

DIFFUSION AND TRANSLATION OF THE BARNAHUS MODEL THROUGH THE LENS OF INSTITUTIONAL TENSIONS

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Responding to the victimisation of children is a key societal challenge to which nations are increasingly committed. As victims, children have rights and needs that require services from both the justice and welfare sectors (cf. St.-Amand et al. 2023). In Europe, the Barnahus model has been introduced as a way to strengthen children’s access to justice and recovery in the aftermath of violence and abuse. As described by Johansson (2011) the model combines two tracks, or ‘institutional logics’ (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Reay & Hinings, 2009), that ideally are meant to be balanced: the *justice* track, which refers to the handling of criminal cases, and the *welfare* track, which refers to safeguarding and recovery measures. Since the Barnahus model was first introduced in Iceland in 1998, it has spread to a number of European countries, both within and beyond the Nordic region.

This presentation has two main objectives: The first is to describe the further diffusion of the Barnahus model throughout Europe and to exemplify various translations at local levels; the second is to present the framework and outline for the new book “Justice and recovery for victimised children. Institutional tensions in Nordic and European Barnahus models” (Johansson et al., eds., 2024).

On an overarching institutional level, the Barnahus model may be understood as having diffused across Europe and led to surface ‘isomorphism’ (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) within the field of organisations that handle victimised children. But on the organisational and agency levels we need to focus on comparative analyses of local organisational adaptations and translations (Greenwood et al., 2014; Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996). Our comparative analysis illustrates major local variations related to the ongoing diffusion and translation process of the Barnahus model in Europe.

This book draws the ideas and institutional manifestations of the Barnahus model to the forefront of the analysis in order to highlight both the potentials of the model and its tensions and dilemmas. For analytical purposes, we have divided the book into four parts and subsequently various institutional tensions into different dimensions or types of tensions, even though the tensions often overlap in practice and are difficult to discern from each other: (1) legal tensions, (2) organisational tensions, (3) professional-ethical tensions, and (4) balancing institutional tensions. In the final discussion, key conclusions are drawn based on the contributions in this book, to provide guidance to countries that are currently considering implementing, or are piloting, the Barnahus model.

Nyckelord: Diffusion, implementation, translation, institutional tensions, institutional logics, violence and abuse against children

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