Unconscious processes in multi-agency partnership working for protecting and safeguarding children: A psychoanalytic examination of the conception and development of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) project in an inner London local authority.

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PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE IN SOCIAL WORK AND

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

2015

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Tavistock

And Portman NHS Foundation Trust and University of East London

For the degree of Doctor of Social Work

And Emotional Wellbeing

July 2015

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Abstract

This study was set within the context of child protection and safeguarding in an inner city local authority. Its main aim was to explore the unconscious processes experienced by organizational representatives when co-located to provide multi- agency partnership work in children services. It acknowledged that a lot has been written about the rational challenges to multi-agency work. It then took a different dimension which focussed on the 'beneath the surface' issues in partnership work. The main research question was; whether an understanding and consideration of the emotional and the unconscious processes in organisations is the missing link in strengthening multi agency partnership working in safeguarding and protecting vulnerable children and their families.

Qualitative data from a two year ethnographic study is presented which was obtained using three research techniques; psychoanalytic informed participant observation, interviews and institutional documentary sources. The observations and narratives from the research participants provided a framework for exploring emotional experiences of being 'an individual, a professional and an organizational being' within an organization, interacting between and amongst others in a group and different subgroups.

The research confirmed the presence of unconscious processes at work which centred on individual and organizational defences. It revealed that multi-agency partnerships are often the context for a range of complex interactions between and amongst individual, professional and organizational aspects of working together. It also confirmed that collaborative structures need to foster boundary negotiation capabilities in order to sustain the survival of the partnerships. Traditional organisational and professional roles and general government prescriptions also need to adapt to new and challenging social problems and come up with context specific solutions.

Key Words:

Multi-agency work; MASH; Unconscious processes; Partnership work; Children's Services; Complex whole.

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List of Abbreviations

AD	Assistant Director
ADCS	Association of Directors of Children Services
ACS	Adult and Community Care
BCS	British Crime Survey
BNIM	Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method
CA 1989	Children Act 1989
CAIT	Child Abuse Investigation Team
CAMHS	Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services
CSC	Children's Social Care
CYPS	Children and Young People's Services
DD	Divisional Director
DI	Detective Inspector
DOH	Department of Health
GP	General Practitioner
HOS	Head of Service
HR	Human Resources
LA	Local Authority
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board can also refer to London Safeguarding Children Board
MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
MISPER	Missing Persons
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
NHS	National Health Service
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PPD	Public Protection Desk
RAS	Referral and Assessment Service
SMG	Senior Managers Group
SSD	Social Services Department
YOS	Youth Offending Services

i.   Acknowledgements

It was indeed a tough journey to get to the stage of completion and submission of this dissertation. Without the support of many people this would not have been a success story. I extend my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to my respondents; I am grateful for the stimulating, mature and intellectual discussions. I want to thank them for the generosity of their thoughts and for allowing me into their inner most feelings concerning their involvement in multi-agency partnership work and MASH.

I want to thank my former managers, Adesua Osime, Bob Bielby and Andrew Wyatt. I am truly grateful and greatly indebted. Without them agreeing to my study days and their encouragement for me to study 'the organization,' I would not even have embarked on this study program.

I would like to express my special gratitude to my supervisors Dr. Agnes Bryan and Professor Andrew Cooper for their consistent support and rigor, their patience, encouragement and guidance throughout the study.

To my niece, 'Little C' for proof reading and formatting, *ndinotenda Mwana'ngu!*

Finally and importantly I reserve special thanks to my friend, study partner and wife Ruth. She indeed was the biblical Ruth- the Mother, without her support and patience this study would not have been.

Thank you!

ii.   Statement of Originality

This thesis was completed solely in partial fulfilment of the Professional Doctorate in Social Work and Emotional Wellbeing at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation/ University of East London. To the best of my knowledge and belief the work in this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference and acknowledgement is made. It has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at any other institution of higher education.

C.R. MADEMBO

01.07.15

iii. Structure of the Doctorate

This dissertation is organised into ten Chapters as following;

Chapter One gives an introduction and a rationale for this study and an overview of the issues to be discussed. It provides in a nutshell the emergence of the MASH as a concept and what it intended to achieve. This Chapter also presents the research question and an outline of the objectives of the study.

Chapter Two reviews literature on multi- agency partnership working giving an insight into the theoretical perspectives underpinning the unconscious thinking at work. It highlights the rationale for considering the unconscious processes and thinking beneath the surface when partnership working.

Chapter Three focuses on methodological issues. It explains in detail from whom, where and what data was collected, how the data was obtained and analysed. It also presents the ethical issues I considered and observed before, during and after the research.

Chapter Four provides a descriptive summary of the key findings of the research.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven explore in detail three main themes which emerged from the research findings; 'Multiple roles and identities in MASH', 'Leadership and Authority in multi-agency work' and 'Relationships and partnership interactions in MASH.' These three chapters give a deeper analysis of the data gathered which included interviews with practitioners and managers within MASH, my observations during various meetings and professional interactions and my personal experiences of working in organizations and during the research journey.

Chapter Eight theorises on MASH as a concept and a possible new model for negotiating boundaries in multi-agency partnership work.

Chapter Nine offers some recommendations from my observations and experiences in MASH and presents suggestions on some specific aspects to consider when establishing a multi-agency safeguarding hub in particular or any multi-agency initiative in general.

Chapter Ten is the concluding chapter where I give my reflections on the whole research process by revisiting the broad aims of this study highlighting some limitations to the study and suggesting areas for further research in this subject area.

Chapter 1: Introduction

'The support and protection of children cannot be achieved by a single agency… every Service has to play its part. All staff must have placed upon themselves the clear expectation that their primary responsibility is to the child and his or her family…' (Lord Laming in Victoria Climbié Inquiry p17.92-17.93).

1.0 Transformation of Partnership working in Children's Services

In this Chapter I will set the context for this doctorate by introducing in broad terms the arguments for transformation in children's services multi-agency partnership work. I will present the multi-agency project I was involved in as the setting for my study and the basis of my curiosity to study what was happening in and around it.

The local authority I was working for participated in a new government initiative project called Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). It was aimed at co-locating different professionals from different agencies into one building to share information on child protection and safeguarding. The deliberations on the formation of this 'new' organization invoked in me an enquiring mind. I envisioned my role at the centre of its formation both as 'an insider,' an employee and a participant from one of the key agencies and as 'an outsider,' a researcher using self to access intimate details of what was going on. The opportunity presented by this project increased my curiosity and interest to review the dynamics of the work carried out by the multi-agency partners whom I was already working with. I wanted to examine what was happening both at the conscious, on the surface level and beneath the surface, at an unconscious level amongst the participants representing different agencies.

This research is premised on the idea that multi agency partnerships and partnership work transformation in Children's Services currently happening in the United Kingdom and probably in many other countries around the globe are inherently and inescapably characterised by complexity. An urgent need exists to uncover and

examine these complexities in order to gain a better understanding of the nature of these transformations.

Policy imperatives have initiated major service redesign initiatives across children's public services including for example, recent work in the United Kingdom countries and in the United States of America (USA) around full service schools, extended children's services and children's workforce remodelling, (Forbes and Watson, 2012). Forbes and Watson (2012:4) further argue that, 'in these and other polities globally, the redesign of children's services policy and governance has been characterised by the idea that, effective inter professional interagency collaboration is crucial in determining whether services to children and families will succeed or fail.' Thus new ways of conceptualising the thinking and decision making processes behind the policies and practices in multi-agency work are vital if transformations are to bring benefits to children, young people and their families.

Inter professional practice appears to be the holy grail thought capable of delivering 'effectiveness and excellence' in even the most challenging of circumstances (Agranoff, 2007). Moving beyond better coordinated services and greater cooperation has however proved problematic, (Forbes and Watson, 2012). Evaluative reports into children services redesign have suggested that practitioners find it difficult to translate the concepts of collaboration and partnership into practice (Whitty and Campbell 2004). Some authorities have described practitioners as allowing only a little cross fertilisation, being relatively entrenched in their attitudes and not deviating or altering their ways of doing things that much, (Sammons et al 2003).

Forbes and Watson (2012) argue that, these problems stubbornly persist despite repeated injunctions and directives by government to collaborate. I found this to suggest the need for a critical examination beneath the surface and explore the unconscious processes which unravel in partnership projects. A consideration of implications of inter and trans- professional workforce remodelling and

transformations including; new workplace relations, children's services locations and co-locations, information sharing and governance is required. Questioning the preparation of practitioners and agencies themselves, their fantasies and crucially the role of leadership and management in integrated multi- agency work in children safeguarding is equally vital. There is need to analyse the impact of this multi-agency partnership transformation on professional identities, changing knowledge, practice and make sense of the fluid, uncertain and less predictable kinds of professional power relations necessitated by and emerging as a result of the integration of children services through partnership work, (Forbes and Watson, 2012).

My aim was therefore to provide an alternative perspective that respects and draws on the diverse knowledge of what has been happening in the multi-agency partnership work but sought to examine and encourage debate on what, how and when it happens 'beneath the surface' in the 'unconscious' of the organizations and the professionals representing them.

1.1 The Multi -Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

My local authority with its safeguarding partners embraced the idea of establishing a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) project. MASH was a new initiative designed by the government to safeguard children and families at risk. MASH proponents argued that, 'it would provide a high level of knowledge and analysis of all known intelligence and information across the safeguarding partnerships to ensure that all safeguarding activity and intervention is timely, proportionate and necessary', (Collins 2011:1).

The conception of the MASH idea was initiated through the London Congress of Leaders with senior representatives from the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS), NHS London, London Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB), and Metropolitan Police Service, (Collins, 2011). This group looked at initiatives in London and around the country. The MPS conducted an internal scoping of good practice across London which then informed the group. The group

found that there was evidence that early intervention with children, families and adults can have a significant impact both in reducing harm and future costs.

There was also evidence that early identification of those at risk is intrinsic to making the most impact. However, the systems for identifying that risk at the earliest stage are very limited. For instance, the police generate an enormous volume of children referrals. These are initially researched against police data sets with over 95% referred onto Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) up to 48 hours later, (Collins, 2011). This could potentially swamp CYPS. There was often no clear linkage between the research of individual partner data sets to gather the full picture and so accurately identify and assess possible risk. This issue has been consistently emphasised in serious case reviews for children and adults over a number of years, (Laming, 2010; Munro 2011).

The MASH framework proposed to include the integration of partnership and police intelligence into a joint collation and assessment facility providing a "front door" for all referrals. Collins, (2011) argues that, using the various models that have been developed so far, it would appear that the co-location of personnel from each agency with the ability to interrogate their own data set is the most effective system. It increasingly promotes open and proportional sharing as the team develops. A key lesson is that fire-walling this team would make it easier for partner agencies in particular health and the police to share service users' personal data. Where this works well; the Unit takes the referral, assesses it against all the data sets within the fire-walled team, a decision- maker will then release a sanitised product and sign posts to the appropriate agencies for relevant intervention, (Collins, 2011).

At its establishment the MASH was intended to provide intelligence sharing within the safeguarding partnership in order for the following three key areas of activity using the combined knowledge to be delivered;

- Tactical safeguarding activity (information based decision making with regards to risk),

- Victim identification and prevention,

- Harm identification and reduction by location and individual.

Essentially the hub was expected to collate and analyse information that was already known within separate organizations in a coherent format to inform all safeguarding decisions. According to the local authority Working document, the principal decision maker remained Children's Social Care however all partners were to support this process by working together to provide the highest level of intelligence, knowledge and analysis to make sure that all safeguarding activity and intervention was timely, proportionate and necessary, (Collins, 2011).

1.2 Drivers for Change

From my experiences as a social work manager, the need for good partnership working is greater than ever before driven by recent political changes, budget cuts, a push for flatter management structures and a need to achieve greater efficiency within reduced budgets. Local authorities are facing a combination of challenges from a tough economic environment and increased public expectations for improved services. In 2010, the treasury advised that, 'the government's approach to public spending will not only be to live within its means but also to ensure that expenditure is focussed on protecting the quality of the key frontline services that are important to the public and that provide support to the worse- off in society,' (HM Treasury 2010:11). There can be no justification for spending public money on programmes and projects without considering the impact on the outcomes that people care about.

Bennington and Hartley (2009: 100) stated that 'recession requires a radical review and restructuring of governance in public services.' They advocated for more creative action between and amongst organizations across sectors with organizations in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors working together. It is from this background that a lot of changes are seen in local authorities

and their partners in the way they manage resources and in turn manage practice and work processes.

Glasby and Dicknson (2008), however argue that, partnerships can be crucial in delivering improvements in people's quality of life but can also bring risks as well as opportunities. Partnerships may not always deliver value for money (given the direct and indirect costs associated) while the complexity and ambiguity that partnership working entails can 'generate confusion and weaken accountability' (Glasby and Dicknson, 2008:2). The Audit Commission (2005) found out that areas such as leadership, decision making, scrutiny and risk management were underdeveloped in partnerships. The Audit Commission (2005:2) warns that 'local public bodies should be much more constructively critical about this form of working. It may not be the best solution in every case.'

Obholzer (1994) argues that, many large social systems not only handle the specific needs linked to their primary task but are charged unconsciously by the population to deal with basic human anxieties relating to life and death. People project their own primitive anxieties into the institution which then serves to contain them just as the mother contains the anxieties of her baby. Local authority social services are historically known as the containers of social anxieties in child protection and safeguarding, (Richardson in Tehrani, 2011). This study also aimed to discover how this was experienced within this new arrangement brought about as MASH.

Partnerships usually allow and enable individual participants the right of exit. According to Glasby and Dicknson (2008), for some partners, it is this level of flexibility and this right of exit that makes partnership an attractive proposition in the first place and the subsequent governance arrangements which strike an appropriate balance between protection, probity, room for manoeuvre and clarity of roles and responsibilities. A further question closely linked to the issues of risk and accountability is how best to ensure that individual agencies continue to meet their

moral and legal obligations once they have delegated day to day responsibility for delivering services to a partnership arrangement like the MASH project.

While some claim that partnerships are potentially a helpful way of responding to the needs of service users and to their desire for more co-ordinated holistic services, others see greater partnership working as leading to reduced choice and a greater concentration of power in favour of services rather than of service users, (Glasby and Dicknson, 2008).

An increased collaboration amongst welfare agencies offers the potential for more co-ordinated, better resourced and more meaningful approaches to service user involvement. It also runs the risk of reducing sources of support and opportunities for service users to voice their concerns should they be dissatisfied with services provided. I also wanted to know, *'…how the hub will deal with user complaints when each agency actually has its own procedures?'*

It has been argued that individuals bring certain concerns anxieties and conflicts specific to them when they join organizations. They may be drawn into particular work or particular organizations because their defences match aspects of the social defence systems of an organization they are joining, (Dartington, 1994; Roberts, 1994; Hinshelwood and Skogstad, 2005). It was interesting to explore this assertion as MASH was a new organization joining up many different organizations. I took an interest in how for example social workers felt working in the same team as police officers, and vice versa. It was interesting to witness and observe the projections and scapegoating taking place within the group of multi-agency professionals.

As these issues were deliberated on during the setting up of the Hub, I wanted to unearth some unconscious processes and emotional challenges for the participants and predict whether the shift from current practice would actually improve the outcomes for the service users or otherwise the change was only a way to avoid the

real painful issues in organizations about responsibility and accountability in containing anxieties brought about by community expectations on child protection.

Hirschhorn and Gilmore (1993) assert that, many organizations' historical patterns are established both to deal with the work and to defend the organization against anxiety. When these patterns begin to change considerable anxiety is unleashed, some relating to the uncertainties about the new patterns, some linked to surfacing issues that were kept out of awareness by the psychological contracts people had with one another and with the organization.

1.3 The Local Authority Multi Agency Partnership Arrangements

The primary legislation on safeguarding is the Children Act (1989) and the updated version, the Children's Act (2004). Section 10 of the Children Act (2004) created a requirement for children's services to make suitable arrangements for co-operation between the relevant partners in order to improve the wellbeing of children in their authorities' area. Statutory guidance for section 10 of the Act states that good information sharing is vital to successful collaborative working arrangements. Under this section agencies should ensure information is shared for strategic planning purposes and to support effective service delivery. It also states that these arrangements should cover issues such as improving the understanding of the legal framework and developing better information sharing practices between and within organizations.

The partnership arrangements of services for children in this local authority were overseen by the Children's Trust Board which was established in 2004. The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) which is independently chaired is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organizations in the local authority will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the borough and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do, (Working Together, 2006). The role and structure of the LSCB Committee is based on that laid out in the

Department of Health (1989, 1999, 2004, 2006)'s Working Together to Safeguard Children. The core objectives are set out in section 14(1) of the Children Act 2004 as follows:

a. *to co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, and*

b. *to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for that purpose.*

The role of the LSCB partnerships in dealing with current professional and organizational practices while emphasising the importance of integrated work, represents a significant challenge to their member organizations' normal working cultures and associated mind-sets.

According to Collins, (2011), the MASH concept was introduced to curb the 'silo' mentality that existed in the Children's Services sector where agencies would only apply their expertise on those cases where they were specifically required to intervene. The change of approach of which the MASH partnerships are one component, is towards a system of integrated services which by acting together allows access to a shared database and are evaluated as a whole rather than separately. This new approach generated some considerable challenges around the day to day working practice of the organizations concerned and required a considerable effort around culture change.

The Children Act (2004) sets out under section 10 a list of relevant partners to be considered in safeguarding and protection of children. These include; Councils (mainly Children and Adult Social Care and Housing), strategic health authorities (NHS in its different and various forms), education provisions in their various forms and the Police.

The MASH in this local authority co-located practitioners and managers from the Police Public Protection Desk (PPD), Children's Social Care, NHS Universal

Services (health-visitors also representing school nurses), Probation Services, Youth Offending Services, Adult Mental Health Services, Adult Addictions Services, Early Intervention and Targeted Services (EITS). The aim was to bring any statutory or non-statutory body with information of relevance to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and co-locate them in a designated building and anticipated that they would work as a Unit. A MASH was not meant to replace established child safeguarding procedures for investigation and remedy, (Collins, 2011).

I was involved from its conception and seeing through its development gave me an insider insight into how projects like this are conceived, the feelings and anxieties shared, the bargaining involved and how change would be finally accepted and implemented. Olbholzer (1994) observed that in looking at institutional processes it is obviously very helpful to have some inkling of what the underlying anxieties inherent in the work of the institution are. Given knowledge of the nature of the task and work of an institution it is possible to have in advance a helpful fairly specific understanding of what the underlying anxieties are likely to be. I went into this project carrying my own views and anxieties. I was not sure what this MASH entailed in terms of, '*…was I going to manage everyone coming, would they bring another manager, what would other managers in the Service say about it, or would they have a say about it, will we still be at the same level, if not who would I be, will I be good enough…and what if it fails?* I assumed that other professionals must have carried similar anxieties provoked by their participation in this initiative.

1.4 Research Objectives

Working within Children's Social Care, I was already observing several dynamics from the personal, professional and institutional levels amongst the organizational representatives. Different emotional and political negotiation skills were being employed by different organizational managers to get the best 'share' and positioning for themselves and their organizations. My objective in this study was to explore this process of inter-agency partnership working looking closely at the

individual, professional and institutional unconscious processes as representatives interacted and to examine the organizational cultures, fantasies and defences which impacted on multi-agency partnership work. I was also interested in finding out whether this was seen as a solution to issues always raised in child protection and safeguarding after every serious case review on child deaths such as inadequate communication, poor cooperation and lack of leadership amongst agencies, (Reder and Duncan 2004).

1.5 Primary Fieldwork Setting

The primary field work setting for this research was an inner city London local authority where I worked. I was a Social Work Team Manager in the Referral and Assessment Service which was part of the Local Authority's Children's Social Care Division. My Team was the 'front door' to children and families' social services and was responsible for receiving and triaging all childcare referrals into the local authority. The primary task of the work is guided by statutory legislation, the Children Act (1989, 2002 and 2004) and various policies and procedures. My Team was to evolve to become the MASH with all the partnership representatives based in it

1.6 Hypothesis and Main Research Question

I was a practitioner/ manager in the Department enmeshed within the new project MASH with the capability to observe, feel and get involved as an insider. These experiences when I looked in as an 'outsider', researcher, made me come up with a few tentative hypotheses from informally observing what was unfolding around the MASH project and subsequent individual, professional and organizational behaviours.

- Emotional and unconscious processes in implementing change in multi-agency projects have a profound impact on collaboration and partnership working.

- Co-location is a way of managing individual and institutional anxieties in child protection not a solution for the challenges encountered in multi-agency

partnership working.

- Unconscious individual, professional and organizational cultures, anxieties and defences are the main challenges to multi-agency partnership working in child protection and safeguarding of children.

From these hypotheses the main research question I was curious to answer was;

…is an understanding of the emotional and the unconscious processes in organizations the missing link in strengthening multi-agency partnership working in safeguarding and protecting vulnerable children and their families?

I was able to utilise mixed ethnographic research methods where I observed and noted in my research journal what was happening in this setting over a period of time. My work role allowed me to gain a close and intimate familiarity with the professionals and the organizations they represented and their practices through an intensive involvement with them in planning, establishing and implementing this multi- agency project for a period of over two years in their natural work environment. I managed to examine the multi- agency group's observable and learned patterns of behavior, customs and ways of working. Throughout this process I had to maintain a high level of awareness on research ethics. Researching in the organization I worked in presented its challenges. I will expound on the research methods in more detail in Chapter Three.

1.7 Timeline of Significant Events during Research Period.

The information presented in this study covered a period of over two years. The MASH project which became the focus of this study was mooted in April 2012. This was when I was seconded to the local police station to jointly screen and analyse referrals. Below is a chronology of the significant events during the research period.

April 2012:	I was seconded to the local police station to jointly screen and analyse referrals.
June 2012:	Discussions started amongst senior managers in the local authority with partners to form a MASH.
August 2012:	The first inter-agency meeting was held attended by 16 participants from 11 agencies. At this point my interest to study the dynamics happening in this multi-agency project was building so I began to keep a research log.
September 2012:	I submitted a research proposal to the University which was approved.
October 2012:	I formally requested permission to study in the local authority and the Assistant Director of Children Services who was also the Caldecott Guardian granted me permission.
November 2012:	Requested and granted permission by organizational representatives to observe partnership meetings
January 2013:	I made an ethics application to University Research Ethics Committee (UREC).
March 2013:	The Children Services was inspected by OFSTED including local authority partnership arrangements.
April 2013:	I received permission from UREC to go ahead with the research on condition that I clarified that no service users were being used as subjects.
April- June 2013:	Carrying out interviews and transcribing the audio information into notes.
May 2013:	The police moved into Children's Social Care building
June 2013:	MASH was officially launched.
November 2013:	Started to analyse data and constructing drafts with ongoing consultations reflecting on the research process.
July 2014:	First compilation of a rough draft

1.8 Conclusion

The aim of the research was to consider the unconscious processes in multi-agency collaborations and their impact on the success of partnership working. The place of emotion in organizational life, its relationship to thinking and its potential for insight was the basis for the study. The following chapters will show that individual actors and their organizations' emotions, feelings and anxieties have a critical and central role to play in this process. The study placed emphasis on those elements of experience that often remain unspoken and unaddressed even when they are at some level 'known' that is in the sense that they are present in emotional experience. The idea of this research is to be a stimulus and a challenge to those engaged in collaborative work whether as a practitioner, manager, leader, academic or just an interested professional to consider the beneath the surface issues.

Chapter Two: Multi Agency Partnership Arrangements

'…It's the organization's body you ought to be examining not mine Doc' (Morgan-Jones 2010).

2.0 Introduction

This Chapter engages with a variety of literature sources which lean towards what is mainly referred to as the 'Tavistock tradition.' It is mainly focussed on bringing together insights from psychoanalysis, group relations and open systems theory, to understand and address organizational dilemmas, challenges and disgruntlements presented by organizational representatives as individuals, professional role holders or whole organizations. It looks at key psychodynamic aspects to be considered in collaborative work such as group dynamics and various defences deployed by individuals which can impact on the setting up and subsequent functioning of a social enterprise such as MASH. Literature on management, leadership and communication in multi-agency partnerships is also reviewed. A psychoanalytic-open systems also referred to as 'system psychodynamics' (Neuman 1999; Gould, Stapley and Stein 2006), theoretical framework is adopted.

Literature searches indicated that there is a lot of information on multi-agency work and challenges to partnerships and multi-agency partnership work. There was however no indication that there had been a closer examination and exploration of feelings of professionals involved on why to this date poor agency work is still being highlighted as one of the main failings in serious case reviews, (Munro 2011). It is important to acknowledge at the onset that most of the multi-agency partnerships are run on New Public Management (NPM) principles of managerialism adopted from private business. This approach is based on enhancing efficiency, effectiveness and savings by applying a performance management regime which involves high levels of scrutiny, monitoring and inspections (Skinner, 2010). This way of working focusses on cognitive abilities, rationality and predictability and pays less attention to the emotional, irrational and unpredictable dimensions of human behaviour. In contrast, the main principle of welfare work is the importance of a holistic

understanding of human beings that encompasses all of these dimensions of behaviour (Ruch, 2005, 2010). The conflict between what managerialism entails and what social welfare is founded on was of particular interest to this research.

2.1 An Open Systems Approach

According to Collins (2011:2), 'the establishment of MASH was an efficient way of managing resources in child protection and safeguarding disciplines.' This was to be achieved through a supportive and enabling structural and organizational environment. However, this research also wanted to discover the role and impact of individual actors and their organizations' emotions, feelings and anxieties in this process.

The open systems theory attempts to provide a joined up way of thinking that relates the internal parts of the organizational body but also examines the relationship between the organization and its social, economic and political environment. This approach provides a rich resource to understanding the way the body of the organization relates to its parts, interrelates with its environment and is revealed in the way the organization is experienced consciously and unconsciously in the mind and the body. One feature of the open systems thinking is the ecological notion that organizations survive by exchanging goods, services, money, staff and experience with their environment by adding value and by relating in a marketplace with mutual interdependence, (Miller and Rice 1967; Gould et al 2006).

This framework not only necessitates analysis of the complexities of the environment and its changing nature, it also takes into account the history and stage of development of the organization in relation to changing values, demands, culture and economic requirements, (Morgan-Jones 2010). The MASH was a new organization being formed from and by existing agencies with already established histories in the ways they each delivered their services. MASH was to become a melting pot of various individual, professional and organizational beliefs in terms of

how child protection and safeguarding should be delivered and how each organization was to measure and view its own impact and performance on the boundaries of its mandate.

Such a process has an understanding of the ways organizations in current market conditions require delegation of authority to the edges of the organization where staff with a whole range of different experiences can deliver while retaining responsibility for articulating the spirit and missions of the enterprise, (Huffington, James and Armstrong, 2004). The open systems approach to exploring boundary issues suggests that the capacity of central management to entrust and resource both management and strategic tasks to the finger- tips of the organization is key to survival. This has been explored in terms of sub-contracting elements of work or flatter structures in organizations that delegate and support trusted authority more widely than is indicated in most organizational charts.

Open systems theory also describes 'sentience' the emotional bonding of work groupings in relationships that create trust, reliability and a common spirit. Esther Bick suggested subjective experience in observation as a resource in understanding some of the often unconscious social processes that operate in organizations, (Morgan- Jones, 2010). Such observations often take place at the threshold of organizations and reveal much about the way the institutionalisation of people and tasks takes place across the boundary of the organizations, a process that is simultaneously physical, emotional and social. I envisaged a two pronged or two tier 'sentience' as individual professionals had to experience the emotional bonding first within their own agencies and recreate those feelings in a new work group called MASH.

2.2 Unconscious Processes and the- Organization- in- mind.

In this research, I would concur with Obholzer in Armstrong (2005) who asserts that there is an urgent need to increase awareness of the importance of underlying emotional factors in the life of organizations. The importance of unconscious factors in the life and destiny of our social and economic institutions has to be recognised. These emotional dimensions of institutional functioning are a key factor in the life and death for that matter of organizations. They are in a sense the last 'frontier' that needs to be opened up for understanding and insight if we are to cope with the turmoil of the 21st century (Obholzer 2005).

The term 'unconscious' has been used in a variety of ways. Freud used it both as an adjective to describe the state of an idea or feeling and as a hypothetical system that is a place in the mind of the individual with certain repressed contents (Stokes, 1994). Freud also distinguishes between the descriptive sense of the unconscious (that which is presently not in consciousness but potentially available) and the dynamic sense (referring to feelings or ideas that are actively repressed or denied but which are constantly pressuring to becoming conscious, hence dynamic). Freud further distinguishes consciousness from the preconscious (that which is potentially available but currently not accessed by consciousness like those memories, facts and ideas which are not repressed, merely out of current awareness).

Western (1999) also defined the unconscious as the processes in the mind that occur automatically and are not available to introspection. They include thought processes, memory, affect, and motivation. He further asserts that, 'even though these processes exist well under the surface of conscious awareness they are theorized to exert an impact on behavior, (Western, 1999). According to Western (1999) there is empirical evidence to suggest that unconscious phenomena includes repressed feelings, automatic skills, subliminal perceptions, thoughts, habits, and automatic reactions and possibly also complexes, hidden phobias and desires.

Western (1999) further argues that, 'the unconscious mind can be seen as the source of dreams and automatic thoughts (those that appear without any apparent cause), the repository of forgotten memories (that may still be accessible to consciousness at some later time), and the locus of implicit knowledge (the things that we have learned so well that we do them without thinking).'

Nicholls and Liebscher (2010) argued that, the unconscious does not include all that is not conscious, but rather what is actively repressed from conscious thought or what a person is averse to knowing consciously. Freud viewed the unconscious as a repository for socially unacceptable ideas, wishes or desires, traumatic memories and painful emotions put out of mind by the mechanism of psychological repression. However, the contents do not necessarily have to be solely negative, (Nicholls and Liebscher 2010).

The unconscious is mainly recognizable by its effects. It expresses itself in the symptoms and the unconscious thoughts. Halton (1994:56) argues that, 'ideas which have a valid meaning at the conscious may at the same time carry an unconscious hidden meaning.' He gives an example of a staff group talking about their problems with regards to the breakdown of the switchboard which may at the same time be making an 'unconscious reference' to a breakdown in interdepartmental communication, or be a 'symbolic communication' about managers who have no room for staff concerns, (Halton, 1994).

In analysing and conceptualising the unconscious in organisations one theoretical model stood out, the 'organization-in-the-mind' (Armstrong, 2005). Organizations exist as an external reality shaped by task, structure and design but alongside this formulation is the enterprise that is actually created. There is the organization that is intended, the organization that actually exists in reality and the organization that exists in the minds of those who work within it. The interactions that occur within an institution may well differ from that which was designed. It is this second aspect,

Organization in the mind is the model an individual constructs in his/ her head to be 'the' organisation. It is an individual's perception of how activities and relations are designed, structured and linked up within self. It is a creation by oneself as part of their own inner world. My organization-in-the-mind was based on relying upon my inner experiences of the interactions, associations and the activities I engaged in which gave rise to images, emotions, values and responses in me. These consequently influenced my participation either positively or adversely to the setting up of MASH. 'Organization in the mind helps to look beyond the normative assessments of organizational issues and activity, to become alert to inner experiences and give richer meaning to what is happening to and around the individual participant,' (Hutton, Bazalgette and Reed, 1997:114).

Hutton, Bazalgette and Armstrong (1994:186) state that, 'the 'organization in the mind' is the mental picture of the institution in its context which is informing the individual experience, shaping their behaviour and influencing their working relations, both overtly and covertly.' To understand how the organization is perceived, it is important to understand how the unconscious operates.

James and Clark (2002) argued that, a significant and often overlooked factor in managing change relates to underlying anxieties and concerns that are frequently not dealt with appropriately. Emotions and emotionality in organizational change are important and a psychodynamic approach to organizational change enables an appreciation of organizations that goes beyond the dichotomy of 'rational' and 'emotional' to acknowledge their co-existence and co-dependence. Kets de Vries (1991) argues that 'emotions do influence how people work. With this understanding in mind, this research focussed on teasing out both the conscious and unconscious 'mental constructs' that were informing organizational representatives' perceptions and behaviour and the ways in which these might have illuminated or clouded the

more manifest organizational dilemmas and challenges the representatives were facing and the way in which these were being framed.

2.3 Group Dynamics in MASH

MASH was a formation of a group with its own new dynamics brought about by individuals and professionals coming from different organizations carrying real burdens from their personal, professional and organizational lives. Unconscious processes can easily manifest themselves in groups. Group dynamics are a source of individual and social anxieties, (Robert de Board 1978; Ruch, 2012).

To assist in understanding group dynamics, Freud (1922), posed some basic question;
1. What is a group?
2. How does it acquire the capacity for exercising such a decisive influence over the mental life of the individual?
3. What is the nature of the mental change which it forces upon the individual?

Le Bon (1960) said that the difference between individual and group behaviour comes from a 'sort of collective mind.' The group constitutes a 'new provisional being' made up of each individual member and in this way individual cells combine to form a new organism. He also said that in the group the distinctive, conscious acquirements of each individual falls away so that a sort of racial or collective unconscious emerges that forms the basis of the group's cohesion and actions. Other forces at work in the group said LeBon (1960), are those of 'contagion' and 'suggestibility'. He also explored the concept of group mind and said it showed a similarity with the mental life of children and primitive people.

Freud (1922:37) however poses two other interesting questions, 'if there is a collective mind, what is the bond that unites the group? If suggestibility is a factor in group behaviour akin to the situation in hypnosis, who then is the hypnotist in the

group?' In attempting to answer these questions, McDougall (1920:45) asserted that, 'emotional contagion is the most important process in a group, leading to the intensification of a group's emotions.' He called that, 'the principle of direct induction of emotion by way of the primitive sympathetic response.' McDougall (1920:45) viewed an unorganised group very unsympathetically and referred to it as excessively emotional, impulsive, violent, fickle, inconsistent and irresolute and extreme in action. He said that, 'all intellectual tasks should be withdrawn from group and dealt with by individuals, (McDougall, 1920:45).'

Freud found the concept of suggestibility, 'extremely unsatisfactory.' He argued that, 'there has been no explanation of the nature of suggestion; that is of the conditions under which influence without adequate logical foundation takes place', (Freud 1922:37). Freud introduced the concept of libido to explain group behaviour. Libido is the energy of those instincts to do with all that may be comprised under the word 'love' and argued that the binding force of a group derives from the emotional ties of the members that are expressions of libido.

Bion (1961) drawing from Kleinian ideas of infantile defence mechanisms takes psychoanalysis into the group context and in so doing develops a theory that would have considerable impact in the way groups and organizations can be understood. Lawrence et al, (1996: 28) described this phenomenon as 'a landmark in thought and conceptualization of the unconscious functioning of human beings in groups.' Bion (1961) suggested that groups operate simultaneously in two strictly contrasting ways based on distinctive mental states which he called 'basic-assumption mentality' and 'work-group mentality'. He believed that these mentalities determine a group's capacity to achieve its purposes. These terms refer to fundamental ways of thinking and feeling or avoiding real thought and true feeling which he believed determines the ability of group members to relate and to engage both with each other and with the purpose for which the group has formed. This understanding is fundamental in this study as MASH was a group which relied on its members to function and carry out the task.

According to Bion, (1961:173), the 'work-group mentality' describes the disposition and dynamics that characterize the life of a group to the extent that its members are able to manage their shared tensions, anxieties and relationships in order to function effectively; the outcome is a 'capacity for realistic hard work' (p.157). Where there is a shared understanding by all staff of the primary task and its complications, the actual work has the potential of remaining on task. A work group mentality in that instance will be operating. According to Bion (1961) in such instances there is a possibility for the full complexity of the task to be understood and different interpretations of the task considered and responded to in a thoughtful way.

'Basic assumption mentality' (Bion, 1961:173), by contrast, describes the state of a group that is taken over by strong emotions, anxiety, fear, hate, love, hope, anger, guilt, depression (p. 166) and has, as a result, lost touch with its purpose and become caught up in an unconscious group collusion. The outcome of this is 'stagnation' (Bion, 1961:128).

Bion was also clear that the two always co-exist in human interaction. 'Work-group functions are always pervaded by basic assumption phenomena' (Bion, 1961:154) but that one tends to dominate at any particular moment. The 'anti-task' or basic assumption mentalities are characterised by defensive behaviours that avoid confronting the challenging conditions that prevail and the anxieties they produce. One common manifestation of a basic assumption mentality is the tendency for individuals to resort to 'fight or flight' responses to perceived threats from organizational initiatives (Stokes, 1994).

There have been developments in the understanding of how to operate within working groups and basic assumptions in order to generate desired results. The implications of this relationship, both conceptually and for practice, are of interest to this study. French and Simpson (2010:69) suggest that configuring work group mentalities that parallel basic assumption behaviours that is work group

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dependence, fight/flight and pairing can encourage focussing on the positive dimensions of group behaviour. They propose in some instances to encourage a 'work group fight' stance as a way of generating an appropriate response to the implications of particular organisational changes. In this instance the leader would forge a positive alliance with some participants in the 'basic assumptions' group in order to establish and create resolutions to longstanding defensive positions adopted by participants.

2.4 Primary Task

According to Rice (1958: 32), 'each system or subsystem has however at any given time one task which may be defined as its primary task; the task which it is created to perform.' Rice (1958:32) asserted that, in making judgments about any organization two fundamental questions are worth of asking;
'What is the primary task…?
How well is it performed…?'

Rice (1958) further added that, the concept essentially allows people to explore the ordering of multiple activities they are required to perform. This helps in constructing and comparing different organizational models based on how they define their primary task.

The direction and institutional functioning of an organisation is based on its primary task. This makes it even more important for the organization to be able to clearly define its primary task. Where the primary task is clearly understood the levels of disputes are minimal. However, multi-agency partnerships such as MASH are more complex because they bring people with different primary tasks together to formulate probably a single and coherent primary task. This concept becomes a key element in member to member and leadership to followership interaction.

The MASH was to be based in the Children's Social Care's Referral and Assessment Service whose primary task was to discharge the duty of the local authority to child welfare and investigate concerns where there is cause to suspect a child may be at risk of significant harm. The primary task of its work is guided by statutory legislation, the Children Act (1989, 2002, and 2004) and various policies and procedures. This however, was not necessarily the primary task of the other agencies in the partnership network who were also struggling with change and had a number of challenges in meeting their own primary tasks such as cuts in resources resulting in imposed restructuring.

Osime (2010:28) writing about Serious Case Reviews in Children's Services, argued that, 'given the complexity of our primary task, which provokes intense anxiety in workers, there is both organizational and individual defences at play to defend against this or manage the anxiety the consequence of which undermines or inhibits 'new learning' change and professional and organizational progress.'

According to Menzies- Lyth (1959), some social systems are created as defence mechanisms against anxieties generated by the work. She discovered in her study in the nursing profession that these anxieties made managers and practitioners fail to recognise the distinctive characteristics of their primary task. This in turn had ramifications for service users, practitioners and managers alike. Menzies- Lyth (1959) also discovered that the managers and practitioners failed to embrace a holistic and humane understanding of the circumstances encountered by their patients. Their responses were therefore ineffective and worsened the situation as they generated additional anxieties. These anxieties and the defences against them meant that the definition of the primary task lost the essence of the actual work they were meant to do, that of caring. Ruch (2005) also argues that, it is the interpersonal dimension of the welfare organizations' end product that makes the primary task in those settings such a complex one.

Lawrence (1977) cited in Stokes, (1994) identified three specific perspectives on 'the task': the normative primary task, what we say we do; the existential primary task-what we think we do; and the phenomenal primary task, what we do, do. According to Lawrence (1977), the more closely aligned the normative and the phenomenal understandings of the primary task, the less defended, more 'on task' and 'productive' an organization can be. Hoggett (2006) however finds a problem with this approach. He suggests that, it is a contested and dynamic concept which transforms itself. He refers to 'primary dilemmas', constrained by political and societal influences with different stakeholders within the organization exhibiting different understandings of the primary dilemmas in their work.

Practitioners and managers in children's services are often confronted with situations where they need to maintain a delicate balance between the competing demands of care or control oriented practice from their various groups of stakeholders. In MASH, the challenge was envisaged to be the maintenance of the balance between the parent agency's primary task and that which was being generated by establishing a 'hub' of many agencies with competing demands.

Rice (1958), Miller and Rice (1967), Obholzer and Roberts (1994) and others have written about the danger of the primary task being infiltrated and corrupted by defensive processes arising from the work of the organization. It is important therefore that the key leadership task should be focussing the membership on the primary task of the organisation. The primary task should be constantly reviewed in order for it to meet the demands of a changing external environment and that the organisation also adapts itself accordingly.

2.5 Anxieties and Defences in MASH

This section focuses on those aspects in individuals and groups which happen in their unconscious and how they are acted out and responded to through certain

interactions which might have impacted on the 'smooth running' of the group charged with the establishment of the MASH.

In establishing the MASH, it was important to take cognisance of the anxieties participants brought to the table which had the capacity to derail the progress of the initiative. Hirschhon, (1988) noted that, as the risks of working grow, anxiety increases as well. In their efforts to reduce anxiety, people may create social defences that narrow their range of experience and understanding just when it should be expanding. Although the new technologies may increasingly integrate divisions, units and roles creating more complex relationships among them, people may compensate by seeing the work world as increasingly segmented.

It is from Klein's work that the concept of defences against anxiety originates. Within participants' narratives in this study there are substantial accounts of individuals managing considerable anxieties which appears to produce regression to behaviours and defensive strategies that were identified by Klein.

It was possible that organizational representatives in MASH found it easy to resort to ritualistic routines to avoid the pain of certain tasks confronting them. Hirschhorn (1988) argued that, 'rituals reduce thoughtfulness and by not thinking, people avoid feeling anxious.' Menzies (1959) called such rituals 'social defences', which work through such processes as splitting, projection and introjections. Like Menzies (1959) argued in her study of hospital staff, caught between compassion and disgust and unable to sustain both feelings with balance and continuity, the nurses welcomed depersonalisation to relieve themselves of such contradictory feelings. By splitting off their sense of personal authority and agency from their own experience and projecting it onto the social defences, the ritual of drug administration, they relieved themselves of responsibility for the patient's experience.

