



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

YOUTH UNIONISATION IN DECLINE

Increasing negative attitudes towards the union or a growing involuntary structural individualism?

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Abstract

Sweden has in the past years experienced union coverage declines, particularly amongst young individuals aged 16-24. Previous studies indicates conflicting results regarding the relationship between the youth's attitudes towards the union and their unionisation outcome. The possibility of a growing involuntary structural individualism amongst the Swedish youth, as a cause of a weakening workplace attachment and a decreasing exposure to union representatives and colleagues, needs to be further explored. Based on the Swedish youth aged 16-24, this thesis explores the effect of the youth's attitudes towards unions on the outcome of unionisation over time, and how unionised and non-unionised young individuals' perceived level of workplace attachment, and exposure to union representatives and colleagues, affects their unionisation outcome. Research questions are addressed via mixed-method nested analysis approach, with the application of logistic regression analysis, and focus group interviews with 16 unionised and non-unionised young Swedish individuals. Quantitative results establishes that odds ratios of unionisation when displaying positive attitudes towards unions has declined from 1988 through 2017. During 1988-1993, odds ratio of such an outcome was 2.172, whereas during 2012-2017, odds ratio was 1.689, indicating that the effect of positive attitudes towards the union on unionisation outcome has weakened over time. Qualitative results indicates circumstantial evidence of prevalence of involuntary structural individualism amongst non-unionised participants, compared to unionised participants. Increased involuntary structural individualism, due to weaker workplace attachment and lacking exposure to union representatives and colleagues, could possibly be an explanation to disproportionate union coverage declines amongst the Swedish youth aged 16-24.

Keywords

Union coverage declines, youth's attitudes towards the union, structural labour market changes, involuntary structural individualism, mixed-methods nested analysis approach

Introduction

Unions have long been a cornerstone in labour market research, but the Western world is currently experiencing a clear, overwhelming shift with heavy declines in union coverage. (OECD, 2020).¹ There is, however, no single explanation to the ongoing declines in unionisation – the literature provides many explanations to its causes (Ebbinghaus & Visser, 1999; Kjellberg, 2009; Kjellberg, 2019a; Kjellberg, 2019b; Bernaciak, Gumbrell-McCormick, & Hyman, 2014). Sweden, a country that has historically maintained exceptionally high levels of unionisation, is also experiencing union coverage declines, and has been for the past 25 years (AKU, 2020a). Despite the fact that declines in levels of unionisation are experienced amongst all age-groups, the phenomenon is particularly prevalent amongst the youth. For instance, union coverage amongst the Swedish youth aged 16-24 has declined 26 percent, as compared to the total population in Sweden, aged 16-64, which has declined 13 percent, from the year 1990 to 2018 (AKU, 2020a). This follows a pattern indicating that the Swedish youth aged 16-24 are abstaining from unionisation at a disproportionate level, which in this instance is a unionisation decline that is twice as high as the decline of the total population. Moreover, the characteristics of today's youth are often defined as security-seeking, in addition to possessing work-values that strives for comfortability (The Youth Barometer, 2020b). Considering these characteristics, one would assume that today's youth would unionise to a greater extent, however, this does not seem to be the case. This raises the question on whether the disproportionate union coverage declines amongst the youth are occurring due to an increase in negative attitudes towards the union, or whether the declines are due to the emergence of an involuntary structural individualism, caused by a weaker workplace attachment, and a growing lack of exposure to union representatives and colleagues.

The literature on the youth's attitudes towards the union indicates conflicting results. A recent study conducted by Smith & Duxbury (2019) found that younger research participants demonstrated negative ideological attachments to the union, as compared to their older counterparts. However, a study conducted by Gomez, Gunderson & Meltz (2002) had

¹ In this thesis, simply the term 'union' will be used to refer to what is otherwise often referred to as 'trade union' or 'labour union'.

previously revealed the opposite, demonstrating that the majority of the younger participants in the study had indicated positive attitudes towards the union, which was in contrast to the attitudes of the older participants. In addition, a recent Swedish survey conducted by the Youth Barometer demonstrated that the youth's attitudes towards the *principle* of the union had remained positive, when comparing attitudes from 1997 and 2019, respectively. A total of 71 percent of the Swedish youth considered the principle of the union to be positive in 1997, and a total of 72 percent held the same positive attitudes in 2019 (The Youth Barometer, 1998; The Youth Barometer 2020a), despite the fact that union coverage rates amongst the youth had declined over the past 25 years. Even though the findings from these studies indicate that the youth display both negative and positive attitudes towards the union, they do not investigate to which extent these attitudes affect the youth's unionisation outcome. Therefore, the correlation between the youth's attitudes towards the union and the outcome of unionisation should be further explored.

There is research indicating that young individuals are experiencing a growing sense of detachment from *conventional politics*, due to the feeling of exclusion from political processes. This is in turn believed to have caused a decline in the youth's participation in conventional politics (Henn & Foard, 2012; Sloam, 2007). However, despite the fact that the youth are experiencing a growing detachment from conventional politics, they are actually becoming increasingly engaged in politics as generally defined, and politically active through alternative forms of participation, such as via petitions, demonstrations, and social media platforms (Henn & Foard, 2012; Sloam, 2007; Loader, Vromen, & Xenos, 2014). Similar to the youth's growing sense of detachment from conventional politics, there is a possibility that the youth are experiencing a decreasing sense of workplace attachment, which could affect the workplace collectivity negatively, and which could, in turn, affect the outcome of unionisation negatively. Sweden has in recent years experienced structural labour market changes, consisting of an increasing proportion of young individuals with temporary employments and outsourcing employments (Broman & Larsson, 2015; Eurostat, 2020; FDB, 2020), and young individuals who endure periods of unemployment (Kjellberg, 2019a; AKU, 2020b). These structural labour market changes could have a negative effect on the youth's sense of workplace attachment. A lowered sense of workplace attachment could, in turn, reduce the youth's exposure to union representatives and to colleagues at the workplace (Godino & Molina, 2019; Kjellberg, 2019a).

Furthermore, a reduced exposure to union representatives and to colleagues could negatively affect the youth's opportunities to unionise, since they would lose the face-to-face contact with the union and with colleagues who could encourage unionisation (Bain & Elsheikh, 1979; Vandaele, 2018; Toubøl & Jensen, 2014). The negative effect that structural labour market changes have on the Swedish youth's sense of workplace attachment, and on their exposure to union representatives and to colleagues could then, possibly, induce an *involuntary structural individualism* (Kjellberg, 2019a). This would entail that an involuntary self-reliance, in contrast to collectivism, could be the product of the recent structural labour market changes, negatively affecting the youth's outcome of unionisation and union coverage rates amongst the youth.

Against the background of these two bodies of literature, consisting of the research on the youth's attitudes towards the union, and the research on structural labour market changes in Sweden, there is a need to further explore what could be the principal explanatory factor to the disproportionate declines in union coverage amongst the Swedish youth. With this in mind, the next section will cover the aim of this thesis, along with the research questions.

Aim and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to investigate what could be the principal explanatory factor to the disproportionate declines in union coverage rates amongst the Swedish youth aged 16-24. The investigation will initially explore to which extent the youth's attitudes towards the union affect the outcome of unionisation amongst the youth over time. Continuing, the investigation will explore how the youth's sense of workplace attachment, and the level of exposure to union representatives and colleagues, affects the youth's decisions and opportunities to unionise. The findings aim to contribute to the literature on how unions can reverse the trend of disproportionate coverage declines amongst the Swedish youth.

Using Sweden as a case, and young individuals aged 16-24 as research subjects, the research questions of this thesis are formulated as follows:

1. *What is the effect of the Swedish youth's attitudes towards the union on the outcome of unionisation over time?*
2. *Does the perceived level of workplace attachment and exposure to union representatives and colleagues, and the influence it has on unionisation, differ between unionised and non-unionised young Swedish individuals?*

The research questions are addressed with a mixed-method nested analysis approach, using a quantitative logistic regression analysis to answer the first research question, followed by two qualitative focus group interviews with 16 unionised and non-unionised individuals to answer the second research question. The scope of the research design applied to this thesis will be able to determine *circumstantial evidence* of explanatory factors that may cause the disproportionate declines in union coverage rates amongst the Swedish youth aged 16-24.

Disposition of the thesis

Chapter I consists of the literature review and will provide a context to the research problem and explain its social and academic relevance. **Chapter II** consists of the theoretical framework of the thesis, presenting the theory of involuntary structural individualism as a possible explanation to the disproportionate union coverage declines amongst the youth. This chapter also outlines the theorised social mechanism, the scope of the thesis, and the hypotheses of the study. Continuing, **Chapter III** and **Chapter IV** provide a rationale and an in-depth explanation for the methodology and methods used in this thesis, along with the findings from each analysis, consisting of the quantitative large-N analysis and the qualitative small-N analysis, respectively. Finally, **Chapter V** is dedicated to the joint discussion of the findings of the study, in relation to the literature. In this chapter, the research questions will be answered, and the conclusion of the study will be provided, along with practical implications and suggestions for future studies.

Chapter I. Literature review

1.1 The youth's attitudes towards the union

For many years, unions have operated as safety nets for workers. Unionised workers have benefitted from set pay standards, protective employment rights, income and unemployment insurance, and of course, the power of having a large organisation speak on the workers' behalf. Based on the notion of solidarity and collectivity, unions aim to generate a sense of financial security and work-life comfortability amongst workers (Svensson, 2014). Since unions operate as safety nets for workers, one could presume that unionised workers prioritise work values that concern financial security and work-life comfortability. In this regard, the work values of today's workers differentiates depending on the age of the worker. One example of the main differences is that young individuals seem to strive for a better work and leisure balance, which prompts the youth to prioritise jobs that acknowledge this balance. Older individuals, however, do not seem to have as strong preferences in this regard (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Gaining financial security also seem to be very important for today's youth. Having a stable and meaningful full-time job, preferably with flexible working hours rather than fixed working hours, is highly prioritised amongst the youth (The Youth Barometer, 2020b). Considering these work values, one could infer that the youth are increasingly striving for a life of financial security and work-life comfortability – values which are closely linked with the values of the union. However, despite this fact, union coverage rates are declining. These declines do not only occur in Sweden, but also on an international level, and the declines are mainly seen amongst the youth aged 16-24 (AKU, 2020a; OECD, 2020). In view of these security-seeking work values amongst the youth, it raises the question of why the youth are not unionising to the same extent as in previous years, if they are indeed striving for financial security and work-life comfortability.

Attitudes towards the union are often investigated as a cause to the declines in unionisation, and some of the attitudinal research focus on the prevalence of characteristic differences in attitudes between different generational cohorts. Depending on which generational cohort one belongs to, a certain style of thought is believed to be attributed to that specific generational cohort (Mannheim, 1959). With this in mind, today's youth should

therefore hold specific attitudes towards the principle, the collective purpose, and the instrumentality of the union, which could possibly affect their decision to unionise, depending on if their attitudes are negative or positive. As will be further presented, some research indicates that young individuals demonstrate negative attitudes towards the union, in comparison to older individuals, while other research indicates the opposite.

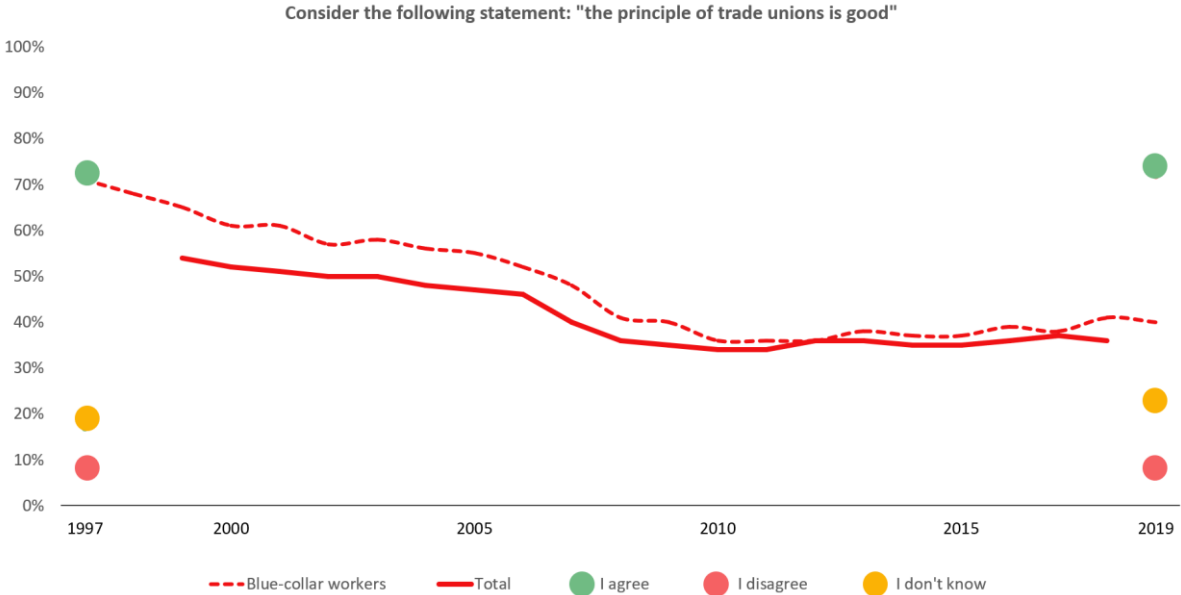
Using a generational cohort lens and a large American union as a case, Smith & Duxbury (2019) investigated individuals' attitudes towards the union, based on semi-structured interviews and a survey.² When asked "how does your generation of workers perceive unions?", 69 percent of the 'Baby Boomer' cohort was considered to appreciate the union's role in society, in contrast to the 53 percent of the 'Millennial' cohort. Older respondents valued the collectivist aspects of the union, while many of the younger respondents did not understand the collectivist purpose of the union. Younger respondents also demonstrated negative attitudes towards the union since they considered the union to be incapable of providing the right support that would aid them in achieving their professional goals, such as higher salaries, better benefits, and increased job security (Smith & Duxbury, 2019). However, these results are conflicting with a previous Canadian study exploring the differences in unionisation amongst older and younger individuals (Gomez, Gunderson, & Meltz, 2002). The Canadian study was based on a survey measuring attitudes towards unionisation amongst a large sample of workers, taking age, gender, region, and employment status into account.³ In contrast to Smith & Duxbury's (2019) study, Gomez, Gunderson & Meltz (2002) actually found that a majority of the youth respondents, consisting of 56.7 percent, demonstrated positive attitudes towards the union, as compared to the adult respondents, where 49.8 percent demonstrated positive attitudes.

