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## Epilogue: The Barnahus Model: Potentials and Challenges in the Nordic Context and Beyond

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### Introduction

The Barnahus model was introduced in the Nordic countries as a response to a growing recognition of the need for more integrated and child-centred services for children exposed to violence and sexual abuse. It has been

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recognised as the most important reform related to child victimisation in the Nordic region (Johansson 2012). Evaluation studies (Åström and Rejmer 2008; Swedish National Police Agency 2008; Gudjonsson et al. 2009; Kaldal et al. 2010; Bakketeig et al. 2012; Stefansen et al. 2012; Landberg and Svedin 2013) have concluded that the Barnahus model in many respects represents a promising development towards meeting victimised children's needs and legal rights. The chapters in this book confirm that the Barnahus model is a step in the right direction, but also highlight the need for critical analysis of its potentials and challenges. Questions that arise from the book include: Under what conditions can the Barnahus model achieve its ideal potential of providing both child-friendly support and justice to victimised children? Are there developments in how Barnahus works, and the roles Barnahus are given, that challenge the key ideas behind the model and its potential benefits for children? Are there limits to what societies can achieve in these respects through the Barnahus measure, in its current form?

In our opinion, these are important questions to address in the Nordic countries, where the Barnahus model has become a permanent part of the welfare state, as well as beyond the Nordic context, given that the Barnahus model has been widely promoted outside the Nordic countries. In 2002, for instance, the Barnahus model was identified as “best practice” in a comparative study of nine European countries in the Save the Children publication: “Child Abuse and Adult Justice” (Diesen 2002), and in 2006, the Icelandic Barnahus received the “Multidisciplinary Award” from the International Society for Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN). This is of course an indication of the model's success; however, there is also the risk of overlooking critical issues, limitations and potentials for improvement in the celebration and promotion of the model. As this volume has shown, the Barnahus model differs quite significantly among the Nordic countries. The model has also been the subject of evaluation and research to very different extents, and many outcomes and effects of the Barnahus practice are therefore yet unknown. Country-specific implementation and institutionalisation processes mean that it is possible to identify a variety of potentials and challenges, which this chapter discusses in the light of the book contributions.

## The Role of the Institutional Landscape

A key perspective in this book, as outlined in the introduction, is that the Barnahus model will take on different forms when introduced in different institutional contexts. Following on from this perspective, we have highlighted how the Barnahus model's success in terms of its rapid diffusion and status as a model for collaborative approaches to child victims of abuse is linked to key and common characteristics of both the justice and welfare systems of the Nordic countries. Importantly, all the Nordic countries have a zero legal tolerance for child abuse, which includes acts that may be considered acceptable methods of disciplining children in other countries. Welfare systems in the Nordic countries also have in common a well-developed child welfare system characterised by a family service orientation (e.g. early prevention, voluntary measures, broad target group) and measures to protect children at risk, such as mandatory reporting systems (see Gilbert et al. 2011 and Chap. 1).

In the Nordic countries, the Barnahus model was thus introduced and moulded to fit into a particular institutional landscape relating to child welfare and criminal justice systems as well as already existing local welfare services. How the institutional landscape of the Nordic countries may further the potentials of the Barnahus model in terms of meeting children's needs and rights is an important issue for further research. It should be noted, however, that there are reasons to claim that there is a link between the effects of the Barnahus model and this particular institutional landscape. In the Nordic contexts, Barnahus operates within a landscape of broader welfare measures related to, for instance, childcare and education, social security and health services. These services and the potential for broader interventions for victimised children add to what is specifically offered at the Barnahus. The institutional premises for Barnahus are in this sense better than might be the case in several contexts outside the Nordic welfare states. It is important for agents promoting the Barnahus model as *the* instrument for dealing with the complex issue of child abuse to recognise this. The key message for countries discussing whether the Barnahus model, or similar collaborative multi-professional approaches, should be implemented is that

the model's potential cannot be understood separately from the institutional landscape in which it is implemented.