Through the linked process of splitting, projection and introjections the nurses lent their individual and collective authority to a ritual and allowed a practice they once

created to dominate them, which in turn authorised them to behave in a depersonalised way. Far from responding in contextually sensitive ways to particular patients, they only followed orders.

Faced with the reality of human pain as social care staff, we undergo stress that is difficult to understand or deal with further exacerbated by working within a culture of fear and blame. Hughes and Pengelly (1997) understand some of the formal and informal cultures in organizations to include defensive barriers against others; but in order to work together we must interconnect. Interconnection does not occur naturally; professionals within the partnership organizations had to be able to freely explore the process in which Ainsworth (1990) describes as a 'secure base'.

Rigid adherence to prescribed departmental procedures is the most immediate defence against anxiety and the fear of blame. It was possible for the practitioners across the partnership to use it as a shield from engaging with painful issues of change and make it become a defence against a non-caring organization. Everyone needed to cover their back by instigation of procedures and processes which were at times unnecessary. Ostensibly those procedures were designed to ensure proper scrutiny, responsibility and accountability but may also have served as defence mechanisms unconsciously intended to delay decisions but at the same time giving an impression of activity.

Bion (1961:173) asserts that, '…in the life of any group, work at the given task may be either hindered or promoted by the basic assumption mentality that is constantly active in the shared unconscious fantasy of the group.' Hughes and Pengelly (1997) also draw attention to Menzies' (1959) view that a common defence mechanism is the avoidance or diffusion of anxious responsibility for making decisions. One of the many social defence mechanisms for doing this is professional detachment. She goes on to say that a necessary psychological task for anyone entering any profession that works with people is the development of adequate professional detachment, (Menzies, 1959). The professional would have to learn controlling their

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feelings, refraining from excessive involvement, avoiding disturbing identification and maintaining professional independence against manipulation and demands for unprofessional behaviour.

Munro (2010) refers to the authoritarian professional mechanistically applying sets of procedures for managing the primary task. This is often attributed to one's lack of experience on what is required by the given task. To contain anxiety as such, sticking to procedures provides a sense of security. The conscious and unconscious tension between the requirements of professional detachment and the genuine need to undertake the task is a balancing act. Practitioners believe that by simply invoking set procedures the job is done without questioning what is informing this and denying the painful feelings that thinking about failure could arouse. According to Cooper et al (2003), one reason child protection and safeguarding is so risky to professionals is its politicisation and consequently the media attention it draws which creates a blaming culture and equally the very intense emotions which child abuse itself engenders in the human species regardless of personal or professional backgrounds.

According to Steiner (1993), fear of reality in individuals can make them create protective mechanisms which he terms 'psychic retreats.' This is when individuals actually believe that they can escape painful issues by simply ignoring them or not talking about them. In organisations, practitioners would just revert back to procedures as a way of avoiding confronting painful situations at work. The paradox of this is also that these very organizations that are charged with the protection of vulnerable people can be very punitive towards their own workers who fail to follow laid down procedures which is an outcome of the blame culture embedded in child protection work and its politicisation (Ferguson 2002; Munro 2005).

By definition organizational culture are the values, norms and beliefs that exist within an organization depending on its structure; managerial and operational systems. Most of the partner agencies within MASH including the local authority have

organizational frameworks which focus on hierarchy, inflexible rules and procedures, elitism and risk management by strict internal government procedures and by insulation from the external environment (Goffman, 1966). The implication is that this could unconsciously act as social defences inhibiting new learning and change.

Theorists such as Simon, Thompson, Galbraith quoted in Hirschhorn (1988) argued that all organizations face continuing uncertainties. They suggested that organizational routines, structures and processes to meet unpredictable demands for change are mechanisms for reducing uncertainty. Hirschhorn (1988) however argues that, because these theorists have not linked the experience of uncertainty to people's feelings of anxiety they have posed the issue of uncertainty too narrowly and have proposed solutions that rely on such rational methods as mathematical calculations and organizational design.

According to Morgan- Jones, (2010), when anxiety interferes with one's thinking, rational procedures get overcome by irrational processes. Morgan-Jones (2010) gives an example of how managers in the manufacturing section in an organisation would fight those in the sales department over inventory policy, one blaming the other for the gap between market demand and company supply. Their anxieties make them project their sense of failure and blame outwards often scapegoating those they must cooperate with to resolve the root causes of their problems. These bureaucratic practices which are the basis for most modern organisations clearly appear to be disguised forms of social defences. Hirschhorn (1988) adds that, 'excessive paperwork helps contain the anxieties of face to face communication, excessive checking and monitoring reduces the anxiety of making difficult decisions by diffusing accountability.'

Social defences can be healthy, enabling people to cope with stress (Halton, 1994). Most commonly they are unhealthy, like individual defences when they distance organizational members from reality, hinder their work, damage them in some fashion and prevent their adaptation to changing circumstances (Stogstad, 2000)

For the successful implementation of MASH to take place, it was important that there was change in both the behaviour and culture of professionals and agencies. Achieving real commitment to change and learning in a defensive and anxious climate is extremely difficult. Any admission of the need to change can implicate individuals and agencies in an ever increasing cycle of mutual blame and guilt (Lawlor, unpublished). It's important that organizations are able to manage and intervene in a system that is traumatized by its 'primary task' and at worst by significant events in its organization, (Hirschhorn, 1988).

2.6 Professional and Organizational Boundaries as a Defence.

People tend to set psychological boundaries to contain anxieties. It is clear that for a period of time agencies have been creating these boundaries against sharing information or rather using the human rights of people/ service users as a reason not to share information, (Lees, 2013). Other agencies create this imaginary boundary to separate their responsibilities in safeguarding to those of the local authority. The local authority in turn assumes the responsibilities as the lead statutory agency in safeguarding to contain the anxieties from other agencies and the community at large, (Osime, 2010).

Hirschhorn (1988) argues that, in classical systems theory the organization imports resources and information across its boundaries, transforms them into useful products or services and then exports them across the boundaries to customers and service users. The boundary separates the outer world of opportunities and challenges from the inner world of work and transformation. Theorists such as Simon, Thompson, Galbraith cited in Hirschhorn (1988) have defined the organization's boundaries as the point where uncertainty is converted into information and decisions.

Tavistock schooled theorists such as Trist, Jaques, Menzies, Rice and Miller made some ground breaking contributions in the 1950s and 1960s to our understanding of subjective boundaries (Hirschhorn, 1988). They argue that, when people face uncertainty and feel at risk, they set up psychological boundaries that violate pragmatic boundaries based on tasks simply to reduce anxiety. It cannot be an exaggeration to say that working with child abuse has a huge psychological impact on all involved even more heightened when a tragedy like a child death occurs. Our response is to build up defensive boundaries which if not attended to compromises learning influences on partnership workers. Working with the many dilemmas thrown up in complex cases is physically and psychologically demanding. The only way workers can remain focused on the primary task is to have a 'holding environment' to help support and militate against the unhealthy defences, (Winnicott 1965; Abram 1996). It can then be argued that MASH was being created to provide a holding environment for organizations involved in safeguarding and child protection.

2.7 Projective Identification and Splitting

According to Klein (1946), projective identification is an unconscious process where parts of self are psychically split off and projected into an object (frequently another person) that in some ways becomes identified with these qualities or parts. Klein suggested that projective identification is used throughout life and that sometimes it is the only way an adult can communicate experience from within their psyches. Splitting and projections are unconscious complex group dynamics which were important to understand in this study as they were to be experienced in a multi-agency collaborative initiative like MASH. Ruch (2012) argues that, it is not uncommon for practitioners to manage the anxiety their work provokes by criticising the capabilities of their manager. Similarly in an initiative such as MASH, some partners could blame the leader for intolerable aspects of the changes to a new way of practice and their own shortcomings and could find it difficult to respond thoughtfully to developmental feedback or constructive criticism.

Different disciplines and professions have different expectations on how they interact and intervene with their service users in single agency settings. In multi- disciplinary and multi- agency partnerships, differences are exposed as boundaries are broken down. Ways of working will seize to be implicit as common ground will have to be found. Communication in language understandable to all will be required and knowledge made accessible to colleagues from other disciplines and organisations.

Trowell, (1995) asserts that for management and leadership to be well developed, they require some understanding of the processes of splitting and projection. Splitting and projection involve an individual or group separating off unbearable feelings and locating them in others in order for the individual or group to continue to function. An understanding of this assists in resolving the disconnection which usually emerges between what needs to happen and what then actually does happen.

Managers are the main targets of projections from their staff however they are equally vulnerable to resorting to defensive splitting and projective behaviours. The consequence of these powerful dynamics is that splits can arise between the 'good' or 'easy' practitioners and the 'bad' or 'difficult' managers, or vice versa. This can easily result in the 'them and us' dynamics permeating group relationships, (Ruch, 2012). In such contexts, managers and leaders risk adopting rigid professional identities and exhibiting reactive responses that fail to recognise these prevailing dynamics and rise to the required levels required for their management role (Ford and Harding, 2007).

2.8 Identity

Forbes and Watson (2012) argue that there is need to analyse the impact of the transformation of children services on professional identities and changing knowledge, practice and power relations and to present new analysis that can more fully grasp and make sense of the fluid, uncertain and less predictable kinds of

professional relations necessitated by and emerging as a result of the integration of children services.

Cooper (2012) in Forbes and Watson (2012) alludes to the tension between the need for strong professional identities on the one hand and the dangers of these on the other. To protect professional identities from becoming blurry, merged and meaningless they require boundaries. Without proper boundaries there is risk of a form of fundamentalist backlash as professional disciplines seek to defend their identities they feel threatened by the mantra of multi- agency and multi professional working. At a broader level of analysis, Giddens (1994:85) described fundamentalism as 'a tradition defended in the traditional way', alerting us to the existential anxieties mobilised by perceived threats to identity.

Contemporary policy discourse casually assumes that professional identities have little substantive value in the first place other than as a means of protecting a set of vested interests. Professional protectionism and self-replication is certainly a problem but there also maybe a deeper value lying within the overprotected space of professional identity that we attack at our peril, (Forbes and Watson, 2012). He also added that one of the main anxieties shared by professionals within children's services is how they feel they are being asked to perform duties far from what they were trained to do. Health professionals feel they are now frontline child protection staff not preventative health workers; teachers feel they are being asked to become social workers; social workers feel like police and police feel like they have been split off from social services departments and marginalised on the child protection frontline. According to Cooper (2012) it might be a great idea placing social workers in schools but it is an idea which really needs time to work as staff from both sides adjust and learn.

Cooper (2012) in Forbes and Watson (2012:18) asserts that, 'there is always something impatient, hasty, pushy about policy change processes and then when change does not happen as magically and rapidly as the politicians and policy

makers are willing for it to happen something complex occurs, professional groups are accused of being resistant, inward looking, dependent, conservative and of guarding their vested interests.' What is not considered is that maybe they are exhibiting something just normal but requiring respect. They could be manifesting conflict about change or conflict about what they are being asked to give up which they value dearly and may as well be valued by the people they serve. Cooper (2012) in Forbes and Watson (2012:18) further argues that 'resistance to organizational change is one of those phrases that we often deploy in a lazy, thoughtless manner.' Halton (2004) has written about how we need the capacity to distinguish between resistance to change on the one hand and the desire to fight to preserve something valuable that is under attack on the other.

Strong professional identities have evolved not only for defensive and narcissistic reasons, they have evolved in the context of practitioners, researchers, professional teachers, trainers, theorists all collaborating intensively over long periods of time in pursuit of better ways of doing their jobs whatever that might be.

2.9 Managing Anxieties and Defences

The lack of emotional containment in a system (within the helping professions, such as social care, health, education) creates greater individual and organizational stress distorting the primary task of the organization through increased reliance on institutional defences. The concept of containment comes from the psychoanalytic work of Bion (1967) who focusing on the mother child relationship suggested that the mother contains and makes sense of the baby's emotional states which in turn makes them more bearable to the child. Knowledge and understanding of the unconscious processes assists in the containment and management of anxieties in institutions. These anxieties, if not contained, can produce powerful and primitive emotions which although frequently unconscious still have a powerful impact on organizational culture and workers within. This has a bearing at every level within partnership working because the nature of relationships and the containment offered

The conception and development of MASH certainly required the development, creation and emergence of certain roles and positions to move the agenda forward as well as managing and containing anxieties. Most managerial and professional positions have clearly defined job descriptions including the required competencies and experiences. Some are protected by professional and training bodies. Once in post there would be clear performance measurement and appraisal systems in place to determine success or failure. It is however difficult to have such clear-cut descriptions in collaborative and partnership working roles. To alleviate this problem, Agranoff and McGuire (2003) argued that management in collaborative settings should be realised as considerably different from that practised in conventional hierarchies. It demands different skills, abilities and behaviours to be effective in managing across boundaries and networks of organizations.

Mandell (1999:5) also adds that, 'collaborations require the use of different management styles and policy instruments than are used in more traditional public policy efforts.' Geddes (1998: 148) studying partnerships in Europe also points out that, 'those involved in partnership working require a specific set of skills to manage complex projects and promote communication and understanding between partners.'

In order to attract and retain suitable staff, local partnerships have to consider the implications for partnerships on career progression, training and development for their practitioners and managers. Jupp (2000) notes that, traditionally management training was mainly offered to those managing in hierarchical situations and contracting. He however advises that all public sector managers have to undergo management training in partnership and collaborative working. He emphasised developing, 'techniques for helping partnerships set clear objectives, understand cultural differences and review progress without blame' (Jupp 2000:31).

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Partnership work and collaborative arrangements require professionals who can span across boundaries of organisations and networks. Williams (2012:32) defines boundary spanners as, 'those especially valuable actors who thrive within collaborative policy arenas where approaches to management are materially different from those prevailing in other forms of governance.' A boundary spanner should have a high level of distinct competencies, skills, abilities, capabilities, traits and experience which enables them to perform their role across organizational boundaries. Williams (2012) asserts that, a boundary spanner should be able to transform themselves into a leader, an administrator, an entrepreneur, an interpreter/ communicator and an expert as the situation dictates. For the purposes of this research I will not separate this role from leadership. I would argue that a leader in collaborative work should have some basic traits of boundary spanning as a minimum.

Leadership roles in multi-agency partnership work need to be sensitive to management of difference. The collaborative setting becomes a melting pot for ideas from a variety of professional, organizational and social backgrounds where people assemble to pursue mutually beneficial agendas. Williams (2012) argues that, this requires a time investment for building an effective working relationship which considers and respects 'reality' from the perspective of others. These relationships are developed by being exposed to one another, exploring and discovering together what each other's organisation represents. When inter-personal relations are developed, participants can then start to search for knowledge about their responsibilities, roles, discover their accountabilities, identify their problems and learn of their cultures, professional standards, aspirations and their underlying norms and values, (Williams 2012).

Obholzer and Miller in Huffington et al (2004) argue that, 'leadership is essentially about the management of change both internally and externally to the organization and the establishment and maintenance of mechanisms that enable the two components to link and co-operate with each other at a pace of change that is

emotionally possible and realistic to both external and internal needs. Change that has its origins from external forces is difficult to wash away. Though for a time the existence of external pressure can be denied by 'turning a blind eye', (Steiner, 1985). Establishment of MASH was being pushed mainly by external forces to each agency. The agencies also unconsciously pushed each other both together and at times apart. Even those agencies who had some reservations would not want to come across or be regarded as the stumbling block or resistors to the new initiative.

To manage anxieties and defences participants also need to find potential areas of communality and interdependency. Effective communication (Hornby, 1993; Ferlie and Pettigrew, 1996), reciprocal understanding and empathy (Trevillion, 1991) are important characteristics for partnership relationships. Positive individual attributes such as tolerance, personability and diplomacy improve the ability to get on with others either individually or in groups (Fairtlough, 1994; Beresford and Trevillion, 1991). Trust building and promotion of trusting relationships is considered to be a vital component in working across agencies in partnership work. Various interpretations of this notion have been advanced. Its converse is recognised as a real danger with spiralling distrust unintentionally harming the collaborative efforts. Hardy et al (1998) argued that, 'power can be hidden behind a façade of trust.'

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has presented psycho-dynamic literature which sought to explain some of the unconscious processes which take place in groups. It has also highlighted that agencies within MASH will have to accept and undergo change at various and different levels of their working daily lives. This would include management styles for new group dynamics and new primary task, environmental change, new legislative framework to cope with new demands of practice and the emotional aspects of leaving their usual work stations and Teams. Senior and Fleming (2006) assert that organizational development involves people at all levels throughout the organization individually and collectively operating as drivers and engines for change. This

literature review shows that for a group to become effective, all group members must share in problem solving and in working to satisfy both task and group members' needs. My argument within this study will be that if the unconscious dimensions or the anxieties and concerns of the multi-agency practitioners are not sufficiently understood then one misses much that is important.

The following Chapter will tackle the methodological issues of the study expounding on how I designed and executed this research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

'…it also feels like psycho analysis in itself….I am having a conversation with myself...I am thinking of a lot of things...am I stepping out of role…?' (Chloe commenting on her single question narrative).

3.0 Introduction

My research experience started when I was seconded to spend about three hours per day for three months at the local police station. This was about six months before the discussions about a multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) had started. I was working on thresholds with officers from the police Public Protection desk (PPD) screening all the referrals received. I had access to Social Services database and we compared the information each agency held on individuals referred. The idea was to establish uniformity and consistency in thresholds for referrals and to test the quality of information each agency held on shared service users. Based on this small project I was involved in with the police, the senior managers from Children Services and the police volunteered to be part of the first pilots of a MASH. The Team I managed was to evolve to become the MASH and this opened up a lot of questions for me.

I was not sure what this MASH entailed in terms of, '*…was I going to manage everyone coming from other agencies, would they accept to be managed by someone from another agency e.g. the police by a social worker, was everyone really ready to give up their offices and join a multi-agency Team, will I be good enough?* These questions created different sorts of anxieties. *How are other agencies going to respond? How are my colleagues in Children's Social Care going to take it, sitting with different professionals every day? …was this project really the answer for the problems faced in multi-agency partnership work? …what do the practitioners in the partnership actually think? Do they really want to come to Social Care building…? How do they behave in a group and what issues do they bring?'* I was having these feelings of anxiety, trepidation, defensiveness, doubt, and excitement, but why? These questions created an inquisitive mind which aroused my

curiosity to want to study the unconscious processes in this multi-agency and multi professionals group.

This chapter outlines the methodology of this study. I will explain in this chapter how the research was designed, the methods and data gathering techniques utilised. It will also clarify the suitability of the strategies I used to gather the research data and the ethical considerations I made. This was a small scale, in-depth, ethnographic study, but one which has some potential for developing policy and could inform practice using practising multi-disciplinary and multi-agency workers' experiences.

3.1 Aims of the Research

The main aim of this study was to explore the unconscious processes experienced by organizational representatives as individuals, as professionals and as organizations who co-located to provide multi- agency partnership working in children's services. I started from the premise that, a lot has been written about the 'rational' challenges to multi-agency work. I however took a different dimension which looked at the 'beneath the surface' issues in partnership work. I wanted to question whether an examination of the unconscious processes in multi- agency working, exploring the 'complex whole' (individual, professional, organization) could reveal a further understanding into the challenges in multi-agency work with a view to improving and strengthening partnership working in child protection and safeguarding.

In designing this research, I identified my organization as the research site and the MASH project in particular, as my case study. I wanted to focus on what was going on in and around the organization. I mainly used an ethnographic methodology to gather the data. Ethnography is a form of qualitative research methods. Within this methodology, I identified three research techniques, psychoanalytic informed participant observation, interviews and institutional documentary sources. I will briefly describe the qualitative research paradigm in general and then discuss the

ethnographic methods and research techniques I used in the study in detail.

3.2 Qualitative Research

The methods used in this study fall under the qualitative research paradigm. Padgett (1998:1) describes qualitative research as 'a family of methods, encompassing terms such as ethnography and narrative analysis that involve paradigmatic assumptions that seek to discover explanatory theories.' This ensures that potential for applicability to other situations can enable comparability and transferability. The major characteristics of traditional qualitative research are induction, discovery, exploration, theory/ hypothesis generation, the researcher as the primary "instrument" of data collection, and qualitative analysis. Berg (2007) adds that qualitative research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things.

According to Bryman (2008:27) the qualitative research paradigm stems from an interpretive approach. It is holistic in nature and aims mainly to understand social life and the meaning that people attach to everyday life. Qualitative research produces descriptive data. It thus identifies the participant beliefs and values that underlie the phenomena. As a qualitative researcher I sought close involvement with the people being investigated so that I could genuinely understand the world through their eyes, (Bryman, 2008). The qualitative researcher seeks 'an understanding of behaviour, values, and beliefs in terms of the context in which the research is conducted (Bryman, 2008:28).' Qualitative research seeks to comprehend a given research problem from the viewpoint of the local population it involves.

Qualitative research is a group of methods which offer substantively different and complimentary information on the ways attitudes and experiences cohere into meaningful patterns and perspectives, (Hakim, 1983). This was appropriate because the study wanted to understand the views, feelings, emotions and experiences of participants during their involvement in the formation of the multi-agency

safeguarding hub project. The study was interested in the unconscious perspectives and opinions of multi-disciplinary practitioners and their managers on their experiences and the observed unconscious dynamics by the researcher of what was going on during this specified period with in the project.

Qualitative research methods are used for finding out about people's experiences, thoughts and feelings and rely on open-ended questions (Strauss, 1987; Bowling, 2002; Nestor and Schutt, 2012). Qualitative research looks for patterns and themes that evolve from research (Levitt, Butler and Travis, 2006). This is different from quantitative research methods which look at theories of patterns and test them in the real world so as to find an objective truth (Morgan and Krueger, 1993; Alston and Bowles, 2003). In qualitative research, themes evolve as opposed to quantitative methods where laws are tested (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Alston and Bowles, 2003).

My research was based on the concern of, 'how the psycho-social world is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced,' (Mason, 1996:4) and used qualitative methods to generate data, which are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which the data is produced. Qualitative research was chosen against quantitative research because qualitative research tends to assess the quality of things using words, images and descriptions whereas most of quantitative research relies mainly on numbers, which was not the focus of this study. Mills in Berg (2007:8) argues that, 'if humans are studied in a symbolically reduced, statistically aggregated fashion, there is a danger that conclusions although arithmetically precise may fail to fit reality'. Qualitative techniques allowed me to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their individual, professional and organizational lives, (Berg, 2007).

3.3 Ethnography

This study used ethnography as the main qualitative research methodology. I chose this methodology because of the data gathering techniques which enabled me to gain information within a naturalistic environment on the 'here and now' as events were unfolding. This was quite pertinent to the research question as I was mainly interested in capturing the raw feelings, emotions and views of participants about multi-agency partnership working.

Ethnography involves using multiple methods of gathering data. Berg (2007:19) asserts that, 'ethnography is a methodology based on direct observation which involves participant observation, fieldwork and case study.' The main difference from other ways of investigation is that the researcher does fieldwork and collects the data him or herself through physical presence, (Eberle and Maeder, 2011). Eberle and Maeder (2011) bring about the notion of organizational ethnography which they assert is doing ethnography in and of organizations. Van Maanen (1979) argues that the purpose of organization ethnography is to uncover and explicate the ways in which people in particular work settings come to understand, account for, take action and otherwise manage their day to day situation. This fitted well with what I wanted to explore, understanding the conscious and unconscious dynamics in multi- agency work. From the onset of the research process, I kept a daily log of field notes and a journal where I recorded my observations, views, feelings and reflections.

It has been argued that ethnography is not reliable, it is sensitive to the researcher's attitude and perceptions; if different researchers visit the same setting they will see things differently (Gobo 2008:22). Gobo (2008:22) however asserts that, 'this notion has scant empirical grounding as ethnographers observe behaviours and behaviours are more consistent than attitudes and opinions, behaviours are much more stable over time.' Following the notion that behaviours are stable, ethnographic research can be replicated where a precise research design has guided the research and that no significant changes have taken place between the piece of research and the next

(Gobo 2008). For me, a social constructionist approach to knowledge production entailed attending to the way in which the knowledge I was producing was shaped by the understandings I brought to the research. As an observer and interviewer, I was active in the co-production of observation and interview material with those who participated (Gilgun and Abrams, 2002; Hollway and Jefferson 2008).

Gobo (2008) further states that another criticism of ethnography is that the results are impossible to generalise because they are based on a few cases and sometimes only one case. According to Collins et al (2006:15) much of the best work in sociology has been carried out using qualitative methods without statistical tests. If the focus of ethnography is on behaviour and given that these are stable in time, it is likely that generalisations are possible. Obviously precise criteria must be followed in the choice of samples (Gobo, 2008).

3.4 Case Study

I employed a case study research approach by tracking the formation of a multi-agency safeguarding project in a particular inner London local authority. Thomas (2011:32) defines case studies as, 'analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the *subject* of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame, an *object,* within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates.' Stake (2003:23) adds that, this is a 'systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aimed to describe and explain the phenomena of interest.'

Case studies are both processes and products of the cases being studied. This was a single site case study based on the local authority I was working for. The decision to employ a case study approach was based on the assumption that I could use it with whatever method that I found appropriate (Stake, 2003). According to Creswell (2009:19), data collection in a case study occurs over a 'sustained period of time.' I

was immersed, studying in this project for a period of over two years. I was already an insider and it was pragmatic and practical to do. Yin (1993) describes a case study as an appropriate strategy for addressing the what, why, and how questions and contemporary issues in research which I predicted would emerge from this proposed new way of working in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

The case study approach provided me with an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of what goes on in groups of individuals and as professionals in multi-agency work. Case Study is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed (Feagin, Orum and Sjoberg 1991). Case studies bring about details from the view point of the participants using multiple sources of data. Yin (2009:41) asserts that a case study method is 'pertinent when research addresses either a descriptive question or an explanatory question and aims to produce a first-hand understanding of people and events.' This method helps a researcher to make direct observations and collect data in natural settings, compared to relying on 'derived' data (Yin 2009:41).

The case study method facilitated unearthing the relevant issues interviewees experienced due to their involvement in the MASH project both at an individual and organizational level. I used multiple sources of data collection to triangulate the information gathered. Information from the interviewees ranging from practitioners to senior managers from different agencies represented in MASH was augmented with the information from my own observations, my own experiences of working in partnership with other organizations and the existing documents. This triangulation of information enhanced the validity and reliability of the data I gathered during this study.

3.5 Insider Researcher Issues

My position in this research was that of an 'insider.' I was an employee (Team Manager) in the local authority I was studying; some of my views and actions as a participant were guided and influenced by my role and remit as defined by the employer. The project I was observing was going to be based in the team I was managing. I was already working closely with most of the respondents in this study some of whom I directly managed.

Many advantages of being an insider-researcher have been discussed in the literature. Speaking the same insider language, understanding the local values, knowledge and taboos, knowing the formal and informal power structures and obtaining permission to conduct the research, to interview, and to get access to records, and documents easily facilitate the research process (Coghlan, 2003; Herrmann, 1989; Rouney, 2005; Tedlock, 2000). My insider status can be clearly recognised as having multiple commonalities with most of my participants, such as shared culture, language, educational experiences, profession, work roles and responsibilities, agency relationships, daily activities and possible work lifestyle. For my research project, I made good use of these advantages in collecting the data. I could collect the research data every day of the week at any time of the day as an observer, which an outsider might not have achieved. This provided continuity for the collection of the research data. The continuity of data collection made it possible to collect more detailed and more versatile, and thus more trustworthy, research data.

I was aware of the stigma that, insider research heightens subjectivity that might be detrimental to data analysis and even collection. Adler and Adler (1987: 85) asserted that the distinction between researcher and participant has 'traditionally existed more strongly in theory than in practice' and that 'objectification of the self has occurred in the analysis rather than the fieldwork.' Although emphasis on "objective" data has been replaced with focusing on the advantages of subjective aspects of the research process, (Adler and Adler,1987: 85), being an insider is not without its potential

problems. In Adler and Adler's (1987:73) discussion of complete member researchers, they suggest that in this 'ultimate existential dual role,' researchers might struggle with role conflict if they find themselves caught between "loyalty tugs" and behavioural claims.' In my research journal, I wrote, *'…I was the central focus of MASH in terms of being the person to manage it… it was to be an improvement of my current team… I felt I could not be separated from it.'* Asselin (2003:70) has pointed out that the dual role can also result in role confusion when the researcher responds to the participants or analyses the data from a perspective other than that of researcher. She observed that role confusion can occur in any research study but noted that there is a higher risk when the researcher is familiar with the research setting or participants through a role other than that of researcher.

One of the challenges was that some of my participants appeared to have particular assumptions about what they should tell me during my interviews. For example one of the participants I line managed took this as an opportunity to 'complain' about what she was not happy with, *'we are not involved in how these decisions are made* (Laura).' Or was this rather me being defensive to deem what she was saying as 'complaining', because of my prior knowledge of her disposition? Watson (1999) and Armstrong (2001) acknowledged similar feelings. Watson addressed this issue in relation to her interpretation of the text and analysis. She stated, 'I still remain unclear whether this is my interpretation of an actual phenomenon, or if I am projecting my own need . . . onto my participants (Watson 1999:98).' Armstrong (2001:243) added, 'at the same time, my empathy and enthusiasm for a subject dear to my own heart may have kept them from considering certain aspects of their experience.' I also felt that because most participants knew how I felt about MASH, they found a way to respond which appeared to support my feeling.

I was privileged in understanding my participants' daily professional activities and their roles, responsibilities, and the facilities available to them. I was aware of the respondents who could be referred to as 'strong,' 'challenging', 'articulate' or 'weak' characters, some strong views held on organizational policies and approaches,

observed interpersonal relationships for participants in the meetings and which characters were likely to dominate. I was aware that some participants could knowingly or unknowingly try to hijack the research process by putting across strong and political views about their organizations and the MASH itself.

Some of my participants felt that *'I was one of them and I would understand better how they were feeling about what was going on in the organisation* (Research Journal).' Dwyer and Buckle (2009:58) however noted that, 'although this shared status can be very beneficial as it affords access, entry, and a common ground from which to begin the research, it has the potential to impede the research process as it progresses. It is possible that the participants will make assumptions of similarity and therefore fail to explain their individual experiences fully. It is also possible that the researcher's perceptions might be clouded by his or her personal experiences and that as a member of the group he or she will have difficulty separating it from that of the participants. This might result in an interview that is shaped and guided by the core aspects of the researcher's experience and not the participant's.' This was evidenced in some narratives where I felt that some participants tried very hard to 'second guess' what they thought I wanted to hear, or what they felt was 'useful for my studies' rather than how they were actually feeling about the subject matter. I noted in my research journal about one interview from a police officer where I said that, *'…it was stale devoid of emotions, with no range...as he tried to be very matter-of- fact with me which is not what I was asking for.'*

During the research period, information exchange never stopped with my respondents as we were working together, meeting in various other groups other than MASH and with some operating from the same floor. I constantly had spontaneous conversations with my respondents who were my peers. At times I was caught off guard with questions like, *'…how are your studies going?'* or rather *'…how do you think MASH is going…?'* a similar question I would have asked them in the interview. These spontaneous conversations enriched my data as it also showed me that my respondents were authentic and cared about what was happening around

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the subject under research. This was also challenging. I wrote in my research journal, '*…halfway through my data collection, I struggled to understand my role as a researcher, because I found it very hard to separate it from my workplace role and this was exacerbated by my participants seeing me primarily as their colleague rather than the researcher. I was daunted by a number of difficulties that were unfolding in my own thinking as I continued with interviews and observations.*'

As an insider, knowing the personalities of participants facilitated the interactions between us. It assisted me in steering the responses towards the research questions. I knew some personal and professional issues some respondents had with the idea of MASH. I wanted to hear their side of the story but at the same time I did not want the organisational politics to take over the research process itself. Knowing what was happening in the partner agencies as an insider helped me to give meaning to implicit messages and provide or seek clarification. I also noted that some information was withheld to me as the respondents were not sure which side I was on, on certain issues. On one occasion one respondent after saying something he felt was controversial, was very anxious about anonymity and confidentiality. The challenge was always guaranteeing anonymity without distorting the quality of data contributed.

Although working as an insider allowed me to access in-depth information both formally and informally, I encountered some challenges because of the sameness that I shared with my participants. I felt I had some over-familiarity with the research context and was equally entangled with research participants. Takeda (2012) argues that these challenges and issues are mostly generated through a researcher's positioning in the research process. For me, the insider position had challenges because of the nature of my ethnographic methodology, which emphasised understanding the emotional and unconscious world of my participants and making sense of their "lived reality."

Entanglement refers to my involvement with my participants' everyday professional activities during the period of data collection. It can be defined as being over-involved (van Heugten, 2004), engaging in 'over familiarity' (DeLyser, 2001), having 'over-rapport' (Miller, 1952), or even 'going native' (Kanuha, 2000). Being entangled with my participants generated both positive and negative outcomes. The advantage is being close to the data sources. It allowed for a more in-depth and careful observation of research participants which included learning more about simple details of their everyday professional activities by listening to what they said unguarded, observing their body language, their interactions etc. Also, it is important to note that if I was merely observing them without being entangled, I might not have been able to obtain some of the in-depth nuances to understand what was happening around them and in the unconscious.

Being entangled with my participants and sharing common experiences led me to encounter role ambiguity in my research journey. Role ambiguity is associated with role duality (being the researcher and the colleague/ worker), and role conflicts (doing research work and helping with participants' work), which are often claimed to be part of an insider-researcher's journey (Coghlan, 2001, Coghlan & Holian, 2007). Although role ambiguity benefited me in terms of developing particular research skills, it also made my data collection challenging. There were times when I was requested to chair the partnership meetings, which as a researcher I was also observing. At times I felt entangled in the clarity I needed from participants, whether it was for the MASH project or for my research project. I also felt that sometimes I brought issues raised by participants in the interviews to be resolved in the meetings. I also struggled with some issues which were raised by participants who was my supervisee and felt the edge to bring the issues into supervision. I wondered whether to step back because of the role confusion I was experiencing. Was I asking questions as a researcher or was I now stepping into team manager role.

As an insider, the problem is not just that the researcher may not receive or see important information. Another risk may be that the insider-researcher gains access

to sensitive information. To conduct credible insider research, insider-researchers must constitute an explicit awareness of the possible effects of perceived bias on data collection and analysis, respect the ethical issues related to the anonymity of the organization and individual participants and consider and address the issues about the influencing researcher's insider role on coercion, compliance and access to privileged information, at each and every stage of the research (Smyth & Holian, 2008).

Insider problems also arose as practitioner/ researcher because some preconceptions about issues and solutions could not be avoided. At times I was also pushed to a position of defending the status quo or being overzealous about change. Moral dilemmas arose in the building of trust because the respondents knew and it was also re-emphasised to them that I was a practising social work Team Manager therefore information which raised child protection or such practising concerns would not be concealed. This might have resulted in respondents withholding some vital information. This was however minimised by an overemphasis of the fact that this was an academic piece of work whose results could also improve the ways of working in the local authority and the use of the single question narrative strategy meant that respondents said what they wanted to say voluntarily.

I used this insider knowledge only for the purposes of managing situations. Some of the participants in this study were quite emotive about the different challenges they were experiencing in their organizations in particular and life in general which they carried with them to MASH meetings. This was also evident in the narratives and even *'the way some emails were constructed...'* What the research wanted to understand was whether some of the responses and content of the contributions to discussions were prompted by personal, professional or organizational experiences.

To mitigate on some of the challenges highlighted, a reflexive stance towards the researcher's own experiences was essential, and the intention was to use research supervision and research peer groups in this way. Richardson (1997), in sharing her

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research journey, explains her notion of understanding the researcher's 'own self' before understanding 'others' (participants). Ellingson (2009) believes that describing the complexity of the research process and explaining the degree of reflexivity are important principles in qualitative research. These two views suggest that understanding my insider issues and explaining the complexity of what I was embarking on were an important part of becoming reflexive in my research journey. I aimed to reflect on issues and experiences that were emerging in the research journey in order to enable me to lessen my biases and increase the trustworthiness of the research process.

Hinshelwood and Skogstad (2005: 83) commenting on increasing the trustworthiness of observation findings, suggested discussion of the findings in a group as traditionally done with infant observation when the 'research instrument can be widened from 'single mind' to a 'group of minds'. Cooper (2007) cited in Foster (2009: 129) holds that, 'the psychoanalytically trained 'thinking mind' will need the help of other equally sensitized minds to unlock and realize the potential of the material. Thus the clinical research supervisor or peer supervision group becomes an extension of the psychoanalytic 'research mind.' Both my doctorate supervisors were experienced organizational consultants and their value was immense. I also brought my material to group supervision sessions where I met with other doctoral students' once per month.

3.6 Data Gathering Techniques

The most recent serious case reviews (Victoria Climbié and Peter Connolly) have put child protection and partnership working in safeguarding of children under a lot of scrutiny and stress leaving professionals with increased anxieties. Hollway and Jefferson (2008:28) argue that, 'that anxiety is inherent in the human condition specifically that, threats to the self creates anxiety.' Mobilisation of defences against anxieties is done largely at the unconscious level. That process of defending against anxieties has a significant influence on people's lives including their actions and

relations. It means that if memories of events are too anxiety-provoking, they will be either forgotten or recalled in a modified, more acceptable fashion. In research these defences can affect the meanings that are available in a particular context and how they are conveyed by the respondent to the researcher who are both 'defended subjects,' (Hollway and Jefferson 2008:29). Techniques which contextualise the lived experiences of the researched and connect them to the research questions were identified and utilised.

3.6.1 Psychoanalytic Informed Participant Observation.

In the past two decades organizational observation has been developed as a psychoanalytic tool using some of the framework from infant observations. As in infant observations the purpose is to develop understanding of subject rather than recording scientific truths (Obholzer, 2000). Participant observation was one of the three techniques I used to gather data. Participant observation as a data collection method falls within the qualitative research paradigm. Its aim is to gain a close and intimate familiarity with a given group of individuals and their practices through an intensive involvement with them within their natural, cultural environment usually over an extended period of time, (Bryman 2004).

Kumar (2011:140) defines observation as, 'a purposeful and systematic way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place.' He further notes that observation is appropriate in situations where full or accurate information cannot be elicited by questioning because respondents either are not cooperating or are unable to detach themselves from the interaction. Kumar (2011) identified two types of observation, participant and non-participant observation.

I was a 'participant observer' in this study who attended most of the partnership meetings for the establishment of MASH. At the time of the research, I had been in the department for three years so I had a reasonable amount of organizational memory and knowledge of its functions. I interacted with various professionals

involved in safeguarding and child protection within the borough and around the neighboring local authorities. I also attended London MASH Steering Group Meetings attended by representatives from all local authorities in London. I took notes during my observations for a research journal. My texts were usually written in the first person and featured dialogue, emotion, and self-consciousness which placed me within the context of the project. It was about putting a point across on my different assumptions and opinions about what was happening around me and why it was happening. I tried to express and situate certain thoughts and feelings to particular events and activities in time within the progress of MASH.

Psychoanalytic informed observations can provide unique evidence of a group's behaviour in different circumstances and illuminate its workings. There could be surface issues (conscious) such as allocation and management of desks and sitting space, computer systems and financial resources. It could also reflect depth issues (unconscious) such as the effect that working with particular partner agencies could have on the group's functioning. By paying attention to the counter transference issues as a researcher I could gain insights into the unconscious of the group providing further data on the research question. Hinshelwood and Skogstad (2005:22) define the task, 'the observer endeavours to keep an eye on three things; the objective events happening, the emotional atmosphere, and ones' own experiences', the whole are of what in psychoanalytic setting would be called counter-transference.'

Counter-transference is a term which was coined by Sigmund Freud to describe the 'feelings generated in the analyst as a result of the patient's influence on his unconscious, (Freud 1910:144).' Winnicott (1947:50) further asserts that, 'the data of countertransference provides useful information regarding the patient and what is going on in the analytic process.' Like in treatment, counter-transference constitutes an inevitable and an integral part of the research process. In the research context, I have used counter-transference to refer to all the feelings that I as the researcher experienced during the research interview session with my respondents. They

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This method offered me an opportunity to explore and share my own feelings and emotions about what was going on in the MASH as a participant. I was enmeshed in the project for more than two years, observing the dynamics of multi-agency working with the intention of unearthing the unconscious processes and experiences of professionals when they participate in implementing a joint multi-agency project. For research purposes, the participants were recognised as the experts of their own experiences. My aim was for them to also benefit directly from the research process as they were supported through the data gathering techniques used, to express, analyse and reflect on their own experiences and to make changes that could improve the project in particular and their work life in general as they saw fit.

My intention was to stay very close to the emotions and feelings of individuals during the creation and establishment of this multi-agency co-located team of multi-disciplinary professionals in the local authority. I wanted to observe how each particular professional and agency 'actually' felt about sitting together and sharing the information. I wanted to witness their interactions, experience their cultures, splitting in professional roles and identities. I wanted to see the sort of conflicts, individual and organizational defences and anxieties they presented when establishing this single point of entry for referrals about vulnerable children and families.

As one of the Social Care managers driving the formation of the MASH project, I was able to gain a close and intimate familiarity with the other professionals and the organizations they represented as well as 'the- organization- in mind' they had. I observed their practices through an intensive involvement with them in planning, establishing and implementing this multi-agency project in their natural work environment.

I examined the multi-agency group's observable and learned patterns of behavior, customs, and ways of working. I focused on the meanings of behavior, feelings, emotions, anxieties, defences, language, and inter-actions of this culture-sharing group and logged them in a research journal. My role as a Team Manager in the local authority and part of Children's Social Care's working group on planning and implementation of the project was also examined both as an insider and an outsider. I was an 'overt participant observer' where all the observed's informed consent and authorisation was sought right at the beginning of the planning for the project. I was also mindful of the impact of my presence and my own contributions in the group.

Kumar, (2011:142) notes that, 'one major disadvantage of direct observation is that an observer maybe biased in his observation and therefore the interpretations and conclusions drawn from the observation may also be biased.' It is important to note that in this case the mind would only see what it is comfortable with. My own anxieties could have influenced what I saw, heard, listened to or felt. This was however part of the material to be analysed.