Referring to the context of Sweden, the analytics company, the Youth Barometer, conducted an online survey asking the Swedish youth to consider the following statement: "the principle of the union is good". Given the three alternatives 'I agree', 'I disagree', and 'I don't know', the results indicated that the Swedish youth's attitudes towards the principle of the union had remained positive over the years, despite the heavy declines in union coverage amongst the

² The study compared the generational cohorts *Millennials* (born 1980 to 2000), *Generation X* (born 1965 to 1979), and *Baby boomers* (born 1946 to 1964). However, categorisation of generational cohorts differs from study to study. Recent literature also include *Generation Z*, known as the "Smartphone generation", which is believed to consist of individuals born 1995 to 2010 (The Youth Barometer, 2020b; Seemiller & Grace, 2019; Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018).

³ Respondents were categorised as young individuals aged 16-24, and adults aged 25-64.

Swedish youth (The Youth Barometer, 1998; The Youth Barometer, 2020a; AKU, 2020a).⁴ In 1997, 71 percent of the Swedish youth considered the principle of the union to be good, and in 2019, 72 percent considered the principle of the union to be good.



Graph 1. Comparison of youth attitudes towards the union, and illustration of union coverage rates amongst youth blue-collar workers and youth total, aged 16-24. Own depiction. (The Youth Barometer, 1998; 2020a; AKU, 2020a).

As can be seen in the graph above, the Swedish youth aged 16-24 seem to demonstrate positive attitudes towards the union over the past years, despite the declines in union coverage amongst the Swedish youth (The Youth Barometer, 1998; The Youth Barometer, 2020a; AKU, 2020a). In addition, these results are comparable to a study conducted by Peetz (2010), indicating that attitudes towards the union have remained stable when measured over time. By analysing attitudes towards ‘collectivism’, based on cross-national data on trends of collectivist attitudes from 1981 to 2001, the results from Peetz’s (2010) study indicates that attitudes towards the union have not become increasingly negative over time, particularly in relation to the declines in union coverage.

One would assume that positive attitudes towards the union would lead to a greater unionisation outcome, resulting in higher union coverage rates, however, this does not seem to be the case. The results from the Swedish survey conducted by the Youth Barometer (1998;

⁴ The annual survey conducted by The Youth Barometer is based on quota samples representing Sweden’s youth population, based on characteristics of sex, age, and region belonging. Their latest 2019 survey sample consisted of approximately 19 000 respondents (The Youth Barometer, 2020b).

2020a) could therefore be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, the results could be indicating that positive attitudes towards the union does not seem to have a positive effect on union coverage, amongst the Swedish youth. On the other hand, the results could indicate that the effect that positive attitudes have on union coverage has decreased over time, possibly due to some other factor that overpowers this effect. Against this background, it is worth investigating what this potential overpowering factor could be. Furthermore, the conflicting results from the American study conducted by Smith & Duxbury (2019), and the Swedish survey study conducted by the Youth Barometer (1998; 2020a) could possibly be linked to the fact that Sweden has a rich history of the union being a powerful and an influential part of society, whereas the American union, historically, has been small and weak in comparison (Kjellberg, 2002; Kjellberg, 2017). Therefore, the Swedish case of disproportionate union coverage declines amongst the youth is particularly striking since the research indicates that the Swedish youth remain positive towards the union, despite the declines in union coverage. With this in mind, it is even more compelling to investigate other possible factors, in addition to the attitudinal factor, that might contribute to the disproportionate declines in union coverage amongst the Swedish youth. However, in order to gain an understanding of the disproportionate declines in union coverage amongst the Swedish youth, there is a need to explore the decision-making process of joining the union. There are different factors that could cause an individual to unionise, and if these factors are affected, the outcome of unionisation might be affected as well, possibly leading to a decline in union coverage. The next section will cover these different factors and the implications that a disruption of these factors may have on the unionisation outcome.

1.2 The decision-making process of joining the union

An individual's decision to join the union could be channelled in different ways. A Danish study exploring the causes of unionisation used register data from the Danish labour market during the period of 2001 through 2007, illustrating union membership status and union density at workplace level. Based on data from Statistics Denmark, the study found that the main indicator of unionisation was the social custom at the workplace, and that a strong motivating factor for unionisation was whether or not colleagues at the workplace were members of the union themselves. The results demonstrated that workplaces with high union density had a

strong influence on non-members to unionise (Toubøl & Jensen, 2014), which would entail that young individuals who enter the labour force and workplaces with high union density are more likely to join the union themselves. In terms of the impact of social environments, another study demonstrated that friends also play an important role in union attitude-formation, which could positively influence the youth's decision to unionise (Griffin, & Brown, 2013). Furthermore, parents of young workers also play an important role in their union attitude-formation and their decision to unionise. This indicates that intergenerational influences could have a positive effect on unionisation amongst the youth as well (Gomez, Gunderson, & Meltz, 2002).

The psychological process of unionisation could be examined through three key approaches, prompting a young individual to join the union. In this case, the psychological process, explained by Klandermans (1986), is initiated with a sense of frustration to a workplace situation.⁵ The *frustration approach* entails that an individual would join the union due to a sense of job dissatisfaction. Second, the *rational choice approach*, highlights the cost/benefit considerations of joining the union, where an individual would consider the pros and cons of a union membership. Lastly, the *interactionist approach*, which entails that an individual would unionise as a cause of influence from their social environment, both from colleagues, but also from their friends and families. These three approaches are believed to be interconnected, where the frustration approach is thought to be filtered through both the rationalist approach and the interactionist approach. In other words, a young individual's decision to join the union, as a cause of an experienced job dissatisfaction, is believed to be determined through interactions with friends, colleagues, family members, and/or partners. On the basis of the outcome of these interactions, and if the young individual considers the cost/benefit aspects of the union to be advantageous, a decision to unionise is then finalised (Klandermans, 1986).

One can use a broader scope to understand the decision-making process of unionisation, again relating to a situation where a young individual would experience job dissatisfaction or need to take action against a work-related problem. The decision-making process could be described in the form of a decision tree (Busemeyer, Weg, Barkan, Li, & Ma, 2000). As is illustrated in the figure below, the process follows three stages: (1) whether or not to take action

⁵ Generally, a sense of job dissatisfaction is not a *necessary* condition for an individual to unionise, however, it could be a *sufficient* condition to unionise, meaning that it could be a contributory cause for an individual to unionise (Goertz & Levy, 2007).

against the cause to one’s sense of job dissatisfaction, (2) whether or not to join the union, (3) whether or not to engage in union action measures, such as collective bargaining, in order to solve the cause to one’s sense of job dissatisfaction.

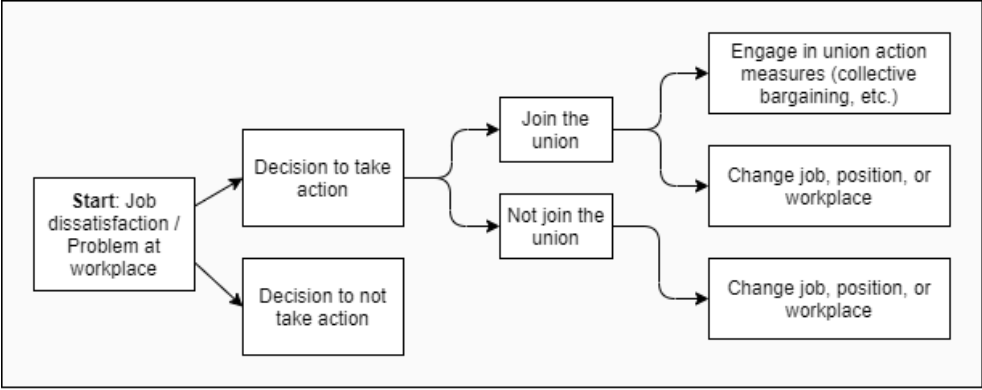


Figure 1. Decision tree involving three independent decision stages. Own depiction. (Busemeyer et al., 2000).

Considering the decision-making process of joining the union, there could be two possible reasons to why a young individual who experiences job dissatisfaction, and who is willing to take action against the problem, does not unionise. It could either be due to intentionally abstaining from unionisation, due to holding certain negative attitudes towards the union, or it could be due to the young individual experiencing *involuntary structural individualism*. Briefly explained, involuntary structural individualism emerges from a high prevalence of temporary employments and outsourcing employments amongst the youth, as well as a high prevalence of youth unemployment (Kjellberg, 2019a). The prevalence of young individuals under these labour market conditions could cause a weak attachment to the workplace (Kjellberg, 2019a). This could, in turn, possibly lead to a lower exposure to union representatives and colleagues amongst the youth. Eventually, the lack of face-to-face contact with union representatives who can recruit new members on the spot, and with colleagues who could encourage unionisation would make it less likely for the youth to unionise (Bain & Elsheikh, 1979; Vandaele, 2018; Toubøl & Jensen, 2014). By avoiding unionisation in this manner, a young individual who encounters a work-related problem would then, possibly, either quit the current job, change to another workplace or position, or simply endure the problem at work.

There are, of course, many other motivations that would prompt unionisation, other than the job dissatisfaction example given above. One could, for instance, join the union for the collective good, for instrumental purposes, or simply due to coincidental or unmotivated

purposes. However, individuals who unionise due to instrumental purposes could still be unionised but stay oblivious to the services that the union offers and end up with never using the support of the union, despite the occurrence of a work-related problem (Kjellberg, 2002).

In the political context, today's youth are from an international perspective experiencing a weaker sense of attachment to, and a growing dissatisfaction towards, conventional politics (Henn & Foard, 2012; Sloam, 2007; Loader, Vromen, & Xenos, 2014; Kitanova, 2019). The growing dissatisfaction towards conventional politics is described by Manning & Holmes (2014) to be due to a lack of affinity between ordinary citizens and politicians.⁶ This lack of affinity is believed to cause a sense of detachment from the lives of ordinary citizens and the lives of those of the "political elite". Due to this development, there has occurred an abstention from voting during political processes, a phenomenon experienced in many Western countries, which could be a symptom of political alienation amongst the youth (Kitanova, 2019). Despite the declines in voting in some Western countries, the youth are actually becoming increasingly interested in politics as generally defined, and politically active through alternative measures of participation, such as through demonstrations, petitions, and social media (Henn & Weinstein, 2006; Sloam, 2007; Henn & Foard, 2012; Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018).⁷ Though participation in conventional politics has been decreasing amongst the youth on an international level, it has actually been increasing amongst the Swedish youth in the past years (Statistics Sweden, 2015). However, the Swedish youth's participation in youth political associations has been decreasing instead, over the past years (The Youth Barometer, 2020b). In addition to the Swedish youth's declining participation in youth political associations, they are also experiencing a lower level of trust in political parties, which could entail that the Swedish youth are questioning conventional methods of politics. The Swedish youth could therefore be channelling their political engagement via alternative measures instead, as is seen in the 'Fridays for Future' or 'Black Lives Matter' movements (The Youth Barometer, 2020b; Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018).

⁶ Affinity refers to the degree of interest individuals have towards politicians who share characteristics with 'ordinary people', such as a way of speaking, or shared experiences. When these indicators are shared between the two, the affinity increases, possibly prompting citizens to vote for that politician (Manning & Holmes, 2014).

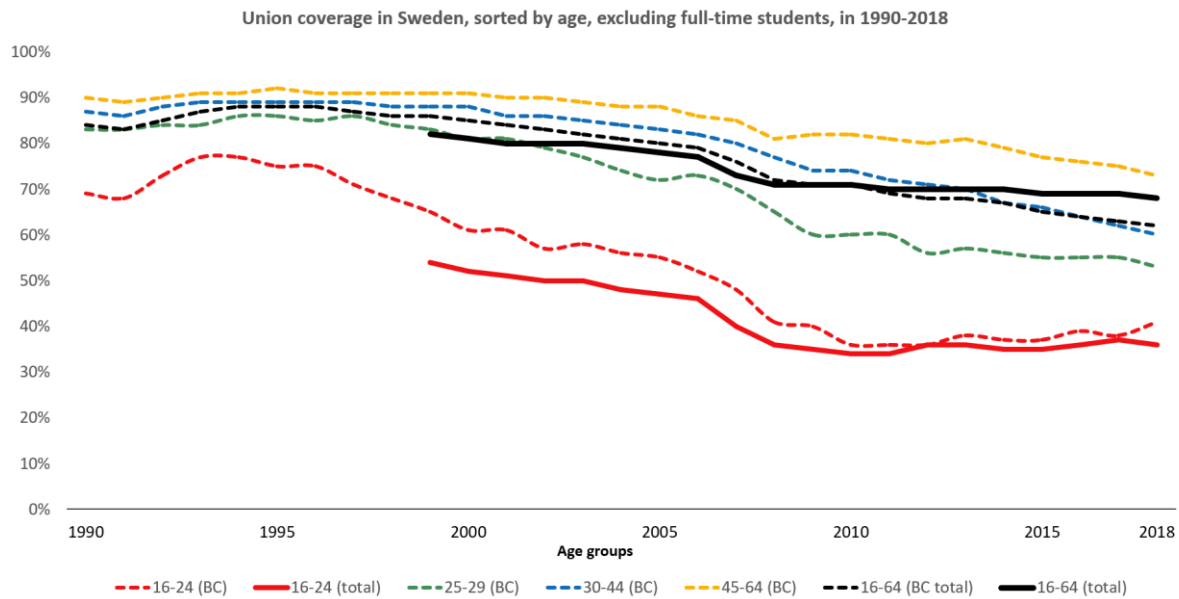
⁷ Through the use of social media (e.g. Twitter, Instagram, YouTube), in combination with other alternative measures, the youth are considered to have greater access to the political discourse by reaching out to their social circles and the public (Loader, Vromen, & Xenos, 2014).

In relation to the union and labour market context, with reference to the political setting described above, there could also be a possibility that the youth are experiencing a weaker sense attachment to the workplace, similar to the youth's weaker sense of attachment to conventional politics. As previously mentioned, a weak workplace attachment could negatively affect the outcome of unionisation amongst the youth (Kjellberg, 2019a), similar to how the youth's weak sense of attachment to conventional politics have, on an international level, negatively affected the youth's participation in conventional politics (Henn & Foard, 2012; Sloam, 2007; Loader, Vromen, & Xenos, 2014; Kitanova, 2019). In order to understand *whether or not* the Swedish youth are experiencing a weaker sense of workplace attachment, there is a need to gain understanding to *what may be the possible cause* of the Swedish youth's weaker sense of workplace attachment. Based on the Swedish context, the next section will introduce the institutional labour market changes that have caused an overall decline in union coverage rates amongst the total population. Continuing, a background to the structural labour market changes in Sweden will be provided, specifically referring to the labour market experience of the Swedish youth. These structural labour market changes will then be outlined as a possible cause to the increasing involuntary structural individualism amongst the Swedish youth.

