A supershort introduction to the

Crime Preventive Operating System

…Prevention Technique and Excess Crime Prevention Theory (Overdoseringsteori)

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JUSTITSMINISTERIET
National Commission for Crime Prevention 2024-2027

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1. What is a crime preventive operating system?

>>> Method

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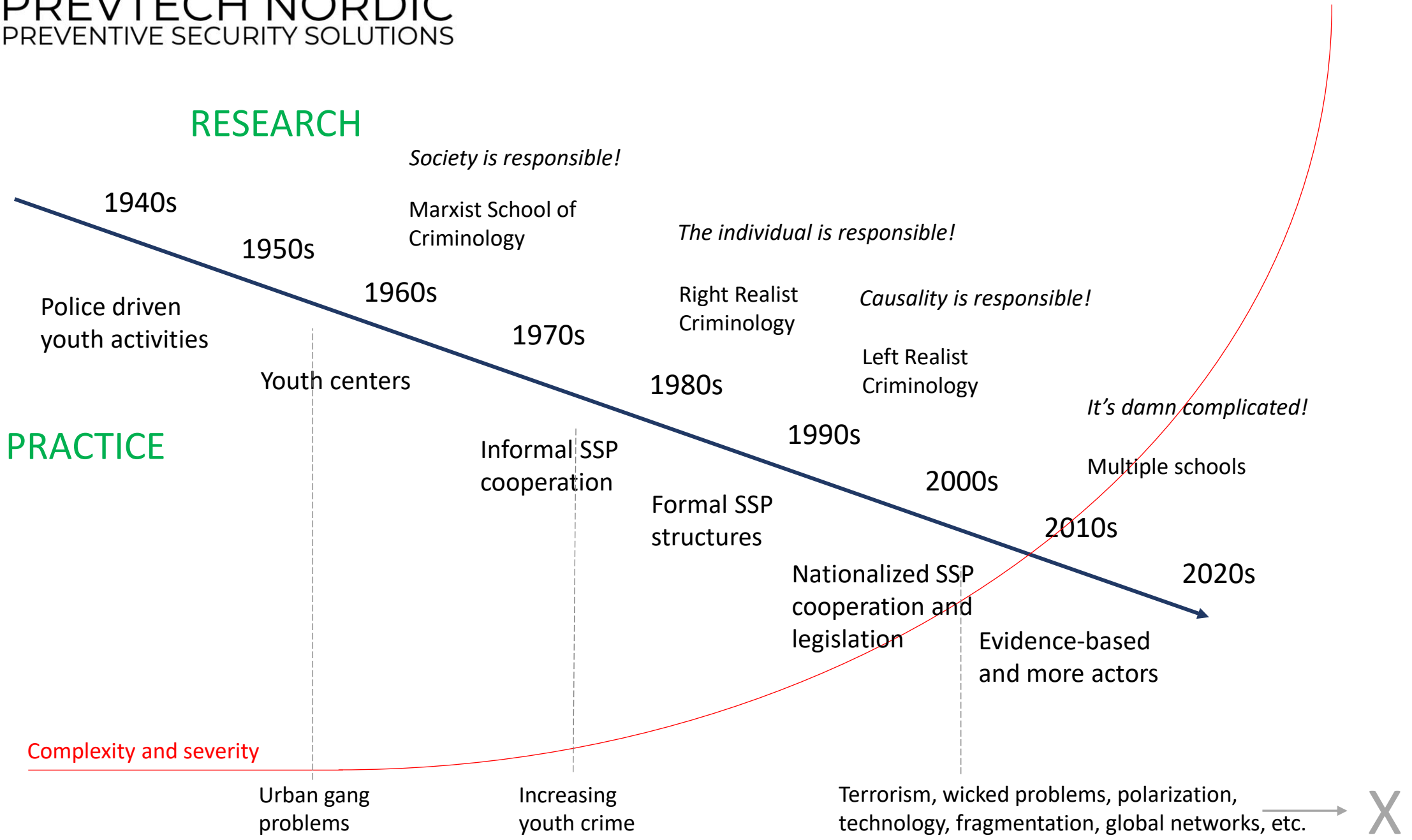

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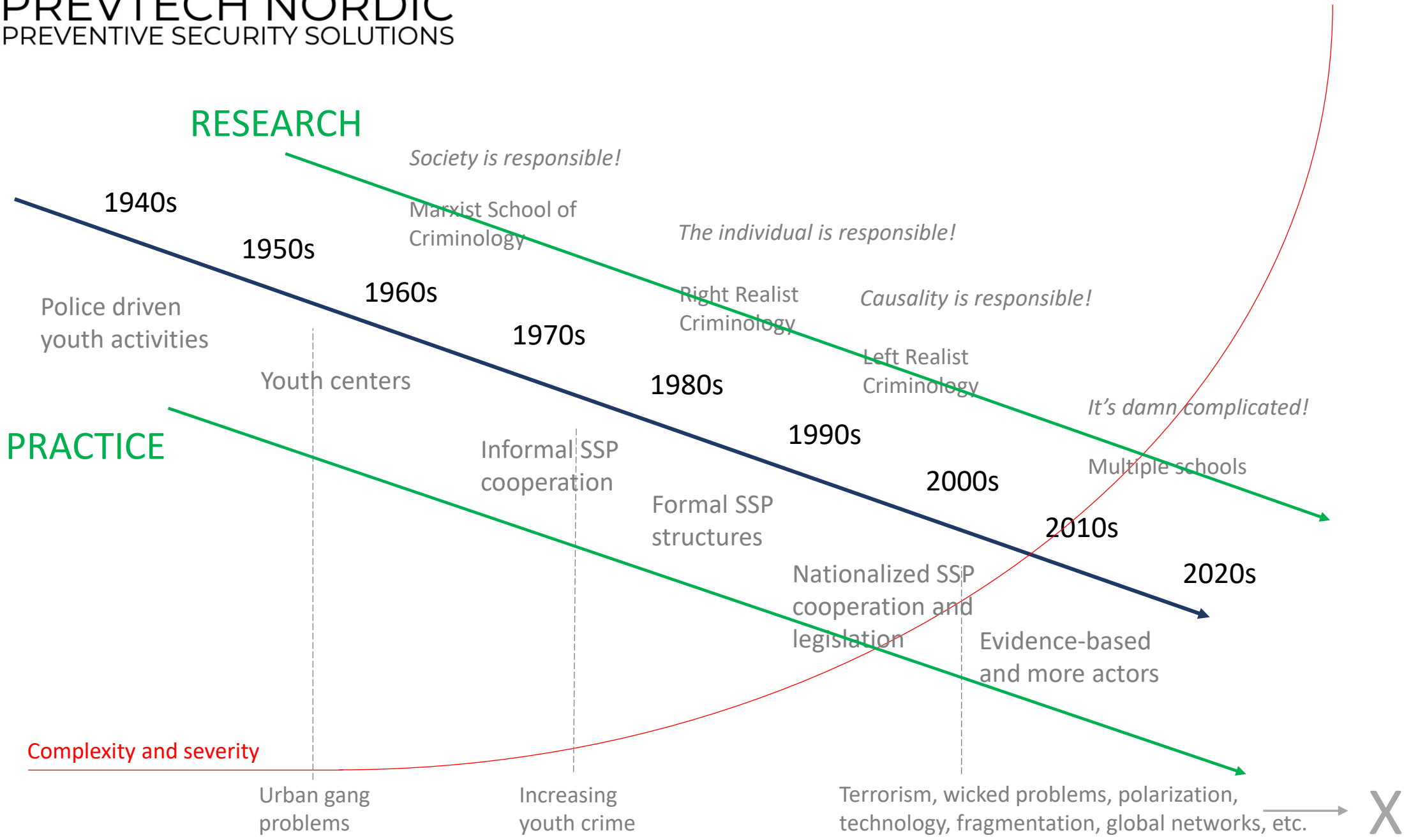