3.6.2 Interviews

My interest and focus in this study was about capturing the 'internal' and 'subjective' dimensions of occupational experiences of multi-agency practitioners. This led me to select biographical interview method which is both intensive and in depth. I wanted a method that allowed me to access participants' frame of relevance including information that maybe hidden or defended or not even obvious to the participants themselves. The fundamental proposition in psychoanalytic theory that anxiety is inherent in the human condition requiring frequently unconscious defences also suggested an approach that could manage or give insight into beneath the surface material (Huffington, et al, 2004).

I used modified versions of the Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) and free association narrative techniques. The advantage of a narrative approach,

according to Wengraf (2001: 115), is that, 'it conveys tacit and unconscious assumptions and norms of the individual or of a cultural group.' I became interested in a biographical approach to research because it relies on the interviewer keeping their intervention to a minimum and relies on a narrative being elicited from the participant. I was also mindful that as an insider researcher this would not place too much pressure on the respondents. Hollway and Jefferson developed the "free association narrative interview" (FANI) using an open framework of questioning to access the participants frame of meaning. They suggest commonality with the method of storytelling and the psychoanalytic method of free association (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000).

Hollway & Jefferson, (2000:37), suggest that by eliciting a narrative structure from participants it is possible to engage with levels of concerns which go far beyond day to day awareness, accessing a frame of understanding which is probably not visible using a more traditional method. They explicitly draw from Melanie Klein's theories of psychoanalysis in relation to defences against anxiety suggesting that conflicts in the psyche impact on the positioning of subjects and the discourses they invest in. The free association techniques ask respondents to say whatever comes to mind. My main question to the respondents was; *'…could you tell me about your experiences in MASH so far…you can start from anywhere you feel comfortable starting from?'* As a psychoanalytic interviewer I was eliciting 'the kind of narrative that is not structured according to conscious logic, but according to unconscious logic, that is, the associations following pathways defined by emotional motivations rather than rational intentions.' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000:37).

BNIM is a model which explores peoples' lived experiences through biographical narrative interviews: essentially, this means in practice that open narrative questions are asked of participants, who are thereby encouraged to talk freely about their lives. In this approach participants define their own frame of relevance. Rather than being asked to respond to an imposed framework of questions, participants have the freedom to follow their own thought processes, their own associations to the initial

question without restriction. The tracking of personal perspectives and perceived values, through eliciting narratives of personal experience, can also allow the subjective dimensions of a respondent's experience to be explored (Wengraf, 2001). I felt at the time that this was critical. I wanted to understand, not just if people struggled in role, but how they made sense of it for themselves and what other internal dimensions or biographical experiences were informing their current professional experience.

The BNIM was appropriate to research on professional issues because it is concerned with clarifying both evolving situations and evolving subjectivities by exploring locally-historically 'situated subjectivities'. This is done by eliciting self-biographic narratives and interpreting them by way of clear procedures which involve thinking about the historical context of the life and of the interview interaction, (Wengraf, 2010).

Wengraf (2010) also asserts that, BNIM, through its focus on eliciting narratives of 'past experience' rather than (just) explicit assertions of present (or remembered) 'position', facilitates the expression and detection of implicit and often suppressed perspectives and practices in the present as well as the expression and detection of perspectives, practices and counter-narratives at various moments in the past. 'Consequently, BNIM is particularly suited for retrospective and ongoing longitudinal process studies of complexity, since it asks for accounts of earlier and ongoing experiences and particular incident narratives (PINS), (Wengraf 2001:19)'

Narrative research methods including life history interviews have gained in popularity as social scientists increasingly recognize the value of subjective data in social research (Bowling, 2002; Rutter et al. 2010). However, Rutter et al. (2010) also argued that life history interviews have rarely been utilized to inform public policy in the United Kingdom because they are time-consuming to conduct, transcribe and analyse. Several authorities have noted that time constraints and costs mean that only small samples of respondents are interviewed. Research that is based on a

small sample can also be viewed as unreliable (Rutter et al, 2010). When I transcribed the data from my eight respondents, they were each averaging 15 pages. Sifting through the data during analysis was equally a challenge which in economic terms might not be deemed cost-effective.

However, the biographic narrative method afforded me an opportunity to get closer to the lived experiences and the subjective culture of my respondents, the staff groups they belonged to and the sort of 'organizations in mind' they work for and would have created through the MASH. I chose this technique because in a pilot already done for an assignment on the Doctorate programme, I had found this to be a very 'emotionally powerful' method which presented a lived experience of the respondent. The data was rich in emotions and feelings, presenting a respondent's state of mind and the impact of the researched subject matter at that particular moment and in history. The respondent was sobbing and struggling to hold back tears, there were changes in her voice modulation, her sitting position and demeanour provided more material about how she felt about the subject matter being researched more than what was being narrated. This was equally experienced in this study and all respondents commented on this 'opportunity and safe space' provided to them to reflect on their experiences. This technique corroborated information I was gathering through observations.

This approach linked well with the systems psychodynamic perspective. BNIM is an approach that both allows for the 'psycho' and the 'societal' to be represented without either being privileged or neglected (Wengraf 2001:49). It is also a method which allows for consideration of issues which may appear to have been avoided, or which indeed become visible and relevant through their very omission from a narrative.

Narratives thus construct stories of lived experiences within the narrative dimensions of time, place, and personal-social relationship (Miyahara, 2012). In critical social work, the purpose of narratives is often to "give voice" to marginalised or forgotten

individuals or groups, to listen to their stories and give them the possibility to speak from their perspectives, (Reissman and Quinney, 2005). One of the respondents, on how his contributions were being viewed in his agency said, *'… and I do not think that was intended by my seniors...so I am not really aggrieved by it but just the frustration, really, that I would want to be involved... something more and engaged in concrete delivering something... but that's not the position I am in and there is frustration for me…'* Reissman and Quinney, (2005) have suggested that, 'social workers deal with narratives all the time: when they hear clients' stories about their situations and try to persuade colleagues and governmental bodies in written reports.' In this study, I was more interested in seeing, hearing and feeling the experiences of the respondents beyond the narrative.

Wilks, (2005:1) notes that, 'the stories that service users tell us and our reinterpretations and retellings of them form the warp and weft of our working lives. Yet, despite these narratives, which bound and shape our professional experience, social work has, until recently, had little space for stories in the analysis of practice.' Wilks (2005: 1) considers social work as a conversation, 'we are a story-telling lot, we social workers'. The model of social work as a conversation is based on three stages of practice, namely; engaging with the service user; exploring and deconstructing stories which may be theoretically and conceptually 'saturated'; and working with service users to re-author stories (Wilks, 2005). I wanted to listen to my research participants who were organizational representatives in MASH. By listening to their experiences and understanding their 'perspectives,' that 'perspective' was to assist me in 'unpicking' the unconscious issues.

Atkinson (2002) identified three guidelines for narrative inquiry. First, the researcher should not judge or analyse the storyteller but instead should focus on establishing connections and examining the personal relevance of each story. Second, the life story can stand independently in offering insights into the human experience and, third, each life story reveals something about life. I chose narratives because they contain people's perceptions and often their own interpretations of meaning derived

from lived realities (Polkinghorne, 1988; Personal Narratives Group 1989; Reissman 1993).

Narratives offer data that have already been interpreted by the narrator before the researcher even reaches the data analysis phase of the research process (Reissman, 1993). One respondent commending on the project and the co-location of the police said, *'…I think I did say that why the rush but is it to do with really genuinely wanting to expand or to find…this PPD need to be out of accommodation urgently and also probably a style of management where it is quite hierarchical… that's probably down to people's cultures…'* This statement appeared to me to be full of assumptions, interpretations and perceptions from a 'perspective' which I could not ignore in analysis. For example, Reissman (1993:5) claimed that, 'narrative analysis has to do with how protagonists interpret things, and … systematically interpreting their interpretations.' After examining the significance of narrative inquiry, Lawler (2002:254) concluded that 'the truths people produce through such stories are not "truths" as conventionally understood by positivists: nevertheless, they do speak certain "truths" about people's (socially located) lives and identities.'

On the other hand, Squire (2008) notes that unlike many qualitative frameworks, narrative inquiry offers no automatic starting points. She suggests that clear accounts of how to analyse the data as found for instance in grounded theory and in Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis are rare. Squire, (2008:4) argues that, 'narrative enquiry offers no overall rules about suitable materials or modes of investigation or the best level at which to study stories.' Despite the above divergent perspectives, I chose the narrative approach as the main approach for this study so as to experience not just how stories are structured and the ways in which they are retold but also to be able to understand how they are consumed or understood by professionals and how narratives are silenced, contested or accepted (Squire, 2008). In this way narratives are not only descriptive but are constitutive of the self and identity and are therefore handled sensitively to ensure the participants are valued in the analysis of their stories, (Holloway and Freshwater, 2007).

I conducted eight interviews using BNIM procedures. Interview sessions were divided into two parts. At first, a carefully constructed question was asked, or SQUIN (Single Question aimed at Inducing Narrative) for short. This question is aimed at inducing a single narrative and places the decision about the 'importance' of selected material on the participant, thus seeking to reduce the influence of the interviewer. It also gives permission for participants to speak in an open ended manner without the pressure of the interviewer obstructing or deflecting them with further questions. However, as Hollway and Jefferson (2000) point out it is not an easy stance to take and yet, in terms of psychoanalytic understanding and BNIM technique, it is imperative to allow the structure of the interview to arise from the participant themselves. This 'free-formed improvising' (Wengraf 2001:27) by the participant allows access to a different level of insight through the structuring, however apparently random, of the narrative.

The second part of the session was aimed at expanding the narrative of participants. Whereas the first part provided a rather overarching report of experience, the second part of the session through careful questioning allowed for, and was aimed at, more detailed 'particular incident narratives' (PINS) emerging. Drawing from information provided at stage one by asking narrative based questions and these strictly in the sequence of topics and words used by participants, it encouraged elaboration on the descriptions provided in the first part of the session while maintaining the individual gestalt or internal logic of sequence presented at the first stage of interview.

3.6.2.1 Sampling

Through purposive sampling eight respondents were selected from decision makers and operational staff in different agencies. I deliberately chose a sample of people who represented characteristics known or suspected to be of key relevance to the research questions. To protect the identities of the respondents I have used pseudonyms and altered their actual titles and used more generic terms. They included; a very senior manager from Children's Social Care, Business Systems

Manager and Triage Information Officer from Children's Social Care, A senior manager from Adult Safeguarding, a senior police Detective and a Detective Constable from Metropolitan Police, an Adult Mental Health practitioner and a Senior Health practitioner from NHS Universal Services.

My observations in the MASH assisted with the identification of these interviewees as I wanted to follow-up and corroborate some of the data I was recording from observations. Participants in this sample were individuals carrying different anxieties, had different personalities, with different and varied professional qualifications and experiences and they also carried different organizational mandates and responsibilities, (see 3.5.2.2 and Table 1 for respondents). I selected specific respondents for the purpose of this study who could give insights into their involvement with this multi-agency project. Among them were those I regarded to be drivers and those I perceived as resistors to the change being proposed from what I was seeing in action. The participants were interviewed by way of narrative techniques.

The advantage of the purposive sampling approach was that focus was on the research questions and a targeted approach to the contributors to the study. The disadvantage could be questions about the reliability of some of the data and researcher bias into choices of interviewees and subsequent qualitative interpretations of data. The researcher therefore remained focussed on the importance of the validity of the research findings and interpretations (Alston and Bowles, 2003).

3.6.2.2 Research Interview Participants

I interviewed eight respondents for this research. I have used pseudonyms to protect their identities. Below are my own constructions of the eight main respondents in this research in the order they were interviewed. This is purely based on how I experienced them and my personal perceptions of who they are. I deliberately left

Respondent 1

Laura Obrien (LO) was one of the practitioners in Children's Social Care. She worked in my Team as a triage officer under my supervision. She is a black British woman who appears to be in her early fifties. She claims to be very proud of her Jamaican heritage and mentions that at every given opportunity. She was the first participant I interviewed in this research and she struggled to understand my interviewing techniques, (BNIM) as she preferred dialogue. She however opened up and provided an insightful account of her feelings about MASH. In her view its purpose was mainly to provide accommodation to the police *'who were going to be homeless in a few days...'*

Respondent 2

Bethy Charles (BC) was a senior health practitioner from NHS Trust. She has been based within Children's Social Care for about eight years on secondment. She had a wealth of experience in working within a social work setting with social workers. She was supervised by one of the social care managers. She gave the impression that she had worked within the borough for several years. Bethy is a black British woman with a Jamaican heritage who appears to be in her mid-fifties. She speaks with a tinge of Patois accent. She came across as very passionate about her profession and defended it at times *'quite aggressively and which was construed by others as being resistant to change'*

Respondent 3

Chloe Samuels (CS) is a Black British woman of mixed parentage. She looked about fifty. She was the ICT specialist for Children's Social Care. She was drafted in to support the technical side of setting up MASH. '…*I think she is a perfectionist...once she starts, she never finishes, as she continues to fine-tune to excess…'* once commented her line manager.

Respondent 4

Collin Goodman (CG) was a senior manager in Adults Social Care responsible for protection and safeguarding of vulnerable adults. He was very astute and intellectual. He always attended the partnership meetings representing Adult Social care and *'fought their corner to be admitted'* into MASH. He would ask when ACS will be included in a live MASH in every meeting. He was very committed to joining and developing the project but faced resistance both internal in his organization and externally within MASH. The MASH lead kept on reminding him that, *'adults…not now'.* After some reflections during this interview, he did not attend four consecutive meetings.

Respondent 5

Julia Barnes (JB) was a Detective Inspector (DI) in Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). She was the head of the Public Protection Desk (PPD) and Missing Persons Unit (MISPERS) in the Borough. She came across as a white middle class woman in her early fifties who spoke with a well-polished accent. At the time of the interview, Julia had secured another job in another police department in a different local authority and was now preparing for her departure. She came across as being very driven and was one of the drivers of the project. She really wanted to see MASH launched before her departure.

Respondent 6

Alex Walters is a white male who appeared to be in his late fifties. He was the most senior member of staff from Children's Social Care in the MASH. He was responsible for safeguarding and child protection. He was also the man charged by the local authority to lead the creation of the MASH. In his own words, *'the divisional director said Alex this is your project, deliver it…'*

Respondent 7

Daniel Griffin (DG) was an Adult Mental Health Practitioner who had experience from working in both children's and adults services at senior level. His post was jointly funded by Health and Adult Services but seconded to Children's Social Care. He had been in this post for more than three years based in the Children Services building.

Respondent 8

Paul Brown was the Acting Police Sergeant from PPD. He was to be my counterpart on the police side in MASH. He came across as very determined for success but at the same time somehow limited by the culture of his organisation on how much initiative he could take. He was to *'refer to my DI'* on almost every issue he was asked. His narrative came across as that of someone who did not want to be caught out or stray out of line.

Table 1

Respondent	Pseudonym	Title/position	Agency
Respondent 1	Laura Obrien (LO)	Triage officer	Children's Social Care
Respondent 2	Bethy Charles (BC)	senior specialist health practitioner	NHS Trust
Respondent 3	Chloe Samuels (CS)	ICT specialist	Children's Social Care.
Respondent 4	Collin Goodman (CG)	Adults Services senior manager	Adults Social Care
Respondent 5	Julia Barnes (JB)	Detective Inspector (DI)	Metropolitan Police Service (MPS).
Respondent 6	Alex Walters (AW)	Children Services senior manager	Children's Social Care
Respondent 7	Daniel Griffin (DG)	Adult Mental Health Practitioner	Health and Adult Services
Respondent 8	Paul Brown (PB)	Acting Police Sergeant	Children's Social Care.

3.6.3 Institutional Documentary Sources

I also used official documentary sources in this study. The use of documentary evidence was a means of enhancing the understanding in this case study through the ability to situate contemporary accounts within an organizational context, (May, 2001). Documentary sources allowed comparisons to be made between my interpretations as an observer of events and those recorded in official documents by the organization relating to those or similar events, (May, 2001). May (2001) further argues that, documents can tell a great deal about the way in which events are

constructed, the reasons employed as well as providing materials upon which to base further research investigations.

I found that documentary sources can be very wide and varied. For the purposes of this study, I mainly concentrated on reviewing official statistics, organizational reports on safeguarding and multi-agency work, policy documents mainly from the local authority intranet and official correspondence pertaining to MASH and minutes of the MASH monthly partnership meetings. I also reviewed some national and local policies on child protection and safeguarding such as Department of Health (1989, 1999, 2004, 2006)'s Working Together to Safeguard Children and the Children Act (1989, 2002, and 2004).

3.7 Data Analysis

I used an 'ongoing consultation model' to data analysis in this study. I relied heavily on the research seminars and supervision as the main support network for analysing the data more so as I had been 'an insider' to the research material generated in the study. Information from participants was obtained verbatim through audio recordings and hand- written notes during the interviews which I then transcribed as narratives. I had also kept a research journal of my observations which I transcribed mainly in first person narrative to form a story of my experiences. I presented the transcripts in the seminars to other doctoral students and supervisors. I also had one to one supervision with my study program leads where the material was analysed. These sessions assisted me in unearthing the underlying issues within the transcripts and the inter-subjective dynamics going on between me and the research participants particularly as I was still working in the research site with some of the research participants.

According to Wengraf (2010) BNIM advocates the use of research panels. The development of the panel method of data analysis where a researcher presents data extracts to a group of colleagues and invited experts has now become a common

approach, (Wengraf, 2010). I also met with and discussed my research data with colleagues in my social work professional network mainly from work and other academic institutions (one of my friends was a doctorate student at Royal Holloway University and my line manager who is also a process recorder was teaching at Kingston University). The consultation meetings were important to me, as I continued to be challenged academically and they also produced new angles and lines of enquiry which I followed. The role of my supervisors was essential in moderating and guiding the process.

From the panel discussions, I employed a framework approach where I created a matrix of emerging themes from all the data gathered. Framework is described as 'a matrix based method for ordering and synthesising data (Ritchie et al 2003:55).' The matrix was a template I created through a number of questions generated from the main research questions and recurring notions emerging from the data gathered. I subjected the data to these questions and established how much the data answered those research questions I had at the beginning. An example of the questions used was;

- *What sort of anxieties and defences seem to be in the minds of the participants,*
- *How do agencies/ participants' perceive their current (from their agency) primary task, how is the primary task of this new organization (the hub) thought about and what seem to be the barriers to embracing it?*
- *What do I learn from the data and my own log about leadership, from individuals, the group and organizations?*
- *What fantasies did participants have about the other agencies e.g. health on police, Children's Social Care on health, adult mental health on Children's Social Care?*

With these questions in hand, I trawled through the transcripts of all respondents and notes from observations picking out what I felt were answers to those questions categorising them under different themes. I then further analysed looking for specific

'unconscious' issues being exhibited by participants in the 'hub' under those themes. My analysis was also based on emerging issues for what I termed the 'complex whole,' (individual, professional and organization). The evidence had to be found in the data gathered from these interviews, observations and organizational documents.

Direct quotes from narratives and common ideas were used to formulate patterns of experiences. The analysis entailed creating categories or themes that emerged from the responses of the subjects. Similar notions were grouped together in a matrix forming different themes which I then subjected to detailed scrutiny applying clinical knowledge, experience from group relations and psychoanalytic theory from literature reviewed. Group supervision at the University remained an integral part of this process.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) warn that time is required to produce a well-grounded analysis, while Miles and Huberman (1994) caution the researcher against reaching a premature closure. In heeding this advice, my process of data analysis started from when I had finished the first interview and continued throughout the coding and writing stages until my final draft. This provided the basis for me to test the hypotheses and for drawing conclusions.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The data gathering methods I employed have some distinctive and some shared ethical dilemmas. I have discussed in detail previously about my position as an insider researcher where I had to be aware of the impact of my role to my research participants. There were also other wider ethical issues I had to consider. As a qualified and practising social worker, I was bound by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and British Association of Social Workers (BASW) code of practice and social work ethics. I had to uphold and promote my participants' human dignity and well-being, respecting their rights to self-determination, treating

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each one of them as a whole and also identifying and developing their strengths when debriefing and giving feedback, (BASW, 2012).

I also aimed to uphold the British Sociological Association (BSA) Statement of Ethical Practice which includes the following; ensuring informed consent, ensuring anonymity, privacy and confidentiality, voluntary participation, honesty and avoidance of deception or, misrepresentation among other considerations such as consciousness of the special power of the investigator, coding names and identities of respondents in all notes and records as well as building trust with respondents, (British Sociological Association, 2002).

I adopted a reflective stance throughout this study knowing and understanding that I am also a product of the field being studied with my own views about multi-agency partnership work and I had created my own 'organisation-in-the-mind' of the MASH being developed. I remained aware of the advantages and challenges of researching the organisation I worked for.

I was also aware that the issues central to this research were emotive as they involved re-living and re-visiting what could have been painful experiences for some respondents. Stanley and Wise (1993) strongly recommend that emotions of both the researcher and participants' should not be ignored. I also experienced intense emotions during the interviewing process listening to the narratives which might have influenced or got me influenced by the material received from respondents.

The main method to elicit feelings and emotions in this research was free association narratives and BNIM. It was difficult for me to envisage how far a respondent will go with the information they shared or released to the researcher when they are in 'free flow' and emotionally overwhelmed. The research question itself had the potential to invoke some suppressed feelings from childhood and other socio- cultural experiences. However, the use of single question narrative as the main strategy allowed the participants to choose what information they wanted to say and at what

stage they wanted to say it. I also offered all the respondents a free session of debrief. It is worth noting that all the eight respondents took up the offer and they found it useful to reflect on the information they had shared and how they were feeling about sharing it. For some it came as relief that they had actually shared that information and those feelings and emotions. This in a way also generated more useful data for me which needed increased care and sensitivity on how I would use it, if I should use it for the research.

3.8.1 Research Approval

The MASH was approved at Local Safeguarding Children Board meeting in June 2012. The first main meeting of the agencies was in August 2012. I started gathering and tracking this project for a period of almost two years. Minutes and discussions of all meetings, observations and any other relevant information of interest was recorded and stored in journal form which I kept securely throughout the research period. Written authorisation was obtained from the Assistant Divisional Director of Social Care (see Appendix 3: CYPS Permission to Carry out Research in the Local Authority) who was the leader of the project and Caldecott guardian for the local authority children and adult services. I prepared a research proposal for this study which I submitted with the ethics application to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). I received permission from UREC to go ahead with the research on condition that I clarified that no service users were being used as subjects, (please see Appendix 4: University Research Ethics Committee Approval).

3.8.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Social Research Association, (2003:39) advises that, 'social researchers need to remove the opportunities for others to infer identities from their data. They may decide to group data in such a way as to disguise identities or to employ a variety of available measures that seek to impede the detection of identities without inflicting very serious damage to the aggregate dataset. Some damage to analysis is

unavoidable in these circumstances, but it needs to be weighed against the potential damage to the sources of data in the absence of such action.'

To protect the identities of my respondents I altered their actual titles and used more generic terms. The coding was such that each respondent was assigned a pseudonym for both first and surname which had no link or resemblance to their actual names, (see Table 1). During data gathering, I deliberately left out any detectable biographic information or questions about the respondents as I felt it reduced anonymity and increased the risk of identification. I also did not want to know much about their personal lives to prevent any awkwardness in our working relationships as I was an insider researcher. I only used what they disclosed in their narratives and my observations of their interactions to construct who I thought they were (see 3.6.2.2). All the interviews were conducted at the times chosen by the respondents in the Children Social Care building. I strategically chose interview rooms away from respondents' work stations to reduce chances of identification.

3.8.3 Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation

The issue of informed consent is paramount in any discussion of ethics. Informed consent refers to a prospective research participant being given as much information as is needed for them to make a comprehensive decision about whether they will participate in the study or otherwise (Scott and Marshall, 2009). I had two sets of research participants, those I sampled for interviews and the others I observed mainly during multi-agency meetings.

I gave out letters to all respondents to interviews seeking their explicit informed consent. To guard against some respondents feeling implicitly compelled to participate due to my insider- researcher status and power dynamics at play, I prepared and presented a research pack to respondents explaining the research process and seeking their written consent to participate. I explicitly stated that their information would be used for research and academic purposes only, (Appendix 5:

Request for Consent from Individual Respondents and Appendix 6: Individual Signed Consent Form from Respondents). Participants were advised that they could withdraw from taking part at any stage and may also decline for their information to be used even after the research interviews were concluded. Only relevant questions to the study were asked. I ensured that the questions asked to the interviewees were appropriate to the research and the questions were formulated in a sensitive manner.

For my observations, I had a general agreement from multi- agency representatives attending operational and strategic meetings. An announcement of my interest to study the MASH and my request to observe them was made to all agencies participating at the working group meeting of 14/11/2012. Their permission was recorded in the minutes, (see extract from the minutes, Appendix 7: Minutes of MASH partnership meeting).

The very flexible, naturalistic nature of participant observation meant that I had to be more sensitive to how I recorded the observed's information. I was aware of the challenges and complexities of the venue both socially and physically. The participant observation was occurring at multiple stages of the research period and some of the participants were transient. It was often not practical and at times simply impossible to gain consent from all those with whom I interacted with, let alone all those I might be observing. There were times I realised the importance and relevance to my research of material generated by an event or incident after it had occurred. An example was when I went for an OFSTED inspection study visit to a neighbouring local authority that had just been successful in their inspection. Our hosting manager just made an 'off the cuff' remark that, *'…they are not at all interested in MASH …not at all…'* referring to inspectors. This was useful information to which I could not seek consent to use.

In analysis information from observations was recorded in narrative form in my journal. Where I needed to comment on what the 'observed' said I only used their

professional titles and/ or agencies in generic terms like, *'…a participant from CSC said…'* Where some specificity was required I would say, '…in the fourth meeting a senior manager from health said...' or *'…for the first time, the Adult Addictions seemed to agree with the police…'* I was confident that this way of recording provided useful insights in terms of what was happening but at the same time protected the identities of those participating. I did not record any activity or conversation during observations where there was a reasonable expectation of privacy without the consent of the participants.

My right to know as the researcher was balanced against the respondents' rights to privacy, dignity and self- determination. I was also sensitive to the power dynamics between the researched and myself as the researcher during the research process. Mason (1996) however discussed the power relations of the interview interaction. It is usually assumed that the interviewer exercises power over the interviewee in and after the interview. The researcher does this in setting the agenda and in controlling the data, therefore, the researcher has certain responsibilities to those interviewees. Hollway and Jefferson (2000:22) assert that, 'power is most commonly associated with structural disparities between members of a social group.' However, power-dynamics are complex and can be multi-directional in that the researcher may be interviewing powerful people and feel that they are controlling the agenda. Thus it is important for the researcher to think carefully about the ethical implications rather than assume that they do not count because the researcher is not holding all of the power, (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000).

According to Mason (1996) in attempting to answer political questions the researcher must ask him/herself whose interests are being served or damaged by the overall analysis. It is important for the researcher to think carefully about one's ethical and political strategy at the beginning of the research. However, it is impossible to take all of the ethical and political dilemmas into account because some of these will arise during the research process.

3.9 Conclusion

By choosing a qualitative ethnographic method in a case study design, I was interested in capturing the lived individual, professional and organizational experiences of the respondents and draw on their perspectives and the meanings they created from it. I was a participant observer and also carried out eight interviews of participants in MASH from different agencies. The methods used offered substantively different and complimentary information on the way attitudes and experiences cohere into meaningful patterns and perspectives.

Single question narrative interviews were used to obtain data from the primary respondents. I found the narrative interviewing to be a relatively informal style with the appearance of storytelling which enabled exploration of a range of themes with respondents. This allowed me to explore feelings beyond the narratives during interviews. The data from interviews was augmented and triangulated with material from psychoanalytic observations and institutional documents including emails, meetings minutes and other policy documents.

In observing the ethical and codes of practice by HCPC, BASW and BSA, I realised that although codes, policies, and principles are very important and useful, like any set of rules, they do not cover every situation. They often conflict and they require considerable interpretation. It was therefore important for me as a researcher to be aware of how to interpret, assess and apply various research rules and how to make decisions and to act in various situations. The vast majority of decisions involved the straightforward application of ethical rules. As a social worker myself and a participant in both the project as a Team Manager in the Department and in the research as participant observer, I was clearly aware of my own 'struggles' and the conflicts I had and gone through which brought the issues of ethics to bear and so had to treat my respondents with respect and empathy. All were offered a separate session for debrief which I found to be helpful both for me and for my participants to

revisit some issues and putting the emotions at easy without the intensity of 'a recorded to be scrutinised' interview session.

Chapter 4: The Research Findings

'…we do not have a choice but to set up a MASH…my managers are pushing me to set up a time line for this.' (The chair's introductory remarks to the first partnership meeting on setting up a MASH).

4.0 Introduction

This Chapter will present the findings of the processes which unravelled during the formation of a multi-agency partnership project to safeguard children. The main research question was centered on trying to establish whether an understanding of the emotional and the unconscious processes in organizations is the missing domain in strengthening multi- agency partnership working when safeguarding and protecting vulnerable children and their families.

4.1 Ownership of the MASH: Whose project is it anyway?

The genesis of MASH in this local authority was based on a smaller project I was involved in where I spend about three hours per day for three months in the local police station, with officers from the police Public Protection desk (PPD) where together, we screened referrals they would have received using our different databases and comparing thresholds. The idea was to establish if there was uniformity and consistency in thresholds for cases that required to be passed on for assessment by other agencies. This was also to test the disparities and quality of information each agency held on same service users. The success of this project gave the impetus and confidence in senior managers within Children's Social Care and The Police to volunteer the local authority to be one of the pilots in London to establish a MASH. The police and CSC in this regard were leading on this. The findings however indicate that there was no clarity on who exactly was to take overall leadership between CSC and the police.

The London Metropolitan Police at headquarters level had already established a project Team and allocated financial resources to develop this project. On the other hand, the local authority had not put any structures or resources in place to manage and lead the project. The MASH was to be based in the Team I managed. I was excited about this prospect but we were also much stretched in terms of resources as a Team. *'I needed more staff and no one knew how much extra work the project would generate, for me and for the Team. I had done several business cases before requesting more staffing resources and was not successful',* I wrote in my research journal.

Partnership meetings were convened every month. The partnership meetings worked as the steering group for the formation of MASH. The chair of the partnership meetings was Assistant Director for Children's Social Care. The chair (Children's Social Care) always sat as, '*the head of the table and always next to the head of the police.*' A relationship was developing, *'which probably could give birth to the MASH.'*

Participants still wanted to know who the leader of the project was. It had come across as a police project even though Children's Social Care were chairing and hosting the meetings. My observations were that the lack of clarity or conviction on the part of the chair and absence of an outright announcement of the specific roles for the two organizations could not dispel the fears among other partners that the police were leading it. Participants were aware that the police had already set up a project team and were well resourced and ready for the project. There was already literature indicating that the MASH pacesetter project in Devon was set up by a retiring senior police officer who was now working as a consultant advising the police headquarters on MASH. Collin said, *'…it is common knowledge though that this thing was started by that former police officer in Devon, so one may want to think, is it the police looking after their own or the new guy (Commissioner) wants to start with a bang…'*

The confusion about leadership by partners was thought-provoking as on paper Children's Social Care is the statutory lead in child protection and safeguarding just like the police lead in investigation of criminal activity and upholding law and order. It was equally interesting that staff in the building also felt that Children's Social Care was playing subordinate to the police. They shared the sentiments that CSC were being dictated to by the police. One manager angrily said, *'…all our space is taken, these senior managers are weak, they are very weak, they are being dictated on by the police…are the police going to hot desk as we do, tell me are they…?'(Research Journal).*

The successful initiation of the project required drivers and champions of its vision who took ownership to drive it forward. The initial stage of establishing MASH appeared as if there were mainly followers with 'absent' leadership. *'We have been told to form'* this organization, were the remarks of the chair at the beginning. At one of the earlier meetings the AD chaired the meeting and then clearly defined himself as the leader for the project. However the way he put it across placed doubt in the minds of all present whether he was really leading it, *'…we do not have a choice but to set up a MASH…my managers are pushing me to set up a time line for this…, this has been a Met police led project until it has now become my business…'*

In this meeting the AD went on to say*, '… what I am told is that there was strategic agreement…our strategic managers have already agreed…'* This did not give a sense that there was conviction and confidence on who actually had the ownership of the project and what the primary task was. It was not necessarily convincing, but what was encouraging was that at least there was now someone claiming to have made it his 'business' to deliver this project. We started to have interagency meetings every three weeks. The meetings were held at our offices. All the meetings have been chaired by the AD for Social Care CYPS religiously attended by the police. Representatives from Health, Probation Services, and Adult Social Care including mental health and substance misuse and Early Intervention Service made the core of the attendees.

As meetings progressed, the chair seemed to warm up to the task and literally made it his business. At the end of the first big meeting, his closing remark was, *'...I want to call us all back in three weeks….we are going to make progress with the police and anyone else interested….in that meeting I want to set up a date for implementation…we have set a date internally for some time in October but I don't think we are going to make it…'*

It appeared clear who was now dictating the pace. Whether he had everyone on board was another question. What did he mean by *'…we are going to make progress with the police…?'* I understood this to mean that if others did not want to join it was up to them as long as Children's Social Care had the police. Everyone else looked at him and then to the lead of the police, as if to say *'we envy you'*. It felt like the police were pulling the strings as they already had a project team and the funding.

A senior manager from Adult Social Care also retorted, '*I think there has been an interesting dynamic around this being quite significantly…being a police led er… initiative both at the strategic level and local level… because they er... are a totemic organization and we all approach them with a set of expectations and beliefs. I think… universally… I am going to be cautious and say universally I think people have been won over by the good faith by individuals involved. I think that's not insignificant… so potential resistance there could have been involvement in a police led process… I say police led but for me it is not part of the police… some of the challenges that involved around…willingness to share information and willingness to be seen to be in a project closely with the police being overcome.'*

I attended almost all of the meetings in the first six months. I felt that I had to be there given the responsibility which was to lie on my shoulders. I would assume this is the feeling the AD and the lead from police had. The AD as the chair has attended all the meetings and chaired them. The lead from the police has also attended almost all of them. When not available, there has always been a representative from the police.

After the safeguarding and looked after children (SLAC) OFSTED inspection no member missed the MASH meeting nor was anyone late. The inspection results were the institutional chemistry which galvanised participants to take ownership and cement their positions in MASH. There was a 'new spring in the step' of partnership working. Everyone had to associate and be part of an outstanding authority. The authority of AD in leading MASH seemed to have been reissued and confirmed. People were a bit more relaxed and also at every possible opportunity it was mentioned, *'...we are an outstanding authority...'*

4.2 Mistrust in Multi-agency Relationships

The findings presented a number of challenges relating to inter-professional relationships masked in other issues including anxieties, defensiveness and scapegoating. I observed that non-social work participants did not step up to take leadership tasks, intervene and manage conflict or volunteer on any administrative tasks (such as minute-taking or chairing meetings). It can be suggested that this was an unconscious way of avoiding 'contamination' or to defend themselves against the difficult emotions that such processes evoke as outsiders. This resulted in the social care lead being left to act as the sole 'container' for difficult emotions and possibly feeling resentful and unsupported. An anxiety fault-line was created dividing the group into police on one side and the rest of the partnership participants on another side. Children's Social Care as the host took a middle position, oscillating between the two groups.

The participant from Adult Mental Health said*, '…I suppose my other anxiety is always around...not always but to an extent around the police and how they kind of operate and certainly speaking to my colleagues in Adults Addictions, there are some real anxieties about the police and I think that's not just about how we interact with them but around the whole ethos of how their organization works is quite different to Social Care and Health. So I am just nervous but I think it's...I like working*

with the police. I kind of like the fact that you got a link into the police and can get access to information they may have on our clients…'

These were clear mixed feelings and reservations about the police being part of the group. The representative from health who has been based in the building observed that, *'…now in terms of working relationships…the area is very small…there isn't enough space. We know that the police will be sitting with us…there is a fear from workers…'*

A Children's Social Care participant added, *'…the whole process of…err the ethical side of it. There is loads of legalities umm people accessing information like the police coming by your side and there is confidential stuff… yeah they are the police so it would probably that's how I perceive it… not necessarily, I would not say unplanned but probably more time should have been spent looking at preparing for it, it just seemed hurried.'*

Collin added that, *'…because the police have a vested interest in this, they have had money behind it and Children Services have a vested interest in it but I wonder whether their interest initially was more about the inspection - OFSTED and they can say this is what we are doing, forward thinking ahead of the game and then the other thing I kind of picked upon one thing is about how referrals are processed...and not processed via Early Intervention Service....'*

Some even expressed cynicism about why the project was being established. Laura commented, *'… I just sense it is a bit rushed that was my only anxiety and I think I did say that why the rush but is it to do with really genuinely wanting to expand or to find…this PPD need to be out of accommodation urgently and also probably a style of management where it is quite hierarchical…'*

4.3 Socialisation and Stereotypes

It appeared to me that some of the challenges in participants' relationships could have been based on their individual, professional and organizational socialisation which created stereotypes against other agencies and their participants. Laura (a black female respondent) aptly put it, '*… and I know that maybe this is inappropriate but police are predominantly white working class… its known white working class and the elderly are quite anti-people of my color so it's really my own stereotype about them which could be because of my own color but it is unfair really...but also the message to clients will truly get Chinese whispers that they are gonna see that MASH as working jointly with the police and that social services… now the police are part of it but ... it might even affect the way that some social workers relate to clients because of the message that is sent out they don't want to disclose the confidential information. Perhaps you don't want to be part of it...so it's probably more based on stereotyping. May be I feel more comfortable working with mental health than the police and I just found them more stereotyping the way they work their manner and them based on… and sitting with us…'*

Another senior manager, Chloe even retorted that*, '…but at the same time what is it going to be like with a bunch of police no barriers and open plan. There are general issues of liaison with the police. Issue of perception for service users with the police in the building…it's a good challenge...'*

4.4 Making Sense of the Situation

Establishing a MASH came across as a new phenomenon to almost all the participants representing different organizations. It has to be noted that multi-agency work has always existed in child protection and safeguarding so does co-location of staff into multi-disciplinary teams. The initial stages of MASH were however riddled with trying to make sense of what and how exactly we were meant to achieve this.

How was this going to be different from what we already knew and what we already have? Was it worth of committing resources to it and what would success look like?

After my first meeting with my manager about MASH, I wrote in my research journal; *'I was not sure what this MASH entailed in terms of, …was I going to manage everyone coming, would they bring another manager, what would other managers in the service say about it, or would they have a say about it, will we still be at the same level, if not who would I be, will I be good enough?* As all these questions kept on running in my mind, creating different sorts of feelings and anxieties…My manager then said, *'… this could be an opportunity, for someone to make a name for themselves.'* I realized that this could actually be me. However this idea of working differently in the local authority ignited an idea to study this area of working and a research-in- action on the MASH for my studies which became another source of my anxieties.

This process of 'sense-making' was also happening to other partnership participants as they tried to understand the expectations in terms of the processes, the resourcing and the relationships amongst themselves.

Collin, a respondent from ACS said, *'…we are still trying to make sense of how this will benefit our organization and our side of business…in doing so I have been involved in writing few papers to our senior managers about the likely benefits…their view is we need to be part of this but they need to be further convinced of the resourcing of it…'*

Daniel also remarked that, *'…this role seems very lonely for me, it appears there is no one in my organization who exactly knows and can advise me on how I am supposed to respond here, and there are no other agencies to learn from apart from learning as we go off course…'*

There was also a need to make sense of who was in charge and the power dynamics within the group. Chloe commented, '…*what is exciting is finding this common ground… now looking at the drivers…CYPS and …from the police, they have always been here, quite vocal and always driving…Uhh…power dynamics….oh police are coming here but CYPS has a lot of power….legislative power.'*

4.5 Fears and Anxieties

Forming a MASH created a lot of anxieties for partners. The idea of not knowing what was going to happen with this new organization created fears in individuals which transmitted to their own organizations. The chair who was my senior manager, said in one of the partnership meetings, '…*the final decision lies with Claudious…the final responsibility for disposal of safeguarding referrals lies with Claudious…Claudious has very broad shoulders, he is going to carry this...'.* He projected to me to hold and contain what I felt were anxieties about the nature of the task the new organization was to undertake. He constantly referred to the local authority, Referral and Assessment Service or Intake Team as, '*...Claudious' Team, comes to Claudious' Team,…goes to Claudious' team...Claudious will make the final decision,…the responsibility of what then happens next is Claudious.'* I started to literally feel that I had to carry this project and the pressure was anxiety provoking and painful. In fact I did not want to miss any MASH meetings from then as I felt a sense of responsibility for the outcome.

Multiple roles created further anxieties. I was an employee, a manager and researching at the same time. I tried to make dispassionate observations. However, because I also actively recorded my own emotional responses and internal associations to them as a way of gathering information about a system and the emotional aspects of its tasks, this did open up emotional and associative responses for me. It was more than just research, but a way of life, my work life. The thoughts triggered a lot of anxieties for me and I felt under a lot of pressure. '*…what if for some reason 'they' decide to stop the project….what happens to my studies…. my*

work…my future? At times it felt like staring failure in the eye as I wondered if I could intervene and steer the course or direction of the project…after all I was only a junior officer among senior officers like Head of Service and Assistant Directors who were sitting on the table. '*…how much could I contribute…could I really influence the course of this project?'*

These feelings were shared by other participants. Collin said, '*…I feel like I am overly enthusiastic, and I want this to work and there is pressure from my seniors but at the same time they do not seem to share the same enthusiasm, they actually want to take the project and give it to my colleagues in another section…'*

Some participants were ambivalent or tried to show a detachment to the proceedings in the meetings based on their contributions, interactions, and general demeanor. For example there was a participant senior in his organization who always came early and left 30minutes early, two participants who always came together and left together. If one was not there, it meant the other was not either. One participant would always sit, looking disinterested, appearing not to be listening, drawing pictures on her agenda sheet. At the end of the session she would then ask questions and generate arguments which would draw out the meeting outside the allocated time. My manager always came to sit next to me during the meetings she attended and after the introductions, she would start to read emails and sending text messages on her Blackberry. If something of interest to her came up, she would start a conversation with me by writing little notes on her agenda, and I would respond likewise.

