till etablering av flera försöksverksamheter med samverkan under gemensamt tak vid utredningar kring barn som misstänks vara utsatta för allvarliga brott

Regeringens beslut

Åklagarmyndigheten skall, i enlighet med vad som utvecklas nedan, tillsammans med Rikspolisstyrelsen, Rättsmedicinalverket och Socialstyrelsen medverka till ytterligare etablering av flera försöksverksamheter med samverkan under gemensamt tak vid utredningar kring barn som misstänks vara utsatta för allvarliga brott som t.ex. sexuella övergrepp och misshandel.

Försöksverksamheten skall pågå under tiden 2005-2007. Uppdraget skall slutredovisas senast den 1 mars 2008. En delredovisning av verksamhetens arbete skall ske senast den 15 juni 2006.

Bakgrund

När det uppstår misstanke om att ett barn har utsatts för brott inleds ofta flera utredningsprocesser av såväl rättsväsendet som socialtjänsten och hälso- och sjukvården. Polis och åklagare skall utreda om ett misstänkt brott har begåtts och socialtjänsten skall utreda barnets situation och eventuella behov av stöd och skydd. Barnet kan också behöva komma i kontakt med sjukvården för läkarundersökningar och behandling. Dessa utredningar bedrivs ofta parallellt och innebär att barnet slussas runt i olika miljöer.

De myndigheter och andra huvudmän som är ansvariga för utredningar vid ärenden om misstänkta brott mot barn skiljer sig åt i många avseenden, t.ex. vad gäller organisation, arbetssätt och kompetensområden. De har också olika roller och syften med utredningsinsatserna.

Postadress
103 33 Stockholm

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08-405 10 00

E-post: registrator@justice.ministry.se

Besöksadress
Rosenbad 4

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Telex
178 20 PREMIER S

Idag finns en skyldighet för bl.a. polisen och hälso- och sjukvården att på socialtjänstens initiativ samverka kring barn som far illa eller riskerar att fara illa (5 kap. 1a § socialtjänstlagen). I de flesta kommuner finns samrådsgrupper mellan socialtjänst, polis samt barn- och ungdomspsykiatri för att underlätta samverkan i dessa ärenden.

På några ställen i landet har genom lokala initiativ samverkan över olika myndighetsgränser utvecklats något mera. Ett exempel på detta är samarbetet mellan barn- och ungdomspsykiatri och socialtjänsten genom BUP-Elefanten och BAMSE-teamet i Linköping. BUP-Elefanten är en specialiserad enhet inom psykiatri för behandling av barn och ungdomar som utsatts för sexuella övergrepp eller misshandel och deras familjer. BAMSE-teamet är ett specialiserat utredningsteam med det övergripande syftet att aktivt bidra till en kvalitativ utveckling av barnutredningar vid misstänkta sexuella övergrepp och misshandel, att utveckla samverkan mellan berörda aktörer och utföra utredningsinsatser.

Ett annat sådant exempel på nära samverkan mellan olika myndigheter är Kriscentrum för barn i Malmö. Detta centrum drivs i samverkan mellan polis, åklagare, rättsmedicin, socialtjänst och sjukvård. Hit kommer barn som misstänks ha blivit utsatta för våld eller andra övergrepp. Möten och samtal med barnen sker i gemensamma lokaler.

På Island har samverkan under gemensamt tak funnits sedan 1998 i vad som kallas Barnhuset. Där kan barn som misstänks vara utsatta för sexuella övergrepp få medicinsk, psykologisk och juridisk hjälp. Syftet är att minska påfrestningarna på barnen genom att de samlade resurserna skapar en tryggare miljö samt att uppnå bästa möjliga koordination och samarbete mellan socialtjänst, sjukvård, polis och åklagare. Resultaten av verksamheten pekar på att arbetet är mera effektivt och att utredningarna har fått ett gemensamt och djupare barnperspektiv.

Regeringen har gett Rikspolisstyrelsen, Socialstyrelsen och Myndigheten för Skolutveckling ett gemensamt uppdrag att ta fram en övergripande strategi för samverkan när det gäller barn som far illa eller riskerar att fara illa (dnr S2003/7118/ST). Socialstyrelsen har även fått i uppdrag att utreda hur en nationell funktion för barn i utsatta situationer kan organiseras och finansieras (dnr S2003/7117/ST). Dessa båda uppdrag har redovisats under hösten 2004 och bereds för närvarande inom regeringskansliet.

