A qualitative study on the reasons for teenager’s involvement in crime: A case study of teenagers in Sättra Gävle, Sweden.

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Abstract

The study aims at finding reasons for teenagers’ involvement into crime in Sätra in Gävle, Sweden. Using a semi-structured interview method via zoom of four participants who are involved with teenager who are into crime, the study sets out to answer the question about factors in the environment and community that leads the teenagers into crime in Sätra. The findings were in line with the theoretical framework which was the Social Bonds theory, which has four components namely: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. Using ATLAS.ti as a tool for analysis. Themes were created from the interview responses and these themes were analysed based on previous research and chosen theory. In conclusion, these four components of the Social Bonds theory help explain the reasons for teenager’s involvement in crime.

Key words: Teenagers, criminality, attachment, commitment, involvement, belief.
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INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROBLEM AREA AND PURPOSE

Teenage criminal activity has steadily increased over time, which serves as a sharp reminder of the need to identify and address the underlying reasons of this alarming trend. Criminality in Sätra has been increasing lately and it is a thing of concern. There are a lot of concerns coming from parents that live in the area and there has been a lot of police and social services movement in Sätra. Statistics provide a clear picture of the current problem's increasing nature. The Gävle Police Department's annual crime report from 2022 states that Sätra has seen a disturbing 25% increase in crimes involving teenagers over the previous three years. According to a report from SVT News (2022), in November 2022 three teenage boys aged 15, 16 and 17 years were arrested for suspected cases of murder. And the 16-year-old boy was said to be part of a crime gang in Gävle. The boy who is 17 has been punished for minor drug offenses and the last who is the 15-year-old has been a suspect for assault. Seeing how the situation in Sätra has changed as mentioned above is an indication of the increasing rate of crime in Sweden as affirmed by Sturup et al (2019). This underscores the significance of this study. Its relevance to social work would be that this phenomenon is affecting the society and community of Sätra with a lot of impact.

In Sätra Gävle, Sweden, where teenage criminal behaviour is on the rise and parents and the community are becoming more concerned, the job of social workers has become increasingly important in preventing and resolving the underlying reasons of crime among teenagers. Thus, this study significance could help the community and all parties involved to start or continue with the work they are doing for prevention purposes. The purpose in focus for this study is to get the thoughts flowing in the actors and those that can have an effect on the futures of these teenagers in question and there to plan ahead for strategies of interventions that can be done by all actors involved.

Social workers, as dedicated professionals with expertise in understanding human behaviour, family dynamics, and community systems, play a crucial role in fostering a safe and supportive environment that mitigates the factors leading to criminal activities among teenagers. The findings from the study can offer a platform for teenage crime prevention as crime is one of the social problems confronting social workers.
1.2 AIM

The aim of this study is to explore the reasons why teenagers are getting involved in criminality in Sätra, Gävle in Sweden.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. What are the reasons for teenagers in Sätra to turn to criminality?

2. What are some of the factors in the environment and community that leads the teenagers into crime in Sätra?

3. What could be the possible preventive and corrective methods to reduce teenagers going into crime in Sätra?

2. Previous research

2.1 Lack of consideration of the long-term effect of crime.

There are various studies that have been carried out in the past on the reasons teenagers turn to criminality, some of these research includes research by Jacobs et al (2019). According to this research by Jacobs et al (2019) on factors that could contribute to substance misuse and criminal activity amongst adolescents, the research pointed that most teenagers usually involve in dangerous behaviour that could impede their wellbeing without reflection of the long-term effects on them and social service providers usually fight to provide effective services to teenagers that abuse substances and get involved in criminality because these teenagers behaviour are affected by some factors such as pressure from pair groups, involvement in gang groups and broken families.

2.2 Teenagers and family life

Family life has been attributed to have a very strong influence on the life of teenagers and also contribute to the development of delinquent and criminal tendencies. This is very well portrayed in Wright & Wright (1994). Their monograph aimed at exploring the extent to which family life could be a factor that contributes to teenagers’ involvement in criminality. Viewing
the family as a strong socialising force, Wright & Wright (1994) argues that the family contributes to teaching children and teenagers either to curb unacceptable social behaviour or aggressive, antisocial, and violent behaviour. Agreeing to the fact that the path to criminality is complex and has multiple pathways, they come to the conclusion that “behavioural problems during childhood predict subsequent delinquency and criminality. Some of these behaviour problems appear to stem from various forms of parental/family involvement (Wright & Wright, 1994; p. i)

According to an article by Chui and Chan (2012) teenagers with very quality relationship with their parent and have strong bonding with their family, teenagers who are strongly committed in positive things in the society, as well as those who have resilient belief and are involved positively in the community, are less likely to involve in criminality. In addition, the article indicated that the social workers intervention to advocate for a healthy parent and children bond, more involvement and commitment to positive activities in the society and healthy belief in the teenager can help prevent teenagers from turning into criminality.

### 2.3 Crime/ involvement

Understanding the multifaceted dimensions of crime involvement among teenagers is essential for effective social work intervention and prevention strategies.

The theme of involvement has been proven to serve as a tool which helps teenagers to stay away from crime. Johnson (2008) carried out research about the religious involvement of African-American youth. In his research, he sets out to examine the hypothesis that says that “religious involvement of African-American youth significantly shields them from the deleterious effects of neighbourhood disorder and decay on youth crime” (Johnson, 2008; p.3). Using the National Youth Survey (NYS) – a longitudinal study of a national probability sample of 1,725 persons aged 11 to 17 originally surveyed in early 1977 – as a data to test the hypotheses, Johnson (2008) suggests that criminologist should not downplay and/or overlook the role of religion – as a whole and African-American churches – in particular -. This is because religious involvement, as seen in the case of the African- American youth, goes a long way in mitigating against juvenile delinquency.