It was clear that some participants showed inhibitions to contribute or state a position possibly because they felt overpowered as there were different ranks of professionals within the group setting. Contributions were made on a 'who wants to speak basis' so the seniors and the naturally talkative spoke more. Those quieter individuals would then normally regroup in twos or threes by remaining in the room at the end of the meeting and started to regurgitate the issues discussed. At times I

listened in and wondered, *'…only if they had said it in the meetings, this would probably have moved things forward…'* On one occasion, an Adults Mental Health participant came to me after the meeting and said, *'…you know what, I didn't want to say it in there…but… I understand but my colleagues would not understand why we would share information on our clients when it is not a section 47…'*

Different and mixed feelings and emotions appeared to hinder progress. A Children's Social Care practitioner asked me, '*...and you covered yourself really from any libel in the future and have sat down with the lawyers and prove this and you have got in your code of practice everything… and the police… they can access but still later down the line you are opening yourself to all sorts of action from clients because it is sensitive information that you handle.'*

Bethy added*, 'guess for me … sometimes I wear my emotions on my sleeves… who do I share this information with… we are surrounded by the law…now how are they to use this information… we all want the best for our clients.'*

The partnership meetings happened for a period of almost a year before the official launch date was decided. It appeared that participants were anxious about this new organization and the fears and anxieties which seemed to pull them back at every point when they attempted to move forward were about leaving their office base into a new building, new Team, joining together with different professionals on what appeared to be a permanent basis, especially the police, sharing information they considered belonging to 'their clients', with others, assuming a whole new identity as a MASH practitioner.

4.6 Internal Communication

A number of agencies had issues with their own internal communication processes which manifested at times in resentment, poor participation by their representatives and acts perceived by others as resistance to undertake the task. I perceived how

internal communication issues were handled by senior managers as lacking respect and appreciation of the work of the operational staff. Poor handling of communication at times perpetuated the issues and problems the new organization, MASH was meant to resolve such as avoidance of duplication, reduction of costs and primarily improvement of communication and information sharing. It appeared as if organizations were working towards sharing information about clients yet they were not coping with sharing their own 'side of business' information within their organizations with their own staff.

This research found out that internal communication within organizations represented had a significant impact on how participants communicated externally and how they felt about carrying out their organizational mandates in MASH. In my case, I heard of the 'starting up a MASH' and our organization being involved in the pilot from my counterpart from the police. She informed me that she had met the Director of my local authority Children Service Department and *'…it was a meeting full of very senior people.'* This new phenomenon was called Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and she would photocopy some papers she brought back. She had heard that our borough was one of the four chosen in London (out of 32) to be part of the pilots to carry out and implement this MASH. She said to me her boss had told her that there is already a project team within the Metropolitan police now responsible for advising on the delivery of this project within London.

What came to my mind straight away was that*, 'why didn't they (senior managers) mention to me this conference they were going to attend given the project itself was to be based in my Team and I was already doing the work in this mini- project with the police….obviously they had some background information as much as my counterpart had.'* It could have been helpful for me if I had heard it first from my own agency. A consultative process seemed to be non-existent, I thought.

This non-existence of a consultative process was felt and had an impact on the buy-in from professionals from other organizations. A counterpart from health who was

already working collaboratively co-located in Children's Social Care said, *'…it seems they think I will drop everything and be on this MASH…and forget about my other skills...my clinical skills, no I am a clinician, I will need to go out to meet my clients in the community, not spend all my time sitting in MASH…'*

Another interesting dynamic was that, Health in the first meetings had five different participants representing different sections of health providers; community health visiting, nurse safeguarding lead from NHS, two representatives from A&E for the two major hospitals in the borough and community children's health. Up to the MASH launch it was not clear who was more relevant or appropriate to what MASH wanted to achieve, who led them all and actually why they could not have a single point of contact. This at times caused confusion for other participants and for themselves as their own internal communication did not resolve issues of joined up working, saving of resources or preventing duplication. It eventually was the health visitor who was already in the building who ended up being the practitioner in MASH. Due to the poor communication, this idea was however met with what was perceived to be resistance from her as she claimed, *'…this would be just a little bit of what my day job entails…so to just spend the day sitting on the MASH, what is going to happen to my other stuff…?'* This gave an impetus to others to argue that they did not need to be in MASH for the whole day and/ or for every day of the week.

Within the Division, I became the face of the MASH. One of the Team managers approached me and complained about her Team office space, *'... I have been short changed you know...it is not right...these senior managers are spineless...they just agree to the police...now the police are going to take over ...they have actually taken over...why can't we go to the police station...now we are going to have a mini police station here...it is not right...I really feel used...short changed ....they didn't do this during the inspection...we are an 'outstanding' borough...there is nothing 'outstanding' about it...I think I want to go to Divisional Director and tell him that there is nothing 'outstanding' about how this office space is being dealt with...not for an 'outstanding' Local Authority. I am going to use that word 'outstanding' ...I will use*

that word 'outstanding'....I am really angry, very angry. I want to see Head of Service...I am going to tell her. We achieved 'outstanding' without MASH...after all, we are going to have more referrals... it is not going to solve anything, is it. Why not spend all that money and time on consolidating what we already have. What we have is good anywhere. No one else is having the police like that 14? 14? They are going to be the biggest Team, they are now the biggest team aren't they...each Team here has 12 workers, they have 14. No ...I am not angry with you...!'

This appeared to sum up the feelings towards the new organization, MASH. The statements were loaded with feelings of anger and betrayal as it covered issues including the lack of consultation, poor internal communication, views on the police, invasion of personal space, poor leadership.

To further demonstrate the quality of internal communication, the Divisional Director for Children's Social Care, called the Business Performance manager to present to him the MASH and possible resources implications. The Business Performance manager was assisting with the IT system to be used in MASH. My manager asked, *'so the Divisional Director is calling her, …whose project is this now anyway...after all the hard work, just to bring her to take the limelight?* I did agree with my manager's sentiments as we were in a better place to explain the 'real' operational information of MASH as we were steering it.

A driving opportunity for the launch presented itself as the lead from the police was equally frustrated with the delay. She wanted to see the go live day completion before going for her new job. She discussed this with the Chair and agreed a start date. This seemed pragmatic; however, there was no consultation with my manager who was the Head of Service in which MASH would sit. She felt undermined and for a while became ambivalent. It was clear that the poor communication created animosities between and among different sections of the organizations.

4.7 Invasion of Space

From my social work practice experience, Children's Social Care are the main beneficiaries of quality information sharing and their work largely depends on it. However, the establishment of MASH which aimed at achieving this did not prepare their staff for the 'invasion' of their building, their space which was to happen with professionals from around eight agencies coming to sit in their building. The police committed to bringing their whole team of fourteen public protection officers. The police also wanted their own secure room to store their 'operational tools' such as '*guns, cs gas*' etc. and secure information room for their 'high intelligence' violent and sex offenders register, (VISOR) database. Co-location was also to bring different cultures and identities in the building (e.g. police wanted to play their radio), Children's Social Care staff were hot-desking, and MASH staff needed permanent desks.

One of the key themes in the observations and narratives from interviews was the issue of invasion of space. It appeared that fear, especially by social care staff, of an invasion by professionals from other agencies was both of their physical and mental space. The police were to bring in 14 officers. It was not clear whether this was in response to the sort of treatment they received or anticipated in partnership meetings where they seemed to be ostracised and scapegoated. Coming in numbers would help in stamping their authority. On the other hand coming in 'full force' was like a total take over. CSC appeared not to have a say so were to lose their space under duress.

Laura said, '*…We have been working together for years with some of the colleagues…and you are having an influx of the police you don't necessarily know…even the dynamics in terms of how you are relating can also affect your professionalism really. You are getting to know new people again so I don't know…*'
Chloe added another dimension, *'I do not know what they would be thinking of…if it was one person coming like the other organizations. The police...they are coming as*

a group. They have found new housing…they are homeless. If it was only one,
would the dynamics be the same?

At the police station, I also felt that I had invaded their private space. After hearing that we were going to go MASH I discontinued my visits to the police station. I am not sure if I actually told everyone that I was no longer coming back. In any event, my counterpart was changed to another section before I left. One of her direct reports became my counterpart for the final week before I left. I did not feel an attachment to the police station. I wanted to go back full time to my office. I felt like being suffocated when at the station. I did not feel a sense of freedom to express myself the way I do back at my office even though the people were very helpful. Also the fact that my counterpart was the one to deliver the message from the Children's Social Care boss that we were going MASH left me feeling a sense of betrayal but I did not blame her, she just happened to be there.

The police brought in their little radio which would be 'belting out' music from terrestrial channels none stop and they would laugh out loud, at times singing along, enjoying themselves. Everyone from Children's Social Care looked at me, as if to say shut them down. One social worker actually came to me and said*, 'your people are making a lot of noise, we can't even concentrate...the music is at times brilliant but haa... I need to work...'* I was the face of MASH so indeed they were my people. *Yes we will shut them down but the Assistant Director agreed that they could play it until we went live...we were not live yet so the music had to continue. Indeed it continued unabated.*

4.8 Clarity on Task

I felt that for people to take ownership of the project, they needed to be clear and sure of the primary task. It appeared that participants including the Chair were not clear of the task which then raised more questions for them. I felt that this lack of clarity also meant that participants were not clear which organizations were meant to

be there or not resulting in some being overly represented like Health. Other questions arose, *'at what level would the organizational representative be…would it be an administrator role, a practitioner role or a management role?* This generated a lot of debate but still no one appeared to be clear.

The Assistant Director for Adult and Community Services (ACS) also diligently attended the meetings. He was always formally dressed in a suit and tie and made very thoughtful and well research based contributions to move discussions forward in the meetings. He had on many occasions stated with authority that ACS were willing to contribute and were ready to join. On all occasions, his advances were rebuffed. He was always told that, *'no…adults not now...this is about children safeguarding...'* He has tried to use various examples from elsewhere, Devon (the pacesetter) included and explored different ways ACS could contribute and the answer was always the same, *'…for now this is about children safeguarding..'* Interestingly, he would come again the next meeting and find a way to put his request across. In one of the last meetings before launching the MASH, the chair said to him, *'…I know what you are going to say…and you know what my answer is still going to be… not now…'* I felt for him. *'…is he forcing himself where he is not wanted… why was he invited in the first place?'*

The information system at some stage was deemed the 'show-stopper' because it was not ready. It was important to have the computer system ready. However MASH was not necessarily about a computer system. It was about sharing information and communicating amongst agencies. The power at that stage appeared to have shifted from the people who were establishing and developing the MASH as an organization to IT people who were developing the information system and were now determining when and if we should go live.

My manager also came up with another dimension. We were all clear that this initiative needed to be resourced. She was however adamant that it was not going to go live before the additional resources required were not yet allocated. If we go live

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before the resources are allocated, how would we be able to justify at a later stage that we needed these resources...? Where would the urgency be to allocate resources when we are already functioning...? The lack of clarity on task appeared to lead to these anti task tendencies.

4.9 Conclusion

The findings have shown that it might not have been as difficult to bring representatives from different agencies together on the table. It was however very challenging to cater for all their different emotional, professional and organisational needs. The requirement was for them to form a single organisation to which they all could identify with as they safeguarded and protected children. There were however a lot of mental blockages and barriers they each had to overcome which presented in different manifestations.

At the beginning, participants showed that they were not clear of the task and spend a long period of time trying to make sense of what had to be achieved. They were not clear who was supposed to lead between two organizations Children's Social Care and the police who emerged dominant and well 'paired.' The whole process of forming this new organization was marred by mistrust and collusion especially against the police mainly because of their traditional role and what they were perceived to represent within the society. The participants showed fear and anxieties with regards to giving up their primary roles and identities and equally so in dealing with the pressures exerted on professionals in child protection and safeguarding.

The next three chapters will analyse these findings in detail focussing on the unconscious processes which prevailed during the formation of the MASH. The impact of the individual, professional and organization will be looked at as a complex whole. The complex aspects of multi-agency leadership are analysed in detail. The third part of the analysis delves deeper into the relationships and interactions between and amongst organisational representatives. This will focus mainly on the

presence of the police, their behaviour and how they were perceived by other partners in MASH.

Chapter 5: The Complex Identities and Multiple Roles Interacting in Multi-agency Partnership Work.

'…my personal view is that it's a good idea…but this does not seat right with me as a professional…how do I justify or even tell a 16yr old boy to trust me when I have just given information for his arrest to the police…I know YOS has to be in the room…I want to share information…' (YOS worker commenting on information sharing in MASH).

5.0 Introduction

Recent studies have postulated that, the effectiveness of partnership work can be located at the various points of interaction amongst the three analytical levels; individual, professional and organization making up the complex whole, (Kauffman 1996, Smith and Toft 1998). Findings of this research indicate that, the participants in MASH experienced these strains in the child protection and safeguarding system at these three, complex interactive levels which triggered anxieties and defences at those three levels. In this section, I made the complex whole the unit of analysis of my findings focusing on the inter-linkages, interaction, relationships and conflicts between and amongst the participants in MASH as the individual representatives, as the professionals and as the parent organizations they represented looking at particular characteristics of those separate entities and their influence to the interaction.

5.1 The Complex Whole

What I discovered in the MASH was that the partnership 'individual/ persons' members themselves were very crucial in determining the success of this project. The level of connectivity or lack of it between organizational members was enhanced or compromised by the identities and personalities of the individuals who were participating. These were the individuals who through their professional persuasions represented member organizations. It was these individual professionals at the core

of these organizations represented in the partnership that sat on the board and interacted with other representatives to determine the future of the new organization being formed.

From my observations, the group dynamics in the 'room' were hugely influenced by the interaction of the three 'identities', the individuals, the professionals and the organizations, co-existing at the level of each partnership member as a 'complex whole'. I experienced the multiple identity representation where participants in the partnership carried three complex identities at once and at times the individual, the professional and the organization being in conflict with in one person in that complex whole. The integration of those three different levels becomes complex due to the fact that while there are clear lines of behavior within each of these dimensions e.g. individuals' actions being justified by personal backgrounds, individual traits and culture, professional opinion emerging from professional training, values and ethos and organizational issues decided based on organizational mandates and strategic vision, the whole becomes a collection of all those different characteristics which in turn make partnership work largely unpredictable, (Kauffman 1996, Smith and Toft 1998).

Kauffman (1996) argues that, where the professional and organizational culture is quite different across the partnership members, the complex wholes risk becoming antagonistic which can impact negatively on attempts at productive collaboration. I concur with Kauffman (1996) as I observed that, the differences in approach within individual partners complex whole, in a way risked causing delays and impacted on the equilibrium within the individual partner complex whole and created the 'unconscious barriers' to productive collaboration. On how she was brought in, Bethy commented, '…*the principles of MASH are good... as an agency, it was assumed maybe by seniors that I am here it is alright….no discussion about JD (job description)…so you have to demonstrate your worth...it is taken for granted that I am here and get on with it. While MASH is important, it should be recognised that I*

do more than MASH. It is now accepted that I am not going to sit and disregard some of my skills… I have to be asked how I want it to proceed.'

These were individual and professional feelings in conflict with the organizational mandate. As an individual, she clearly believed that partnership work and MASH was the way to go. Her organization was keen to participate and it mandated her to represent it. However this was at variance with her professional belief that she should loose some of her skills as the 'JD' was to be altered. This type of conflict within the person was witnessed in a number of participants. Another participant, Daniel also said, '…*my main point really I suppose the other thing on a kind of personal level...I don't know how happy I feel about being stuck in an office from 10 till 4… sort of spend a day in the office and I suppose the reality is...there are other things that I have to do, meetings I have to attend and I am not sure that I will cover those days to be part of MASH. I am not sure in reality whether on a Tuesday, Thursday I will always be sat on my desk in MASH and I wonder...I suppose…I wonder sometimes how that would be perceived...It sounds like I got lots and lots of anxieties about this, not overly anxious but I wonder how I will be perceived by partner agencies or different agencies but then I am responsive to calls...'*

Collin put it aptly, *'...I wrote a paper about our bit of the business on that and in that I wanted to sow the seeds of you know…we could be expansive in our thinking about these issues. MASH is often seen as being of Children Safeguarding and Adult Safeguarding, but there is other areas of work which could fit in…that could relate to it… that are quite useful...and I think I made that argument slightly too well because out of it DLT (departmental leadership team) was so impressed with that idea….and so impressed about the potential for the Communities safety input. They handed the project of developing of the Adult Social Care element to it, to my colleagues in Community Safety.*

It was clear that this participant both as an individual and professional was very committed and a keen participant and contributor as he added to the development of

MASH. However his enthusiasm was being hampered by the behavior of his organization which could potentially cost MASH by loosing a devoted worker as this participant was one of the boundary spanners. He further added that, '…*And for my colleagues in Community Safety, who are very overstretched, they went through significant reduction, just around the same time…this cannot be one of their top priorities so that is not necessarily good in their queue of work. We are not making the most of the opportunity that is in front of us…*'

Other complex wholes were however constrained by the participants' professions and organizations in terms of how the individuals took instructions and how specific organizational mandates were meant to be executed. This was experienced with the police where individual feelings were heavily suppressed in favor of professional and organizational mandates. According to Martin (1999), 'showing or expressing feelings is regarded a weakness in the police' which as I observed, distorted their complex whole.

The wider system in which these interactions occur however can influence this either positively or negatively, that is facilitating or delaying cooperation, hence leading to a 'safer' provision of services to children or on occasion hindering it.

5.1.1 The Single Complex Whole

A single individual participant would be dealing with his/her own issues and conflicts about individual aspects of his/ her life. The individual would also deal with influences from their own environment and how it relates to their work. The professional is influenced and dictated upon by the organizational demands, expectations and anxieties stemming from and deep rooted in this complex socialization system.

Individual

Point of conflict/
equilibrium

Professional

Organization
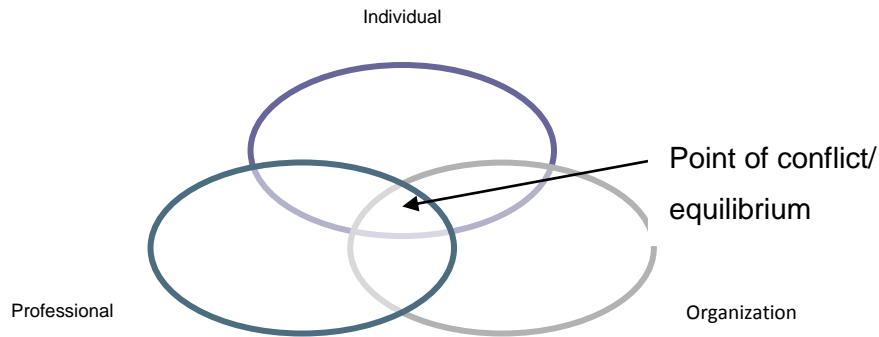
Figure 1: Single Complex Whole

5.1.2 The Multiple Complex Whole

Figure 2 illustrates that, MASH was a multi system complex whole with different participants coming together as many different individuals with different backgrounds including color, ethnicity, birth nationalities, ages, sex/ gender, sexuality. These individuals were from very different professional backgrounds with some having multiple qualifications. They included, social workers, some who specialized in children and families and others in adult social care, teachers, nurses, medical doctors, and some who specialized in pediatrics and others in psychiatry and police officers. They represented different organizations. Some represented different divisions and departments within organizations. These organizations carried different cultures and ethos and had different primary tasks but all had to meet to establish a single organization, MASH.
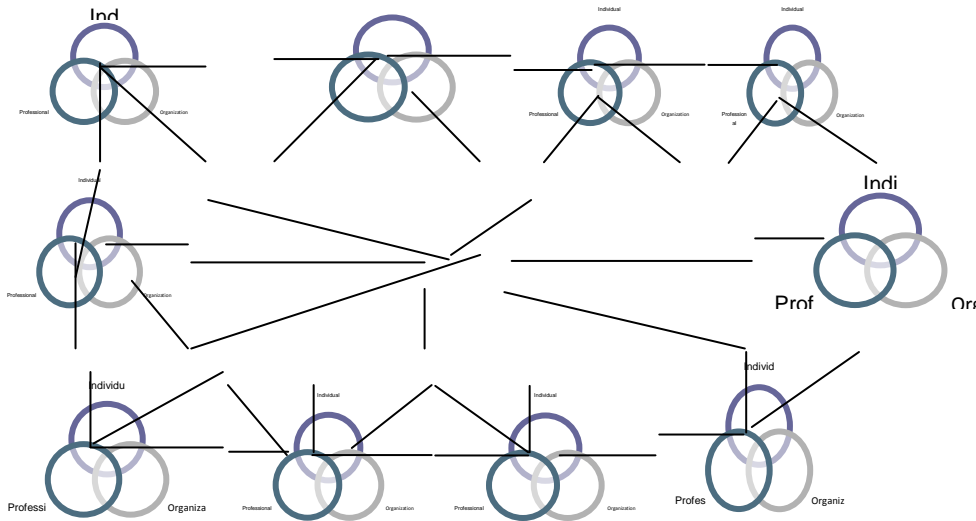
Figure 2: Multi- agency round-table discussion.

5.2 The Individual Level

The role of the individuals is an essential determinant of partnership success, (Kauffman 1996). From my observations, I found that, for some individuals, the context of inter-agency working allowed them the opportunity to act more dynamically than they could within the (constraining) context of either their 'parent' organizations or of their professionally constructed roles.

This dynamism can be illustrated with the 'boundary-spanning' (Williams 2002) activities of some representatives who were active in finding 'solutions' to inevitable problems of maneuvering organizational structures and incompatibilities between organizational mandates. Collin, whom I felt was an active boundary- spanner said, '...*and then the other interesting thing that happened from my perspective was in order to facilitate discussions from within Adult Social Care on what the MASH could be and how we might relate to it, I wrote a paper about our bit of the business on that and in that I wanted to sow the seeds of you know…we could be expansive in our thinking about these issues..'.* In so doing, some individuals had to exceed their organizational mandates considerably by taking personal stake in the partnership's mission. *'If I have to bang on the table to put my point across, I will keep on banging*

the table to put my point across…' This was Collin illustrating how much and how far he would go to make sure that he puts his point across and is ultimately heard. This was seen in sharp contrast with others who fulfilled their mandates rather reluctantly or appeared to have a 'confused' mandate or rather confused on the mandate.

'…We are like a bit of a family now… We have been working together for years with some of the colleagues…and you are having an influx of the police and other agencies you don't necessarily know…even the dynamics in terms of how you relating can also affect your professionalism really. You are getting to know new people again so I don't know if it's a good idea… (Laura).'

I tried to take the role of the boundary spanner, but I was rather confused on how to span across the individual and the organization given my manager, a Head of Service, and her manager the Assistant Director were sitting on the table. We were three different people from the same professional background and same organization but at different levels within the organizational structure. Our power and influence on policy and direction of the project was different. I also felt under pressure as an individual, pressure that if this project failed, it would ruin my studies, which was a personal concern because I had a vested interest. Failure of the project could also mean losing my job and its success as well meant different job description and different responsibilities and more so a direct impact on me as a person. The presence of my two senior managers was very stifling; it didn't do much to contain my anxieties. I observed this to be true as well with other practitioners who had more than one representative and their contributions took a hierarchical fashion.

The organizational entity of the complex whole appeared to be overbearing on the other two components as the position in organization equated to the amount of power and influence the individual could use. This was more prevalent in the police where the individual was totally silent and the professional and organizational components more vocalized.

In one partner agency which had three representatives who had the same hierarchical position within their parent organization and came from the same division (but different departments); it was easy to observe and experience the influence of the individual and interestingly different interpretations of same professional and organizational mandates. Their different approaches could not have been on the account of hierarchy, but possibly their socialization within the organizational culture. Institutional influences external to the complex whole also played a part. This was observed with health professionals representing different Accident and Emergency (A&E) and midwifery Services from different hospitals but in the same local authority.

Other representatives, however, seemed to be overly concerned with their mandates which appeared to hinder progress for information sharing within the new organization. This was mainly experienced from health in its various formations, particularly adult mental health and substance misuse. Daniel said that, *'…and I still keep coming back to the fact of why we are sharing information if it's not section 17 or its not section 47 (of the Children Act 1989), there is no need to share that information. I think you can make a good argument to give basic information about whether someone is known, whether they have got a care coordinator, signpost the MASH lead to make contact with those...with that person to gather more information. I suppose the only thing which could possibly happen in that instance...and will happen in some instances...is the call to the allocated social worker and they will be reluctant to share any information and to some extent I think they could be justified in that response. But again it depends on what other information has been gathered. I suppose ideally through this whole kind of MASH process, ideally I would like to be the last agency in line to get the referral. So you get the picture from all the other agencies because without that I will potentially struggle. And I suppose… potentially could face a challenge with in my own organization questioning why I shared the information. I suppose the other things that need to be sorted out I kind of understand from Adult Mental Health perspective of...documenting things accurately, having some kind of...I think protocol is quite an elaborate kind of word but some*

form of guidance in terms of how we operate as a MASH partnership…' My deductions are that what was going on in the mind of this participant was more of individual fears and a personal lack of confidence in whether to share or not to share information rather than a protection of organizational or client interests for that matter. These were anxieties exerted by the organization and profession on the individual which created a paralysis to innovation.

It is important to note that some participants like substance misuse, appeared to say as individuals, they had no problems sharing information but as professionals and organizations they were more worried about their clients and service users. It is possible that their anxieties regarding sharing information were stemming from their own personal issues and fears which in turn impacted on their ability to perform professional duties thus they just used professional and organizational reasons as defence mechanism as to why they could not share information. It was also interesting to observe that some of these reservations were blamed or rather scapegoated on the presence of other partners on the table particularly the police. Bethy said, *'…we know that the police will be sitting with us…there is a fear from workers…'* These could have been individual fears emanating from own personal experiences and or social perceptions of the police than what workers were actually expressing. Rationally and professionally all participants would know that the police would not just go about arresting people without concrete evidence. However at an individual level, some participants had experienced harsh treatment from the police and/ or belonged to certain social classes of people who have historically experienced 'harsh treatment' from the police. At the center of what this Hub wanted to achieve is safeguarding of children as paramount but the information everyone seemed to be concerned to protect and safeguarded was that of adults, parents and carers.

It was also important to look at what it was that made some people better individuals than others in partnership work. Personality and charisma emerged as factors, so did the length of professional training and experience of task and roles being performed.

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Those individuals had a way of managing the different levels of identity complexities by cutting though boundaries to achieve change. Williams (2012) defined those individual professionals who have the ability, skills and capacity to work across different professional and organizational boundaries as 'boundary spanners.'

My view is that individual dynamism and personality determined boundary spanning abilities in partnership work. Strong professional and organizational ethos, seemed likely to place limits on the extent of freedom that individuals felt in being able to exercise their own will and judgment in professional exchanges in partnership meetings. This was mainly observed in relation to people from professions and organizations labeled as 'reluctant partners' by their multi- agency colleagues in both interviews and meetings.

Personal or rather vested interests can assist in propelling boundary- spanning. For example, the one representative who proved so resourceful in finding ways to commit their organization to the partnership goals, it turned out that she was at the verge of a transfer and it was important to achieve something big before moving. Her view was, *'…I would have loved even to stay but the way it works at Borough level in the organization is that it might still not have been me to see it running because the moment its up and running I could have been moved to another project and someone else to run it. So there was no guarantee in that but I had found a project I had belief in and was passionate about. I really have belief in it that is why I had to push as hard as I did. I think multi agency work has progressed over the past twenty years but I think this is the icing on it. So possibly that is my disappointment that after all my efforts I am not going to see it up and running…it's a big, big project I wanted to see off before going to another department which I have always wanted so I will take this with me…(Julia).'* She had tried relentlessly to push for a start date and finally achieved it two weeks before her departure to a new post.

Accountability and responsibility also boosted boundary spanning. Fear of failure and their obligations to others (staff, clients, constituents') made some partner

representatives work even harder. For my part the success of the project was not just my job but it offered the opportunity to study. I also had to account to my Team who waited each time when I attended partnership meetings to know the outcome and progress of the project as it equally affect their positions and the way they would do their work.

The police have provided general leadership and enthusiasm which equally spanned across boundaries in formulating the concept of MASH. However one more cynical view by a participant on their general participation was that, '…*the cynical side of me would say that is the police officer from Devon recently retired so got a nice consultancy job and a new commissioner of the Met looking for eye catching initiatives but I think that is too cynical a picture of it…(Collin)'.*

In a study by McAllister and Dudau (2008) into LSCB work, professionals who would not have had a long socialization into the culture of the profession and/ or organization had a chance to prioritize personal rather than professional beliefs around aspects of their work. Whether this would be tolerated within more routine work like police and health is debatable but this supports the view on consistent leadership renewal in organizations. The police found themselves more willing to be innovative rather than rule bound. They were able to manifest an affinity with the subculture belief in welfare (at the expense of the more widespread foci of crime prevention and detection that prevailed within the police culture). Another representative I perceived to be a 'boundary spanner' was trained late in the profession (social work) and had had a few other jobs across sectors. Work and life experiences assisted in dealing with anxieties about change.

It was equally interesting to observe that individuals used their professional roles and organizations as barriers to progressing multi- agency work particularly information sharing as if to indicate 'they were working against their individual will' and more so scapegoated those who willingly participated. I did dictate a relationship between the level of hierarchy of an individual and his or her ability to span boundaries in

partnership work. The more senior managers in the partnership meetings found it easier to make individual decisions committing their organizations. Certain organizational management structures (bureaucracies) had the potential to frustrate boundary spanning efforts.

In my research journal, I noted that, *'…I had arranged with a colleagues at the same level from another agency to start exchange visits and test information sharing…one of the senior managers I copied in the emails responded in a dismissive way to say this needed senior managers authorisation…regardless of the potential this had…senior managers never came back with authorization.'* Competing interests between and within individuals impacted on the development of the collaborative agenda.

On another level the enthusiasm of a boundary spanner was curtailed when the seniors saw the potential of the work he was doing. Instead of supporting him, they took away the responsibility and gave it to another section, *'...and I think I made that argument slightly too well because our DLT (departmental leadership team) was so impressed with that idea….and so impressed about the potential for the Communities Safety input. They handed the project of developing of the Adult Social Care element to it, to my colleagues in Community Safety,'* (Collin). I always feared that an individual in this sort of situation could attempt to sabotage the project. Collin was however always available and contributing in every meeting until the day of my interview. At the end of my interview, Collin said, *'…mmm this was quite some reflection…it now got me thinking…'* He did not attend the MASH partnership meetings for the next three months, I am told for health reasons.

Whenever a boundary spanner would leave the partnership to be replaced by someone else from their agency, I witnessed more anxieties among the other partners, particularly the leadership. This seemed to hinder continuity and impeded on progress as some newcomers appeared to bring in totally new dynamics and dimensions to the discussions. Others expected to be inducted from the beginning.

Some remained 'strangers or outsiders' to the proceedings because of what I felt to be the *'…I have just started'* mentality.

Another instance in which individuals appeared to have made a difference to partnership working was through the partnership leadership. The strength and capacity of leadership appeared to be viewed differently by different agencies and their representatives. There were some conflicting but interesting views on the individual leader and the way he also viewed his mandate and authority.

Daniel however had the following sentiments, *'…going back to the kind of organization...I suppose I wonder sometimes about...one of the key players...their kind of understanding about MASH and I suppose for me the kind of way they operate is kind of laissez faire for me.. it is not, it doesn't seem organized enough for me some of the times and involvement for me but that does not mean to say this process is not organized, it is organized....it feels organized, and it feels very driven by the police and Children Services which obviously it is…'* This came across as mixed if not confused feelings about whether the process is organized or not. However the focus appeared to be on the individual than what they were representing.

Another participant however viewed the leadership of it thus, *'…he took it on and identified the right sort of people, had regular meetings, they were all minuted so there was a record of it so I think he did very well really and he has achieved a lot and all the Health considerations, I am still confused by all of them and I think everyone is confused as well. He presented it to the LSCB so his management of it was very good. I think it was the way he is, very calm and he managed to get through to some very strong individuals in the partnerships so I think individuals and personalities are key in making it a success and people's determination because if you don't have that I think a project like this would succeed eventually but may not succeed in agreed time…'* (Julia).

It was not clear at the beginning whether the leader was really clear about what needed to be achieved or rather how to achieve it. His views were that, '…*almost deliberately what I didn't do was put a project plan in place...I am still in two minds on whether or not that would have helped...so with the current blueprint of what I thought the MASH would look like, I put these partnership meetings in place and we got into the project. So the way I try to operate is let's try to understand this together. I don't need to understand all the details of what goes on but gradually as we go along, the details would surface and I will understand what I need to. So far for example things like the IT systems, I don't know what it was going to look like at the beginning and instead of wasting time worrying about it, that would come out as it develops....that is exactly what happened…'* (Alex).

I was equally not clear about the direction being given of the project at the beginning. I was asked by my manager to draft a paper summarizing the progress made to that stage. One aspect of it was very difficult to put together. My main issue at this stage was what I felt to be a lack of leadership for this project. I so much wanted to communicate in this paper my quest for *'…leadership direction of this project…', someone to step up and say I am in charge…, this is how we are going to do it..'* I tried the wording for that section for several times, trying to be as diplomatic as I could. On reflection, it appeared to me that it was an individual style of the leader. He showed a high level of calmness amid high levels of multiple anxieties being displayed around him by other participants. It appeared all the other participants wanted him or expected him to also show the worries and anxieties they were displaying.

The chair's definition of what was required was that, *'…we need a room probably bigger than this room with people and laptops interrogating their agency database… the referral desk will be joined by the PPD and become one single referral point joined by other agencies… the disposal of referrals in safeguarding terms lies with Claudious' team..'* At this stage everything to do with the local authority, Referral and Assessment service or Intake Team was being referred to as, *'...Claudious'*

Team, comes to Claudious' Team,…goes to Claudious' team...Claudious will make the final decision,…the responsibility of what then happens is Claudious'. Initially I thought, *'…yes, this sounds like recognition of my value in the organization, may be I am actually being realized after all...'* I considered the responsibility to be huge, *'but besides grafting… what else was it to bring…more power....more money…?. No, this was not there or at least not clarified, not mentioned, and not discussed so far at least... so when?* What was clear though was indeed it brought more work and more responsibilities.

The way it was being described was such that everyone was to send their information to me to make the decisions, so if things go wrong I was going to be the 'fall guy' as an individual, I thought. I was made the container of everyone else's anxieties, worries and probably projections. *'…the final decision rests with Claudious…the final responsibility for disposal of safeguarding referrals lays with Claudious…'* the words kept lingering in my mind and the thoughts placed quite a huge burden on my shoulders. And then the AD said in one of the meetings, *'…Claudious has very broad shoulders, he is going to carry this...'* I started to literally feel it. I felt that I had to attend every meeting with regards to MASH. All my programs and diary revolved around MASH at the expense of my other duties. I did not want to lose anything or miss anything on MASH. I also felt I could not trust anyone to report back on MASH. With study and researching MASH, the burden became even bigger to such an extend that when I presented in the research seminar, my colleagues and tutors felt the emotional burden and that I was taking in too much which was no longer emotionally healthy for me.

This was mainly about 'me' the individual, not the professional or the organization. My fear of failure or rather the consequences of it was anxiety provoking. This appeared to be directed to me the 'individual' not the organization. And in any event if it was to the organization, then the Chair would have said, *'we (as an organization) have very broad shoulders…we (as an organization) are going to carry this…'* Separately my organization at a different level had created and induced how I felt,

acted and behaved as an individual. The organization projected its burden and those of its community to me and I unconsciously introjected them. The comment, *'…Claudious has very broad shoulders, he is going to carry this...,'* in my view had a hypnotic effect. It made me literally carry the organizational burden for MASH.

5.3 The Professionals Level

The seemingly obvious barriers to partnership progress were identified as being rooted in professional cultures and ethos, including: working in professional silos due to professional identities; defensiveness; territoriality; either lack of understanding and/ or wrong assumptions about the other's work; overly application of 'confidentiality' rules across the board (especially in the case of the health professionals and, to some extent, social workers); mistrust at the three different levels of the complex whole; and the involvement of 'perceived antagonists (police vs. substance misuse workers), involvement of too many professionals (which was seen to confuse clients and lead to the duplication of work) and 'possessive ownership' of service users, (*my client…my patient…my service user..)* I also discovered that the issue of 'seeking consent to share information from service user,' was the defended subject among professionals cutting across organizations. One participant called it *'the elephant in the room...'*

Participants saw working in professional silos as one of the key barriers to inter-professional work and it was, as a consequence, one of the main reasons to forming a MASH as an attempt at breaking down those barriers. The silos were viewed as strong bonds within professional groups which in turn generated a reluctance to engage in working with other professions, particularly if there is a significant difference in occupational ethos. I observed that mental health and substance misuse professionals formed an alliance which was experienced in '…*their communication, subject areas they raised and even where they sat on the table…'* They seemed to understand each other's language and it also emerged that they shared the same client database called electronic patient journal system (EPJS).

They found common ground on most issues and appeared to gang up against the police.

Health professionals wanted to be on their own. They found their own hierarchical structure amongst their professional colleagues who included medical doctors, commissioners, safeguarding administrators and health visitors in that order. Health visitors were so keen to speak for school nurses who were not represented. Police, YOS and probation created their own silo. YOS at times floated in between police and social care probably due to a confusion of professional identity, (the YOS representative was a police officer seconded to Social Care). It was visible that YOS resented Social Care at individual level but gravitated towards them at professional level. I noted in my research journal that, *'YOS flirting with the police appeared to be based on their envy of police masculinity role in approaching criminal justice, yet YOS practice is feminist orientated social caring work…'*

Social workers appeared to be on their own within their own silo. They however also had their tentacles dotting towards each and every agency possibly because both professionally and organizationally, they relied on other agencies more, to do their work than other agencies relied on them. During partnership meetings it was observed that when other agencies appeared to be 'ganging up' against the police, Children's Social Care appeared caught in between. Interestingly at 'individual' level Children's Social Care and police had formed some relationships which were now being put in jeopardy at professional and organizational levels as Children's Social Care appeared to be forced to take a side by circumstances and dynamics in the group.

It was however interesting to observe that some relationships which were created at individual level were very helpful in breaking the barriers at professional and organizational levels in the complex whole. Police and Social Care in this local authority had a 'standing warm' relationship and participants in another initiative were at the center of creating this new organization so it was a continuation of a

good working arrangement. *'...actually it was down to the little project that we did...didn't we… where we screen what PPD does and send to you, that part of the work really was the beginning of MASH....when I spoke to the Project Team they said the local authority was not part of the project....but they were going to make us part of the pilot....we agreed let's do it and already we have been doing something so it was easy to start because we were just progressing from there....' (Julia).* Health visitors and adult mental health professional were already based in the Children's Social Care building for a few years back before MASH was mooted. At an individual level, the professionals knew each other before hand so they did not need to go through the formalities of 'breaking the ice.'

To understand the issue of professional silos, it was also important to understand the sources of their antagonism. Much of what was playing on the table and in the interviews appeared to be deep seated in personal historical issues, social perceptions on particular agencies and structural issues with some agencies. Participants perceived these barriers to be a consequence of the inherent values that were promoted by their professions and organizations. Based on similarity and dissimilarity between those values, professionals revealed unconsciously through my observations and their interviews the other professional categories that they work best with and those with which they have most conflicts.

Alex's views were that, *'…Health is a good example of where change is actually difficult for them to...to make because of the way they are funded ...because of the way they are structured ....they got commissioners and providers.... It is actually difficult for them to take up an idea, absorb it and improve it to make it work. Mmmm... and then, they also struggle to manage human... people side of things when there is resistance from staff....there is not the same type of authoritarian approach... authoritarian maybe too strong ....but for example in the police and the local authority where essentially we are a very hierarchical structure....you do as you are told...err...for health that is not the case, not so easy…'* What this seemed to confirm is that individuals may be forced to behave in a certain way by the structure

of their organization and have potential to be different in a different organizational setting.

Bethy, commenting on police presence in MASH said, '… *from each agency's background, we hold dearly our values. Sometimes we struggle with what we give out. We take our clients personally so we struggle to give away information… especially giving it to the police… and what we believe they would do with that information is difficult for me… how each agency views confidentiality...we have managed it around section 47 (of children Act 1989) what of outside that framework in the best interests of the child and of their family...and we have different professional cultures and beliefs…'*

Daniel from Adult Mental Health commenting on the police said, *'...I suppose my other anxiety is always around...not always but to an extend around the police and how they kind of operate and certainly speaking to my colleagues in Adults Addictions, there are some real anxieties about the police and I think that's not just about how we interact with them but around the whole ethos of how their organization works is quite different to Social Care and Health. So, I am just nervous but I think it's...I like working with the police. I kind of like the fact that you got a link into the police and can get access to information they may have on our clients.'*

Chloe from Children's Social Care gave a very dramatic narrative on her views about the police which were quite mixed, '…*I do not know what they would be thinking of…if it was one person coming like the other organizations. The police...they are coming as a group. They have found new housing…they are homeless. If it was only one, would the dynamics be the same? Same applies to the other members who do not want to move. The police have been really, really helpful and keen to provide information….they have done their tasks and send them back. But at the same time what is it going to be like with a bunch of police no barriers and open plan. There are general issues of liaison with the police. Issue of perception for service users with the police in the building…it's a good challenge...'*

Perception on others was a key issue in discussing and agreeing the information governance of the project. Trust appeared to be based on what participants thought and felt they knew about each other. Everyone seemed to worry about the police because they 'investigate,' 'arrest,' 'they are the law' and were easily 'the common enemy' as described by the participants. The issue about, '*real anxieties about the police and I think that's not just about how we interact with them but around the whole ethos of how their organization works…*' was mentioned by almost all participants to this research. What was clear is the impact the organizational ethos or culture has on the individual and professional both internal and external to the organization. Internal in terms of what the organization wants its professionals to be like and external in terms of how it wants to be perceived and how it becomes perceived and the opinions others form about it. The work of the police created the level of *'…real anxiety about the police…'* but at the same time envy and fantasies about what they actually do*, '…I kind of like the fact that you got a link into the police and can get access to information they may have…'*

The substance misuse representative said*, 'if I give you information on a recovering addict, obviously the police only see crime, they want to know the supplier, and where cash is obtained…*'

Social workers complained that GPs *'just don't respond to information requests in time…always purporting to be dealing with life and death issues…' (Laura).* This as well was a view on perceived status of medical doctors who historically have had issues with attending or fully participating in multi-agency work. Post Victoria Climbié, this shifted as Lord Laming's enquiry did not spare them either. Other agencies also claimed that social workers, *'…just do not tell us what happens to referrals we send to them… (Participants from health, YOS, Adults Mental Health)'.*

The above vignettes were mainly about anxieties of agencies expressed against each other but especially against the police presence. With regards to the police for example, my view is that participants mixed reality, perceptions and fantasies of the

police created over time pre-dating the MASH. The unconscious issues were experienced as reality, however most of them did not necessarily pertain to children safeguarding or child protection but to the organization and/ or profession in general.

