“Getting the agencies together”:

A qualitative study of the professionals’ perceptions of collaboration in prevention of juvenile criminality

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Abstract

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Interagency collaboration is increasingly recognized as an effective approach in prevention of crimes among young population. Sweden along with Denmark and Norway was among the pioneers in introducing the platform for information exchange between social services, schools, police and the recreational centers for youth, those agencies having the primary contact with young people. In doing so, the professionals involved found a way to address the issue of juvenile criminality together, pooling the resources and collecting essential information that they would otherwise not be able to access on their own. The aim of this qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of relevant professionals from social services, schools, police and the recreational centers on collaboration in prevention of juvenile criminality in the city of Gothenburg. In particular, understand professionals' perspectives on their roles in collaboration, reflect on its strengths and weaknesses, and discover the role of a coordinator. In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with 20 respondents (including one e-mail interview) representing each of the agencies and the coordinators. Insights from the Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and the Craftsmanship theory of interagency collaboration (Bardach, 1998) were borrowed as a theoretical framework for the current study. Content analysis as an analytic strategy allowed to identify the recurring themes in the empirical data.

The findings allowed to conclude that collaboration was conceptualized by professionals as an effective approach featuring trust, mutual understanding of the roles and responsibilities, communication and continuous information sharing as the pillars of collaboration. The dominating perceptions of collaboration related to the comprehensive character and integrated approach it has. In particular, collaboration was recognized as a platform for information exchange between partners, collective decision-making, and early identification of youth at risk with each partner's contribution equally important. The study recognized that coordinators are assigned critical roles in collaboration, such as performing organizational responsibilities along with the casework. However, varying time commitments significantly affect their ability to answer the expectations of the team members. Coordinators and team members had similar expectations as to the skills, personal qualities and knowledge that coordinators should possess, yet, their points of view divided with regards to coordinator's qualification. Despite general encouragement of collaborative practice and desire to work together, the study revealed significant barriers to collaboration, such as issues with information sharing and confidentiality, insufficient communication, police reorganization, power relations and status differences, inadequate follow up of the cases as well as problems related to prioritizing collaboration.

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Acronyms

SSPF – social services, schools, police and recreational centers (F – free time)
ICC – Interagency collaborative capacity
UN – United Nations
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
EU – European Union
UNCRC – United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child

Contents

List of tables and figures

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

From an international perspective, Sweden and Denmark are considered the pioneers in organization of crime prevention measures giving special powers to the local municipalities and promoting multidisciplinary action between the key stakeholders (Takala, 2005). In the context of failed traditional criminal justice approach, that promotes punitive ideology and does not address the causal factors of delinquent behavior on individual, family and community levels, proactive interagency collaboration between different sectors of society is increasingly recognized as effective practice in crime prevention, especially when it concerns the welfare of children and youth (Leone, Quinn and Osher, 2002). With this regard, the UN Beijing rules for the administration of juvenile justice call upon:

> […] positive measures that involve the full mobilization of all positive resources, including the family, volunteers and other community groups, as well as schools and other community institutions, for the purpose of promoting the well-being of the juvenile, with a view to reducing the need for intervention under the law, and of effectively, fairly and humanely dealing with the juvenile in conflict with the law (General Assembly, 1985, Art. 1.3)

Back in the 1970s, the First Secretary of the National Police headquarters in Stockholm pointed out that "[…] if prevention is to be effective, it requires cooperation and sharing of responsibilities on as wide basis as possible" (Efraimsson, 1978). He further argued that to be more effective it should bring together professionals on the local level so that they could respond appropriately, take measures and provide assistance to children and young people directly before it is too late (ibid.). Among the institutions, which should constitute the local crime prevention network Wikström and Torstensson (1999) distinguished the police, social services, recreational activities administration, family, private enterprises and the health care services. The authors believe that what is needed in the field is clearly defined joint objectives to be implemented in cooperation with those actors active in the local communities and backed up with the research on what the local causes of crime are and how they can best be addressed (ibid.). While the need for collaboration and evidence-based practice has been admitted long ago, the research shows that the collaborative measures taken in the field of crime prevention in Sweden have been primarily short term and project-bound. Often the police was the central coordinating agency, however it is recognized that the ability of police to influence youth criminality by itself without assistance from other agencies is limited. Therefore, there is a growing need for integrated measures in the field in the form of interagency collaboration between the public, private sector, civil society organizations, the family and the child him/herself (ibid.).

Gothenburg is one of the Swedish cities, apart from Malmö and Uppsala, to implement the local collaborative structure between social services, schools, police and the recreational centers (SSPF), which is an information exchange platform aimed at crime prevention and minimization of risk-associated behavior among children and young people aged 12-18. This initiative in Sweden was inspired by successful Danish experience where SSP was gradually established in 95% of municipalities throughout the country starting from 1975 when the SSP Committee under the Danish Crime Prevention Council was set up. The Danish Crime Prevention Council (2002) defines SSP as a form of interdisciplinary and cross sectional cooperation that involves schools

and extra-curricular programmes (S), social services (S) and the police (P) in prevention of criminality among children and youth. It illustrates the multidisciplinary approach to prevention of juvenile criminality on the local level. Surprisingly, there has not been much research done on the outcomes of SSP in Sweden/Denmark to date. Sixteen years ago, in 2000, a survey launched by the Danish Advisory Councils on Violence, Substance Use and Crime Prevention was undertaken on the impact of SSP exploring organization, audience, areas of work and the approaches in local municipalities where SSP was established (Pedersen and Stothard, 2015). Similarly, another research described the perceptions of Danish SSP employees on the risk factors and the causes of criminal behavior. Yet, the evaluation component especially with regards to the outcomes needs further consideration (Pedersen and Stothard, 2015; Wikström and Torstensson, 1999). Jørden Pedersen, the chairperson of the Danish SSP Council explains such state of affairs by saying that "we don´t have one central SSP model but instead we have 98 different models in every municipality in Denmark".

The first and the only implementation evaluation of the SSPF in Gothenburg and Mölndal has been carried out recently. The evaluation focused on the overall picture describing the SSPF: what is SSPF and how it is implemented in Gothenburg and Mölndal, how intervention is supposed to work, what are the roles of the interagency groups involved in collaboration as well as similarities and differences in SSPF between different districts (Turner, Nilsson and Jidetoft, 2015). The findings allowed to conclude that even though SSPF created a culture of action, contributed to information exchange and promoted holistic approach to crime prevention, there was a significant variation as to how it was actually carried out in different districts. Perhaps, this can partly be due to different perceptions professionals have on interagency collaboration and their roles in that respect, which requires further investigation. In addition, previous studies suggest that there is an increasing demand for in-depth exploration of the strengths and drawbacks of collaboration, the roles of coordinators, specifically exploring how they perceive and construct collaboration and whether their perception is in any way different comparing with other professionals (Green, Rockhill, Burrus, 2008; Strype et al., 2014). Given that the problem of juvenile criminality attracts growing attention, there is a need to identify how it can best be addressed by practitioners who, on the one hand, have different background, working methods and attitudes as to what constitutes risk and criminal behavior, but on the other – inevitably belong to a wider network of professionals working for the common goal, namely ensuring safety, protection and welfare of local population.

1.1. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The Purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of relevant professionals from social services, schools, police and the recreational centers on collaboration in prevention of juvenile criminality in the city of Gothenburg. In this respect, the study seeks to understand professionals' perspectives on their roles within the SSPF collaboration as well as to reflect on their perceptions of collaboration practices, its strengths and weaknesses. Finally, the study attempts to discover the role of a coordinator and his/her qualification in the process of interagency collaboration. In such a way, this study will contribute to better understanding of the collaborative approaches to prevention of juvenile criminality in the context of Swedish SSPF model and the aspects promoting or hindering collaboration in this area.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do professionals understand interagency collaboration and reflect on their significance in SSPF?
2. How do SSPF coordinators and team members perceive the roles of a coordinator in interagency collaboration?
3. What strengths and obstacles to collaboration do professionals recognize in their SSPF work experience, and how do they reflect upon them?

1.3. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Clearly, it is essential to conceptualize the key terms, such as interagency collaboration, crime prevention and juvenile criminality/delinquency. Establishing a common platform and understanding what interagency collaboration is, how crime prevention and juvenile criminality are defined, is recognized as the first step towards effective practice in this area.

Inter-agency collaboration

Collaboration, in its broadest sense, as suggested by Linden (2002, p.7) implies co-labour and

> […] occurs when people from different organizations (or units within one organization) produce something together through joint effort, resources, and decision-making, and share ownership of the final product or service.

In defining collaboration, Weinstein, Whittington and Leiba (2003) suggest distinguishing it from *working in partnership*, which as argued is a formal and institutionalized form of collaboration, a permanent state of relationship. Collaboration, as distinct from partnership is referred to as an active form of working together for the best interest of the target group, a process of non-hierarchical partnership in action incorporating knowledge base, expertise skills, and motives of practitioners making collaboration an effective practice (Kraus, 1980; Okamoto, 1999; Weinstein et al., 2003). Rosenbaum (2002, p.171) compares interagency collaboration with a "[…] vehicle for planning and implementing complex, comprehensive community interventions" aimed at addressing multidimensional problems

The notions of multi-agency, partnership or collaborative approach in the area of juvenile crime prevention are often used interchangeably being referred to as the cooperative relationships between organizations aimed at achieving a common goal representing a "[…] unique hybrid organism in the world of social interventions" (Rosenbaum, 2002, p. 176). However, going further by analyzing the differences between these concepts, several scholars have distinguished the levels or stages of collaboration whereby the lowest level represents little or no collaboration and the highest – full collaboration (Frey et al., 2006). Peterson (1991) suggested three levels of collaboration: cooperation, which stands for providing general support to each other and sharing available resources while being independent and having own goals and objectives; coordination that implies combining the efforts of two or more organizations to promote joint projects whilst still being autonomous in goals and objectives and finally, the interagency collaboration representing the most intensive, continuous and long-standing interaction between the agencies that may demand changes in the internal policies for the sake of a common goal. Hogue (1994) extended the classification to five levels, namely networking, which is the lowest stage, cooperation or alliance, coordination or partnership, coalition or partnership and finally, collaboration representing shared vision and interdependent systems in addressing the issues.

Even though, as argued by Liddle and Gelsthorpe (1994) professionals in interagency teams specifically in the area of crime prevention, rarely share the same priorities, working practices, organizational structures and define the problem differently, any meaningful work in the area of juvenile criminality requires active participation of all stakeholders from public/private sectors

and the civil society. It enriches collaboration with multidimensional overview of the causes and potential solutions elaborated through constructive discussions representing different perspectives and allows a wider network of professionals to share their concerns and approaches.

Crime prevention

Crime prevention is a concept that covers a broad range of theoretical ideas and local contexts that may have different meanings to difference professionals, even for those working for the common goal. Ekblom (1994, p. 194) defines crime prevention in a simple and all-embracing way: "[…] intervention in mechanisms that cause criminal acts". More specific definition is suggested by van Dijk and de Waard (1991, p. 483): "[…] crime prevention is the total of all private initiatives and state policies, other than the enforcement of criminal law, aimed at the reduction of damage caused by acts defined as criminal by the state". In the preamble to the Resolution on Prevention of Urban Crime, the Eighth UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders recognized that crime prevention is a matter of all citizens, the community and institutions in society. It should incorporate multi-agency approach and provide a coordinated response at the local level bringing together professionals responsible "[…] for planning and development, for the family, health, employment and training, housing, social services, leisure activities, schools, the police, and the justice system" (United Nations, 1990, p.125; Clark, 1994). Similarly, the UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime advocate for cooperation between authorities arguing that because the causes of crime are wide-ranging, there is a need for multidisciplinary professionals to address them (United Nations, 1990a). Nordic countries, Sweden and Denmark in particular, are often characterized as supporting social and situational crime prevention (Takala, 2005). The former influencing the development of the child's propensity to crime and the latter seeking to reduce the likelihood of crime by making it less rewarding and more risky to commit (Ministry of Justice, 1997; Wikström and Torstensson, 1999).

Juvenile criminality

Juvenile delinquency is an equivalent to juvenile criminality, which is used in Swedish legislation. Unlike the former, the Swedish concept juvenile criminality, as suggested by Sarnecki and Estrada (2006) does not include so-called status offences – acts committed by juveniles that constitute a crime, but are legal if they are committed by adults. The Merriam Webster dictionary defines juvenile delinquency as a "conduct by a juvenile characterized by antisocial behavior that is beyond parental control and therefore subject to legal action". Juvenile delinquency is often used as a synonym to juvenile offending that describes antisocial or criminal behavior of minors (individuals by the age of 18). In the current study both concepts, juvenile delinquency and criminality, are used interchangeably.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Having defined what is meant by interagency collaboration, crime prevention and juvenile criminality, I will now move on exploring Swedish national and local background in addressing youth crimes. The following chapter opens with a brief situational analysis of youth crimes and delinquency in Sweden. It further explores Swedish national crime prevention context and describes the roles of the key stakeholders, such as social services, schools, police and the recreational centers in preventing criminal behavior among children and young people.

2.1. YOUTH CRIME TRENDS IN SWEDISH SOCIETY

It is widely agreed that Sweden along with other Scandinavian countries represents a typical example of the social democratic welfare state that has a large public sector and extensive welfare economy (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Sweden is often associated with low poverty rates, low levels of income inequality, long life expectancy, high standards of living and the progressive taxation system designed to support highly expensive social democratic state. In discussing the Swedish model of the welfare state Andersson (2009, p.233) refers to it as "[…] the utopia of the rational, pragmatic society where social problems are approached in a non-dogmatic and efficient way". Nonetheless, the issue of juvenile delinquency attracts growing concern in Sweden as will be illustrated further.

The United Nations World Youth Report recognized that young people constitute one of the most criminally active groups of the population (United Nations, 2005). The comparative statistics of the EU Member States suggest that juvenile delinquency accounts for an average of 15% of all crimes, even though in some countries it raises up to 22% (Sigmund, 2006). The Youth Law in Sweden defines youth as between 13-25 years of age, which makes up a total of 1'533 165 persons in this age category, 52% boys and 48% girls and amounts to 15.5% share of the total Swedish population (Hallengren, 2005, Statistics Sweden, 2015b). Even though the extent of youth crimes is difficult to measure due to a large proportion of unreported law violations, the national statistical information gives an insight on approximate scope of the problem. According to statistics collected by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå, 2015), young people (aged 15-18) were suspected of committing 13'668 offences in 2015, which constitutes almost 13% of the total share of registered law violations in Sweden for respected period. Crimes against property (46%), narcotic drugs crimes (28%), crimes against person (24%) and road traffic offenses (18%) were among the most common suspected violations by youth. Furthermore, the most recent Swedish School Survey on Crime concluded that it is relatively common for year-nine youth in Sweden (mean age 15 years) to engage in some type of unlawful activities. While the general involvement in crime among the students and the share of respondents who committed at least one theft declined between 1995 and 2011, the proportion of respondents engaged in the acts of violence remained stable at 10% until 2011 when it dropped to 6% (Ring, 2013).

Similarly, the results of the Second Self-Reported Delinquency study conducted in 2005-2007, support the findings of the Swedish school survey in that 12-15 year old students do commit crimes (Ring and Andersson, 2010). The study is an international collaborative research initiative aimed to make a cross-national description of juvenile delinquency across 31 countries. With the overall response rate of 78.2% it suggests that over one-third of young people from Sweden who participated in the study reported "ever" having committed a crime and approximately one-fifth of them did it in the past year. The study also provides data as to the types of crimes committed by the youth assigning them to so-called "traditional offences", such as thefts, robberies, assaults, drug/alcohol use, truancy, vandalism, etc. (ibid.)

2.2. CRIME PREVENTION IN SWEDEN: NATIONAL AND LOCAL PERSPECTIVES

The primary actor in the field of crime prevention in Sweden is the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), which was established in 1974 under the Ministry of Justice in response to the growing public and political concern over increased criminality in the country (Andersson, 2005). Even though the rates of juveniles brought into formal contact with the police and criminal justice system in Sweden has somewhat stabilized and declined substantially since then, the issue with the children's and youth's criminal behavior remains stable on the agenda as was illustrated above.

Crime prevention policy in Sweden, as well as in other Nordic countries highlights the prevention of marginalization and promotion of integration as the central principles in this field, which is achieved through universal as opposed to targeted programmes implemented by local councils in the municipalities (Takala, 2005). In the report to the Swedish Ministry of Justice back in the 1996, Wikström and Torstensson, (1999) argued that the ultimate goal of the national crime prevention policy is that crime prevention programmes should be developed locally with a national support structure including early and later-stage social prevention, early and general situational prevention as well as programmes for chronic criminals. However, even though local crime prevention councils are established in most of the Swedish counties, the way they organize, plan, implement and evaluate crime prevention initiatives varies greatly between municipalities (Council of Europe, 2002).

Another essential point is that crime prevention efforts in Sweden rely heavily on the idea of cooperation engaging all relevant actors where the contribution of each is based on understanding of their particular role in affecting the behavior of children and young people and allows to avoid duplication of services since every party is acknowledged of what the others do (Johansson, 2014; Wikström and Torstensson, 1999). Johansson (2014) argued that local cooperation in crime prevention has recently become a central organizing and guiding principle bringing together public and private sectors. The Swedish National Police Board in its report on cooperative efforts between the police and local municipalities suggested: "[…] cooperation in crime prevention efforts involves each party contributing in specific resources, skills, and knowledge as to jointly reduce both the likelihood of crime and its negative effects" and implies more efficient use of resources (Rikspolisstyrelsen, 2012, pp. 7-8; Takala, 2005). For instance, the first national crime

prevention programme "Our Collective Responsibility" that came into force in 1996 recognized that good collaboration is a prerequisite for success in crime prevention efforts (Ministry of Justice, 1997). However, despite acknowledgement of how significant collaboration is, crime prevention in Sweden often lacks clear sense of direction and shared perception as to what causes the problem and how it should best be addressed (Wikström and Torstensson, 1999). In addition, scholars agree that there is not enough evaluation carried out as to what are the consequences of crime prevention measures. Instead, the Swedish Crime Prevention Council, which among other responsibilities is a center for research and development, conducts a large number of studies evaluating the process and changes in legislation rather than the outcomes (Takala, 2005).

2.2.1. Roles and responsibilities of local stakeholders in prevention of juvenile criminality

Local actors in the field are mandated by their regulations as well as Swedish legislation to cooperate with each other in carrying out crime prevention activities. For instance, the Swedish Social Services Act stipulates that the social welfare activities shall be designed and carried out in collaboration with local agencies and organizations (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 2001). Besides, there are special "collaboration agreements" between the police and municipalities specifying focus areas and recommended measures for local crime prevention (Rikspolisstyrelsen, 2012). The stakeholders in charge of preventing children and youth from committing criminal acts and becoming involved in criminal gangs in Sweden represent a broad range of public, private and voluntary institutions (Bjørgo, 2015). Often it is the child welfare services, schools, police and the recreational centers that are the central actors in this field, however in some cases health care services are involved as well, especially when the case concerns substance misuse. It is important to mention that the municipal sector in Sweden is a central ground for provision of welfare services and local authorities are autonomous exercising increased discretion and extended responsibilities in developing the profile of services (Bergmark and Lundström, 2007). In the section that follows, the role of each agency in prevention of youth criminal behavior is described in detail.

2.2.1.1. Child welfare services

Within its organizational structure, child welfare services have special units for investigation and assessment focused on children and young people with different types of social problems or signs of criminal behavior (Bergmark and Lundström, 2007). Specifically, the responsibilities of child welfare services in this regard include providing support to children whose basic needs are not met and to young people who attract special attention because of drug/alcohol misuse, criminality or other indicators of social problems (Ministry of Justice, 1997). While social services and judicial authorities share the responsibility for young offenders aged 15 to 17, addressing delinquency and the criminal acts committed by children under the age of 15 is considered an integral part of the Swedish child welfare system, which is central in responding to cases where children are involved (Andersson, 2012; Bjørgo, 2015).

Andersson (2012) suggests that the measures applied by social services with regards to young offenders and those at risk of asocial behavior, depend on the situation and vary greatly between

the municipalities based on the factors pushing the child to commit a crime. Perhaps, this happens because social services are the local self-governing entities under the legal and financial responsibility of municipalities that decide how to organize their work (Hessle and Vinnerljung, 1999). Nonetheless, in addressing the delinquent behavior of young people, child welfare services, within the framework of their responsibilities specified in the Social Services Act SFS:453, shall (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 2001):

- in close cooperation with the families promote all-round personal, physical and social development of children and young people;
- in cooperation with other agencies, ensure that children and young people grow up in a safe and secure environment;
- in partnership with the families, ensure that children and young people at risk receive protection and support they need;
- conduct outreach work and other activities;
- Actively work to prevent and combat substance misuse among children and young people;
- Monitor children who show signs of unfavorable development.

The Swedish Social Services Act states that the measures targeting young offenders should have the aim of removing the causes of the criminal behavior in cooperation with the individual, his/her parents and the social services (Sarnecki and Estrada, 2006).

Hessle and Vinnerljung (1999) grouped the activities of Swedish child welfare services in four categories: prevention, investigation, social support and in-home treatment, and care. The first two categories, among other functions, include activities aimed at preventing juvenile crimes. On the prevention level, social services in close cooperation with other agencies are engaged in various programs aimed at preventing negative development, antisocial behavior in youth and out-of-home placements. Concerning investigation, professionals who due to their work peculiarities have direct contact with children and youth, such as teachers, health care workers, nurses, and police officers are obliged by law to report to the child welfare services if there is a growing concern about the child. The majority of referrals, as argued by Wiklund (2006) concern youth problems such as delinquency, which occupies a large part of the child welfare services work in Sweden. Upon receiving the referral, social services initiate an investigation process in close cooperation with the family and the child concerned.