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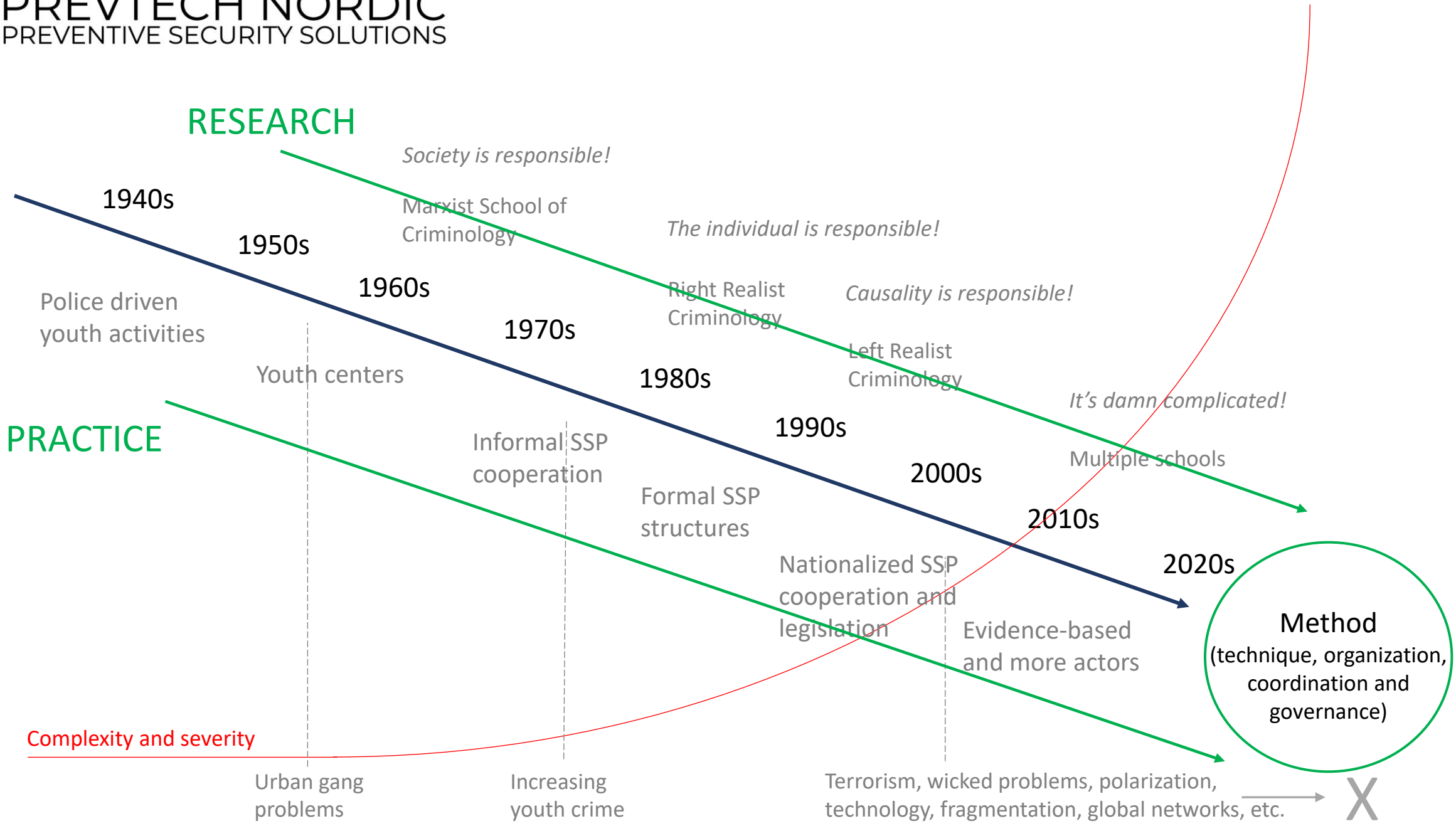

As we've just seen, the field of crime prevention is still utterly immature, and hasn't changed much over the past 40 years. This is the case despite the fact that in recent years we have witnessed a dramatic exponential increase in the complexity and severity of the problems we are required to address. One critical element in armoring the Scandinavian societies for the future, is to translate everything we know from the most significant post-war research into *general rules of problem handling*, which implicates:

1. A clear *definition* of our field of scope, so we achieve the greatest possible effect from our efforts and limited resources

2. A more *technical, systemized and methodical* way of looking at problems with human behavior – "from the way we bring up our children, to the way we wage war"

3. More *analytical and operational precision* to avoid counter-productive results, e.g. the adoption of a new – qualified, and more precise – concept of risk

4. Strengthening *coordination capacity* in public sector generally and in the crime preventive sectors specifically, in order to mitigate organizational task uncertainty when presented with problems of the future

5. A larger degree of *specialization*, division of labour and interdependent cooperation

6. An *operating system* that embraces all of the above: A common specialized terminology (working language), method, system and procedure

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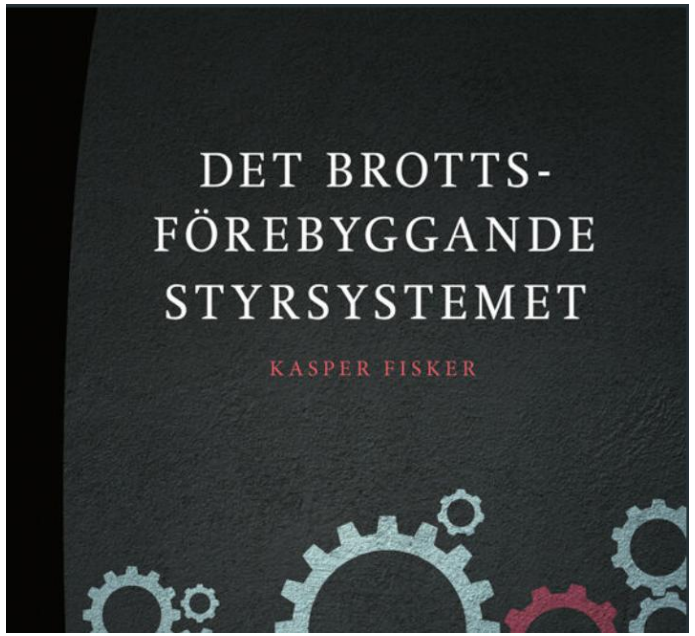
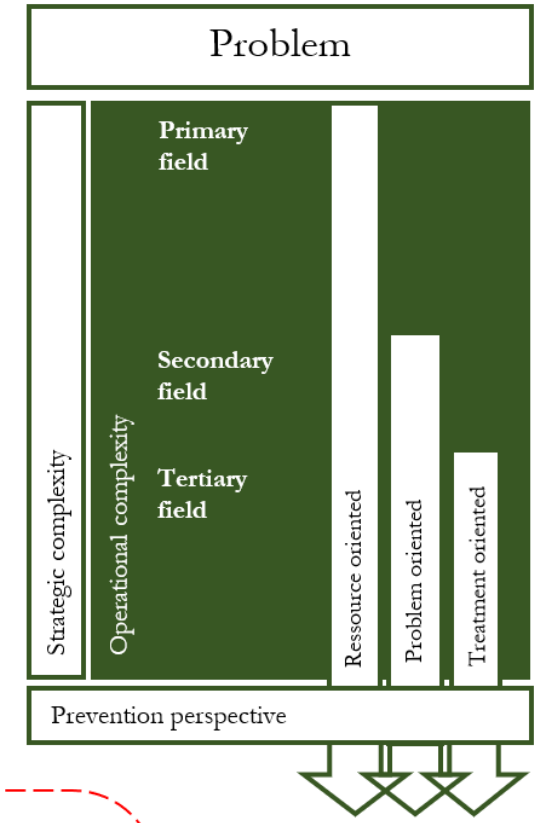
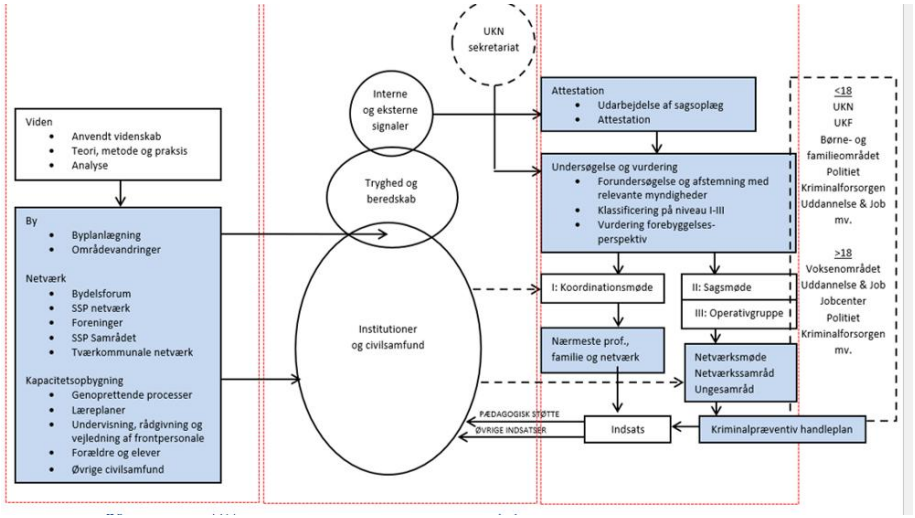
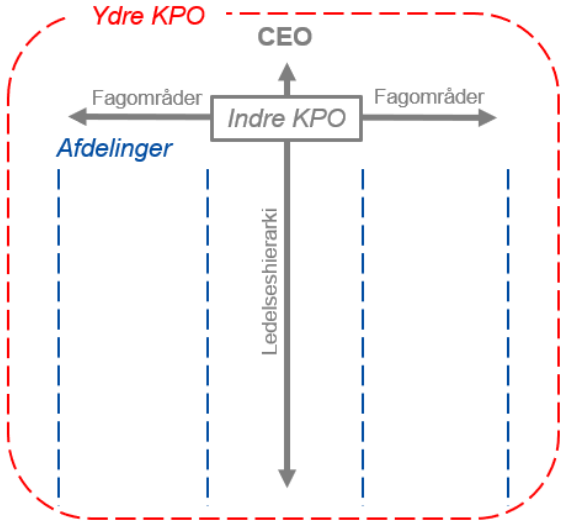