My observations were that participants from substance misuse and adult mental health appeared affected by feelings of guilt and shame when they had to discuss private information of their clients as if to protect them from blame as they would have worked hard to build trust and rapport with those in the communities they served. In a study by McAllister and Dudau, (2008), some multi-agency practitioners also confessed to having feelings of sympathy towards service users especially those coming from deprived areas. In some instances the practitioners would find excuses for not referring those clients to Children's Services. Health professionals expressed feelings of anger and frustration as they could not control what happened to their referrals to children social care.

The findings of this research concur with Reder and Duncan (2003) who also observed that the conflict of interests between parents and children sometimes seem to play out amongst the group of professionals charged with supporting them. This might be a result of different models used for example the medical model for health professionals focus on the patient who could be the adult and their interest is about protecting and safeguarding the interests of that patient without consideration of the patient's immediate and extended family (which may include children), the community and society at large, which becomes the social model for social workers, the police and other social welfare agencies.

There were however examples of agencies and organization who appeared quite compatible in working with each other. 'Compatible professions' were found to be social care with health visitors, teachers with health professionals, police officers with probation officers and YOS workers, YOS workers with probation officers and YOS workers with teachers. In another study, 'the highest 'misfit' pairings have been registered between Children Services professionals (both social workers and

educationalist) and third sector workers, between police officers and social carers, and between police officers and health professionals, (McAllister and Dudau, 2008). Individual relationships and length of time people have known each other at both individual and professional levels also have a huge impact.

This research confirms results from a case study done in an LSCB by Dudau (2009) where she found out that, the sources of the professional tension/compatibility between various groups appeared to be around issues such as:

- Welfare versus punishment- differentiating for example social work from police work, but bringing together officers of the probation and of the police who both are involved in criminal justice system and have a say in the punishment of offenders;

- Professionalism versus amateurism- differentiating for example third sector workers from most other professionals in the sense that the former are not 'professional' per se-in that they do not have normative professional background

- Gender bias, creating masculinity versus feministic divide most evident in the divide between police and GPs being mainly males where as social workers and health visitors are predominantly females.

- Common 'enemies'- evident in the case of most professionals 'against' the police representatives who were perceived to be reluctant to understand the circumstances within the criminals/ child offenders. This could be an issue of power and control and the police seen as criminalizing everyone's service users.

My observations were that Probation Services appeared to be more compatible with everybody else possibly due to the restorative nature of their work or probably no one really felt antagonized or threatened by their presence. They appeared to be out of everyone else's way. They did not force their way into proceedings though my experiences from my social care interface with them is that they dealt with most of the perpetrators mainly of domestic violence who would have gone through the court system. They have more expertise than any one on the table in working with perpetrators yet this was not talked about much nor did they mention it even though

more than half (60%) of the referrals into Children's Social Care were about domestic violence (Collins 2011).

Early Intervention Services (EIS) and YOS officers are probably the model MASH was trying to set up. YOS were a group of inter-disciplinary professionals already co-located to work with young people who are at the verge of entering the criminal justice system due to offending behavior or who are already in the criminal justice system requiring rehabilitation. The YOS and EIS in this local authority had among their professional staff, police officers, social workers, youth advisers, educational psychologists, social workers, and teachers. McAllister and Dudau, (2010) argued that, YOS officers were largely 'tolerant' of professional diversity, having experienced it first-hand and for a longer time period than most other LSCB professionals.

The YOS is essentially a multi-professional organization, which brings together not only representatives of, and 'secondees' from, a range of agencies (such as Social services, education , police, probation and Connexions) but also workers recruited through the usual recruitment channels from the outside labor market. This mix determines a merge into a 'cultural compound' (McAllister and Dudau, 2010) a theory more likely to be compatible with others than might be the case with more rigid, longer developed professional culture.

5.4 The Organizations Level

From my observations and the interviews with participants, there appeared at one level to be not much difference between the 'professional' and the 'organization' levels of the complex whole. The narrative around the professional ethos and organizational cultures appeared quite intertwined. This was so mainly with agencies such as the police and social care where the profession dominates the organizational direction. In these organizations, the organizational mandate could be seen as dictating the professional behavior or vice versa. These I will define as primary professionals in their organizations. The compatibilities or incompatibilities

therefore appeared to be between one profession to another or one agency to another in what I will term secondary professionals in organizations for example, school nurses in schools or social workers based in hospitals. This seemed to create an easier route for the participants to generalize their feelings about each other. In some narratives, it was then clear the mixed or conflicted feelings about how one wanted to feel about the other which could be positive but resented the agency they represented which was negative.

A closer examination of the agencies' complex wholes revealed that there were some internal conflicts between the profession and the organization within the agency itself. Statements such as, *'…as a professional I want to do this…but my organization wants to do that...'* were quite common. Bethy summed up the conflict which can be created within the complex whole if organizational communication is not managed accordingly. *'It is about communication…valuing staffing…having knowledge of what they do. Starting point should have been…what I do and how I do it and then how we move forward with my contributions taken on board. This would have given me confidence in how I do my work. I don't think that was handled properly. It appeared that I was resistant all the way and was portrayed as such but it's a wrong impression. I felt that I had to defend my work, my job description…what I am about before any form of decision is taken. I don't think that's the way to develop a service. The processes were all wrong. After I visited another local authority it was the only time that I was given an opportunity to say that this is what I want and how I want it to be…to conserve the skills and competencies of the two clinicians involved. We have to wait and see. I do believe that I was viewed as being resistant and difficult…but I don't think that at all….'*

Some of the narratives came across as complaints by the professional against their organization, (more like the ego, id, superego relationship/ conflict). These professional issues highlighted the problems within organizations or rather limitations in internal communication within agencies which requires closer examination before even trying to address external communication with other agencies. '…*I think there*

tends to be secrecy…you are not told about things really so I think perhaps if we were involved more on the initial stages of yah rather than a meeting later on and you are told about that this is really happening you know...if more open dialogue I feel but this is it or this is what's happening which is fine but probably more involvement from the beginning…', (Laura). The relationship between the 'body of the organization' and its 'own parts' was clearly an issue which was being transferred externally in partnership work. Blame and scapegoating was evident mainly from middle managers (who were agency representatives in MASH) against senior managers (*who remained in their office*s). Participants who had issues with their organizations even though they appeared able at individual and professional levels to move things forward came across as resistant and it was difficult for them to efficiently represent their organizations in partnership work.

The individual professionals who carried organizational mandates to move the project forward obviously held the key to the speed with which progress could be achieved. The leadership both by individual professional and the organization he represented was viewed as key to achieving this. There also appeared to be some confusion or rather conflicted views on the 'complex whole' as to whether it was the individual or profession people took issue with or the organization or both when looking at leadership. My view from observations was that it was always difficult to separate the components. There were clearly some issues participants had with the personality of the leader, however there were some long standing perceptions on the profession and reputation of the organisation he represented.

The police as an agency came across as the most content with less to little anxieties. It was more the picture they painted as the most decisive, '…*at times forcing decisions...'* if things were slowing down. On occasions they clearly used 'shock and awe' tactics where they would come in numbers bringing various policing specialists to maintain a superior, macho-like disposition.

I noted in my research journal that, *'…when they came to inspect the security setup of the building, eleven of them came…one officer was from facilities tactical operations-, armament security, IT, police insurance, and one was overheard saying he deals with security for diplomats accommodation… more like a movie style swoop…'*

It can however be argued that maybe the police were the more anxious and had to find support and strength in numbers, talk about 'guns' to sound macho as a way to protect themselves from dealing with individual emotions and feelings about their primary task.

Other agencies came across as envious of the police power and authority. Interestingly as an agency, the police were so willing to share their information. They did not seem to have any inhibitions. They however also seemed very territorial, wanting their own sitting area as a group, *'with their little room to store their police gear…'* They gave a picture that their complex whole was at equilibrium. However from their narrative, their complex whole was not complete. The individual component appeared quite suppressed with no feelings or emotions ever showing in what the two police respondents said and their dispositions and demeanor. It can however be agreed that their professional and organizational socialization is mainly centered on emotional management, (Martin 1999). The police interview came across as being very official, devoid of emotions or feelings at individual level and did not separate the profession and the organization. Their complex whole seemed to lack the three elements as the dominant voice was that of the organization.

Children's Social Care came across as 'rigid', 'communicative', 'hierarchical', 'gendered', 'hard working', and 'frustrated' in the other professional groups and agencies because of what they claimed were delays in getting information back and poor quality information being send to them 'without due regard of the volumes they have to deal with.' They made this initiative about 'children' and wanted everyone to know they are in charge of child protection and safeguarding. They also had the

'home advantage' as it was becoming apparent that everyone was going to be housed in the Children's Social Care building. Territorial advantage was also enhanced by the fact that all meetings took place in Children's Social Care building. They were equally quick to remind others that, *'… if there was any serious case review we would be the ones accountable...'*

The more notable barriers to cooperation were said to be with health authorities due to their information governance and need for consent issues. They were equally reported to be arrogant, especially General Practitioners, *'and not taking information sharing seriously...'* The juxtaposition of the individual professional and organization appeared to be more complicated and complex within Health. At organizational level they were extensively represented with professionals from health visiting, commissioning, providers etc. indicating that they understood the need and were willing to work in partnership. However these good intentions appeared to be blocked and undone at individual and professional levels due to probably internal issues and traditional professional cultures. The patient remained the 'defended subject' used to protect the professionals against their own anxieties. The patient had to be protected against abuse (of their information) by other professionals at any cost.

Children's Social Care seemed to complain that, 'education does not want to ruin their long and trustworthy relationships with children and families *by 'reporting them to Social Services…'* Here, educationalists' position seemed to be portrayed to be the same as the GPs in feeling they have a privileged, long relationship with children and their families which can be endangered by getting the social services involved. But who is education? A simplistic answer is schools, run by head teachers and teachers with their students. As far as information sharing was concerned, the MASH being set up could not identify who exactly to invite from education to represent them. Their silence was conspicuous due to their absence at the table which they did not create themselves. They became very invisible but much talked about. It was explained that each school keeps its own database of children on roll. This local authority has over thirty schools. The authorities argued that, it was not feasible to

invite a representative from each and every one of them. This anomaly though justifiable is quite curious as schools see and spend time with children more than any other organization represented. School representatives are part of the 'core group' in over 60% of the children on Child in need (CIN) and Child protection (CP) plans. Their presence is vital and should have been sought in one way or another.

My observations were that the police were not a barrier to cooperation. It was rather the other organizations who just did not want to cooperate with them due to all the blame and scapegoating which was going on. One representative from Children Social Care asked, *'…why is it that in all the serious case reviews police are never directly blamed or vilified like Social services and health yet they have police protection powers to remove the child at risk and arrest the perpetrators…'*

The police appeared to use security for bargaining. Their lead once stated that, *'…you know as officers we can be called to perform different duties at any time…we need rooms to keep police gear, cs gas, riot stuff…(and others shouted guns).* This appeared a reasonable request with plausible justification. However, other agencies are more used to open plan offices and hot- desking so territoriality is fading. Social Care as providers of the office space were also getting concerned with the 'silent take over' by the police. They wanted to bring their whole Unit of 14 members of staff. One social care manager out of frustration of losing office space said, *'…. I have been short changed you know...it is not right...these senior managers are spineless...they just agree to the police...now the police are going to take over ...they have actually taken over...why can't we go to the police station...now we are going to have a mini police station here...it's not right...I really feel used...short changed ....they didn't do this during the inspection...we are an 'outstanding' borough...there is nothing 'outstanding' about it...'*

The formation of the MASH coincided with the Safeguarding and Looked after Children (SLAC) OFSTED inspection. The OFSTED regime was very keen on multi-agency working arrangements. During the period of inspection, (20days) which

included multi- agency focus groups, a forced galvanization of relationships emerged among agencies. Organizational representatives at individual, professional and organizational levels spoke literally with one voice.

'When OFSTED inspection came, people were...the police couldn't have been kinder about....MASH project has been great ....The Borough Commander, it was the first thing he said, when the inspectors arrived ....and they all came in and said it...oh it has been fantastic working together on the MASH project, totally unscripted...very supportive...the inspectors immediately got the message. Oh you don't have to worry about MASH the police have already said it...which was really helpful. But nobody had a thought about it....' (Alex).

It appeared to me that CSC manager was very happy with police endorsement. I also attributed this to familiarity which was created by the partnership meetings but in the unconscious, it was the huge fear of failure as organizational culpability is always attributed to individuals, and individuals who cause failure usually get severely punished if identified and would suffer professionally in a blaming culture which exists in child protection and safeguarding.

5.5 Conclusion

Anxieties and fears provoked by child protection and safeguarding were expressed both consciously and unconsciously at individual, professional and organizational levels. This interaction within individuals is very complex and often conflicted. Individual agencies representatives struggled to manage the conflicting interests of the complex whole which gave rise to acting up in the unconscious. It was also observed and experienced that different anxieties and emotions were felt at the three different levels of the complex whole.

My experience as a social worker is that Children's Social Care are viewed by the society and by other professionals as containers of societal anxieties. They are

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authorized to apply thresholds and screen what needs and does not need safeguarding. Unlike the police, perpetrators of abuse are to be worked with not punished. Other agencies' social mandates seem to be clearer, health treats, police bring people to justice, schools educate. However for social care, the social mandate appears too wide and often intangible. In an anxiety- laden child protection arena, more seems to be referred to Children's Social Care who clearly need help and the MASH was a good starting point.

The MASH partners represented a diversity in individual, professional and institutional personalities that came together to create and deliver on this new primary task. These personalities brought with them different cultures which at times clashed as they defended their identities. Some theorists see the components of partnerships as being individual professions while others view them as organizations depending on the theoretical angles the structures are looked from. The individuals who sat in MASH represented their professions and their organizations alike. They had their professional paradigms acquired through education but also through professional and on-the-job training that influenced their behaviors even as individuals. The influence of their individual, professional and organizational socialization was reflected in how they made their decisions, their evaluation of situations as well as how and whom they interacted with.

Chapter 6: Leadership and Authority in Multi Agency Partnership work

'…at times I wondered who exactly was leading this…and whether they were sure where they wanted this thing to go...' (Daniel).

6.0 Introduction

Leadership was one of the consistent themes across the narratives and observations in this study. This chapter will focus on emerging issues pertaining to leadership. Partners representing different agencies in MASH were coming as leaders from their different agencies. As a group hierarchies emerged among the individuals, the professions and the organisations represented in relation to their contributions to child protection and safeguarding. This chapter will define leadership as it pertains to multi-agency collaborative work. The chapter will highlight the complexities of leading multiple agencies as experienced in MASH and the impact of unconscious processes and group dynamics. I will expand on some sub themes that emerged from the findings which included the concept of shared/ distributed leadership, power and authority differentials and leadership and followership fantasies.

The leadership challenge faced in MASH reflected the particular circumstances of multi-agency partnership work. There was a diverse set of stakeholders, disparities in power relationships, different levels of understanding of the aims and objectives of the project. The inadequate clarity over processes and consensus became tedious to achieve. There were also a number of practical issues leadership had to grapple with including, office space, appropriateness of representation and attendance, ICT, financial and human resources to cater for additional staffing needs and managing emotional and communication issues*.*

The findings of this research lend support to an emerging body of literature that suggests that leadership approaches need to be responsive to the particular contexts of collaborative work. In previous sections I have postulated that representatives within MASH carried three complex identities at once, the individual,

the professional and the organization to form a complex whole. The integration of these three different levels becomes complex due to the fact that while there are clear lines of behaviours within each of them, as a collective they acquire different properties which need to be managed and can stretch the capacity and abilities of leadership.

Leadership in multi-agency work was about operating and directing contrasting complex multiple systems and multiple individual and professional personalities. The magnitude of the task was huge, bringing together and leading a multi-faceted group of individuals and organizations to form one homogenous group whose primary task was to share information each organization contained on citizens as 'shared' service users, customers, clients in most cases without them knowing it, under the pretext of safeguarding and protecting children.

As organizations in all sectors cope with massive change both internally and externally, Huffington (2004) argues that one effect of this turbulence has been to alter irrevocably the psychological contract between organizations and their employees. In this context leadership as well as management effectiveness has become crucial. MASH as a new organization being formed needed leadership to pull the whole organization together in a common purpose, articulate a shared vision, set direction, inspire and command commitment, loyalty and ownership of change efforts to safeguard and protect vulnerable children.

6.1 Defining Leadership as seen in MASH

Leadership is a process of interpersonal influence from one person to others in the direction of a goal where the others subsequently act of their own will in the direction sought for by the leader, (Baruch, 1998). It should be viewed in context and not considered as being separate from strategy, organising, learning and all those interactions that make organizations, (Gray 1989). Leadership is pivotal in the

development of individuals, groups and organizations and always deserves extensive exploration (Baruch, 1998).

Individuals may be appointed to positional leadership roles but this does not necessarily make them leaders. The key function of the leader is to create an organizational vision to influence others, (Dubrin 1995). Leadership is about the quality of the relationships that are developed with staff while at the same time acting as a role model, mentor and teacher to others, (Kickul and Neuman, 2000). These features were apparently required in setting up and moving the MASH forward. Most participants were aware of what was required of their leadership but my observations were that they appeared to be held back by some unconscious issues residing in the individual, professional or organizations they represented which included fear to take responsibility, anxieties about failure, defence against blame by passing the buck and scapegoating others who showed initiative for example the police.

I noted that leadership was located within individuals, professions and organizations. The primary task and processes in MASH partnership work also impacted on leadership. The three-fold structure emerged when looking closely at the data produced from narratives. It is worth noting that the interviews did not focus exclusively on leadership, but on a whole range of issues around the establishment of MASH and partnership working. Leadership emerged naturally from the interviewees' narratives when they talked about how issues were being resolved in the partnership meetings, how interaction among colleagues was managed and how the MASH project was generally driven, who drove it and why and their expectations of what 'things' should have been like. From my observations, leadership was equally a big subject to the participants. It also highlighted some of my own struggles about taking risks which affected how I contributed to the different aspects of my work within the MASH context.

6.2 The Concept of Distributed and Shared Leadership

'…who really is the leader…?' Laura asked.

I looked at leadership capabilities of different individual representatives in the partnership body who were expected to act as channels of communication between their organizations and MASH. The leadership of this project was located in the ability of Children's Social Care to mobilise all the participants and their organizations around the collective aims of the partnership. I investigated leadership as a process of the way things actually got done to achieve desired change and how the collaborative advantage of many organizations working together came about to deliver the MASH.

In the context of this study, I will make an assumption that leadership is demonstrated by committing the resources of one's organisation to the collaborative agenda. Representatives would also disperse knowledge about partnership work in their organizations. This would be done by individuals who occupy senior positions in their organizations' hierarchies, high enough to be able to commit resources yet not so high as to be disconnected from the field practitioners where the information needs to be communicated to.

The process to form the MASH was driven through the monthly multi agency partnership meetings. These meetings were called and chaired by the Children's Social Care in their building. The first meeting was attended by fifteen professionals representing eleven different agencies from four corporate organizations, the London Metropolitan police, the local authority, National Health Services and Probation Services. The assumption was that these were the core agencies and appropriate leaders to represent their organizations in establishing this new organization, MASH. It can also be assumed that the individuals attending MASH partnership meetings were mandated by their agencies to lead on the issues of multi agency child protection and safeguarding. However this role created some anxieties amongst

some participants because the mandate 'to lead' appeared not clear as most participants expected 'to be led.'

Daniel said, *'.... sometimes I am stuck in the middle and I also feel as though from my agency perspective in terms of MASH we are kind of making it up as we go along as I feel as though there is no leadership… although I feel supported by my manager...'* It was clear from this statement and from my observations that many of the organizations were not clear of what MASH was and therefore not sure of what they had to contribute. Some viewed themselves as having been send to do something they were not sure of. These anxieties raised further frustrations which led to 'anti task' attitudes. Alex once said, '*…no one needs it (MASH) we have been told to develop this...you need to develop this as much as I do otherwise your senior managers would want to know why you didn't engage with the process…'*. This summed up the general attitude at the beginning where the feelings were, *'we are being made to develop something we do not need.'* In my view this came across as feelings of being 'coerced' by the 'actual' leaders who resided elsewhere outside MASH, not the ones representing the organizations.

Some participants were not clear about the process and feared to expose themselves to 'bad practice' without proper guidance from leadership. '*... And I wonder whether if I felt this whole MASH was being driven in a more cohesive, robust, forward thinking and dynamic...way, whether some of that would be there. I suppose some of it goes back prior to doing this role… I managed....I was the service manager I managed a whole range of services...and I suppose you just sometimes think back how you would drive this through and think there is a conflict for me. I am not saying it would be easy to do this or I would have done things differently',* said Daniel.

Due to this lack of clarity on the process and how to achieve the goal, most participants did not feel they were able to take the leadership role or at least contribute to it. One would assume for example, that the participant who was once a

service manager would jump at the opportunity of leading in a project like this, but he saw 'a conflict' for him. In my view this conflict was in the mind as he acknowledged that he was aware of 'how to share information in section 47' cases and it was one of the major inhibitions for many participants not to contribute to the leadership role. The group had to assign this role. The Children's Social Care and the police who appeared to have been authorised by their agencies to lead assumed the role of leadership. The participants started to scapegoat the chair and the police representative as the ones either moving too fast or failing to move the project forward. Laura said, *'…it's always a rush…I am not sure really why the rush to do this thing (MASH)…'* At the same time another participant was complaining, *'the movement and the processes are so slow…at times you really wonder whether the person leading really knows where we are going…'*

Menzies (1959) talks of the concept of collusive redistribution of responsibility. She analyses this as a form of splitting in which members of a group project unsatisfactory tendencies within themselves onto other members. Some of the participants in the partnership meetings demonstrated an admission of sometimes being content to pass on difficult issues as another person, (chair) department's or senior management's responsibility adopting an 'it's out of our hands' approach even for something they could easily implement for their own wellbeing to alleviate the same anxieties defended against.

Another aspect was that, 'even the assigned leaders' also wanted to be led. The chair for the partnership meetings said, *'…I was fairly unquestioning about it and what I think I should have done is... I need a board of reference to which I can report progress. I had a project sponsor in Divisional Director if you like, we would formerly review it in my supervision that was fine and I am still reporting into the LSCB but even the LSCB were not acting as the body of reference, not giving the strategic message to the agencies they had to deliver...and that has been a struggle through out and I felt that, that has been left to me and my personal resources to make it happen. I never get told back and considering it suddenly became a priority I would*

have expected some leadership at a very senior strategic level but it wasn't to be...it wasn't forthcoming in the way I envisaged it coming anywhere...' (Alex).

The fact that the leadership of MASH was not formally announced meant that at different levels people wondered who exactly was leading it. The individuals within the group had to assign the role to who ever they 'felt fit.' Collin, a senior manager himself observed that, '...*I think there has been an interesting dynamic around this being quite significantly... a police led initiative both at the strategic level and local level... because they...they are a totemic organization and we all approach them with a set of expectations and beliefs...*' The police had already set up internal structures to support MASH. In that sense they were already leading. Their role in society especially in 'emergency' situations also meant they led. The fitness to be leader appeared to be based on which organization the assigned leader represented, the participants' perception on the contributions of the assigned leader and what the assigned leader's organization was perceived to represent in the community at large. For example, when the substance misuse agency representative spoke about not wanting to share service users information with every agency in the room, there appeared to be sympathy and understanding that there were some agencies who should not get that information. At that time everyone looked towards the police representative as if to provoke a response or comment if not to say, *'your presence is to blame for not sharing information.'*

One of my colleagues asked me, '*...you see another point which really is kind of...uhh...you are kind of managing it by default because nobody has really said you are the manager of MASH... but you are the manager of MASH and what are the overall implications and because if there is a query that comes in, it will be directed at you, any complains... anything really... you are the manager of MASH. Why not give you that title that says you are the manager of MASH... but you head the MASH so what are the implications really and shouldn't that be recognised and will that cause any general problems even for the running of the team...?* She felt I was the leader and wanted this formally announced based on what she perceived my

contributions were. Leadership from this argument comes not just with responsibility but also with recognition. The responsibility in her view included dealing with '*complains, queries…anything really*'. Could this possibly have been the reason why participants did not want to share in the leadership?

The responsibility to lead appeared quite huge. I also expected to be formally authorized to lead. Without that I felt inhibited even to contribute but more importantly did not want to create 'conflict'. On reflection, the 'conflict' I feared and wanted to avoid was mainly stepping out of role as a follower. Where I had two of my senior managers present, I felt my contributions had to be proportionate to my level not to compete. It was clear to me that contributions resulted in recognition both positive and negative. I was not sure how to deal with disagreements with my own seniors or how they would deal with them, this was inhibiting. It is also possible that my own fear of the task raised anxieties in me which were debilitating. I feared to take risks, however further down the line, I felt confident. One of my contributions which only came around the sixth month of the partnership meetings seemed to move things forward.

From these experiences I realized that I feared taking risks to challenge the authority of my seniors or to contribute amongst leaders even if that would move things forward. I also observed that it was difficult for my counterparts to take similar risks which sometimes is something blamed on public servants in general not going outside their comfort zones. Pollak and Levy (1989) suggested that, it is possible for practitioners to doubt their competences or judgment among others and can fear ridicule by colleagues if there is no immediate confirmation back about abilities from others. Although it can be argued that the private sector ethos have entered public sector to some degree (William, 2012), there are still elements of the latter that have not been, and still are not being challenged significantly. Most of the organizations represented in MASH, just like mine, have an organizational framework which focusses on hierarchy, inflexible rules and legalistic procedures, at times elitism and risk management by strict internal governance and by insulating itself from the

external environment. The implication of this is that it can unconsciously act as social defences inhibiting new learning and the application of experience. These social defences can at times be healthy, enabling people to cope with stress (Halton 1994). However most commonly they are unhealthy, like individual defences when they distance organization members from reality, hinder their work, damage their confidence to take risks and prevent their adaptation to changing circumstances (Menzies 1959).

Many participants could not conceive sharing information without consent of parents in child protection. For a long period there was both a conscious and unconscious reluctance to engage with the issue so as to move things forward. Information governance became the 'defended subject' which was heavily used as a defence against future anxieties of getting it wrong in MASH. My view is that the 'fantasy' on process and the complexity of the 'primary task' did not foster for individual participants initiative. The real subject matter for establishing MASH which primarily was about safeguarding and protecting children at times got lost or forgotten.

Harlow and Shardlow (2006) made similar observations. Their evaluation of the groups that are responsible for the implementing child protection plans (core groups) revealed a number of challenges relating to inter-agency co-ordination and inter-professional relationships including issues of anxiety and defensiveness. They noticed reluctance by non-social work practitioners in taking certain tasks in the group. They suggest that this may constitute an unconscious wish to avoid 'contamination' or to defend themselves against the difficult emotions that such cases evoke. Social workers would be left to contain those difficult emotions resulting in them feeling resentful and unsupported. In the case of MASH, the Chair had to do the containing of difficult emotions.

The research revealed that there is a need for detailed guidance and procedures for managers and practitioners alike on behaviour management in complex multi-agency settings. The concept of distributed or shared leadership is still far from

reality in safeguarding agencies due to the complexity of the task and the individual anxieties and fear participants have of getting this wrong. The nature of child protection and safeguarding follows an auditing regime which requires a high level of accountabilities. Many managers shy away from leadership particularly if not authorized due to the burden of accountability which is usually followed with blame in the event that things do not go as expected. It then appeared that clarity and authorization to take leadership positions may assist with the confidence required to contribute to collaborative work.

6.3 Power and Authority Differentials in MASH

Power and authority differentials challenged the exercise and capacity of leadership in MASH. Different individuals, professionals and organisations clearly had more power than others which influenced leadership of the new project. The thought that collaborative work was meant to emanate from a position where representatives had the same amount of power and equal voice in the proceedings was proved in this study to be a fantasy. Some agencies brought in more representatives than others. Other agencies were represented by more senior and authoritative figures who could make final decisions in meetings whereas others needed to go back to their offices to consult and take instructions. Some organisations like the local authority and NHS had several agencies and separate departments representing them in different capacities giving them an upper hand in negotiations. The following two sections will expound on those multiple layers and multiple agencies representation.

6.3.1 Multiple Layers of Representation in MASH

I observed that the representatives who constituted the MASH partnership meetings (group of leaders from various agencies) were at different levels along organizational hierarchies. My view was that middle managers were the more suitable level to represent their agencies and lead on MASH. This was in Children's Social Care terms the level of Head of Service/ Service Manager or in police terms the Detective

Inspector. In terms of driving a process like establishing a MASH, this level of positions is typical middle management and links the operational level with the strategic levels in organizations. It is my assumption that it is a level which could advise on strategic direction at the same time connecting well with operational processes on the ground. On the contrary different levels of managers represented different agencies in MASH. Children Social Care had level one manager who supervises practitioners, second level social work manager who supervised deputy team managers, third level managers and assistant directors. Health was represented from practitioners who are more field workers to commissioning managers and probation had the director level representation.

The disparities in grade levels for partnership representatives where some agencies had director level and others had practitioner level representatives caused a number of complications. From my experience practitioners' level is defined by a minimum of 50% direct work and interaction with service users per week with no strategic element to their work and not making any decisions on resources. The two extreme poles were to face challenges when expected to disseminate information from partnership meetings. One would be too high and disconnected from operational issues while the other would be too low to make any impact in strictly hierarchical organisations such as the police. Influencing policy change would be bound to take longer in those circumstances.

Having different grades exposed organizational internal communication issues which exposed the quality of the management and leadership of the senior managers in those organizations. One of the participants said in the meeting (in the presents of her managers), '...*it is taken for granted that I am here and get on with it. While MASH is important, it should be recognised that I do more than MASH. It should be accepted that I am not going to sit and disregard some of my skills... I am not going into the MASH accommodation... I want other workers to access me…*' The participant challenged her managers in the meeting as to why she was not informed

of changes to certain aspects of her job description and other issues affecting the ways of her working.

Other instances also arose where participants from the same agency were clearly not agreeing and to move things forward they had to be asked to have a separate meeting within their own agency. Such issues became 'toxic' in that they affected the morale of the group. They created a 'juniors versus seniors' type divide which pushed senior managers at times to be defensive to the detriment of free flow of discussions. I would argue that some of the issues raised were from a social work perspective typically what would be resolved in a supervision setting. This in turn exposed some of the supervision cultures in some organizations and propagated the notion that supervision cultures follow the cultures of the organizations.

In Social Care, multiple level representations had its own issues. Making contributions in the meetings where my 'bosses' were present was quite stifling. I did not want to raise issues I was not sure my manager the Head of Service and/ or her manager the Assistant director would not agree with or would somehow find controversial. There was also a general anxiety of not wanting to expose myself and my organization in case I say something 'out of sync' as there were so many 'very' senior managers from other agencies and I was 'only' a tier two manager. I could see this happening also to other participants who had their 'managers' there. This in a way actually delayed progress because it was only in month five after I noticed that we had certainly moved in cycles on certain issues and I gathered confidence to force through some of my views on to the table and suggested experiential solutions from an operational manager perspective, *'as someone who was going to be running this project.'*

Alex commented, '…. *I should have listened to you more…actually one of the key meetings we had was a contribution that you made (researcher) where you initiated a discussion and your explanation was what did it for me about what actually it was, we were trying to achieve in terms of sharing information case by case...and I felt*

that actually shifted things quite a long way...I wish I had at that point...I had encouraged you to make the contributions before because it helped people to see that it was do-able… and see the network for what it is, until that point they had struggled but after that it changed because they had heard the discussion and it cleared it for them which had taken me time...'

This however raises the issue of risk taking and confidence in shared leadership and how to distribute the leadership task. It also put in question the appropriateness of the levels of some of the participants representing their agencies. I could have pushed my views on the table and moved things forward earlier, only if I had been confident enough. I was in these meetings for a role, 'to contribute' so it is important to attend to and unlock whatever it was that inhibited me. This might have been the same with other representatives who struggled to articulate their views in this type of a group setting. It is possible that as a group we could have moved the project forward in a shorter amount of time than we then spend had everyone contributed the same to the debate. However, it is the contention of this research that there were deep seated unconscious issues that acted as barriers.

Some organisations were represented by their most senior managers who ended up dictating proceedings in the partnership meetings. The problem with this was that in the first instance they would promote their own organizational and professional interests (e.g. in the case of Probation Services which had its Chief Operating Officer and Children's Social Care which had an Assistant Director among other senior managers) rather than prioritizing the collaborative agenda and helping create collective capabilities. One example was that when the issue of human resourcing the MASH was raised, Probation Services offered 6hrs to a 35hour week. What this meant was that there was no other level to escalate this to, to bargain for more hours as the buck stopped with the Chief Operating Officer. On the other hand the police offered and managed to justify having a whole Team of 14 officers to be moved into the building taking half the space allocated for the whole MASH, *(most respondents felt this was linked to the police's own accommodation needs as their station was to*

be renovated). Other agency representatives had to go back to consult with their senior managers as they were not at a level to allocate resources. In other instances, some participants had to request other agency leads to bargain on their behalf as they were too junior in their own organization to make an impact.

In one of the meetings, the Executive Director of Social Care (with a portfolio cutting across Housing, Adults and Children services, Youth Offending and early intervention services) attended and wanted to push an idea for increasing the capacity of MASH. Other participants including those within her portfolio had highlighted the difficulties and challenges as to why they could not increase staffing. Her response was, *'capacity will not be an issue for my agencies…thank you…may I have names of people in your organizations I need to talk to, to move this forward…'* From there the complexion of the discussion completely changed especially for those from local authority agencies. Those who had come across as vociferous resistors immediately switched sides as the 'real leader' had spoken. Indeed she could make things happen but at the same time this rendered the contributions to the discussion against increasing capacity irrelevant and equally altered the process of negotiation. One organisational representative even said, *'it came across like everyone was being told what to do… this was no longer negotiating…'*

These disparities slowed down progress for those representatives who had to consult with their seniors before making decision. They also caused a status divide in meetings based on power and seniority impacting on contributions. This was quite evident in my observations in the partnership meetings that those very senior in their agencies controlled the discussions and appeared to be listened to more. They also got away with some privileges like it was easily justifiable for them to come in late or leave early from partnership meetings. This was equally reflected in the minutes of the meetings that those seniors who were influential had their contributions well-articulated and at times those views of low ranking officers were not even documented in the minutes or at times not given attention.

One practitioner commenting on the evolution of MASH felt that junior officers were not sufficiently consulted. She observed that, '…*it is always these secret meetings, people are not really in dialogue, like with this leaflet…it would have been nice to be asked to contribute to it…being asked what you think and probably more interactive. If what I say is garbage so be it but at least you are more involved and are part of that process. I don't think its deliberately done but I just think it's just again people and their style and as for me I am more conscious because I don't want to come across as rude because you don't want to be seen as the dumb thing because the other person is above you so you do not approach them… you don't have an opinion or voice your opinion. I must point out that it's not a major issue. I think people have come to respect other people even though there is less contribution so it certainly exists but less now. It is to be less now with more professionals coming now to join the Team… so yah culture influences….'* (Laura).

Multiple level representations created conflict over project ownership and task distribution. This was experienced on determination of the action plan such as launch date for the project to 'go live' day. The Children's Social Care Director requested the Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Manager to give him a presentation on the progress of the project. In the eyes of the social work managers, this was seen as 'ICT stealing the limelight.' The ICT managers highlighted that the launch could not go ahead as some specific ICT issues were not in place. She called this the *'show stopper'*. Social work managers asked, *'whose project is it anyway'* and acted against the advice as they saw 'ICT as an element' but not the main issue to determine the launch date of the project.

The Assistant Director met with the Detective Inspector from the police and decided the launch date as they wanted the issue concluded. However the Social work Head of Service who had operational responsibility stopped it as she claimed that she needed more resources before that happened. The main issue in my view was that she was not consulted prior to the date being decided. These few vignettes highlight the link and co-relationships among personalities on the table, quality of

communication and leadership stirring the group. They also highlight that leadership can be a product of power as different participants tried to show how much of it they had and/ or should have in deciding the fate of the project.

In creating this collective capacity it is important to highlight that the gaps between organizational cultures and professional cultures were quite evident in the group and they had a huge impact on how individuals were ranked and how they behaved and acted out their positions in contributing to leadership and the progress of the project. This view is supported by findings from earlier studies (Leathard, 1994; White and Featherstone, 2005).

6.3.2 Multiple Agencies Representation

The research findings indicate that some organizations had a number of different agencies, departments and/ or divisions representing them. They had joint organizational vision but different departmental and sectorial interests (see Fig 3). The local authority had Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Housing Services, Youth Offending Service, and Early Intervention Services as different agencies. Within those agencies were also some sub agencies with different interests like in Adult Social Care there was Adult Mental Health Services, Community Safety and Adult Safeguarding as separate entities. Health also had Universal Services, Adults Mental Health, Adult Substance Misuse, Commissioning, and Accident, Emergency and Acute Services all under NHS local trust umbrella. It became apparent that even within these organizations themselves, they were not clear who had to take the representative leadership of their organization, who had to be responsible for the decision making and accountability and who actually was the most appropriate and better placed to be in the MASH. There was also a lot of intertwining and overlapping in some organizations. Adult Substance Misuse crossed over between NHS and Adult Social Care and had both medical and social care staff representing it. It was not clear which voice carried more weight and strength or was it down to

personalities. Those who could articulate their position better emerged as the leaders in that regard.

Differences in views between corporate leadership and agency representatives also could upset the progress of the partnership project. Collin lamented that, '*… in order to facilitate discussions from within Adult Social Care on what the MASH could be and how we might relate to it, I wrote a paper about our bit of the business on that and in that I wanted to sow the seeds of you know…we could be expansive in our thinking about these issues…and I think I made that argument slightly too well because our DLT (departmental leadership team) was so impressed with that idea….and so impressed about the potential for the Communities Safety input. They handed the project of developing of the Adult Social Care element to it to my colleagues in Community Safety. And for my colleagues in Community Safety, who are very overstretched, they went through significant reduction, just around the same time…this cannot be one of their top priorities so that is not necessarily good in their queue of work. We are not making the most of the opportunity that is in front of us. So I think yah… I put it that can create some tensions within my position within the MASH project group because clearly people want to talk about the here and now and do not want to hear how we are going to get on with other things…*'

The multiple agency representation at times also confused and complicated issues and disadvantaged other partners. The chair commenting on health said, '*there are so many different sets of them… you wouldn't know who is who and what they actually do. I am not sure if they know themselves…*' Another participant also said on the same, '*…I am still confused by all of them and I think everyone is confused as well.*' Even though many authorities on leadership are now propagating lateral, distributed and shared leadership (Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Butterfoss & Goodman, 1996) spread across different agencies and individuals, traditionally accountability had to lie in a designated individual and it was clear during partnership meetings that representatives yearned for that individual.

Fig 3, is an illustration of how 2 main organizations in MASH inter-connected. It demonstrates how intricate the agencies observed were to navigate both for insiders and outsiders with various Departments and Units. The local authority had four main agencies and about eight units represented. Some of them like the Adult Mental Health and Substance Misuse Services were interwoven with the National Health Services (NHS).