2.2.1.2. POLICE

Police is the central public agency in Sweden responsible for crime prevention work throughout the country. The Swedish Police Act establishes that the police is obliged to maintain public order and safety is society, in particular, prevent crime and other violations and provide communities with protection, information and other kinds of assistance (Swedish National Police Board, 1999). Similar to the child welfare services, police is obliged to work in partnership with other authorities and organizations, specifically maintain cooperation with the social services and keep them informed in matters that might require their involvement (Andersson, 2012; Rikspolisstyrelsen, 1999). The cooperative programmes involving schools and police,

dissemination of information about crime risks and measures are some of the examples of crime prevention done by the Swedish police.

An important task for the police is to prevent young people from violating the law and developing a criminal lifestyle. When the police suspects that a young person committed a crime, they are obliged to investigate the case, however if the person is underage, child welfare services are involved as well (Rikspolisstyrelsen, 2012a). Wiklund (2006) suggests that the police reports are transmitted routinely to the social services if the suspected person is under the age of 18. An example of youth crime prevention initiated by the Swedish police in cooperation with the social services is the Stockholm Gang Intervention Project aimed at preventing youth from engaging in criminal activities in street gangs or other criminal networks and implementing various educational efforts to inform youth about alternatives to gang crime (Leinfelt and Rostami, 2012). One of the components of the project was creation of social development groups (SDG) in local communities for the purpose to find collaborative approaches to protect youth at risk (12-20 years of age) from the criminal gangs, drugs and crime. Furthermore, the project aimed at informing about the risk factors associated with joining a gang. The SDG team consisted of the school principal, school nurse/counselor, youth counselor, professionals from the local youth recreational facilities and the police. In such a way the SGD represented an overarching collaboration system between the police, schools, recreational centers and social services, an equivalent of the SSPF model, however limited in scope by the duration of the project (ibid.).

2.2.1.3. SCHOOLS

It is commonly agreed that schools represent a critical social context for crime prevention and have a great potential in identifying, preventing and addressing youth crimes through a rich diversity of professionals employed there, such as teachers, psychologists, social workers and medical staff (Sherman, 2002; Welsh and Farrington, 2007). The Swedish Education Act declares that children from the age of seven are required to attend compulsory schools, which creates a strong platform, social and cultural meeting place where they establish friendship networks and connections affecting the way children grow and develop (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Similar to the recreational centers and the child welfare services, it is the local municipalities that have a significant degree of autonomy in administering lower and upper secondary education. The governmental philosophy in this area is based on the principle that the municipalities and schools should have as much freedom as possible to carry out their work and formulate regulations while the state defines national goals for education (Grewe, 2005).

The schools, according to the Swedish legislation are responsible to help the child establish respect for human rights and basic democratic values, sense of justice and capacity for tolerance, promote all-round personal development and discover their own uniqueness. With regards to the norms and values that Swedish schools are expected to engrain in pupils, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization highlights conscious understanding of human rights and basic democratic values, respect for intrinsic value of other people, rejection of oppression and degrading treatment towards other people as well as respect and care for both their immediate environment and the environment from a broader perspective (UNESCO, 2010). At the same time, school is the place where children and young people spend most of the time in their teen

years, the age when they are especially exposed to peer group influences and risk developing antisocial behavior. Clark (2007) suggests that the teenage years is a critical period and therefore a great concern should be over the environmental influences affecting the child's development. Considering that at this age, the attitudes on what is good and what is bad are at the formation stage, schools have important levers of influence on the development of tendencies to delinquent behavior (Ministry of Justice, 1997).

2.2.1.4. RECREATIONAL CENTERS

Swedish local authorities are responsible for offering children and young people leisure activities that are organized in the form of recreational youth centers where the individuals can spend their free time. Attendance is voluntary and is based on a principle that children and youth should be allowed to develop their own interests independently (Andersson, 2012; Linström, 2012). The network of recreational centers in Sweden has a long history dating back to the mid 20s century when they were created as a response to growing concerns about the lack of meaningful activities for children and youth to spend their leisure time (Mahoney and Stattin, 2000). Most recreational centers belong to the public sector within the responsibility of local authorities, however some of them are managed by non-governmental organizations. The local councils provide financial support to the youth centers fostering open access to leisure activities for anyone who wants to spent their spare time in there (Linström, 2012). Young people, 13-16 years of age constitute its main target group. For those between 17-25 years municipalities offer so-called youth culture houses. The youth centers are usually accessible during the week opening around dinner time and working until 11-11:30 p.m. (Mahoney, Stattin and Magnusson, 2001).

Forkby and Kiilakoski (2014) argue that there is no legal documents on the governmental level regulating the types of activities of the recreational centers. Therefore, it is up to the local authorities to decide what to offer to children and youth for their leisure time in such facilities. Most of the staff members employed at the recreational centers are trained youth workers who completed specialized two-year vocational training programme, however there is a share of those with no formal education. (Forkby, 2014; Forkby and Kiilakoski, 2014). The typical activities are usually low in organization (ping-pong, video games, darts, TV, music etc.) with one or more adults present at the center, but not instructing youth on what they have to do (Mahoney and Stattin, 2000).

With regards to prevention of juvenile delinquency, Mahoney et al., (2001) suggest that one of the most important functions of the recreational centers is to reduce youth antisocial behavior by offering children and young people a place to spent their leisure time instead of joining criminal activities after school. After-school programs are built on the principle that if providing children and young people prosocial opportunities, their involvement in delinquent activities in the community can be reduced (Welsh and Farrington, 2007). However, previous research and longitudinal studies suggest that there is a link between involvement in community-based leisure activities low in structure and antisocial behavior in children and young people, which is contradictory to expectations of the general public as to the beneficial outcomes of such facilities (Mahoney and Stattin, 2000, Mahoney et. al, 2001, Mahoney, Stattin and Lord, 2004). As explained by Mahoney and Stattin (2000), while typically structured leisure activities high in

complexity and involving guidance, cooperation and support from the adults are linked to significantly lower levels of asocial behavior, the research findings reveal that involvement of kids in comparatively low structured youth recreational centers was associated with high levels of delinquent behavior, regardless of the gender. Although a series of studies concluded that the decision to participate in the activities of the recreational centers was significantly related to juvenile delinquency, the findings cannot be generalized to other Swedish cities due to the fact that they were conducted on a sample of children from one out of 290 municipalities, which can be unique in its attitude to functions of the recreational centers. Nonetheless, the fact that the recreational centers play a crucial role in filling in children's leisure time with meaningful activities cannot be disregarded in the context of prevention of juvenile delinquency and current study.

As was illustrated above, the actors in the field of crime prevention are urged to cooperate in order to provide better services and address the circumstances affecting the decisions of children and young people to commit a crime.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following chapter explores the factors leading to delinquent behavior in children and young people as well as consequences it may bring. Clearly, in an attempt to develop effective mechanisms in crime prevention, interagency collaboration holds a prominent position and the following section will also explore the perceived benefits, obstacles and factors contributing to multi-agency working. Finally, Danish and Swedish approaches to prevention of juvenile criminality are described in detail.

3.1 DETERMINANTS OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Overrepresentation of young people in the criminal justice statistics on the one hand, can be explained by the failure of national crime prevention programmes targeting young population. On the other hand, it would not be correct to rest entire responsibility for the juvenile crime rates on the policies implemented by the European states, but rather emphasize that it is often difficult to develop effective programmes preventing juvenile delinquency without understanding the origins and the reasons behind children's involvement in unlawful activities.

Juvenile delinquency is a complex phenomenon influenced by a variety of factors ranging from individual related to the personality of a child, family background to societal. There is no single accurate way to define it or explore its origins. A number of theories, such as, for instance, Strain theory (Agnew, 2001) or Social Control theory (Hirschi, 2002), have attempted to identify the determinants leading to such behavior or factors increasing the risk of committing a crime, which altogether indicates how comprehensive the problem of juvenile delinquency actually is. According to one of the explanations, juvenile behavior is argued to be affected by intense period of rapid development when young people are especially sensitive to peer, educational, social and familial environmental factors. Beyond that, physical and mental factors, unfavorable home, school, neighborhood and occupational conditions were found to be linked to the risks of committing offences in the young age (Bridges, 1927; Clark, 2007). Other scholars define juvenile criminality as a leisure time phenomenon, however there is an undisputable influence of each system in the child's ecological environment on the patterns of his/her behavior (Junger-Tas and Decker, 2006).

In the Swedish context, the findings of the Second Self-Reported Delinquency study suggest that those students who have experienced negative life events, such as death in the family, conflict between parents more often reported involvements in criminal activities (Ring and Andersson, 2010). These results positively correlate with what the Strain theory identifies as the determinants of the criminal behavior in children, such as when kids experience stress related or family matters and are not able to cope with them (Agnew, 2001). Strong social bonds to parents, being successful in school, spending a lot of time on doing homework were associated with lower levels of delinquent behavior in kids who participated in the study, which provides an evidence to

what the Social Control theory developed by Hirschi classifies as the factors restraining the individual from engaging in delinquency (Hirschi, 2002; Ring and Andersson, 2010). Finally, another group of researchers exploring the effects of the family and environmental background on the levels of youth crime rates in Stockholm metropolitan area identified the link between lack of resources within the family or broader social environment and increased risk of criminal behavior in a child (Hällsten, Szulkin and Sarnecki 2013).

3.2. CONSEQUENCES OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR

Previous research on juvenile delinquency and substance misuse among young girls involved with the child welfare services in the United States suggests that there is a strong link between teen pregnancy and juvenile delinquency. It is argued that ever-pregnant young females exhibit significantly higher levels of criminal behavior comparing with their never-pregnant peers (Helfrich and McWey, 2014; Hope, Wilder and Watt, 2003). Furthermore, the study examining the long-term consequences of youth delinquent behavior and substance use on their marital choices identified significant likelihood of the first marriage at younger age for both sexes (Blair, 2010). Similarly, in their research on the effects of delinquency on alcohol misuse among juveniles in Europe, Gatti et al. (2013) found a strong correlation between alcohol misuse and delinquency providing an evidence for the fact that binge drinking among young people who had committed a serious offence is five times higher comparing with those who had not committed any offences. Therefore, it is evident that juvenile delinquency puts youth at high risk of unemployment, early marriage, drug and alcohol misuse as well as dependency on the welfare state. These consequences have a structural nature because it is not only the young person, who committed the crime that is suffering, but also his family and the society as a whole.

From pragmatic point of view, juvenile delinquency inflicts damage on the society, both the financial and the intellectual, because those young people who were supposed to come and replace the older generation on the labour market are not able to do so due to the complex of problems associated with their past experiences. It is commonly agreed that by replacing punishment with early prevention measures, it is possible to minimize the social cost of youth crime (Clark, 2007). Therefore, The European Economic and Social Committee on the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency urges the European Union to shape a common strategy to combat juvenile delinquency arguing that it not only affects minors and young people, but also prevents adult crime in future (Sigmund, 2006). Given that the issue of concern is a comprehensive phenomenon, the efforts to address it should be of collaborative nature as well, which would allow to tackle juvenile delinquency interdisciplinary consolidating professionals from different fields and societal systems from the micro to macro levels. As specified in the Recommendations of the Council of Europe concerning new ways of dealing with juvenile delinquency and the role of juvenile justice:

“The response to juvenile delinquency should be planned, coordinated, and delivered by local partnerships comprising the key public agencies – police, probation, youth and social welfare, judicial, education, health and housing authorities – and the voluntary and private sector […]

responsible and accountable for achieving a common and clearly defined aim". (Council of Europe, 2003, Art. 21) .

3.3. BUILDING INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

As illustrated above, the problem of juvenile criminality is complex and multidimensional and therefore requires comprehensive and multidisciplinary efforts to address it. However, even though the knowledge about the causes of crime, drugs and disorder in society is substantial, the effective crime control and prevention strategies are yet to be discovered (Rosenbaum, 2002). While it is argued that preventative measures taken by only one partner are often limited and risk to fail, multi-agency crime prevention is recognized as the model whereby the power to act is concentrated in the hands of the agencies exercising the highest influence on the target group, such as educational institutions, local police or social services (Barton and Valero-Silva, 2013). Nonetheless, the all-embracing crime prevention programmes targeting children and youth in conflict with the law are comparatively new in the field (ibid.). The first official international encompassing document on the UN level, namely the UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, or the Riyadh Guidelines was adopted and proclaimed in its resolution in December 1990, a year after the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child was ratified by the UN General Assembly. The Guidelines establish the rules for the prevention of juvenile delinquency that facilitate successful socialization and integration of all children regardless of race or nationality through the family, community, peer groups, schools and vocational training, and specify protection measures for those young people who were abandoned, neglected, abused or live marginalized (General Assembly, 1990). Individualistic approach is gradually replaced with more comprehensive national and local support structures consolidating agencies in a partnership for the sake of achieving the common goal.

3.3.1. INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION IN PREVENTION OF JUVENILE CRIMINALITY

As was illustrated earlier, one of the approaches to avoid fragmentation of services, increase organizational accountability, strengthen local community organizations and reduce crime in the most cost-effective manner especially when it concerns children and youths in conflict with the law is to work in collaboration (Rosenbaum, 2002). It has commonly been agreed that multi-agency working has a positive impact on young people and their families, specifically in preventing truancy and bullying, developing individual response to the needs of children and young people as well as addressing their concerns on learning opportunities (Harris and Allen, 2011). Dickerson, Collins-Camargo and Martin-Galijatovic (2012) suggest that interagency collaboration helps to build shared value systems, improve communication and provide a team of support for children and families. Yet, local crime prevention projects involving interagency collaboration has been reported with mixed results, which perhaps can be explained by the variation in education, work experience of practitioners and local context. The research evidence suggests that professionals bring with them different perspectives, ideologies and cultures, multiple skills and knowledge, which altogether contributes to the development of integrated services (Ekblom and Wyvekens, 2004; Hatton and Schroeder, 2007). On the other hand, Dickerson et al. (2012) highlight that often professionals struggle in building effective

collaborations due to mistrust, lack of understanding of the values, goals and perspectives of each other. The following section will explore the nature of interagency collaboration with specific reference to the professional autonomy, professional boundaries and power relations, institutional cultures and resources, and finally the role of a coordinator (Harris and Allen, 2011; Harris, 2003).

3.3.1.1. PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY OF THE AGENCIES IN COLLABORATION

Gorisi and Walters (1999, p. 637) argued that interagency collaboration can only be functional "if the autonomy and specific role of each individual partner is respected and included". In this regard Beatrice (1991) urged to accept the fact that the agencies cannot do the things they are not equipped to do, professional autonomy has to be respected given that the agencies have their own priorities. Often the tension occurs around the statutory framework of the agencies that other partners do not understand. Therefore, accepting the existing limitations, the areas of expertise, service mandates and scope of responsibilities of the agencies within the collaborative framework allows to avoid unrealistic expectations about each other's authority to act (Darlington, Feeney and Rixon, 2005; Green et al., 2008). Similarly, in the context of professional autonomy Rose (2011) explored the dilemmas that often occur when professionals are imposed the roles that do not employ their area of expertise or when their contribution is devalued. With this regard Darlington et al., (2005) advocates for understanding of the constrains and opportunities provided by the policy and legislative contexts that guide the work of collaborating agencies and allow to avoid conflicting expectations.

3.3.1.2. PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES AND POWER RELATIONS IN COLLABORATING TEAMS

In the research on collaboration between the child protection and mental health services, Darlington et al., (2005) found an evidence supporting the idea that such gaps in interagency collaboration as lack of information on the other agency, namely on services available, roles and responsibilities of professionals was hindering effective collaborative practice. Moreover, mistrust between partnering agencies and lack of understanding of each other agencies' perspectives was recognized as another barrier to collaboration (Green et al., 2008). The authors believe that clearly defined processes and structures, well documented and supported by training sessions that clarify the boundaries and limitations of participating agencies help to overcome this kind of dilemmas (ibid.). Supporting this position, Huxham and Vangen (1996) highlight the importance of establishing clear and agreed set of aims, which ultimately minimizes misunderstanding of the professional responsibilities and reduces false expectations as to what the others have to do. Establishing high levels of trust and mutual responsibility for the outcomes lies the foundation for successful interagency collaboration. With regards to power relations, it has been recognized that imbalance in seniority among professionals can lead to conflicts within the interagency collaboration (Liddle and Gelsthorpe, 1994). Yet, Emerson (1962) suggests the parties are mutually dependent on one another and further states that "power resides implicitly in the other's dependency" (ibid., p. 32). Therefore, it is important to accept that power imbalances are embodied in interagency relations and ensure that there is no hierarchy between the agencies and professionals are equal in their right to influence the case, specifically in crime prevention.

3.3.1.3. INSTITUTIONAL CULTURES

Johnson L. et al. (2003) holds the view that each agency has its own organizational culture, which includes language, values and priorities, perceptions of risk and protective factors as well as the meaning of collaboration itself that is often a source of misunderstanding and frustration in the interagency collaboration teams. Accepting the culture of other agencies, namely their rules and values, as argued by Johnson L. J. et al. (2003, p. 206) encourage "to seek solutions that were sensitive to the unique cultures of agencies involved in the collaboration" and ultimately contribute to effective working arrangements within the interprofessional team. Differences in perspectives between professionals representing contrasting institutional cultures Bardach (1998) believes, affects the way they interpret a problem and apply intervention strategies to address it. Furthermore, lack of understanding and vague role distribution within the team was recognized as negatively affecting collaboration. Unnithan and Johnston (2012) suggest that effective collaboration requires active participation, open, constructive communication where everyone feels valued and the power is shared fairly between the partners.

3.3.1.4. RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

It is generally agreed that pooling of resources contributes to better collaboration, promotes greater sustainability and allows to adopt wider variety of approaches to prevent juvenile criminality (Hatton and Schroeder, 2007). Furthermore, service integration enables the agencies to elaborate integrated responses addressing the needs of children and young people. Ekblom (1994) suggests that resources include basic funds, personnel time as well as information on crime available to different stakeholders. Inadequate resources have been listed among the barriers to collaboration as it is often difficult to maintain effective collaboration being short on time or relevant professionals with the expertise in specific areas (Darlington et al., 2005; Johnson P. et al., 2003).

3.3.1.5. COORDINATING PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN COLLABORATION

In discussing collaborative practices, especially in the areas responsible for children's welfare, where social services, educational institutions, police and the recreational centers are engaged, the highest priority is given to establishing a common ground so that everyone in the team is equal and understands the roles and responsibilities of other partners. This role is often assigned to coordinators who can either be members of one of the agencies represented in the interprofessional team, or be independent. Strong leadership has been identified by Johnson L. et al. (2003) among the most important factors in interagency collaboration. Based on the ideas of Beatrice (1991), coordination helps to collect resources, attract additional support and allows the agencies to avoid "reinventing the wheel" (ibid., p. 50). Furthermore, the research evidence allows to conclude that high levels of coordination in interagency collaboration reduces the levels of conflict between the group members inasmuch as it allows to establish a common ground and understanding as well as promote clear division of roles and responsibilities (Alter, 1990). Coordinator is central in ensuring that all parties understand how collaboration is designed and what the purpose of working together is.

3.4. DANISH AND SWEDISH APPROACHES TO PREVENTION OF JUVENILE CRIMINALITY

The following section describes the experience of interagency collaboration in Denmark and Sweden. Specifically, it explores how collaboration between schools, social services, police and the recreational centers was developed and is functioning in two Scandinavian countries.

3.4.1. SSP COLLABORATION IN DENMARK

Evidence suggests that cooperation between the agencies, particularly in the area of juvenile crime prevention grows in popularity. Denmark, the country that pioneered the interdisciplinary and cross sectional collaboration between schools (S), social services (S), and the police (P) set an example for other Scandinavian and European countries aimed at eliminating the phenomena of youth crimes in society. From an international perspective, Denmark is considered one of the innovators in the field of crime prevention (Takala, 2005).

Danish SSP crime prevention model illustrates how the agencies can cooperate equally, share required information and resources, and avoid hierarchical professional relations to prevent children and youth from pushing the legal boundaries. The Danish model is not restricted to cooperation between the police and social services, but is inclusive to all stakeholders in the field and is longstanding. The fundamental idea behind the SSP model lies in the perspective according to which if children and young people have more opportunities for personal development, there will be fever of them committing crimes (Ive, 1999). The Danish multi-faceted crime prevention approach is implemented in most of the municipalities across the country. It provides a formal platform for the key actors in the field to establish working relations and implement crime-preventative initiatives locally directly targeting children and youth. SSP operates on four levels: state, management, coordination, and implementation levels that are described in greater detail below (Danish Crime Prevention Council, 2002; Ive, 1999; Marks, 2005).

3.4.1.1. STATE LEVEL: DANISH CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL

The state level is represented by the Danish Crime Prevention Council set up in 1971, the main body responsible for the crime prevention in its broadest sense. The Council has a central advisory and consultative role in Danish society with regards to crime prevention. The core of the Council's work is composed of five Standing Committees and a Think Tank: the Technical Safeguarding Committee (DTS), the Crime Prevention Scheme Advisory Board (PTU), the Crime Prevention Information Committee (UKO), the SSP Committee (SSP), the Committee for Crime Prevention through Planning Residential Environments (MPU) and a Think Tank assisting the Violence Prevention Unit (DVE). Through the network scheme of 54 local police districts, the Council maintains communication with SSP committees in the municipalities and distributes the information on crime trends, new ideas and solutions derived from national and international studies (Ekblom, 2004).

3.4.1.2. MANAGEMENT LEVEL: CENTRAL SSP COMMITTEE

The first SSP authority subordinate to the Danish Crime Prevention Council, the National SSP Committee (SSP-Samrådet) established in 1975 functions on the management level. Its central task lies in the cooperation with the local authorities in setting up the SSP collaboration schemes, planning initiatives, designing guidelines and recommendations, which reinforces local interagency cooperation. Besides, the Committee provides advice and guidance on how to plan the SSP work and is primarily responsible for administration and planning of interdisciplinary and cross-sectional cooperation between professionals in the field. Each of the municipalities, where SSP cooperation is implemented, established the local SSP Committee, or the steering group as it is referred in Sweden, consisting of the Chief of the police, chairpersons from the relevant municipal committees, senior executives from the educational institutions and the social services (Nickelsen et al., 1998).