Method →

Organization, coordination and governance







1. Introduction: A crime preventive operating system and prevention technique?

PART I: PROBLEMS (Order in chaos)
2. The subject of prevention technique
3. Behind the problem
4. Strategic complexity
5. Operational complexity

PART II: PREVENTION (Proportional action)
6. Counterproductive mechanisms
7. The prevention perspective
8. Resource oriented approach
9. Problem oriented approach
10. Treatment oriented approach

PART III: ORGANISATION (Operational readiness)
11. Vertical and horizontal coordination
12. The crime preventive organization
13. Affiliated documents of governance

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Research, hypotheses,
”best practice”

Preventive action

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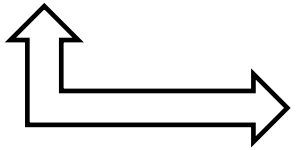
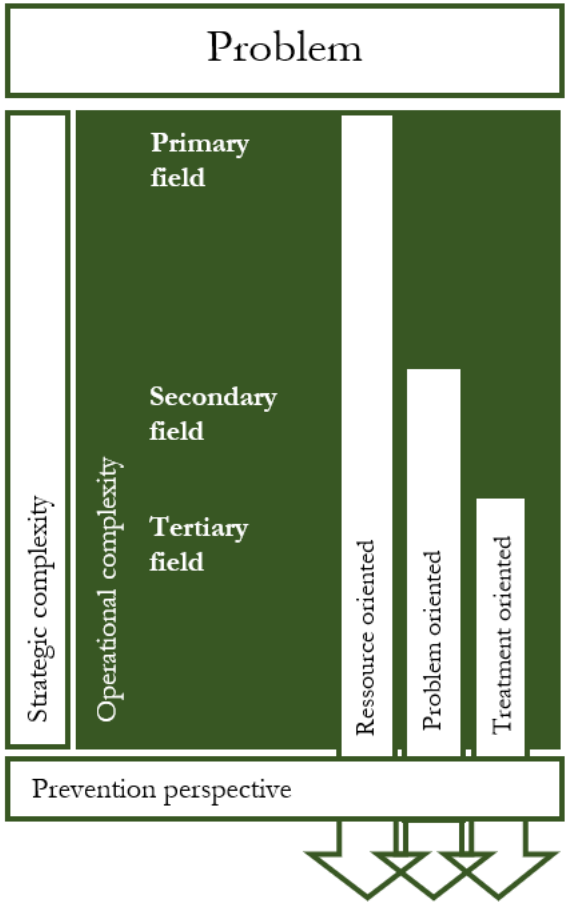
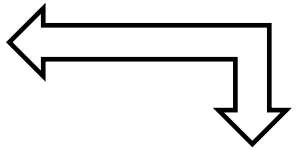
Research, hypotheses,
”best practice”