Fig 3 Intricacies of organizational and agency representation in MASH
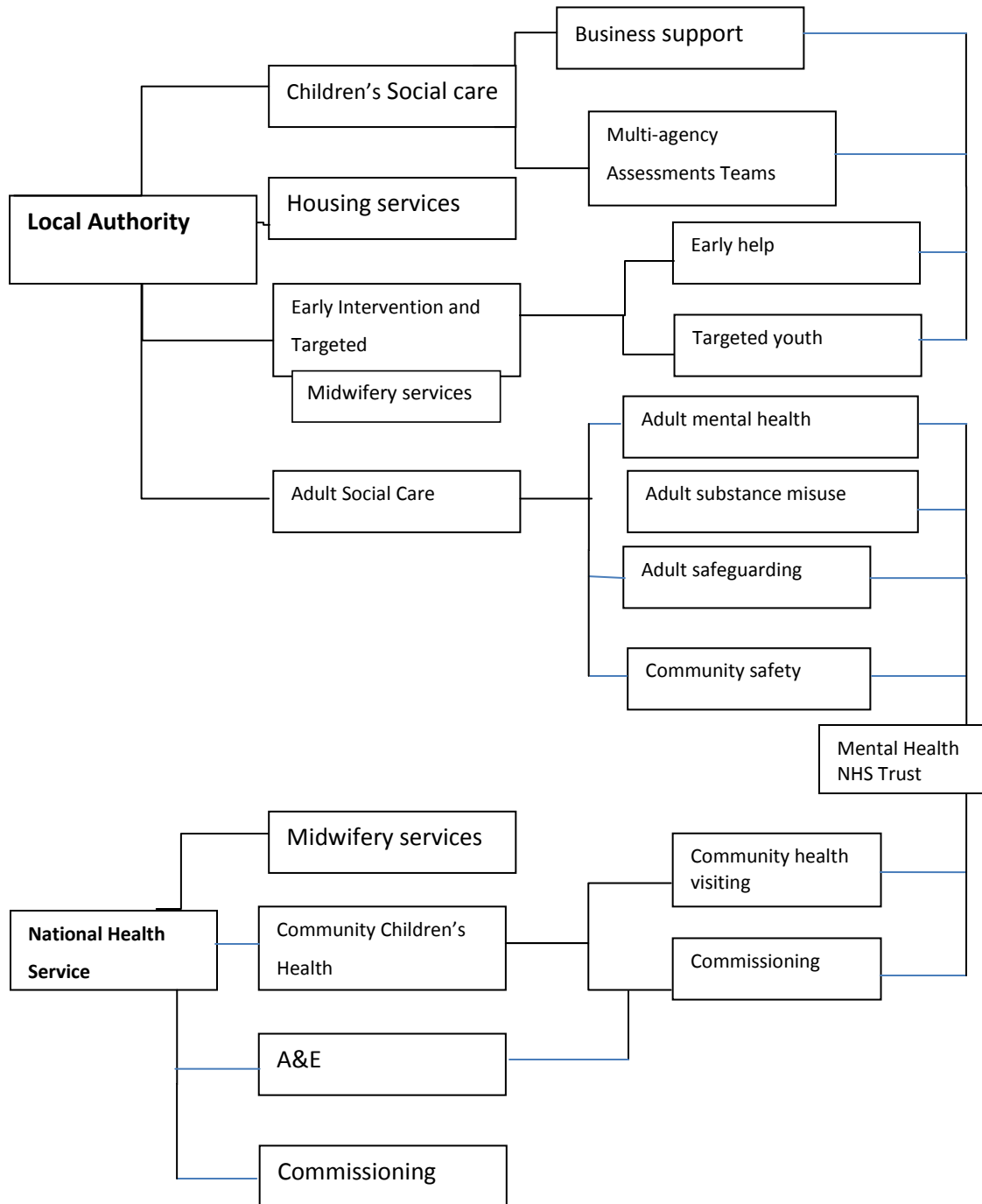
Leadership of the MASH was also impacted by the different values that underpin each of these components in such diverse and well established organizations and professions which at times proved to be a challenge to other partners. Organizational participants had varied perceptions of each other which had the potential to unconsciously cause tensions. Daniel, commenting on the chair and his own agency said, *'....I sometimes wonder how well organized the whole process is… that is one of my kind of issues. It makes me feel as if I am being obstructive but working both in Social Care and Health I think the way they think about...the way they share information is slightly different and the kind of processes are different so I feel as though sometimes I am stuck in the middle and I also feel as though from an adult mental health perspective in terms of MASH we are kind of making it up as we go along as I feel as though….you kind of feel you are kind of trading on water in some of the decisions you make so that is kind of the key thing I suppose…'*

A participant from Children's Social Care commenting on another agency said, *'…health is a good example of where change is actually difficult for them to...to make because of the way they are funded, ...because of the way they are structured ...they got commissioners and providers....It is actually difficult for them to take up an idea, absorb it and improve it to make it work. They also struggle to manage human...people side of things when there is resistance from staff....there is not the same type of authoritarian approach...'*

Alex had these perceptions on the police*, '…So take for example, Police have a culture of working that you need to bear in mind when working with them....it's really authority driven, it's a working culture totally dissimilar to Local Authority where there is a lot of power at the centre so with a new commissioner coming on board, with the project being led by Deputy Commissioner suddenly everybody in the MET Police was doing what they were told because it was coming from the top… to take a little example of where the police culture, not harshness but it's just a difference, we had a visit from the facilities and IT people from the police, quite a number of them came. What you picked very quickly is that there is quite a culture of superiority in the*

police, so they couldn't quite believe that we could have a fairly secure building where you had swipe cards... Unfortunately what happens is there is some level of arrogance that spills out...'

These views are supported by Broussine and Miller (2005) who asserted that, dealing with differences in point of view emanating from organizational, professional and sectorial beliefs and priorities is a basic leadership challenge in partnership work.

It was apparent that leadership could only manifest itself in form of co-ordination skills to achieve the effectiveness of partnership work. Even though Children's Services were viewed as the designated leader due to their mandate in child protection and safeguarding, in MASH, they were only co-ordinators because they could not 'get' the partners 'to do' something. They could merely encourage a certain course of action by using for example reminders of the vision, negotiations or just political bargaining. At the very first partnership meeting, the Children's Social Care lead had said, *'we will work with those who want'* as it was proving clear that he had no power to force anyone on board if they did not want to. Later on when the project was underway, he reflected that, *'this has been an interesting project because each agency has got to solve its own problems, where as in the safeguarding work that we do together, and in most partnership work the lead is very much given by the local authority. The local authority is very much the solution finder, but in this project each agency had to find its own solutions with a bit of steer maybe from the local authority... ourselves, but they had to do it themselves.* He further commented that, *'because this was a multi-agency partnership, you could not instruct people to do what you wanted, you had to get their buy-in and because this is a different working arrangement and they are all at different stages of understanding and commitment...um....that was tricky, it was ....you had to persuade and use some political skills.*

Collin referring to the chair commented that, *In the context of what we are thinking about is the chair's leadership and his style in the process, he is able to keep… you know what he has got on his mind, you know he is going to get it out there….but he is able to engage and engage others in that journey with him and encompass the views of people in the room…He manages the room quite well. I think people go away in my view... and I certainly experienced this…people go away feeling heard and therefore remain engaged with the process. And if you are not going to get what you want that is done in a nice way…'*

It can be argued however that multiple departmental representation had its own advantages as well. It had a positive impact on the co-ordination and leadership role where political power rested in the corporate organization. Any dissent could be coerced from the very top. For example, the local authority with its multiple agencies (Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, YOS, and Early Intervention Service) who all had the same political leadership could be stirred in a particular direction based on corporate vision. Once they were convinced that MASH was the way to go, departmental leaders were mandated to make it happen. Representatives in various agencies came knowing that the end game was that MASH had to be established. Their role and responsibility was mainly and only to make that happen. These various departments coming as separate agencies, with equal bargaining power with other 'external' agencies in the partnership also lend a powerful voice to the local authority. This was also the case with health, however what should be noted is that some of its 'insiders' were from Social Care backgrounds who on professional matters would lean towards their professional colleagues.

The police also used the same strategy of leadership by numbers to achieve what they wanted in the partnership. From the onset the police were clear that they wanted to bring the whole Team (14 officers) to sit in MASH. The police lead also used various departments at her disposal for consultations with some at times appearing as guests in partnership meetings. This actually gave the police a comparative advantage to other partner agencies.

6.4 Leadership and Followership Fantasies.

In the previous sections, I alluded to the fact that most participants did not view leadership as a shared task they also had to engage in. They felt that they were not formally authorized to lead therefore they unconsciously assigned the responsibility to the chair of the partnership meetings. I fell in the category of participants who wanted to be authorized if they were to assume any leadership responsibilities. The levels of satisfaction and perception of the leader were quite mixed. What is interesting to note is that representatives from the two agencies who shared in the leadership task felt the leadership of the chair was good. They both bought into the shared leadership concept. One of the agencies was the police. Julia said, '…*we always knew it was going to be a struggle for workers and organizations and financial input in providing staff within MASH. It has been a positive one, I think the chair has driven it very well and got on top of it with regular meetings. I would say all the other agencies have had a very positive response to that. If there was anyone who didn't want to be part of it now they want to.*'

They appeared to readily accept the gravity of the task of leadership and they were equally aware of the challenges they also presented, like the Adult Services representative further added, '…*my understanding of what has been going on in the room is that people are being quite polite around me, my space… but I think if they do not give me a minute,… I keep banging the table…until I get it over and done with. In fact it feels like it is expected at some point that I have got to do it. People would be disappointed if I do not do it. But I think there is some merit and some value in it…*'

The participants who wanted to be led focused on what they saw as areas others needed to improve not what they had to do to improve and move things forward. Daniel said, '...*I suppose I wonder sometimes about...one of the key players...their kind of understanding about MASH and I suppose for me the kind of way they operate is kind of laissez faire for me.. it is not, it doesn't seem organized enough for*

me some of the times and involvement for me but that does not mean to say this process is not organized, it is organized....it feels organized, and it feels very driven by the police and Children Services which obviously it is.'

This statement seems to highlight the state of the leadership task under a shared framework. The respondent's thoughts showed a mixed and somehow confused view, *'it doesn't seem organised…but that does not seem to say the process is not organised…'* he was a senior manager in his organization, however throughout his narrative, he never suggested how he wanted to see things progress, how things could be tackled better and/ or differently. These sort of sentiments from some participants always came across as complaints or moaning about someone else than themselves. This appeared to be the demands on leadership in multi-agency work as many authorities have highlighted its complexities, (Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Butterfoss & Goodman, 1996; Kegler *et al*, 1998; Granner & Sharpe, 2004).

The chair was expected to know and be able to articulate the process to achieve the intended goal to the participants. That created and increased pressure and anxieties on the leadership of the chair. Participants would come and discuss the same issues over and over again without making tangible progress. The chair of the partnership meetings said *'…I think in terms of process, what happened was I think people didn't really know or understand what MASH was despite our best efforts to try to explain what it is and the pen didn't drop for several people until about several months, I think six months into the process to say what actually it was we were trying to develop. And even then...we were saying our understanding of how we need to develop it will shape up once we start doing it...it is one of those projects where there isn't a blue print that you can impose and say this is what it would exactly look like. Very few other places have done it...and they have done it differently…'*

Participants fantasised about the type of leadership they wanted to see and be led by. The assigned leader by the group (Alex) had his own fantasies of expectations. *'I was fairly unquestioning about it and what I think I should have done .....is I need a*

board of reference to which I can report I had a project sponsor if you like in Divisional Director if you like, we would formerly review it in my supervision that was fine and I am still reporting into the LSCB but even the LSCB were not acting as the body of reference, not giving the strategic message to the agencies they had to deliver...and that has been a struggle through out and I felt that, that has been left to me and my personal resources to make it happen, I have had a lot of help along the way and I don't know what help has been given outside because people haven't told me anything so I don't know if Executive Director is doing anything in the background to say to partners, look you need to make this happen, get your people to cooperate with us. I never get told back and considering it suddenly became a priority I would have expected some leadership at a very senior strategic level but it wasn't ...it wasn't forthcoming in the way I envisaged it coming anywhere...'

He clearly felt and wanted to share the burden of leadership, but not necessarily with the other partnership representatives. He wanted the involvement of a higher authority to lead him, *'I am almost driving it, doing a lot of work, talking to people emailing people, trying to convince people where I have not been able to say, look we have got partnership board, board level meeting coming up next month ... I expected …eer.....a strategic board at quite a higher level if I am being honest... where people at Executive Director's level ....the Children's Trust would have been the obvious platform to do it where every three months at Children's Trust, we will be reporting MASH progress but that was never part of the deal and I don't know whether it was ever discussed at Children's Trust, I was never privy to that...I never saw the agenda so I never know if it happened...I am only saying this with benefit of hindsight because at the time I was far too accepting ....what I should have said was, well I think this needs to be a quarterly discussion at Children's Trust Board who would be a body of reference and the strategic driver of the project…'* (Alex).

It was important for the chair in exercising leadership to have the ability to delegate and identify support from different staff groups. The chair commented on the support from subordinates, *'…other thing which I think has taken it a step forward is that*

Anna (head of service) and you (researcher) have stepped up when I needed you to...to drive some of the really detailed aspects of the operation that I was not going to be able to deal with...Norah (head of administration) coming in, getting the police in, getting the new desks ordered and delivered. It has been such a detailed piece of work and people have really, really worked very hard, and often through the inspection process which lasted a long time where we had other priorities…'

The success of the project also depended on identification of appropriate personnel to do the task and thoughtful delegation from the leader. The chair's task was made easier by the co-operation of the identified staff and their commitment to executing the assigned task.

Huffington et al (2004) argue that, for the organization to be creative it requires followership to be an active process of participation in the life of the common venture and this in itself may carry with it some discomfort. The followership looked up to the leader and their fantasy was that the leader should provide the direction and necessary answers when the group was not sure.

During the establishment and development of MASH, it was clear that there was a time the process was inflicted by some confusion and a lack of balance which translated in resistance to move forward. There appeared to be a lack of 'spark' to inject a bout of energy and cement people together and move the project forward. The OFSTED inspection provided the leadership with that 'spark' and 'institutional chemistry' required to bring people together. The institutional chemistry created reality in working together and sufficient awareness of the pressures impinging from and opportunities afforded by the external world of the MASH. Obholzer and Miller in Huffington et al (2004), argue that, 'an awareness of the presence and workings of the unconscious, personal, interpersonal, group, intergroup and intra institutional processes among both leadership and followership is essential'. They further argue that, 'as basic minimum, such awareness can help to prevent in whatever role, collusion with or being caught up in anti-task institutional processes, for e.g. endless

meetings that never come to a decision'. Such awareness enables pro-activity in expecting these processes to make their appearance at certain strategic stages of institutional development and to ensure that they cause a minimum of disruption.

Leadership was heavily dependent on authority. Partners needed authority to move things forward especially to allocate resources. Most of the representatives in MASH could only recommend but did not have the power to authorise resources. Most of the participants were not at a level where they controlled budgets or could commit resources. This seemed to trigger another defence against this powerlessness. The chair, who was the visible leader, had no power or authority to order people to do things. His was only a coordinative role. Most participants were saying they needed to know how much work was going to be generated before they could ask for resources. What no one wanted to consider was that the type of work MASH was expected to do was not necessarily quantifiable in monetary terms. It was possible for example that quality sharing of information through MASH could avert the possible death of one child, in financial terms how much could that cost?

6.5 Reflections on Leadership and its impact in MASH

On reflection I think I had an opportunity to take a leading role in the establishment of MASH right from the beginning. I was involved in the 'small project' where I was based at the police station. I was already managing the Team where MASH itself was to be integrated, the partnership meetings were taking place in our offices so I was in essence the host. This indicates to me that I was starting with an advantage in relation to others. There were others who equally were at an advantage. One agency was represented by its Chief Operating Officer, making him the most senior person in the meetings, there were various heads of services with a lot of experience who could also have taken or contributed to the leadership role.

It appears to me that there was a general fear of taking responsibility manifested in MASH like in most public agencies. Participants constantly referred to examples of

public inquiries into child deaths during the discussions which in turn heightened their anxieties against being accountable to progressing MASH. High emotional responses from the public were experienced in cases such as Victoria Climbié and Peter Connolly as a result of the horrific nature of what happened against the innocence of the children, (Stanley and Manthorpe, 2004). This has resulted in the government taking at times unbalanced public stand by first placing blame on someone (e.g. Director of Children Services Ms Shoesmith in the case of Peter Connolly) and second initiate policy change (e.g. Laming and Munro Reviews). This is also exemplified by the wording of the report into the death of Kimberly Carlile which reinforced the blame culture festering in organizations when there is a child death. The report made some contradictory statements that undermined its credibility but still heightened anxieties amongst child protection and welfare practitioners. Referring to the social work team leader, the report states that:

'…he was a prime candidate for blameworthiness in failing to prevent Kimberley Carlile's death…. And we recommend that he should not in the future perform any of the statutory functions in relation to child protection...'

However on the same page it adds*,*

'…his written statement (to the inquiry) is an outstanding document of insight into the nature of a social worker's tasks …and his employing authority should make the document available as an educational tool for the training of social workers generally, and for those involved in child abuse particularly, (Kimberley Carlile Inquiry Report 1987:22 cited in Reder et al 1993).

I felt that participants were hesitant to take responsibility for decisions on complex policy problems. For my part upon reflection and introspection I traced my upbringing from childhood into adolescence and adult life experiences. I notice that there have been huge cultural implications to how I took the responsibility of leadership especially under the 'shared leadership' model. I was born in a society where shared leadership exists but within a very hierarchical social management structure. It was difficult for me to come out openly without being explicitly invited to speak

especially where there were my known seniors around. In my culture, seniors directly invite juniors to participate or speak. The invitation would be direct and explicit like, *'C what do you think about....C what are your views on?'* These cultural inhibitions fostered an inadequate drive to take initiative to participate and freely contribute.

MASH presented a wide scope to exercise leadership. As a new concept and new organization it called for new ideas to which anyone could contribute to, be as creative and drive the processes forward. One can conclude that even though leadership appeared challenging to perform the MASH experience actually offered a good opportunity to experience it and make a difference. MASH offered a chance for participants to inspire, persuade or compel those among them to accept their visions, their values and the consequent changes in their work patterns and lifestyles for the benefit of shared service users.

My observations in MASH confirmed that within the multi organizational partnerships, leadership should be assumed to negotiate options, distribute responsibilities, find resources, resolve problems, deal with conflict, encourage equality, inspire member collaboration and garner support for coalition objectives (Hord, 1986; Butterfoss *et al*, 2006a). In that case, leadership becomes the strengthening authority that drives processes in a complex collaborative system containing participants acting as individuals, professionals and organizations at once as multiple complex wholes.

Even though in MASH many participants including myself wanted a nominated leader the complexity of the issues to be navigated required a sensitive outlook. My experiences in MASH confirm that collaborative situations require distributed leadership (Bryson & Crosby, 1992). Effective leadership requires a collection of qualities and skills derived from a team of committed leaders (Butterfoss *et al*, 2006b). Organizational representatives who were the 'nominated leaders' from their agencies did not all step up to assume leadership roles. This was probably because in practice leadership roles are often personified where a particular individual is seen as a partnership's leader. Uncertainties existed about who were the leaders and who

were the followers. Leadership in collaborative efforts should not be about one person having the monopoly on the vision. It requires qualities that would include an appreciation of team working and connectedness in its broadest sense. This model entails leadership tasks being shared and distributed among participants. This would need to be imbedded in the social systems at different levels of the organizations in the partnership network.

The conceptualisation of leadership in MASH needed to be explained at the onset as a relational and distributed process occurring at various levels of social interaction in the partnership network. Participants needed to know that it was not the traditional one directional model where particular individuals and organizations were assigned the role. My observations were that the chair tried to engage people as a group not as individuals as a way of making them feel empowered. However the group dynamics exposed that participants were not equal. Leading within this model proved to be challenging as it required letting go of the power and distributing it amongst all participants. For that as well the group would require the ability and relevant professional knowledge to enable it to reach consensus and make informal decisions, (Locke 2003). Despite the participants understanding of what needed to happen, some individuals worked well being told what to do. Seibert, Sparrowe and Liden (2003) argued that some situations required a position of power and authority to implement change. Such a leadership approach requires high investment in building and maintaining group relationships while asserting a position of authority for instigating action.

All participants were supposed and expected to step up and provide joint leadership as by virtue of their positions in their organizations, they were deemed to have the 'qualities' to lead. However leadership was located in the local authority as the statutory lead agency (Children's Social Care) and acted out by the Chair who actually had no choice but was appointed and tasked to deliver by his own manager and equally expected to do so by the other participants. He had the advantage of the organizational lead role and was the host. It would be interesting to fantasize on

what could have happened had the meetings been taking place elsewhere for example police station or Adult Substance Misuse offices.

6.6 Conclusion.

This study discovered that in partnership work leadership should not reside in one individual to contribute singularly to organizational success. It should be dispersed throughout the partnership. This is of significant importance as all partners in MASH were (presumably) equal. This study concurs with many authorities who argue that, partnerships by definition, should build on lateral rather than traditional hierarchical relationships where organizations and individuals participate voluntarily. In such settings the focus is on informal or emergent leaders based on their abilities to stir the process of collaborative work across boundaries among the many complex obstacles which partnership work naturally presents. Partnership agencies have to identify the right people with the right level of skill set and personality to represent them and empower them to assume the leadership responsibilities which go with the roles.

In this study I found out that leadership can manifest itself through individuals, professions but also groups or organizations. Many writers on partnership work assume the existence of a lead organization. In the establishment of MASH, leadership was important to get people motivated, to energize and enable them to deliver outcomes. I wanted leadership to give me authority not just to do but also to lead. I felt I could have contributed more had the leader actually tasked me or asked me to. Most literature however, suggests that leaders should emerge and take positions rather than be tasked. A number of studies looked at leaders as being individuals in organizations who already have and share several personal characteristics, skills, abilities, personality and behaviour. The participants in MASH could be deemed to have these qualities as they were all leaders in their respective organizations albeit at different levels.

I observed that as time went by and participants became more confident and comfortable among each other, other informal leaders emerged as they became and felt more empowered by their agencies to engage in partnership endeavours and also as the redistribution of pre-existing power relations took place. In MASH, leadership was meant to be the joint responsibility of the monthly partnership meetings which operated in the frame of a steering committee. Participants were meant to take up roles and positions as organizations rather than individuals within organizations to provide for continuity.

Leadership was an important variable that could either encourage individual and social defences or assisted in containing fears and anxieties in partnership work. The research revealed how leadership theories can help in advancing knowledge about work in partnerships in general and in statutory partnerships in the policy area of children and young people in particular. Leadership theory can also assist in understanding and managing some of the unconscious processes in partnership work. It can be the glue that bonds the professionals working together for children and young people anchoring them to the same primary task. In practice there are a number of obstacles overarched by the inherent anxieties and defences as well as by the rigidity of the public sector accountability system in which initiative appears discouraged and control is tighter as a defence against failure and societal blame. These obstacles ultimately stand in the way of effective inter-organizational and inter-professional collaboration as experienced on how they slowed progress in the establishment of MASH. The nature of leadership in this complex and multi-layered partnership system will continue to require further unravelling as organizations become more and more networked.

Chapter 7: Relationships and Partnership Interactions in Multi Agency Work: A Focus on the Police Presence in MASH

'…we have been working together for years with some of the colleagues…and you are having an influx of the police and other agencies you don't necessarily know…even the dynamics in terms of how you relating can also affect your professionalism really. You are getting to know new people again so I don't know if it is a good idea…' (Laura).

7.0 Introduction

The previous two chapters have described and analysed in detail how the 'complex whole' and leadership issues were experienced in MASH. This section will focus on the impact of the conscious and unconscious processes on how relationships and interactions between and amongst agencies were observed and experienced. The MASH was a new group forming and the dynamics were affected by participants as individuals, professionals and organizations. Their socialisation at those different levels played a big part in influencing the proceedings in establishing MASH.

The above quotation from one of the respondents captures the dominant positions, cynicism and ambivalence of other participants and their agencies towards the police. The presence of the police in MASH generated a lot of mixed views, feelings and interactive emotions among other participants more than any other agency or profession. This prompted this study to focus a bit more on the relationship between the police and other agencies. This chapter attempts to articulate and analyse an anxiety- fantasy structure which emerged within the MASH centred on perceived power and authority of one agency (the police) over others. This structure was mainly centred on what was viewed as the 'police culture' which 'unconsciously' resulted in the splitting by the other agencies between projecting their anxieties on to the police and being envious of and fantasising about the police's 'command and control' system of governance.

The police provided an interesting case study as one of the major agencies in child protection and safeguarding and the biggest referrer in terms of contacts they send to Children's Social Care in particular and other agencies in general. Sitting in the room were partners from Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Adult Mental Health Services, Adult Addiction Services, Probation Services, NHS Universal Services, Early Intervention Services and The Police. They all attended monthly partnership meetings which acted as a steering group for establishing the MASH. The meetings were chaired by the Assistant Director of Children's Social Care.

7.1 The Police Primary Task, Power and Authority.

The public image of police work is associated with crime fighting and is stereotyped as masculine. According to Martin (1999), police do not only enforce the law and arrest offenders; they are also responsible for preventing crime, protecting life and property, maintaining peace and public order, and providing a wide range of services to citizens throughout their day's life. Across these tasks it can be generally agreed that an essential part of policing is taking charge of situations. Police work depends on circumstances and situations. Police officers often take control by either talking through, referring, rescuing, tending, separating, handcuffing, humouring, threatening, placating and at times hitting or even shooting, (Bayley and Bittner, 1984).

Reiner (1992) notes that, while most calls to the police do not necessarily refer to a crime or result in invocation of officers' legal powers, most incidents do deal with an element of latent conflict and the potential ingredients of a criminal offence. This enables an officer to interpret an event either as a conflict necessitating an aggressive response or as an interpersonal dispute requiring informal resolution. The nature of the incident is often subject to interpretation such that the police actions may trigger competing ways of understanding and performing the primary task. An aggressive outlook to crime fighting is regarded by both police and the public as real police work and its visibility is more valued, (Martin 1999).

According to Hochschild (1983: 7), police work involves extensive emotional labour since it requires the officer 'to induce or suppress feelings in order to sustain the outward expression that produces the proper state of mind in others.' Martin (1999) defines emotional labour as managing feelings to create a publicly observable display on the job. For police officers to be deemed effective they must control both their own feelings and the emotional displays of citizens. Emotional labour for the police is often overlooked and downplayed by the public and even by the police. This is mainly because for long policing has been publicly displayed as fighting crime and catching criminals even though it involves a far wider range of tasks. Secondly the occupation has historically been dominated by men and closely associated with the stereotypical inexpressive masculinity of 'Sergeant Friday,' even though women police service has been in existence in the UK since 1914, (Kelly 2012).

Despite the public displays of an unemotional image which has been cultivated in the profession the activities and incidents that police encounter often arouse deep emotions in themselves and the public they serve. Failure to manage these emotions by an officer may have high personal and professional costs. An illustration of this is an officer's lack of self-restraint resulting in the death of Ian Tomlinson during G8 riots in 2009 in the United Kingdom and police involvement in subsequent death of Rodney King in Los Angeles, California. Hochschild (1983) emphasized the need for professionals to manage their own feelings in a way which affects others positively.

In the United Kingdom, it can be argued that at the centre of child protection and safeguarding is 'coercive intervention' and central to the primary task of the police is their ability to coerce and make people submit. It is equally central to the Social Care role. Child protection and safeguarding intervention can be potent and even destructive due to the amount of power authorities wield and can exert on families. The other agencies sitting in MASH seemed to be ambivalent about the power they possess and found it easy to project this on to the police who were viewed as having arbitrary power. Chloe said, '*…power dynamics….oh police are coming here but CYPS has a lot of power….legislative power.'* This appeared to be an

acknowledgement that the power which was being conferred to the police was mainly in the 'mind' as all other agencies actually had statutory powers to carry on with their business without being inhibited by other agencies. What is interesting in child protection and safeguarding is that police are actually invited by the other health and welfare agencies mainly Social Care to intervene and support and they attend on that basis. The care and control dilemma then seemed to cause splitting in agencies who often confused themselves about the police's actual role.

There was a lot of scepticism and disquiet about police involvement in the MASH. Chloe summed the views, thus, *'…how are we all going to be viewed…having a bunch of police officers on the floor?'* Other agencies did not want to share information with the police or for the police to know what information they had on their clients. It was even fascinating to observe that everyone seemed to 'dislike' working with them yet in my view everyone unconsciously needed them as well. In simplistic terms the police are required when situations are difficult, they are a critical emergency and rescue service. My observations were that there was some resistance amongst the partners to acknowledge that they needed rescuing, that is why the police were there.

The police apparently could be the largest single referer to all different agencies in the partnership. *Working Together* (HMG 2006, 11.46) directs the police to 'assess and make referrals to Children's Social Services, who are enjoined to take safety considerations into account in making contact with families referred in this way.' Police powers under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to share information with other agencies were strengthened by the Children Act 2004, which placed new obligations on the police to cooperate with local authorities and relevant partners in promoting the welfare of and safeguarding children. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) (2004) guidance on domestic abuse stated that 'notifications of children present at, or ordinarily resident at premises where domestic violence takes place… should be forwarded to Social Services departments as necessary' (6.3.2).

The 2008 edition of this guidance (ACPO 2008) emphasised the need for a filtering and monitoring system to assess which police information should be shared (6.2.7).

In undertaking their primary task, the police shared referrals with all agencies on the table. In the local authority under study from a Children's Social Care perspective, 60% of the referrals received came from the police which included among others; cases of domestic violence, missing persons including children, youth and gang violence. 65% of those referrals related to domestic violence and adult mental health where police would have been called out or attended. There was an increase in incidencies of youth violence and the police were usually the first to be called to attend. In such cases the police would also liaise with health and other agencies providing them with vital information, (Children's Social Care Digest, June 2013).

Police's burden for 'duty of care' may actually be bigger than that of the other partner members and Children's Social Care has always been lead in child protection and safeguarding. The idea of structured collaboration through forming the 'hub' could be viewed as a way of psycho- social division of labour, which aimed to distribute the task of child protection by having different organizations and different professionals working together as 'one new organization', the MASH. However the anxieties created by the desire to hold on to the primary task, primary roles and primary identity in the parent agencies created a fault line which resulted in defences, scapegoating and splitting. It was mainly blamed on *'…not wanting the police in'.* My obsrvations were that the police were viewed as 'criminalising' therefore to stay safe from that is to stay away from the police.

The police were able to mask their anxieties and appeared more secure than the other agencies. They had the ability to cover up their emotions and feelings on what was going on. They also seemed to have noticed the envy from other agencies and acted on it by showing a level of efficiency, power and authority at every possible opportunity. They 'indirectly' demanded their own space under the pretext that they had sensitive information and senstive equipment to keep and protect. '*We asked*

the police for emails and it was at a click of a finger…they were here….but when I tried it for some people who are even in the building, how difficult it was to get…' said the Business Information Manager. It also proved that their 'command and control' style was efficient. It got things done.

Part of the myth of policing is that there are organizational 'secrets' that the police know to which the general public should not have access. Police officers have incredibly wide ranging powers to arrest, detain and generally make life difficult for some 'ordinary' citizens. Conversely, they have the power to help and make life much easier for certain people in some circumstances (by resolving minor offenses/ infringements). Linked to this are regular opportunities for police officers to engage in behaviours that could be described as 'corrupt' including and ranging from accepting a cup of tea to cover ups and suppression of evidence of criminal acts. The use and abuse of police discretion in this way becomes a key aspect in forming people's attitudes and perceptions including those of other professionals, (Westmarland 2008).

Police culture is transmitted via shared 'values, norms, perspectives and craft rules.' This leads to the perpetuation and survival of the group identities because of a 'psychological fit' with the demands of the rank and file within the organization, (Reiner 2000:87). The police had an ability to control and manipulate the situation in the MASH in their favor. Policing is about the exercise of authority and the regulation of conflict; it is inherently controversial and inevitably contested, (Reiner 2010).

During the establishment of MASH, police would come in 'numbers', if and when they wanted to exert power and 'force the issue.' A particular incident of interest to note is when attending a meeting about the security of the Children's Social Care building where MASH was to be based, the police brought in eleven different male specialists to one member from Children's Social Care. By bringing in that level of delegation they were unconsciously conveying a message of *'their power and strength.'* It was clear for all in the building to see and take notice. They also asked for a special

secure room to store their equipment (guns, cs gas and other riot gear) but at the end this was seen as not necessary.

The police requested space for 14 officers to make them the biggest team in the building, though to date there has never been more than eight officers on the floor. It appeared the police were exibiting their fantasies in a percecutory way, (guns, numbers) and the attitude towards the police by the other agencies were a defence against persecution rather than prosecution which is part of police primary task. It was also apparent that the other partners conferred all the power and authority to the police and failed to realise how much power they also had.

Some of the respondents narratives indicated that they had been raised and socialised to view the police in a more negative way. On the other hand, the police were sticking to their agency primary task and staying in role, cold, no fear, in command and in control unconsciously showing force as *'they were the law.'* Chloe however posed an interesting scenario, *'…I do not know what they would be thinking of…if it was one person coming like the other organizations. The police...they are coming as a group. They have found new housing…they are homeless. If it was only one, would the dynamics be the same? Same applies to the other members who are just bringing one person, what if they were coming as a group as well?*

7.2 The Police Attitudes and Behaviours in Multi-agency Work.

The police have a discernible culture flowing from the nature of their primary task. Skolnick (2008) argues that, police behaviour is strongly influenced by the underlying values and politics of the community that finances them. Police views, attitudes and behaviours are professionally constructed through training and modelling by management. According to Martin (1999), it is important for police organizations to manage the emotions, attitudes and behaviours of their officers. This is usually done by the way they are selected socialised, supervised and are made to perform ceremonial rituals such as at parades, funerals etc. These are emotional

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management techniques which are part of their occupational norms for which applicants are carefully screened. Candidates usually undergo extensive background investigations including emotional stability, psychological testing and an interview with a psychologist (Scrivner 1994).

Professional socialization for the police is in several phases which all aim at providing alternative ways to manage feelings. In police academies, the learning is mainly centred on professional demeanour including the repression of emotions. This is conveyed largely by emphasising the importance of solidarity, teamwork, toughness and stoicism in the face of pain. They also stress the importance of viewing the public in a detached manner and the belief that both hard and soft emotions are an occupational weakness in performing their duties, (Pogrebin and Poole 1995).

In MASH, the police seemed content and well contained probably as part of who they are and who they are supposed to be. As individuals and professionals, their organization demands of them not to show much 'emotions'. It can also be said that in theory the police culture is that of discipline and hard facts. Their work is based on finding and preserving evidence. The lack of emotions and feelings might necessarily be deliberate and rather part of a well engrained tradition founded on professional training and experience. Martin (1999) argues that, police organizations also exercise cultural control through recruitment, selection, socialization, and supervisory practices.

Potential employees are screened not only on skills but for temperamental fit with the emotional demands of the job. Through socialization, individuals learn the rules regarding the content, intensity and variety of emotions demanded in performing their work role; once these are internalized, the work and desire for success provide incentive for conforming to these rules. When display rules are not congruent with workers' inner feelings, organizations manage those emotionally dissonant feelings through monitoring, rewards (for example, raises and promotions), inculcating

psychological defence mechanisms, and occasional punishments such as transfers and terminations, (Rafaeli and Sutton 1991). With this background in mind, it was clear why the police in MASH had to remain in role and emotionally and behaviourally in charge.

One of the police respondents appeared to confirm and conform to this 'learned behaviour' as his interview appeared to be sterile, too clean and official without any range of emotions. However when corroborated with another police officer's narrative, it confirmed that the learned behaviours within the police 'culture and tradition' plays a big part in the way they interact with others. My view of one of the police respondents was that he, '…*presented as emotionally detached to the pain of the other partners who were anxious about joining this new organization being formed.'* This was contrary to his usual 'free flowing' conversations in corridor discussions. It is possible that the officer only gave this demeanour due to his training. Pogrebin and Poole (1995) observed that, 'an officer who displays too much anger, sympathy, or other emotion in dealing with issues, danger or tragedy on the job will not be accepted as a 'regular cop' or viewed as someone able to withstand the pressures of police work. The narrative showed that there was this impenetrable wall I had to break if I was to get to his true inner feelings about how he perceived the development of the MASH. He gave a very 'controlled' narrative which clearly towed the official line. It has to be admitted that although guarantees of anonymity were given, anxiety over the issues being researched could have reduced the politics of interviewing; as a respondent he may still have had doubts about the destiny and influence of the data I was collecting (Ladner and Nocker, 2013).

Laura had alluded to the fact that*, 'the police are white and middle class and do not understand the problems of the commoners and minorities'.* This was an example of stereotyping which ran across most of the narratives. Given what literature says on police recruitment and selection (Pogrebin and Poole, 1995; Martin 1999) it is possible to conclude that police officers behaviours have similar traits as the stereotypes found in middle class communities, aloof, individualistic, polished, and

factual, devoid of emotion. It is possible that with this in mind the interviewer did not challenge this stereotype during the interview and transferred those feelings to the interviewee who then acted them out. Collin said, *'…I think there has been an interesting dynamic around this being quite significantly…being a police led initiative both at the strategic level and local level… because they are a totemic organization and we all approach them with a set of expectations and beliefs.'* It is of interest to note that if that is the stereotype other members of the partnership carried about the police; it means that the power dynamics in meetings are always naturally skewed as the police are always empowered by others within the interactions to act as such.

The enactment of power and superiority was also experienced when the police in the interview talked a lot about *'discussing with and consulting with'* the Divisional Director (DD) and Assistant Director which was more to allude to her status in the operation. She wanted to deal with more senior managers, 'the powers that be.' This could be seen as an unconscious elevation of her own status as from observation she would communicate at the level of AD and DD. The equivalent of her role in Children's Social Care would have been Head of Service/ Service Manager level. The roles and positions may be difficult to match directly organization to organization but my assumptions are based on the levels of responsibility and decision making. It is equally possible that this elevation was an enactment of feelings being transferred to her by other participants, that, *'…she was more senior and had more power than all of us.'*

The narrative of the police gave a sense of lack of trust within our (professional) relationship albeit my role in this was as a researcher. It was very guarded and protected from emotions and feelings but more dry and matter of fact. It was possible that given how the police want to protect information, providing information which was not factual but opinion would not be appropriate. It can be argued that emotions are personal but not facts. Given that I was in essence their host, the guest (police) could only choose their words carefully about the host (Children's Social Care) and how the project was going, which the host was leading on. This (the narrative) in

essence ended up like two people who did not know how much they could talk about to each other. The police are well trained in that regard. It is possible then to assume that they (the police) withheld information including their feelings and emotions which then puts in question the authenticity and genuineness of the relationships and interactions at play. The impact of unconscious worries about each other's agency as shown here have implications for partnership working as member agencies and/ or their practitioners 'hold back' for whatever reason. The whole system appeared to be struggling with regards to what can be said, to who, begging the question whether this is part of the reason why multi-agency communication or rather lack of it remains one of the key issues raised in serious case reviews. If safeguarding is the issue, it seems to be governed by suspicion where there is no trust to share everything including our own feelings and emotions.

It appeared to me that at times the police attitude indicated a 'yearning' to appear 'normal' like other 'civilian' professionals. During my stint working from the police station I observed that the officers who were to be in MASH, '…*did not wear uniforms and they appeared to call each other by first names. This was quite contrary to my stereotype and experiences elsewhere and how I thought they behave to each other especially their seniors. I was expecting to see 'a regiment of officers saluting their sergeant…and probably addressing her as madam.'*

When the police moved to Children's Social Care building, they also brought in a radio and would work listening to music singing along and laughing out loud may be to purport a 'relaxed' atmosphere of 'ordinary' citizens. I could not tell whether they had an awareness of their new environment now or it was just a performance. This to Children's Social Care was deemed inappropriate. The Children's Social Care lead said, *The other slight difference… its very small example but it shows the differences, the police have moved here and they have a radio and I have said to D.I that is not going to happen, the radio is not going be on......and oh why is that? I said our view of how we work as a professional organization our working culture does not allow that. You go around our Teams; you don't see a radio that is a deliberate*

conscious effort to look professional....and we don't want that in the MASH....I don't want that, she gave in very quickly...she said she told them once we go live we don't want to see the radio. It's just a small example of different ways of how people work.

It is interesting to note that in this regard Children's Social Care was making a 'deliberate conscious effort' to look professional when it appeared to them that the police were equally making a conscious and deliberate effort not to. An interesting view on the contrary, however could be that given the views and attitudes of other participants towards the police, it was an unconscious process that they did not want to see the police as 'normal' or 'relaxed' and therefore made conscious efforts to resist and disturb that. Children's Social Care might also have felt that the police were taking over; their office space, coming in numbers, bringing a radio and their own culture. They had to exercise some semblance of taking some power back by flexing their own muscle and in a way saying 'no' to the police was a big statement.

7.3 Partners' Perceptions and Attitudes towards the Police.

Individual, professional and organizational socialisation played an important part in forming and shaping partners perceptions and attitudes towards the police. Socialization as the process by which humans acquire the skills necessary to perform as functioning members of their societies through influential learning processes and life experiences has a huge effect on human behaviour, (Billingham, 2007). Cultural and customs variability within the group of participants in MASH meant that different people had had different experiences and treatment from the police. For example in my case, growing up in a country where police had a lot of 'unrestricted' power and where incidences of 'police brutality' went unpunished meant that my relationship with and perception of the police was that we could not negotiate as equals. Further examples of how the police in the UK had treated some black people especially black males through stop and search initiatives, defining crime as 'black on black', results of enquiries such as McPherson (1999) created a public perception that police are anti-black people. Terms like institutional racism

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have been used to describe this relationship. Four of the partner organizations were represented by black professionals, which had potential to unconsciously create tensions which would in turn increase the anxiety fault line. One black female participant had conversed to me referring to the head of the police, *'she looks too white-middle class…'* which was meant to connote negativity. There was however nothing for me to base that judgment on.

As stated elsewhere in this study, individuals came to MASH also carrying professional and organizational responsibilities in that complex whole (individual, professional and organization). Professional and organizational socialisation was at times at variance with the individual experiences in terms of how they perceived and related to the police. Socialisation in different professions is often long and heavily controlled by regulatory bodies. It is not a static process but is reworked throughout the professional working life and can be developed through the revision and refinement of professional values, needs, ethics and self-regulation, (MacIntosh, 2003). This in a way compels professionals to behave in a particular way to each other (regarded as being professional). At the conscious level, confrontation and blatant dislike for each other would be deemed 'unprofessional' and masked to be projected as something else. Some of the dynamics in the 'room' were that certain individuals would always sit together or avoid other people; others would not speak or contribute to certain people's views or became more supportive to others, refining their arguments. It was also noticed that when the police spoke most participants did not acknowledge and others became defensive both in posture and how they responded.

The pairing between Children's Social Care and the police was also fascinating, as the Children's Social Care representative always conferred and confirmed with the police representative and vice versa more than they did with other partners. The chair of the partnership meetings from Children's Social Care even said, *'we will do it with the police then others can join in as and when they can…'* My view is that this was mainly due to organizational socialization as the two agencies are viewed as the

main agencies in child protection and safeguarding. The police act as both a referring and intervening agency in child protection, Children's Social Care is mainly the intervening agency whereas the other agencies are mainly referring and supporting organizations.

In organizational socialisation individuals learn about the organization and its history, values, jargon, culture, and procedures. They also learn about their work group, the specific people they work with on a daily basis, their own role in the organization, the skills needed to do their job, and both formal procedures and informal norms, (Adam 2010). Kammeyer-Mueller, & Wanberg, (2003) argued that, socialization functions as a control system in that new employees learn to internalize and obey organizational values and practices. The anxieties exhibited by the substance misuse workers about sharing information with the police were mainly emanating from mirroring their organizational clients who were engaged in illegal acts.