## The Diffusion of the Barnahus Idea, Modes of Governance and Implementation

Institutional theory offers important concepts for understanding diffusion and implementation processes. Røvik (2016), for instance, differentiates between *copying*, *modifying* and *radical* forms of translations between “source models” and “outcome models”. What we have seen in the Nordic region may be interpreted as modifying processes that, as we will discuss further below, are still very much “in the making”. Iceland adapted the US Children’s Advocacy Centre model to fit the Icelandic justice and welfare system, while Sweden and Norway adapted the Icelandic model to their respective systems. Denmark drew on experiences from all the models. In Finland, in contrast, the Barnahus pilot project partly draws on existing specialised forensic psychology units at university hospitals, as described by Korkman and co-authors in this book (Chap. 7), and partly on the other Nordic Barnahus models.

As shown in Chap. 1, the Barnahus model “landed” quite differently among the Nordic countries. The implementation of Barnahus also followed partly different paths, where the varied role of state governance is especially worth addressing. In all the Nordic countries, the implementation of the Barnahus model, to larger or lesser extent, followed from an analysis of the institutional landscape. In Norway, for instance, a governmental committee described and discussed three different models for Barnahus and concluded that only one of the models fitted the core idea of Barnahus as offering integrated services under one roof (Norwegian Ministry of Justice and the Police 2006). This and other national reports were based on ad hoc criteria for evaluating the existing system and the possible improvements that would follow from implementing the Barnahus. In Sweden, a Barnahus pilot was commissioned at six locations by the government, with minimum criteria for the target group and involved agencies, but stressing that more detailed organisation, localisation and financing was to be solved locally and within each agency’s existing budget (Swedish Ministry of Justice 2005). The

commission also initiated a cooperative group of central governmental agency representatives to follow the pilot and to stimulate the diffusion of collaborative arrangements like Barnahus in Sweden. This resulted in the establishment of around 30 Barnahus at different times and places, through varied initiatives. Great variation developed between different local Barnahus. The differences are partly linked to the local institutional landscape and specific local needs, pre-existing collaborative arrangements and available resources, and partly linked to the main interests of varied local promoters (e.g. local Save the Children organisations, politicians, agencies, professionals).

The relatively vague state governance in Sweden subsequently allowed for agents outside the government to influence the development of the Barnahus model. At both national and local levels, Save the Children Sweden has been a promoter and driving force for the establishment, diffusion and steering of Barnahus. The organisation has, for example, organised a national network for professionals involved in the Barnahus work, issued criteria for the content of a Barnahus (Save the Children Sweden 2009), conducted a quality assurance study and developed a manual of quality assurance of Swedish Barnahus (Landberg and Svedin 2013). This manual drew on international law (CRC), national guidelines, standards from the US National Children's Alliance, Save the Children Sweden's Barnahus criteria as well as guidelines on child-friendly justice from the Council of Europe, what could be interpreted as a mix of international, national and transnational regulations (cf. Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson 2006; Cotterell 2012; Johansson 2016).

In Denmark, in contrast, the simultaneous start of five mandatory Barnahus followed from a large national law reform ("the abuse package"), as described in Chaps. 1 and 14 of this book. The law reform also included changes in social welfare legislation as well as the enforcement of a specific Barnahus regulation. The reform was in turn based on a ministerial commission that included the investigation of a number of individual cases in order to analyse how serious system failure could be prevented, which resulted in an expert panel report with recommendations to the Danish government on how to combat child abuse (see appendix).

The role of the state as well as other non-governmental actors has thus taken quite different paths within the Nordic region in the

implementation process of the Barnahus model. This calls for further attention to be paid to the implications of different steering mechanisms and forms of regulation, which includes the role of both legal changes and soft regulations (such as guidelines, standards, manuals) for the ongoing translation and implementation process of the Barnahus model in both national and local contexts.