Peer pressure and group dynamics have a significant impact on teenager’s criminal activity, according to research. According to Gardner and Steinberg (2005), teenagers who are exposed
to peers who support illegal behaviour are more likely to engage in such behaviour themselves. Teenagers may engage in illegal activity due to peer pressure, the need for acceptability, and a sense of belonging. By encouraging healthy peer relationships through community initiatives, mentoring, and support groups that encourage pro-social behaviours and beneficial social interactions, social workers can counteract this tendency.

The role of media exposure and socioeconomic factors in shaping teenagers' perception of criminality cannot be underestimated. The line between fictional representations and real-life repercussions can become hazier after repeated exposure to violent and criminal content. Teenagers may internalise criminal behaviour due to the media's propensity to sensationalise lawlessness as a regular or even glamorous aspect of life. Also study by Hirschi (1969) identifies that living in neighbourhoods with high crime rates may normalise criminal behaviour, leading teenagers to perceive it as a more acceptable path and the socioeconomic disparities can thus distort teenagers' understanding of right and wrong, blurring the lines between legality and criminality.

3. Theoretical perspective

The theory we used in our study is the Social Bonds Theory. The Social Bonds Theory talks about how attachment, commitment, involvement & belief are the big factors when talking about people that engage in deviant behaviour. According to a study done by Salvatore & Taniguchi (2012), several turning points and social bonds were found to influence decreases in criminal offending for a lot of emerging adults. This goes to show that social bonds theory is something to be taken into account in this subject. This relates to our study where we talk about the reasons why teenagers get involved in criminality in Sätra and criminality being one deviant behaviour makes the theory relevant to our study.

While this is the theoretical frame that our study is going to follow, there are reasons for the decision. Social bonds theory goes beyond questioning the individual reasons for certain behaviours and questions the macro and mezzo sized reasons. It is easy to question the individual person committing crimes about why they did it and looking for personal reasons, but there might be a bigger picture that explains the effects of family and community on this matter. Which is why the theoretical framework of social bonds fit our study. Also, according to Akers (1997), who pointed that our chosen theory suggests that deviance behaviour could be as a result of leakage or weakness in the social bond of an individual. Thus, Social bond
theory is one of the leading perspectives on deviant behaviour in teenagers. And social bond theory is undoubtedly the most regularly discussed when dealing with sociological theories of deviation mostly in teenagers.

According to Hirschi (1969), who pointed out four (4) components of the social bond which are attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.

### 3.1 Attachments

One of the aspects of social bonds theory that might give an insight to the impacts of family ties and relations have on teenagers is attachment. Attachment is one of the bricks that holds up the social bonds theory. This perspective suggests that the attachments that people have with their families, peers and/or other people that they value have an effect on how they behave or rather decreases the odds of them behaving outside of the norms. According to social bond theory, persons who have strong attachments have less possibility to engage in deviant behaviour “Hirschi assumes that the stronger the degree of social control and the denser the network of social bonds are, the more likely people are to behave in accordance with the standards.” (Wickert 2022).

In the case of Sätra Gävle, this attachment element of the social bond theory can explore the quality of family relationships, peer networks, and community bonds among teenagers. By identifying teenagers with weak attachments, this can be essential in understanding ways to foster positive relationships, providing family counselling, and creating mentorship programs that offer emotional support and guidance.

### 3.2 Commitment

Secondly there is the angle of commitment that explains a bit about the effects that dedications have on people. This angle is all about having socially accepted goals and/or standards. “Hirschi assumes that someone who has already invested resources, time and energy in achieving compliant goals has more to lose through deviant behaviour than someone who has invested little devotion in pursuing socially accepted goals.” (Wickert 2022). This perspective might give us an insight into if teenagers' investment in different aspects of the community has any positive effect on their behaviour.
Thus in relation to this study, commitment can investigate the level of involvement among teenagers in Sättra Gävle to education, extracurricular activities, and community involvement. By identifying teenagers lacking strong commitments will be pivotal in framing this study towards designing programs that can enhance goal-setting skills, provide vocational guidance, and create opportunities for skill development, thereby bolstering commitment to lawful activities.

3.3 Involvement

Thirdly, there is the fact that some people might have too much time in their hands and/or do not have intimate involvement with socially accepted activities which would have taken some of that time and energy off their hands. “Hirschi means that someone who is intensively involved in conventional activities has less time and opportunity to engage in deviant behaviour.” (Wickert 2022). Some of these sorts of activities might even be considered as good bases for the self-discipline needed to avoid involvement in deviant behaviour.

This involvement element of the social bond theory is important in this study to examine the range and nature of teenagers' involvement in constructive activities within Sättra Gävle. This will be instrumental in identifying ways that can assist the parents, community groups, and schools to develop extracurricular activities that keep youth engaged in constructive activities and lower their risk of becoming involved in crime by finding gaps in involvement.

3.4 Belief

The fourth factor in the social bond’s theory is belief. “This refers to the belief in and validity of the values and norms of the mainstream society.” (Wickert 2022). This factor has been critically discussed many times and criticised by many. The discussion had been mainly about if belief has the effect, it is said it has on people's deviant behaviour and if someone acts in a deviant because their belief in the values has become weak or if it is because they have got new values that replaces them. Either way, it is a factor worth discussing and an angle investigating form.