3.4.1.3. COORDINATION LEVEL: LOCAL SSP COORDINATOR/CONSULTANT AND DISTRICT COMMITTEES

Every district in the municipality has its own cross-disciplinary operating team and a local SSP coordinator who provides administrative support to the team and is responsible for ensuring that the crime prevention efforts are well coordinated, evaluated and followed up properly. The Danish Crime Prevention Council provides education to SSP consultants on their role in crime prevention work at schools, project management, cultural understanding, integration, ethical issues and the confidentiality principles. Each of the districts and municipalities has its own requirements to coordinators and treats their responsibilities differently. However, general guidelines of the Danish Crime Prevention Council suggest that the SSP coordinator's daily tasks should include: collecting information on the criminal activities of children and young people in the municipality, identifying its general and local determinants; developing plans for local crime prevention etc. Additionally, the implementation level requires coordinators to collect experience from actual preventative work in the municipality and perform evaluation of what has been done (Nickelsen et al., 1998).

3.4.1.4. IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL: INTERAGENCY COOPERATING GROUPS

Finally, the implementation level involves direct contact of the local SSP professionals with children, young people and their parents in implementing joint initiatives (Ive, 1999). The typical inter-agency team guided by the SSP coordinator in Danish municipalities includes frontline professionals from public services and educational institutions representing mainly social services, police, schools, child and youth welfare service, prison and probation service, outreach youth education programmes, psychological advisors etc. SSP coordinator is central to ensuring effective collaboration between the interagency professionals (Nickelsen et al., 1998).

The Danish SSP cooperation aims to build up a local network that has a crime preventative effect on the daily lives of children and young people 6-18 years of age, however is extending the scope of coverage up to 25 years within the SSP+ programme (Danish Crime Prevention Council, 2002). More specifically, these networks are thought to be used to detect danger signals and the new tendencies in the development of crime as well as conditions in the lives of children and

young people that are potentially dangerous and may lead to risky behaviors and subsequently develop approaches to act on them. Pedersen and Stothard (2015) pointed out that SSP is not an *after-the-event response* or the *case-conference approach*, but a process of formalized cooperative working relationship, flexible and responsive intervention, and a system of information exchange and communication. Such formalized relationship is not legally binding, however each of the participating agencies has the responsibilities of either ensuring encompassing personal development of children (educational institutions), supervising living conditions (social services) or actually preventing the crimes in society (police) (Marks, 2005).

3.4.1.5. TYPES OF INTERVENTION

The Danish SSP model promotes the so-called "subjective prevention" aimed at reinforcing the individual to choose actions alternative to criminal (Nickelsen et al., 1998). It includes three types of effort. The general effort is targeting children and young people who have not committed a crime. Within this level, professionals aim to address the causes of crime and deliver this message to the youth. The activities include awareness raising and capacity building for young people and those in position to influence their decisions aimed to improve general conditions on individual and societal levels. As suggested by Hemmingsen (2015, p. 24) general effort is "the earliest type of prevention preventing anything from ever happening". Furthermore, it strives to build and strengthen the resilience and cohesion at the societal level, facilitate dialogue on critical issues, strengthen critical sense among citizens and train the professionals (ibid.). The specific effort is designed for individuals who have been in trouble with the law and aims at capacity building for them and their immediate surrounding preventing problems from becoming worse. The specific efforts often include guidance to individuals and their relatives and outreach activities in the community (ibid.). Finally, the individual effort aims to prevent relapse in individuals who have already committed a crime. Such targeted efforts provide exit programmes for children and young people engaged in criminal acts, mentoring and coaching programmes aimed at capacity building and therapy. Interestingly, with respect to the general and specific effort, the Danish Crime Prevention Council recommends full partnership and collaboration between local stakeholders from public and private sectors, while individual effort, due to confidentiality obligations is assigned purely to civil servants whereas private organizations may be involved in cooperation only with the permission from young people and their parents (Nickelsen et al., 1998; Hemmingsen, 2015).

3.4.1.6. LIMITATIONS OF THE DANISH SSP COLLABORATION

The Danish SSP approach to crime prevention is recognized as reinforcing interdisciplinary and cross-sectional cooperation locally enabling professionals in the communities to bring into effect joint efforts addressing the problems of juvenile delinquency (Marks, 2005). However, even though it gained a reputation worldwide as a successful model of crime prevention and is referred to as the best practice, a number of pitfalls jeopardizing the efficiency of this kind of inter-agency collaboration have been identified by different scholars and practitioners. High turnover of staff leading to constant demand for the training, education and establishment of stable professional connections is one of the major obstacles to smooth and productive inter-agency collaboration.

Referring to specific experience from Denmark, Pedersen and Stothard (2015) explain this problem with lack of a career structure and recognized programme of professional development. Second, great variation in resources and work force across the municipalities as well as high competition for resources often limits the scope of SSP. Finally, there is a recognized limitation related to contrasting working cultures and professional backgrounds, which, on the one hand contributes to broader approach to handling the case, but on the other creates a platform for conflicts and misunderstandings (ibid.).

3.4.2. SSP COLLABORATION IN SWEDEN

While Pedersen and Stothard (2015) argued that the Danish SSP approach is unique in its kind, with the exception of Norwegian coordination of local measures (SLT – Samordning av Lokale kriminalitetsforebyggende Tiltak), it has been 10 years since the SSP model of collaboration between schools (Skola), social services (Socialtjänst) and police (Polis) was introduced in Sweden in 2006. It represents the permanent platform to address youth problems and social unrest. The main target group for collaboration in the SSP framework is children and young people, 12-18 years of age who play truant, are suspected of committing crimes or demonstrate signs of antisocial behavior (Polisen, 2016).

SSP has been implemented in three Swedish cities – Malmo, Gothenburg and Uppsala. Overall, the model is similar, yet it differs in the extent to which different agencies are involved. For example, Uppsala has four SSP groups aimed at identifying young people showing signs of delinquent behavior. Similarly, in Malmo SSP is a local crime and drug cooperation between schools, social services and the police aimed at preventing and minimizing crime, substance misuse and other risk-associated behavior (ibid.). Swedish Police suggests that SSP in Malmo involves collaboration against criminal youth gangs, street work in high-risk environments, parents support, initiatives aimed at limiting children's access to tobacco, alcohol and narcotics as well as establishing trust between young people and local authorities (ibid.). Gothenburg is unique among these three cities in a way that it includes cooperation with the recreational centers (Fritid), creating SSPF platform.

SSPF model is based on cooperation on two levels. Each local municipality where SSPF is implemented, has a coordinator, a steering group and a working group composed of representatives from the four agencies (ibid.). For example, each district in Gothenburg and the municipalities of Ale, Mölndal and Partille have its local SSPF coordinator, steering and the working group. The role of the working group is to ensure early identification of young people at risk and work together to address their problems. Usually, it is the local social services managers, school principals, police officers and the recreational centers administration with a mandate to make decisions, who participate in the working groups. Some districts in Gothenburg have modified the original SSPF model by creating direct groups comprising of professionals having direct contact with children, such as teachers, staff of the recreational centers, field social workers and police officers. The steering group provides the working group with available resources, is responsible for the overall strategy and objectives of collaboration and is represented by higher-level municipal authorities. SSPF coordinators are the local leaders coordinating and integrating crime prevention on the local level, as well as ensuring information exchange between the

working and the steering groups. Local working groups meet every third week where they discuss current situation in the area, create mutual commitment plans, raise cases of children or young people that attract growing concern. An important part of SSPF is obtaining the signed consent form from parents in order to proceed with the case. If parents refuse, SSPF collaboration cannot go further addressing the problems of a certain child (Polisen, 2016).

The results of the SSPF evaluation suggest that this model of collaboration created a culture of action, better information exchange and follow-up at different levels, starting from the individual work with the young person and up to the city. However, it was also recognized that lack of financial and human resources were hindering effective SSPF collaboration while power and status differences as well as lack of communication and consensus have been cited as barriers to a lesser degree (Turner R. et al., 2015).

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I am going to present and discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the study that will help to understand and interpret the findings. The theoretical framework guides the researcher on important aspects to highlight in the course of the study providing broad and comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon, which enables the researcher to focus on the cornerstone issues of the subject under investigation and fill in the gaps in the specific research area (Swanson, 2007). Tudge (2008) highlights the importance of theoretically driven research arguing that there should be a link between our basic assumptions about the world, the theory, the methodology applied and the approaches to data analysis. There is an extensive amount of research aimed at explaining the causes of juvenile delinquency and the role of interagency collaboration in effective decision making with regards to children's welfare. For the purpose of this study, I will focus on the theories that are most useful in interpreting empirical data in accordance with the aim of the research and the research questions. Among them, special attention will be given to the Ecological systems theory that is looking at the environment surrounding the child, its influence on his/her development and takes the leading position in the social work and criminology domain (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1993). The levels of child's development are introduced where the microlevel, which includes the child's immediate environment (family, school, peers) has the most profound effect on the future pathways of a child and as a result, provides an insight on the likelihood of committing crimes. Another theory guiding this research is the Craftsmanship theory of interagency collaboration that provides an insight on approaches in building effective interorganizational collaborative capacity (ICC) and compares interagency collaboration with the craftsman's efforts in working with the raw materials to achieve desired goals (Bardach, 1998). This is especially relevant in the area of prevention of juvenile criminality when social services, schools, police and the recreational centers are consolidated to support youth in trouble. Further down these theories will be presented and discussed.

4.1. ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY

According to the ecological systems theory, which attempts to understand human development and explain the processes of socialization, the development should be studied in its ecological context that is in the actual environments where human beings live their lives (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). The ecological environment is defined as "a set of nested structures", each inside the next one extending far beyond the immediate setting directly affecting the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.3).

In line with the initial Ecological systems theory, introduced by Bronfenbrenner (1979), in an attempt to define and understand human development, the researcher must consider the entire ecological system in which growth occurs. This ecological system surrounding the child consists of four interrelated socially organized layers that can affect and be affected by the child's development (see Figure 1). The layers expand from the micro – level, which is the immediate environment, to macro-level that includes social beliefs, customs, and traditions influencing the child indirectly. The fifth dimension of time, the chronosystem, which is the red line cutting

through the layers, was introduced in U. Bronfenbrenner's subsequent revisions of the theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). He suggests that the child's development is affected by all of the five layers, even in the settings where the child is not present, as in the case with the state or municipality legislation influencing the development unidirectionaly, through the policies over the course of time. The quality of interactions on each of the layers and the context of the child's surroundings is of paramount importance in the course of development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

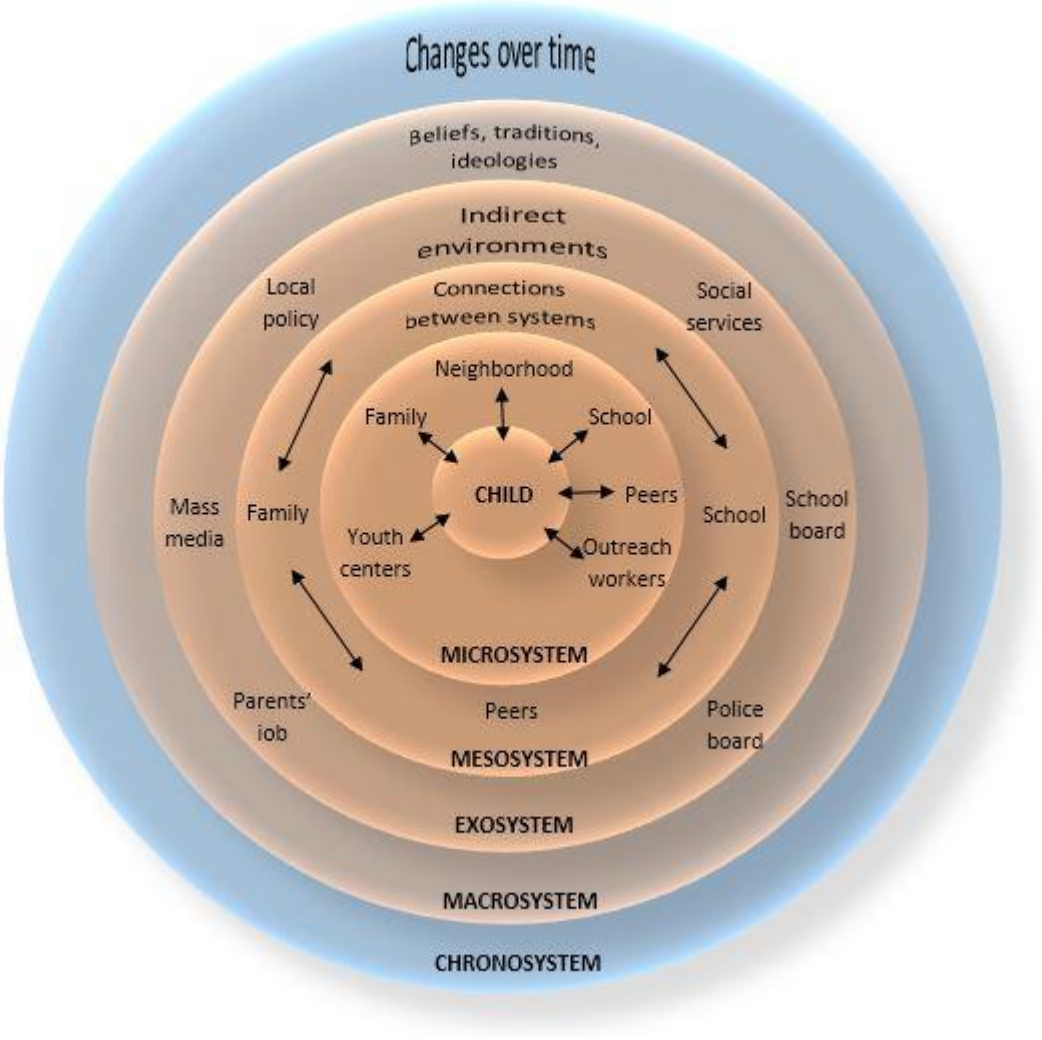

Figure 1. Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1993)

4.1.1. MICROSYSTEM

The child located in the innermost center of the ecological systems diagram is surrounded by the microsystem, which is his/her immediate environment. Microsystem, as suggested by Bronfenbrenner (1979), consists of interactions, activities, social roles and interpersonal relations in a face-to-face setting including family, school, peer groups, neighborhood, and those social groups with which the child is engaged in a direct contact. The relations on this level are

bidirectional meaning that as the immediate environment affects the development of a child, the child in turn affects the environment (ibid.). It is further argued that the capacity of the microsystem setting to function effectively with regards to the child's development is dependent on the nature of social interconnections between the settings. The degree of the impact on the child's development is affected by the quality of direct interactions, participation and communication that engage the child with the others in joint activities (ibid.). Bronfenbrenner (1994) suggests that in order to be effective, the interaction between the child and his immediate environment must occur on a regular basis over extended periods of time. Bronfenbrenner (1994) refers to such forms of interaction as the "proximal processes" or the primary mechanisms producing human development, which are found in parent - child and child-child activities, interactions in a group play, learning new skills, studying etc. (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). Therefore, the theory emphasizes that otherwise, if the relationships in the immediate microlevel setting are fractured, the child will not have the tools to explore other parts of the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

4.1.2. MESOSYSTEM

The mesosystem of the child's ecological environment represents the linkages and interconnections between two or more settings of the microsystem, such as interactions between family members and the schoolteachers, with both of whom the child has immediate contact (ibid.). In explaining the nature of the mesosystem, it is relevant to discuss a study on parental involvement practices in learning activities with children at home conducted by Epstein (1983). In particular, the researcher conducted a survey exploring a connection between the teachers and pupil's parents and identified parental involvement in learning activities at home as a teaching strength. The author in his subsequent work elaborated that the partnerships between the family, school and community positively affect the child's development by creating a caring environment around and motivating young people to set and achieve desired goals (Epstein, 1995). Nash, Munford and O'Donoghue, (2005) suggest that the stronger and the more diverse the links are in the microsystem, the greater positive impact has the mesosystem on a child.

4.1.3. EXOSYSTEM

The exosystem, according to the Ecological systems theory, is comprised of linkages and processes that take place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not have direct contact with the child. An example of such setting, which according to Bronfenbrenner (1979) has the highest impact on the child's development is the conditions of the parent's employment. Other examples of social settings at the exosystem level include mass media, local government, social services, police and school boards where the publications, decisions, resolutions and state regulations indirectly affect the development of a child.

4.1.4. MACROSYSTEM

In defining the macrosystem of the child's development, Bronfenbrenner (1993, p. 40) compares it with the "societal blueprint for a particular culture or subculture". Basically, the macrosystem represents characteristics of micro-, meso- and exosystems in a given culture, which includes dominant beliefs and practices, life styles, traditions and ideologies that shape the patterns of

behavior. These ideas has a unidirectional effect on the child's development through the overarching common norms generally accepted in a given society. Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasizes that within one culture the settings of a given kind on each of the three levels are similar, while in another culture they are distinctly different. This point suggests that when working with children one should consider the broad context in which the human development happens and the quality of interactions between the systems. Bronfenbrenner (1979) challenges the capacity of the social setting to function effectively by highlighting its dependency on social interconnections between settings, such as joint participation, communication and the information exchange throughout the layers.

4.1.5 CHRONOSYSTEM

Finally, the concept of time in the chronosystem illustrates the time-based dimension affecting the development of a child on each of the levels represented in the ecological systems theory through significant life events and experiences at particular points in time. The environment, as well as the characteristics of the person as argued by Bronfenbrenner (1994) change and evolve over the life course influencing the patterns of the child's development. Thus, the idea behind the chronosystem is that the human development is affected by different systems, directly and indirectly over time and the factors explaining certain behavioral patterns in a given time are different over the life course.

The ecological systems theory provides the framework for analyzing the causes of juvenile delinquency. Warehime (2014) suggests that youth do not operate in isolation from the broader environment, but i engaged in bi- and unidirectional interactions. Therefore, Warehime (2014) points out that where there is delinquency in one context, the risk and protective factors in the entire ecological environment of the child should be assessed, understood and taken into account in developing effective prevention programmes targeting delinquent youth. The ecological approach highlights the importance of developing a supportive social network, collaboration between different systems enabling to improve the capacities and strengths of a child to resist law violations.

4.2. CRAFTSMANSHIP THEORY OF INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

One of the leading theories exploring how efficient and productive are the professional relationships in multidisciplinary teams is the Craftsmanship theory of interagency collaboration that borrows the concepts and empirical findings from the Network theory or the "network-related thinking" as Bardach (1998) refers to it, and the Resource dependence theory (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). Even though it is originally intended for professionals in the field of public administration, it can equally be applied to diverse policy areas where interagency collaboration is capable of contributing to public value, such as, for instance, prevention of juvenile delinquency.

Bardach (1998) argues that building effective relationships requires time, effort, a mix of skills and constructive professionals willing to place their efforts on developing effective collaboration,

which emerges slowly through discussions and disagreements. Interagency collaboration is a systemic activity, which involves people having different views on the issue under concern, often arguing about *best* approaches to address it, but in the end coming to feasible conclusions as to what *better* means and how to make sure that better is not worse for the person (ibid.). By coordinating and collaborating work efforts in solving a problem, agencies can work more efficiently and be better equipped to address the needs of society (ibid.). However, what does it actually mean for the interagency collaboration to be effective or efficient in one way or another? Is there any tool to measure the capacity of such collaboration in achieving set objectives? What is so unique in interagency collaboration comparing with the intra-agency efforts? While, as argued by Bardach (1998), the literature is mostly concerned with finding out whether collaboration in fact exist, the Craftsmanship theory of interagency collaboration is primarily concerned with whether or not the collaboration is productive even though he points to the fact that estimating efficiency is empirically complicated process.

Therefore, the Craftsmanship theory of interagency collaboration attempts to elaborate a so-called interagency collaborative capacity (ICC) that Bardach (1998) defines as the potential to engage in *collaborative* activities rather than just any regular activities as its core issue of concern. ICC is compared to a virtual organization or an agency on its own, capable of having a division of labour, internal communication channels, resources and informal culture, decision-making and control systems, which creates a psychological reality to those who participate in it (Bardach, 2001). For instance, a network of professionals from social services, the police and educational institutions consolidated to solve the problem of youth crimes with one professional in the coordinating position, is an example of such a virtual organization. Even though each professional is officially bound to one of the agencies, the joint goal and agreed working arrangements, either fixed or flexible, of such network create an ICC. In developing the ICC Bardach (2001) refers to the metaphor of *building a house* where each of the professionals is a *craftsman* on the one hand and *the raw material* on the other. Through the *developmental dynamics* or the possibility of creative and purposeful decision – making strategies, professionals are *platforming* their collaboration capacity working independently, but at the same time respecting the interests and being connected with one another through the networking channels thereby contributing to a common goal of such a virtual organization (Bardach, 1998, 2001).

While within the framework of the Resource Dependence theory, the police, social services, educational institutions would seek to protect their autonomy by preserving the resources within the agency or at least minimizing the resource interchange, and rigidly following the fixed working descriptions, the Craftsmanship theory of interagency collaboration stresses the need to converge the efforts and available intellectual, physical, financial and human resources for the sake of pursuing a common goal ((Bardach, 1998; Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). Equipping the professionals with high degree of flexibility, fostering "mutual intelligibility", trust and high-quality effort in addressing the issues is recognized by the author as a prerequisite for the ICC to function well.