De förhör med barn som sker i samband med de rättsliga, sociala och barnpsykologiska utredningar som blir aktuella när det finns misstanke om att ett barn blivit utsatt för brott kan vara mycket påfrestande för barnet. Bl.a. av denna anledning är utredningarna många gånger svåra att genomföra. Alltför ofta leder polisens utredningar inte till någon lagföring.

Om dessa utredningar i större utsträckning anpassas till barnens behov borde en del av dessa problem kunna undvikas. Ett viktigt steg i denna anpassning är att barnen inte behöver slussas runt i olika miljöer. Om polis, åklagare, rättsmedicin, socialtjänst och psykiatri finns samlade på en och samma plats behöver barnen endast komma till detta ställe där alla nödvändiga utredningar kan genomföras. Med ett sådant samarbete kommer kvaliteten på utredningarna att öka. De rättsliga utredningarna kan renodlas och förbättras. Detta leder i förlängningen till att allt fler gärningsmän kan lagföras. Om kvaliteten på de sociala och barnpsykologiska utredningarna höjs kommer även stödet och hjälpen till barnen och deras familjer att kunna bli bättre.

Genom nära samverkan mellan berörda myndigheter minskar även risken för dubbelarbete och samhällets totala insatser kan härigenom användas mera effektivt. En annan fördel med samverkan under gemensamt tak är att medvetenheten och kunskapen om barnens utsatta situation ökar. Vinsterna med samverkan mellan dessa olika myndigheter och huvudmän är således stora framförallt för de utsatta barnen men även ur ett samhällsperspektiv.

Uppdraget

Åklagarmyndigheten skall tillsammans med Rikspolisstyrelsen, Rättsmedicinalverket och Socialstyrelsen medverka till ytterligare etablering av flera försöksverksamheter med samverkan under gemensamt tak vid utredningar kring barn som misstänks vara utsatta för allvarliga brott som t.ex. sexuella övergrepp och misshandel.

Syftet med uppdraget är att de utredningar som görs i samband med misstankar om att ett barn har utsatts för brott skall vara anpassade till barnen. Barnen skall inte behöva ha kontakter med polis, åklagare, rättsmedicin, socialtjänst och barnpsykiatri på olika platser utan endast behöva komma till ett ställe. Barnen skall inte i onödan behöva utsättas för upprepade förhör och intervjuer av olika personer och för olika syften.

Ett annat syfte med uppdraget är att genom metodutveckling höja kvaliteten i utredningarna. Detta möjliggörs genom en nära samverkan som skapar förutsättningar för kontinuerligt utbyte av information och kunskap – i varje enskilt ärende men också på en övergripande nivå. På så sätt skapas bättre underlag för rättsprocessen och för samhällets fortsatta insatser.

Närmare detaljer kring hur verksamheten skall vara utformad och var den skall vara lokaliserad får lösas inom ramen för uppdragets

genomförande. Hänsyn bör dock tas till att verksamheterna får en lämplig spridning i landet.

Det är emellertid angeläget att var och en av de berörda myndigheterna upprätthåller sina roller och ansvarsområden. I det ingår att identifiera eventuella rättsliga hinder, t.ex. sekretess mellan myndigheter, som kan behöva uppmärksammas.

Åklagarmyndigheten skall ansvara för att samverkan enligt detta uppdrag påbörjas och kommer till stånd. Därutöver har Åklagarmyndigheten inte något annat ansvar för verksamheten än vad som följer av myndighetens roll i rättsprocessen.

Resultaten av ovannämnda uppdrag till Rikspolisstyrelsen, Socialstyrelsen och Myndigheten för Skolutveckling att ta fram en övergripande strategi för samverkan samt uppdraget till Socialstyrelsen att utreda hur en nationell funktion för barn i utsatta situationer kan tjäna som värdefulla underlag vid detta arbete.

Av redovisningarna som skall ske enligt detta uppdrag skall framgå vilka åtgärder som vidtagits och de resultat som kontinuerliga uppföljningar och utvärderingar av verksamheten har visat.

Samråd skall ske med Brottsförebyggande rådet, Brottsoffermyndigheten, Sveriges kommuner och landsting samt Rädda Barnen.

Uppdraget skall genomföras inom respektive myndighets befintliga anslag.

På regeringens vägnar

Thomas Bodström

Marie Axelsson

Likalydande till
Rikspolisstyrelsen
Rättsmedicinalverket
Socialstyrelsen

Kopia till
Ju/PO
Ju/Å
Ju/L6

Kopian överensstämmer
med originalet:

Ju/IM
Fi/BA
S/ST
S/SK-Barn
S/HS
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