1.3 Understanding union coverage declines

1.3.1 Institutional factors

The overall declines in union coverage is a social phenomenon that the Western world has been experiencing for the past decades (OECD, 2020; AKU, 2020a). Statistics from the Swedish Labour Force Surveys indicates that union coverage in Sweden has been decreasing heavily in the past 25 years (AKU, 2020a). As can be seen in **Graph 2** below, the declines in union coverage over the past years is mainly experienced amongst the Swedish youth aged 16-24, and particularly experienced amongst young blue-collar workers.



Graph 2. Union coverage in Sweden, blue-collar workers (BC), and total, excluding full-time students. Own depiction. (AKU, 2020a; Kjellberg, 2017).⁸

Social phenomena are complex, and therefore, these union coverage declines could be associated with many different factors. The declines could partially be understood by following factors such as level of unemployment, changes in legislation, and changes in the political climate. In a study investigating the changes in union coverage on a cross-country level in Western European countries, Ebbinghaus & Visser (1999) found that configurational factors, meaning the institutional context that the union resides in, plays a key role in the *general* declines in unionisation. These factors include the welfare functions and incentives that the union offers to its members. For instance, union associated income and unemployment insurance, home insurance discounts, or scholarships. It also includes the role of influence that the union has on workplaces, such as the prevalence of union representatives at the workplace and local union clubs (Ebbinghaus & Visser, 1999). Sweden, along with Denmark and Finland, has voluntary income and unemployment insurance schemes associated with unions (A-kassan),⁹ as a part of the Ghent system. This system is believed to have strongly contributed to a high union density in these countries, currently maintaining coverage rates around 65 percent

⁸ The low *baseline* of unionisation amongst the youth aged 16-24, as compared to other age-groups, is explained to be due to the youth's shorter average time under employment, as compared to their older counterparts. The longer an individual has been employed, the greater is the exposure to union representatives, which would entail greater chances to be recruited to the union (Waddington, 2015; Bain & Elsheikh, 1979).

⁹ Hereinafter referred to as A-kassan

(OECD, 2020; Kjellberg, 2019a; Shin & Böckerman, 2019).¹⁰ When the welfare functions and the influence of the union are affected, it also affects unionisation levels (Ebbinghaus & Visser, 1999).

In the beginning of 2007, the membership fees for A-kassan were raised significantly due to mandate pushed by the Swedish centre-right government. The raised membership fees caused a drop in Swedish union density by six percent, and the union lost around eight percent of its members (Kjellberg, 2009). Today, the membership fees for A-kassan have been restored to the previous low levels, but the initial increases in fees are believed to have caused many individuals to reconsider the cost/benefit aspects of joining both A-kassan *and* the union. The result has therefore been a substantial overall decline in union memberships (Kjellberg, 2009; 2019b; Bernaciak, Gumbrell-McCormick, & Hyman, 2014). These declines are also believed to have weakened local unions at workplaces, reducing the prevalence and the capacity for action of union representatives at workplaces. In turn, this has led to difficulties in recruiting new members (Ebbinghaus & Visser, 1999; Kjellberg, 2019a).

These institutional factors describe the *overall* declines in union coverage rates amongst the total population in Sweden, however, they do not specifically explain the *disproportionate* union coverage declines amongst the Swedish youth aged 16-24. Therefore, the following section will cover the structural labour market changes believed to cause the disproportionate union coverage declines amongst the Swedish youth aged 16-24.

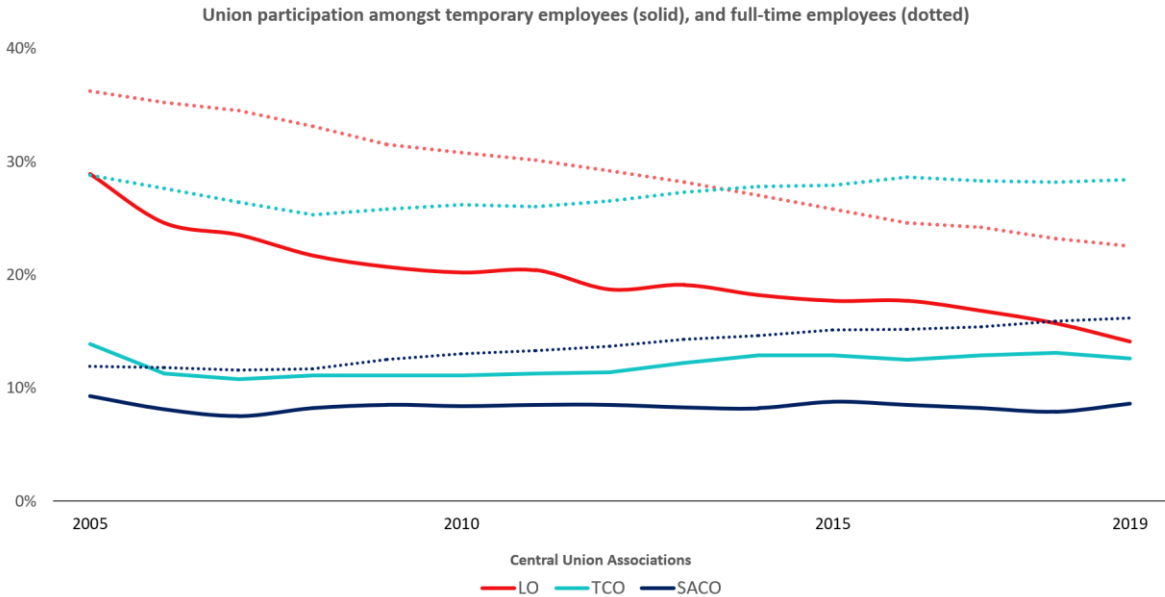
1.3.2. Structural labour market changes

Union coverage declines in Sweden are particularly experienced amongst blue-collar unions, mainly as a result of a decline in unionisation amongst blue-collar workers aged 16-24 (AKU, 2020a; Kjellberg, 2017). Academic and white-collar unions operating beneath the central associations of Saco and TCO are increasing in coverage, while in contrast, blue-collar unions operating beneath the central association of LO are decreasing in coverage.¹¹ Per capita, more

¹⁰ In Sweden, A-kassan and the union are two different things. A-kassan grants access to additional income insurance on top of funds one would receive from the central income and unemployment insurance system (Alfakassan), ensuring full financial security in case of unemployment (LO, 2012; Alfakassan, 2020). Therefore, joining A-kassan does not entail joining the union, or vice versa (Kjellberg, 2017).

¹¹ Swedish unions aim to represent workers of every profession and operate beneath three central associations that function as umbrella organisations. The association for academics, Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Saco), the association for white-collar workers, Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO), and the association for blue-collar workers, Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) (Kjellberg, 2002).

union members are white-collar workers and academics than are blue-collar workers (Kjellberg, 2019a). This is shown in the graph below which illustrates union participation amongst temporary and full-time employees in each respective central union association, over the past 15 years.



Graph 3. Union coverage amongst temporary and full-time employees in Sweden, categorised after union association belonging. Own depiction. (AKU, 2020c).

As is shown, the LO-associated unions have experienced heavy losses in memberships. This could partly be explained due to the decline in blue-collar workers in the labour force. Similarly, Saco and TCO has experienced increases in memberships as the academic and white-collar share of the workforce has risen (Kjellberg, 2019a; Geelan, 2015). However, increases in union coverage amongst academic and white-collar unions do not fully explain the declines in union coverage amongst blue-collar unions, since the coverage rates of blue-collar unions have been declining *disproportionally*. This indicates that there are other factors involved, other than a shift in the workforce consisting of blue-collar workers transitioning into the white-collar sector or into academia.

The Swedish labour market has been experiencing a variety of changes in the past years, including significant increases in youth unemployment rates. Youth unemployment in Sweden amongst individuals aged 20-24 increased from 4.4 percent in 1990 to 23.4 percent in 1994.¹²

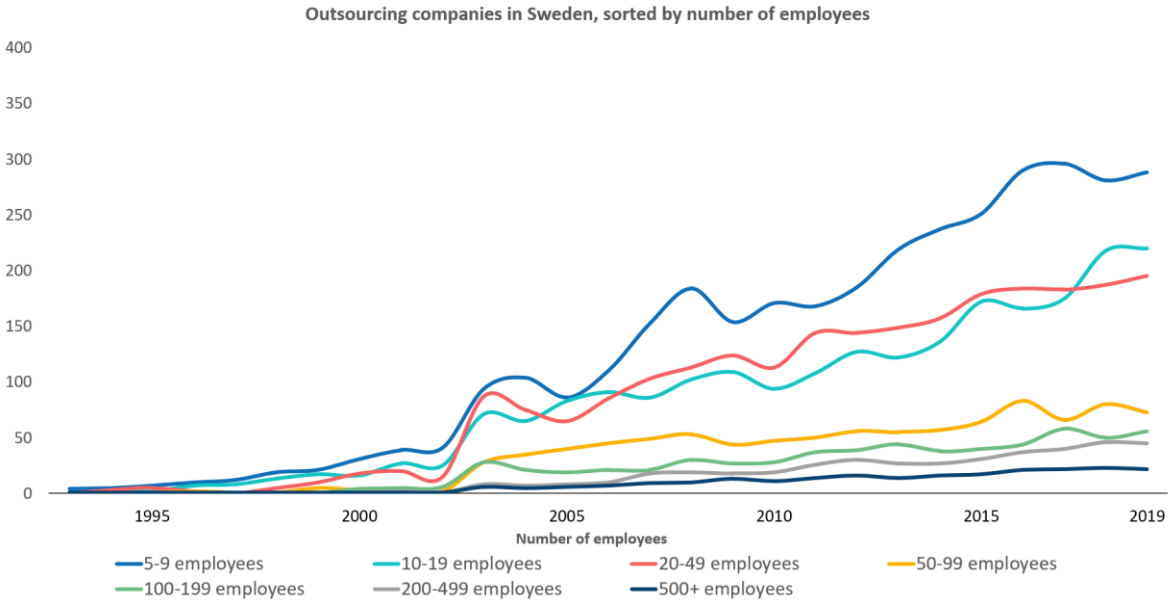
¹² Swedish unemployment data for age-group 16-24, dating from 1990-onwards is not available (AKU, 2020b).

The rate of youth unemployment has not recovered since the initial increases, and has instead maintained an average rate of 16.3 percent from 1995 to 2019 (AKU, 2020b). During times of high unemployment, unionisation and collective bargaining are often met with resistance from employers. The fear of resistance and victimisation from employers could then, in turn, negatively impact the youth's decision to unionise or engage in the union (Hodder & Kretsos, 2015; Foster, Laird, McAndrew, & Murrie, 2005). In addition to this, the high level of youth unemployment also compromises the overall integration of the youth into society, and increases the risk of social exclusion, due to their lack of prior qualifications and their labour market absence (Kieselbach, 2003).

The Swedish youth is also, by far, the main group hired under temporary employment contracts (Broman & Larsson, 2015). The percentage of temporary employment contracts out of total employments, amongst the Swedish youth aged 15-24, was 35.6 percent in the first quarter of 1996. Respectively, in the first quarter of 2019, that number had increased to 53.5 percent, which was higher than the EU average during that same year, which was 40.9 percent (Eurostat, 2020). The increase in temporary employments is a growing problem, causing a further weakening position of the youth on the labour market (De Grip, Hoevenberg, & Willems, 1997). Temporary employments are usually short-lasting, which means that young workers often must endure periods of unemployment in between jobs. Temporary employments could also, in addition to the periods of unemployment, consist of irregular work hours, lonely shifts, and night shifts. This could decrease the young workers' sense of workplace attachment and harm the sense of collectivity at the workplace, which could, in turn, negatively affect the youth's opportunities to unionise (Kjellberg, 2019a). The prevalence of temporary employments does not have a beneficial effect on youth unemployment either, as would, for instance, part-time employments. The prevalence of temporary employments amongst the youth is actually seen to have a positive correlation with rates of youth unemployment, and could, unlike part-time employments, be regarded as a manifestation of the weakened position of the youth on the labour market. Compared to the rest of the working population, young individuals up to the age of 24 are three times more likely to be temporarily employed, often without any prospects for full-time employments (De Grip, Hoevenberg, & Willems, 1997).

In addition to the increasing youth unemployment rates (AKU, 2020b), and the increasing prevalence of temporary employments, amongst the Swedish youth (Broman & Larsson, 2015;

Eurostat, 2020), the number of outsourcing companies in Sweden have also been on the rise for the past 20 years, which is illustrated in the graph below.



Graph 4. Growth of outsourcing companies in Sweden, demonstrated in company size (number of employees). Own depiction. (FDB, 2020).

The dividing of outsourced personnel and standard personnel on workplaces could be adding to the weakening effect of workers' collectivity and mobilisation, and negatively impact the sense of workplace attachment (FDB, 2020; Kjellberg, 2019a). In addition to this, outsourcing companies are often characterised by poor working conditions, a non-application of collective bargaining agreements, along with a prevalence of disperse workplaces, lonely shifts, and personnel who lack in knowledge about labour rights (Godino & Molina, 2019). Despite the fact that workers who endure these types of work conditions are the ones who are most in need of the support of the union, these characteristics could actually result in a lower union density. The reason for this is because there is a growing issue with recruiting outsourced personnel to the union, due to difficulties in reaching out to individuals with outsourcing employments, as compared to individuals with standard employments. Considering this, unions require better resources to reach out to outsourced personnel (Godino & Molina, 2019). Gig economy platform companies who identify as “tech companies”, such as Foodora – a food/product delivering service – have been on the rise for the past years as well. These types of companies have a history of distancing themselves from certain employment responsibilities that other "standard" companies otherwise would uphold (Healy, Nicholson, & Pekarek, 2017).

Researchers Tassinari & Maccarrone (2017), on the topic of the union mobilisation of gig economy workers, suggest that unions should advocate for the closure of legal loopholes that allows for the misclassifications of workers as "independent contractors" in order to promote good working conditions and employment rights to workers within the gig economy.