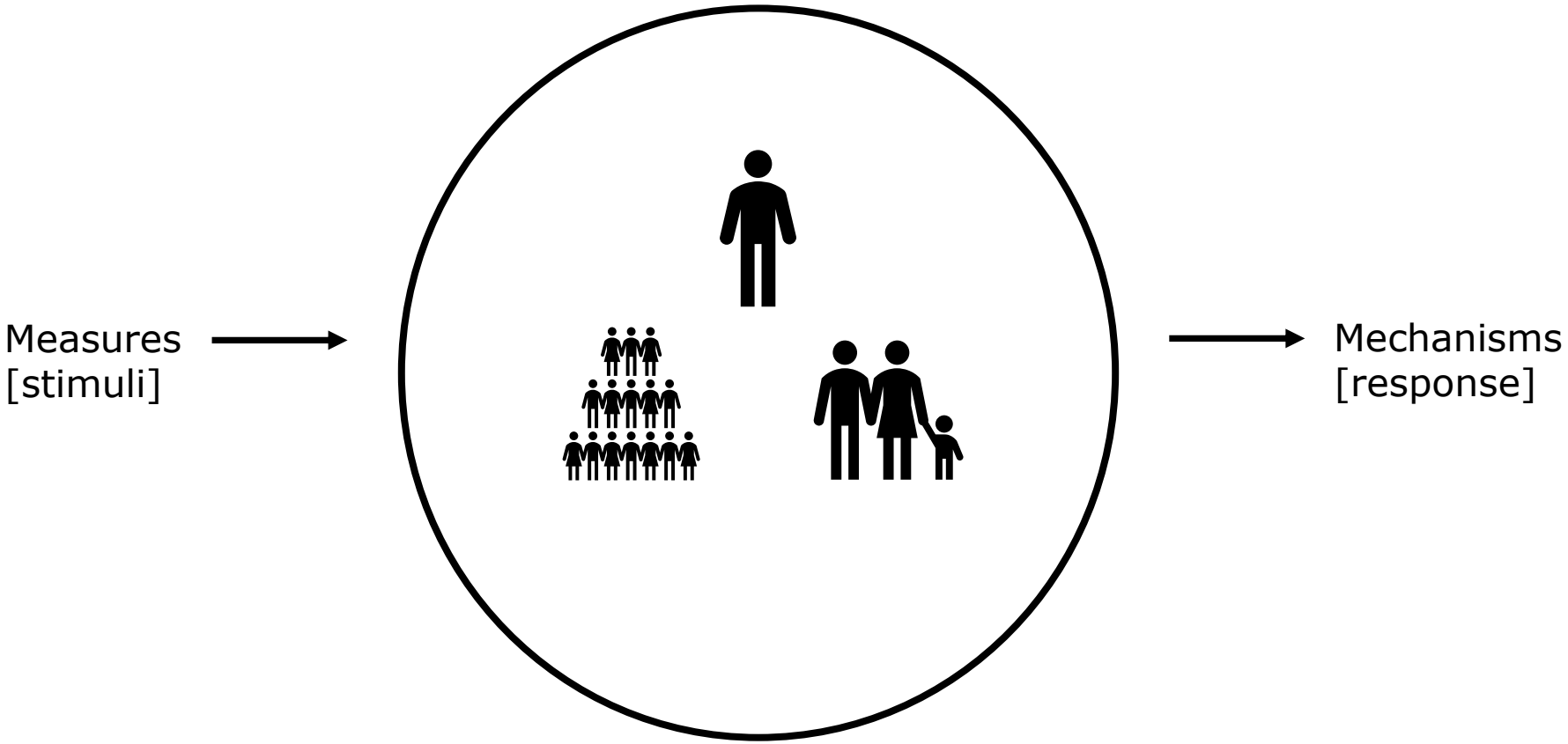






Preventive action

Measures, mechanisms and the contemporary (broader) concept of ”prevention”…



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2. Long-term and measurable results?

>>> First, don’t do harm

The purpose of the operating system is to operationalize the following equation...

<u>The five doctrines (or Excess Prevention Theory)</u>

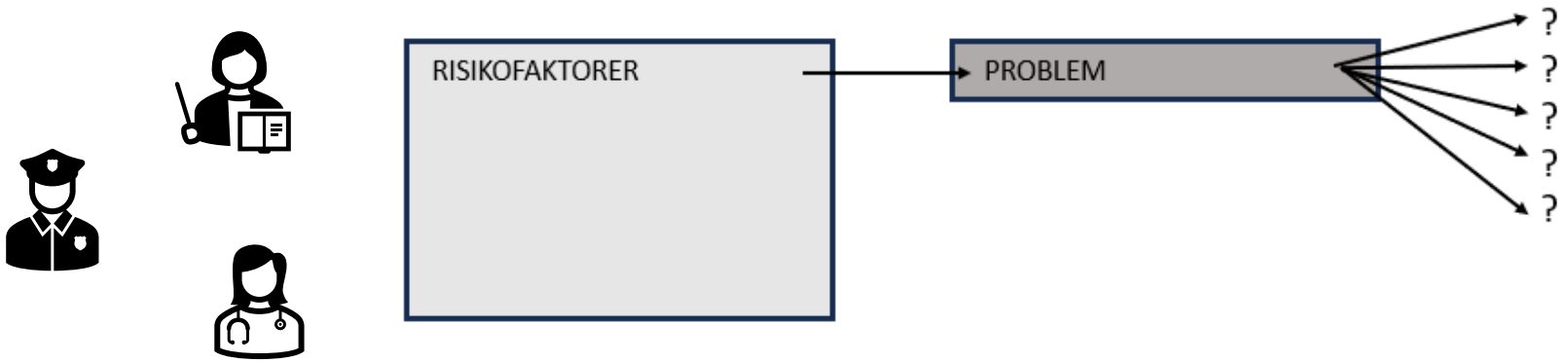
1. Preventive intervention produces a risk, that can be high or low
2. The intervention risk is high where crime risk is low, and vice versa
3. Intervention deficiency can be unproductive and entail little or no effect
4. Intervention excess (or overdose) can be counter-productive and cause unintended negative effect
5. In order to maximize the probability of positive effect and reduce the probability of no – or negative – effect, there must be A) presence of a prevention perspective, and B) proportionality between level of crime risk and level of intervention risk

- The professional risk assessment in the field of crime prevention in the Nordic countries, is dominated by a general concept of statistical probability (Kazdin 1993; Justitsministeriets Forskningskontor 2012; Socialstyrelsen 2017)

- Statistical probability implies that certain life circumstances are over-represented, when we focus on individuals that commit different types of criminal behavior

- Over-representation, however, does not mean that this applies to the majority.

- Our professional expectations and assessments are heavily affected by the way we perceive the social background of the individual, or the area we target
- Furthermore, we have up until now relied on statistical probability in risk assessment
- This, in spite of the fact that a vast majority of youth with the risk factors we normally associate with certain problems, never experience these problems, and
- if they do, we're not able to predict which (since risk factors are interconnected).



- If the general concept of risk is so coincidental, what consequences do the frequent errors in professional assessments expose to the individuals we serve?

→ An estimated 50% of crime preventive interventions initiated by public authority, either has no effect or has the opposite effect (increases crime), due to inappropriate treatment

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- Research
  - Ringstedforsøget
  - Scared Straight
  - D.A.R.E.
  - Cambridge-Somerville Youth Study
  - Summer Camp
  - Questioning Authority
  - Social interaction training
  - Early intervention*
- Excess Crime Prevention Theory/Overdoseringsteori (e.g. crime prevention aimed at non-criminal behavior)
- Mechanisms
  - Attraction (e.g. speakers and celebrities)
  - Peer deviancy/afsmitning (e.g. bootcamps and mutual attachment)
  - Boomerang effect (e.g. preventive conversations)
  - Stigmatization (e.g. sanctions in school)
  - Majority misperceptions (e.g. media campaigns and preventive education)
  - Premature action (e.g. UKN)
  - System transistion (e.g. shift between placement homes, schools, primary adults)

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* Rather: Timely and approproiate

The qualified concept of risk means that we will be able to estimate a certain development with enough precision to conclude that there is an overwhelming probability that the problem will occur, unless we intervene.

Within the Nordics, we've traditionally severely underestimated the most significant criterion for risk; that the person has done it – or something similar – before.

The opposite position applies to e.g. psychiatry (Battaglia 2004; Iozzino et al. 2015; Amore et al. 2008, Andrews et al. 2004; Bonta 2002 osv., osv.).

The qualified concept of risk implies that actual risk must be assessed, using two criteria:

- General risk factors (statistical probability) ⟶ **Potential vulnerability**
- Criminal behavior (actual probability) ⟶ **Risk** (qualified)

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Parameters for resilience

- Individual — Development (age appropriate)
  - *Physical*
  - *Cognitive/intellectual*
  - *Social*
- Family — Parenting style
  - *Emotional attachment*
  - *Selfconfidence*
  - *Selfworth*
  - *Selfcontrol*
- Socio economy — Resources
  - *Maintenance*
  - *Social interaction*
  - *Stimulation*
  - *Selvrealization*
- Outside family — Environment
  - *Negative dominant view on crime/deviance*