Bardach (2001) identified ten building blocks of the ICC, a *theoretically efficient sequence*, each of which as suggested, is a collaborative capacity on its own right enhancing the *platforming*

efforts. Whilst every capacity is valuable in itself, it helps to build the next level of capacity in such a way *platforming* the ICC (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Platforming Interagency Collaborative Capacity (Bardach, 1998)

Creative opportunity, which is the first pillar in building the ICC, as suggested by Bardach (2001) attracts professionals willing to contribute to public value by working together for the common goal. Intellectual capital concerns the ability of professionals to generate strategic ideas and goals with regards to collaborative action using their knowledge from different fields. The intellectual capital helps to identify those who should participate in the working group and those professionals that are missing, but have to be included into the implementation network, which creates a vision for emerging interagency collaboration capacity. The advocacy group, Bardach (2001) claims is an informal steering structure evolving from the implementation network involving professionals willing to cooperate, yet reluctant to contribute until they establish mutual trust, the fifth platforming capacity. Trust, the author believes, helps professionals to work more effectively together. The next stage concerns selecting the leader, or the coordinator of the group for what there is a growing demand from the group members. In the meantime, the capacity for effective communication grows due to established trust within the implementing network. At the point when the ICC reaches the *improved steering capacity*, the construction becomes more integrated – professionals established trust, effective communication, agreed on the purpose of collaboration and selected the leader of the group. Improved steering capacity Bardach (2001) argues, helps to improve the intellectual capital and revise the design of the operating subsystem if there is a need for doing so. Finally, the ICC reached the level when it has obtained the required elements to begin its work. The highest pillar of the ICC platforming stands for continuous learning, which implies improving the ICC by monitoring its performance and evaluating various components of collaborative work (ibid.).

Coordination

With regards to coordination, Bardach (1998) suggests that professionals in the ICC operate in so-called self-managing teams. Such teams take responsibility for sharing their expertise with one another, providing access to own resources and stimulating emergence of the ICC, which is non-hierarchical in nature. SSP collaboration in both Denmark and Sweden illustrates that such alliances exist. However, the author believes, self-managing teams still require internal management, the coordinator, "[…] someone to be first among equals or even a bit higher" (Bardach, 1998, p. 199) stimulating group efforts and improving the quality of interpersonal work dynamics.

Resources

Bardach (1998) believes that what prevents ICC from developing is the resistance of professionals to contribute resources. The Craftsmanship's theory identifies 6 types of resources important for building the ICC: the "turf", which Bardach (1998, p. 164) defines as "the domain of problems, opportunities, actions over which an agency exercises legitimate authority", the autonomy, money, people, political standing and information. With regards to the SSP collaboration, child welfare services, particularly in Sweden have the legitimate authority over the cases of children and young people at risk of criminal behavior. This provides the professionals with higher discretions as to how to deal with such cases, but can often become a source of tension in the interagency teams if the "turf" is not shared to the required extent with other stakeholders. Collaboration, as suggested by the theory, often challenges the decision-making autonomy of professionals, which refers to the concept of professional autonomy discussed above. It is suggested that those agencies that are confident in their autonomy are more likely to collaborate that those whose autonomy is threatened. By people Bardach (1998, p. 164) means "the quantity and quality of manpower needed to make an ICC function at an acceptable level". The author believes that human resources bring enthusiasm, intelligence, technical expertise, creativity, time and commitment, which ultimately contributes to building effective interagency collaboration capacity. Concerning political standing, the theory refers to local authorities, leaders of the community and their willingness to contribute to ICC financial resources and information.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

The following chapter will discuss the methodological framework of the research, in particular describing how the research was carried out, how respondents were selected into the sample and what were the data collection instruments. Furthermore, the ethical principles and limitations of the study are presented.

5.1. EPISTEMOLOGICAL PARADIGM

Methodology of the research, as argued by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011, p. 6) "[…] is the bridge that brings our philosophical standpoint (on ontology and epistemology) and method (perspective and tool) together". As was clarified in previous chapters, the current study aims at exploring how interagency collaboration in juvenile crime prevention is constructed and reflected on by professionals working in the field. These professionals, coming from different fields and backgrounds have one thing in common – they are a part of the group working together, in collaboration. Bryman (2012) suggests that within the constructionist perspective, social phenomena and their meanings, which is interagency collaboration in the current context, are continually accomplished by social actors, professionals working in collaboration. The meaning, the author further elaborates, is produced through social interactions and is in constant state of revision (ibid.). Social constructivist paradigm underpinning the current study suggests that the objects exist only after they enter communication space, which changes the way they are perceived and constructed in a certain social context (Keaton and Bodie, 2011). While interagency collaboration is a broad concept embracing a large scope of research, theoretical perspectives and local meanings, it is here and now that the researcher attempts to explore how selected professionals construct the meaning of collaboration in the context they belong to, specifically with regards to prevention of youth crimes, what ideas define collaboration and how their understanding changes cross disciplinary over the course of continuous interaction (ibid.).

5.2. DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Seeking to understand the respondents' views on collaboration in crime prevention, the author decided to apply the qualitative research methodology, which allowed to grasp personal experiences of collaboration. In particular, aiming to explore the topic in its depth and elaborate a thick description of the phenomena, a mixture of exploratory and descriptive designs have been applied (Rubin and Babbie, 2007). It enabled the researcher to explore the meaning and interpretation that the respondents were assigning to it and subsequently build an analysis based on the theoretical standpoints exploring their understanding of juvenile crime prevention and peculiarities in organizing effective interagency collaboration.

The study was conducted in the city of Gothenburg, Sweden, in January-May 2016. First, the researcher did an extensive literature review on the topic of interagency collaboration in prevention of juvenile criminality searching in such databases as ProQuest Social Sciences, EBSCO, Scopus, Google Scholar. Such key words and phrases as "juvenile criminality" OR "delinquency", "crime prevention" AND SSPF OR "interagency collaboration", allowed to explore the topic in its depths specifically focusing on experience of Nordic countries. Bryman (2012) suggests that critical review of existing literature helps to identify what is already known

about the topic, as well as what research methods and theoretical ideas have been applied in previous studies to describe the phenomena under concern.

Second, the sample selection criteria were developed. The Swedish SSPF model of collaboration is built on two strategic levels whereby each district has its local steering group, operating group and a coordinator ensuring mutual information sharing. The steering groups usually involve managers and administrators that have little or no contact with children, but have an ultimate organizational responsibility for issues concerning SSPF strategy and objectives, coordinating as well as providing sufficient resources to local operating groups. The operating groups, on the contrary, are the "doers" monitoring the crime trends, identifying children at risk and addressing their needs. For this reason, respondents from the operating groups and their coordinators were selected for this research. It was relatively easy to get access to the respondents, specifically SSPF coordinators, because they were interested in participating in this kind of study and share their perspectives.

5.3 DATA COLLECTION

5.3.1. SAMPLING PROCEDURE AND THE SAMPLE SIZE

The respondents were recruited through the non-random purposive sampling. Purposive sampling allowed to ensure adequate representation of informants from different agencies with contrasting professional profiles yet sharing the same experience, which contributed to reliability of the findings. Bryman (2012) suggests that this kind of sampling enables to select participants in a strategic way, so that the profile of the respondents is relevant to the purpose of the research and the research questions. Similarly, Creswell (2007, p. 125) highlights that within the purposive sampling, the researcher selects individuals for the study because "[…] they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon". Each respondent was reached through a personal email containing the information about the study, the researcher and explaining the need for the interview.

The snowball technique of the purposive sampling provided easier access to professionals. The sampling was carried out in two stages. First, the SSPF city coordinator was contacted and interviewed. The city coordinator, among other roles, is responsible for ensuring communication between the steering groups operating on the management level and coordinators of operating groups implementing the actual activities in the districts of Gothenburg. After the initial meeting with the city coordinator, contact details of 19 coordinators of the operating groups in different districts of Gothenburg were provided. Finally, each of the coordinators who agreed to participate in the study provided the names and emails of the team members involved in the interagency collaboration in the operating groups. Professionals represented social services, coordinating agency of the SSPF collaboration, police, public schools and the recreational centers for youth. This kind of sampling allowed to include 20 respondents into the target group: 10 coordinators and 10 SSPF team members.

Coordinators and the operating group's team members worked in seven out of 10 Gothenburg districts. Initially, the invitations to participate in the research were distributed among coordinators in each of the districts, however only some of them confirmed. The need for interviews with coordinators in each of the districts is explained by the fact that Gothenburg is the second largest city in Sweden with the population of about 548 190 citizens (Statistics

Sweden, 2015a). Almost 25% of inhabitants are foreign born (134 144) (Statistics Sweden, 2015). Gothenburg is often referred to as having a high level of ethnic residential segregation and large minority population densely populated in the city districts (Bråmå, 2008). Turner et al. (2015) found in the implementation evaluation of the SSPF model in Gothenburg and Mölndal significant variations in the way SSPF is implemented in different districts. One of the reasons for that as was explained by coordinators was local context, which is different across Gothenburg. Therefore, including variety of informants from each of the districts allowed to collect rich qualitative data representing different perspectives.

5.3.2. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS IN THE SAMPLE

The final sample included 20 respondents: 10 SSPF district coordinators and 10 SSPF team members (see Table 1). The SSPF time commitments of the district coordinators ranged from 10% to 50% of their total working time. Among the team members two police officers, three social workers employed at the police office, one school headmistress, one leader of the recreation center, a social worker from the social services, a field worker, and the youth secretary of the resource unit for children and youth were interviewed. The latter organization provides advice and support to parents, children and adolescents and is also included in SSPF collaboration on equal ground with the field workers. One of the coordinators had a dual role first, being a coordinator, and second, representing social services in the SSPF working group meetings. Some of the team members participated in several working group meetings in different districts of Gothenburg. All of the SSPF coordinators in the sample had education in social work. Their working experience ranged from 6 months to 10 years. However, prior to joining SSPF, they worked with children and youths in conflict with the law albeit not bound by an organizational structure like the current collaborative information exchange platform. Seven informants were male and thirteen were female.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

	Male	Female	Work experience
Coordinators	3	7	6 months – 10 years
SSPF team members	4	6	6 months – 10 years
Total	7	13	-

5.3.3. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS: INTERVIEW GUIDE

The In-depth interviews were organized in such a way as to grasp the data on different aspects of interagency collaboration in accordance with the purpose of the research and the research questions. Therefore, the semi-structured interview guide comprised of nine questions including one introductory question, eight central questions and seven probing questions grouped in three blocks: “understanding interagency collaboration”, “the role of coordinators” and “strengths and weaknesses of SSPF”. In the beginning of the interview, respondents were asked about their qualification and the work experience at the agency within SSPF information exchange platform.

The intent of the interview was to explore both the perceptions of coordinators and the SSPF team members from each agency on collaboration, the role of coordinators, strengths, obstacles and drawbacks in SSPF collaboration. The interview guide was developed based on previous research on collaboration in crime prevention in such a way as to fill in the gaps in the current topic and enable collection of rich qualitative data.

5.3.4. INTERVIEW PROCESS

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in several districts of the Gothenburg municipality in February – April 2016. Each interview was organized on the job location of respondents, in a quiet room free from distractions, and lasted for approximately 40-50 minutes, however one of the interviews was as short as 20 minutes. After the first two pilot interviews, the researcher refined the questions so as to better address the phenomena under investigation. Initially it was planned to discuss factors leading to development of delinquent behavior, and investigate the respondents' attitude on the Danish experience of collaboration. However, instead, the researcher decided to narrow the focus and explore professionals' perceptions of collaboration. Besides, the initial interview guide contained a number of questions that as the pilot interviews demonstrated were repetitive and confusing to respondents. For this reason, the interview guide was modified. One of the pilot interviews (with two coordinators) was nonetheless included into the total number of respondents interviewed because the empirical data they provided opened up important insights on the topic.

The empirical study consisted of 16 qualitative semi-structured interviews (including one pilot interview) and one e-mail interview. In particular, among 16 interviews three were joint (with two respondents) and 13 individual face-to-face interviews. In joint, or dyadic interviews, as they are often referred to, two respondents sharing the same experience interact in response to open-ended questions (Morgan et al., 2013). This specific method of qualitative data collection is sometimes compared with the focus groups and allows the informants to stimulate ideas and provoke discussions with each other providing depth and detail that otherwise would be problematic to get (ibid.). Joint interviews were organized with three pairs of SSPF coordinators mainly due to their high workload on their request and for their convenience. Each pair work together in one of the city districts. With the joint interviews, there is a high likelihood that one of the participants will remain silent while the other one will dominate the discussion. However, in the current study each of the respondents in joint interviews contributed equally. Furthermore, because of the fact that two coordinators were present on the interview, they were supporting each other with translation to English. E-mail interview was organized on the request of a respondent who did not speak English well and instead asked if it would be possible to provide the answers to the interview guide questions in writing. The answers were provided in Swedish and later translated to English language. E-mail interview is a type of a text-based asynchronous interaction with the respondent whereby participants have more time to think, construct and review their answers (Bampton and Cowton, 2002). Yet, while this method of qualitative data collection provides access to respondents who otherwise would not be included, it is associated with a number of drawbacks, such as lack of face-to-face-communication, inability of the researcher to observe the body language of the informant and ask probing questions in this way elaborating the in-depth discussion.

In the beginning of each interview, as an icebreaker, the researcher introduced herself, her experience of studying at the international master's programme, explained what the research was

about and why the respondents were selected. The researcher tried as often as possible to avoid sitting at the table in front of the respondent, because it creates a psychological barrier and hinders the establishment of a rapport between the inquirer and participant (Ivey, 1994). As suggested by Creswell (2007), the researcher memorized the questions and the order in which to ask them so as not to lose eye-contact with participants. Furthermore, to stimulate discussion, paraphrasing, encouraging noises and reflections were used. Whenever the respondents were silent, the researcher did not interrupt giving them time to formulate the answer. With some respondents, such silent intervals were particularly long. Nonetheless, because semi-structured interviews expect from participants to share their experience, the researcher is required to have special patience and skills, specifically in respecting the silence (ibid.).

With the prior permission of the respondents and emphasizing that the data will be kept confidential, the interviews were recorded using the digital recorder and later transcribed. The duration of the interviews altogether was approximately ten hours, which was subsequently transcribed into 60 pages of plain text. In the end of the interview, respondents were informed that the results of the research would be shared with them once the report is finalized.

5.4. METHODS OF ANALYSIS

Max Weber (in Weber, Bruun and Whimster, 2012, p. 119) argued that "[…] all knowledge of cultural reality is always knowledge from specific and particular points of view", that is to say, the researcher's approach to data analysis illustrates her interpretation of professionals' opinions relying on previous research and theory. Seeking to explore professionals' perceptions of collaboration, content analysis was selected as an analytic strategy for the current study, which Bryman (2012) defines as an approach to the analysis of documents and texts seeking to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories. The research focused on both manifest and latent contents - visible components as well as interpretation of the underlying meanings of the text (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004). Bryman argued (2012) that the coding process in content analysis can be thematic, which entails more interpretative approach to searching for latent content in empirical data. While content analysis is rooted in the quantitative research strategy, the author in the current study used its insights in organizing and coding the empirical data.

Following the framework for analyzing qualitative data by virtue of content analysis, suggested by Graneheim and Lundman (2004), the researcher coded the data. Initially, after reading the transcripts line by line multiple times back and forth, and highlighting the key words in different colors, empirical data was sorted into five content areas in accordance with the research questions: professionals' perceptions of interagency collaboration; significance of the agencies, role of coordinators, and finally, obstacles and strengths of collaboration. Subsequent to this, the researcher read the empirical data in each section again to get overall understanding of the text, highlighting significant statements and grouping them into the "meaning units" (Creswell, 2007; Graneheim and Lundman., 2004). Graneheim and Lundman (2004, p. 106) define meaning units as "words, sentences or paragraphs containing aspects related to each other through their content and context". Next, the researcher condensed each meaning unit by summarizing the main idea behind the quote and labelling it with the code. Coding was done in a manner as to avoid overlap in the categories and ensure that the meaning units are mutually exclusive and not repetitive (Bryman, 2012). Next, an interpretation underlying the meaning of the text was generated. Finally, it allowed to group the meaning units into sub-themes (38) that were subsequently

organized into bigger, over-arching themes (15) under each content area explored in the next chapter.

For the convenience of the reader, each quote in the chapter that follows is labelled with the letter C and the order number from one to 10 for coordinators and with TM and the order number from one to 10 for the team members. Specifically for the team members, their position is mentioned as well. In this way, it is possible to see the variety of opinions from each respondent.

5.5. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

In discussing the legitimacy of qualitative research and striving for credible data interpretation, validity and reliability hold a prominent position. Reliability, as defined by (Babbie, 2010) is the extent to which a particular research method can repeatedly generate the same results. Validity, on the other hand, is concerned with the accuracy of the findings and the extent to which the real meaning of the investigated phenomena is adequately represented in the analysis (Babbie, 2010; Creswell, 2007). Validity, as put by Bryman (2012) presumes reliability, but not vice versa. In this regard, Kirk and Miller (1986, p. 20) conclude that "it is easy to obtain perfect reliability with no validity at all" while from the other perspective, perfect validity would ensure perfect reliability. Unlike in natural sciences or quantitative research, ensuring perfect reliability is often problematic in qualitative studies due to a number of reasons. For example, Brink (1993, p.36) talks about the "informants bias" and the "elite bias". The former concerned with the factors within the informants themselves, such as fatigue, anxiety, mood, state of health etc., and the latter with obtaining data from "articulate, well-informed, usually high-status informants".

As was discussed earlier, the sample in the current research involved a diverse group of informants representing several districts and agencies, having different status positions, gender, work experience, education and attitudes on the SSPF platform, which altogether provided various extensive evidence and contributed to the reliability of the research. However, while the repeated interviews with the same respondents or other professionals from the same area could generate similar results because they share the experience of collaboration, it is not possible to generalize to other cities where SSPF is implemented, such as Malmö and Uppsala due to local specificities and different context. In this regard, Maxwell (1992) introduced the concept of internal and external generalizability as a type of validity whereby the former is concerned with generalizing within the community, groups or institutions studied to other persons or groups not included into the sample, and the latter with generalizing to other communities. Within the current study, the researcher attempted to insure internal generalizability. As one of the approaches to boost the validity, the researcher ensured that respondents are clear on the nature of the research by introducing herself, explaining why the research on this specific topic is carried out, how the data is collected and what is the purpose of the analysis (Brink, 1993). It was not possible, though, to interview the informants multiple times to ensure that the information is correct and not influenced by internal or external factors, however, the fact that the researcher had a diverse sample enabled her to reach saturation point.

Apart from generalizability, Maxwell, (1992) developed four other types of validity that concern qualitative researchers. Descriptive validity involves the accuracy of representing the data in the analysis. In this connection, enhancing accuracy of the study is possible through rich and detailed description and grounding the data in theory and previous research, which was done by

the researcher in the current study (Stiles, 1993). Second, mostly every qualitative study presumes a certain degree of interpretation by the researcher, and the interpretative validity, the other type introduced by the author, deals with the accuracy to which the inquirers represent the accounts of people studied on their own words and concepts (Maxwell, 1992). Including direct quotes in the analysis enhanced the interpretative validity of the study. Theoretical validity, the third type deals with the legitimacy of using specific concepts or theories to characterize the phenomena under investigation (ibid.). In the current research, the author refers to the concept of collaboration, which is an equivalent to Swedish concept "samverkan" widely used in Swedish legislation with reference to different actors in the field of juvenile crime prevention. The theories selected, on the opinion of the researcher, are the most suitable with regards to interpretation of the findings on the current topic. Finally, the evaluative validity concerns the extent and the accuracy to which the researcher evaluates the actions and decisions of the informants applying the so-called "evaluative framework" as named by Maxwell (1992) to the subjects of study. The current research, as was introduced earlier, does not seek to evaluate the perceptions of the informants, but to explore and describe them.

5.6. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Both, reliability and validity, as suggested by Stiles (1993) concern trustworthiness: of observations or data when it refers to reliability and of interpretations or conclusions when it refers to validity. Trustworthiness of the research is crucial in evaluating the quality and worth of the study. Hence, Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced four criteria facilitating the establishment of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability each having an equal role in ensuring that the researcher fairly represents the voices of its informants. Guba (1981) compares these criteria with internal validity (adequate representation of the findings), external validity or generalizability (applicability in other contexts), reliability (ability to replicate the results) and objectivity (neutral representation of the findings free from the researcher's bias), accordingly (Guba, 1981; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In ensuring trustworthiness as consistent with these criteria, such methods as peer debriefing, persistent observation, triangulation, collecting thick descriptive data, developing thick descriptions, practicing reflexivity, doing the purposive sampling and maximizing the range of respondents covered are suggested (ibid.).

Within the current study, researcher selected the respondents purposefully. In this way, a variety of professionals from different fields and districts sharing the same experience enabled to explore SSPF collaboration from different perspectives and in doing so ensured credibility of the study. Second, direct quotations and thick descriptions of the findings in the analysis helped to avoid subjectivity of the researcher and describe the phenomena neutrally through the voice of respondents. In the same way, peer debriefing throughout the research during the thematic seminars at the university allowed the researcher to detach herself from the study and look at it critically. It was not possible, though, to do the triangulation, which as defined by Bryman (2012, p. 717) implies "the use of more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon so that findings may be cross-checked". Interviewing was the central data collection method.

5.7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to the fact that the researcher is not a native Swedish speaker, all of the interviews were conducted in English. Most of the respondents were comfortable responding in English, however some encountered difficulties. Some respondents could not find correct English equivalents to Swedish concepts, so they were rephrasing the answers in such a way as to provide the general idea. The respondents were also mentioning that while they kept thinking about their jobs in Swedish constructs on the interview, they have to adjust specific professional terminology so as to explain it to the researcher in English. In this way, it could have affected the content and scope of collected data.

Second, not all of the districts in the city of Gothenburg were represented in the sample. Gothenburg is recognized as one of the most segregated cities in Sweden. Furthermore, the variations in population ethnic background and criminal rates in different residential areas of Gothenburg may affect the working methods of the SSPF groups and the perceptions of professionals regarding interagency collaboration. Similarly, it was not possible to ensure equal representation of professionals from each agency within the SSPF collaboration in the sample due to their busy schedules and inability to devote time for the interview with the researcher. For this reason, the SSPF team members who were interviewed mostly did not belong to one SSPF team, but different teams across the districts of Gothenburg.