In the particular setting of Sättra Gävle, the Social Bond Theory offers a solid framework for understanding the reasons driving teens' involvement in crime. Social workers can create
focused treatments that bolster the factors that guard against criminality by putting the theory's components—attachment, commitment, engagement, and belief—to use. Social workers support a safer and more promising environment for Sätra Gävle's youth by building positive attachments, boosting commitment to future objectives, encouraging participation in constructive activities, and reinforcing positive beliefs. In addition to advancing our knowledge of the factors influencing teenage criminal activity, this study provides practical advice in line with the Social Bond Theory's principles, eventually promoting youth development and well-being.

4. Chosen method for the study

Data was collected using an open-ended interview question (face-to-face) and via zoom. The interviews was with different actors in the community of Sätra and a lot of them were interested in the well-being of inhabitant Sätra teenagers. The open-ended interview questions gave the respondents the opportunity to freely express their experience on this matter and elaborate on their thoughts and feelings on the topic. This method left room for interpretation as well as the answers of the respondents. In-depth knowledge was gained during the qualitative research. Reliability according to Nachmias et al. (2015), pointed that consistency of a study when repeated and making use of the same methods indicates that the study is reliability and Patton (2004) agrees with this in their book that reliability of a study can be said to be the extent to which there is independence in the result in a research. The team of researchers thus ensured that every process and detail during the research was clearly documented, in order to make it easy for future researchers to access the study for future purposes which was room for repetition of the study subject. Validity of the study which according to Nachmias et al., (2015) is the degree to which the planned study is measured correctly. During the research we the researchers ensured that the research method is followed thoroughly and the results obtained from the finding was interpreted and double checked with earlier studies done, theories used and methods, this is in accordance with Patton (2004) which agrees that validity is the correct interpretation of the finding in a research. We used the Gisted format of transcribing, which is a method of transcribing an audio interview and the most important parts are picked and the unimportant parts are left out (Paulus et al, 2014).
This study comes from a larger perspective than the individual one and tries to capture the impact the surrounding of the teenagers have on them. With this in mind, the people that we thought would have the experience and view needed to get some insight to this subject were interviewed by us, the interviewers. Which is why we chose some people from the community that might have different opinions on the matter and people that come from different aspects of the community when it comes to their jobs, roles and responsibilities they have in it. To give a clearer explanation on how different these perspectives might be and what kind of context the opinions of these people come with, we gave a bit of background to these interviewees. The first people to be interviewed were two social workers that work on the field (field agents). They work intimately with youth centres around in Gävle and have somewhat good relations with the youth around in Sätra. Secondly, we interviewed a coach of the Sätra football team that has lived his whole life in Sätra and knows the majority of the teenagers in Sätra and has somewhat good relationships with a lot of the parents. Thirdly we interviewed a school principal in Stora Sättrakolan that is back to back with Treffen and in our opinion should have the best relationships with the teenagers that roam Sätra. She gave us the permission to mention her as the present school principal in Stora Sättrakolan. And lastly we interviewed a former manager in the centre for criminal young adults who has worked almost all his life with teenagers who are into crime.

Also, we collected data from previous research that are similar to our research which includes research on the factors that could contribute to substance misuse and criminal activity amongst adolescents by Jacobs et al (2019), research by Wright & Wright (1994) that was aimed at exploring the extent to which family life could be a factor that contributes to teenagers’ involvement in criminality, a research on An empirical Investigation of Social Bonds and Juvenile Delinquency in Hong Kong, by Chui and Chan (2012) and lastly, Johnson (2008) research about the religious involvement of African-American youth.

4.1 Data analysis

The primary data analysis tool in this investigation was the ATLAS.ti 23 edition. According to Rambaree, K. (2013), ATLAS.ti offers many possibilities for scholars to carry out different methods of a qualitative data analysis. The University of Gävle's remote services were used to access ATLAS.ti 23. The organisation, processing, and analysis of the data were all aided by
this application, which is a tool for qualitative data analysis. The interviews were entered into the 23 programs of the Atlas. The study's objectives and theoretical stances were taken into consideration when coding the data. The open coding format was applied, which requires labelling different text passages in accordance with their content. The researchers developed a coding framework that functioned as a manual for coding based on the study's goals and research question. Themes were created from the interview responses and these themes were analysed based on previous research and our chosen theory. The themes used were attachment, commitment, involvement and Belief. Thus, the data collected was analysed using previous research and our chosen theory. After the data had been coded, it was used with the ATLAS.ti 23 tool's network function to look for trends and themes.

4.2 Ethical consideration

During our research, we ensured that we observed several ethical considerations, which was in line with Gustafsson et al. (2006) approvals. Some of these ethical considerations include- that we ensured that the participants received and signed consent letters before they participated in the interview. We ensured that privacy and concealment of the participants was ensured during and after the interview, that is we ensured confidentiality, also we ensured we fully respect the ideas, knowledge, feelings and dignity of our participants and participants assured that sensitive personal data was not processed. As we ensured to meet them face-to-face on zoom recording during the interview, we sought their permission first and all recordings were destroyed immediately after we finalised our research. Lastly, we made it clear and explained to the participants that their participation is on a voluntary basis and they were very free to decline from the research at any time they feel like without any questioning from us, Gustafsson et al. (2006).