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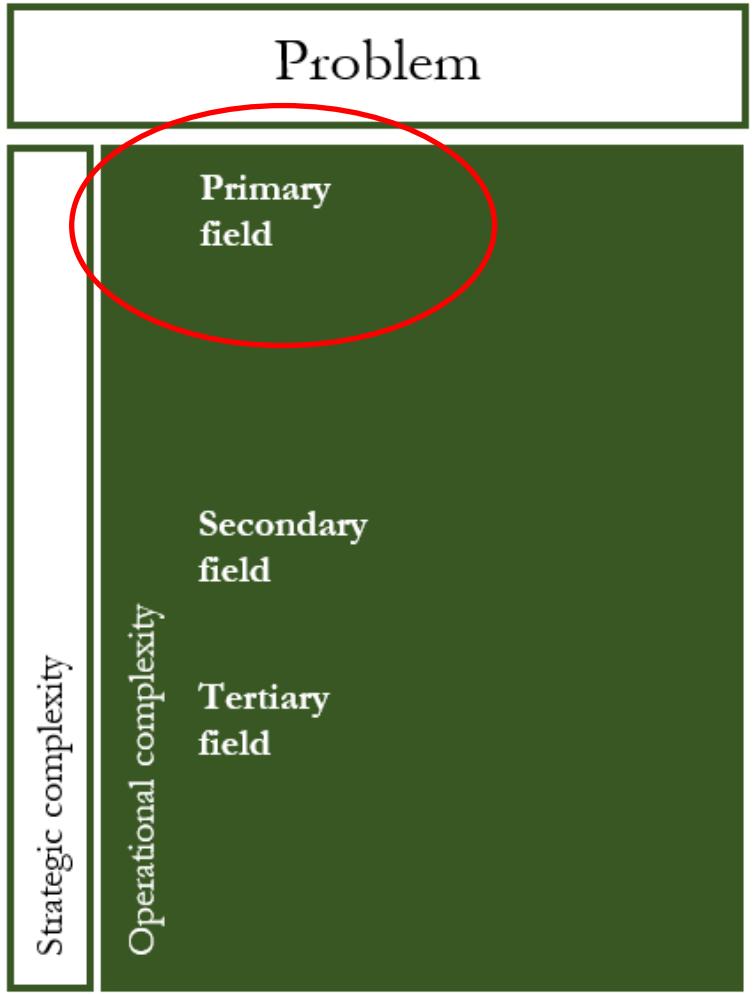
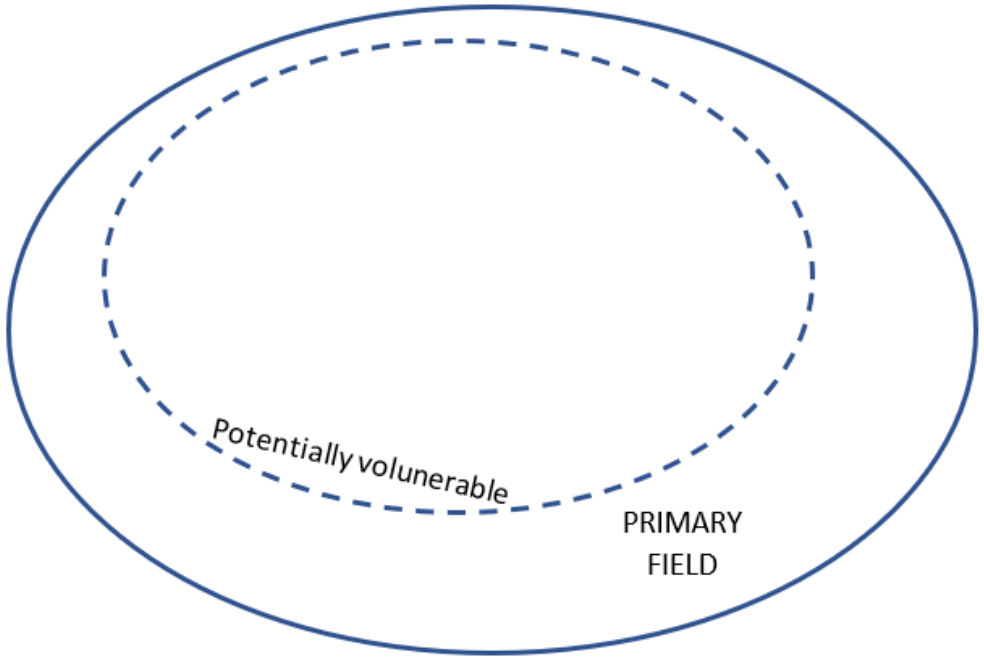


Primary field

- General society and samples thereof
- Control mechanisms and low crime rates
- Domain: Insecurity, unease, polarization, lack of attachment, frustration…
- Structural societal impact



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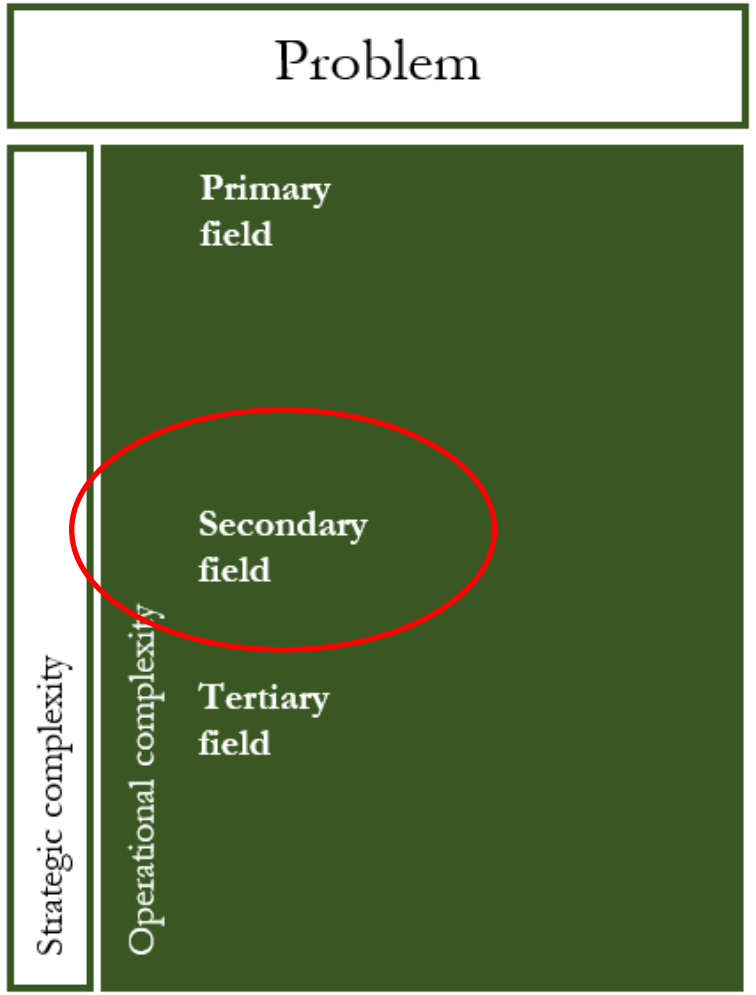
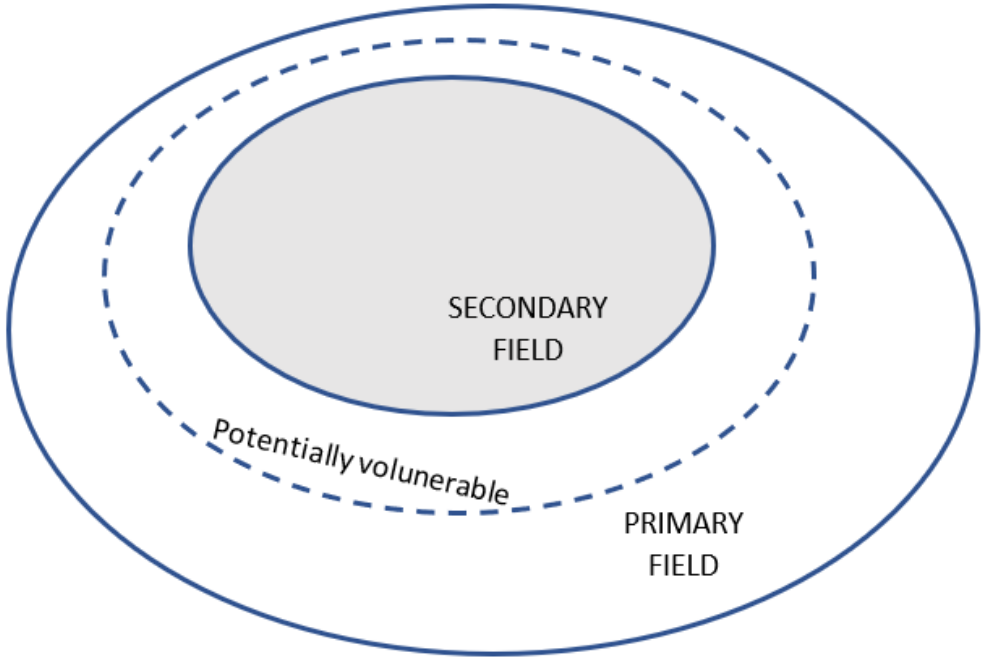


Secondary field

- Individuals (and groups?) at risk
- General risk factors and criminal behavior (not the potentially volunerable)
- Domain: General risk factors (e.g. psychiatry, domestic violence, parenting style) and acts out the very behavior we want to prevent.