Against this background, a key factor to unionisation amongst the youth is considered to be the face-to-face availability of union representatives at workplaces, since it enables a contact between the worker and the union (Shulruf, Yee, Lineham, Fawthorpe, Johri, & Blumenfeld, 2010). Many young individuals do not join the union simply because they have never been approached by union representatives at the workplace (Bulbeck, 2008). This indicates that the absence of union representatives at workplaces negatively affects unionisation rates. Increases in youth unemployment, in temporary employments, and in outsourcing employments, could contribute to a lower exposure to union representatives, which could in turn cause a weaker contact between the youth and the union. The lack of exposure to union representatives, along with the lack of exposure to colleagues who could encourage unionisation (Toubøl & Jensen, 2014), could therefore negatively affect the youth's opportunities to unionise (Kjellberg, 2017).

With this in mind, the next chapter will cover the theoretical framework of the thesis, where the potential causes to the disproportionate union coverage declines amongst the youth will be theorised and discussed. The attitudinal research and the research on structural labour market changes will be problematised, and the theorised social mechanism, the scope of the research design, along with the hypotheses will be outlined.

Chapter II. Theoretical framework

As mentioned in the literature review, the Swedish youth's attitudes towards the principle of the union have remained positive over the past years, despite the disproportionate declines in union coverage amongst the Swedish youth (The Youth Barometer, 1998; 2020a; AKU, 2020a). This could possibly indicate that some other factor(s) has, over time, had an increasingly overpowering effect on the youth's decision, or opportunities, to join the union. This other factor(s) could possibly be the emergence of *involuntary structural individualism*. In order to investigate this notion, this thesis will, based on the scope of the research design applied to this thesis, first determine the effect of the Swedish youth's attitudes towards the union on the outcome of unionisation over time. Secondly, this thesis will determine if the perceived level of workplace attachment and exposure to union representatives and colleagues, and the influence it has on unionisation, differs between unionised and non-unionised young Swedish individuals. Based on the findings from this investigation, this thesis will be able to provide *circumstantial evidence* of explanatory factors that may be the cause of the *disproportionate declines in union coverage rates* amongst the Swedish youth aged 16-24. Continuing, the following section outlines the theory that will be the basis of the investigation of this thesis.

2.1 Involuntary structural individualism

Sweden has experienced structural changes to the labour market over the past years, and the implications caused by these changes could potentially be a crucial factor to the disproportionate declines in union coverage amongst the Swedish youth aged 16-24. This, however, does not necessarily have to entail that the Swedish youth have developed negative attitudes towards the union. In fact, the Swedish youth seem to have, according to the Youth Barometer, remained positive to the principle of the union over the past years, despite heavy union coverage declines (The Youth Barometer, 1998; 2020a; AKU, 2020a). Knowing that attitudes towards the union may have remained positive amongst the Swedish youth over the past years, there is a possibility that attitudes have, over time, had a weaker influence on the outcome of unionisation.

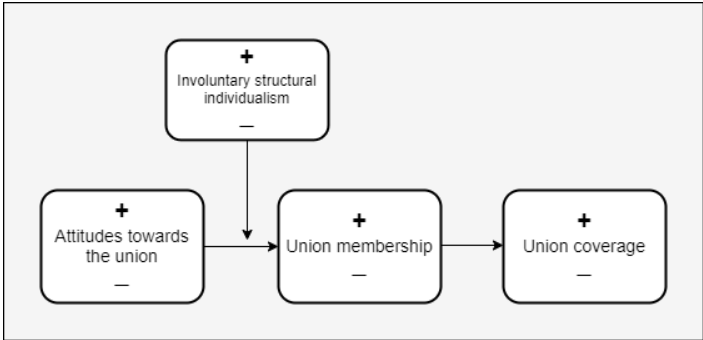
Temporary employments and outsourcing employments are increasing in Sweden (Eurostat, 2020; FDB, 2020). These types of non-standard employments are likely to be characterised by unconventional working conditions, such as lonely shifts, night shifts, disperse workplaces, as well as a lack of workplace collectivity (Godino & Molina, 2019). In addition to this, an increasing number of young Swedish individuals are enduring youth unemployment (AKU, 2020b). These types of structural changes to the labour market could possibly weaken the Swedish youth's sense of workplace attachment (Kjellberg, 2019a). This could, in turn, induce a lack of exposure to union representatives amongst the youth, which could in turn negatively affect the youth's opportunities to unionise, since one would lose the face-to-face contact with the union (Kjellberg, 2017). Furthermore, the weakened workplace attachment could also reduce the face-to-face contact with colleagues who encourage unionisation. This would negatively affect the youth's opportunities to unionise as well (Toubøl & Jensen, 2014). This process is, in this thesis, conceptualised as *involuntary structural individualism*, since the process would entail an involuntary self-reliance, rather than collectivism, due to the characteristics of the labour position that the youth increasingly reside in. An emphasis is placed on the fact that the labour position would not be a conscious decision made by the youth themselves, but rather an effect of the structural labour market changes characterised by the increase in temporary employments, and in outsourcing employments, as well as an increase in youth unemployment.

In the following section, the social mechanism of the theoretical framework will be outlined in directed acyclic graphs in order to visualise and simplify the understanding of the theory used in this thesis. Conclusively, the hypotheses of this thesis will be presented.

2.2 Social mechanism

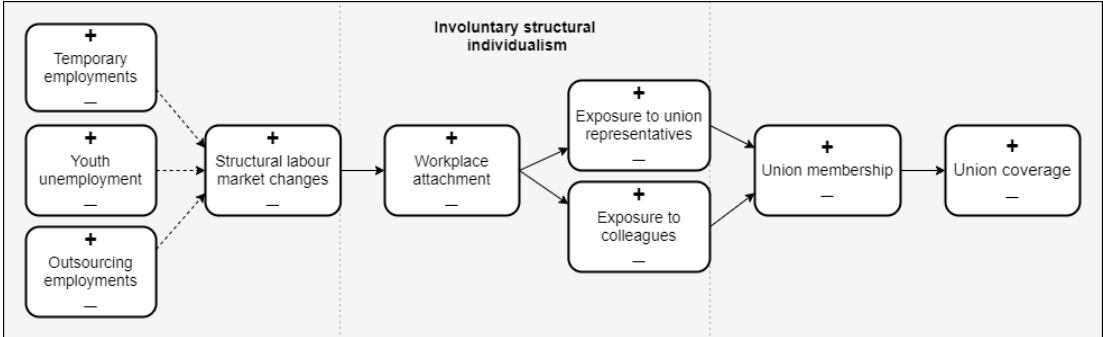
The following directed acyclic graphs consist of a set of nodes, and a set of links that describe the relationship between the nodes (Pearl, 2009). As can be seen in **Graph 5** below, attitudes towards the union are believed to have a causal relationship with union membership, which in turn has a causal relationship with union coverage. Positive attitudes towards the union would lead to a higher probability of unionisation, which would, in turn, have a positive effect on union coverage. Negative attitudes towards the union would, naturally, have the opposite effect. However, this causal relationship does not seem to correspond with reality, since union

coverage rates amongst the Swedish youth have declined over time, despite the fact that attitudes towards the union amongst the youth have remained positive over the past years (The Youth Barometer, 1998; 2020a; AKU, 2020a). Therefore, the declines in union coverage amongst the Swedish youth could possibly be caused by a growing *involuntary structural individualism*.



Graph 5. Causal relationship between attitudes towards the union, union membership, and union coverage, intervened by involuntary structural individualism. Own depiction.

Involuntary structural individualism could have an overpowering effect on the influence that attitudes towards the union have on union membership. This would entail that an increasing involuntary structural individualism would, possibly, hinder the act of unionisation, even if individuals hold positive attitudes towards the union. In turn, this would lead to union coverage declines. Since the Swedish youth are believed to experience involuntary structural individualism on a greater level, compared to the rest of the Swedish population, it could possibly be the cause of the *disproportionate* union coverage declines amongst the Swedish youth. The social mechanism of ‘involuntary structural individualism’ is detailed below.



Graph 6. Causal relationship between structural labour market changes, union membership, and union coverage, through the process of involuntary structural individualism. Own depiction.

The prevalence of youth unemployment, temporary employments, and outsourcing employments is operationalised as *structural labour market changes*. Due to the characteristics

of these non-standard employments, and the high levels of youth unemployment, these structural labour market changes are believed to have a negative effect on *workplace attachment* – the higher the level of structural labour market changes, as is operationalised in the graph above, the lower the level of workplace attachment. Workplace attachment is, in turn, believed to affect the *exposure to union representatives* and the *exposure to colleagues*. For instance, a lower workplace attachment would entail a lower exposure to union representatives and colleagues. These three nodes are conceptualised as *involuntary structural individualism*, as can be seen highlighted in **Graph 6** above. The exposure to union representatives and colleagues is, in turn, believed to have an effect on *union membership*, since the likelihood of an individual being recruited to the union either increases or decreases depending on if that individual has a higher or lower exposure to union representatives and colleagues. Finally, union membership is believed to have a causal relationship with union coverage.

In **Table 1** seen below, four possible scenarios and potential unionisation outcomes are illustrated. In scenario (1), the individual displays positive attitudes towards the union and does not experience involuntary structural individualism. This scenario is theorised to be the most likely to lead to unionisation. Scenario (2) illustrates an individual who displays negative attitudes towards the union, as well as not experiencing involuntary structural individualism. The negative attitudes towards the union makes it, naturally, less likely for that individual to unionise, however, the absence of involuntary structural individualism could still, potentially, lead to unionisation. In scenario (3), the individual displays positive attitudes towards the union instead, but does however experience involuntary structural individualism. This scenario is not optimal for unionisation, but the positive attitudes towards the union *could* potentially lead to unionisation. Finally, in scenario (4), the individual displays negative attitudes towards the union and experiences involuntary structural individualism, which makes it, theoretically, the least likely scenario for unionisation.

	Attitudes towards the union	Involuntary structural individualism	Union membership	Union coverage	
Scenario 1	+	–	+	+	1
Scenario 2	–	–	–	–	2
Scenario 3	+	+	–	–	3
Scenario 4	–	+	–	–	4

Table 5. Ranking of unionisation outcome depending on scenario.

Conclusively, it is necessary to clarify that not all young Swedish individuals are believed to experience involuntary structural individualism. However, due to *structural labour market changes*, the number of young Swedish individuals experiencing involuntary structural individualism are believed to be greater today, as compared to in previous years. Naturally, there are also individuals who are neutral towards the union. However, since neutral attitudes does not manifest as an attitudinal impact, neutral attitudes are not included in the theoretical model. Continuing, in the following section, the scope of the thesis will be discussed in order to understand to which extent this study will be able to make scientific claims based on the findings.

2.3 Scope of the thesis

In order to statistically test this theory and establish whether there is a causal relationship between involuntary structural individualism and the outcome of unionisation, there is a need for time series data consisting of an operationalisation of ‘attitudes towards the union’, ‘level of workplace attachment’, ‘level of exposure to union representatives’, and ‘level of exposure to colleagues’. However, due to this combination of statistical data not being available, this thesis will be limited to, on a statistical level, testing the Swedish youth’s attitudes towards the union, operationalised as ‘trust in unions’, and its effect on the outcome of unionisation over time. The effects of involuntary structural individualism on the outcome of unionisation will in this thesis be investigated through the application of two qualitative focus group interviews instead. The two qualitative focus group interviews aim to investigate whether unionised and non-unionised young Swedish individuals illustrate different *arguments* concerning the level of workplace attachment, the level of exposure to union representatives, and the level of exposure to colleagues that they experience. Furthermore, the analysis of the focus group interviews intends to demonstrate whether these variables have had an influence on the Swedish youth’s decision to join, or not to join the union. The sample of the quantitative analysis will, however, not consist of the same sample as the qualitative analysis. Therefore, the scope of the thesis is incapable of establishing whether there is a causal relationship between involuntary structural individualism and the outcome of unionisation. The thesis is, however, capable of indicating *circumstantial evidence* of a causal relationship between involuntary structural

individualism and the unionisation outcome. Against this background, the following section outlines the hypotheses of this thesis.

2.4 Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this thesis are based on the case of Sweden, and the subjects of research are young Swedish individuals aged 16-24. The first two-part hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1a: If an individual displays positive attitudes towards the union, then unionisation may be more likely for that individual.

H1b: When measured over time, positive attitudes towards the union may have a weaker effect on the outcome of unionisation.

Continuing, the second hypothesis is tested via the application of two focus group interviews consisting of unionised and non-unionised young Swedish individuals, and is formulated as follows:

H2: Unionised individuals may be more likely than non-unionised individuals to indicate a stronger workplace attachment and a higher exposure to union representatives and colleagues.

Chapter III. Quantitative large-N analysis

Lieberman's (2005) mixed-methods nested analysis approach was the methodology of choice applied to this thesis. The approach entails the combination of a quantitative large-N analysis (LNA) and a qualitative small-N analysis (SNA).¹³ Through the process of triangulation, the analyses are combined in order to incorporate different viewpoints and methods, which aims to increase the validity of the study (Yeasmin & Rahman, 2012). The utilisation of the approach provides a greater analytic culmination, rather than what the sum of each separate analysis would be able to provide. Therefore, the analyses complement each other to reveal information of higher conceptualisation and measurement quality (Lieberman, 2005; Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2015).

The aim of the thesis is to investigate the causes of the *disproportionate declines in union coverage rates* amongst the Swedish youth aged 16-24, and to do so by answering the two research questions of this thesis. The LNA is applied to answer the first research question, statistically investigating the effect of the youth's attitudes towards the union on the youth's outcome of unionisation over time. Continuing, the LNA estimates the robustness of the theoretical model defined in the first, two-part hypothesis. Continuing, the primary goal of the SNA is to answer the second research question, investigating whether arguments concerning the level of workplace attachment, and its influence on unionisation, differ between unionised and non-unionised Swedish youth. Furthermore, the SNA estimates the theoretical model defined in the second hypothesis, in narrative form. The combination of these two analyses aim to indicate *circumstantial evidence* of a causal relationship between involuntary structural individualism and the outcome of unionisation. The research process of this thesis followed the outline demonstrated in **Figure 2** below.

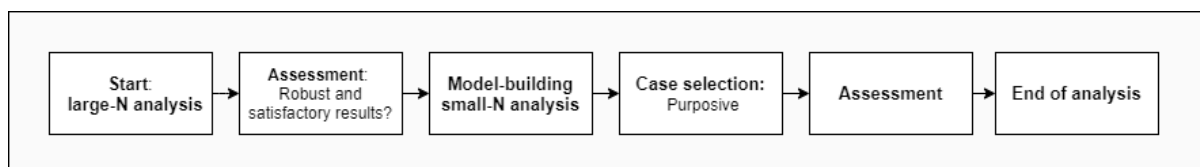


Figure 2. Overview of mixed-methods nested analysis approach. Own depiction. (Lieberman, 2005).