5.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The current study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles guiding social workers, in particular the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers, specifically concerning scholarship and research (NASW, 1999).

Prior to the interviews, the researcher informed the respondents about the purpose of the research and the reason for why they were selected. The electronic invitation letter distributed among participants contained the informed consent form, which specified the ethical principles and guidelines adhered by the researcher as well as provided contact details of the researcher and her supervisor. The consent letter informed the respondents that once the research is finalized, data collected on the interviews will be destroyed. The names of respondents included into the sample and the districts where they work were kept confidential. Furthermore, the respondents could opt from the interview or refuse answering certain questions if they found them inappropriate without explaining the reasons.

One of the ethical dilemmas that the researcher encountered in the current study related to using appropriate terminology shaping the roles of respondents in SSPF. For the purpose of making a distinction between coordinators and the SSPF team members, the researcher initially applied the concepts of “coordinators” as those respondents coordinating SSPF team meetings and “professionals” as those employed at the social services, police offices, schools and the recreational centers. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines professional as “relating to a job that requires special education, training or skill”. However, understanding that the role of each respondent in SSPF is equally important and requires specific knowledge and skills in the area of juvenile crime prevention, and taking into account the fact that all of the coordinators interviewed were qualified social workers, the term “professional” covers the entire sample. To avoid wrong interpretation, the researcher changed the terminology from “professionals” to SSPF team members.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The following chapter presents the findings of the current study and attempts to explore its meaning by virtue of the theoretical framework applied and previous research in the area. This study borrows the insights from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological systems theory and Bardach's (1998) Craftsmanship theory of interagency collaboration, specifically the author's discourse on interagency collaborative capacity (ICC) as a theoretical framework to understand the perceptions of relevant professionals of collaboration in their daily practice. Based on the research questions, the findings are divided into five content areas that constitute the core sections of the chapter: professionals' perceptions of interagency collaboration; significance of the agencies in collaboration; the role of coordinators and finally, strengths and obstacles to interagency collaboration.

6.1. PROFESSIONALS' PERCEPTIONS OF INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

Quality of collaboration depends on the professionals involved, their motivation and perceptions of what it means to collaborate. With this regard Bardach (1998) talks about working in collaboration more as fulfilling a creative function by creating an interagency collaborative capacity (ICC), which includes the *platforming capacities* identified in the current study by the respondents. While the concept of *platforming* is often associated with the building industry, Bardach (1998) suggests adopting this metaphor with regards to interagency collaboration, which he believes is a virtual organization in its own right. Efficient platforming, as the author highlights, includes a "sequence of steps that aims to create and then exploit such a chain of opportunities" (ibid., p. 271).

In discussing the concept of collaboration, both the coordinators and the SSPF team members were replying from the perspective of their SSPF working experience, which ranged from 6 months up to 10 years when this kind of information exchange platform emerged in Sweden. The team members represent a broad range of professionals, such as police officers, social, field and youth workers, and school principals. Most of them engage with young people in direct contact throughout the day and in doing so are involved in the microsystem of the child's environment and in meso-system by being in contact with the young person's parents and each other (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The coordinators are mainly employed by the Gothenburg's city administration in the resource units aimed at providing social services to children and young people, individual and family care and other areas, and work in close cooperation with the social services, the SSPF coordinating agency in different city districts. Multiple times the respondents mentioned that Gothenburg is a segregated city that ultimately affects the working methods down in the field. All this makes an impact on how collaboration is conceptualized and understood by each of the respondents.

> We, as coordinators, have one perception of how it works and what it gives, and people that actually work with individuals, have another picture of it (C4)

Yet, despite variation in qualifications, occupied positions, and the areas where they work, respondents shared similar opinions and interpretations as to what collaboration means to them. In the course of the analysis, those shared perceptions were organized into four sub sections based on the underlying common contexts. Some relate to characteristics and components of collaboration and motivation of the team members, while the others describe implications for the youths and their families.

6.1.1. PILLARS OF COLLABORATION

6.1.1.1. TRUST

Trust has been identified as the basic fundamental principle and requirement for effective collaboration. Both, the coordinators and the team members were continuously bringing to notice the need for establishing trusting relationships within the team with each of the professionals, and outside of the collaborative circle with those for whom collaboration has actually been put into place – young people and their parents. The respondents interpreted trust as *getting to know each other* and *building relations*.

> When collaboration works as best, in best times it is when we know each other and we have worked together under a long time. There is trust between us. We understand each other; we know how everyone works and what it means to collaborate (C10)

Trust, as was identified, not only enables the professionals to be honest with each other about what is going on and feel safe on the meeting sharing the information, but also contributes to the feeling of confidence in that after the meeting the team members will do their job in accordance with what has been agreed within the team. Loxley (1997) cited trust among the necessary conditions for collaboration that implies confidence in the partners' faith and ability to rely on their competence. The climate of confidence in the context of interagency collaboration serves as a signal for the readiness to act (Bardach, 1998). It has been clearly emphasized that working in collaboration means not only attending the group meetings and discussing local problems, but also acting when no one else is there and prioritizing this aspect of work. It is about trusting professional relationships across the fields, within the child's ecological environment.

> It is not just about the meetings, it is what is happening after and between the meetings. If I trust you, if you are a good police officer, and I meet you every three weeks, and I know that you know what you talk about, I can call you until the next meeting, because I trust you. We can work together. That's important. It's not just the meetings. It what comes between as well (TM 3, social worker at the police office)

Another dimension related to trust is time. Learning how to work in collaboration and how to trust each other is a time-consuming process (Bardach, 1998). The findings suggest that establishing trusting relationships requires a longstanding experience of working together, together with the same group of people. Previous research evidence confirms that in order to develop strong interpersonal professional relations, stable representation of the exact same team

members over a course of time is required (Mattessich, Murray-Close and Monsey, 2001). While time on the one hand, is quite an abstract concept, respondents were clear in their expression of what it means to build trust with each other and with the kids. Both the young people and their parents, as was mentioned, are often beware of any intrusions from social services or the police, however when there is trust and understanding, it makes collaboration smooth. Team members were repeatedly accentuating the need for gradual accumulation of friendly relations with the young people. Specifically the police shared the opinion that they need to get acquainted with the kids earlier and in this way persuade them that the police officer is not an enemy, but a person that you can turn to and trust.

> One crucial thing is that you know and understand the kids we are working with. I must know him and he must know me to understand what I work for. And I think that working there for seven years, they were very angry in the beginning, because they hate every police. But as time goes on and a lot of speaking, they understand me and that I am honest in what I do. And as time goes by, it is much more easy to work in this area because they are familiar with you. And then it would be natural to talk about certain kids in the SSPF because I know the parents, I know the kid, I know the teacher and I am sure that this information will stay in this room, everybody is talking the truth about what they know. Everybody is honest and at the same agenda to make it good for this kid (TM 1, police officer)

Bardach (1998) classified trust as one of the pivotal stages in platforming the interagency collaborative capacity (ICC), which stands in direct ratio to the ability of the team to work more effectively with one another. The author provides an exhaustive definition of what the trust is in building the ICC: "[…] confidence that the trustworthiness of another party is adequate to justify remaining in a condition of vulnerability" [ibid., p. 252]. Basically, trust in accordance with the Craftsmanship theory of interagency collaboration is closely linked with the feeling of vulnerability, uncertainty and the power of others over themselves in case of critical situations that require immediate action.

> It is about … trusting that other people do good things and that you can do good things together (C4)

The expectation that the partner in collaboration is doing the *good things* is kind of reliance on his/her trustworthiness, the feeling that secures the team members from being uncertain about each other. Mutual trust as one of the platforming capacities of the ICC requires each of the team members to assess the level of trustworthiness of one another, it is about the people involved in building it [ibid.]. Evaluation of similar collaborative platform in Norway confirm the findings of the current study in that trusting relations between the partners affect the quality of interagency collaboration (Gundhus, Egge, Strype and Myhrer, 2008). Similarly, Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggests that when it comes to the young person and his/her ecological environment, the factors of activity, role and interpersonal relations constitute the building blocks of the microsystem whereby trust is kind of a "glue" sticking those elements together. Trust is closely linked with

the second pillar of collaboration identified by the respondents, namely understanding the roles and responsibilities of the team members in collaboration.

6.1.1.2. MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Bardach (1998) argued that the problems of misunderstanding, misperceptions and mistrust are often tied together and can cause frustration among the team members. In support of this, Green et al., (2008) and Dickerson et al. (2012) distinguished lack of understanding and miscommunication among potential barriers to collaboration. The respondents were repeatedly coming back to the need for clear distribution of roles and acknowledgement of each other's responsibilities as a way to avoid blaming for failure to act as well as unrealistic expectations about what each of them can and is allowed by law to do. Each professional has its own specific and unique role that contributes to the overall success of the team (Zaccaro, Rittman and Marks, 2001). Therefore, as the findings allowed to conclude, mutual understanding is one of those significant conditions defining success of the team work.

> [*Collaboration is*]… when you can talk about everything and you must understand that every professional has its limits, and what you can expect from them, and what they can do and see if we can get into each other's professions and see if we can do that together. To make two pluses (TM 1, police officer)

While most of the respondents agreed that their roles are clear, some shared the experience when the agencies were instructing the others how they should act in certain situation and expecting them to do so, which caused internal conflict not solved to date.

SSPF in a way is an example of a stand-alone "virtual organization" that has its own group climate and professional culture (Bardach, 1998). It has been compared with the cake wherein each agency has its piece. The particular concerns, however, have been expressed with regards to collaboration between the police and social services that used to blame each other for not addressing the cases in a way they should have. This particular belief that someone knows better how the other professionals should perform their responsibilities derives from deep misconceptions and lack of communication. Gorisi (2001) refers to it as the *cluster differences* between the police agencies and welfare agencies and suggests that clarification of each other's profile and professional identity is essential.

> Here you have the police, and here is the social services, like big, big machineries. And they hate each other. "Why doesn't the police do anything?", "Why doesn't the social services do anything?" But, with us working together, there can be a better understanding (TM 3, social worker at the police)

Therefore, continuous discussion of assumptions about one another is pivotal in ensuring productive group climate and effective collaboration. One of the respondents used the word *consistency* in this regard suggesting that the team members need to work together for a long time before they open up and understand what their partners are doing. The respondent also mentioned that currently there is much better mutual understanding between the police and social services that perhaps owes to consistent working relations.

> It is very easy … to blame each other and for us it is important to support each other for these children. Question is not who is guilty, it is more about how can we work together so that we can support this child (C8)

The professional, as was noted, does not need to know everything, but be aware of what his/her position allows him to do and what the partners in collaboration are able to contribute. Being aware and respectful to each other has been recognized as a pivotal element of SSPF. Bardach (1998) refers to it as to the understanding of one another's' agency-professional worldviews.

> When you work in the SSPF, you must understand your role and understand that you are just a little part of everything (TM 1, police officer)

Mutual understanding of the roles and responsibilities stands at the outset of platforming the ICC. In this regard, Bardach (1998) puts forward *intellectual capital* as a smart practice and one of the fundamental ICC platforming capacities. Accumulating the latter capacity progresses well before establishing trust. In fact, Bardach (1998, p.202) cites Innes, Gruber and their colleagues (1994) who accurately define intellectual capital as being "agreed on facts, shared problem definitions, and mutual understanding". Mutual understanding, and to a large extent clarification of one another's positions in the team grows over time among the professionals.

6.1.1.3. COMMUNICATION AND CONTINUOUS INFORMATION SHARING

"Expanding circle of trust creates the communications capacity and the social capacity to expand still further" (Bardach, 1998, p. 277). Communication is one of the building platforms of the ICC, as the trust grows, the team members are more willing to share the information and engage in mutual discussions in this way boosting the ICC's potential to contribute to the public value that is prevention of the juvenile criminality in the current study. Given that the group reached the level where the trust is established, ensuring information exchange and supportive communication allows the team members to work more effectively together having in possession knowledge, which is essential in social work (Strype et al., 2014).

> The idea is not that SSPF is like a new thing, we are collecting all the people who are around the kids, so that *everyone hear the same thing* and know what school does or what the social services do (C2)

Furthermore, as one of the possible approaches to achieve clarity with regards to a certain case and find common ground, it is to capture the perspectives of each team member, something that the majority of respondents were especially stressing on.

Trust, acceptance of the roles and responsibilities, communication and the information exchange were identified as the three pillars of the SSPF collaboration. Yet, another component penetrating each one of those is a relationship, both within the team and outside, a kind of *togetherness* or a collective way of comprehending the situation that protects against professional isolation.

> What every person does is just one piece, and together with others, it actually makes a difference…. You don't feel alone in your work (C4)

Communication is closely linked both with trust, and with the ability to be clear about one's roles and responsibilities. For instance, it is suggested that as communication slows down, team members struggle to make themselves understood and as a result it takes more time and energy for the ICC performance to be efficient (Bardach, 1998). Based on the Bardach's (1998) platforming model, insights from the Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and the findings of the current study so far discussed, it was possible to develop a converged SSPF collaboration model illustrated in Figure 3.

The inner circle of the diagram includes the SSPF working group team and the pillars of collaboration that contribute to the overall team performance. Due to specific work arrangements, SSPF is located in the microsystem of the young person's ecological environment and in this way, continuous reciprocal relations within the team, with the young person, his/her friends and family are established. Creative opportunity, the first ICC platforming capacity, is prevention of juvenile criminality in the current context leads to development of collaborative relations between professionals (Bardach, 1998). The pillars of collaboration represented in the diagram create a strong foundation for effective practice in the field. Mesosystem represents the linkages between direct environments of the young person, such as, for instance, between parents and outreach social workers or police officers. Exosystem involves connections between indirect environments, such as school board and administration of social services whose decisions with regards to cases lifted at SSPF meetings potentially affect the young person's development and his/her propensity to antisocial behavior. As was suggested by respondents, SSPF has to adjust to local context and consider prevailing values, attitudes on crime prevention in communities and other essential macro-factors.

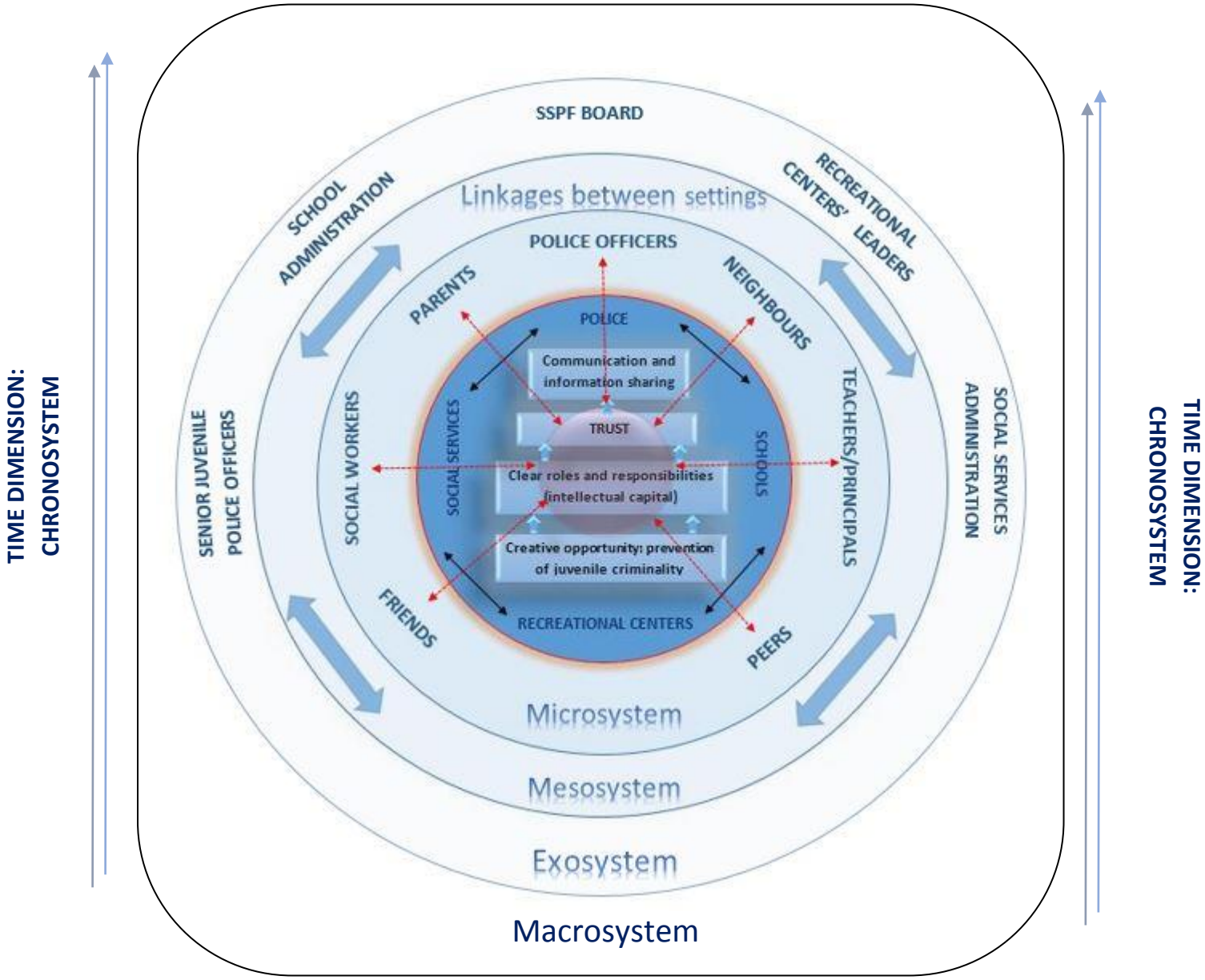

Figure 3. Research findings on SSPF collaboration model inserted in Bardach's (1998) ICC platforming model and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological systems theory

6.1.2. TEAM MEMBERS' CHARACTERISTICS

Another theme that emerged in discussion of the professionals perceptions of collaboration is the characteristics of the team members that are pivotal for effective group work. First, it has been recognized that the person needs to be motivated to work in collaboration and see the point of doing it. Skepticism unlike the dedication has proven to slow down the speed of collaboration and provoke internal conflicts within the group.

Furthermore, respondents shared that in some SSPF teams professionals represent administration of the agencies and are not directly in contact with the kids. Therefore, the quality of their contribution depends on the staff's reports. For this reason, respondents highlighted the need for

engaging relevant professionals to SSPF, those having the first-hand experience with young people. The *implementation network* as one of the ICC platforming capacities, Bardach (1998) suggests, includes mid and upper-level managers, those who in the current context are in power to operate the SSPF "machinery" and ensure smooth and fast decision-making and implementation. Similarly, other scholars emphasize that partners in collaboration should hold senior positions giving them authority to influence decisions (Sutton, Cherney and White, 2008). Yet, the research findings allowed to conclude that in the specific context of Swedish SSPF where professionals depend on the information about the young person, it is essential to include outreach workers into the implementation network as they possess critical information. In addition, Liddle and Gelsthorpe (1994) emphasized that interagency working groups should be broad enough to facilitate crime prevention, however a very wide range of the team members can lead to lack of coherent, unifying focus. The dilemma observed with this specific requirement suggests that often those people working in the field do not have the decision-making authority that complicates the process in the end.

Second, along with the motivation, the team member needs to be active and open-minded, the qualities that according to the findings are inherent to the professional. Understanding what is important and how the team members can contribute has also been recognized critical.

> It's important to be open-minded and that's not something you can teach, you have to have that as a person. I think it's personal qualities (C10)

Trusting interpersonal relations within the team is not the only factor contributing to growing and strengthening of the ICC. Bardach (1998) argued that the ICC environment in itself and essentially, the members themselves are *active teachers*, more effective when they are prepared and open-minded. Team members in the environment, the author further elaborates, "praise, complain, suggest, criticize, act and react", which requires them to be self-critical and accepting (ibid. p.205).

Finally, it has been recognized that for the collaboration to be effective, the team members have to be prepared for the meeting in advance, which means being aware of the young person that is going to be discussed, details of the case. Such preparedness allows to be active on the meeting, contributing own *piece of the cake* to make the picture comprehensive.

> You have to be prepared when you come to the meeting, maybe if somebody wants to take up the kid and talk about the kid, all the parts need to be informed (TM 2, social worker at the police)

6.1.3. Collaboration as a platform for early intervention

One of the associations shared by the respondents with regards to the SSPF collaboration has been early intervention. Every other day matters when it comes to the signs of delinquent behavior in children and young people. Therefore, the earlier professionals identify the need for intervention, more time would they have to address the issue.

> If we did not have this meeting, maybe we would not know so early that it was so bad, as it was (C3)

Arguing in terms of the Bronfenbrenner's (1993) revised ecological model of human development, the chronosystem that stands for the time dimension holds a prominent position in the young person's ecological environment. Not only does it affect the characteristics of the person over the life course, but also the environment in which that person lives (ibid.). Specifically with regards to the SSPF it has to be mentioned that the primary target group for such collaboration are young people from the age of 12 to 18, in some cases 20. Therefore, if one of the agencies identify the young person that requires assistance at the age of 16, the group of professionals working in collaboration are limited in their ability to address the issue qualitatively, which is not because of their qualification, but due to limited resource of time.

> The younger kid is that you just start talking about, the longer time we have. So… if the school for instance, brings a 12-year old and says, we have a problem, we are very worried, then we have some years to do a good job. But if they come when this person is leaving school, then it's much more difficult to actually feel that we are doing a good job because not so many people will see this young person. So the younger they are, the easier it is to do a good job (C6)

Some respondents suggested initiating crime prevention even earlier, indirectly through special programmes for the parents and continuous communication support and in doing so embracing the entire process of the young person's development.

6.1.4. PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Bronfenbrenner (1979) in his work on the ecology of human development recognized that the family setting as the immediate environment for the child plays the foremost role in the personality development, but the quality of the latter depends on a number of diverse factors. The findings of the current study revealed that the parents are central to SSPF and the entire SSPF work depends on whether the parents give their permission, the signed consent form to initiate this kind of information sharing platform or not. If they do not agree, the case will be handled solely by social services. However, it varies from one district to another to what extent the parents are involved in the actual decision-making on the SSPF meetings.