In this book, two chapters in particular offer insights into how and why institutional analysis should be carried out to provide a good framework for the implementation and follow-up of the Barnahus model. Friðriksdóttir and Haugen's chapter (Chap. 9) presents and discusses a method to assess the extent to which the justice system and the complex system of services and professional practises are set up in accordance with the principles of child-friendly justice. Bredal and Stefansen (Chap. 15), using the "Barnahus for adults" pilot project as their point of reference, highlight the importance of analysing not only the landscape of services at the national level, but also the landscape of (partly overlapping) local services in order to prevent professional conflicts and competition.

## Professional Tensions

### The Balancing Act of Competing Institutional Logics

The Barnahus model is not only introduced into an institutional landscape; this landscape is also in a sense institutionalised in the Barnahus model, as described, for instance, by Johansson in this book (Chap. 12). The Barnahus idea, as discussed in Chap. 1, revolves around a notion of the Barnahus as a safe and child-friendly place for disclosure but also as a neutral space for professional interventions. Neutral here refers to the idea of Barnahus as a mechanism for balancing the different institutional logics that the Barnahus model comprises: the criminal law-oriented logic on the one hand and the treatment-oriented logic on the other hand (Johansson 2011a, b). As several chapters in the book suggest, this should be understood as an idea and not an in-built feature of the Barnahus model in practice. The "power" of the

different institutional logics within Barnahus is, as the chapters of both Johansson (Chap. 12) and Bakketeig (Chap. 13) show, partly related to the design of the model and to professional and collaborative negotiations and routines that evolve over time. Bakketeig also points to the role of external factors in shifting the power balance between different logics. In Norway, the rapid increase in the number of abuse cases and the new law on mandatory use of Barnahus when conducting child investigative interviews have led to serious overload problems in the Barnahus and a corresponding worry that this may lead the staff to prioritise the coordination tasks related to the investigative interview over providing treatment and support. Bakketeig argues that this is caused in part by the organisation of the Barnahus as a service within the police. As police employees, the Barnahus staff within the Norwegian model (social workers, psychologists) are obliged to work towards the goals of the police in terms of executing child investigative interviews according to the time limit set in the law.

In order to identify and protect children at risk, the need to collaborate and coordinate professional competences and resources when handling cases of suspected child abuse is often stressed (see, e.g. Steinkopf et al. 2006; Anning et al. 2010; Stanley and Humphreys 2015; Parton 2014). This book also shows the importance of critical analysis of how the collaborative work takes form. Since the Barnahus collaboration implies professional tensions and the balancing of competing institutional logics, an important research agenda concerns comparative analysis of power dimensions and professional identities in the Barnahus collaboration. Such analysis will further the knowledge and potential of collaborative multi-professional work against child abuse.

## **The Relationship Between Barnahus and Local Child Welfare Services**

The Danish chapter in the book, written by Søbberg (Chap. 14), describes a form of professional tension that to date has been less acknowledged compared to the tension between the criminal

law-oriented logic and the treatment-oriented logic. Søbberg focuses on tensions that in her interpretation result from two competing notions of holism. The Barnahus model represents a holistic perspective in the effort to integrate specialised professional services for victimised children through collaboration. Social work, in contrast, and as carried out by the local child welfare services in Denmark, departs from a perspective of holism that emphasises the child's welfare in broad terms that is also related to issues in the family other than violence or abuse, such as parental drug and alcohol problems, or poverty. As Barnahus both centralises services for victimised children and primarily deals with the abuse the child may have suffered, local child welfare workers in Denmark worry that their holistic approach will become more difficult to carry out and legitimise.