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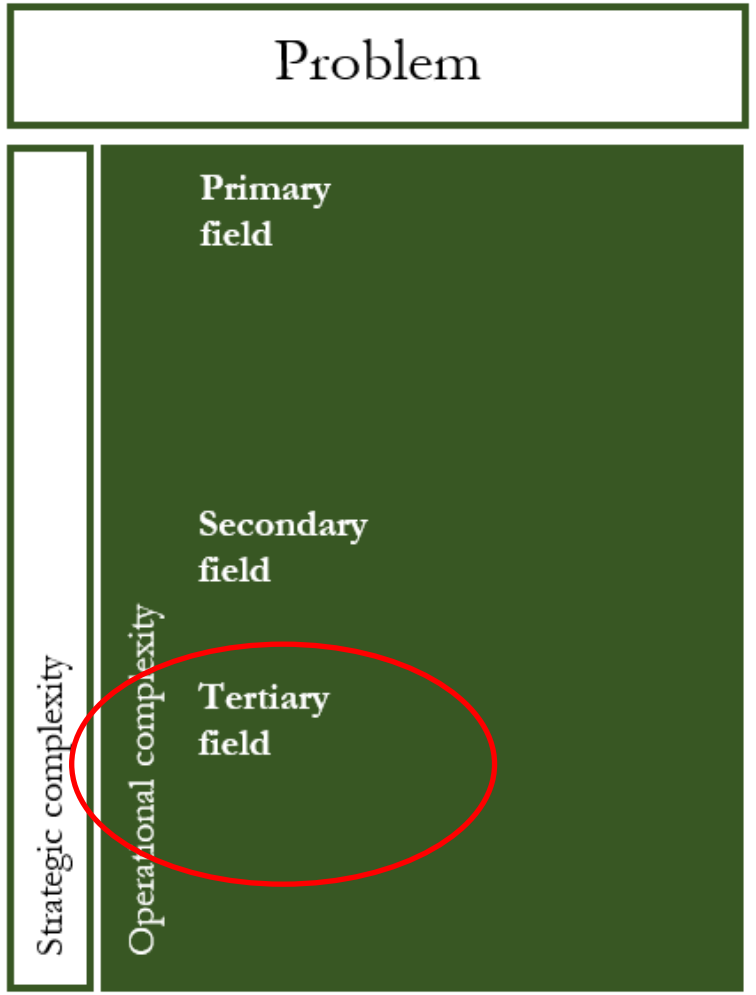
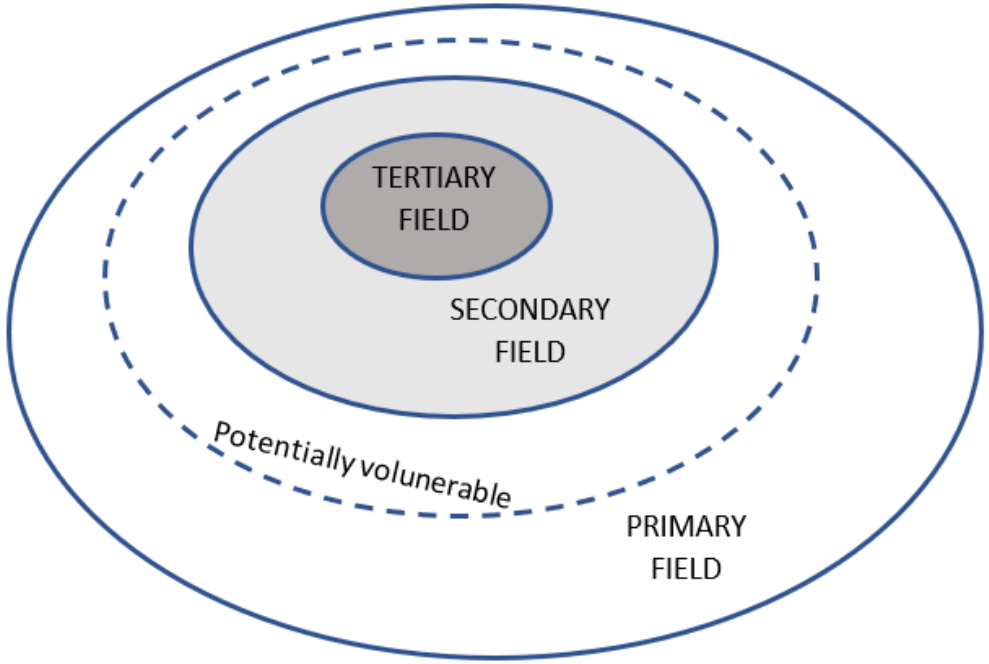


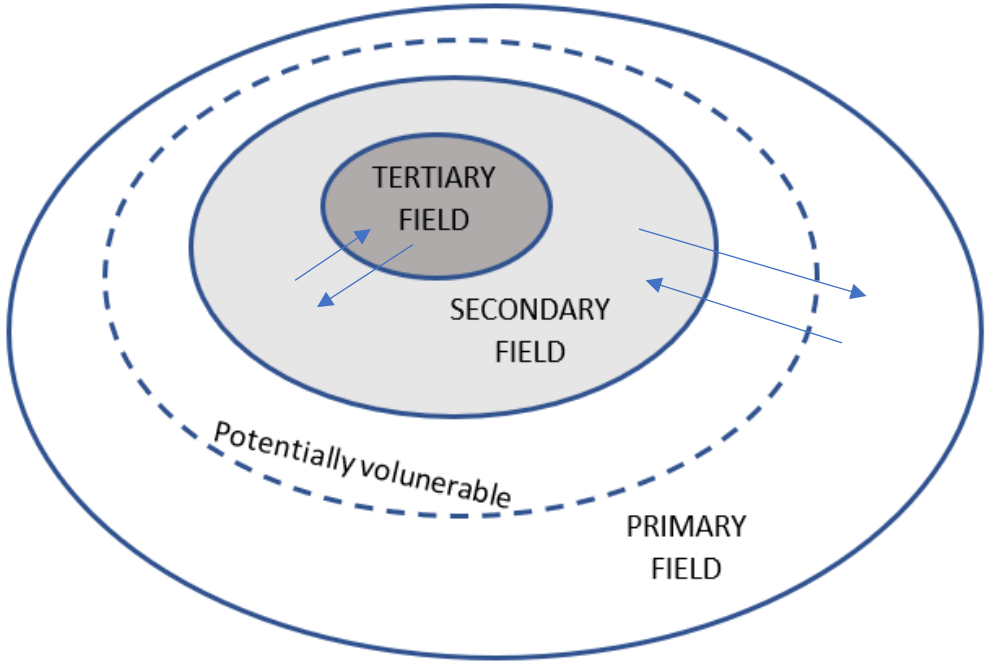
Tertiary field

- Individuals with lifestyle/chronical problems
- Domain: Criminogenic cognition (requiring treatment)
- Comormidity and contributing factors



Push- and pull mechanisms

- Primary field's pull mechanisms
- Primary field's push mechanisms
- Secondary field's pull mechanisms
- Secondary field's push mechanisms
- Tertiary field's pull mechanisms
- Tertiary field's push mechanisms