¹³ Hereinafter referred to as LNA and SNA.

The mixed-methods nested analysis was initiated with the LNA, as is customary in such an analysis, due to the possibility that the LNA could provide essential information that could guide the case selection process and the execution of the SNA (Lieberman, 2005). Furthermore, the following sections of this chapter provide a background to the dataset, the variables, the statistical research method, and the limitations of the LNA.

3.1. Dataset

The LNA was based on the ‘Super-Riks-SOM’ dataset developed by the SOM Institute. The dataset consists of a large number of observations representing the attitudes of the Swedish population over time (SOM Institute, 2018). The SOM Institute is an impartial research institute at the University of Gothenburg that conducts annual surveys focussing on the attitudes, habits, behaviours, opinions, and values of the Swedish population, in subjects relating to society and politics. The dataset is based on data from 32 national surveys in Sweden during the period of 1986–2017, mainly conducted through postal surveys, but since 2012 conducted via online surveys, as well. The respondents of the annual SOM Institute surveys are selected using random sampling, and each survey is carried out under as identical conditions as possible in order to ensure comparability in between years.

3.2. Descriptive statistics

In order to gain an understanding of the variables used in the LNA, the descriptive statistics are provided in **Table 2** below. Further information on the variables is outlined in the following sections.

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SE	SD
Union membership	8228	0	1	0.27	0.005	0.443
Trust in unions	8228	0	2	1.27	0.009	0.812
Working	8228	0	1	0.29	0.005	0.455
Unemployed	8228	0	1	0.12	0.004	0.322
Female	8228	0	1	0.53	0.005	0.499
Age	8228	16	24	20.13	0.028	2.568
Year of survey	8228	1988	2017	2004.38	0.086	7.765

Table 2. Descriptive statistics.

3.2.1. Dependent variable

The aim of the LNA was to measure the effect of the Swedish youth's attitudes on the outcome of unionisation over time, while controlling for other background factors. In this thesis, the unionisation outcome was measured using the dependent variable *union membership*, which is a binary variable based on a single survey question which specifically indicates whether an individual is a member of the union or not. The survey question was formulated as "are you a member of the union?", and the survey respondents were given two alternatives to respond: "no" or "yes". Therefore, the binary encoding of the dependent variable *union membership* is 0 (no) and 1 (yes).

3.2.2. Independent variable

Theoretical concepts are not always directly measurable. Therefore, in order to facilitate the measurement of a theoretical concept, there is often a need to operationalise (Jupp, 2006). In order to measure the effect of the Swedish youth's attitudes on the outcome of unionisation, the independent variable must be an operationalisation of *attitudes*. The 'Super-Riks-SOM' dataset includes the measurement of individuals' level of trust in various institutions in Sweden, including the level of trust in unions (SOM Institute, 2018). Within the survey category 'institutional trust', the respondents of the annual SOM Institute survey were asked, "how much confidence do you have for the way in which the following institutions do their work?" referring specifically to 'union organisations'. The survey respondents were given alternatives to answer according to a psychometric Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The alternatives consisted of 'very low trust' followed by 'low trust', 'neither low nor high trust', 'high trust', and finally, 'very high trust'. Therefore, the operationalisation of attitudes for the LNA was in the form of the independent variable *trust in unions*.

In order to investigate to what extent low trust in unions and high trust in unions affect the outcome of unionisation, the extreme values of the Likert scale were merged together on each end of the spectrum – a process known as dichotomisation. The values 'very low trust' and 'low trust' were merged and categorised as *low trust in unions* (=0), and the values 'very high trust' and 'high trust' were merged and categorised as *high trust in unions* (=1). Since neutral attitudes would not manifest as an attitudinal impact, the neutral value *neither low nor high trust* was used as a reference point in the analysis. This was a purposive decision, since

the alternative form of dichotomisation, namely the ‘median split’, often yields misleading results (MacCallum, Zhang, Preacher, & Rucker, 2002).

3.2.3. Control variables

The ‘Super-Riks-SOM’ dataset provides data in the form of demographic variables, which allows for the control of potential confounders (SOM Institute, 2018). Controlling for potential confounders allows for more precise measurements on the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The variable *female* (with 1 being female, and 0 being male) was included in the LNA as a potential confounder.¹⁴ The impact of gender on the outcome of unionisation is contested, however, men and women do seem to have different preferences to union services. Women seem to prioritise social benefits of unions, over the economic benefits, whereas men seem to have opposite priorities (Waddington, 2015). Due to these differences, there may be a possibility that gender has an impact on the outcome of unionisation.

The *age* variable was also included, since the literature illustrates widespread evidence that the overall low *baseline* in union density amongst the youth, when compared to other age groups, is due to low age (Bain & Elsheikh, 1979; Waddington, 2015). Age is correlated with duration under employment, and younger individuals experience a shorter duration under employment, which entails a lower exposure to union representatives and colleagues (Bain & Elsheikh, 1979). In 2001, the Swedish Labour Force Surveys changed its definition of the population ‘youth’. Today, it is defined as individuals aged 15-24 instead of the previous definition, which was individuals aged 16-24 (AKU, 2002). However, in the LNA of this thesis, the population ‘youth’ will be defined as individuals aged 16-24 in order to maintain time consistency.

Finally, the following variables were also included in the LNA as potential confounders: *unemployed* (1 being unemployed, and 0 being not unemployed), *working*, which indicates whether the respondent is gainfully employed or not (1 being working, and with 0 being not

¹⁴ The *female* variable originally consisted of the values ‘male’ (=0), ‘female’ (=1), and ‘other’ (=2). However, the ‘other’ value was excluded from the analysis due to consisting of too few responses, which would be deemed insignificant in the analysis. Therefore, the variable used in the analysis was solely based on the values ‘male’ (=0) and ‘female’ (=1). On this note, feminist research promotes an inclusive gender measure based on an open-ended question where respondents can define their own gender, such as ‘gender fluid’, ‘transgender’, ‘non-binary’, ‘male’, or ‘female’. Responses could then be transformed into categorical data with statistical code in various statistical programmes (Cameron & Stinson, 2019). In case of further studies, an inclusive gender measure could possibly be considered in order to avoid gender-based exclusion.

working), and *year of survey*, which indicates the specific year of the conducted survey (ranging from the year of 1988 to 2017).

3.2.4. Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity refers to the relationship between variables in a model, and occurs when variables are highly correlated (Field, 2017). When a high level of multicollinearity occurs, then the analysis could become less reliable. This is due to the fact that when multicollinearity increases, so do the standard errors, which entails an increase in variability and a decrease in reliability (Midi, Sarkar, & Rana, 2013). Furthermore, a high level of multicollinearity makes it difficult to determine the importance of each individual variable. In other words, if variables are highly correlated within the model, then one is unable to determine which variable is important to the specific outcome (Field, 2017). IBM SPSS Statistics version 26 provides tools to test the variance inflation factor (VIF), which is an indicator of whether variables have a strong relationship with other variables in the model. The VIF is the inverse measurement of the tolerance value, which too is a measure of multicollinearity. If VIF levels are greater than 10, and if the tolerance levels fall below 0.1, then there is a serious multicollinearity problem in the model (Field, 2017). The multicollinearity statistics seen in **Table 3** demonstrate the level of tolerance and VIF of each variable used in the LNA.

Variables	Tolerance	VIF
Trust in unions	0.969	1.032
Working	0.825	1.212
Unemployed	0.927	1.079
Female	0.981	1.020
Age	0.829	1.206
Year of survey	0.997	1.003

Table 3. Multicollinearity statistics. Dependent variable: Union membership.

As can be seen in the table, the tolerance and VIF levels are good, and do not indicate high multicollinearity.

3.2.5. Limitations of the quantitative analysis

Several confounders that could have had an effect on the dependent variable were not included in the LNA, due to the lack of available data. Variables such as ‘outsourcing employment’,

‘temporary employment’, ‘workplace attachment’, ‘exposure to union representatives’, and ‘exposure to colleagues’, would have been preferred to include in the analysis. This would, for instance, allow for a statistical analysis of involuntary structural individualism within the same sample.

3.3. Statistical analysis

Logistic regression analysis was applied using the statistical programme 'IBM SPSS Statistics version 26'. Logistic regression analysis is a common method used to study a set of independent variables on a binary dependent variable (Harrel, 2015). In this thesis, the logistic regression analysis was applied in order to investigate the effect of the independent variable *trust in unions* on the binary dependent variable *union membership*. The results are presented in the exponentiation of B-coefficients, which are in *odds ratios*. The odds of an outcome occurring could be defined as the probability of an outcome occurring, divided by the probability of an outcome not occurring (Field, 2017). For instance, the odds of union membership when an individual indicates high trust in unions ($y^1|x^1$), is based on the division of the probability of positive union membership outcomes (y^1) with the probability of negative union membership outcomes (y^0), amongst cases indicating high trust in unions (x^1). The equation of this example is illustrated as follows:

$$Odds_{y^1|x^1} = \frac{\Pr(y^1|x^1)}{\Pr(y^0|x^1)}$$

When an odds ratio is smaller than 1, it indicates a negative relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. An odds ratio of 1 indicates a neutral relationship, and an odds ratio greater than 1 indicates a positive relationship.

It is important to note that odds ratios as comparative effect size measures could reflect unobserved heterogeneity as well as the size of the effect when comparing across and within models with different independent variables (Mood, 2010). Reflecting this notion to the LNA applied to this thesis, the conclusions made from the comparisons of odds ratios between models are made with caution, with respect to the possibility of unobserved heterogeneity.

3.4. Findings from the quantitative large-N analysis

In this section, the results from the logistic regression analysis are presented. Each model illustrated in **Table 4** demonstrates the effect of the independent variable, categorised as *low trust in unions* and *high trust in unions*, on the binary dependent variable *union membership*, while holding the control variables constant. The analysis consists of a total of six models. Models 1 through 5 demonstrate the findings in six-year-intervals from 1988 to 2017, and Model 6 demonstrates the accumulated total findings from 1988 to 2017.

Table 4. Effect of trust in unions on union membership.

	Model 1. 1988-1993	Model 2. 1994-1999	Model 3. 2000-2005	Model 4. 2006-2011	Model 5. 2012-2017	Model 6. 1988-2017
Low trust in unions	0.631** (0.175)	0.831 (0.179)	0.833 (0.150)	0.818 (0.174)	0.820 (0.189)	0.780*** (0.076)
High trust in unions	2.172*** (0.192)	2.106*** (0.181)	1.568*** (0.139)	2.248*** (0.150)	1.689*** (0.144)	1.875*** (0.069)
Working	3.186*** (0.177)	4.723*** (0.171)	4.214*** (0.129)	2.450*** (0.143)	2.262*** (0.140)	3.159*** (0.066)
Unemployed	2.618 (0.236)	2.075*** (0.205)	1.973*** (0.181)	0.933 (0.212)	0.755 (0.239)	1.565*** (0.090)
Female	1.019 (0.149)	1.073 (0.150)	1.049 (0.119)	0.801 (0.134)	1.017 (0.133)	0.976 (0.060)
Age	1.453*** (0.036)	1.554*** (0.039)	1.496*** (0.028)	1.645*** (0.033)	1.538*** (0.032)	1.534*** (0.015)
Year of survey	1.114* (0.045)	0.879** (0.044)	0.990 (0.034)	0.891** (0.039)	1.111* (0.044)	0.943*** (0.004)
<i>N</i>	1 018	1 212	1 962	2 172	1 864	8 228
<i>Missing cases</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Cox & Snell R² and Nagelkerke R²</i>	0.265- 0.353	0.308- 0.424	0.254- 0.364	0.206- 0.344	0.177- 0.281	0.261- 0.380
<i>Predicted correct (%)</i>	71.1	76.8	76.8	84.0	81.3	78,7

Notes: Odds ratios; standard errors in parenthesis. Variable 'trust in unions' is demonstrated in separate values *low trust in unions* and *high trust in unions*. Value *neither high nor low trust* is used as reference point in the independent variable and therefore not included in the table. Region: Sweden. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

As is demonstrated in Model 6, the odds ratio of *low trust in unions* is highly significant and below 1, indicating that the odds of a young Swedish individual joining the union is low if that

individual displays low trust in unions. This can be seen in Models 1 through 5 as well; however, the results from *low trust in unions* are insignificant when isolated in six-year-intervals, except for in Model 1. In contrast, the odds ratios of *high trust in unions* are highly significant and above 1 in all of the six models, which indicates that high trust in unions increases the odds of the outcome of union membership. Accordingly, this confirms hypothesis 1a, that if a young Swedish individual displays positive attitudes towards the union, then unionisation may be more likely for that individual. However, as can be seen throughout all six models, the odds ratios of high trust in unions on the outcome of union membership has decreased over time. This finding confirms hypothesis 1b, that positive attitudes towards the union have had a weakened effect on the outcome of union membership when measured over time.

Continuing, both of the variables *working* and *unemployed* demonstrate odds ratios above 1 with high significance, indicating a positive effect on the outcome of union membership. However, the odds ratio of *working* is approximately twice as high as the *unemployed* variable, which indicates that the outcome of union membership is more common amongst individuals who work rather than individuals who are unemployed. Furthermore, the odds ratios of both variables have decreased over time as well, which could possibly indicate that a larger number of students are unionising. It could also indicate that an increasing number of unionised workers are leaving the labour force and entering retirement, and that a decreasing number of young individuals, who are entering the labour market, are joining the union. In other words, the outflux is greater than the influx, when measured over time.

As expected, the odds ratios of the variable *age* (ages 16 to 24) is above 1 and highly significant, meaning that the older the individual, within the age range of 16 to 24, the more likely it is for that individual to unionise. Finally, the odds ratio of the variable *year of survey* fluctuates above and below 1 in each of the six models, however, in Model 6, the odds ratio of year of survey is below 1 and highly significant. This would entail that the outcome of union membership has decreased over time, when measured from 1988 to 2017.

The estimates of Cox & Snell R^2 and Nagelkerke R^2 indicates the amount of variation in the dependent variable explained by the models, and could be described as pseudo R^2 statistics, as opposed to true R^2 statistics which are usually seen in multiple regression outputs. The estimates range from a minimum value of 0 to a maximum value of approximately 1. For

instance, as demonstrated in the Cox & Snell R^2 and Nagelkerke R^2 estimates in Model 6, the respective values of 0.261 and 0.380 suggest that between 26.1 percent and 38 percent of the variability is explained by the combination of variables applied to the model (Pallant, 2013). Furthermore, Model 6 correctly classified 78.7 percent of the overall cases, which indicates that the model accurately identified the true positives, which is the group with the characteristic of interest, and the true negatives, which is the group without the characteristic of interest (Pallant, 2013). As for the Models 1 through 5, the estimates of Cox & Snell R^2 and Nagelkerke R^2 , as well as the predicted percentage correct estimates, can be viewed in the regression output seen in **Table 4** above.