As discussed in Chap. 1, the Nordic Barnahus models show great variation in terms of the integration, involvement and role of local child welfare services in relation to the Barnahus service. In Norway, for example, the local child welfare services are not formally a part of Barnahus collaboration, while in Denmark the local child welfare services are the key responsible agency throughout the whole Barnahus process. These variations address the importance of further researching the potentials and challenges these differences represent, not least concerning the performance and outcomes of the child welfare investigations and the participation of children and families in such processes (cf. Willumsen and Skivenes 2005).

## **Dilemmas in Reaching Children's Rights by Child-Friendly Justice**

A common feature in Nordic child law is the growing emphasis on children as holders of individual rights. The formation, ratification, transformation and in some cases incorporation of the CRC is one explanation and has contributed to a new way of looking at children. One element of children's rights highlighted in international law is the right of access to justice. This can be seen as an outflow of art. 12, the



right to participation (CRC/GC/12, Council of Europe 2010), but also as a fundamental right that follows from being a right holder when fundamental rights have been violated (CRC/GC/12 and CRC/GC/2). According to the CRC, a fundamental right of any child is protection from sexual, physical and psychological abuse (e.g. art. 6, 19 and 34), which makes access to justice in cases of abuse crucial from a child rights perspective.

An important question is to what extent the Barnahus model helps to realise children's rights. As discussed by Friðriksdóttir and Haugen (Chap. 9), the aim of Barnahus is safeguarding several aspects of children's rights, and this is a challenging task. This is illustrated in the chapter written by Kaldal et al. (Chap. 10), which discusses the child's right to information in Barnahus in the light of the CRC art. 12 on the child's right to participation. According to the CRC, participation is a right, not a duty, and therefore, the child has a right to information in order to make an informed decision according to the best interests of the child.

In the Nordic countries, children's right to access to justice has been considered in legislative work for the past decades. The discussion has, for example, led to legislation where children, through independent representation, have been given rights to act autonomously in relation to a custodian in legal proceedings. This legislation can be found in areas where there is a potential conflict of interest between the child and the custodian, such as in child welfare cases and criminal cases with suspected abuse from a family member. See, for example, the chapter in this book written by Forsman, where she discusses the special representative for children in criminal cases and the special representative's role in Barnahus (Chap. 11). An emphasis on children's rights to access to justice, however, also requires a justice system that is child friendly (cf. Council of Europe 2010). Consequently, a child's involvement in legal proceedings must be adapted to the needs of the child. This is also the core of the Barnahus ideology. What makes a Barnahus child friendly is not a simple question, however, and can be approached in different ways. One aim of the Barnahus model is to provide a child-friendly environment. What child-friendliness means in this context is discussed in the chapter written by Stefansen (Chap. 2). Research into children's

own experiences and perspectives from visiting Barnahus is limited, but the chapter written by Olsson and Kläfverud presents a study of children's own experiences of visiting Barnahus (Chap. 3). Both chapters highlight child-friendliness as a multidimensional phenomenon that is far from easy to achieve in practice.

A core aspect of children's rights to access to justice is the child investigative interview. As pointed out in Baugerud and Johnson's chapter (Chap. 6), the main evidence in the vast majority of criminal cases in Barnahus is the child's statement. As described by Myklebust (Chap. 5), a child's statement in a criminal proceeding is handled in a similar way in the Nordic countries, by using a video-recording of their statement from the criminal (pre-trial) investigation as evidence in the main hearing. The child witness, therefore, is normally not present in the court. This especially applies to particularly young or vulnerable children (e.g. preschool-aged children, or children with developmental difficulties or communicational problems). Traditionally, statements from children in abuse cases have also raised issues about children's credibility and suggestibility (see, for example, Doris 1991; Hershkowitz et al. 2007; Chap. 7 by Korkman et al.; Chap. 6 by Baugerud and Johnson). The consequence of this is that the demands on the quality of the child statement are high, and therefore so is the quality of the interview method, as well as the requirements of safeguarding the defendant's right to a fair trial. The context in which the child is interviewed, as well as the interview method as such, has been in focus for many years in the Nordic countries, among researchers, police and prosecutors, as well as courts. In Sweden, for instance, the Supreme Court has commented several rulings on aspects of the child investigative interview, such as the questions asked, the defendant's right to cross-examination and the quality of the documentation (Sutorius and Kaldal 2003).