The agency representatives kept on oscillating and probably muddled between the conscious and the unconscious. The conscious appeared apparent as partner representatives could see that the police showed that they want to work together with other agencies as 'equal partners'. The unconscious however dictated whether the police were 'real equal partners'. The perceptions based on individual and professional socialisation and their understanding of how to relate to the police was that they were not 'equal' partners. Different participants referred to the police as 'the law' in five separate narratives and there was a thread of suspicion running across all the interviews.

Prosecution was confused with persecution and used as a reason to scapegoat and project anxieties on the police. A demarcation of 'them' and 'us' was drawn in the mind creating a dichotomy of the 'police' and the rest of the agencies. The usual goals of multi- agency work were at times lost, and nothing was connecting those issues other than the anxieties, the insecurities and the fear to change. Individual agencies had always survived by 'compartmentalising' their fears and anxieties in

their professions and organizations, now MASH was bringing together those anxieties to be shared as a group of agencies with different 'complex wholes' and at this stage the police was 'nominated' as the scapegoat and villain. In this shared 'territory' MASH, the police were still emerging as the powerful regardless of the leadership of Children's Social Care. The envy of the police by other agencies created negativity towards them. It was also evident that the police as an agency, in their line of work, are used to confronting situations painful and difficult as they may come without consideration of whether they are liked for it or not. Bethy said, *'the police are the police, they are never liked anyway and they know that…'*

Police were described by most respondents as 'rigid' 'too constitutional,' 'patriarchal', regimented', 'hierarchical', 'opaque', 'mistrusted' (by the public), nurturing a 'fear culture' and 'a blame culture' within profession, as well as a majority culture in the organization (favouring the recruitment of male, white, British others). Most respondents also felt that the police have antagonistic relations with most of the other key organizations and professions in the partnership on the basis of the attributes outlined, complemented by high loyalty to their profession, which makes them display territorial behaviour. The police 'simply assumed' the role assigned to them by the group and carried on. This also seemed to affect their intra-relational communication with other professions.

Fear of getting it wrong in child protection and safeguarding was played out as fear of the police. There are people who came to the table riddled with anxieties and fear of failure to protect and safeguard children. For most of the partner agencies, child protection was not necessarily their primary role. They identified themselves with other roles and different primary tasks. Bethy said, *'…I am a clinician, I would not want to lose that with this MASH…'* Being with the police even increased the fears and anxieties as if to confirm that *'the police deal with those who fail to do the right thing…whatever that is.'* It is also possible that some participants were unconsciously afraid of the police because in everyday life, the police exhibit an aggressive style and intimidating image which most people are socialised to believe.

The passive aggression observed in the meetings was in form of the language used. At every possible opportunity the police representative would use statements such as, '...we have highly sensitive information like on terrorists..., we need to store police equipment like guns and riot gear...' In my view this was meant to maintain their authority and superiority over others.

Co-locating into the MASH meant having a new identity for most participants and working as one team with the police. It has been argued that professionals and other male dominated jobs are expected to display and manage emotions revolving around anger and implied threats in order to instil fear and compliance in others (Hochschild 1983; Rafaeli and Sutton 1991; Wharton 1996). These gender assumptions transfer from the individuals to their jobs where they are simultaneously constructed and performed through work. The gender designations of work activities are culturally shaped and reinforced in ways that support the jobholders' gender identities (Leidner 1991).

It can be argued that police presence and demeanour might have placed some partnership representatives in a 'zone of discomfort' be it from their socialisation or historical encounters with them. Chloe stated that, '...I was involved in community network and community policing...they used to come to my office for discussions. One day I had my jogging pants on, outside my house jogging... they stop- searched me...' This appeared to be an 'institutional' fear and awe of the police as a 'powerful' organization in terms of what they represent and how the society perceives them rather than specific individuals in the MASH. I had similar emotional experiences during the time I worked from the police station where I noted in my research journal that, '...the hospitality was very extraordinary. I felt this was unlike the police or maybe the little I know about the police. On reflection, for the seven weeks, I only used their bathroom once. I am not sure whether I was holding back, or I was just not comfortable walking around in their station, I just had some fear of this place.' It is possible as well that unconsciously I was aware that as a black African male, I

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fitted the profile of most of the people who had endured police victimisation both in the UK and elsewhere.

According to Reiner (2010), the history of police racism as illustrated in Anglo-American police research is evidenced by a series of high profile disasters and scandals which show how the norms and values of occupational cultures may influence individual officers' behaviours and attitudes. These include in Britain the miscarriages of justice in the 1970s and 1980s, the Brixton riots in 1981 in which officers were said to have put law enforcement over order maintenance in an overly heavy handed manner without consideration for the community. Most recently the investigation of the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the cultural meltdown and identity crisis unleashed with in the police by the 'institutional racism' findings of the Macpherson inquiry and 'stop and searches' still happening to date, (Gregory and Lees 1999; McLaughlin 2007).

A social care practitioner also commented that, *'…but police are predominantly white working class… its known white working class and the elderly are quite anti-people of my colour (black) so it's really my own stereotype about them which could be because of my own colour but it is unfair really...but also the message….and like I said working in a ...previous role you truly get Chinese whispers that they are gonna see that MASH as working jointly with the police and that social services… now the police are part of it but ... it might even affect the way that some social workers relate to clients because of the message that is sent out they don't want to disclose the confidential information. Perhaps you don't want to be part of it...so it's probably more based on stereotyping. May be I feel more comfortable working with mental health than the police and I just found them more stereotyping the way they work their manner and them based on… and sitting with us…'* (Laura).

The police institutional structures and its representatives seemed to collude with these historical perceptions of the general public to instil this fear in representatives from other agencies. The chair of the partnership meetings commenting on the

police bringing in eleven officers from different sections to inspect the security of the building, observed that, '…*so they couldn't quite believe that we could have a fairly secure building where you had swipe cards, not only on the ground floor but on every floor even in the lift so they were expecting to come in and say …actually your building is completely insecure but in fact when they went away and reflected, they felt that actually our building is like any other building and as secure as theirs.'* However, after this visit, the police produced a 42-paged security assessment document on that visit which from my observations no one cared to read.

There was a strong sense of power attributed to the police. Everyone's fears were being projected to the police as agency representatives unconsciously 'huddled' together in one 'corner' with the police on the other side. Children's Social Care as the 'chair' and 'host' appeared to be in the middle at times 'pairing' with the police or oscillating between the two 'protagonists.' The diagram below (Fig 4) illustrates how the 'fantasy-anxiety' structure of other agencies relationship and interaction with the police was constructed unconsciously in the minds of the participants.

Fig 4: The Fantasy-Anxiety Structure

Other partner agencies huddled together

Police

CSC

Wall of fantasies, anxieties, defences, fears influencing inter-agency relationships & interactions
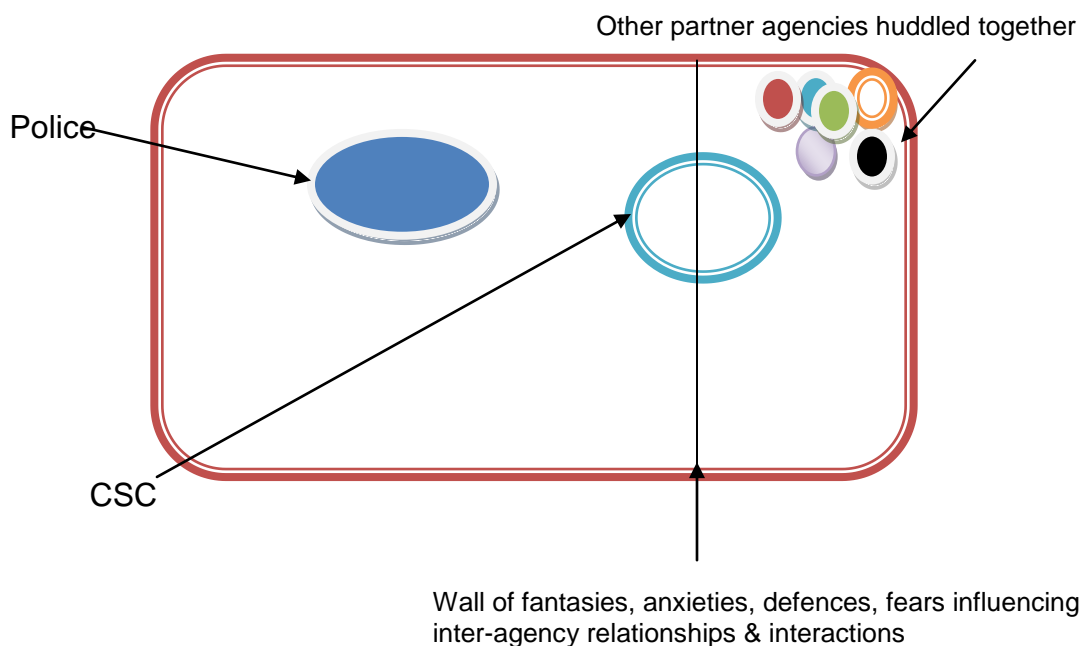
The police wanted to bring in more people (14 officers) while other agencies were struggling for resources to bring a single representative. One practitioner viewed this as domineering, *'… We have been working together for years with some of the colleagues…and you are having an influx of the police you don't necessarily know…even the dynamics in terms of how you relating can also affect your professionalism really. You are getting to know new people again so I don't know… I just sense it's a bit rushed that's my only anxiety… is it to do with really genuinely wanting to expand or to find…this PPD need to be out of their accommodation urgently…(Laura).'* The anxieties were about police presence however she tried to rationalise and suggest that the project was rushed. If the police were needed in the building, postponing their coming was simply delaying the inevitable.

There were inter-professional anxieties about police presence. The police were considered to be the law. One respondent said, *'we are surrounded by the law, with the police around, confidence is under threat.'* The fear was, whether the police were going to dominate and monopolise the proceedings. Bringing fourteen officers in the building made them the biggest single team, surpassing even the hosts who averaged twelve members per team. This also played out as envy for other partners. The police however have always been part of multi- agency arrangements like child protection conferences, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and their presence and intervention from my experiences has always been invaluable and required.

It was also possible that the other reason why the other participants particularly practitioners from Children's Social Care resented the police was that they felt they were invading their territory. There were five Teams on the floor averaging twelve practitioners per Team. Bringing in fourteen police officers meant adding a whole Team on an already congested floor. Teams were shifted about and desk sizes reduced to create space to fit in the police. One social work manager raged, during the office reorganization to create space, *'... I have been short changed you know...it is not right...these senior managers are spineless...they just agree to the police...now*

the police are going to take over ...they have actually taken over...why can't we go to the police station...now we are going to have a mini police station in here...it's not right...I really feel used...short changed ....they didn't do this during the inspection...we are an 'outstanding' borough...there is nothing 'outstanding' about it...I think I want to go to Mark (Divisional Director) and tell him that there is nothing 'outstanding' about how this office space is being dealt with...not for an 'outstanding' Local Authority. I am going to use that word 'outstanding' ...I will use that word 'outstanding'....I am really, really angry, very angry...' This sort of anger was felt across the floor amongst practitioners and managers with some passively dissenting by taking their time to move to designated spaces.

This played well into what some authorities have argued that, professional socialisation processes impede the sharing of information due in part to high risk concerns centred on legal and public accountability and a lack of inter-professional trust (Stuart, 2011). Others mentioned poor inter-professional relationships, (Roaf, 2002; Goodwin et al, 2010). From this research, I concur with these assertions but would go further to say that these are organizational and professional defence mechanisms which stand in the way of multi- agency collaborative work. They created anxieties which professionals had to diffuse by projecting them to the police. Bethy said, *'…my fear is that what would they do with the information and I am sure some of the other agencies would have the same view. We get the majority of our referrals from the police and some of the details when we do the visits are further from the truth when you pierce things together. Now we have to worry… with some of the information they would get or things they would hear around MASH. Would they use that information or would it remain with in CYPS arena... I am sure I am not the only one given the vulnerabilities of the clients that we are working with so in that respect it would be useful to know that it remains within CYPS and nothing else will be done with it. It will be interesting to hear other people's views on this…but I bet you everyone must be worried other than the police themselves off course…'*

These came across as genuine fears by some of the agencies whose clients clearly had issues with the police. Some domestic violence perpetrators, young offenders and substance misuse clients were actually on police wanted-persons lists. The shared information amongst agencies including with the police could actually lead to their arrest. Client-worker relationships were to be affected especially for service users who were expected to visit offices where police were now co-located. One participant from Youth Offending Services mentioned that a young person in her Team was arrested by the police just after the meeting in which some police officers had participated in and they tipped their colleagues of his presence. It was also clear from some participants that their agencies did not want to tarnish their relationships with those who use their services like teachers and health visitors with parents, substance misuse practitioners with their service users as in most cases, client participation is voluntary.

A lack of inter-professional trust remained a major challenge in the establishment of MASH. Other agencies within MASH were happy to receive information from the police but would not want to reciprocate and share with them back. Trust can be defined as a belief and expectation that members will perform a desirable action (Das and Teng, 1998) and should be based on principled conduct (Hudson et al, 2003). Stuart (2011) in his study of multi professional teams in 'The Children's Workforce' reported that professionals engaging in integrated working were challenged by "interpersonal issues and inertia as they were not fully engaged, did not truly trust one another and did not feel able to contribute". Trust, therefore, becomes a major challenge when professionals have a rigid allegiance to their own service and 'watching their own back' to avoid responsibility or blame, prevents information exchange (Horwath and Morrison, 2007:65).

Laura had the same fears, *'...and you covered yourself really from any libel in the future and have sat down with the lawyers and prove this and you have got in your code of practice everything… and the police… they can access but still later down the line you are opening yourself to all sorts of action from clients because it is*

sensitive information that you handle.' This can lead to defence mechanisms such as 'fight, flight, defensiveness and denial behaviours to prevent the distortion of anxiety, (Morrison, 1996) and in turn impact negatively on collaborative work.

One participant stated that, *'...many domestic violence victims who claim to be pregnant are not…they lie to the police…for more protection…now when they know this, what are they going to do with this… we are going to be mindful of their presence...'* What is interesting from these remarks is that, there was an acknowledgement by some agencies that service users do not always say the truth to the police as a way of soliciting more protection or to cover themselves. The professionals were however prepared to side with service users against the police. An awareness of police presence seemed to highlight a need to work out how to continue to hide the truth from them.

These agencies appeared to mirror the behaviours and attitudes of their clients and unconsciously colluded with them. The worry and resistance to release information on clients by Substance Misuse practitioners for example, who work with people who misuse and abuse illicit and banned drugs such as cocaine, heroin, marijuana and alcohol seemed collusive. There was anxiety about whether they were going to 'criminalise,' other agencies' service users. It was quite a stumbling block to sharing information for Adults Addiction Services who feared, *'the police would ask too many questions…'* Daniel said, *…I suppose my other anxiety is always around...not always but to an extend around the police and how they kind of operate and certainly speaking to my colleagues in Adults Addictions, there are some real anxieties about the police and I think that's not just about how we interact with them but around the whole ethos of how their organization works is quite different to Social Care and Health. So I am just nervous but I think it's...I like working with the police. I kind of like the fact that you got a link into the police and can get access to information they may have on our clients…'*

It appeared as though they were prepared to guard their clients at any cost even in circumstances where they were breaking the law. The primary task of the Police on the other hand lies in establishing criminal responsibility and guilt followed by provision of judicial and legal intervention. They wear a strait- jacket of criminal justice. At the centre of this fantasy structure was the ambivalence of other health and social welfare agencies about their own power and authority which they seemed to view in terms of radical consequences of coercive intervention projected and scapegoated to the police.

The police were viewed as having arbitrary power. There was also a clear thread of envy which cut across the other health and social welfare agencies' representatives of the police command and control structure. The emotions of envy were clouded and confused in anxiety and fear and came out as anger and projections. As might be expected, dramas often portray everyday police work as exciting with the regular occurrence of physical danger, macho, prowess, competitive games and the intrigue of solving crimes. However, Westmarland, (2008:89) argues that, 'real police work is rather less exciting and varied in terms of action and excitement although the personalities behaviour and meanings ring time in the same ways partly because the process reinforces itself in that officers may model themselves on film and television characters some being avid consumers of police drama.'

The relationship between the police and the other partners was not always full of tension and animosity. The particular police representative grew to be well liked and regarded by the other representatives. My observations of the way she contacted herself in the partnership meetings and as well during her interview makes it apparent that her personality was the difference. She was very committed and appeared to hold a belief that the police had to be part of a Team to build the MASH. Ladner and Nocker (2013) revealed that sometimes organizational and professional cultures can be neutralized by strong personalities with personal motivations to work for one cause or another. Collin even said, *'…I am going to be cautious and say universally I think people have been won over by the good faith of the individuals*

involved. I think that's not insignificant… so potential resistance there could have been involvement in a police led process… I say police led but for me it's not part of the police… some of the challenges that involved around willingness to share information and willingness to be seen to be in a project closely with the police being overcome.'

The police lead exhibited many traits of a proactive personality including motivation and reliability which transcended the culture normally projected by her organisation. Collin added that, '*…But that's part of being the police anyway. But to some extend that is a bit more reassuring because it feels more in control. I am sure there would be challenges if it was just being driven by police because it would feel too controlled for me probably...'*

There was some merit in perceiving the police as the leadership of this project considering how it all started. The police had hosted me for two months in their police station for piloting data sharing. It was the police who introduced to me the MASH concept and they already had the draft guidelines documents. They had already earmarked resources for the project which included putting a project team in place before anyone else was involved. A figure of £100,000 was also mentioned as being available from the police for this project. This gave the impression that it was a police project and everyone else was coming at their invitation. The police representative must have been aware of this perception created by how the project was introduced. She always made it a point to emphasise in meetings that, '*…this was a local authority project….it depends on what the local authority wants…'* This probably was her way of defending against the projections from other partners.

Police involvement and their leadership were still being questioned and viewed with cynicism due to lack of trust. Collin summed it by admitting that, '*…the cynical side of me would say that it is the police officer from Devon recently retired so got a nice consultancy job and a new commissioner of the Met looking for eye catching initiatives but I think that is too cynical a picture of it. The new commissioner... I don't*

know him but it sounds just about right to suggest … I can only a...I can't help to think there is the analogy about....a case of Fiona Pilkingston in Leicestershire leading to the anti-social behavior work being led by the police for vulnerable people....in the community...something eye-catching goes wrong and people and the police think they have two sets of motives, one, that avoids that for happening again for good reasons and two, ...hoping nothing should go wrong on their patch....and like I say the police as an organization, the person at the top is thinking that...they are able to....that's what we are going to do and get on with it... The other partner organization would follow and say....nothing!

The chair also had the same view that it was a 'seniors project', He said, *'…so with a new commissioner coming on board, with the project being led by Deputy Commissioner suddenly everybody in the MET Police was doing what they were told because it was coming from the top…it was from the Deputy Commissioner. This was going to be the project for Seniors...'*

Other participants felt that because the police building was being renovated, all they needed was accommodation. Laura summed it by saying, *'... I am just wondering if the drive is the accommodation for the police and in that rush… sense that there was an urgency to get this thing up and running… I don't know by them coming along does it carry…is there any financial element to it. But before that I sense that…I then afterwards hear that they will have to be out of their accommodation by a certain date and I said is it MASH and that urgency about getting things up and running. Actually this was about trying to accommodate the police… yeah it was more of the accommodation that the whole thing had to be rushed about… the set up was driven by the fact that they have to be out of their accommodation. So is it being delivered by their dedication or is it being delivered by the urgency of wanting to accommodate the police?*

7.4 Conclusion

The MASH concept was described as organizations moving away from individual silos or compartments into possibly one 'big transparent silo' in which professionals and organisations would freely interact. This was mooted as the ideal place in which information sharing and partnership working would be developed. This was an attempt at creating a common identity for professionals and partner agencies. In essence individuals were expected to engage and interact in daily role transitions from one identity to another as part of their daily organisational life. Carroll and Levy (2008) argued that as organizational challenges and uncertainties are encountered, individuals are more likely to revert to their default identity (the professional and parent organization identity). However, the two identities have a relationship of complicity whereby they are imbedded and intertwined with each other. Organisational representatives unconsciously did not want to change and their resistance manifested in their resentment of each other especially against the police presence.

The organizational and professional anxieties resided with individuals tasked to build the 'hub' and they manifested as systemic in nature. There was a pre-MASH resistance against interaction with the police. Police culture was being described in the singular as if 'one size fits all' despite the growing realisation of the influences of officers' gender, race and ethnicity upon workplace practices and attitudes and that different ways of working create occupational cultures which impact on police power and authority (Westmarland, 2008).

I felt that individual and professional socialisation provides people with skills for behaviour and emotional management. It was observed and experienced with the police that they 'stage managed' to look serious, understanding, controlled and contained. They detached and defended well against any personal feelings of pain, despair, fear, attraction or revulsion. These feelings which were viewed as interfering with the professional relationship got suppressed. Fineman (1993) argues that, there

are organizational norms governing both the appropriate expression and the suppression and management of emotions. It can be argued that, these norms are observable and they equally suppress 'free and fair' interaction within the multi-agency setting and creation of open inter-agency relationships.

MASH as a group had to go through the group processes of forming, storming, norming and performing. This research mainly concentrated on the period between the forming and the norming stages. The group dynamics confirmed what happens in groups. The storming and norming stages were well drawn out to an extent that the participants kept oscillating between the two stages. There were a number of protocols which had to be agreed on, however each organization had its own views which influenced the processes. Further confusion to these group dynamics was also compounded by changes in personnel representing different agencies at different times.

The dynamics in the group confirmed that gender plays a role and impacts on interaction and communication in partnership work by reinforcing the boundaries between males and females in organizations, professions, and ultimately amongst the individuals involved in the process of service delivery. The police were constructed in a masculine way taking the attributes of a *'big, bold, harsh, aggressive man often unapproachable who uses own discretion on whether to help the weak or take away freedom from the delinquents.'* They carry with them a long history of oppressive heavy handedness towards certain social classes and groups of people who the welfare agencies in the partnership are meant to rescue and support as their service users.

It can be deduced that trust-based communication is at the heart of effective joined-up service delivery. It was clearly observable that agencies did not trust each other and they used information governance and police presence as a defence against collaborating. The fact that police attitudes and behaviours are modelled on masculine traits which portrayed their work as mucho, aggressive and intimidating

played into the psychology of other representatives. Agency participants through mirroring the behaviours of their service users were prepared to collude to hide information as a way of resisting the police. There was a lack of trust which was purported as *'not knowing what the police would use the information obtained on service users for...'* Police were stereotyped due to their institutional history. Strong organizational and professional boundaries were used as barriers to bolster the defences against collaboration.

Police introjected the feelings which were being projected onto them by not showing feelings or emotions like other participants. They only focussed on the professional and organizational issues without attending to individuality aspects which carry emotions and feelings. The projections against the police also allowed them to emerge as the leader of the group. They are used to leading multi-agency arrangements including in emergence and disaster situations. Their organisational patriarchal and masculine traits aided them in that. They showed ability to control and deal with the contradictions between love and hurt of the police not just by members of the public but also by fellow professionals on the table from other agencies.

This chapter clearly demonstrated that the dynamics of interactions and agencies inter-relationships play a major part in the success of multi-agency work.

Chapter 8: MASH as a Model for Renegotiating Boundaries in Multi-agency Work.

'…it feels like we will be crossing too many boundaries too often…are we the Police…are we Social Care… or are we Health, maybe we are just MASH.' (Bethy commenting on MASH and multi-agency work ahead)

8.0 Introduction

This chapter brings together material from the literature reviewed and the findings from this research into a single argument. The findings presented in the last three chapters have indicated that individuals with and from different professional backgrounds, representing different agencies created different complex wholes which led to complex group dynamics in the partnership group. They also revealed that professional and organisational cultures, roles and identities contributed to some partnership representatives unconsciously resenting and scapegoating each other. Leadership and negotiation became pivotal in focussing the organisational representatives on the new primary task.

The emerging theoretical argument from this research is that the success of collaborative partnership work is based on negotiation and re-negotiation of boundaries between and amongst partners. Unconscious processes and dynamics form the basis and do influence the boundary negotiations. This chapter will demonstrate the application and applicability of this view to different partnership settings.

The diversity of challenges in the local authority under study draws attention to the level of complexities the professionals both as individual agencies and as a collective have to deal with on a day to day basis. This demands a high level of boundary negotiation capacity and skills. Public services organizations in the United Kingdom are heavily subjected to a strict and prescriptive agenda promoted through both statutory regulations and quasi-government scrutiny (Williams 2012). The strategic

theme in driving the new agenda for MASHs has been leaner structures and horizontal linkages between fields and functions. Separate structures of law and order, health, education, housing and child protection and social services are viewed as being inconsistent and disjointed in solving problems such as crime, unemployment, poor educational achievement and ill health which are at times referred to as 'wicked problems' (Perri 6, 1997).

The MASH was a new organisation formed from and by already existing agencies with already long histories of the way they delivered their own services. Rigid boundaries were already physically and psychologically constructed. MASH was to become a melting pot of various individual, professional and organisational beliefs in terms of how child protection and safeguarding was to be delivered in the local authority by permeating through those boundaries. Negotiations were done based on how each organisation was to measure and view its own impact and 'net' gain within the partnership network.

8.1 Context of the Problem

Problems afflicting multi-agency partnership work have been extensively written about. Many authorities have highlighted conflicting key performance indicators, defensiveness, lack of shared database in place, high volumes of work coupled with limited availability of resources; fear of commitment and of taking responsibility as the main issues hindering cooperation and collaboration in multi-agency work, (Leathard, 1994; Lupton et al, 2001; Reder and Duncan, 2003). The barriers to multi-agency work sometimes seem to be more numerous than the incentives for collaboration (Huxham and Macdonald, 1992; Mandell and Steelman, 2003; Loffler, 2004). These 'wicked problems' as discovered by Churchman, (1967), requiring multi-agency approaches are not just complex but can be deeply ambiguous (Martin 2009).

Poor leadership in public sector partnerships and coordination of collective efforts can lead to unpredictable tragedies (Laming, 2003; Reder and Duncan, 2003). Tragedies have also taught us that even where everyone is clear of their roles and tasks in the system, things can still go wrong. Gaps in communication between and among professionals of various agencies are often highlighted as the main cause. These lapses are largely due to the difference in the assumptions and cultures that underpin the partner professions and their organizations, (Turner, 1978).

The MASH experience confirmed that collaborative structures need to foster negotiation of boundaries in order to support the system adapt government directives to contextual specifics. This would also assist partners to adjust to each other and realign their services with the purpose they aim to serve. Negotiation and renegotiation of boundaries is a phenomenon which cuts across any and all partnerships. It is a broad issue bigger than the MASH. It poses challenges to any partnership relationship.

Child protection and safeguarding has a plethora of issues requiring negotiated boundaries to deal with. Budget and financial resources to support the network (eg LSCB), the composition of partners and their willingness to contribute to partnership debates, the nature and ability of the partnership leadership are not guided by national legislation. These issues require to be negotiated by the partners themselves. Different multi-agency networks have to make their own 'network-specific' arrangements that match the problems they intend to solve. This would in turn allow creation of collaborative capabilities in focussed, unique and context-specific ways.

In this study the obvious issues in multi-agency partnership working were being realized and recognized but were coming out from both the 'conscious' and the 'unconscious' of the individual, professions and organisations represented. The conscious seemed to be exposing the well documented day to day challenges in partnership working such as differences in working cultures, differences in primary

task and its execution, communication styles and differences in management structures and leadership. A closer attention to the unconscious processes was equally revealing but has often been unattended to. What seemed to connect the partners together, were their emotional insecurities and anxieties about the task of safeguarding and protecting vulnerable children.

The consequences of failure to protect vulnerable children from harm be it from their primary caregivers such as parents or from strangers are so huge in the UK and they can completely 'overwhelm and destroy' practitioners as individuals, as professionals and as organizations. Immediate examples in recent times can be easily found in the cases of Victoria Climbié and Peter Connolly; the vilification and scapegoating of the social workers and their managers and the ensuing socio-political consequences to the local authority as an organization where its Children Social Services department ended up in 'special measures,' after what appeared to be a 'politically motivated' revision of an OFSTED inspection report, (Community Care 2003). The same can be said of the impact of bad publicity on social work as a profession and the raft of changes since then brought in to mitigate.

Despite challenges posed by vested interests, apathy and the legitimate need for services identity partnerships like MASH present opportunities for achieving greater integration in local government. New communication technologies facilitate the integration of information systems as never before. Research and development of models for changing cultures across boundaries and over partnerships has generated ideas on how micro- level integration initiatives might work. MASH appeared to me to be a plausible, practical experiment in partnership working, shared resourcing and common interfaces with the potential for increased co-operation amongst different agencies. Although challenges remain, with a new understanding of the unconscious processes and emotional issues beneath the surface to partnership work, the MASH model exposes a set of practices on which greater ambitions can be built in partnership work.

This is equally applicable at a macro level as can be observed in major partnerships such as the European Union and/ or even United Nations. For example, Geddes (1998) argues that the process of European economic integration was driven by the creation of the Single Market which in turn gave a new stimulus to economic growth. As well, they were also dealing with anxieties caused by the emergence of new patterns of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion as economic and other changes impacted different regions differently. It is against this background that the concept of partnership is increasingly being promoted into the policies and programmes of the European Union to encourage social cohesion and inclusion.

8.2 The Boundaries

The establishment of MASH was based on a renegotiation of boundaries; boundaries of organizations, professions and individuals. Participants had to renegotiate their primary task, their roles and their identities around a new working culture. Hernes (2004), defined boundaries as the physical, social and intellectual distinctions made between and within organisations to define their identities. These boundaries can be reconstructed by members to reshape agency identity (Ashforth et al. 2000). This definition refers to a variety of organizational features and processes such as practices, values, structures, events and actions that evolve during and after the partnership is formed (in this case establishment of MASH) and shape the new identity. I would concur that any integration process is shaped by the motives and actions of the parties to the partnership as well as by the contextual forces that gave rise to the integration in the first place.

Each organisation had to realign and/ or adapt their identity in the post 'launch' of the MASH for the success of the new organisation. Negotiation was therefore required to deal with clashes between different organisational cultures, roles and behaviours (Buono and Bowditch 1989). Individual participants had formulated their own 'organisation in the mind' and it was evident that they based their negotiations on that. This according to Armstrong (2005) was governed by unconscious

assumptions, images and fantasies participants held about the MASH as an organisation. Every one participant had a mental image of how MASH should work. These different images and ideas are not often consciously negotiated or agreed upon among the participants but they exist. According to Shapiro and Carr (1991:69) 'all institutions exist 'in the mind' and it is in interaction with these 'in the mind' entities that we make sense of them.'

Effective post establishment collaboration implies consensus on the new organisation's identity. However this new identity can be highly contested during the negotiation process. The use of personal, professional and parent organisation identity was critical in informing the new boundaries that defined the new organisational practices and standards following the establishment of the MASH. The streamlined practices, values and structures that resulted from the negotiation of boundaries became the building blocks that partnership practitioners were to work with as they continued to forge the identity of the MASH informing the vision and strategy that defined its future.

8.3 The Negotiation of Boundaries

The renegotiation of boundaries is a phenomenon made more relevant and prominent by the demands of post modernism and globalisation. There is a case for arguing that this view is translatable to many different arena starting from simple micro- familial- relationships level cutting across to macro multi-inter-state-arrangements such as the European Union, a conglomerate partnership of 28 countries with half a billion citizens, (Eurostat 2014). Current policy discourse on collaboration and integration indicate that significant importance is being attached to partnership approaches and to locally based solutions initiatives in most countries.

My observations were that the success of collaboration in multi- agency work is based on successful renegotiation of boundaries and the willingness of participants to shift from their traditional individual, professional and organisational positions to

collaborative positions. However unconscious processes influenced and determined the shifting from those traditional positions. In this study, the novelty in MASH was the apparent renegotiation of those boundaries in the primary task, roles, identities and of working cultures including leadership and resources management creating a new form of psycho-social division of labour among multiple-professionals. The level of acceptance to negotiate those boundaries influenced the efficiency and effectiveness of the collaboration in the partnership and the organisation each individual was beginning to form in their minds.

The experiences in MASH highlighted that building consensus and conflict resolution is fundamental in partnership working. Negotiating partnerships must not only establish structures and processes which ensure the representation of key interests but must equally consider compromises during designing of a common strategy, action plans and how to deal with conflicts which are likely to arise. Geddes (1998) argues that building and maintaining a partnership strategy involves the collaboration of unequal partners with widely differing resources, expertise, culture and interests. The negotiation of an alliance of organisations, actors and interests with the aim of implementing a common strategy and action plan is the obvious basis for partnership working. It is however essential to equally consider key interests beneath the surface and in the unconscious which cannot be easily rationalised but could potentially affect partnership structures and derail the negotiation of an effective coalition.

Looking at conflict fault lines, I observed that child protection and safeguarding in multi-agency partnership work is largely about care and control of service users. The dichotomy between the 'caring' and the 'controlling' agencies had to be traded on sensitively. The demarcations between and among functions and disciplines needed to acknowledge this dilemma. The different aspects and functions of care and control had to be negotiated by the agencies themselves in MASH. This called for the practitioners in MASH to be 'psychologically and emotionally present at work' at all times in order to perform a multi-functional role and deal sensitively with disagreements which slowed down the change process.

Unconscious processes and issues residing in the individual, professional and organization had a profound impact on the success of the boundary negotiation and creation of a common action plan for multi-agency partnership work. There were defences residing and mostly acted out by the organisational representatives as complex wholes in partnership work which affected the interaction and relationships in multi-agency work. This research demonstrates Menzies Lynth's concept on how the non-human aspects of organisational life structures, practices, policies, technologies, work methods, patterns of decision making, the distribution of authority were incorporated into the cycle of projection, introjection, transference and counter-transference in a way that reinforced the individual and social defences against task related anxiety, (Krantz 2010). What made the social defences so effective is that the organisational arrangements either eliminated situations that exposed the organisational representatives to anxiety provoking activity altogether or insulated them from the consequences of their actions. All this was engineered and shared in the unconscious.

Halton, (2004) argued that, 'resistance to organisational change is one of those phrases that are often deployed in a lazy, thoughtless manner without reading the signs beneath the surface.' As this research found out, it is vital to have the capacity to distinguish between resistance to change on the one hand and the desire to fight to preserve something valuable that is deemed under attack on the other, when negotiating boundaries in partnership work.

Strong personalities are vital in driving the task of boundary negotiation and overcoming individual and social defences which can be impediments to the successful development of the partnership project. This research concurs with previous researches which highlighted the importance of boundary spanning and boundary spanners in bringing knowledge, expertise and willingness to cut across sectorial boundaries (Geddes, 1998; William, 2012).

Geddes (1998) researching on some European Union projects observed the importance of identifying some key individuals who made critical contributions to local partnerships. They may already be leaders of project teams, representatives from leading partnerships or members of partnership boards or management committees. Those individuals will reflect the 'networking' dimension of partnerships with their ability to cross organisational boundaries and build links between organisations and individuals with different cultures and ways of working. The key individual may be one who can bridge the divide between the local community and organisational partners from the basis of knowledge of both 'worlds'. Such individuals may already be experienced in formulating and designing collaborative mission statements and strategy and can assist in converting doubters and resistors into champions of partnership goals. As noticed in MASH, practitioners, middle managers and senior managers have the ability to play these roles, however some may require authorisation to build the confidence to do so. Emotional intelligence is however important in influencing the direction of the initiative.

However, it has to be noted that a dependence on such individuals can be a weakening factor in the long term. It can prove difficult to sustain achievements following the departure of a key actor. The contributions required from such individuals may actually change from time to time at different stages of a partnership's life particularly as it moves from its initial construction through the mobilising of resources to the implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the projects. Local partnerships should avoid organisational participants who as, Le Gales and Loncle, (1996:23) observed, 'find themselves at the heart of a partnership for the wrong reasons: to satisfy their acute obsession with the culture of meetings, to enjoy congenial contacts with a range of very diverse partners, to give the impression of causing a stir... (and who flourish in a context of)....opaqueness of initiatives and confusion about objectives.'

This research discovered that the level of anxieties in the 'complex whole' of the participants has a profound influence on their ability to span boundaries. I observed

in the partnership meetings that the level of 'emotional attachment' on certain issues (eg, information governance, sitting space, individual agency clients) for some participants, impacted on how they negotiated the boundaries of their roles and organisational participation. Some then came across as resistors and saboteurs and were easily labelled as such. Others projected their negative feelings to other participants. A balance between individual, professional and organisational emotions within a participant's 'complex whole,' promoted capacity for positive boundary spanning and negotiations.

Leadership in multi-agency partnership work is equally complex. In this study it took a coordinative role as each agency had its own management cultures and structures which followed certain frameworks of power and authority. Participants in multi-agency partnership work are unconsciously uncomfortable with the ethos of shared leadership and were unwilling to contribute to leading. Participants looked up to a nominated leader and/ or unconsciously colluded to appoint and apportion different roles to other participants in multi-agency work. This research study acknowledges that while the underlying concepts of collaboration and multi-agency partnership work may be relatively straight forward and the objectives clear, the business of realizing authentic collaborative learning culture requires that leadership recognise the depth of this task and the multitude of challenges that need to be addressed along the way. It can be argued that developing a collaborative learning culture is a process that requires knowledge, skills and persistence.

This research discovered that trust was a significant factor amongst organisational representatives when negotiating boundaries. Trust issues manifested themselves between and amongst individuals and professions. They were also apparent amongst organisations especially against what those organisations represented or were perceived to represent in society (e.g. the police were the least trusted). This is in line with what Kruse and Louis (2009) suggest; that trust is a key element of organisational culture that is often taken for granted and routinely overlooked.

Low trust is associated with stress and anxiety. Kruse and Louis (2009) noted that even where there are pockets of high trust among like-minded professionals there may be weak relational trust within the larger organisations. When it became apparent that trust had improved, positive results were realised at three levels; individuals were better able to connect with others, they found satisfaction in their relationships with other participants, and contributed to building social capital for performance of the initiative. It was important to identify appropriate ways to enhance trust as a source of momentum for the collaborative group. From these experiences within the MASH, I agree that, think system and not individual organization if the goal is to fundamentally change the culture of organizations, (Fullan, 2008).

Hefetz- Linsky (2002) writing about turning around failing schools, emphasised tackling and changing system culture. Technical problems may be complex and critically important but often have known solutions that can be addressed through current knowledge. They can be resolved through the application of authoritative expertise and through relooking at the organisation's existing structures and policies. Cultural issues on the other hand can only be addressed by confronting and challenging people's practices, behaviours and loyalties. Making progress requires going beyond any authoritative experience to challenging certain entrenched ways, accepting losses and developing new capacity which can thrive through boundary negotiation.

In multi-agency partnership work, it is very necessary to have structured change but there is need to move and go deeper beyond structural change into deep cultural change. I experienced that organisations need to move from individual learners to true learning organisations where knowledge and practice is shared, developed and applied. Networks have to be built which go beyond organisations' own individual walls to embrace and benefit from a system- wide collaborative learning culture. The coming together of professionals should not result only in more knowledge but improved practice. Practitioners becoming links and conduits of information between their parent organisations, the MASH and the communities they serve.

Individual, professional and organisational socialization contributes to the unconscious dynamics and processes enacted in the boundary negotiation within partnership work. For example it was easy and at times acceptable to scapegoat the police in partnership work due to the role the society assigns to the police which organisational representatives perceived as oscillating between being 'rescuers' and being 'oppressors.' My view was also that the role had nothing to do with the partnership work of the police in child protection and safeguarding but a lot to do with what they stand for in society and in history as I alluded to in Chapter 7. Other participants used this to negotiate for what they 'could' and 'could not' share or do in the partnership using the way the police are perceived as leverage.

A key question arising from the emergency and establishment of MASHs is; what is the future of the child protection and safeguarding as it gets moved away from being single agency led responsibility to a 'wholly' multi-agency led framework? Organizational boundaries and local area borders are falling being replaced with joint operational strategies such as joint commissioning, borough mergers, hubs of different shapes and sizes. Protection of civil liberties in terms of sharing 'citizens' information without consent remains an issue, one which provokes anxieties given existing case law such as the Haringey judgment (Royal Courts of Justice 2013). What is apparent is the fear of 'failure to protect' due to unprecedented government and social pressures. This is propelling agencies and professionals to renegotiate the boundaries of what to share, when to share and how to share by as well renegotiating what used to be very stringent information governance structures.

Considerations of privacy have long prevented the flow of personal information across departments, agencies and tiers of government. Professionals cite pieces of legislation such as the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Human Rights Act (1998). As the flow of information increases across service boundaries, there should be clearer and more detailed codes of practices to safeguard its uses. Moreover, there will be some areas where full integration is inappropriate. For example, where preventive services need to attract clients who are engaged in illegal behaviour such

as misuse of illicit substances, it will be important to state that these services are quite separate from law enforcement and to retain firewalls in the flows of personal information. The principles used should be mainly that it is *'…proportionate, appropriate and in the public interest to do so…'* before sharing personal data, that is either giving out or receiving citizens' information.

Writing more than fifteen years ago, Perri 6 (1997) argued that, the core problem for government is that it inherited from the 19th Century a model of organizations that is structured around functions and services rather than around solving problems. Those structures meant that the links between departments and agencies were vertical and silo- like. Horizontal relationships had to be created. However to date those horizontal links are still barely existent. Perri 6 (1997) further argues that, functional division has become so ingrained in the civil service and politicians because the professions have organized themselves around the functions and have become powerful and able to make their professional thinking part of the 'common sense' of governance.

The service professions like the police, allied health, social workers, teachers etc. have organized their professional status, role, standards and relationships with clients around the idea of functional thinking. Perri 6 (1997) argues that, these professionals are as much to blame for their defence of turf as is the crude lobbying power of their trade unions from the frontline. The organisational representatives showed an 'obsession' with data and performance indicators. Interestingly what Perri 6 (1997), said then, is still the case now; government today is awash with statistics which purport to measure performance but in fact only measures levels of activity.