As previously mentioned, variables such as ‘outsourcing employment’, ‘temporary employment’, ‘workplace attachment’, ‘exposure to union representatives’, and ‘exposure to colleagues’, were not included in the analysis due to the lack of available data. If these variables were to be included in the analysis, and measured over time, the variables could have possibly provided an explanation to whether a growing involuntary structural individualism could be the reason for the weakening effect of positive attitudes towards the union on the outcome of unionisation. However, due to the impracticability of such a statistical analysis, the results from the SNA applied to this thesis will instead be able to provide the alternative option, which is *circumstantial evidence* of this notion.

Conclusively, the assessment of the findings from the LNA are deemed robust, satisfactory, and confirming of the first two-part hypothesis of this thesis. The results indicate that young Swedish individuals aged 16-24 with low trust in unions are less likely to unionise, and that young Swedish individuals aged 16-24 with high trust in unions are more likely to unionise. The results also indicate that positive attitudes towards the union have had a weakened effect on the outcome of union membership when measured over time. The confirmation of these findings allows for a further investigation of the possibility that involuntary structural individualism could have an overpowering effect on the effect of attitudes towards the union on the outcome of unionisation. Such an investigation will be provided in the following chapter, which covers the qualitative small-N analysis applied to this thesis.

Chapter IV. Qualitative small-N analysis

In contrast to the LNA, where emphasis is placed on numbers and the main features consists of measurement, causality, generalisation, and replication, the SNA is concerned with words, with features consisting of context, description, theory, and the perspectives of research participants (Bryman, 2012). The SNA allows for a contextualised understanding of the disproportionate union coverage declines amongst the Swedish youth and completes the process of triangulation in order to increase the validity of the study (Yeasmin & Rahman, 2012). In this section, the case selection, the qualitative method, the process of analysis, the ethical implications, and the limitations of the SNA will be discussed, and finally, the results of the SNA will be provided.

4.1. Case selection

Case selection in qualitative studies can be challenging, since selected participants are intended to elucidate features of a larger population. Sampling in quantitative studies succeed better in representation, since the large quantity of cases is more likely to reflect the characteristics of the larger population (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). However, qualitative studies are favourable when studying the opinions of a specific group, which is why the choice of a qualitative study, in addition to a quantitative study, was the optimal choice for this thesis. There are, however, risks of selection bias when choosing cases in a deliberate manner in qualitative studies. But there are also risks associated with choosing cases at complete random. For instance, random sampling in quantitative large-N analyses naturally allows for a lower standard deviation, meaning that the average scope of variation around the mean is lower (Bryman, 2012). In qualitative small-N analyses, random sampling could instead lead to a high standard deviation, due to the sample being unrepresentative (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). Against this background, the case selection process of the SNA of this thesis consisted of purposive sampling.

Purposive sampling was applied in order to identify and select participants relevant to the investigation, which mainly aims to answer the second research question of this thesis (Bryman, 2012; Palinkas et al., 2015). With financial support from the Swedish analytics company, the Youth Barometer, a total of 16 young Swedish individuals who have entered the labour market

were selected to participate in two focus group interviews.¹⁵ The participants were contacted via e-mail using contact information provided by respondents from the previous annual Youth Barometer surveys. The selected participants were then divided into two focus groups, one group consisting of eight unionised individuals (focus group one), and another group consisting of eight non-unionised individuals (focus group two). Hypothetically, the optimal case selection procedure would be to select individuals who display a strong workplace attachment and a history of high exposure to union representatives and colleagues in one group, and individuals who display a weak workplace attachment and a history of low exposure to union representatives and colleagues in another group. However, such a case selection process would be too complex and difficult to implement. Therefore, the reverse case selection procedure was applied instead, as it was more achievable.

The age of the participants ranged from 19 to 24, thus considered belonging to today's youth (Seemiller & Grace, 2019). The participants were all young Swedish workers, however, with various employment statuses, such as temporary employments, outsourcing employments, part-time employments, and full-time employments.¹⁶ The characteristics of their jobs varied as well, where some of the participants were working night shifts, lonely shifts, day-time jobs, and jobs with various hours. None of the research participants had a university background, nor were they white-collar workers, rather, the participants had jobs that required some form of physical effort, however, not necessarily manual labour in the traditional sense. The participants were mostly in the service or retail sector with jobs that do not require a university education, but a primary or a secondary education. For further information about the characteristics of the focus group participants, see [Appendix 2](#).

4.1.1. Limitations of the qualitative analysis

The sample of the qualitative small-N analysis is unable to *fully* represent 'the Swedish youth' due to its limited size. Considering the small sample size, it is quite an ambitious task to strive

¹⁵ The average number of participants per focus group ranges from 3 to 21, with a median of 10 participants per group (Ochieng, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018).

¹⁶ Employment status refers to the participants' type of employment at the time when the focus group interviews were conducted. During the discussions, the participants may have, naturally, also shared experiences from previous employments, in addition to their current employments. For instance, a participant with a current full-time employment may have also shared experiences from the time of being an outsourced or a temporary employee. In which case this may have occurred, these shared previous experiences will be mentioned in the section presenting the findings.

for a full representation of the population. As previously mentioned, the majority of the participants held occupations within the service sector, and none of the participants had a university background. In addition, the unionised participants were all members of blue-collar unions affiliated with LO. These characteristics produces a certain bias which limits the scope to investigate the experiences of young Swedish individuals who belong to academic and white-collar unions affiliated with Saco and TCO. However, the disproportionate declines in union coverage amongst the Swedish youth is particularly experienced amongst blue-collar unions affiliated with LO (Kjellberg, 2019a). Taking this into consideration, the opinions of the participants are still relevant to the purpose of exploring the causes for the disproportionate union coverage declines amongst the Swedish youth.

4.2. Focus group interviews

The tool for data collection was in the form of *focus group interviews*. Focus group interviews are a method used with the purpose of generating group discussions, in which the participants of the study focus on a specific subject that needs in-depth exploration. Hence, the name ‘focus group’ (Knodel, 1995). The research method originally emerged due to the limitations of individual interviews, where researchers often play a large role in the data collection process. Focus group interviews, however, allow the participants to play a larger role in the data collection process instead. Another positive aspect of focus group interviews is that they allow spontaneity, since the format generates a natural form of social interaction with other participants, and attaches less focus on the moderator, something that one-on-one interviews often fail to do with their strict “question-answer” setting (Hennink, 2007). Furthermore, another benefit of the method of focus group interviews is that individuals are able to encourage the participation of hesitant or shy participants who would otherwise be unwilling to be interviewed individually in a one-on-one interview (Kitzinger, 1995). Conclusively, the purpose of using the method of focus group interviews for the SNA was to enable the possibility of receiving in-depth information and diverse opinions from the interactions of the participants (Hennink, 2007; Ochieng, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018).

The focus group interviews were conducted in Stockholm, Sweden, and were moderated using a prepared interview guideline (see [Appendix 1](#)) categorised in five different themes. (1) *the youth’s educational choices*, (2) *the youth’s professional choices*, (3) *the youth and the*

union, (4) the youth's union commitment, (5) how youth receive information about the union. The first two themes were developed in order to gain an understanding of the educational and professional background of the research participants, providing a context to their current labour market position. Continuing, the third and the fourth themes were developed in order to understand the participants' views on unions, from a general perspective, and their views on joining the union. Further, the themes were developed in order to gain an understanding of their associations with being unionised and not being unionised, as well as their thoughts on how the union could convince the Swedish youth to become involved with the union. These two themes were of primary importance for the investigation, regarding whether their sense of workplace attachment and exposure to union representatives and colleagues played a role in their process of unionisation, or their absence of unionisation. Finally, the last theme was developed in order to explore how the youth receive, and should receive, information about the union. Learning about the Swedish youth's preferences on how to receive information about the union could be beneficial to the purpose of reversing the trend of disproportionate union coverage declines amongst the Swedish youth.

As a moderator during the focus group interviews, the main task was to maintain a good balance between making sure that the discussions stayed on-topic, but also ensuring that the moderation did not become too instructive or revealing, in order to sustain the spontaneity of the discussions. The responsibilities as a moderator also included encouraging participants to speak and requesting overly talkative participants to let others talk or finish their sentences (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009). Furthermore, the duration of each focus group interview was approximately 90 minutes, which is the median length of a focus group interview (Ochieng, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018).

4.3. Content analysis

The information gathered from the focus group interviews was analysed in the form of *classical content analysis*, which entails the process of structuring the gathered information to generate codes, concepts and categories. In order to enable coding, the focus group interviews were recorded with both video and audio. The recording process was followed by the transcription process, which entails the production of large bodies of texts for the purpose of an in-depth analysis for each focus group interview. The purpose of the use of video recordings during the

focus group interviews was to identify the specific participants that were speaking during the discussions, which facilitates the transcription process. Furthermore, the video recordings of the focus group interviews were transcribed twice, in order to ensure that all the information gathered during the interviews were written down correctly in the fullest. After the transcription process, the texts were analysed and coded. The coding process of classical content analysis entails identifying whether a participant used a specific code and assessing whether each of the groups used the specific code, and finally, identifying all instances of a specific code. These codes were supplemented with a qualitative description, in addition to information regarding the frequency of the codes (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009). The coding process was necessary in order to structurally analyse the statements made during the discussions. This process involved carefully reading and summarising statements, and then formulating the summaries into codes that represent the topic of the statements. Furthermore, when analysing focus groups interviews, the group dynamic and the interaction between the participants need to be considered. During the process of coding, different types of interactions need to be categorised, such as "questions", "referring to the opinion of another participant", "displaying a change of mind", and so forth (Kitzinger, 1995). The coding process was repeated twice, in order to ensure that each statement was categorised into applicable codes.

4.4. Ethical implications

Prior to the recruitment of the participants, all individuals were informed that the focus group interviews would be conducted in cooperation with the Youth Barometer, and that this thesis would be available to the public when finalised. Considering that this thesis would be available to the public, the confidentiality of the participants was of main importance.

When analysing information gathered from focus group interviews, it is important to identify detailed accounts from the discussions, and to later reformulate sensitive information to avoid confidentiality dilemmas. Kaiser (2009), on the topic of protecting participant confidentiality, explain *internal confidentiality* as the occurrence of information that include unintentional revealing characteristics of participants. For instance, names of participants could be replaced with pseudonyms, however, characteristic information about the participants could still be available, such as information revealing the combination of sex, age, region of origin, years under employment, and company names. Despite the fact that the names of the

participants would be replaced with a pseudonym, the information about the participants presented in the study could still reveal distinctive characteristics, which in turn could lead to the identification of the participants (Kaiser, 2009). Therefore, in order to ensure confidentiality in this thesis, the names of the 16 participants were replaced with numbers, and the names of the companies where the participants are employed have been censored as well. This procedure makes it difficult to identify the participants. The available information regarding the participants is strictly basic, but essential information, such as sex, age, employment, job type, and union affiliation (see **Appendix 2**).

Continuing, the practice of rewarding participants for their contributions to the thesis should also be discussed, regarding its ethical implications. As Head (2009) explains in her research on the ethics and the implications of rewarding participants in qualitative research, she argues that fair compensation encourages participation but could also induce a power dynamic that many researchers overlook. Some participants with low income may feel obliged to participate in studies if the reward is too high to refuse. Rewards may cause a sense of coercion amongst participants, where they could feel obligated to answer all the questions that the research moderator asks during the interview (Head, 2009). In the case of the focus group interviews conducted in this thesis, the participants were informed, in conjunction with the recruitment process, that they would receive the reward solely for their attendance, and not for their level of participation during the discussions. The participants were encouraged to engage in discussions; however, it was made clear that their engagement was not obligatory in order for them to receive the reward. Furthermore, an optimal reward amount depends on factors such as the time and effort to commute to the location of the focus group interview, the total length of the focus group interview, and the topic of the focus group discussions (Singer & Kulka, 2002). In the case of the focus group interviews conducted in this thesis, the 16 participants were each rewarded gift vouchers worth 300 Swedish crowns (SEK) for their participation. The gift vouchers were fully financed by the Youth Barometer, which was also informed to the participants, prior to the recruitment.

4.5. Findings from the qualitative small-N analysis

In this section, the results from the qualitative small-N analysis are presented. The section is divided into two sub-sections where the findings from each focus group interview will be presented. The first sub-section is dedicated to the findings from the first focus group, the unionised participants, and the second sub-section is dedicated to the findings of the second focus group, the non-unionised participants. Conclusively, the qualitative findings will be discussed. The cited participants and their focus group belongings are listed in [Appendix 2](#).

4.5.1. Findings from focus group one

A recurring theme in the discussions amongst the unionised participants, regarding the reasons that compelled them to unionise, was their willingness to increase their sense of security and comfortability at work. Many of the unionised participants had, for instance, shared personal stories where they had used the support of the union in cases where they had experienced unfair treatment from their employer. The exposure to risks at the job was often a factor that was highlighted in the discussions in order to explain *why* some individuals chose to unionise. It was clear, when the unionised participants were asked about their reasons to join the union, that “when something goes bad, you are happy to be a member of the union”. However, most of the unionised participants expressed that they would not have unionised if it were not for union representatives visiting them at their workplaces or visiting them during high school before they had graduated. The participants expressed that face-to-face contact with the union was highly important and was also highlighted as the most significant factor that lead to their unionisation.

“ *During the three years that I have been working, I have only seen a union representative once at my workplace, and that time they visited, I joined the union.*

– Participant eight, focus group one

A few of the participants were unfamiliar with union representatives visiting different workplaces. The participants who had met union representatives at the workplace emphasised the importance of a union presence at the workplace, in order to encourage individuals to join the union. This was simply due to the fact that the participants, and their colleagues, had the opportunity to ask union representatives questions, not only about labour rights, but also about

the union membership fees, the membership process, and other concerns involving the membership. Furthermore, many of participants felt that a face-to-face contact with the union was important in order for them to feel comfortable unionising. Due to the large variety of unions in Sweden, many of the participants expressed an initial hesitance as to which union was the right choice for them, however, with the presence of union representatives at the workplace, many of the participants felt that they were able to join the right union.