The tension between children's capacity as witnesses and their right to a child-friendly approach on the one hand, and on the other hand safeguarding the rights of the defendant, is one of the dilemmas when it comes to the child's right of access to justice. As discussed above, this has led to the development and implementation of a specific method for child investigative interviews.

The methods used in the Nordic countries are, as noted by several authors in this book, interview protocols that resemble the NICHD protocol (described in, for example, Chap. 6 by Baugerud and Johnson). Whether results are better in terms of following the principles of the protocol, when used in the Barnahus setting, is not clear however and needs to be further studied empirically. The Barnahus has, however, as described by Langballe and Davik (Chap. 8), and referring to the Norwegian context, been a driving force in the development of new interview procedures for groups that are difficult to interview using the standard protocol, such as very young children. As described by Myklebust (Chap. 5), the implementation of specific interview methods has led to high demands on the competence of the interviewer and the development of specific educational programmes designed for child investigative interviewers.

## The Debated Question of Treatment and Medical Examinations

Psychological treatment and medical examinations are areas that have caused professional tensions and debate. In the Swedish context, the debate regarding psychological treatment relates to the availability of treatment, both in the Barnahus and in the local treatment system. This is probably because emergency and short-term interventions for the child and family are offered only in about half of the Barnahus in Sweden (Landberg and Svedin 2013). In the Norwegian context, emergency and short-term interventions are part of the Barnahus model. Here, the discussion among staff has revolved around what types of psychological treatment should be offered. According to the evaluation of the Norwegian model (Stefansen et al. 2012) the staff seem to have had a high degree of professional autonomy in this issue and a relatively wide opportunity to use their professional judgement to decide what to offer children and families. This probably relates to the mandate of the Barnahus to make sure that the chain of services is well connected.

The Barnahus in Norway are responsible for offering emergency and short-term interventions, while the responsibility for long-term treatment normally lies in the local specialised treatment systems. If the child, for instance, is already seeing a local therapist when arriving at the Barnahus, the child will normally continue treatment there. If the child is in need of treatment but this is not available locally, the Barnahus will offer treatment, normally for a limited amount of hours. The Barnahus staff will also arrange hand-over meetings or consultations when a child is referred to specialised treatment locally. Barnahus also makes use of different methods of emergency and short-term interventions, and are testing methods for more long-term treatment (e.g. Circle of Security). The Barnahus would like to handle more of the long-term psychological treatment themselves as a result of accumulating special competence in the treatment of abused children and their families. We do not know whether this will be the case, but it does illustrate how potential challenges and tensions may arise regarding institutional boundaries and fields of responsibilities when establishing a new service within a landscape of existing services. In the Finnish Forensic Psychology Units, operating at university hospitals, it was, for instance, decided that psychological treatment should be clearly separated from the forensic psychologist investigative interviews undertaken by the units (see Chap. 7 by Korkman et al.).

Another professional tension, or discussion, one that this book does not cover, relates to the role of the medical staff and medical examinations in Barnahus. Most Nordic Barnahus are equipped for medical examinations, but few such examinations are carried out (Bakketeig et al. 2012; Åström and Rejmer 2008; Kaldal et al. 2010). Discussions regarding the medical examinations revolve around two main issues (Bakketeig et al. 2012). One issue is whether all children that visit Barnahus should be offered a standard medical examination as part of the Barnahus routine, or whether the medical examination should be reserved for cases where the police require a forensic medical examination as part of the criminal investigation. Norwegian Barnahus leaders have, for instance, argued that all children should be offered a medical examination (cf. Oslo Barnahus 2014). They contend that this can have a healing effect on the child and also lead to a documentation of abuse

which can be used as evidence in court, which otherwise would be overlooked. A standard procedure would thus improve children's access to due process. Arguments against such a standard routine are seldom voiced explicitly, but one key issue would be resources. Most Barnahus do not have the capacity to perform medical examinations on all children.