4.3 Presentation of results

The results from our study were gathered into themes and talked over in connection to previous methods, research, and theories. And the final research conclusion will be made centred on the findings.
4.4 Limitations of the study
During the research, the researchers encountered a lot of limitations such as limited time. Research of the sort requires adequate time to carry it out. But unfortunately we had only 8 weeks for the research. Language barrier was also a limitation, the official language in Sweden is Swedish and most of the actors who agreed to have an interview with us were fluent in speaking Swedish not English so we had to interpret our interview questions to Swedish language before we carried out the interview and most of the results were also interpreted to English.

5.0 RESULTS
The result section involves the perspectives and opinions of the participants with some key quotations. The themes were developed with the understanding of the theoretical perspective Social Bonds Theory.

5.1 Attachment

Social workers point of view (field agents)
Looking for the social worker view on Sätra and what angles they work from, we interview two social workers that work actively on the field by connecting and creating networks with organisations and arenas. When the social workers were asked about what they think about the effects of the different attachments the teenagers have or lack thereof, they seem to agree on the fact that it is the first place to start when trying to build a support system for the teenager and the younger they are when this building starts the better they thought. The strongest attachment they thought the teenagers should have was to their family, particularly their parents. This support system was to help them guide through times of doubt or reconsideration of their path (the path of school, work and/or path to socially accepted goals and achievements).

“De relationerna som de saknar från ansvarande vuxna så som skolor och familj kommer de att förska hitta någon annanstans och det råkar vara. i många fall, i den kriminella världen.”

“The attachments they lack from responsible adults like schools and family, they will try to find it somewhere else and that somewhere else in a lot of cases happens to be in the criminal world.”
But there are also the attachments to other actors (responsible young adults) of the community they thought was pretty important. There lies a problem in Sätra they thought, where there is no centre for Sätra for these young adults to meet with these teenagers. There is Treffen (the youth centre in Sätra) that gets the teenagers together. But there seems not to be a centre or a place in Sätra that makes it possible for people of different ages to meet regularly and exchange works and experiences. This, they thought, was a very important thing in a society to have and something that could bring some sort of community feeling in Sätra. Some of the other attachments that they mentioned were important was the attachment the teenagers have to the schools and their teachers. Another one of these attachments was to some sort of organisation such as a sports club and Treffen (the youth centre). There is also another thing they pointed out and it was the influence of their friend, which they thought was almost as important as their attachment to their families. Social worker 1 mentions that in his opinion “if family ties and ties to the school share number 1 on the priority list of attachments, then friends are a very close second”. Because as soon as the families and schools show to be a bit distant or unavailable for longer periods of time, friends will swoop in and take that influential role.

Service provides point of view (football coach, part time teachers and leader of some summer activities)

This might be one of the most important parts of the system that the teenagers have around him/her. He thinks relationships and attachments that the teenager has to his/her parents, teachers, coach or/and friends has the biggest effect on the teenager. But unfortunately, a lot of parents have a lot to do to provide for their families already which can drain their energy before they even get home.

“Alla familjer har inte samma förutsättningar för det, det finns de som själva behöver skapa en position i samhället och på det göra ett hästjobb hemma så de inte har energin för att aktivt stöta sina barn utan ger full tillit till att samhället ska göra det.”

“All families don’t have the same opportunities, there are those that needs to create a position for themselves in the society and do a lot of work at home on top of that, which leads to them not having a lot of energy left to actively support their children and just has full trust in society to do it for them.”
**Point of view of the former manager in the centre for criminal young adults**

When he was asked: *how does relationship with the family affect the teenagers*, the manager replied/spoke from his personal experience and agreed that relationship or bonds with family has a great impact on the teenager and teenagers who have strong attachments have less chances of engaging in crime:

“I come from my experience of all criminals that I have met, maybe there is an exception, if they have a relationship with their father it may not be a good relationship - they have a father problem and lack a good strong bond with the father”.

In a further reply to the question, the manager points out:

“You know, some of these kids have parents who are criminals and drug addicts; like parents who drink wine and allow the teenagers to do their thing. You have like families who have been criminals for generations. ...if the parents are not active in the kids’ life, you know taking them to sports or spending good time with them, a positive bond is not created.”

**Point of view of the school principal**

When the Principal of the school was interviewed and asked questions about what the schools focus was and their role in the community of Sätra, they answered in detail and did not leave anything out it seemed. On the question of important attachments and relationships for the good of the teenagers, she had the opinion that the school and parents had the most crucial role in it. That means that they have very much importance and they have big influence on the teenagers and their choice of behaviour and activities.

“Vår jobb är in att bara utbilda de i det akademiska men också uppföstra de den tiden de spenderar i skolan.”

“Our job is not just to educate them in the academic sense but also to raise them during the time they spend in school.”

Her view on the most important relationship might have been the school and the parents but she also mentioned that there are relationships that are as important such as their relationships with their leaders in activities outside of school, youth centre employees they meet at the youth centre Treffen and their friends.
5.2 Commitment

Social workers point of view

When they were asked about what kind of things could help keep them in line with what is referred to as a straight line according to society, they thought that a support system was a very important part of it. But something else that was as important was if the teenagers have some sort of obsession with some sort of goal or achievement. This means that if there is some sort of dedication or commitment to any kind of goal or path that society deems acceptable, the odds of them straying are way less.

“Något som är viktigt att tänka på i tidiga åldern på ungdomarna är att bygga ett system som stödjer de i sina vardaliga liv. Det här systemet kan byggas av många part så som skolor, familj, Fritidsledare och ansvariga för fritids aktiviteter.”