“ *I think people who work for the union should come to workplaces and show themselves. I hadn't heard of a union person at my job before and I didn't know which one to join, until they visited us. They should especially come and visit retail stores.*

– Participant one, focus group one

I agree... the union should visit workplaces and talk with the employees face-to-face. If you work at an ordinary workplace like mine, you've probably never seen a union person, and if you haven't, you probably won't join a union. ”

– Participant four, focus group one

Another participant expressed that advertisements on social media platforms could be useful, but that the most effective strategy in terms of recruiting young individuals to the union seemed to be the face-to-face contact between the staff and union representatives at the workplace. According to this participant, searching for information on the internet requires some effort from the individual, but if the union would visit workplaces, they would reach out to a higher number of young workers who are oblivious to the fact that they could use the support of the union. This could also be a valuable strategy to inform workers about their labour rights.

“ *If the union is amongst the people, then they can spread information on another level. It is one thing to read something on the computer, but another thing to go out and communicate with people.*

– Participant five, focus group one

Not only did participants suggest that the union should visit workplaces, in order to reach out to workers personally, but they also suggested that the union should implement early action-measures. Some suggested that union representatives should visit high schools, since it could be a valuable opportunity to reach out to the Swedish youth and talk to high school students that are soon about graduate and enter the labour market. This could be of benefit to young individuals who plan on working a few years before they, potentially, begin studying at universities. Furthermore, some of the common employments amongst the Swedish youth after

graduating high school seem to be temporary employments or outsourcing employments within the service or retail sector, where the support of the union could be useful.

“ *I joined the union when I was in high school. They visited our school and talked about the benefits of being unionised. At that time, I had worked at the store for six months. Today, I have understood the worth of a membership, to receive benefits, and to receive support if I get into trouble with my employer.*

– Participant one, focus group one

The participants who had unionised after their face-to-face contact with union representatives in high school also mentioned that the visits included special offers aimed towards high school students, such as reduced membership fees during their first working-year after graduation. Informing high school students about the union, in combination with an incentive to unionise, seemed to be an effective combination, prompting them to unionise.

“ *The union came to my high school and offered a free membership for the first year, but only if you joined that same day.*

– Participant two, focus group one

The participants also expressed a sense that the union should visit high schools, no matter if some high school programmes are aimed towards students in vocational training or in college preparation programmes. One participant expressed that all types of students could benefit from unionising, no matter which type of educational programme students are enrolled in, since many students usually have a sabbatical working-year prior to their university studies.

“ *I think unions should visit schools, no matter if it is a vocational programme or a college preparation programme. I think that in high school, people are a bit clueless because they don't know what they want to do in life, so you might work for a few years before studying at university.*

– Participant one, focus group one

One of the unionised participants even suggested that the schools should include basic information about the union in the curriculum, where the history of the union and labour rights is taught as an obligatory form of basic knowledge to the students.

“ *In high school, you have no clue about the union and the whole labour thing. And you know how it works in high school, with peer pressure and everything... If info about the union would be voluntary, nobody would talk to the union. So, I think it should be compulsory so that everyone can learn about it.*

– Participant eight, focus group one

4.5.2. Findings from focus group two

As for the non-unionised participants in the second focus group, many expressed positive attitudes towards the union, in terms of the union's ideological and collective purpose. The reasons to why the participants had not joined the union was mainly expressed to be due to their previous lack of contact with union, as well as their lack of knowledge about the instrumentality of the union. Many participants had held different job positions and different employment types throughout the years, but almost none of the participants had actually met a union representative face-to-face before.

“ *I feel that the reason to why I'm not a member of the union is because I haven't gotten information about the union. I have worked at the lowest level of the labour market, and of course, that is when I should get involved with the union.*

– Participant seven, focus group two

“ *If the union had come to my workplace, I would have joined. Because then you would not have to sit and search for answers yourself and find out which union to turn to and to register, and that whole process...*

– Participant three, focus group two

The lack of knowledge about the union, combined with the fact that some of the participants had experienced constant job changes, all seemed to add to the confusion regarding which union was the right choice to join, since there are a variety to choose from. This had in turn led some of the participants to not take any action at all, regarding joining a union. When compared to the unionised group, some of the unionised participants had experienced this problem as well, however, their face-to-face contact with union representatives seemed to be helpful in their search for the right union.

“ *To me, it's definitely been because of the lack of info. When I used to work as a security guard, I used to receive mail from the union all the time, but when I started my current job, I haven't received a single one. So, I have no idea which union I should join. To me, joining the union feels like a complicated process.*

– Participant three, focus group two

“ *I don't want to receive a phone call, because then I would just think that it is a salesman or something. I want straightforward information from someone who works at the union.*

– Participant five, focus group two

Having a job that mainly consists of lonely work shifts and experiencing a lack of exposure to colleagues also seemed to be a factor that hampered the decision to unionise. One participant worked as a personal assistant for the elderly, a job where you mostly do not work beside colleagues. The participant expressed that a face-to-face contact with colleagues could have probably helped her in the pursuit of unionising, since she would be able to ask colleagues various questions about the union.

“ *If I didn't work alone, I would have probably talked to a colleague who I knew was a member, and I would've asked questions, like, "which union are you a member of?", "do you think the union is good?", "what does it cost per month?". I would have really appreciated information from someone I know.*

– Participant six, focus group two

...Also, I don't sit in an office with my colleagues. So, I don't know, I think it would be a bit scary if a random person visited me at my workplace, because I work alone. So maybe if they [the union] had better ads, that would work for me. ”

– Participant six, focus group two

One participant who worked as an electrician seemed to experience a weak workplace attachment. The participant was the only woman at a male-dominant workplace and expressed that many of her older male colleagues opposed the idea of a female electrician. The participant expressed that she would be hesitant to unionise if the union representative were an old man, since she would probably associate him with her colleagues at work. The participant therefore suggested that, for the purpose of recruiting young workers, the union should send young union representatives to visit workplaces. The intention of such a notion was that a mutual affinity between young representatives and young workers could contribute to a higher number of young workers unionising. Furthermore, the participant expressed that her busy work schedule made it difficult to actively engage in unionising on her own, since she felt that it would require too much of her time. She was therefore positive to the idea that young union representatives should visit workplaces once or twice a year, in order to encourage the youth to unionise.

“ *I would've probably not joined the union if an old man wanted me to join. It's enough that I'm a woman myself, and as a female electrician, you stand out from the crowd quite a lot. I have to take a lot of crap at work because I'm a young girl, and there's a lot of older electricians at my workplace that don't think that women should work as electricians. It's just that, I think that the youth speak to the youth.*

– Participant three, focus group two

It's hard to put my finger on why I haven't unionised, but I work from seven to four, every day, five days a week. I also have a shift every other weekend. I don't know, I have to organise my time. It would have been easier if I knew which union to turn to. Also, I'm the only one in my social circle that works as an electrician, so it becomes difficult to talk about the union. Would've been easier if they [the union] came to my workplace.

”

– Participant three, focus group two

“ *...It should be obligatory that companies invite unions once or twice a year, so that they can visit and talk to the staff. It's easy to duck a phone call or skip an ad.*

– Participant three, focus group two

Another participant who had actually experienced a face-to-face contact with the union at the workplace expressed that the union was too old-fashioned and traditional, which made it difficult for him to identify with the union and the image of a ‘unionist’. The participant added that the individuals who were active in the local union club at the workplace did not have any knowledge about the youth or ethnicities, which affected the participants image of the union.

“ *I felt that the local union club wasn't geared for young people at all. Some of them kept asking about my heritage, saying “where are you from?”. I know that I don't look Swedish. All those guys were old and Swedish, and they had no clue about different ethnicities or young people, which is a real bummer.*

– Participant two, focus group two

Even though a lack of face-to-face contact with union representatives and colleagues seemed to be the main reasons for not joining the union, not all of the participants actually felt that joining the union was necessary. Some of the participants expressed an unwillingness to unionise since they considered their current employments to be temporary. The participants felt that joining the union would be unnecessary, since they would probably change jobs in the near future. These participants were not necessarily opposed to the idea of unionising, but they would rather join a union relevant to their future profession instead, rather than their current temporary job. One of the participants, who held a temporary job at a restaurant, felt that unionising was unnecessary since she regarded her job as a ‘side-gig’.

“ *I landed this job recently, and it's just temporary. I had no prior experience in the restaurant business, and it's nothing I would do full-time in the future. So, I feel that it would be unnecessary to join the restaurant union if my job is only a ‘side-gig’.*

– Participant one, focus group two

4.5.3. Discussion of qualitative findings

Most of the unionised participants of focus group one expressed having a face-to-face contact with union representatives, either at their workplaces, or prior to entering the labour market, where union representatives had visited some of the participants' high schools. In contrast, most of the non-unionised participants expressed that they had not encountered union representatives at workplaces but were very open to the idea of union representatives visiting them. Furthermore, in contrast to the unionised participants of focus group one, the non-unionised participants of focus group two gave the impression of having a weak workplace attachment. Many of the non-unionised participants had a labour position that made it more difficult for them to unionise. A face-to-face contact with union representatives and colleagues, as well as a strong workplace attachment increases the chances to unionise (Bain & Elsheikh, 1979; Vandaele, 2018; Toubøl & Jensen, 2014; Godino & Molina, 2019; Kjellberg, 2019a). Against this background, some of the non-unionised participants held jobs consisting of lonely work shifts, where one works without the presence of colleagues, or outsourcing employments, where one changes workplace regularly, as well as temporary employments, where one works for a short period of time interspersed with periods of unemployment.

The perception of the union amongst most of the participants consisted of the idea that the union acted as a social safety net, but at the same time a "hard-to-reach" bureaucratic organisation. These perceptions could be relativized to a similar behaviour seen amongst the youth when relating to politics, where the youth, from an international perspective, are positive to politics as generally defined, however, do not participate in conventional politics or in political youth organisations as compared to in previous years (Henn & Foard, 2012; Sloam, 2007; Loader, Vromen, & Xenos, 2014; Kitanova, 2019). The non-unionised participants expressed positive attitudes towards the union for protecting workers' labour rights and acting as a social safety net, but the idea of unionising was perceived as complicated, time-consuming, and for some as irrelevant, which hindered their unionisation process.

Against this background, these findings seem to indicate *circumstantial evidence* that unionised individuals are more likely than non-unionised individuals to indicate a stronger workplace attachment, and a higher exposure to union representatives and colleagues. Conclusively, these findings are confirming of the second hypothesis of this thesis.

Chapter V. Discussion

Relativizing to the survey conducted by the Youth Barometer (2020a), the Swedish youth may have, indeed, maintained positive attitudes towards the union over the past years. However, as is indicated from the findings of the LNA, the influence that positive attitudes towards the union have on the outcome of union membership has, amongst the Swedish youth, decreased over time. Over the past years in Sweden, the number of temporary employments and outsourcing employments, as well as youth unemployment, has increased (Eurostat, 2020; FDB, 2020; AKU, 2020b). Against this background, the Swedish youth aged 16-24 are particularly likely to have these types of non-standard employments, as well as more likely to endure unemployment compared to any other age group. Considering these structural labour market changes in Sweden, there are reasons to assume that the weakened effect of positive attitudes towards the union, on the outcome of union membership, could be due to a growing involuntary structural individualism amongst the Swedish youth. The findings from the SNA provides *circumstantial evidence* of this notion being true. The non-unionised research participants were more likely to display a weaker workplace attachment, and less likely to have experienced a face-to-face contact with union representatives and colleagues, as compared to the unionised participants.

As is shown in **Table 5** below, the optimal scenario for unionisation is when a young Swedish individual display positive attitudes towards the union, as well as not enduring involuntary structural individualism. This was the case for many of the unionised participants in focus group one. As for the non-unionised participants of focus group two, many displayed characteristics defined in ‘Scenario 3’, and some displayed characteristics defined in ‘Scenario 4’. Due to these circumstances, these individuals were experiencing a labour position that made it less likely for them to join the union.

	Attitudes towards the union	Involuntary structural individualism	Union membership	Union coverage	
Scenario 1	+	-	+	+	1
Scenario 2	-	-	-	-	2
Scenario 3	+	+	-	-	3
Scenario 4	-	+	-	-	4

Table 5. Ranking of unionisation outcome depending on scenario.

Based on the combination of findings from the LNA and the SNA, this thesis provides *circumstantial evidence* that involuntary structural individualism could be an explanatory factor for the disproportionate union coverage declines amongst the Swedish youth aged 16-24.

Conclusions

Indicated from the findings from the logistic regression analysis applied to the quantitative large-N analysis of this thesis, it can be established that positive attitudes towards the union increases the odds ratio of the outcome of union membership. Measuring the Swedish youth's attitudes towards the union from the period of 1988 through 2017, the overall odds ratio of union membership when displaying positive attitudes towards the union is 1.875. Furthermore, the odds ratio of union membership when displaying negative attitudes towards the union is 0.780 when measured over the same time period. However, despite the fact that positive attitudes towards the union increases the odds ratio union membership, the odds ratio of such an outcome has decreased over the past 30 years. During the period of 1988-1993, the odds ratio of such an outcome was 2.172, whereas during the period of 2012-2017, the odds ratio of such an outcome was 1.689. This could indicate that the effect of positive attitudes towards the union on the outcome of union membership has weakened over time amongst the Swedish youth. Continuing, the results from the qualitative small-N analysis of this thesis indicates *circumstantial evidence* of involuntary structural individualism amongst non-unionised participants. A growing involuntary structural individualism, due to a weaker workplace attachment and a lack of exposure to union representatives and colleagues, could possibly be an explanatory factor for the disproportionate declines in union coverage amongst the Swedish youth aged 16-24. This is, however, solely circumstantial evidence. In order to strengthen these claims, there is a need for a statistical analysis that includes additional, relevant variables.

Future studies

In order to statistically analyse the effect of involuntary structural individualism on the outcome of unionisation, future studies should consist of a dataset which includes variables such as 'outsourcing employment', 'temporary employment', and operationalisations of 'workplace attachment', 'exposure to union representatives', and 'exposure to colleagues'. Suggestively, the annual SOM surveys could incorporate applicable questions in order to construct such

variables in future datasets. Furthermore, during the course of this thesis, the coronavirus pandemic has caused massive implications in society, including the economy and the labour market. The coronavirus crisis in Europe began in February. Already in March, memberships of the voluntary income and unemployment insurances (A-kassan) in Sweden increased with 114 000 members (3 percent) as compared to in February. The Swedish Hotel and Restaurant Employees A-kassan (HRAK) experienced a membership increase of 17 percent in only one month (IAF, 2020). During the same period, Swedish unions experienced a total increase of 30 000 new memberships. Academic unions affiliated with Saco experienced an increase of approximately 3 700 members, and white-collar unions affiliated with TCO experienced an increase of approximately 15 800 members, and finally, blue-collar unions affiliated with LO experienced an increase of approximately 9 600 members (Kjellberg & Bender, 2020). Future studies should therefore analyse the effect of the prevalence of the coronavirus on the Swedish youth's decision to unionise, and to what extent factors such as involuntary structural individualism, and attitudes towards the union, have had an influence during the course of the pandemic.