Offering medical examinations to all children as part of the support services at Barnahus can in a sense be seen as placing emphasis on the treatment-oriented logic in the Barnahus. At the same time, if this service also provides more evidence for use in court proceedings, the routine also responds to the criminal law-oriented logic. Results from a Swedish Barnahus context have, for instance, identified how higher attendance of medical specialists at consultation meetings results in more medical examinations of children, as well as close connections between decisions about medical examination on the one hand and decisions about police reporting, as well as to prosecute, on the other hand (see Åström and Rejmer 2008; Johansson 2011a). This suggests the importance of the attendance of medical staff as well as undertakings of medical examinations at the Barnahus from a criminal law-oriented perspective.

Another discussion relates to whether or not the (forensic) medical examination should be carried out at the Barnahus with more limitations regarding specialised examination and consultation, compared to hospitals. Moving the medical examination out of the Barnahus would mean leaving aside the one door principle and thus one of the core components of the Barnahus model. Specially trained medical staff always carries out the examinations in Barnahus, while this may not be the case at hospitals. Still, several arguments have been presented against using the Barnahus for medical examinations in the Norwegian context (Bakketeig et al. 2012). One argument is that it would drain the hospitals of specialised competence and weaken an already limited field of specialised competence. This is a similar argument to the one Søbberg finds among child welfare workers in the municipalities related to social work (see Chap. 14). The medical specialist would also lose the opportunity to be part of a broader medical environment at the hospital and specialists in other medical fields would be less available

(Bakketeig et al. 2012). Another argument is availability: the Barnahus has limited opening hours, while the hospitals are open 24/7. Since the capacity at the Barnahus would be more limited than in the hospitals, there may also be a risk of compromising the child's ability to present medical documentation of abuse in court. The research-based knowledge regarding the forensic medical examination is presently very limited, however, and it is important to initiate research to investigate the quality of the medical examinations as well as the implications of conducting the examinations at Barnahus or at hospitals.

## Barnahus: A Field in the Making

The extensive and rapid diffusion of Barnahus throughout the Nordic region, and the creation and implementation of both national laws and transnational regulations concerning the model, indicates the emergence of a new organisational field within the Nordic welfare states. The notion of a specific Barnahus field implies that it represents a recognisable and distinguishable field constituted by organisations that produce similar services and that are bounded by shared institutional norms and rules (cf. DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott 2008). More recent contributions also suggest that “fields can develop not only around settled markets, technologies, or policy domains, but also around central disputes and issues” (Scott 2008, 184) that is not solely around shared conceptions and compatible structures. Fields are in this sense bounded by a duality of meaning and space (cf. Scott and Meyer 1983; Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson 2006), and represent constantly evolving structures of communication and meaning as well as spatial and relational boundaries. From this perspective, the Barnahus field can be seen as an evolving institutional structure that deals with the issue of child welfare and child justice in cases of suspected child abuse, in terms of both meaning and space formation. As the book demonstrates, and as we discuss below, the Barnahus field is a field in the making.