> If you have the family where the parents are worried about their child, they want us to help them, and we meet them and we ask them how they experience things. We always work with their permission and we always ask them first, when we do things (C3)

An interesting comment has been made by one of the field workers interviewed, who mentioned that for the stake of the child sometimes it makes sense to worry the parents who otherwise would not recognize the need for intervention, but truly believe in their child's honesty and good conduct. Worrying has been compared with informing and in doing so raising their awareness on the complexity of the situation with the young person.

> It's good to worry people sometimes, because then you see if the parents cannot do anything, how bad is the situation. Are the parents good enough to deal with this or are they not? But first of all they have to be informed (TM 9, field worker, resource team)

Interconnections between the family and the SSPF team first make an impact on the parents themselves who are given an opportunity to observe their child's life through the lenses of the professionals and, at the same time encourage them to act in partnership with the SSPF. Bronfenbrenner (1979) recognized that the family is the most stable base throughout the young person's development and therefore these specific mesosystem influences that involve concerned individuals are tremendous. As Bardach (1998) put it, this kind of joint efforts within the ICC, which is the SSPF in the current context, contributes to creation of the public value that is prevention of juvenile criminality.

Similarly, one of the guiding principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child is that the child should be provided with the opportunity to be heard in matters affecting him/her and the expressed views should be given a due weight (General Assembly, 1989, Art.12). With this regard, the respondents expressed the need for children's participation on the meetings that are in a way a place where a variety of opinions are merged together. It is not just about sharing the information and updating the young person on what the agencies are planning to do in his/her case, but also an opportunity to encourage, empower and make the child feel stronger and resilient about the situation around.

> Sometimes we have this meeting where the parents are very tired of the children, they are angry. They maybe want them away. And, it can be very hard for the children to sit at this kind of meeting and hear that. So all the others are trying to show what is working, so that the children can get stronger and feel that we have a lot of people that trusting for her (C2)

As the young person is located in the innermost center of his/her ecological environment, all of the actors involved within the SSPF platform in a way intrude into the private life, however being guided by the principle of the best interests of the child. With this in mind, stimulating and encouraging active participation of the young person, giving him/her a space to share opinions, talk and make own choices is recognized critical. An interesting finding of the current study was that, basically, SSPF as an example of the ICC virtual organization is in contact with each of the layers of the young person's ecological environment: microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem, inasmuch as those SSPF working group meetings where the child is not present still affect the traits of his/her development due to the decisions agreed upon the professionals about the case.

6.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AGENCIES IN COLLABORATION

Essentially, the majority of respondents recognized how critical each of the agencies is in collaboration. Both were they discussing their agencies' part as well as commenting on

significance of their partners in SSPF. It has been highlighted that the strength of SSPF is the police, social services, recreational centers for youth and schools. Because of cooperation of those *four different legs* as one coordinator emphasized, the results of the SSPF interventions are more efficient and *settled*. Inclusion of the four diverse sectors has been cited advantageous in a way that it allows professionals to meet the young person in different environments throughout the day. Another comment was shared by one of the coordinators who was particularly concerned about personal, first-hand contact between the SSPF team members and the young people. Coordinators often lack this kind of relation with the child due to their working arrangements and time commitments and therefore to make collaboration efficient and in the best interest of the child, it is essential to have those various professionals having a relation with the child together.

> We are not outside, we are not in the school, we don't see the children, and it's very important that school and the field workers and other people who are working with the children, can talk about them and talk about the problem (C8)

The four partners in SSPF collaboration constitute that foundation that makes the interagency collaborative capacity to grow (Bardach, 1998). In belonging to the *implementation network* of the ICC, professionals engage in mutual accountability systems as the author refers to, in a way being accountable to each other and dependent on one another's contribution, intellectual and material resources (ibid.). The SSPF implementation network steers the course of the entire collaboration. Liddle and Bottoms (1994) provide a useful framework for analyzing the forms of agency participation in collaboration. The authors identified six general forms of the agency's participation that can equally be useful in the current discussion, especially the first three: the "prime movers", "supportive passengers", "sleeping partners", "obstructors", "agency spies", and finally, the "proselytizers" (ibid). Commenting on each agency's importance in collaboration, the respondents were mostly referring to the agencies as the "prime movers" that take a large share of responsibilities for the case and make significant contributions to the overall performance of SSPF. Quite often though, in some of the districts certain agencies were performing the roles of the "sleeping partners" attending the meetings, but not making any real contribution, which the coordinators explained by the local context whereby a limited amount of professionals were physically not able to have the information on a large number of children in the area. In analyzing the role of the social services in SSPF, there is a dilemma in identifying their actual position in collaboration. On the hand, social services are described by respondents as the "prime movers" because of their central role in SSPF. On the other hand, due to complexity of their working arrangements, high workload and limited time for collaboration with the others, they could be classified at some point as "supportive passengers" in a way expressing support to this kind of collaboration, but not actually being able to contribute to the overall SSPF performance. The role of each agency in collaboration is discussed in greater detail below.

6.2.1. POLICE

In discussing the role of the police in collaboration, respondents, both the coordinators and the team members were affirmative in saying that the police officers are essential in SSPF considering their direct involvement with the youth in times when the other professionals are not out, such as night hours. Doing the outreach work on the streets and at schools, police officers, as they shared, establish a relation with the youth making them trusting and more open to the police that used to be a *threatening* agency to young people. One police officer shared that usually they

have one or two police officers assigned to one school, so when children see the police officer both inside the school and outside working on the streets, it is the same person all of the time. Therefore, what they bring to the SSPF meetings are the things they observed, the youth they have met and the other things that the police is generally responsible for. Most of the police officers in SSPF, as the respondents shared, are quite knowledgeable on the risk factors, environmental influences and are open to information regarding the young person's circumstances, which as one of the coordinators emphasized, makes them *the best social workers*.

> I think the police is our best, they are the best partners. Oh, they are so good at the meetings, and you know… they know the kids we talk about and they know the parents, and they are the best social workers, really… (C6)

Another essential issue is police' cooperation with the social services that is distinct from the SSPF. With this cooperation, there are social workers employed at the police offices on a regular basis giving the police officers *another perspective* on the young person's situation. Therefore, when they come to the SSPF working group meetings, both professionals speak together.

> When it's our turn to speak, we do it together… We talk together… we are talking about the same things together… we are very important together with the police (TM3, social worker at the police)

At the same time, the interviewed police officers recognized that even though they have a good relationship with the youth and care about them, they do not have the tools to *make it better within the family, or the school problem* that the other agencies involved in SSPF have. For this reason, it has to be the others who address the situation with the young person lifted by the police on the meeting.

6.2.2. SOCIAL SERVICES

The research findings allowed to conclude that the role of social services in the SSPF collaboration is quite controversial. On the one hand, social services is the coordinating agency in SSPF mostly due to the fact that they are legally bounded to keep an eye on children and young people by the age of 18. On the other hand, often respondents shared their worries related to the social services participation in the SSPF meetings and their particular inability to share the information about the case processing. At the same time, social services keep on being the central organizational structure accumulating the most relevant resources and having *prima facie* right to intervention. Therefore, their participation in SSPF is implicit.

> For me it's very important. I think that we can achieve more results if we work together than if we work on our own. But to do that, you have to invest time and time is something that we don't have right now… We barely have the time to do our own work and then, working together with someone else, you have to invest time and it's not possible right now (TM 10, social worker, social services)

Interestingly however, it has been found that social services can equally work with the case of a child without SSPF, for instance if the consent form from the parents has not been obtained, but there is a high risk for the child's life and well-being. At the same time, conversely, SSPF cannot work effectively if social services are not there, in the *implementation network*. Social workers recognized that SSPF collaboration is important like the social services own participation, yet the time constraints do not allow them to contribute as much as the other SSPF team members expect them to.

6.2.3. SCHOOLS

Respondents cited schools as the primary environment where children and young people socialize, interact with their peers, develop both intellectually and psychologically and establish networks. Teachers who are those adults having the most frequent contact with the young people observe their behavior, school performance, as well as can associate certain behavioral patterns with other factors that could affect the child's decision to break the law, play truant or commit some shoplifting. Second, most often, as the respondents emphasized, teachers as well as school administration have trusting relations with the child's family, which therefore makes it easier to convince them that there is a problem going on with the kid that needs to be addressed properly.

> They [school] know a lot about children, so it's quite easy for the school to contact the families (TM 9, field worker, resource team)

For this very reason, school along with the police has been cited among the key informants in SSPF, bringing most of the cases to notice of other professionals making their participation critical to the overall success of SSPF.

6.2.4. RECREATIONAL CENTERS AND THE FIELD WORKERS

Finally, the recreational centers have also been recognized important partners due to their ability to observe the young person's behavior in spare time, after-school hours and establish trusting relations with the youth, which in a way gives them an overview of the situation in local communities.

> We want to meet kids as much as we can, because my central opinion – it's to create relation… Whatever we do – if we bake, I talk to them, I have a relation. I think it's my biggest work (TM 6, recreational center leader)

The field workers, another partner in SSPF have been cited as an important component of collaboration as well since they meet the youth outside, talk, try to see if anyone needs help, if anyone is at risk. Working daytime, field workers focus on visiting schools and establishing contacts with the youth, trying to get to know them on a more personal level, while at nights monitoring the situation in local communities. In this way, both the recreational centers staff and the field workers contribute an important piece of information to the SSPF by having a good experience in the area, knowing people and the local situation. However, it has also been noted that the leisure time workers meet the young people only if they decide to come to the recreational centers. Sometimes, the recreational centers are not engaged in SSPF simply because there is nothing they can say about the child.

6.3. THE ROLE OF A COORDINATOR IN FACILITATION OF COLLABORATION

Coordination is an essential part of collaboration. In the meaning of the Craftsmanship theory, coordination is conceptualized as leadership, a new way of managing collaboration "against the hierarchical grain" (Bardach, 1998, p. 307). The coordinator of the team, in line with the theory, fulfills the role of a facilitative rather than top-down leader (ibid.). The author believes leadership is "a set of focus-giving or unity-enhancing behaviors that would help an ICC accomplish their work" (Bardach, 2001, p. 157). While the ICC as the theory suggests, must be creative, motivate high-quality effort among the professionals, foster mutual intelligibility and trust, it is mainly the coordinator who has the highest stake in accomplishing it (Bardach, 1998). In discussing the concept of leadership Zaccaro et al. (2001) suggests that for the overall success of the team, the leader's ability to coordinate and synchronize individual contributions of each professional is essential. The latter argument coincides with Rosenbaum's (2002, p. 203) idea in that there is a need for coordinators who can help the team members to "[…] formulate a collective vision, motivate them to participate fully, and keep them interested in coming back", those expectations that the respondents shared in the course of the interviews.

6.3.1. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SSPF COORDINATORS

The research findings allowed to conclude that coordinators work quite differently in different districts of Gothenburg. Mostly, the respondents explained it by the variance of time they have for SSPF since the role of coordinators is not their permanent function. Similarly, respondents emphasized that each city district has specific local context, which includes the background of local population, number of children and schools in the area, and other factors that altogether affect the way coordinators perform their duties. While, as was discovered, coordinators follow the SSPF standard procedures designed for Gothenburg, such as having the same procedure for the meetings of the working group, discussing similar questions and working with the same contents, the areas of their responsibility vary greatly across the city. Perhaps, it can also be explained by the fact that SSPF is designed to perform in a complex and dynamic environments, both of the young person in focus and the team itself (Zaccaro et al., 2001).

Based on the information collected at the interviews with the coordinators, two categories of responsibilities that they perform have emerged. The first covers the organizational and administrative functions, while the other one involves individual work with young people and their parents. In some districts both categories are combined, while in other, the organizational prevails. These findings coincide with the framework for constructing a general classification system of the leader performance functions organized by Fleishman et al., (1991). The author and his colleagues introduced four generic dimensions of leadership activities: information search and structuring, information use in problem solving, managing personnel resources and managing material resources that constitute the overall organizational responsibility discussed further (ibid.).

6.3.1.1. ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

A large portion of the coordinators' responsibilities, as was shared involves organizing the meetings, *getting the agencies together*, arranging all the practical issues, writing the meeting minutes, keeping in contact and sending updates to the team members as well as performing the role of a facilitator, which in fact requires coordinators to be creative, supportive and generally easy-going. The foremost task in this regard, as was emphasized is to establish the common platform of understanding within the group through conversation. While Zaccaro et al. (2001) refers to it as the responsibility for defining and interpreting events for the team, Fleishman et al. (1991, p. 260) interprets this responsibility as "communicating information" that involves "transmitting, exchanging, reporting or passing on".

> My task in this is to get… conversation to flow or to get everyone to take their own responsibility and not tell what everybody else should do… You have to explain, a lot of explaining, a lot of information in collaboration about what we can do, we cannot do, and how we understand things (C10)

The facilitative leader in developing the interagency collaborative capacity is expected to protect the team members from being exploited by each other due to miscommunication, which makes the value of "communicating information" and the capacity of the coordinator to balance the powers of professionals critical to the SSPF's efficiency (Bardach, 1998).

Therefore, organizational responsibility grows far beyond pure coordination in its original meaning. Merriam Webster dictionary defines coordination as "the process of organizing people or groups so that they work together properly and well". Making people work together properly and well as the first step towards efficient collaboration requires coordinators to clarify what it means to collaborate, what is everyone's role in the team, and the expectations from collaboration. One of the respondents hit the mark in saying that coordinators try to take care of the information, of the needs that come up during those meetings and in doing so provide proper input to the overall success of SSPF. Furthermore, it has been emphasized that among the coordinator's primary responsibilities is to help the team members to elaborate the comprehensive picture of what is happening with the young person, in a way help them to look at the problem, talk how to do things and see the meaning of working together.

Time has been recognized as the cornerstone issue in coordinator's availability to work with the individuals. By having as little as 10% of the total working time devoted to SSPF, coordinators were restricted in what they can do, while those with 50% could perform a lot more functions. Because of the time, coordinators shared that they cannot meet the young people and their parents, even though they recognized that it is essential. Instead, they are just coordinating the work, but *not doing it ourselves* as one of the respondents put it. The city coordinator explained that even though they give recommendations to the local districts on the amount of time required for SSPF work, it is mainly local administration that decides to what extent SSPF is a priority for them.

> Three month ago, we only had 10% to work as coordinators. Because of that, that made us meeting leader, most of it, just meeting leader, we were not able

> to work with methods or to work hands on with the kids. But now we are trying to elaborate (C5)

It has also been emphasized that due to inability to work with the cases themselves, coordinators help the team members to decide who will be in charge of working with the individual. However, coordinators are still responsible for keeping in contact with the parents and updating them on what is going on within the SSPF group.

6.3.1.2. INDIVIDUAL WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR PARENTS

Those coordinators working with individual cases have more extended and flexible responsibilities both including the earlier mentioned organizational functions and on top of that casework. As the empirical data revealed, it has only been in one district that the coordinators worked directly with the young people and their parents by writing up an action plan specifying what needs to happen, what can every professional do, what should be the young person's and his/her parents' contribution. Furthermore, it is the coordinators who try to establish contact with the child first, earn trust and confidence meeting them before the official SSPF "gathering".

> We always meet the children before the meeting so they get the chance to know us and we show that we are at the same side, we want to help them, we listing them up (C2)

In this regard Crawford (2012) highlights the need for a coordinator to be mindful of the service users situation in collaboration making them fully aware of who is involved and what information they make use of. In addition, because SSPF is designed for the young people, their voice and opinion are essential. With this in mind, coordinators ensure that young people have proper space to share their vision and that other professionals consider those.

> And our role is also to like help the child to get their voice in the meeting (C3)

In this specific district, as the findings showed, regular SSPF meetings often include the parents and the child, which enables the team members to discuss what is working and what is not, what professionals are worried about. So, in this way it is not only opinions of diverse professionals on the situation, but also another perspective from within the child's microsystem – the parents, innermost individuals influencing the young person. Coordinator in this specific context, serves as a mediator, a point of contact between the family on the one side and the group of professionals on the other, in a way being involved in the mesosystem of the child's ecological environment through these interconnections (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Finally, respondents emphasized that following up the case is another important stage in SSPF. Coordinators constantly keep an eye on how the approved action plan is implemented and what is going on with the young person in between.

> We meet like after four or six weeks again and see what has happened. Is it better or not. Do we need to do anything else or just continue what we do? (C2)

Reflecting on the coordinator's role in SSPF through the lenses of the Craftsmanship's theory, it is important to mention that the SSPF team members rarely have powers to choose their

coordinator themselves, unlike the ICC where acceptance of leadership is a distinct platforming capacity and the leader is selected from within the group (Bardach 1998; 2001). The SSPF coordinator is present in the team from the beginning, the emergence of collaboration. The emergence of the interagency collaborative capacity as argued by Bardach (1998) literary begins with acceptance of leadership that is the 6th in order platforming capacity in the author's model. Due to the fact that the order of the ICC platforming capacities in SSPF teams is reversed, as the empirical data revealed, the acceptance of leadership goes on simultaneously with establishing trusting relations and clarifying the roles and responsibilities within the team. Essentially, being accepted as an ICC leader or SSPF coordinator necessitates acquiring trust from the professionals working in collaboration (ibid.). Therefore, the SSPF coordinator by accomplishing his/her responsibilities leads the team through the development of every capacity in this way assisting the professionals in platforming efficient ICC (see Figure 4).

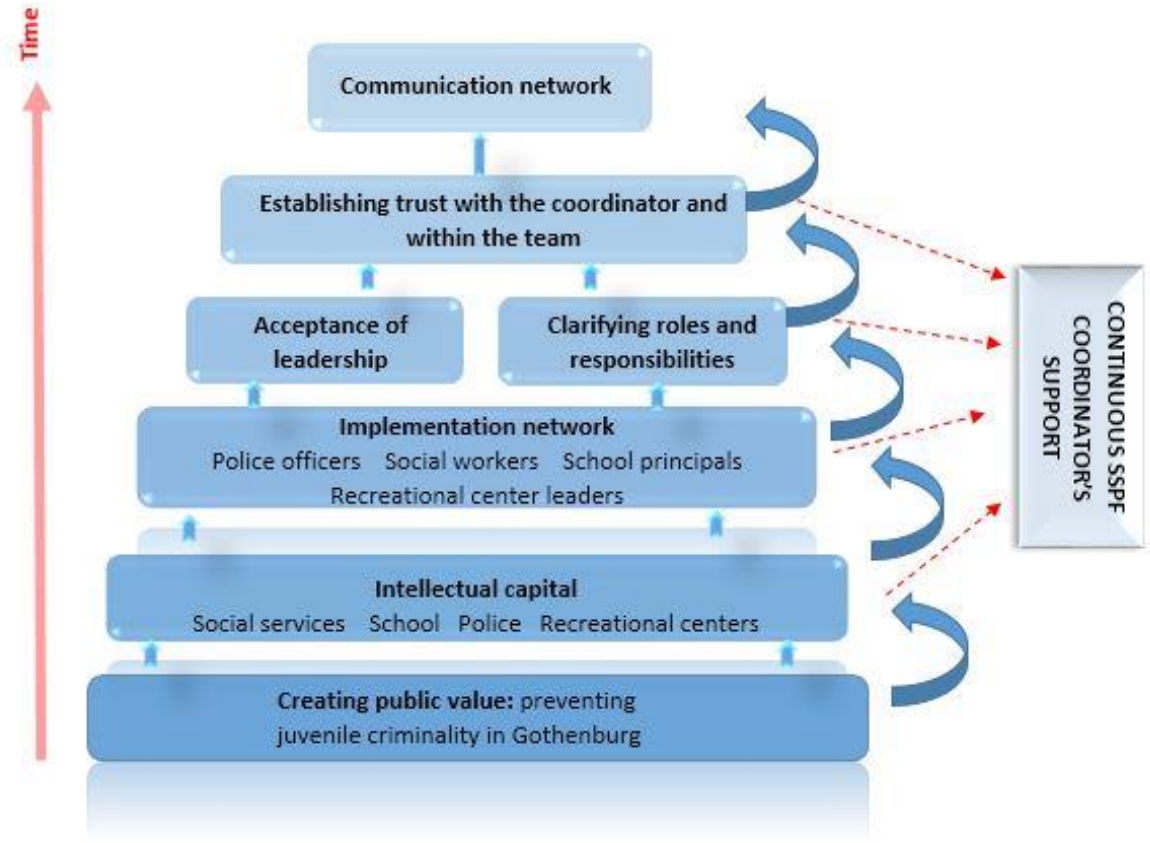

Figure 4. SSPF organizational structure: the role of a coordinator (based on empirical findings and adapted from Bardach's (1998) ICC platforming model)

6.3.2. Reflections on personal qualities, knowledge and skills required for the SSPF coordinator

Essentially, Crawford (2012, p. 150) recognized that effective leadership in the agencies providing social work services requires coordinators to have "[…] the skills to motivate, manage

change, communicate and negotiate with others, develop and take forward strategy and vision and model good interprofessional practice". Based on the empirical data, it was possible to elaborate a generic model of personal qualities, knowledge and skills for a potential coordinator both expressed by the coordinators and the team members (see Table 2) discussed in greater detail below. The current model is based solely on the views of the respondents and therefore is strongly connected to the local context and consistent with prior research. One remark however should be made here. It is that while the coordinators were mostly concerned with personal qualities and the skills, the team members were significantly more demanding towards the skills and knowledge required for the coordinator. Perhaps it can be explained by the requirements and expectations the team members have with regards to the professional background of the coordinator.