“Something that is important to think about in the early ages of teenagers is to build a support system to help them in their daily lives. This system can be built by different actors/parts such as schools, family, youth centre employees and those responsible for their free time activities.”

Coming from two social workers and both of them with a past of working in the crime section before becoming field agents (social workers in field), this confirms a bit about the theory of commitment and attachment.

Point of view of a school principal in Sättra

When asked about goals and achievements and their effects on the teenagers, her view was that it was one of their more important missions at the school and trying to make them commit to some sort of goal that meets the normal standards like decent grades (grades that can get you into gymnasium/high school). This she thought was one of the most effective ways to make the teenagers stick to socially accepted activities and avoid what is considered as deviant behaviour.

“Om vi kan få dem att se hur viktigt det är med hyfsat bra betyg som kan ta dem in till gymnasiet så blir vår jobb som lärare mycket lättare.”
“If we can make the see the importance of decent grades that can get them into the gymnasium/high school, then our work as teachers becomes a lot easier.”

Service provides point of view (football coach, part time teachers and leader of some summer activities)

According to the coach, committing to some sort of goal and having a sort of obsession to some achievement is important for keeping yourself in line. This would mean that they would invest a lot into one or a couple of things that would make it clear to them what they need to do to achieve these goals.

“Att ha ett mål som tar upp majoriteten av din energi och tid kan vara hälsosam och ger mindre tid till oönskade aktiviteter. Det är därför fotboll kan vara en aktivitet som ger ungdomarna ett visst mål som de kan fokusera på och även ge de ett syfte till det de gör.”

“Having a goal that takes up the majority of your time and energy can be healthy and leaves less time for unacceptable activities. Which is why football can be an activity that gives the teenagers a goal that they can focus on and even give some sort of purpose to their actions.”

Point of view of the former manager in the centre for criminal young adults

According to the former manager of the centre for criminal young adults’ criminality, he says that crime is an evolving life situation to lose in a big way and those teenagers who have a healthy commitment in different aspects of the society tend to have better behaviour. He further added that “especially if they are committed to school and study and to success in school, I think that is not guaranteed but it is a strong indicator for choosing another way”.

In other words, channeling the teenagers’ time to being committed in positivity will definitely push the teenagers away from crime as the teenagers don’t want to lose all the efforts put in already.

5.3 Involvement

Social workers point of view

According to social worker 2, involvement in socially constructed activities leaves less time and energy to the teenagers. This means that they have less time and energy for the activities that are socially unaccepted and considered as deviant behaviour that are outside of the norm.
According to social worker 1, this sort of activities are better used if they are applied in early stages, which is why he mentioned that they have shifted their focus of group from gymnasium students to elementary and middle school students to better enhance the support system and to early on have a relationship that makes the teenagers a lot more suggestion acceptable that comes from the support system.

“Vår föregående fokus var mot gymasie elever som höll på att gå ur vägen och försöka hjälpa dem så mycket som möjligt. Men på senare tid har vår fokus skiftat mot högstadies och grundskolan elever för att kunna etablera ett system som de kan förlita sig på redan från tidig ålder.”

“Our focus before was on the gymnasium students that might be straying and trying to help them as much as possible. But lately our focus has shifted to secondary and elementary school students to be able to establish a support system they can rely on already from early age.”

This makes their job more effective they thought because with the relationships they already build in those early stages, they are able to suggest such involvement in some sort of activity that is more in line with the societal norm. Another big reason for involving teenagers in those sorts of activities was that it gives to some a sort of goal to achieve, which helps with the commitment part, to some, there is the support system part, to help keep them in line with the accepted standard.

**Service provides point of view (football coach, part-time teachers and leader of some summer activities)**

The coach defines the summer activities as magnets for teenagers that have not yet been activated and end up creating some bad habits soon.

“Många ungdomar saknar vettiga fritidsaktiviteter vilket leder till grupperingar av ungdomar som inte blir aktiverade och i längden riskerar att utveckla dåliga vanor.”

“A lot of teenagers lack decent free time activities which leads to creation of groups by the teenagers that do not get activated and in the near future risks to develop bad habits”

He also mentions that it can create some sort of feeling of belonging, which would help with a lot of teenagers that have a hard time looking for a group or place to belong to. This
question of belonging can be one of the reasons for teenagers to search for groups that are up to no good just to feel like they fit in, according to the coach.

**Point of view of a school principal in Sätra**

Regarding involvement, the school principal had a couple of statements. The first one was that having after school activities that they can engage themselves into has a big positive effect on the teenagers. The sort of after school activities that she was referring to were activities like football, music and/or hanging out at the youth centre Treffen.

"Vi försöker att motivera dem till att ha nån type av aktivitet efterskolan hela tiden. Det ger dem nån sorts aktivitet att fokusera på när de inte har skola och ger dem även möjligheten att använda extra energin och tiden de har på händerna."

"We encourage the teenagers to get involved in some sort of hobby or afterschool activities all the time. This gives them some sort of activity to focus on when they do not have school and gives them the opportunity to use the excess energy and time they have in their hands."