## Branching Out: A Common Trend?

One example of an ongoing field development or trend is the Barnahus models' branching out in terms of defining its target group. Common target groups for all but the Greenlandic Barnahus models are at the moment children as victims of sexual abuse and violence. In a sense, this is also due to a process of branching out, as the first Icelandic Barnahus for many years only focused on sexual abuse cases, but under inspiration from, for example, Sweden and Norway, came to also include physical abuse. In addition, recent developments of branching out include discussion of whether to include young people who sexually abuse other children within the target group of Barnahus. This is currently debated in Norway and noted as a recommended target group when considered appropriate in the Swedish national guidelines (Swedish National Police Agency 2009). Iceland, in contrast, has taken a stance against including this target group, since it is regarded as problematic in relation to the central idea of Barnahus as a safe space for victims, free from offenders (see Chaps. 1 and 2). Similarly, there has been a parallel discussion regarding safety from offenders in relation to the Swedish "Karin-project" that physically moved a separate Barnahus into a building that integrated crisis centres for women, children and men under one roof (cf. Chap. 15 by Bredal and Stefansen). It was, for example, questioned whether it was appropriate to still regard this measure as a Barnahus or not, due to the collision with the idea of Barnahus as a safe space. As explained by Thulin and Kjellgren (Chap. 4), a treatment intervention in cases of child physical abuse is offered at several Swedish Barnahus, which is directed towards the whole family, including the offender(s). This is also an example of the tension between the idea of a safe space on the one hand and offering support and treatment in order to prevent continuous child abuse on the other hand.

Another example of branching out regarding the target groups of Barnahus is children as witnesses of violence. This is, for example, a challenge for Barnahus in Sweden, due to differences in "legal status" for children who have witnessed abuse and children who have been exposed to violence themselves. The former group of children are rarely

seen in the Swedish Barnahus (Landberg and Svedin 2013). An explanation is probably that they are not regarded as parties in the criminal case and therefore lack the procedural rights of victims during the criminal case, which is regarded as problematic in relation to the parallel investigations coordinated within the Swedish Barnahus model (the criminal investigation and the child welfare investigation). In Norway, this is not an issue since it has been ruled by the Supreme Court (Rt. 2010/949) that children as witnesses of violence are covered by the statute<sup>1</sup> in the Norwegian criminal law that targets family violence.

This book has also identified other examples of branching out the target groups of Barnahus, for example, due to the legal regulation of mandatory use of the Barnahus which significantly increased the number of children interviewed (cf. Norway), or by including all criminal acts against children as part of the target group (cf. the Faroe Islands and the Åland Islands). An important subsequent research question is what implications the trends of branching out in relation to the target group will have for Barnahus field development. It could possibly imply a process of criminalisation and potential juridification, with more police reports, child investigative interviews and increased focus on criminal investigations (cf. Chap. 12 by Johansson and Chap. 13 by Bakketeig), but it could possibly also imply more support and treatment for children not previously acknowledged and supported. The tension and balancing act between “justice” and “welfare” is evidently still an important question for research, policy implementation, as well as the ongoing collaborative work within Barnahus.

The Barnahus field is also branching out in terms of diffusion, space and location. This involves, for example, the establishment of a number of new Barnahus as has been the case in both Sweden and Norway. A similar trend is the establishment of satellites in order to complement already existing Barnahus (which is the case in Denmark, and currently being piloted in Norway). In Greenland, the Barnahus has developed complementary “mobile Barnahus” or travelling units of police who bring video equipment and interview children in their local settlement (see appendix). Common to all these branching out trends are geographical difficulties in reaching the target group nation-wide. A continuous and central discussion in several Nordic countries has involved



how Barnahus should be dimensioned, staffed and localised in order to fulfil the demands of serving the whole country in an equivalent manner (e.g. Kaldal et al. 2010; Bakketeig et al. 2012; Stefansen et al. 2012). This trend is also partly related to the case volume of Barnahus, which differs quite significantly both within and between the different Nordic countries. For example, in Norway the Barnahus in Oslo (the capital) conducted 1150 investigative interviews in 2015, while the Barnahus in Bodø, in the northern part of the country, conducted 263. In 2014, the Faroe Island's Barnahus received 20 notifications about child abuse in total. Another expression of branching out is in terms of size, for which the Stockholm Barnahus in Sweden is an apt example. This Barnahus is a centralisation of three original Barnahus locations into one larger building, dimensioned for more cases as well as staff. As illustrated by these examples of branching out, questions of dimension and locality could be identified as equally important to consider when evaluating needs and planning to implement Barnahus in countries outside the Nordic region.