Table 2. Personal qualities, knowledge and skills required for the SSPF coordinator (based on empirical data)

Coordinators	Team members
Personal qualities	
Being structured and good at keeping the order of collaboration	Not afraid of taking own decisions
Being good and listening and understanding the big picture	"Being a human"
Having the drive and interest in young people	Keeping the meeting in its frames, being structured
Not being afraid of saying things many times, repeating for others to understand the meaning of collaboration	
Being flexible, determined and patient	
Being "sharp"	
Being curious, open-minded and humble	
Having personal commitment to the area where you work	
Skills	
Having social skills	Having good social skills so that everyone can trust her/him
Skills in leading the meeting to make everyone feel involved and listened to	Good organizational skills
Being able to lead and take responsibility for the meetings	Consistency – holding everything together like a spider
Making the professionals feel comfortable and trusting each other	General good ability of keeping the meetings vivid and not too vivid
	Being able to moderate and stop discussions when they go overboard
	Having personal contact with each team member and keep them updated
Knowledge	
Awareness of the roles of each agency and every participant	Awareness of the roles of each agency and every participant
Having a good local knowledge	Having experience of working down in the field/ Knowing the community, having local knowledge
Having experience of collaboration	Understanding the professionals: what each of them is allowed by law to do
Being updated and understand all of the professionals	Understanding confidentiality rules – how much you can and cannot say on the meeting
Being aware of the laws leading the social services, what kind of services are available for the young people	Being able to select the right people for the SSPF meeting
	Having a good network and connections/ being a link between different agencies
	Being connected to social services

6.3.2.1. PERSONAL QUALITIES

Coordinators were quite creative in their opinions on personal qualities they should possess to be able to lead the SSPF teams and perform their duties. As such, one of the key qualities expressed

by the coordinators has been being open-minded, good at listening and understanding the big picture. The SSPF teams often have to deal with complicated cases that require each team member and especially the coordinator to be open and accepting to the incoming information, able to process it quickly and construct the all-embracing description of the young person's problems and needs together with other professionals. Therefore, as the findings revealed, this specific quality is paramount in meeting the expectations of the group, which makes every professional feel listened to and involved. Second, the respondents expressed that coordinators should have personal commitment to the area where they work, being curious, *having the drive* and interest in young people as the target group of SSPF. As has been suggested, while in the field of social work professionals often operate in deprived areas with comprehensive cases, there should be some kind of inner aspiration in them driving processes ahead.

> When you come here and you look at it, it's a very boring area. I mean it's all grey and kind of very poor in many ways, but having worked here for many years I feel my heart is for the people here and I, I can see them behind the facade, and I want people here to have the possibilities, to have a good life... I go to work and then I go home, but still I have my heart here where I work (C6)

Following the discussion, the interviewed coordinators expressed that the quality they need is patience and courage in repeating over again what the collaboration is all about, which enables to establish the common platform of understanding within the team. Not being afraid of saying the same things multiple times and stimulating meaningful discussions in the teams is how patience and courage were interpreted.

> You need patience and you need to have kind of a long experience of doing the work. Otherwise you won't understand why they do what they do (C9)

Another personal quality both the coordinators and the team members found important was being structured and good at keeping the order of collaboration, which is closely linked with two previously illustrated qualities. Finally, the other qualities coordinators expressed a need in were being flexible, determined and humble. Flexible in a way as to be able to react to quickly changing circumstances in the area and inside of the agencies, determined with regards to the decisions jointly made on the SSPF meetings and humble in asking for a helping hand.

Unlike the coordinators, team members were mostly emphasizing a considerable significance of *being a human* and in doing so able to meet children and young people and express sincere involvement and concern with their situation. As was discussed earlier in this chapter, being a human in a way helps to build a trusting relationship with the young person. Of course, not every coordinator meets young people as part of their daily work, but generally the quality of being a human covers a wide range of other qualities described above. Finally, one of the team members also suggested that coordinators should not be afraid of taking own decisions, which the respondent linked to the feeling of *insecureness* whereby sometimes coordinators do not feel secure in the actions they take and therefore it affects the general performance of the SSPF team.

> I think also it needs to be a person who is not afraid of taking own decisions. I am in two SSPF and I can compare. One is working better than the other one. I think it works better in one because…I don't really know what the problem is in the other one, but I think it's some kind of insecureness. They are a little bit insecure of how can we actually… what kind of intervention, what kind of young people can we bring out to the board, incidents. It's a little bit difficult to just make it happen (TM 5, social worker at the police office)

6.3.2.2. SKILLS

Essentially, both sub groups of respondents emphasized that the coordinator should have good social skills making every professional feel comfortable on the meeting and at the same time expressing trust to the team leader. In practice, the respondents shared that the skill of making everyone feel trust to the coordinators means being open and clear about yourself as a person and a part of SSPF, and clarifying doubts and expectations of the team members. Bardach (1998) suggests that because the process of ICC development is difficult and vulnerable to failure, the team members must trust in the coordinator's capacities.

> I think also as a coordinator, it's very important to tell everyone before what is my thought about getting together, give them a little bit of background, so they also know what kind of things would be possible (C7)

The ability of the leader to nurture interpersonal trust, Bardach (2001) argues, is critical for the ICC success. Related to this, the team members recognized the need for a coordinator to have personal contact with each team member and keep them updated, which again, is one of the approaches to establish interpersonal trust. The research evidence supports current findings in that the coordinator's ability to acknowledge achievements of professionals and keep them to date encourages mutual trust within the team (Peterson, 1991).

Second, multiple times coordinators were compared with the *spiders* in a way that they should be able to hold everything together *under one roof*, make the SSPF meeting consistent. Consistency as the research allowed to conclude, requires the coordinator to have good organizational skills, which means being able to lead and take responsibility for the meeting, moderate and stop discussions when they go *overboard* as one of the team members noted and make everyone feel involved.

Finally, it has been noted that the skill of keeping the meeting *vivid and not too vivid* is an advantage for every coordinator, meaning that the person in this position should feel comfortable in facilitating the discussions and being able to keep the positive climate within the team.

6.3.2.3. KNOWLEDGE

The third component in the current sub-section is the knowledge respondents expected the coordinators to have. It has been recognized that working in the field of crime prevention requires team members and the coordinator in particular to possess a range of skills and knowledge. Sutton et al. (2008) highlights the need for having knowledge on effective problem solving and

analysis, understanding techniques of crime reduction, experience in coordination as well as specific monitoring and evaluation skills in following up the cases.

To start with, both the team members and the coordinators found that it is extremely important to have local knowledge on the area where the SSPF works and the experience of working down in the field prior to be appointed. Knowing the community and being known by the local population as the respondents suggested is an advantage for the coordinator, which makes it easier to organize SSPF meetings and get the written permission from the parents. Being aware of the situation in the families, involved and *feeling it* was recognized critical.

> I think also it's very important for the coordinator to have worked on the ground themselves, to see what it is, to see the situation for the families, to feel it, otherwise if there is just people from above speaking and talking and not involved in what is happening down there, I think that's not good. I think it's very important both for the families that they know, and can feel about what the families can be, and also together with the people that you connect with in the collaboration (TM 9, field worker, resource team)

Second, as was discussed earlier in the chapter, ensuring mutual understanding of the roles and responsibilities among the team members is a requirement for building an effective ICC, the SSPF collaboration in the present context (Bardach, 1998). The respondents emphasized the need for a coordinator to be aware of the roles each agency and every professional in the SSPF team plays, which also includes knowing the legislation that controls the scope of powers they have. Furthermore, as social services is the coordinating agency of the SSPF, the interviewed coordinators recognized the relevance of being aware in specific legislation leading the social services.

> I think you should know the laws, directing social service, and I think you need to know how the police is working, of course. And the other things you will find out, like what kind of services do we have for young people, but also you need to update it all the time, because new things happen (C7)

Related to this, as the team members shared, is also the overall knowledgeability on what kind of professionals should be invited to the SSPF meetings – *ability to select the right people* as they mentioned. Even though, officially it is the social services, schools, police and the recreational centers that are part of SSPF, it depends what kind of professionals attend the meetings – those working down in the field with the young people or managers in power of taking decisions. Often though coordinators do not have the power to influence the selection of the team members, yet, the findings revealed that it is critical for collaboration as well.

The respondents emphasized that the coordinator should understand the confidentiality rules, *how much each professional can or cannot say* and be able to work with that. In one of the areas included in the current study, coordinator had a dual role first, as being the leader of the group, and second, being a social worker and representing the social services in this collaboration. In this way, and because the team leader had the same levels of confidentiality with the social services, the coordinator was able to have wider access to information about the young person,

which in the end, facilitated more smooth collaboration between the agencies. Some team members recognized that overall it is beneficial for the SSPF collaboration to have the coordinator connected to social services in a way.

> We have the same confidentiality, even if I am sitting here, I am allowed to get to know what they know (C7)

Finally, the team members repeated multiple times that the coordinator should have a good network and connections throughout the city. Being sort of a link between different agencies.

Prior research suggests that good practice in crime prevention, and essentially among young population requires professionals and those who coordinate these efforts to have knowledge of the local area, local community needs and available services (Sutton et al. 2008). Apart from that, in-depth understanding of local problems and priorities, and finally awareness on specific approaches to crime prevention available in the community, and ability to select the most appropriate ones among them (ibid.). These dimensions have been acknowledged by respondents in the current study. On top of that, Crawford (2012) cited a range of skills for interprofessional practice, such as communication skills, empathy, skills demonstrating trust, respect and honesty, self-awareness, reflexivity, critical thinking etc. that have also been recognized essential by respondents in discussing coordinator's roles.

6.3.3. Reflections on the SSPF coordinators' professional qualification

As was discussed earlier, social services is the coordinating agency of the SSPF in Gothenburg, responsible for the overall performance of this information exchange platform. The respondents explained such a choice by arguing that social services are obliged by law to take care of young people that have some problems and in doing so legally have wider access to information and corresponding rights to intervention if there is a need for doing so. Therefore, it was self-evident that this specific agency should be in charge of the SSPF, they are *in the middle of everything* as one of the respondents emphasized. The current state of affairs posed a question as to whether coordinators should actually have professional education in social work or if the education does not really matter. Interestingly, the opinions of respondents varied largely. While most of the interviewed coordinators agreed that being a social worker is necessary, the majority of the team members found it either irrelevant or were not sure. The findings allowed to conclude that such diverse perceptions depend greatly on the respondents' understanding of the coordinator's role and the expectations with regards to his/her powers and areas of responsibility. As was mentioned in earlier sections of the chapter, there is a large variance in the working time that the coordinators are allowed to devote to SSPF, which affects the range of work they are able to complete and take the responsibility for. All coordinators who participated in the study were social workers by qualification. According to some of them, there are areas in Gothenburg where coordinators have different education and as they conclude, it affects the quality of SSPF.

> Not everyone in Gothenburg SSPF coordination are social workers and when they are not, we can see they have problems with this, because they don't really understand the social services (C2)

In providing supportive arguments for education in this area, coordinators were arguing that being a social worker allows to see a large picture of what is going on with the young person, what his/her problems, risks and protective factors are. Social workers are kind of all knowing, they conclude, because they studied a wide range of disciplines as part of the degree. Due to social worker profession, the respondents were arguing, coordinators have the ability to consider more perspectives and subsequently understand the roles of each and every team member. This eventually boosts the coordinators ability to facilitate SSPF team discussions more effectively.

> As a social worker, we know a little about a lot, about many things. A teacher knows a lot about teaching, the police knows a lot about delinquency, but a social worker knows little about many things. We have learned to see different perspectives in our education. So, I think it's important to be a social worker (C10)

Understanding complex issues, being aware of how to motivate young people change their behavior and being legally advanced were among the most common arguments for education in social work. Similarly, the respondents suggested that such qualification provides coordinators with the power to influence decisions in the group. The team members, on the contrary, were less affirmative. Mostly, they associated the need for education in social work with the ability of coordinators to get to know social services as the central agency in SSPF better. Qualification in social work and consequently relevant working experience with the social services were kind of tied together based on what the team members were saying.

> I don't know if it's important, but I think it's very necessary to know how social services work, what kind of interventions there are in the district (TM 5, social worker at the police)

Similarly, another respondent agreed that education in social work is not in the list of priority, but rather the ability to establish connections is more important. It has been argued that since the coordinators do not have the decisive role in SSPF, their organizational and networking skills are valued higher than education. Yet again, coordinators vary in terms of the time they have for SSPF and as a result, the responsibilities and tasks that they can accomplish within the SSPF collaboration vary throughout the districts.

> I don't think they have to be educated in that area. The most important is that they have the connections that the person knows we have this problem – who can I call to adjust or to… So, because in the role of the coordinator, he or she does not have any obligations to do as a police officer or a social worker. So, the education does not matter (TM 4, police officer)

> I think you could do a good job as a coordinator even if you are a policeman, but quite timewise… I think it would be a problem (TM 8, school principal)

Reflecting on the knowledge required to work in crime prevention, Sutton et al. (2008) accurately distinguished five dimensions of it: "know about", "know what works", "know how",

"know who" and "know why". Essentially this classification consolidates the findings of the current study related to the skills and knowledge respondents expected the SSPF coordinators to have. The author suggests that "know about" knowledge includes awareness on general crime trends and patterns in the local community, risks and protective factors and theories of crime. These are the expectations, respondents shared with regards to the coordinator's background. "Know what works" knowledge involves understanding particular methods in crime prevention specific for local communities together with those side effects it can lead to and resources required for its implementation. "Know how" knowledge implies the coordinator's skills in writing action plans and the implementation strategies, those responsibilities SSPF coordinators perform, as part of their duties. "Know who" knowledge refers to what the respondents in the current study identified as the networking skills, the ability of the coordinator to include relevant members and be able to keep in contact with other professionals who might be important for certain cases. Finally, "knowing why" knowledge brings us to the Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological system's theory, specifically the macrosystem – those cultural, political, symbolic, emotional and ethical dimensions that in some areas might hinder crime prevention initiatives and explain why certain parents do not want to support SSPF (Sutton et al., 2008). Essentially, proper qualification and work experience as the findings allowed to conclude allows SSPF coordinators to effectively perform their roles in keeping with the team members expectations.

The knowledge, skills and personal qualities that the respondents identified as critical for the SSPF coordinator, make him/her competent in facilitating platforming of the interagency collaborative capacity and in doing so contributing to juvenile crime prevention efforts in the community (Bardach, 1998).

6.4. STRENGTHS OF SSPF COLLABORATION

6.4.1. ABILITY TO OBSERVE A COMPREHENSIVE PICTURE

SSPF collaboration has been referred to as a platform whereby different agencies could contribute with their piece of information about the young person in this way building up a detailed composition of the situation that is happening with a certain kid and the environment around him/her, to get the *collective image of the youth*. It was conceptualized as an approach to avoid a one-side view of the problem that was especially stressed on by social workers employed at the police office.

> I think that collaboration that works really makes one plus one be three or more. Cause I think that if you have a group of people that meet the children in different circumstances and we put our knowledge together, we can really get bigger and better picture of understanding what the real problem is… Cause then we can both try to prevent this, but also strength them, the parts that actually work together (C4)

The SSPF team members have wide discretion of responsibilities, resources and potential for action. They meet the young person at different circumstances, different time of the day and

observe contrasting personality traits of the youths. Therefore, by putting this knowledge together professionals are able to trace the trends and identify the action points that require intervention. One of the police officers made an essential remark with regards to the need for sharing the information with each other.

> I am the only person working with these kids in the evenings and the nights. Social workers are not working, school is closed, it is only us and the kids out on the streets. So, it is important for all of the other people to get the information that I can supply, because they do not see how the kid behaves in the evenings. Because when he gets to the social workers, he has been in the shower, sleeping in the last twelve hours, he is always smiling, no problem. But if we can give another picture of what did he do last night, who he was together with, in what situation, he has nothing to say, you know, because I know (TM 1, police officer)

Another critical element in this discussion is the fact that this specific ability to see the comprehensive picture of the young person makes it easier for the team members to do their job, get together faster and start working with the case immediately by having each other's contacts. In this way, their contribution, which is unique in a way that no one else has the same responsibilities, makes their work worth more than if they were working on their own. Furthermore, insights from the literature suggest that collaboration enables professionals to avoid "reinventing the wheel" (Beatrice, 1991, p.50), which again helps to save time and resources.

Ability to get a comprehensive, all-inclusive picture is another dimension of the *intellectual capital* capacity that requires team members to elaborate a well-documented information on the young person, risks and factors presumably affecting his/her behavior (Bardach, 1998). Essentially, the ICC is created for the purpose of looking at social problems through the eyes of different professions and having wider selection of solutions (ibid). Having a comprehensive information, which is an effort of the entire SSPF team, enables the ICC to reach the next platforming capacity, the *implementation network* (Bardach 1998; 2001). In the case of SSPF, the implementation network involves those team members who were selected to be in charge of the case, which we can call the "case leaders". Therefore, as has been illustrated, there is a strong connection between each of the ICC capacities making them interdependent.

6.4.2. INTEGRATED APPROACH TO PREVENTION OF YOUTH CRIMES

Working in collaboration means being fast in discussing the case and making relevant decisions. This kind of working arrangement, as the empirical data demonstrated allows the team members to stay in touch and respond to certain issues faster, avoiding time-consuming procedures of referring the case from one agency to another.

> It's like a massive work together in a quite short time to see if we can progress
> (TM 9, field worker, resource team)

Based on the research findings, SSPF can be conceptualized within the "one-stop shop" principle whereby the young person, being in the innermost center of collaboration, is surrounded by

professionals that operate on diverse levels of his/her environment, and are in contact with the kid throughout the day. Furthermore, it is not only the child that is the target of collaboration, but also his/her family and the group of peers that the young person is in contact with. In this way, collaboration takes the complex and integrated character addressing the issues both on the individual and group levels.

> That is just as important for the SSPF as working with one child, is also working with the group and see, maybe we have one child that we are worried about. And we also need to see, what happens around that. Maybe there are more individuals that we need to work with, but maybe we don't have to make it a case (C4)

The interconnections between different settings in which the young person is an active participant brings SSPF to the area Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines as the mesosystem. As the young person grows, the number of settings he/she belongs to increases, just as the impact they make on the person's development (ibid.). Respondents in the current study noted that *the older you get, friends are more important than your parents*. Therefore, the knowledge professionals obtain through communications and the links they establish with those meaningful groups that often include older and "more experienced" delinquent youth enables the SSPF to pool the required resources and address the needs of the young person fast and in a comprehensive way.

6.5. OBSTACLES TO INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

Of the factors negatively affecting SSPF collaboration, respondents cited a number of obstacles grouped into six primary themes: information sharing and confidentiality; reorganization of the police structure; insufficient communication; power relations and status differences; attendance and participation in SSPF meetings, and finally, inadequate follow up of the cases and target group dispersion. Each of these themes is described in greater detail below.

6.5.1. INFORMATION SHARING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Access to information is recognized as a tool to sustain and enhance collaboration (Sheperdson et al., 2014). Bardach (1998) recognized that what prevents the ICC capacity from growing is the reluctance of professionals to share resources whereby information relevant to the management of particular cases is listed among the most critical. The findings revealed significant barriers in sharing relevant data between the agencies, which is closely linked with the issue of confidentiality. Working in SSPF collaboration requires prior written consent from the parents of a young person under concern. The consent form is that kind of document that gives professionals a "pass" to initiating SSPF, working around the young person and within his/her environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Petch (2008) argued that lack of the agreed protocol for sharing confidential information is often recognized as a barrier to progressing partnership working, limiting professionals in their ability to discuss young person, which the respondents associated with the feelings of *"tension"* and *"unbalance"* bounding their working capacities.

> There is maybe a tension if we don't have this document that make sure that we can talk. But I would like to change a word to unbalance… we can still work with the case, we still able to do, maybe, not as big difference, but we can still work with it (C5).

In discussing the issue of confidentiality, respondents pointed to the confrontation between social services and other SSPF agencies as a *big argument* in getting access to relevant information that the former organization has primary access to. Both the SSPF coordinators and team members emphasized that the social service's reluctance to share the information with the colleagues in collaboration, created the feelings of *frustration*, *irritation*, and *annoyance* in the group, the terms in which respondents described their feelings about this issue.

> If you say that we are gonna collaborate and someone is not telling you everything that they know, it's gonna make people be irritated about that (C9)

Special concerns in this regard have been shared by one of the police officers who emphasized that as the police, they are obliged by law to report to social services cases concerning young people whereas the social services do not have this kind of obligation to report them back and in this way, mutual interaction is broken down. Other respondents shared the feeling of exclusion by saying that as the SSPF members, they put information into the table, but do not get anything back, which makes them feel frustrated. Interestingly, however, reluctance to share information has been associated with the human factor whereby it was suggested that it depends on social workers and how they interpret the law. Yet, the social services themselves were quite persistent in claiming that the rules of confidentiality are clearly stipulated in the Swedish legislation and have to be respected despite feelings of frustration in the group.

> You have to understand – that's the confidentiality and that is a Swedish law and you can't stand above the law (TM 10, social worker, social services)

With this in mind and considering the SSPF team's inability to change the way social services treat confidential information, coordinators emphasized the need to discover creative ways of working together under existing circumstances. Specifically, it has been shared that social services can be consulting, advising and more open to collaboration.

6.5.2. Reorganization of the police structure

Another major obstacle to collaboration has been the reorganization of Swedish police that is currently going on in the entire country. Specifically, as the respondents shared, prior to reorganization there has been a special police unit responsible primarily for young population, whereby police officers used to monitor the situation in local communities, do the field work and establish trusting relations with the youth in Gothenburg's neighborhoods. With the reorganization, such units are dissolved, police officers who used to meet the youth and do preventative work are no longer there, and instead the police will only be reacting to crimes that have already happened, doing the investigations daytime inside of the office.

> No one is outside anymore working with the youth in the field. So, we don't have the personal connection anymore. So that's a problem, and that's something that I have addressed… I think it's wrong, but I can't change the structure of police organization (TM 4, police officer)

In discussing the character of interrelations between the young person and his/her ecological environment, Bronfenbrenner (1979) introduced the concept of affective relations, that type of interaction whereby more pronounced feelings are developed between the young person and others, trusting relations as the respondents referred to it. Yet, the shifts in the police officers' responsibilities have been recognized as discouraging to establishment of positive connections with young people.