Initiatives such as the MASH are however needed as they have the potential to ameliorate the complex problems that cut across boundaries of organisations and agencies. Child protection and safeguarding needs to be more 'holistic' achieving greater integration across the public and voluntary sector agencies who come in contact with vulnerable children and families. It needs to be more preventative

shifting the balance of effort away from curing problems but stopping them at source in a joined up way.

To achieve this will often require that welfare agencies go beyond providing services and enforcing the law to focusing instead on changing the cultures of service users- parents and patients, adults and children and more importantly their own cultures of 'doing things'. What seems to be missing in public sector reforms even with the initiatives such as MASH are concerted efforts aimed at changing the hearts and minds and targeting the cultures of service users and the public on how they view and access services. It has become increasingly evident that to solve the central problems of crime, unemployment, poor educational achievement and ill health, the public at large should be willing to take greater responsibility and be part of the change they want to see.

Partnerships such as the MASH have the potential to act as early warning systems within child protection and safeguarding. They already have expertise on risk assessment, contingency and scenario planning. Risk assessment tools should be based on tighter, published and publicized codes of practice to prevent public managers from taking draconian action on the basis of soft evidence against individuals who might already be vulnerable. The designed new ways of working need to be firmly grounded in an understanding of why previous initiatives did not work or achieve intended results.

It is equally important to consider how the success of the multi- agency partnership work is measured. Evaluating the impact of multi- agency partnership work is a challenging task. It requires forms of appraisal which are adapted to the pluralistic nature of the partnership work. Evaluations of partnerships need to be conducted collaboratively reflecting and respecting differences in objectives and expectations among different interests as well as commonly defined goals, (Geddes, 1998). As argued in this Chapter, the nature of partnerships is so often a matter of negotiation and compromise, formal evaluation procedures developed in more simple situations

may not necessarily work. Nonetheless, detailed impact analysis is essential to guide and consolidate the partnership process and to develop sustainable common ground among partnership agencies.

8.4 Conclusion

This study was set within the context of child protection and safeguarding to draw attention to the changing and challenging nature of the work. It accepts the premise that partnership work based on the deliberation of different players and involving the application of their combined expertise and collaborative strategies offers the potential for effective management of public services.

The current attention being given to partnership work is a recognition that many organisations are facing and dealing with problems which transcend the remit of their specific and existing structures. This interest entails a shift from traditional policy paradigms in search of new policy initiatives. These partnership innovations seek to eradicate the overprotectiveness, hierarchical approaches and compartmentalisation of policy issues into silos of separate agencies and services. They seek to facilitate building of alliances when reacting to problems and the sharing of risks and responsibilities in a changing and unpredictable policy environment. The emphasis is on lateral, localised, inter-organisational and interdisciplinary collaboration as the basis for policy innovation.

This research also asserts that individual and professional fears and anxieties in public sector workers have been for some time compartmentalized in different practitioners in their different agencies while working as separate entities. With the formation of the 'hub' and a structured collaboration group, those anxieties and defences came out in the open to be shared as projections and introjections in a wider 'unprotected' and possibly 'unsafe' arena. Participants came together to form an organization whose primary task was to protect and safeguard children. They however ended up sharing their fears and anxieties. They used the new initiative as

a platform to scapegoat, project and transfer their anxieties about child protection. Their potential to perform this task seemed to be perforated by fear to change which also brought out fantasies about power and authority. Through concerted boundary negotiations the multi-agency partnership participants however realized that the mandate for safeguarding and protecting children was changing and required them to take up new identities, roles and responsibilities and to accept new positions by transforming their primary task.

Participants themselves had to work through their own anxieties and fears and deal with those barriers 'in the mind' in order to successfully navigate through new boundaries MASH working culture was bringing. Participants had to make the 'hub' a safe place for themselves first where they could share not only the 'citizens' information but the information about their own anxieties as well. It was evident that interaction in multi-agency collaborative work is very 'fluid' as different individuals, professions and organizations encountered different challenges which they will unfortunately bring with them to the multi-agency setting and influenced and impacted on their negotiations.

Partnerships such as MASH are not new. This thesis builds on an existing body of literature on inter-agency collaboration to service delivery cutting across organisational boundaries. The current focus of policy debate around partnerships acknowledges that traditional social policies of either a sectorial nature such as crime, health, education or targeted on specific social groups like children, the elderly or migrants must be supplemented by a more integrated and multidimensional approach which reflects the complexities of the causes of those problems. This research adds that for the partnerships to deliver on their intended goals a consideration of the unconscious processes within the multi-agency interactions is essential.

Chapter 9: Considerations and Recommendations

'This can actually be an opportunity for someone to make a name for themselves…'
(My manager, Head of Service, inviting me to be part of the MASH steering group).

9.0 Introduction

In this Chapter I have reflected on my experiences of being at the centre of creating and establishing a children services multi- agency safeguarding hub. I made some observations which may be worth considering especially for both leadership and followership to deal with some of the resistance, dilemmas and anti-task behaviours when negotiating boundaries in multi-agency work. Some of the tensions arising during the formation of this initiative with benefit of hindsight could have been dealt with differently by addressing them swiftly at the onset. Combined with an array of literature now available, strategies could be formulated to suit individual situations and specific organizational needs.

9.1 Knowledge of the Unconscious Processes

An understanding of the complex whole and acknowledging the unconscious processes in group dynamics is vital. Most of the participants knew each other from various multi-agency enterprises which were taking place in the local authority and beyond. However, the organizational and professional anxieties were residing with individuals tasked to build the 'hub' and they manifested as systemic in nature. The work dynamics generated by the primary task can affect everyone working within an organization regardless of seniority. This is not to suggest that defining the primary task given the diverse interests of the range of stakeholders within any organization is in itself an easy or straightforward task (Roberts, 1994; Hoggett, 2006).

MASH as a group in essence had to go through the group processes of forming, storming, norming and performing. This research mainly concentrated on the period

between the forming and the norming stages. The group dynamics confirmed what happens in groups. The storming and norming stages were well drawn out to an extent that the participants kept oscillating around the three stages. It was interesting to experience how the storming stage played out for a group of people who were compelled by their parent organizational mandates to be 'together and be in the group' until the new organization was formed. Bion (1961) analysed groups at two levels, as 'working on overt tasks' and/or 'acting upon covert assumptions, (cited in Kahn 2005:54). Overt actions enable one to focus on the primary task, whereas covert assumptions take one off the primary task. I experienced that; both patterns of behaviour can be seen within organizations that brings forth pain and psychological anxieties with child protection cases. Avoidant and ambivalent behaviours were taking place where participants instead of rationalising their anxieties around specific issues were rather being defensive, projecting and transferring their feelings on others. Stokes (1994) argued that this form of defensive practice hinders experiential learning (cited in Kahn 2005:54). Hirschhorn (1988) revealed 'feelings of anxiety are at the root of distorted or alienated relationships at work, which warp people's collective capacity to accomplish primary tasks', (cited in Kahn 2005:55).

Participants' presence in MASH was not voluntary. Their organizations were mandated through the LSCB. There were a number of protocols to be agreed on, however each organization had its own views influenced by their professional and organizational backgrounds which impacted on the processes. Further complexities to these group dynamics was also compounded by constant changes in personnel representing different agencies at different times due to staff turn- over, annual leave and sicknesses impacting even on some secondary relationships, pairings and alliances which were beginning to form. It is therefore significant to consider the unconscious issues and managing them when embarking on multi-agency partnership projects.

9.2 Identify Champions

Understanding of the complex whole should assist the leadership to identify and target champions of the initiative. Knowing who the supporters of the project are from the onset is helpful as it also frees time and space to target, negotiate and offer concessions to those perceived as resistors. There were agencies along the way who were turned around and started to support the initiative once they had successfully negotiated their boundaries and got their concessions.

9.3 Identify Psychological Barriers and Clarify issues early

There were questions asked many times at the beginning about the this initiative where no clear answers could not be provided. This appeared to create psychological barriers for some participants. The main issues centred on the primary task, processes and intended outcomes and how to measure success and impact. Practical questions such as, *'how much work are we going to generate through? …at what organizational level is the MASH practitioner going to be…are we going to share all the information with everyone in MASH? …etc.'* These sort of questions created barriers in the minds of many participants as they all reflected on their existing workloads and started imagining caseloads overload with new work generated. Fear of the unknown was very real and it permeated across the projected including in the leadership. This created a paralysis even in leadership. This paralysis however set a stage where the ethos of shared leadership could flourish with new leaders emerging. However this needed to be encouraged and executed so that those in the know regardless of position, hierarchy or which organization they represented, could step in and contribute to move the discussions forward.

9.4 Define Leadership, Authority and Power

Leadership needs to be clearly defined and clarified with authority and power to make binding decisions. It was clear on this journey that multi-agency leadership is shared as it followed different management structures for different organizations. It is however important to realise that a new organization was being formed and as complex as the issues were, it also needed its own structures. In the first instance the leadership role took a coordinative function of rallying everybody and every organization together but the concept of followership entails that people want 'to see someone' in charge in order to direct their energy both positive and negative. This also helps with group function and dynamics. Even though in MASH, many participants, including myself wanted a nominated leader, the complexity of the issues to be navigated required a sensitive outlook.

In these collaborative settings, I would argue for distributed leadership where all partners bring and share their skills in managing the process to move the new initiative forward. However the experiences in MASH further assert the need for clarity for participants from their parent organizations in terms of the power and authority they actually have in the meetings; can they make binding decisions, do they need to seek authorizations from elsewhere and how they feedback to their own agencies to ensure that decisions from the partnership are reflected in the internal policies. Changes in organisational representatives also need to be managed accordingly given the fact that replacements may not always be at the same level of astuteness and may not even have the same skill sets especially in boundary spanning. The partnership has to find a way of harnessing the collection of qualities and skills found in the team and deploy them accordingly.

There would be times when uncertainties exist all representatives would be required to step-up and share on the leadership task. Leadership should also be conceptualized as a relational process occurring at various levels depending on how

representatives are interacting and participating in the partnership. The challenges of the model also have to be acknowledged as alluded to in Chapter Six.

9.5 Maintain Human Contact

The three weekly partnership meetings and subsequent monthly meetings were very helpful in ensuring that participants remained in touch and in charge. There were some meetings where at the end there were grumblings about not 'making progress' or 'being repetitive' of what was discussed last time. However the meetings kept the issues alive and participants together. Participants also acknowledged and appreciated continued meetings as they started to form individual, professional and organizational relationships, some not necessarily related to MASH but which assisted to galvanise their contributions to MASH. Those relationships and alliances formed started to impact positively on people's work and demonstrated what wider partnerships through MASH could generate. This also assisted in shifting professional and organizational positions as boundaries were being renegotiated.

9.6 Create a Reflective and Learning Organization

Adopting the ethos of a learning culture meant not just being satisfied with progress made. Participants were encouraged to continue learning about partnership work by visiting other initiatives in different organisations including other local authorities. A reflective organization recognises the importance of learning from experience (Cooper and Lousada, 2005; Rustin and Bradley, 2008). Experiencing and understanding of what was happening elsewhere stimulated debate on own situation. Participants managed to see that they 'were not alone' and that they 'were on track after all' in terms of dealing with some of the dynamics which were going on. A reflective organisation allows participants to make mistakes without fear of blame and allowing corrective action to take place. This in turn reduces anxieties and defences associated with fear of reprimands. A reflective organisation ensures that there is continuity in understanding of the primary task between the operational staff

on one hand and the strategic leaders on the other. Practitioners and managers are integral to the reflective and learning processes.

Through LSCB joint training and recruitment was encouraged. The local authority provided joint away days where different agencies for the first time sat together engaging in 'team building' exercises. Exchange of good practice especially supervision was a standout. Participants started to learn and use new language which promoted the 'we' 'us' in MASH. Those small behaviours developed in strides to a level where all participants were speaking of 'our MASH' and defending what it stood for.

9.7 Use Existing Structures and Create Institutional Chemistry

The MASHs were not necessarily the beginning of multi-agency work or co-location of staff from various agencies into one building. Before MASHs different sorts of relationships already existed and different local authorities had different initiatives which were working for them. In the local authority under study, there were already health visitors and targeted services workers within the building. A worker from substance misuse was also on secondment so was an adult mental health manager. This in essence was actually half of the main agencies required and now sitting in MASH. However what did not happen at the onset was to actually acknowledge the strength of what was already there and group together those workers and learn from their experiences then build on the work they were already doing.

To cement the relationships, workers also needed a common aspect of their work to identify with. Good news- stories help in creating institutional chemistry. The workers in existing structures had already built a considerable organizational memory within the local authority to identify with. In this local authority an OFSTED inspection assisted in creating that institutional chemistry. A good OFSTED result gave the impetus for the MASH project. The leadership capitalised on the goodwill generated by a positive inspection and moved things forward.

9.8 Improve Internal Communication within Organizations.

The whole ethos of multi-agency partnership is centred on improving quality of communication and quality of information shared. It was however fascinating to realise how poorly organizations communicated within themselves and those weaknesses ending up being exposed within the partnership initiative. For instance I leant of our involvement and wanting to set up a MASH from a colleague in another organization. Some organizations were overly represented in MASH meetings due to failure to communicate and agree on who was most suitable to represent them. Most Children's Social Care workers only found out about the MASH when they were losing space to new colleagues from other agencies.

Such issues became 'toxic' in that they affected the morale of the group. They created a 'juniors versus seniors' type divide which pushed senior managers at times to be defensive to the detriment of free flow of discussions. My observations were that some of the issues brought to MASH meetings could have easily been discussed in internal supervision settings. This in turn exposed some of the supervision cultures in some organizations and propagated the notion that supervision cultures follow the cultures of the organizations.

This study discovered that a sound communication strategy for disseminating information had to be looked at from the onset to create the enthusiasm and generate more drivers and champions for the initiative.

9.9 Take Everyone on Board.

I noticed that people responded to leadership and to working in groups differently. Some came and easily fitted in forging alliances to support their negotiations; others were overly confident and were able to push their own agenda within the group even dominating other participants including the chair. There were however those in which group I fell who 'wanted to be formerly invited to the table' in order to fit in, those who

required 'constant parenting in a nuclear family type model.' Some participants either because they were naturally quiet appeared withdrawn and/ or because they were just junior both in their organizations and as well as in this new initiative they struggled to put their point across or to contribute within a group setting.

It was then adopted that at the beginning of each MASH partnership meeting all representatives from the different agencies would give brief updates, reporting back on any developments in their organization and any reflections from the previous meeting. This also happened at the end of each meeting to give everyone an opportunity to comment and reflect on what would have happened in the meeting. In the practitioners meetings, the chairing of meetings and taking of minutes was rotated. This gave everyone an opportunity to have a slot to take the leadership role. Different qualities emerged which could then be utilised differently in the group and in the new organization.

9.10 Create an Inclusive Identity

The MASH concept was described as organizations moving away from individual silos or compartments into possibly one 'big transparent silo' in which information sharing and partnership working would be developed. This was an attempt at creating a new identity for professionals and partner agencies as child protection and safeguarding practitioners. Participants however unconsciously did not want to change their identities. Their resistance manifested in anti-task behaviours such as their resentment of other agencies and projections of negative feelings to each other. They continuously wanted to revert back to their parent organisations and professional identities. Carroll and Levy (2008) argued that as organizational challenges and uncertainties are encountered, the individual is more likely to revert to their default identity (the professional and parent organization identity). The emergent identity is embedded and intertwined with the default identity. I would suggest that it is more useful to observe and nurture the relationship and interaction between the two identities than concentrating on their mutual exclusivity.

The creation of an identity agreed by all participants facilitates shared values and meaning. It allows for participants to identify with the new organization. The creation of the new partnership's own boundaries is one mechanism through which the identity of the new organization emerges. Hogg and Terry (2001) suggest that in collaborative integration both higher and lower-status parties may either resist or embrace the partnership work of their organisations indicating that the identity dynamics are complex. This combined with the common practice of retaining various identity elements of the parent organization suggests a complicated process through which the emerging identity of the new partnership should be negotiated.

The new identity as MASH needed to be enunciated and understood in relation to their former and create the co-existence of both. It is very common for example to see organizational letterheads with logos and crests for various agencies to depict the representative agencies in the conglomerate. Agreeing on a name might seem very simple and straight forward however its impact is huge if some participants do not identify with it. Negotiating a common identity right at the onset provides a feeling of inclusiveness and collectiveness.

9.11 Conclusion

This research recognises that every partnership large or small will face differing multi-agency challenges and that the opportunities and threats will always vary across areas, goals and objectives of the partnership. An understanding of the unconscious processes and practices which considers the issues beneath the surface is vital in the management of those challenges in partnerships and collaborative work. Leadership capabilities came across as the thread that consciously connected most of the issues highlighted above and had the authority to move things forward. Partnership agencies have to identify the right people with the right level of skills, personalities and emotional intelligence to represent them who then can assume the leadership responsibilities required for the role.

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Chapter 10: Reflections on the Research Journey and Conclusion.

'…I wanted to stay as close to the action as possible to see what was happening to such an extent that I could not take annual leave…' (Writing in my research journal reflecting on the burden of participant observation).

10.0 Introduction

In this concluding chapter I will review and reflect on the whole research process. I will be exploring and trying to discern issues that were triggered by this experience. The research process has invariably increased my sensitivity to power dynamics and issues of equality and difference. I also hope that it has led to a development in my critical thinking skills, creation of new knowledge and personal intellectual growth. This chapter will revisit the research questions and consider whether they have been answered. I will explore the contributions this research will make to both practical and theoretical knowledge and identify its limitations along with suggestions for future research.

10.1 Answering the Broad Aims and the Research Questions

When I embarked on this study my main aim was to explore the unconscious processes experienced by participants as individuals, as professionals and as organizations as they co-located to provide multi-agency partnership working in child protection and safeguarding. I was already observing interesting dynamics going on in this group of professionals who were charged with creating a MASH. I wanted to understand the behaviours of people when they have to act as individuals, as professionals and as an organization at the same time. I started from the premise which acknowledged that a lot had been written about multi- agency work. This thesis looked at it from a dimension which questioned whether an understanding of the unconscious in multi- agency working, exploring the 'complex whole' (individual, professional, organization) could improve partnership working in child protection and

safeguarding.

The thesis discovered that multi- agency work is about boundary negotiation and an understanding of the unconscious processes is a vital resource in those negotiations. It is equally paramount in providing leadership for boundary negotiators and negotiations.

By looking at the individual, professional and institutional unconscious processes unfolding in the MASH, I managed to examine the roles, identities, cultures, fantasies and individual and social defences which impacted on multi-agency partnership work. My main and broad observations from this research process were that;

- Emotional and unconscious processes such as individual and organisational defences when implementing change in multi-agency projects have a profound impact on collaboration and partnership working as they affect capacity for boundary negotiations.

- Co-location can be a way of managing institutional and individual anxieties in child protection but does not necessarily abate the challenges encountered in multi-agency partnership working as it also increases anti-task tendencies in group dynamics such as projections, scapegoating and transference.

- Unconscious individual, professional and organizational cultures, anxieties and defences are one of the main challenges to multi-agency partnership working in child protection and safeguarding of children as they have the potential to derail progress unnoticed.

Therefore an understanding of the emotional and the unconscious processes in organizations could be the missing link in understanding and strengthening multi-agency partnership working in safeguarding and protecting vulnerable children and their families.

These broad observations were obtaining from my central and vantage position as an employee in the Department. I already had a substantial amount of experience as a social worker and a manager working with in a multi-agency partnership setting protecting and safeguarding children. I had already started contributing to the formation and establishment of the MASH project before starting on the research journey. On reflection my research stance as a participant observer in this study was a unique and authoritative position to be in.

I was able to observe socially structured defences within the research site. They were experienced as tight boundaries being applied around the responsibilities of different professions and organizations. These resulted in disputes and feelings of resistance and resentment which caused delays in driving and moving the project forward.

This study has also offered suggestions for enhancing containment as advocated for by Western (1999). Chapter 9 presented a range of practical and pragmatic opportunities in boundary negotiation within multi-agency settings with the view to breaking down unhelpful social defences and anxieties. In general these recommendations relate to subtle tips on observed and experienced realities.

10.2 Practical and Theoretical Contributions to Knowledge

This research provides several notable contributions to the current body of knowledge within multi- agency partnership work in particular and within Social Work in general. The study:

- Increases the understanding about the nature of anxieties multi- agency practitioners have on information sharing in child protection and safeguarding task,

- Contributes knowledge concerning the attachment to and anxieties about changing professional and organizational roles and identities,

- Provides experiential evidence of emotional and practical challenges managers and practitioners face when working in multi-agency settings,

The research also makes a number of theoretical contributions;

- Methodologically the application of a psycho-analytic framework to the study of multi-agency work is new. The narrative strategy was a bold stance in getting data containing raw emotions and feelings of the individual participants on the subject matter. It was a 'real' engagement between participants and myself as researcher where through transference and counter-transference I experienced different feelings and emotions including at times anger, resentment, defensiveness, envy, sadness and satisfaction. Accepting and sharing those feelings was quite unique but at the same time something missing in practice. An understanding and acknowledgment of that exchange of feelings is an area which can be developed for supervision and staff support.

- The analysis of individual and social defences presented in this study represents a contribution to the understanding of group dynamics in contemporary multi- agency work. The findings provide a different perspective to certain working practices, how they develop and how they are defended. The study has managed to explain how fears and anxieties manifest as difficult behaviours usually identified as unhelpful but still difficult to change. Krantz, (2010)'s view is that such knowledge is useful to leadership, managers and

policy makers attempting to meet the needs of practitioners who span organizational boundaries and to support the management of change and adaptation within contemporary organizations.

- The findings from this study offer important new insight into the challenges and complexities of multi-agency collaborative work. It acknowledges that previous studies including serious case reviews and some academic reports have identified what professionals have at times failed to do. This study offers deeper ethnographic understandings of how and why such challenges may occur.

- The study's findings contribute to the understanding of the impact of the unconscious processes in boundary negotiation. This thesis makes the further point that if emotions, feelings and anxieties are considered and acknowledged during negotiations, professional and organizational opportunities to increase common understanding of what needs to be achieved is increased. This is an illuminative development to existing literature in the field of emotional intelligence and boundary negotiations.

- This thesis also makes a small contribution to the social identity literature by drawing attention to the important role of boundaries and practices that define the individuals, professionals and organizational identities in multi-agency work. I have shown how these boundaries get renegotiated and realigned to those of the new partnership preserving those aspects of parent organisation identity that allow members to uphold key values which they can revert to as and when required. The study concurs with the notion that, 'people's identities, their subjective positions, own view of themselves and where they fit in the social order are major aspects of how they exercise social and power functions,' (Fook, 2002: 135).

10.3 Limitations and Areas for Further Research

This research accessed the views of only those practitioners and managers who represented their agencies at the partnership meetings. This means that the unconscious process explored were from a small pool of people observed and interviewed during multi- agency partnership meetings. Whilst the findings concurred with those found elsewhere in the academic literature (McAllister and Dudau, 2008; Woodhouse and Pengelly, 1991) the lack of opportunity to explore further with a wider range of practitioners especially those who did not attend partnership meetings is a limitation to the study. To address this, further research within a multi-agency environment targeting a wider range of participants is suggested. Action research to investigate and evaluate the use of psycho-dynamically informed interagency and inter-professional working would represent a good opportunity to further develop the knowledge base.

The methodology of this study relied heavily on my own interpretations of unconscious processes, my ability to spot anxieties and defences and understanding of the study's theoretical framework. This posed some limitations to the study. Even though I applied the principles of psychoanalytic institutional observations propounded by Hinshelwood and Skogstad's (2005) the influence of my own unconscious issues including researcher bias and impact of own feelings and emotions was unavoidable. Research seminars were however integral to the process of data collection and analysis.

I agree with Forbes and Watson (2012) who argue that there is still need to analyse the impact of the multi-agency partnership transformation of children's services on professional identities. Further research could shade more light on the fluidity of practice, power relations and professional boundaries' issues resulting from integrated services. Professional relations seem to be uncertain and less predictable as a result of partnership work (Forbes and Watson 2012).

It is also important to acknowledge that during the fieldwork period there were rapid changes in the research setting pertaining to the local authority in particular and the welfare sector in general. There was a huge staff turn-over in the Children's Services Division cutting across different levels. In other agencies representatives frequently changed altering the composition of the group which impacted on observed group dynamics. Fieldwork for this thesis ended when the multi-agency initiative (MASH) was launched. Data on issues arising when all partners had co-located into the building and started sharing information such as power and control struggles in the new organization, sharing and management of resources and exit strategies should a member want to opt out or leave were not considered. The long term applicability of these research's findings should bear in mind these limitations.

10.4 Reflexivity

In this thesis I have argued that multi-agency partnerships have historically promoted the use of managerialist thinking which prefers 'on the surface' and rational structural aspects of practice at the expense of the less rational, 'beneath the surface' issues in the unconscious. This has created difficulties of relational understanding and communication between and amongst different professionals representing different agencies resulting in a system that is out of balance. This research set out to redress this through a deeper investigation of the experiences of day-to-day partnership working in a multi-agency reality. It is also true however that focusing at a deeper level should not be at the expense of meeting the practical resourcing needs of multi-agency practitioners and their organizations. Improvements to multi- agency working are more likely to benefit from a more balanced approach sensitive to the surface and rational as well as the below the surface and the emotional issues which are monitored in a containing approach.

This research experience with a number of practitioners and managers from different organizations as respondents provides a useful example of the importance of considering differences as well as similarities. I possess a number of personal

characteristics similar to those of the respondents who participated in this study. Other researchers often raise the perceived difference between the research participants and the researcher as ethical issues (Omidian, 2000). I acknowledged my own position as a black African male managing a Team with in the local authority where 40% of its citizens are from black and ethnic minorities. I had a vested interest in what was going on in MASH. Like my participants, I wanted to see the success of this new initiative but at the same time I also had my own issues including my role which could be under threat if the initiative failed, my professional identity which could be overshadowed by having other professions coming into the building, my authority which could be undermined by a number of senior managers involved in this initiative.

However, probably for different reasons all research participants appeared quite willing to tell me their story throughout this research journey. I felt as if I was providing therapy to some of the respondents. I actually provided a safe space for them to reflect about their work and confer their views without being judged or fear of reprimand. Before commencing the research I could not have predicted these points of connection and difference which emerged during the research process. There were multiple, interweaving and interconnecting ways in which our various positioning and identities were revealed and negotiated both consciously and unconsciously. Managing these dynamics with respondents who were from different organizations, different professional backgrounds and at different levels in their organizations was crucial to the conduct of this research.

As I listened to the participants' narratives, I came to the realisation that there were actually a lot of feelings and emotions beneath the surface about joint work and multi-agency work and how professionals actually related to their agencies. I related with a lot of the issues participants were raising but my clinical social work and management training enabled me to maintain equanimity in the face of some 'uncomfortable' material. The more narratives I listened to the more I discovered coping strategies. After 'difficult and emotionally charged' interviews, I would move

from feelings of impotence, hopelessness, overwhelmed, or sadness to a position in which I was a kind of witness to history and discovery (McKinney, 2007).

The process of data collection had its challenges because of some narratives contained issues I felt were 'injustices, unfairnesses, defensiveness' in organizations which I had also personally experienced but never shared with anyone. My own feelings were coming to the surface at times 'clashing' with those of respondents creating transferences and counter-transferences. For example when I interviewed one of my supervisees there was a stage in the interview where I felt she was relishing an opportunity to attack me but because of the methodology and interviewing technique (BNIM) I could not respond. This made me feel vulnerable. However in another interview with a senior manager in an adults' social care setting it was painful when the respondent realised through his narrative how his own organization had and was treating him. Sometimes after these interviews I would feel helpless and at other times sadness characterised my evenings as I listened to the recordings of the narratives. One respondent had told me that she felt so much better after speaking to me and telling me her *'…side of things...'* She literally sighed and told me that having me listening to her story attentively was like offloading all her sad experiences of many years of doing her work.

The importance of my research journal could not be over-emphasised with notes and scribbles written all over it at different times and odd times. It was about when not where an idea or situation of interest presented itself. Reading it back made me realise the importance of some spontaneous ideas. That process enhanced reflexivity by monitoring the research process and preserving personal ideas (Streubert and Carpenter, 1995; Yardley, 2000). I maintained my attendance at research seminars where I engaged with other doctoral students and supervisors. This was very useful for me in dealing with issues I was facing in the research field and the group helped contain my anxieties from the field.

I concur with the suggestion that when researchers are reflexive they are not interested in simply analysing what they have done and how they have progressed their knowledge boundary but they become part of the context and the way in which their interpretations are affected not only by other professionals but also the dominant discourse (Lam et al 2007). Reflecting on this process, my interest in partnerships and multi-agency collaboration work and its potential to ameliorate some of the challenges I face daily in social work practice has increased. I will continue to study and further my knowledge and understanding of the unconscious processes and the dynamics in multi-agency partnership work.

10.5 Concluding Remarks.

Representations of life in research just like as in art can only be partial. I make no claim that the narratives, the observations or the research journal and other documentary evidence in this study allow for any generalised positions regarding unconscious processes in multi- agency work and how these should be understood in social work practice. Conclusions from this study need to be drawn with due acknowledgement of the methodological challenges of the adopted design. Analysis is based on a small sample of respondents and participants which suggests that it is unlikely to be representative of the broader population of multi-agency functionaries. The generalizability of the findings to other settings may also be limited by sample bias since only workers from agencies and organizations based and with a vested interest in the local authority were interviewed. Establishment of MASHs took different formats in different local authorities in order to respond to localised issues. However by recognizing these difficulties certain broad conclusions can be drawn from this study and applied to contemporary issues.

The combination of the narrative method and constructive social work experience provided a means by which I could articulate and present the participants' accounts. Combining the stories that emerged out of the research with my own observations and documentary data effectively allowed for additional insights into the richness of

the data gathered. There was a regular movement back and forth as I worked through texts to ensure that I understood what I had been told by the participants.

I can only assume that for the participants to give me the accounts of their experiences in MASH we had created some form of a trusting relationship. They would not have opened up if they felt I would place their work life at risk. I have come to acknowledge that whatever my respondents told me, true or false, said something and gave me some aspects of their personality: their hopes, their wishes and their fears. This is the kind of approach that could potentially encourage people to be more attentive to the detail of another's experiences.

During the course of my research it has become clearer that there will always be at least some aspects of my participants' experiences and ideas that I will not understand and that I will therefore be unable to relate or convey such understandings to others. To have learned so very clearly that there are things I can never know, experiences that are incommensurate with the reality in which I operate on a day-to-day basis solidifies my view that understanding 'beneath the surface' unconscious processes require skill and attention.

Writing a conclusion that draws all the different threads of the thesis together presented a daunting task. The sheer volume of overlapping material and the need to make it comprehensible to the reader carries with it the ever-present concern that there is always something more that could be added and some point elsewhere that could be further clarified. However as Cole and Knowles (2001:212) note, 'in research as in life as in art there is no possibility of completeness, certainty or closure.' Someone else will pick it up from here!

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Permission to Carry out Research from the Local Authority Research Governance Framework

```
From: ███████████████
Sent: 29 October 2012 15:03
To: Madembo,Claudious
Subject: RE: permission to do research.

Hi Claudious

I agree with you on the numbers that here it is the detail you are
looking for and the range of responses - you are not seeking to make
assumptions about the wider population but would certainly
contribute to the development of how these relationships work at
whatever stage they are.

There is very often a misunderstanding around the use of qualitative
research so appreciate that it can be frustrating at times as there
can be such an emphasis on numbers.

The fact that you have any many people coming forward with their own
observations and stories also shows that people are willing to talk
about their experiences and it sounds like you will not come up
against barriers that we have had to contend with on occasions,
where people feel suspicious or simply uncomfortable expressing
their opinions honestly and openly.

You do have approval from ████████ to go ahead - we do not normally
deal with CYPS projects in this department but I am sure in due
course it will be necessary for the CYPS to set something similar
up.

Anyhow best of luck with your project, and feel free to contact me
if you've further queries.

Thanks
████████
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-----Original Message-----
From: D███████,████████
Sent: 14 October 2012 08:20
To: Madembo,Claudious; ████████████████████████
Cc: ████████████████
Subject: RE: permission to do research.

Dear Claudious

Thanks for your email and sounds like an interesting piece of work.

I am responsible for our research governance framework for adults, and ████████████ who I have copied in, is our lead on this area, and can provide you with Lambeth's paperwork.

However, because we are in adults, I'm not clear whether CYPS have a similar process in place, so am copying in J████ P█████ to advise. If there isn't an RGF in CYPS, we'd be happy to do it via our process.

P█████ can give you more details (she isn't in the office today). Our first step will always be to speak with the relevant senior manager (█████?) to see whether they have an initial view, and will then ask you for more information; to be clear what the research will cover, how it will be carried out, ethical and data considerations, and so on. We then get a small panel to review (often a virtual panel by email).

J████ - let me know if you already have this in hand, or if you want to do via ACS. I'm off now until next week, but can catch up then.

V██████

████████████████
Head of Policy, Research and Customer Relations ██████ Adults' and Community Services ████████████████████████████████
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Making a difference

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-----Original Message-----
From: Madembo,Claudious
Sent: 13 October 2012 20:41
To: ███████████████ ; ████████████████
Subject: permission to do research.


Dear V██████ and J██████

I got your details from a colleague. I manage the Intake Team in the
Referral and Assessment Service which will soon become the Multi
agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). I am also a social work doctorate
student at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation. I would like to
do my research on the processes building up to the launch of the
MASH. (The actual topic is: Unconscious processes in multi- agency
partnership working for protecting and safeguarding children. A
psychoanalytic examination of the conception and development of a
Multi- Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) project in an inner London
local authority).

Please could you advise what is required in terms of local authority
research governance expectations.

Thank you in advance.


Claudious Madembo
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Appendix 2: Request to Carry out Research in CYPS

5th October 2012

Mr ████████████
The Assistant Director,
Children & Young People's Services
London Borough ████████
London ██████

RE: Request to carry out Research in your Local authority, Children's Division

Dear Mr ██████

I am writing to you in your capacity as the Assistant Director in Children & Young People's Specialist Services and also the Caldecott guardian for Children and Adult Services. I am requesting your permission to carry out research in your local authority.

I am a social work student doing doctoral studies at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation. My research is based on exploring the unconscious processes happening within multi agency partnership working. The actual topic is:

Unconscious processes in multi-agency partnership working for protecting and safeguarding children. A psychoanalytic examination of the conception and development of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) project in an inner London local authority.

This is purely an academic piece of work which is independently done by myself in partial fulfilment of my Doctorate. I am requesting permission to observe the processes going on when building your MASH project. This will include observation of meetings and interviewing some key personnel involved. No information on service users is required and will be used and all participants in this research will be anonymous. The information obtained will also be treated with confidentiality.

I also declare that I am currently an employee in your department and have gone through the local authority vetting procedures including CRB checks and fitness to work with children and vulnerable people. I am available should you wish to interview me about this request. I supply herewith if you require any reference, my university principal investigators details who could be contacted to verify my request and credibility;

Professor Andrew Cooper acooper@tavi-port.nhs.uk and Dr Agnes Bryan abryan@tavi-port.nhs.uk
The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust
120 Belsize Lane
London NW3 5BA
Tel: +44 (0)20 8938 2582
Fax: +44 (0)20 7447 3837

I look forward to receiving your favourable response.

Yours truly,

Claudious R. Madembo

Appendix 3: CYPS Permission to Carry out Research in the Local Authority

12th October 2012

<u>RE: Request to carry out Research in your Local Authority, Children's Division</u>

Dear Mr Madembo

Thank you for your letter requesting permission to carry out research in this local authority. As a learning organisation, we are happy to welcome researchers who can contribute to the further development and success of our organisation. I am happy to grant you permission to contact your research provided our employees (your respondents) participate out of their free will and the time to participate will not conflict with their duties.

I will be grateful to receive feedback of findings from your research.

Yours truly,

██████████
Assistant Director
Children & Young People's Services
London Borough ████████
██████████,
████████,
London ████
Tel: ██████████

Appendix 4: University Research Ethics Committee Approval

UEL
University of
East London

2nd January 2014

Dear Claudious

Project Title:	Unconscious processes in multi agency partnership working for protecting and safeguarding children. A psychoanalytic examination of the conception and development of a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) project in an inner London local authority
Researcher(s):	Claudious Madembo
Principal Investigator:	Professor Andrew Cooper

I am writing to confirm the outcome of your application to University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which was considered at the meeting on **Wednesday 6 March 2013.** Further to your response to the conditions, submitted on 27 March 2013 and 10 April 2013, and discussions with Merlin Harries, your application has received ethical approval as the conditions were met.

Should any significant adverse events or considerable changes occur in connection with this research project that may consequently alter relevant ethical considerations, this must be reported immediately to UREC. Subsequent to such changes an Ethical Amendment Form should be completed and submitted to UREC.

Approved Research Site

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

Research Site	Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator
UEL Fieldwork	Professor Andrew Cooper

Approved Documents

The final list of documents reviewed and approved by the Committee is as follows:

Document	Version	Date
UEL Ethics Application Form	1.0	10/02/2013
Participant Information	1.0	10/02/2013
Participant Information	2.0	27/03/2013
UEL Ethics Application Form	2.0	10/04/2013
Participant Information	3.0	10/04/2013

Approval is given on the understanding that the UEL Code of Good Practice in Research is adhered to.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Wood
University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)
Quality Assurance and Enhancement
Telephone: 0208-223-2678
Email: **researchethics@uel.ac.uk**

Appendix 5:   Request for Consent from Individual Respondents

Dear ………………………….

I am the Team manager for the Intake Team in the Referral and Assessment Service which will soon become part of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). I am also a social work student doing doctoral studies at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation. I am writing to you as a social work student with regards to my research study. It is based on the unconscious processes happening within the Multi agency network building up to the launch of the MASH.

Aims of the project

The main aim of my research is to explore the unconscious processes experienced by professionals both as individuals and as organisations as they co-locate to provide child protection and safeguarding multi-agency partnership working.

The actual topic is: ***Unconscious processes in multi-agency partnership working for protecting and safeguarding children. A psychoanalytic examination of the conception and development of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) project in an inner London local authority.***

This is purely an academic piece of work which I am independently doing in partial fulfilment of my Doctorate. I however have permission from my employers (Assistant Director of Children Services) to carry out the research.

What I am asking you to do

As one of the leads/ practitioners in the processes of formulating and launching MASH, I was wondering if you could offer me an opportunity to talk to you as one of my respondents.

If you agree to take part, I will use a narrative strategy which means that your experiences will to some extent determine the content of the interview. The interview should last no longer than (1 ½ hrs)

If you agree to participate, I will contact you again to arrange the time for the interview. Please note that, even if you agree, you can still withdraw at any stage with in the process. I can also have a pre-interview discussion with you should that further clarify what I am asking for and assist you in making your decision.

Confidentiality

All of your comments will be strictly confidential and I will remove any details from the information that I gather from interviews, which could identify you.

Thank you in advance and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely

Claudious Madembo

Appendix 6: Individual Signed Consent Form from Respondents

(to be signed before interview commences)

You (researcher) have explained in detail your request to interview me for your research. I understand that this is an academic piece of work and should you decide to publish your work, you will ask me again and I can elect to withdraw my consent for my information to be used. You have also explained that the information I provide will be treated in confidence and my identifying details will be kept anonymous. I understand that at any stage during the interview, I may decide not to continue/ withdraw my consent and the information I would have provided to that stage will be deleted. The information I will provide in this interview will be kept securely and will be destroyed at some stage after use under strict data protection guidelines.

Signed_____

                Research Participant

Date_____

Appendix 7: Minutes (last page) of Partnership Meeting giving Consent to Observe Participants

6	**Any other business:**
	CM request to observe the partnership meetings both as a Team Manager in R&A and also as a doctorate student. CM explained that he is a student at The Tavistock doing a doctorate in Social Work. He requested for consent from the organisational representatives to observe them and record his observations in a research journal for his studies. CM advised that no individual names or individual identifying particulars will be used other than at times generic names such as social workers, police, health could be used. The organisation representatives were happy for CM to observe the meetings and ▮ requested CM to provide a copy of his findings to the group. This was agreed.
	Date of next meeting agreed: Tuesday 8th January at 10am. If unable to attend please send a representative.

Date of this meeting:	Date: Tuesday 14th November 2012 Time: 14:00 – 15:30hrs / Venue: ICT3 room, 3rd floor, ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ House	
Date of next meeting:	Date: Tuesday 8th January 2013 Time: 10:00 – 11:30am / Venue: ICT3 room, 3rd floor, ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ House	
Signed off as an accurate record:	A▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮	▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

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Appendix 8: Participants to MASH Partnership Meetings.

Organisation	Agency	Unit/ Team	Title	Number of meeting attended
LA	Children's Social Care	Senior Management Group	Assistant Director	9
		Referral and assessment Service	Head of Service	6
		Family support	Head of Service	2
		First response and Triage	Team manager	10
			Business systems Manager	4
		Business Support	Business Support & Information Officer	5
	Adult services	Adult Safeguarding	Head of Service	9
		Adult Substance Misuse	Head of Service Senior Practitioner	8
				8
		Adult Mental Health	Safeguarding Manager	7
			Psychiatrist	
	Housing	Allocations	Head of Housing Options and Allocations	5
				4
		Housing administration	Team Manager	3
		Corporate Facilities	Facilities Manager	
	Targeted and Early Intervention	Targeted Youth/ YOS	Assistant Director	4
		Early years	Assistant Director Head Of Services	2
				4
			Head of Services	4
	Information Governance	Information Governance	Governance Manager	2
NHS	Universal	Community children's health	Specialist Health Visitor General Manager	8
	Clinical Midwifery		Specialist safeguarding manager	8
	Commissioning		Commissioning manager	7
	Acute A&E		Safeguarding manager	6
MET Police	PPD	PPD	Detective Inspector Detective Sergeant	9
				3
	Community Safety		Detective Inspector	3
	Child Abuse Investigation Team		Detective Inspector	2
	Police MASH Project	London Project Team	Detective inspector	3
Probation Services			Chief Operation Officer Probation Officer	9
				2