## New Professional Practices

The chapters in this book illustrate an important effect of the introduction of the Barnahus model in the Nordic countries: it has in many respects worked as a change maker, facilitating discussion of professional standards and procedures.

Langballe and Daviks chapter (Chap. 8), for instance, shows how the Barnahus staff are in the process of carving out a distinct professional role related to the child investigative interview through collaboration with police interviewers. This can perhaps be seen as a sign of a development towards a shared Barnahus identity for professional staff with training in different disciplines. To give an example, the Barnahus psychologist not only evaluates children's needs as a psychologist, but also as a Barnahus professional. In the Norwegian context, the coordination role related to treatment and support following the child investigative interview also seems to be constructed as a specialised task for professional Barnahus work (cf. Stefansen et al. 2012).

An important research area is thus how different Barnahus models affect the professional roles developing among Barnahus staff in relation to collaborative partners.

Another area where Barnahus have had a wider effect on the development of professional practice is related to treatment and interventions. As exemplified in this book, in the chapter written by Thulin and Kjellgren (Chap. 4), treatment models are tried out in Barnahus and with the help of Barnahus staff. Given the coordinating role that Barnahus staff takes in assuring support for the child and family after the interview, at least in the Norwegian model, it seems reasonable to suggest that the Barnahus model will, over time, increase the awareness of local services regarding providing support. This could counteract the negative effects of the centralisation of professional competence that Søbberg (Chap. 14) suggests is an unintended consequence of the implementation of Barnahus in Denmark.

A third area, which we have discussed above, relates to the education of child investigative interviewers.

## An Emerging Research Field

As an overall perspective, we suggest seeing the Barnahus model as at the core of an emerging institutional field that interlinks child welfare and child justice, in turn, two partly overlapping policy fields. Barnahus can thus be understood as a “hybrid organisation” positioned in an institutional tension field spanning the legal areas of welfare law and criminal law, and bringing together contrasting institutional logics (Johansson 2011a). This position subsequently implies dilemmas and challenges of special interest from an interdisciplinary and comparative research perspective, which we hope this book has demonstrated. While the chapters of the book are organised in broad themes that represent different scholarly traditions and specialised discussions, one aim of bringing them together has been the presentation of an emerging research field: *the field of Barnahus research*. With this book, we have aimed to further the understanding of what the Barnahus model is, how it works and what its potentials and challenges are, which can inform Barnahus policies and practices both in the Nordic region and

beyond. We also hope to stimulate further research on Barnahus and to have demonstrated the many advantages of bringing together research from different disciplines and national contexts. Our aim throughout the book has also been to highlight how Barnahus research can take its outlook from within the Barnahus practice (e.g. from the perspectives of Barnahus staff) but also from outside the Barnahus practice (e.g. from surrounding actors, services, governance structures or relating processes).

The variations in implementation and institutionalisation processes, as well as the potential and challenges, identified in this volume, call for the initiation of more interdisciplinary and comparative Barnahus research. While in one sense being a specialised research field, Barnahus research is simultaneously inter-related with many broader research areas concerning child abuse, domestic violence, child welfare policy and practice, children's rights and child-friendly justice, integrated services and multi-professional collaboration, and governance, to mention the most central. From this perspective, the Barnahus research presented in this volume and the identified set of agendas for further research are also important for broader scientific discussions. In conclusion, we wish to stress the importance of dialogue among related research fields in order to further the development of interdisciplinary knowledge that may inform policy implementation and professional practice, with the overall aim of collaborating against child abuse.

## Note

1. In the ruling from 2010, this was related to §219 in the Norwegian Criminal Code 22. May 1902 no 10. Norway now has a new Criminal Code of 20. May 2005 no 28 and the relevant statute is now §§282 and 283.

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