Majority of respondents agreed that such reorganization would complicate the process of collaboration and described this process as *unfortunate*. Being a part of the *implementation network* in platforming the ICC, resignation of police puts at stake sustainability of the entire SSPF structure (Bardach, 1998, 2001).

> […] The problem is that you need to have the police on the outside to be a good part of the meeting, because if I don't have the information what has happened outside, and I can't talk about the children that the police in the meeting address, what do I do then? I don't think the police is doing what they should to contribute, to make SSPF the best as it should be… (TM 4, police officer)

Unlike the respondents' pessimistic tunes, some coordinators were more positive discussing police reorganization, yet recognizing that for a while it could get worse. As such, it has been noted that suddenly, you have a lot of policemen that can bring their knowledge and it can be better than before.

However, respondents were afraid that due to modified responsibilities the police officers are going to have, they will not have enough time to address the issues of juvenile criminality in the framework of the SSPF collaboration. Even though, as one of the coordinators shared, the police will try to keep working with the youth, if anything else happens, they will have to prioritize that. As the respondents shared, in the context of the general population's distrust to authorities, police and the social services in particular, inadequate number of professionals establishing trusting relations with the young people and their parents, it is quite challenging to achieve goals set for the SSPF.

> That is one problem in this area that the officials, the professionals are far from the kids on the street. And they don't trust us. Parents, the people living here are kind of distrusting to authorities (C9)

Addressing the mesosystem of human development, Bronfenbrenner, (1979) used the concept *interrelations* between two or more settings. Essentially, among the four types of interrelations identified by the author, multisetting participation and intersetting communication are those most relevant in the current discussion (ibid.). Constructive communication between the youth and the SSPF professionals, participation of the young people in activities within SSPF are

those elements of the child's environment affecting his/her development. Lack of personal contact with the youth, mistrust and fear from the local population as well as other consequences that police reorganization can bring to SSPF structure endangers the professionals' ability to address juvenile criminality in the area properly.

6.5.3. INSUFFICIENT COMMUNICATION

Communication, as argued by Henneman, Lee and Cohen (1995, p.106), "[…] serves as the vehicle for articulating other important precursors to collaboration, such as respect, sharing and trust", those pillars of collaboration described in the earlier sections of the chapter. Prior research suggests that lack of understanding regarding the other partner's specific roles and capabilities is a general problem in collaboration and until the lines of communication are established and respected, collaboration would suffer (Unnithan & Johnston, 2012). Essentially, lack of understanding inside a single agency is another obstacle to collaboration. Respondents shared that in some of the SSPF teams the working group is comprised of *administrators* who have *people under them*.

> Sometimes those people under them don't understand their part or their role. Or they find it difficult to understand what they have to do (C10)

Respondents associated the lack of proper communication in collaboration with significant threats to the SSPF's sustainability. Specifically, communication was conceptualized in terms of clarifying one another's expectations and seeking to establish a common ground through conversation. Social services emphasized that due to the overestimated expectations SSPF members have about their contribution, there is that reported frustration concerning the belief that social services are not addressing the cases of troublesome youth in a way they are expected by the partners in collaboration. The current state of affairs, perhaps, can be explained by lack of proper communication within the group, and essentially between the social services and other professionals. Such confrontation of organizational cultures was described by Hughes & Rowe (2007) as the *clash of cultures* phenomenon. The author suggests that the pressures on each agency to fulfil their direct responsibilities and at the same time contribute to collaboration may lead to their priorities *clash* with the demands of professionals in collaboration that in the end leads to conflicts (ibid.)

> One thing that is very important in cooperation is that maybe I expect you to do things, but I don't tell you to do that, I don't tell you what my expectations are. And if we don't talk about this, then cooperation is very difficult. So, you have to speak about your expectations. A good communication is very important (C6)

It has also been recognized that trying to work with so many different backgrounds and understanding different things can sometimes cause conflicts in the group due to miscommunication, misunderstanding and diverse meanings professionals put into the concepts they discuss. For instance, one of the coordinators shared that often police *want things to happen fast* not understanding why it takes so long. They see a difference between the police *way of thinking* and the other professionals'. Essentially, collaboration requires sharing knowledge,

values, responsibilities, outcomes and visions, those components acquired through conversation (Henneman et al., 1995). Crawford (2012) recognized that ignorance of importance of understanding each other's roles, responsibilities, values and knowledge base can have significant impact on communication within the group and ultimately, negatively affect collaboration. Coordinators reported a worry in that it is more difficult to get SSPF work effectively when there are different opinions in the group and reluctance from the team members to get along together.

> One group works good and they all getting along and the other group, they are not getting along and they do not understand each other, and it is due to history, different cultures and different areas (C9)

Therefore, insufficient communication between the SSPF team members have been rated among the most evident and critical obstacles to collaboration. This as well has been recognized by Bardach (1998) as an essential problem in platforming the interagency collaborative capacity where the *communication network* is identified as one of the fundamental platforming capacities. Lack of it ruins the entire collaboration.

6.5.4. Attendance and participation in SSPF meetings

The primary purpose of SSPF is to get professionals from different agencies to work together for the common goal. Yet, despite recognized relevance of such working arrangements, respondents reported frequent problems in actually prioritizing SSPF and having enough time to work in collaboration alongside fulfilling direct responsibilities. The highest concern has been shared by social services. In particular, it was mentioned that social workers at the social services have a high workload managing up to 25-30 cases simultaneously. At the same time, they deal with such issues as physical/sexual abuse, maltreatment where there is a threat to the child's life, cases that are prioritized. Busy schedules and inability to put focus on SSPF leads social services to not being able to either attend the meetings or address the SSPF cases properly.

> So as long as we have the organization where we have all the social problems together, like every social worker is working with everything from criminality, to drug abuse, to kids who are assaulted by their parents, well, then they [SSPF cases] are prioritized down all the time (TM 10, social worker, social services)

For this very reason, social services suggested that it makes sense to create a separate unit within the agency responsible solely for handling the cases of children and youth with delinquent behavior. In this way, social workers would be able to invest enough time and professional attention into SSPF. It is important to mention here that one fifth of the Swedish municipalities, as suggested by Bergmark and Lundström (2007) within the child welfare services organizational structure have sub-units dealing with social problems among adolescents (drug abuse or criminality).

The same situation has been shared by one of the coordinators with regards to the school's participation in the SSPF meetings. While, as was mentioned, professionals have good intentions and desire to work in collaboration, the fact that they are full with their own work makes it hard to prioritize SSPF cases. Such situation leads to the team members coming unprepared and not

able to talk at the meetings, which brings into question relevance of collaboration by itself. Prior research suggests that collaboration cannot exist if the professionals do not attend and participate in the meetings (Unnithan and Johnston, 2012). Sheperdson et al., (2014, p.110) refers to it as to the "administrative burden of supporting and attending interagency forums".

> Not everyone is as active as they could or should, but I think it varies from area to area (C9)

Another issue related to attendance and participation is staff turnover. Building working relations and establishing interpersonal trust between professionals requires time, highly demanded resource. Essentially, trusting and knowledgeable partners were cited as critical elements to development of interagency collaborative capacity whereas stuff turnover is listed among the worst problems for the ICC (Bardach, 1998, 2001). Professionals, the author argues, are the key elements contributing to success of ICC, therefore once they change, the ICC, and particularly, in the current context SSPF's sustainability is questioned (ibid.). Respondents reported that often when a new team member comes, it slows down the speed of collaboration due to the need for clarifications and getting to know each other. However, it is not the case for all of the districts though.

> Maybe [new team members] don't know the area, don't know the kids and we have to start all over again, so it's getting an inconsistency. You need this to be a normal, not something that you need to teach everyone, convincing everyone again that this is a good thing, that it is a source of collaboration and is normal as everything else that you do every day (C9)

From this perspective respondents shared the need for SSPF to be *dependent on function, not person* meaning that as Bardach (1998) referred to ICC – create a "virtual organization" with its own working arrangements and structure whereby professionals belong to it regardless of their professional affiliation.

6.5.5. Power relations and status differences

The issue of unequal power relations has also been shared as one of the obstacles to collaboration. Specifically, it has been discussed that differences in statuses between coordinators and team members, who occupied more powerful positions of local managers, and administrators being *bosses* as some coordinators said, complicated team meetings.

> It's quite overarching…. Most of them are at the same level [team members]. We are down and they are… We are the lowest and then most of them are bosses (C6)

In particular, Henneman et al., (1995) argued that collaboration requires flat rather than hierarchical organizational structure where participants, team members and coordinators are equal in their right and power to make decisions. Yet, as the research findings allowed to conclude, in some SSPF teams the issue of power makes collaboration more difficult, especially when it concerns interrelationships between coordinators who are there to facilitate discussions, and team members reluctant to accept their roles. Particular worries have also been expressed

with regards to the role of social services that is the coordinating agency of SSPF in a way consolidating power for the case's progress and critical decisions regarding the young person. On the one hand, SSPF promotes equal share of responsibilities and power among the team members. On the other, as was found out, social services stand above all the other agencies in a way that they have the power to make decisions with regards to certain children, wider access to information and consequently stricter confidentiality rules that make them restricted in the ability to discuss the details of the case processing with other partners in collaboration. The research evidence suggests that competing power relations and varied levels of trust among the team members are often among the most frequent causes of tension in the teams (Harris & Allen, 2011). Their inability to contribute enough time and consequently resources to SSPF leads to the feelings of frustration among other team members with the lack of proper information sharing. In doing so, social services put other partners in a position of dependency on social workers holding confidential information. Consolidation of power residing in the hands of one agency was recognized by Unnithan & Johnston (2012) as one of the obstacles to functionality of collaboration. Yet, even though social services recognized that such arrangement is not beneficial for SSPF, the current workload does not allow them to fully contribute to SSPF.

> I can understand that they are frustrated and I am too, but we can't do anything about this. We have to prioritize and as long as we have this much to do, we won't be able to prioritize that. That's the fact (TM 10, social worker, social services)

6.5.6. INADEQUATE FOLLOW UP OF THE CASES AND TARGET GROUP DISPERSION

Finally, some of the respondents identified inadequate follow up of the cases SSPF was working with as a significant problem in collaboration. This, in line with the Craftsmanship theory, poses a threat to the SSPF's sustainability. The ICC, as argued by Bardach (2001), has the capacity for self-improvement by monitoring its performance, which the author defines as *continuous learning.* Lack of it, the upmost platforming capacity, endangers the entire structure.

In some cases, it was explained by the consent form that is restricted to a certain amount of time it is valid for. Because of that if professionals decide to find out what is going on with the young person and see if a positive change happened over the course of time, the consent form from the parents has to be requested again. In other cases, as one of the respondents explained, *it just falls out in the sand*. Essentially, most of the respondents agreed that follow up is important, as it is a kind of evaluation of the SSPF's achievements and drawbacks. Yet, the bureaucratic component of it restricts the professionals' capacities. However, due to tied cooperation and good professional relations between the agencies, often evaluation takes the form of an unofficial follow up.

> Because of the close collaboration here, we have those children under our wings anyway, so it becomes a non-official follow up, you can say (C10)

In one of the city districts, the SSPF coordinator shared a worry about not being able to work effectively together due to a large number of children and young people in the area they are

responsible for. Because of that, professionals come unprepared to the meetings, not aware of the cases discussed.

> We have so many schools and we have children from all of the city, and also from other municipalities… So, that makes it hard, because we are so many… And the biggest problem, I think, is that when someone talks about the group or individual, no one else in collaboration knows about them… Quite often we just share the information… but we have a hard time actually getting to really working together (C4)

A similar problem used to exist in another district, however the coordinators together with the key agencies found a solution by creating six local SSPF teams in this way targeting larger population and making the interventions more individual.

These were the major obstacles respondents identified with regards to the SSPF collaboration. Some of the coordinators also mentioned the lack of financial resources as a barrier to implementing certain activities in the framework of collaboration, however it was not the case for other SSPF teams. Interestingly, while the obstacles described in the current section sound as significant barriers to collaboration, respondents were positive in saying that as time goes and the SSPF experience is accumulated, these obstacles gradually disappear. Even the police reorganization has been cited as temporary, because Swedish police, as the respondents emphasized is in constant mode of reorganization.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to explore the perceptions of diverse professionals on collaboration, specifically within the Swedish SSPF information exchange platform aimed at juvenile crime prevention in the city of Gothenburg. In discussing the findings, the researcher attempted to illustrate them through a combination of the Ecological system's theory and the Craftsmanship theory of interagency collaboration (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bardach, 1998). Clearly, Bardach's ICC platforming model served as a strong base for analyzing SSPF that in a way was a practice-based example with its strengths and pitfalls. With the ICC model in mind, the researcher concludes that SSPF has not yet developed all of the capacities introduced by Bardach (1998) in his theory. Yet, SSPF is in a constant mode of development, learning and self-reflection that at some point will contribute to its organizational arrangements and overall improved efficiency.

Essentially, the research findings allowed to conclude that collaboration was conceptualized by professionals as an effective approach featuring trust, mutual understanding of the roles and responsibilities, communication and continuous information sharing as the pillars of collaboration. Yet, despite general encouragement of collaboration and desire to work together, current working arrangements, time commitments and the bureaucratic procedures in some of the areas did not allow SSPF to be as efficient as it was supposed to be. Collaboration is often featured as a smart practice in many areas, such as, for instance, health care, education, child protection and, as illustrated above, crime prevention. However, the wide range of obstacles identified in the current study demonstrated that working in collaboration is hard, requires particular dedication and time commitments that many actors in the field are not able to contribute for the time being.

The dominating perceptions of collaboration among professionals related to the comprehensive character and integrated approach SSPF has. In particular, collaboration was recognized as a platform for information exchange between partners, collective decision-making, and early identification of youth at risk, which is consistent with previous research in the area. However, on practice the study revealed major obstacles to collaboration contradicting with the respondents' shared perceptions. In fact, the study made it possible to conclude that those perceptions of collaboration shared by respondents in some of the areas in a way represented their requests for what SSPF lacks. This was especially evident in discussing the mutual intelligibility. On the one hand clarification of roles and expectations, common understanding were cited as the critical elements of collaboration in general, and SSPF in particular. From the other perspective, this exact lack of proper clarification of one another's roles in collaboration and insufficient communication in some of the areas were identified among the significant barriers. Similarly, trust and professional relationship on the one side of the scale and police reorganization together with frequent stuff turnover on the other side in a way illustrated the complicated period that professionals are currently facing trying to establish and keep those relations and trust in a highly dynamic environment. The greatest worries penetrating the entire SSPF collaboration in each of the areas included in the study related to the social services' confidentiality rules that generated overall feelings of frustration, irritation, tension, annoyance and unbalance in the group. While

information sharing was recognized as one of those pillars of collaboration, on practice it was not as smooth and barrier-free as expected. In fact, this entire discussion moves us to wider context, macro-level where the government's legislation steers the course of collaboration, which quite often (as in the case with police reorganization as well) makes it complicated.

While each agency recognized the importance of working in collaboration and the value of their specific contribution, varying priorities, time commitments, and workload of some of them in fact made SSPF more complicated. Nonetheless, in those areas where professionals were able to prioritize juvenile crime prevention in their schedules, had a long-lasting joint teamwork experience, trusting relations in a team, and with the youth, SSPF as a collaborative practice was highly appraised both by coordinators and the team members.

The prominent role in SSPF as the study revealed, is assigned to coordinators, those professionals making collaboration happen. SSPF rests a heavy responsibility on coordinators that at one point puts a high pressure on them, while at another point sets high expectations from the team members as to what coordinators should do. Related to this, the study revealed varying requirements with regards to the coordinators' personal qualities, skills, knowledge and professional qualification, which the author believes, owes greatly to the image of a team leader each partner in collaboration has.

While the current study focused mainly on experiences of professionals engaged in crime prevention activities, there also another perspective exists – of the families whose children are the focus of current collaboration. Arguably, Swedish social services is a powerful agent in the field that at some times might be quite intrusive into the family environment of a young person. Similarly, other members of SSPF collaboration also have exclusive access to information that, as reported, is used in the best interests of the child, another two-fold construct. It is also understandable why parents are often distrusting to authorities trying to protect the family's right to integrity. For this very reason, professionals have to find a balance between the need for intervention on the one hand and protection of their client's rights to integrity on the other, carefully estimating possibilities and constrains, parents' and essentially, the young person's perspectives. In view of the current discussion, there is a growing need in exploring the attitudes of young people and their parents on juvenile crime prevention, specifically in the framework of the SSPF information exchange platform. Such a study may bring alternative point of view that will certainly benefit the practices of professionals working in collaboration.

Considering the explored findings, in particular obstacles to SSPF collaboration, some recommendations for practice are suggested further. First, there is a need to establish a better dialogue between the social services and other partners in collaboration to address the miscommunication gap, clarify roles and expectations of one another. In this respect, social services as the SSPF coordinating agency need to clarify their confidentiality principles to the partners in collaboration, even if they are available in open access in Swedish legislation. Constructive dialog will enable the agencies to avoid later frustration associated with the social service's reluctance to share information, as they will already be aware of the legal boundaries that the social services are constrained by. At the same time, better communication with and awareness raising among young people and their families on what SSPF is, what its legal

framework and the levels of responsibility are could be a step forward in improving the authorities' relations with the population. Second, following the discussion with the social services, SSPF city coordinators in cooperation with local municipalities should investigate the opportunity to organize a separate unit within the social services responsible for delinquent youth. This will enable social workers to make juvenile crime prevention a priority in their schedule. Third, as police reorganization has been cited among the most critical obstacles to collaboration, it makes sense to organize a meeting with administration of the local police offices to discuss the importance of their outreach work and in particular establishment of continuous trusting relations with the youth for the overall juvenile crime prevention success. Finally, it is crucial to develop the SSPF monitoring and evaluation framework so as to identify and document evidence-based best practices as well as areas for improvement.

Due to a limited amount of time for this study and the researcher's language barrier, it was not possible to participate in the SSPF working group meetings, which could provide different overview of the relationships and dynamics within the group. Similarly, it could have been beneficial to arrange a case study of a single SSPF team to see how they handle the cases and how the interagency collaborative capacity grows in a given context (Bardach, 1998). Considering discovered obstacles to collaboration, there is a need for further research on the role of social services in collaboration with specific focus on mutual information sharing systems, confidentiality principles and power relations. Essentially, it is critical to explore how social services balance their role as the coordinating agency in SSPF with an inability to prioritize cases of juvenile delinquent youth in their schedule. In the light of this and understanding that SSPF operates in a wider environment and is influenced by a variety of factors, such as, for instance, local municipality's policy and nation-wide legislation, further in-depth research on SSPF from the macro-level perspective is required.

Coming from Ukraine, I found the experience of collaboration between various actors in the field of crime prevention among juveniles in Gothenburg quite insightful. Understanding that Sweden and Ukraine are different in many instances, especially when it concerns child welfare policies and practices, an equivalent of the SSPF model might work as a solution for the problem of juvenile criminality in Ukraine. Similar to Sweden, Ukrainian public agencies work in cooperation with each other, yet I believe there is a demand for better-organized collaboration in local communities by those actors in the field that are in contact with the youth, which is different from intragovernmental cooperation. Nonetheless, there is a need for further research on collaboration in juvenile crime prevention in Ukraine to explore how SSPF can best be adapted and fit into the local Ukrainian context.

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APPENDIX 1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE SSPF TEAM

Topic: "Getting the agencies together": a qualitative study of the professionals' perceptions of collaboration in prevention of juvenile criminality

Dear respondent,
Thank you for participating in this research. Your contribution is especially important because otherwise it would not be possible to describe the process of the SSPF inter-agency collaboration fully from all the angles. I would like to remind you that you may withdraw from the interview any time you wish. You may also skip answering certain questions if you find them inappropriate. With your permission, I will record the interview as it facilitates the process of data analysis. All the data collected at the interview is confidential and will be used exclusively for this research. I will also be happy to share with you the final results of the study once the research is completed.

1. Could you please introduce yourself your role in the SSPF collaboration? What is your qualification? How long have you been working in the SSPF?

Understanding interagency collaboration

2. What does the collaboration mean to you?
    - What do you expect from collaboration?
    - What, on your opinion, is the most important in collaboration?
    - How/ in what way SSPF collaboration affects your working methods? Can you give an example?
3. How do you personally ensure that there is a good collaboration between the agencies?

The role of coordinators

4. What qualities and skills, on your opinion should the coordinator possess?
    - Is education a part of it? If so, in what field?
5. How would you describe advantages and the drawbacks of coordination in the SSPF team you belong to?
    - Is there anything you would like to improve?

Strengths and weaknesses of SSPF

6. What, on your opinion and from your experience facilitates collaboration process? In what way?
7. What particular obstacles to collaboration did you come across in your SSPF work experience?
    - Can you give an example from your practice?
    - How do you deal with those obstacles?

8. Are there any weaknesses of the SSPF collaboration approach to prevention of juvenile delinquency from your experience?
9. Hypothetically, if you had a chance to make a structural change in the SSPF, what would it be and how would you change it?

APPENDIX 2: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT

The following is presentation of how I will use the data collected in the interview.

In order to ensure that projects meet the ethical requirements for good research I promise to adhere to the following principles:

- Interviewees in the project will be given information about the purpose of the project
- Interviewees have the right to decide whether they will participate in the project, even after the interview has been concluded.
- The collected data will be handled confidentially and will be kept in such a way that no unauthorized person can view or access it.

The interview will be recorded as it makes it easier for me to document what is said during the interview and also helps me in the continuing work with the project. In my analysis, some data may be changed so that no interviewee will be recognized. After finishing the project, the data will be destroyed. The data I collect will only be used in the project.

You have the right to decline answering any questions, or terminate the interview without giving an explanation.

You are welcome to contact me or my supervisor in case you have any questions (email addresses provided below)

Student name & e-mail

Olena Zhuchyna
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Supervisor name & e-mail

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lena.andersson@socwork.gu.se

Interviewee