**5.4 Belief**

**Social workers point of view**

In the belief front, there was not a lot of speculation because they felt that they could not speak on behalf of the teenagers. As mentioned earlier, this aspect of the theory depends on the person and can vary between the reasons for the shift of their validity of some values they had depends on those values becoming weaker or if this teenager has got new values that trumps the old values he/she had. Social worker 2 thought that it could be a little bit of both whereby the new values taking over, the old values got weaker and disappeared in the process. Social worker 1 had a little bit more to say and one of the factors in this theory is that there are a lot of social media platforms that are easily accessible. He mentions that in his teenage years, there was not a lot of content to be watched and digested, and in that sense, it was easier to hold your values straight for a longer period of time. According to social worker 1, he thinks that there are a lot of theories of values and propaganda being streamed through these platforms which almost every teenager can have access to and this information stream is easily digested by these teenagers, which makes it harder to even stick to one set of values and standards.
“När jag var i deras ålder fanns det ingen Tiktok eller Instagram som man hade tillgänglighet till så lätt. Den informationen som man fick eller nya saker som man lärde sig tog lite tid att få tag i.”

“When I was in their age, there was no TikTok or Instagram that was so easily accessible. The information that was provided took some time to get a hold of.”

Service provides point of view (football coach, part time teachers and leader of some summer activities)

The subject of belief (not only in religious context) is a subject that is not easily to see in an objective view for many. According to the coach, having a religion makes it harder to stray from the socially accepted way.

“Av erfarenhet vet jag att ungdomar som har en stark koppling till religion har mycket lägre sannolikhet att hamna i kriminella vanor.”

“What I know from experience is that teenagers that has a strong connection to religion has a lot less odds of getting involved in criminal habits.”

In search of a meaningful life, coach mentions that:
“a lot of people find the meaningfulness that they are looking for to get out of criminality in religion in my opinion.”

Point of view of the former manager in the centre for criminal young adults

According to the former manager, he thinks that religion is what people fall back to when they become older and begin to have a rethink and regrets on their past teenage actions. He further added that as teenagers the religion that can attract them may be the religion that is aggressive as these teenagers can see it as strong and they want to be associated with strength and not weakness.
"On the other hand when you grow older and realise that life of criminality and drugs is no a happy life and it is not the road to success, people when they are in their 30s (thirties) they begin to feel bad- then many turn to religion I DID”

He further added that strong male figure are needed for teenagers to be attracted to religion. Hence most people end up finding God in prison “many people find God in prison”

**Point of view of a school principal in Sätra**

Talking to her about belief was easy seeing how she herself was a believer and religious. She truly believes that having some sort of structured belief system is calming and makes some things easier to avoid in the sense that if you follow a religion and you are aware of the guidelines that are to be followed then this means that you put validity in these guidelines and therefore are easier to follow by your own will. But a lot of teenagers are, in her opinion, almost forced into religion and a set of guidelines that are to be followed by their parents. These guidelines can be of the religious type or just guidelines on how people are supposed to behave in a society. Those guidelines might be harder to keep a tight hold on nowadays where there is social media that is easily accessible wherever you go.

“Nu för tiden är det enkelt att komma åt information some finns i våra händer var vi än går. Det gör det enklare för ungdomarna att hitta nya “samhällsregler” att föjla som är mer attraktiv för de än vad dem har fått lära sig i skolan eller hemma.”

“Now a days, it is easy to get access to information that is on the palm of our hands wherever we go. Which makes it easier for the teenagers to find new “societal rules” to follow that more to their liking, rather than those they learned in school or at home.”

6. **Analysis**

6.1 **Integration to previous research**

The role of the family cannot be overemphasised when it comes to reasons teenagers in Sätra are involved in criminality. It is evident that family life contributes directly to the development of delinquent and criminal tendencies. Wright & Wright (1994) highlights the fact that teenagers imitate their parents' corrupt and unacceptable social behaviour. This falls in line
with one of the participants’ contributions that some teenagers (in Sätra) have parents who are criminals and drug addicts, while some have families who have been criminals for generations. This speaks largely to the fact that criminality among teenagers in Sätra could be said to be emulation/imitation.

This is an environmental influence in which teenagers take what happens in the family as models and at the same time see their parents as role models. Wright & Wright (1994) suggest that teenagers with criminal parents face a greater likelihood of getting involved in crime and criminality in contrast with children with law-abiding parents.

Also, research by Jacobs et al (2019) which pointed that factors such as pressure from peer groups and involvement in gang groups pushes teenagers to criminality agrees with one of our interviewees who pointed out when speaking on involvement, that most teenagers lack ideal free time activity and it makes them to be attracted more to their peers who are into crime. Thus, these teenagers do not mind the consequences of their actions as they only want to feel like they belong.

There is no doubt that lack of involvement and commitment brings about high levels of crime among them. Affirmations to this have been made by previous research. This speaks for the lack of activities that could involve teenagers in Sätra. Scholars (Johnson, 2008) are of the opinion that involvement such as religious involvement helps mitigate against crime, since it helps the teenager imbibe moral values and find meaning and fulfilment in life.

6.2 Connection to theory

The social bonds theory suggests that there are more than just personal interests at play when a teenager starts straying. The attachment they have with adult figures and their friends, if they have commitment to some sort of path/goal or trying to achieve something in the future, their involvement in socially accepted and constructed activities and the validity they put on some of their principles and guidelines that they learn in school at home or from their respective religion.

When we look at the subject and teenagers’ tendencies to deviate through the lens of social bonds theory, we are coming from a theory that aims to look at the reasons why teenagers do not participate in such activities assuming that humans have a natural tendency to delinquency. Our findings where that according to the majority of the big actors in Sätra we interviewed, a good support system, healthy relationships, a clear goal with the understanding of the true meaning of reaching the goal and having core value that is in line with the norms are some of
the crucial factors in a teenagers life and decides which way this teenager takes. By healthy relationships, it means relationships like with your parents and family, your teachers at school and with your role models in your everyday life. These kinds of relationships create the needed support system around the teenager and is there when he/she is falling off the wagon.