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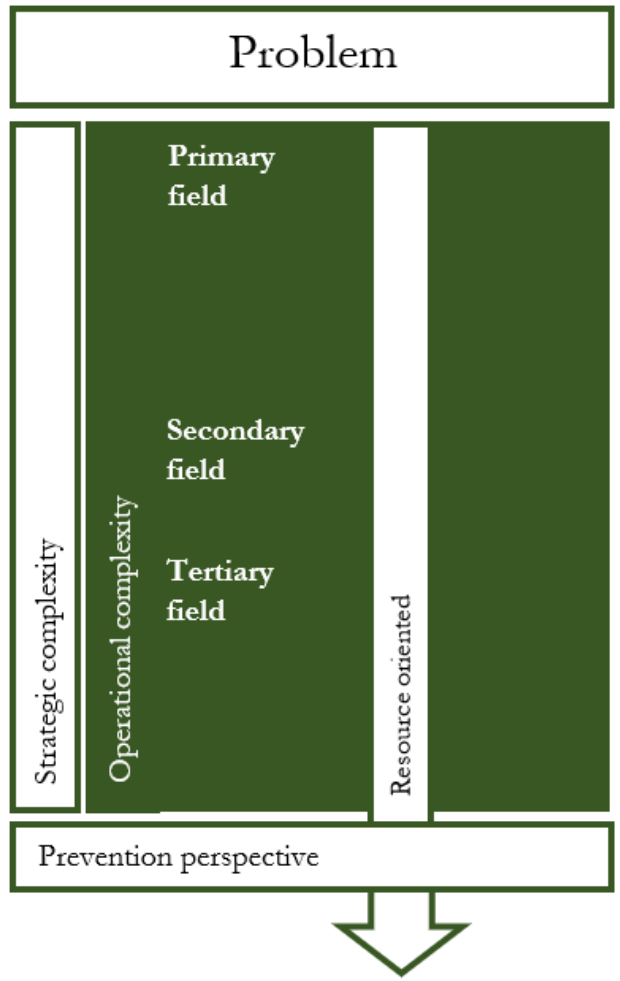

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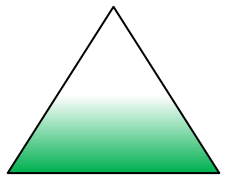
<u>Resource Oriented Approach (building good stuff)</u>

The resource oriented approach has its focus on the enhancement of existing resources in society – whether they be minor or substantial. The arenas of attention are e.g. urban environments, communities, groups or individuals. The balance of power is that of equality (by ambition) and shared understanding of future goals. Through different processes resilience is strengthened so that 1. general or specific future problems will be less likely to emerge, and/or 2. measures already conducted become (more) sustainable.

Measures are facilitated in order to develop attachment, social capital, (life) skills, safety, environmental improvements, etc.

The resource oriented approach is, in other words, oriented towards strengthening pull-factors in primary field. The actors are professionals working in primary sector – preferebly the professional closest to target – and civil society.



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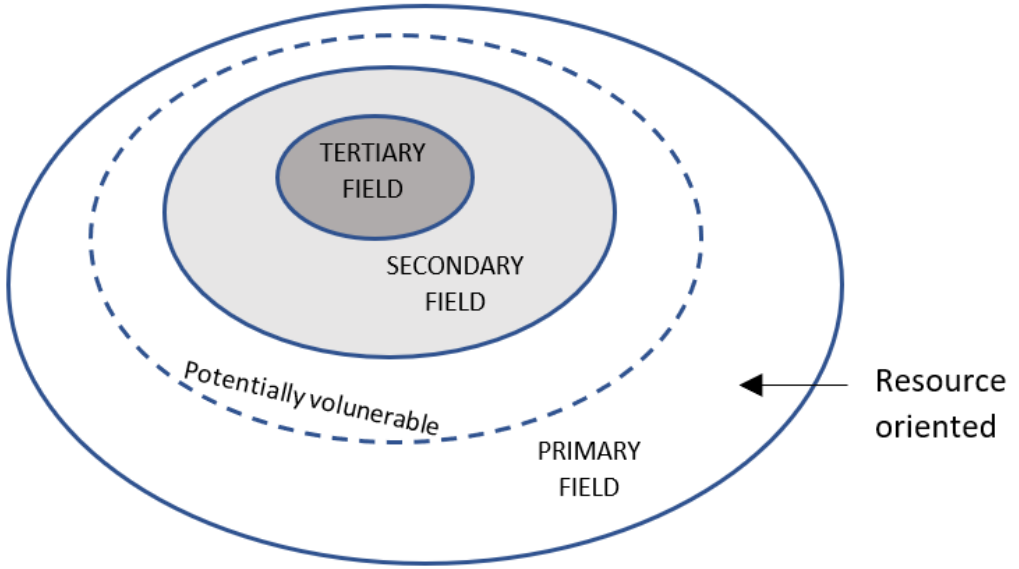
Measures (e.g.)

- Urban environments: CPTED, ABCD, network governance, community walks, township meetings, etc.
- Groups: Relational practices, social norms approach, school curriculum, etc.
- Individuals? Appreciative pedagogy, skills development, etc.
- Public communication: Realistic concept of normality, and focus on healthy existing norms
- Professionals: Skills development and empowering actors/professionals closest to target
- Nudging techniques

Actors

- Professionals closest to target, civil society and relations – in a normalized setting
- Civil society, peers, family
- Political level



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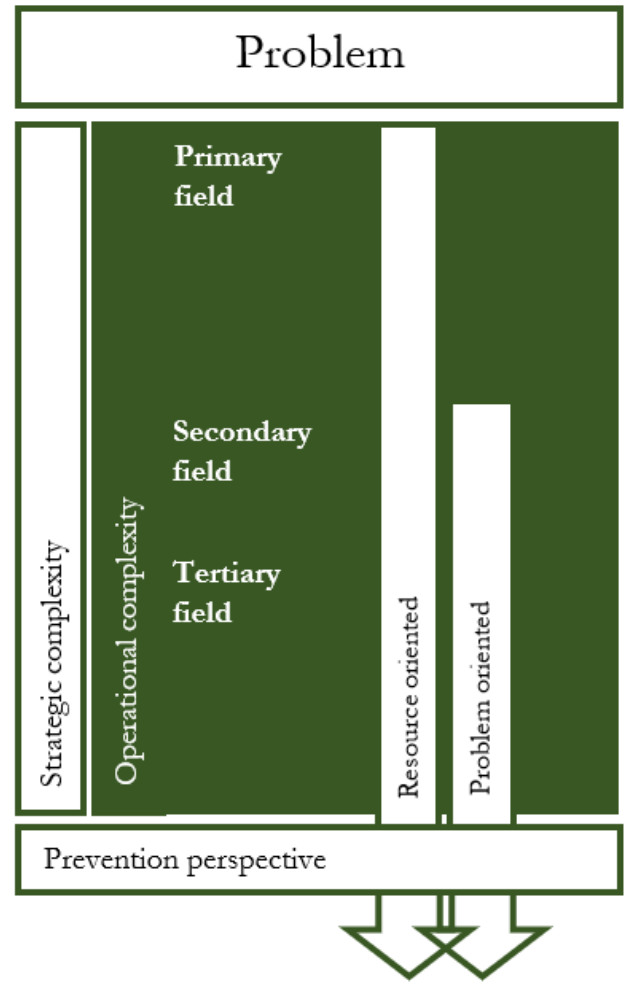

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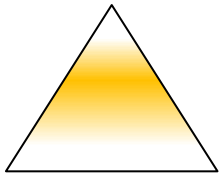
<u>Problem Oriented Approach (breaking down bad stuff)</u>

The problem oriented approach has its focus directed at behavioral problems that obstruct a person's possibilities of realisation within the generally accepted norms of society, and other people's quality of life. The balance of power is that of inequality, with the authority adressing the problem explicitly on the base of a pre-defined understanding of the problem. Vital goals in working within the problem oriented field are stimulating self recognition and motivation for chance.