Practical implications

In order to reverse the trend of disproportionate union coverage declines amongst the youth, the union could, suggestively, increase its efforts to make contact with hard-to-reach young workers at workplaces. Based on the qualitative small-N analysis, a successful strategy for union recruitment seemed to be face-to-face contact between workers and the union. Most of the unionised focus group participants expressed that they joined the union when union representatives visited them at workplaces or at high school, which is something that the non-unionised participants had not experienced. Furthermore, young union representatives could possibly be more effective in encouraging young workers to the union, since the similarity in age could increase the potential for a mutual affinity between union representatives and young workers, which could, in turn, increase the chances for young workers to unionise.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.

Interview Guide

The interview guide below has been translated into English. The focus group interviews were originally conducted in Swedish.

Background information script (10 min)

Welcome to this focus group! The discussion here today will be about unions, and the duration of the discussion will be about an hour and a half.

An important thing to mention is that there are no right or wrong answers, and you obviously do not need to have the same opinions as the rest of the group. On the contrary, it is fun and interesting if we share different opinions and ideas. It also does not matter how knowledgeable you are about what we are discussing. All thoughts and opinions are welcome! You can also abstain from answering the questions if you want – you will still receive the gift voucher at the end of this interview.

The idea is also that we should have a nice time together. I encourage laughing and joking, but only if it does not happen at someone else's expense. Some questions will be answered one person at a time, and some will be asked to the whole group. Any information that may reveal your identity will be removed during the analysis process, therefore, you will be completely anonymous.

We will start off with a greeting session, where we tell something short about ourselves!

Theme 1: The youth's educational choices (10 min)

Objective: understand the youth's views on their educational choices.

Can you briefly describe your thoughts on your high school choice?

Now that you have completed your education, was your education as you had imagined?

Follow-up questions:

If it was as you had imagined:

What did you think about the education before you started the programme, and in what way did the programme meet your expectations?

If not:

What did you think about the education before you started the programme, and why did the programme not meet your expectations?

What do you think about the difference between vocational and college preparation programmes?

Theme 2: The youth's professional choices (10 min)

Objective: understand the youth's views on their career choices.

Can you describe your thoughts on your current job?

How did you end up at your current workplace?

What made you want to apply for that particular job?

What do you think was most relevant when choosing a job? (E.g. close to home, reputation, status, friends, etcetera).

What kind of employment do you have? (E.g. full-time, part-time, temporary, outsourcing, etcetera).

Now that you have been working for a while, what are your opinions on your job?

Do you have a regular contact with your colleagues if you have any colleagues?

Do you feel a sense of "workplace collectivity" at your workplace?

Theme 3.1: The youth and the union (25 min)¹⁷

Objective: Understand the youth's view of union memberships and what caused them to unionise, as well as what the youth associates with unionisation. Use the white board.

Which union are you a member of?

Why did you join the union?

How did you join the union?

Have you ever met any union representatives at your workplace, and if so, how often?

Can you describe the situations when union representatives visited your workplace?

What do you think you can benefit from by unionising?

What is positive / negative about the union?

If you are member of two or more unions, or have been a member of another union previously, is there any union you think is better than the other? And if so, why?

What is the most important thing about a union membership?

What kind of benefits or services do you usually use, or have you used, that the union offers?

Is there any benefit or service that you think is missing in the union today?

Is there any benefit or service in any other union that you think is good, or that you would like your union to have as well?

¹⁷ Theme 3.1. was dedicated to focus group one, consisting of union members

Do you think being a member of the union is worth the membership fee? (*Is it worth being a member of the union from an economic perspective?*)

Follow-up questions:

If you do:

How would you motivate this for someone who is hesitant to join the union?

If not:

How much should a membership cost in relation to income, for you to think it is worth it?

What would the union need to add or adjust for it to be worth joining?

What do you think the union should take more responsibility in?

What do you think about unions being politically affiliated?

What topic do you think the union should take more responsibility in? (E.g. environmental issues, etcetera).

Theme 3.2: The youth and the union (25 min)¹⁸

Objective: Understand the youth's view on membership in the union and what they associate with being unionised. Use the white board.

Are you a member of the union?

What do you think about the union?

Do you have positive or negative attitudes towards the union and its purpose?

What is positive/negative about the union?

If you are positive towards the union, why are you not unionised?

If you are negative towards the union, what could the union do for you to unionise?

If you think a membership in the union is too expensive, how much should it cost in relation to your income to make it worth joining?

Have you ever met any union representatives at your workplace, and if so, how often?

What specifically should the union adjust to make it worth joining?

What do you think about unions being politically affiliated?

What topic do you think the union should take more responsibility in? (E.g. environmental issues, etcetera).

Theme 4.1: The youth's union commitment (15 min)¹⁹

Objective: Understand the youth's views on what made them unionise and engage in the union. Understand what would make them more involved in the union.

¹⁸ Theme 3.2. was dedicated to focus group two, consisting of the non-unionised participants

¹⁹ Theme 4.1. was dedicated to focus group one, consisting of the unionised participants

Have any of you actively influenced something at work with the support of the union?

If you have:

In what way have you influenced or tried to influence something with the help of the union?

(E.g. a problem at work)

Where / to whom did you turn to?

What were the reactions of your colleagues and the employer?

Did it (the problem at work) change?

Did the process feel easy / simple?

Do you wish the process could have developed in some other way? If so, how?

Have you wanted to influence something with the help of the union, but have not done it?

If yes:

Why have you not?

What would get you more involved in the union?

Has there been times when you thought you wanted to change something, but did not know how, or dare to?

Do you talk with your family or friends about the union?

What does your family or friends think of the union?

Theme 4.2: The youth's union commitment (15 min)²⁰

Objective: Understand the youth's views on how they can join / start getting involved in the union. Understand what would get the youth involved in the union at all.

Have you ever wanted to unionise?

Have you wanted to influence something with the help of the union?

What has prevented you from joining the union, or influence something with the help of the union?

Theme 5: How youth receive information about the union (15 min)

Objective: Understand how the youth receive information about the union. What platforms should the union use to reach the youth? Which platforms are considered to have the most impact and are the most reliable for current information on the union?

Where do you get the best information about the union?

Why is the information from "X" better than from anyone or anything else?

What could these sources of info do to improve the information you receive about the union?

Where is it best to inform, or be informed about the union?

When (what age) should you start inform / getting information about the union?

What do you think the union should do to increase information about the union?

²⁰ Theme 4.2. was dedicated to focus group two, consisting of the non-unionised participants

Appendix 2.

Participants of Focus Group 1: Members of Unions

Participants	Sex	Age	Employment	Job type	Union affiliation
1	F	22	Part-time	Store Clerk	Union of Commercial Employees
2	M	24	Full-time	Restaurant worker	Restaurant Workers' Union
3	M	24	Full-time	Warehouse Worker	Real Estate Employees' Association
4	M	20	Full-time	Cook	Restaurant Workers' Union
5	F	22	Full-time	Team Leader	Union of Commercial Employees
6	F	22	Full-time	Store Clerk	Union of Commercial Employees
7	F	21	Full-time	Team Leader	Union for Service and Communications Employees
8	F	23	Part-time	Store Clerk	Union of Commercial Employees

Participants of Focus Group 2: Not Members of Unions

Participants	Sex	Age	Employment	Job type	Union affiliation
1	F	23	Part-time (Temporary, outsourcing)	Restaurant Hostess	-
2	M	24	Full-time	Team Leader	-
3	F	24	Full-time	Electrician	-
4	M	23	Full-time	Truck Driver	-
5	M	19	Part-time (Temporary)	Store Clerk	-
6	F	24	Full-time	Personal Assistant	-
7	M	23	Full-time	Postman	-
8	M	24	Part-time (Temporary)	Store Clerk	-

Appendix 3.

Graph 1.

Comparison of attitudes towards the union, and union coverage rates amongst blue-collar workers, and the total, aged 16-24.

Own depiction based on data sources:

The Youth Barometer. (1998). *Arbetslivsrapporten*. Stockholm: Ungdomsbarometern.

The Youth Barometer. (2020a). *Arbetsliv- och fackrapporten*. Stockholm: Ungdomsbarometern.

AKU [Arbetskraftsundersökningarna]. (2020a). *Trade union coverage in Sweden, blue-collar workers, excluding full-time students*. Stockholm: Statistics Sweden.

Year	Blue-collar workers	Total	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
1997	71%		71%	7%	17%
	68%				
2000	65%	54%			
	61%	52%			
	61%	51%			
	57%	50%			
2005	58%	50%			
	56%	48%			
	55%	47%			
	52%	46%			
2010	48%	40%			
	41%	36%			
	40%	35%			
	36%	34%			
2015	36%	34%			
	36%	36%			
	38%	36%			
	37%	35%			
2019	37%	35%			
	39%	36%			
	38%	37%			
2019	41%	36%			
	40%		72%	7%	21%

Graph 2.

Union coverage in Sweden, blue-collar workers, and the total, excluding full-time students.

Own depiction based on data sources:

AKU [Arbetskraftsundersökningarna]. (2020a). *Trade union coverage in Sweden, blue-collar workers, excluding full-time students*. Stockholm: Statistics Sweden.

Kjellberg, A. (2017). *Fackliga organisationer och medlemmar i dagens Sverige*. (3rd ed.) Lund: Arkiv.

Year	16-24 (BC)	16-24 (total)	25-29 (BC)	30-44 (BC)	45-64 (BC)	16-64 (BC total)	16-64 (total)
1990	69%	62%	83%	87%	90%	84%	81%
	68%		83%	86%	89%	83%	
	73%		84%	88%	90%	85%	
1995	77%	69%	84%	89%	91%	87%	85%
	77%		86%	89%	91%	88%	
	75%		86%	89%	92%	88%	
2000	75%		85%	89%	91%	88%	
	71%		86%	89%	91%	87%	
	68%		84%	88%	91%	86%	
2005	65%	54%	83%	88%	91%	86%	82%
	61%	52%	81%	88%	91%	85%	81%
	61%	51%	81%	86%	90%	84%	80%
2010	57%	50%	79%	86%	90%	83%	80%
	58%	50%	77%	85%	89%	82%	80%
	56%	48%	74%	84%	88%	81%	79%
2015	55%	47%	72%	83%	88%	80%	78%
	52%	46%	73%	82%	86%	79%	77%
	48%	40%	70%	80%	85%	76%	73%
2018	41%	36%	65%	77%	81%	72%	71%
	40%	35%	60%	74%	82%	71%	71%
	36%	34%	60%	74%	82%	71%	71%
2018	36%	34%	60%	72%	81%	69%	70%
	36%	36%	56%	71%	80%	68%	70%
	38%	36%	57%	70%	81%	68%	70%
2015	37%	35%	56%	67%	79%	67%	70%
	37%	35%	55%	66%	77%	65%	69%
	39%	36%	55%	64%	76%	64%	69%
2018	38%	37%	55%	62%	75%	63%	69%
	41%	36%	53%	60%	73%	62%	68%

Note: BC = Blue-collar

Graph 3.

Union coverage amongst temporary and full-time employees in Sweden, categorised after union association belonging.

Own depiction based on data source:

AKU [Arbetskraftsundersökningarna]. (2020c). *Trade union coverage amongst temporary and full-time employees in Sweden, year 2005-2019*. Stockholm: Statistics Sweden (SCB).

Year	Temporary employees			Full-time employees		
	LO	TCO	SACO	LO	TCO	SACO
2005	28,9%	13,9%	9,3%	36,2%	28,8%	11,9%
	24,6%	11,3%	8,1%	35,2%	27,6%	11,8%
	23,5%	10,8%	7,5%	34,5%	26,4%	11,6%
	21,7%	11,1%	8,2%	33,1%	25,3%	11,7%
	20,7%	11,1%	8,5%	31,5%	25,8%	12,5%
2010	20,2%	11,1%	8,4%	30,8%	26,2%	13,0%
	20,4%	11,3%	8,5%	30,1%	26,0%	13,3%
	18,7%	11,4%	8,5%	29,2%	26,5%	13,7%
	19,1%	12,2%	8,3%	28,2%	27,3%	14,3%
	18,2%	12,9%	8,2%	27,0%	27,8%	14,6%
2015	17,7%	12,9%	8,8%	25,8%	27,9%	15,1%
	17,7%	12,5%	8,5%	24,6%	28,6%	15,2%
	16,8%	12,9%	8,2%	24,2%	28,3%	15,4%
	15,7%	13,1%	7,9%	23,2%	28,2%	15,9%
2019	14,1%	12,6%	8,6%	22,5%	28,4%	16,2%

Graph 4.

Growth of outsourcing companies in Sweden, demonstrated in company size (number of employees).

Own depiction based on data source:

FDB [Företagsdatabasen]. *Company by industry SNI92, SNI2002, SNI200, and size class, year 1993 – 2019* (not in printed form). Stockholm: Statistics Sweden (SCB), different years.

Growth of outsourcing companies, demonstrated in company size (number of employees)									
Year	0	1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100-199	200-499	500+
1995	55	33	4	1	0	0	0	0	1
	70	39	5	2	3	0	0	0	1
	67	42	7	2	5	1	0	0	1
	85	45	10	7	2	2	0	0	1
	114	54	12	8	0	1	1	0	1
2000	116	69	19	13	5	1	0	0	1
	148	93	21	17	10	5	0	0	1
	209	123	31	16	18	3	4	1	1
	261	148	39	27	20	4	5	2	1
	284	183	41	25	15	2	6	1	1
2005	299	229	94	71	87	28	28	8	6
	386	257	104	65	75	35	21	7	5
	488	290	86	83	65	40	19	8	6
	580	396	110	91	85	45	21	10	7
	742	534	152	86	103	49	21	18	9
2010	786	560	184	102	113	53	30	19	10
	587	599	154	109	124	44	27	18	13
	563	585	171	94	113	47	28	19	11
	699	671	168	108	144	50	37	26	14
	616	782	185	127	144	56	39	30	16
2015	706	829	219	122	149	55	44	27	14
	755	898	237	136	157	57	38	27	16
	758	967	251	172	179	64	40	31	17
	940	1087	290	166	184	83	44	37	21
	1106	1205	296	175	183	66	58	40	22
2019	1118	1381	281	218	187	80	50	46	23
	1268	1520	288	220	195	73	56	45	22