With goals and achievements is meant to have some sort of dream to follow or an achievement, whether in school or outside of school, that you are trying to reach could help keep you in line. Involvement in some sort of afterschool activities are recommended by all of the big actors that we interviewed and the reason is that they seem to agree with the theory that the more involvement and investment you have in such activities, the harder it becomes to deviate and change paths. By committing to a goal or achievement that you are trying to reach, you have some sort of obsession and that obsession will keep you from deviating because you have too much interest to give up on it.

Although everyone had something to say about the factor of belief and belief system and its effects, not all of them had concrete answers on that part. The only part that they all could agree on was that social media has a big role in building mind sets and changing mind-set because it is so easily accessible.

7. Discussion
Following the data gathered from our research, the impact of the research on international social work is that this draws the attention of social workers mostly on teenagers in the aspect of attachment, involvement, commitment, and Belief. Awareness should be created on the families in Sätra on the importance of positive attachment, interaction (that is, healthy communication and listening skills) and strong bond with their teenage children. Thus, social workers can advocate for training parents on ways criminality could be prevented among teenagers. Also, skills on how to train a child should be learnt by these families in such training. Awareness on the impact of involvement and commitment to positive activities in the community on teenagers should be created. Social workers should also create programs with the sole aim of raising crime free-teenagers in the community.

In our opinion, the more the teenagers invest and get involved into the community, the less chances are that they go against the societal norms and deviate. But for them to be able to do that, the responsible adults need to take the first steps for them in the sense that they need to be the ones to reach out to the teenagers. It becomes a lot easier when we can help the teenagers to find somewhere where they feel like they belong.
When we look at it from the perspective of social work, these findings can be of a lot of use. Social workers like the field agents for example, could use the theory/factor of involvement to guide teenagers in a path that leads to activities and ties to organisations outside of school that are socially accepted. Teachers could and already do a lot of them, the influence of commitment to give teenagers some sort of goal to strive to. Family and parents could use the theory of attachment to their advantage and try to create a bond/relationship with their children early on. Besides that, all teenagers in the world might not work the same but there are a lot of similarities for people that age wherever they might live. Considering that, these theories are not hard to try to apply around the world. The only outcomes of trying these theories are that you might put effort into it and get minimal results or you could help a lot of teenagers starting from an early age. Studies that can be done further internationally could also prove if these concepts work and how many teenagers respond to it.

7.1 Discussion based on study’s theoretical framework

Interpreting the research findings in the context of the Social Bond Theory provides valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of teenagers' involvement in crime in Sätra Gävle, Sweden. The four main components of the theory—attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief—highlight complex connections that broaden our comprehension of the phenomenon.

The theory's emphasis on emotional connections as protective elements is in line with the association that has been shown between strong relationships and lower criminal activity. The insight from the findings that teenagers having possible or cordial relationships with their families and classmates were less likely to participate in antisocial behaviour. Thus, social workers could take advantage of these findings by giving priority to family-focused interventions that promote healthy relationships and open communication, which will reduce the appeal of troubled peer groups.

Commitment, as a deterrent to teen criminal activities, finds support in the research outcomes. Teenagers displaying dedication to long-term goals exhibited lower tendencies towards criminalities. This knowledge can help social workers create goal-setting programs that provide teenagers the tools to put off short-term gratification in favour of long-term goals. Hence, the theory's claim that constructive activities take time that might otherwise be used for teenage criminalities, reflects the effect of positive involvement in reducing criminal engagement. Teenagers who were involved in clubs, volunteer work, or athletics displayed a lower risk of
engaging in criminal behaviour. This is consistent with the theory's assertion that prosocial activity strengthens resilience to criminal behaviour.

Belief systems, as reflected in the research, are instrumental in shaping teenagers' attitudes toward criminality. Teenagers who valued law-abiding behaviour and upheld society norms could be less likely to engage in criminality. This relationship reflects the theory's focus on the deterring effects of shared values. Social workers can use this knowledge to create educational programs that emphasise empathy and reinforce knowledge of the legal repercussions, which will help to develop a belief system that deters criminal activity.

7.2 Discussion based on study methodology

The qualitative methodology employed in this study, characterised by thematic analysis, proved to be a valuable approach for delving into the complex realm of teenagers' involvement in crime in Sätra Gävle, Sweden. With the help of this method, we were able to look deeper into the underlying motivations and causes that lead teens to engage in criminal activity, moving beyond simple numbers and statistics. In particular, the use of thematic analysis made it easier to spot recurrent themes and patterns in the participant narratives. This method provided a more in-depth understanding of the problem and was in line with the research's main goal of studying the complex aspects of youth criminal activity.

Although the qualitative approach has many advantages, it also has certain drawbacks. The findings might not have the widespread applicability frequently associated with quantitative research, despite offering valuable insights peculiar to Sätra Gävle. The results of the study may not be broadly applicable to other locations or adolescent populations because of its narrow geographic emphasis. The research's context-specific character emphasises how crucial it is to understand the results within the specific social and cultural setting of Sätra Gävle. The possibility of prejudice on the part of the researcher is yet another drawback of qualitative research. The interpretation of themes and conclusions is nonetheless impacted by the viewpoints of the researchers, despite efforts to reduce subjectivity and personal bias. This necessitates using caution when interpreting conclusions and suggestions from the study's findings.