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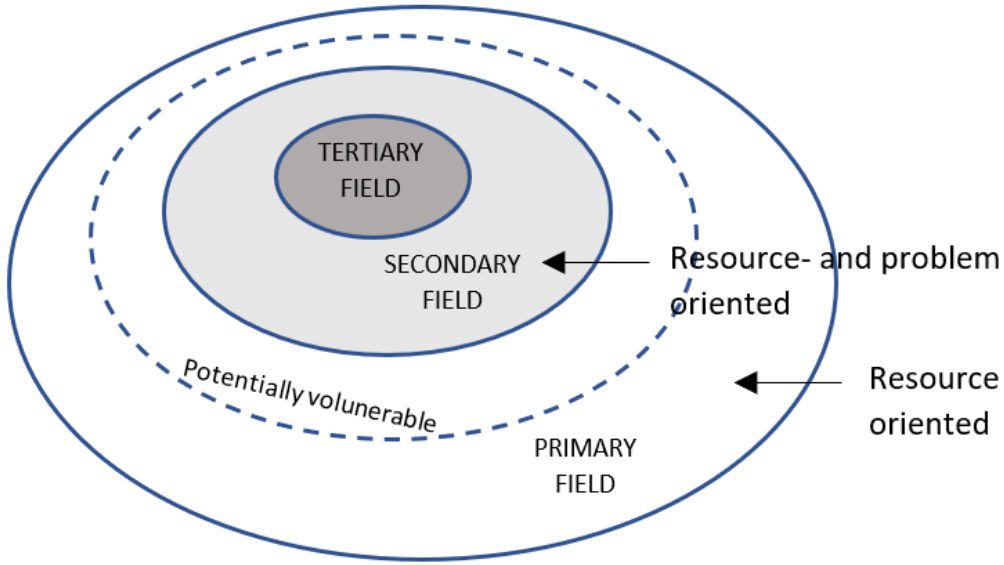
Measures (e.g.)

- Individuals: Empowerment conversation/preventive dialogue, conflict management, restorative practices, prosecution, pedagogical support, zone of proximal development, motivation, identity, etc.
- Groups? If so, be aware of counterproductive mechanisms and need of risk reduction. Police/fire fighter junior-trainee projects, summer camps, trips and other projects must be criminogenically thinned out!
  Guest speakers on risk behavior, substance abuse and crime topics: Parents and professionals

Actors

- Specialists: Crime preventive professionals, municipal authorities and criminal system



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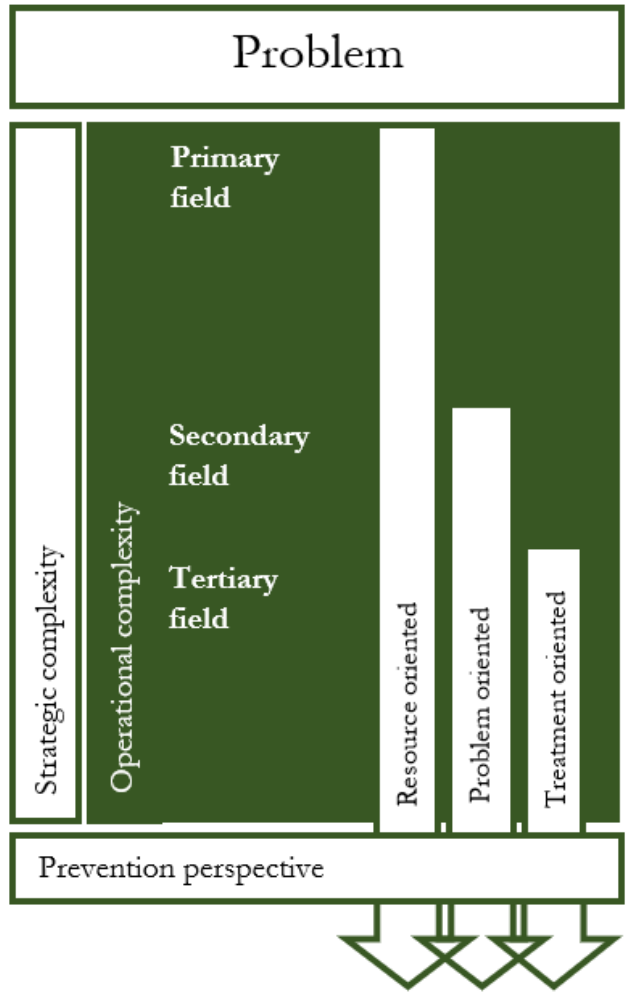

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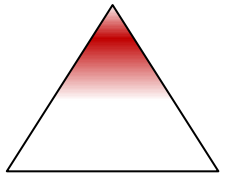
<u>Treatment Oriented Approach (composing normality)</u>

The treatment oriented approach has its focus directed at the help that is required to bring a person out of a society- and selfdestructive course of life, that destroys the person's chances of self realization within the general norms of society. The essence of this approach is found in the treatment principles, because the severity of problems have reached a "chronic" state as a result of criminogenic cognition. Furthermore the extent and scope of the problems demands that deep and comprehensive intervention be made.



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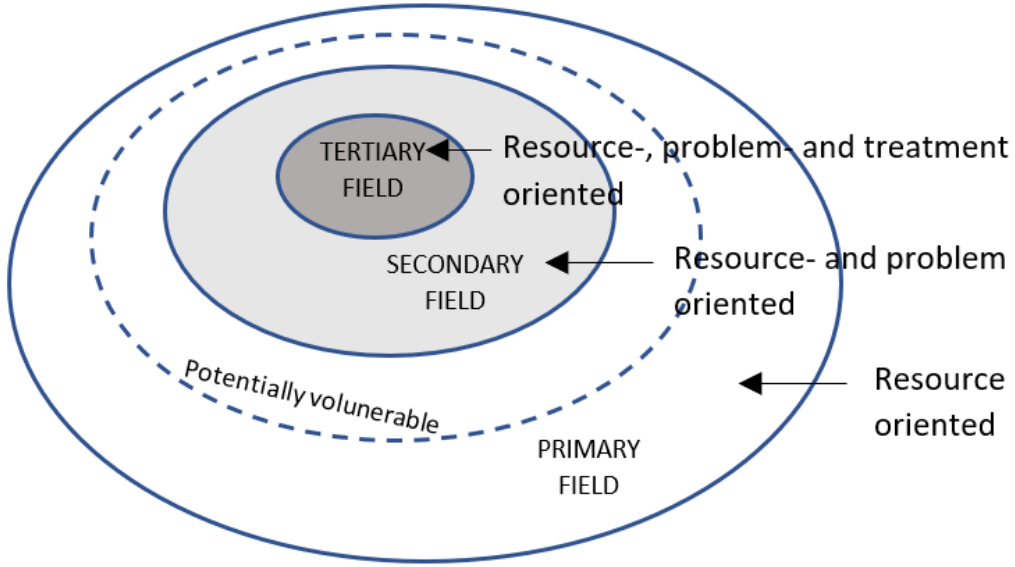
Measures (e.g.)

- Individuals: Work within the treatment principles, Arbejde indenfor behandlingsprincipperne, ambivalence (motivational interviewing), Signs of Safety, family treatment, substance abuse treatment, trauma treatment, anger management and other cognitive behavioral programs, therapy, medicine etc.

Actors

- Specialists: Crime prevention and (clinical) treatment professionals



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The Prevention Perspective: Does it make sense to intervene in the life of a person, and, if so, how?

- Existing or anticipated condition
- A prevention technical standard (criminal-, practical- and/or legitimacy criteria)
- Risk — Relevant risk- and protective factors; Criminal behavior
- Need — Criminogenic needs; Barriers
- Responsivity — General capacity; Individual responsivity
- Voluntarism/motivation — Trial conditions or seeks help?
- Unclear/diffuse prevention perspective (→ low-risk measures; resource oriented)

Main rule
1. All fulfilled = prevention perspective around primary and secondary field (resource- and problem oriented approach)
2. Criminogenic cognition = prevention perspective around tertiary field (treatment oriented)
3. Insufficient risk = prevention perspective regarding primary field (ressource oriented)

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