Qualitative research is also characterised by its very small sample size. This enables a rich investigation of human experiences, but it could lack the statistical strength of more substantial
quantitative studies. The breadth and depth of the participant-provided material, which helps to create a more complex understanding of their viewpoints, balances out this drawback. Methodologically, the thematic analysis played a pivotal role in shaping the study's outcomes. We discovered common themes using this method, including the role of peer pressure, media exposure, family dynamics, and socioeconomic issues. Additionally, thematic analysis showed us how these themes are interconnected, offering light on how they interact and influence youths' decisions to commit crimes and possible corrective and preventive methods.

8. Conclusion

With the awareness of the increasing rate of criminal activity among teenagers in Sättra, Gävle, Sweden. This study sets out to explore reasons behind this. This study demonstrates the fact that the social bond theory explains the reason teenagers are getting involved and turning to criminality in Sättra. The absence of attachment, commitment, involvement and belief has been a contributing factor to this increase in crime rate. A good grasp and understanding of what the theory is all about, as well as its implementation is a sure way through which social workers can intervene and help teenagers in Sättra live a meaningful life.

The main reason for this study was to find some of the reasons that teenagers get involved in criminality, to explore some the factors from the environment and community that affects the teenagers in Sättra and what can be done to prevent deviant behaviour such as this. If we are to summarise the findings we have got, there are a lot of reasons for teenagers to get involved in criminality but some of the core reasons could be that there is minimal involvement of parents and family in a teenager’s life. Secondly, the teenagers have little to none involvement in the socially accepted activities and spends their time unsupervised. Thirdly, they do not have a goal or achievement that they are obsessed with and they are trying to reach. Another factor could be that their belief and values have decreased or been replaced in several ways.

8.1 Recommendations for future research

Following the results of our research, which suggests awareness of the increasing rate of criminal activity among teenagers in Sättra, Gävle, Sweden. The research revealed the reasons behind this and also pointed out that family plays a vital role in teenagers. It is therefore paramount that a research, which aims at exploring the effect of parenting style on teenagers, would be a good future research that would add an interesting discourse to the discourse.
Furthermore, ways to curb juvenile delinquency in Sätra could also be an interesting area for future research.

To enhance this study for future research, several strategies can be employed. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches would provide a more comprehensive perspective and reinforce results. It may be possible to gain a deeper understanding of how cultural influences interact with criminal activity by incorporating an extensive cultural investigation, such as anthropological components. Teenagers could be followed over time using a longitudinal viewpoint to reveal changing patterns. A full picture would be provided by enlarging the scope to incorporate stakeholder opinions from parents and law enforcement. A comparison with a nearby community could illustrate regional versus global influences. Utilising a trauma-informed lens and taking trauma into account as an underlying cause may produce insightful results. Also, teenagers could be empowered and data could be enriched by implementing participatory action research that includes them in the process. Cross-cultural insights could be gained from a cross-country comparative study. The study's depth, validity, and application would be improved by using these techniques, resulting in a more complex understanding of youth criminal activity. These approaches are perfectly in line with social work ideals, which guarantee ethical considerations, diversity, and client-centred procedures.
REFERENCES


Appendix 2
Interview Questions

1. Tell us a little about your view and experience on Sätra.

2. Tell us what you feel your role is in the community of Sätra?
   1.1. How do you think your role can help prevent teenagers from turning to criminality?
   1.2. What other actors can you see yourself collaborating with to work against these outcomes and try to prevent them?

2. What can you say about the teenager in Sätra?

4. How do you see the crime rate in this region, mostly among teenagers?

5. What are your views about teenagers’ involvement in crime?
   5.1. How is it in Sätra?

6. How does relationship with the family affect the teenagers? *(Attachment)*
   6.1. How about attachment to the community?
   6.2. Who are in the community that they commit to in your opinion?

7. Do you think that commitment can have an effect on teenagers' involvement in crime? If yes, commitment to what? What can these commitments look like? *(commitment)*

8. What are your views about teenagers' integration with religious groups? *(Belief)*

9. Do you think different parenting styles play a role in the path the teenagers choose? Why and how?

9. Do you think the environment around the teenagers has any effect on them?

10. What other actors do you recognise in Sätra that has an influence on the teenagers?
Svenska

Intervjufrågor

1. Kan du berätta lite om din syn och upplevelse av Sätra.

2. Kan du berätta vad du tycker är din roll i Sätra?

2.1. vad bidrar din roll med i Sätra och vart kan din roll vara som mest effective?

2.2. Vilka stora inflytanden kan du känna igen i sätra och vilka andra aktörer (personer/organisationer som har stort inflytande på tonåringarna) kan du se dig själv samarbeta med för att motarbeta tonåringarnas inblandning i den kriminella världen?

3. Vad kan du säga om tonåringen i Sätra idag?

4. Hur ser du på brottsligheten i denna region, främst bland tonåringar?

5.1 Hur är det i Sätra enligt din genrela syn?

6. Hur påverkar relationen till familjen tonåringarna?

6.1. Vad sägs om relationer till andra aktörer med inflytande?

6.2. Vilka andra aktörer kan tonåringarna ha relationer till i din åsikt och hur stor inflytande har de på tonåringarna?

7. Tror du att engagemang kan påverka tonåringars engagemang i brott? Om ja, kommentarer till vad? Hur kan dessa åtaganden se ut?

8. Vad är din åsikt om tonåringars integration med religiösa grupper? ser du stor inflytande på tonåringar som har ett tro eller värderingar som är starka i grunden? Vad tror du då är det som händer när de lämnar sina värderingar och går i andra riktningen?