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EMPTY LABOUR AND A MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS OF COMMITMENT

A case study of two different organisations

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

The aim of this master's thesis is to explore the interplay of commitment and empty labour in two widely different organisations. Empty labour can be described as when you are doing anything else than your official working tasks. Commitment on the other hand is how and in what way you feel obligated to the organisation, your boss, your colleagues' etcetera. Depending on several factors such as colleagues, the organisation in itself, compensation packages and of course psychological predispositions amongst others, we argue that organisational members will relate to their work, workplace or peers in differing ways. In general terms, the higher the commitment that is expressed, the higher the obligation to actually do your job, or other tasks that are beneficial for the organisation or the context. By conducting qualitative interviews in addition to workplace observations, we have found empirical support for our idea that the types of commitment that are present in organisations, influence the type of empty labour that employees choose to engage in. From this, the type of empty labour that certain employees' conduct is a product of a multi-facetted construct where feelings towards the employer and/or colleagues, compensation, interest in the job, ethics and such play a vital role. Following this, we have found the need to combine the theory behind different types of commitment with the theory describing empty labour, as a way of bridging the gap that we identified exists between the two fields which are arguably important for one another.

Keywords: *Empty labor, empty labour, commitment, multidimensional, career, job involvement, enduring, coping, subjectivity, contextual*

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1. Introduction

In most cases, empty labour seems to be a sort of misbehaviour towards the organisation and can range from active resistance towards management to more subtle actions such as quietly wasting time while acting as if you are being productive (Paulsen, 2015). The overarching term of misbehaviour is described as when you are doing anything at all in the workplace that is not something that you are supposed to do (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999, p.2). This view is challenged by Karlsson (2012, p.185), who is narrowing the scope of misbehaviour to only include conscious misbehaviour such as wasting time, e.g. disregarding mistakes and such.

Empty labour can take a lot of forms and be seen in a lot of different ways. According to Paulsen (2015, p.2), around two hours a day on average is spent on non-work, by employees at work. And as Paulsen (2015, p.62) writes, "It can be a trap; it can be a way of coping; a personal pleasure; or a type of sabotage; depending on the organisational context and the subjective intent of the employee.". This basically translates to the assumption that it is the intent of the employee that decides if empty labour is being used against the employer, or if it is just something that you feel the need to do for yourself.

Paulsen (2013; 2015) does not place a lot of focus on the different types of commitment and in turn how this is able to affect the amount and type of empty labour that employees partake in. Commitment is described as either high or low, and no distinctions in between are done. This is a shortcoming of his analysis as it arguably simplifies a, in reality, quite complex issue.

Several authors (Allen & Meyer, 1991; Blau, 1985; Greenhaus, 1971; Morrow, 1993) delve deeper into the questions regarding commitment, although we feel that in these cases, empty labour is disconnected from the model and thus we feel the need to construct our own theoretical model to intertwine these two dimensions, commitment and empty labour.

Considering the fact that our two case organisations differ in almost every imaginable way, we felt that the current framework had to be revised and adapted to the reality in which we have been conducting our study.

In this thesis, we have relied on an ethnographic study meaning that we have been conducting quite a few interviews which we then have reinforced with our field

observations that we have been able to do on a number of occasions when visiting our case organisations.

1.1 Theoretical gap

As mentioned above, there is a gap in the theoretical foundation that links different types of commitment with certain types of empty labour and in extension the prevalence or amount of it. While conducting a study to prove or disprove our conclusions arguably would be tedious, we argue that understanding why people feel a certain way towards their job, their employer or their colleagues and how this in turn affects performance could be quite useful and if nothing else, pave the road for further understanding and research regarding organisational commitment and behaviour.

1.2 Research problem

From the above descriptions, the reason for, and the implications of empty labour, may not be as unitary as one might think. If this is the case, the amount of empty labour depends not always on the same variables, whereas an interesting notion would be that different kinds of empty labour is being perceived and made sense of differently. We therefore aim to examine different kinds of empty labour, what type of commitment that causes this and how they can be connected to understand why people in certain positions or organisations behave in the way that they do and in turn, possibly suggest a way of dealing with this.

1.3 Aim of study and research questions

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the difference between different kinds of "empty labour" (Paulsen, 2015) and how it is perceived by employees. Furthermore, we will focus on the different types of commitment that can be identified amongst our interviewees and that arguably has laid the foundation of the empty labour that we are able to observe. Given our theoretical framework and empirical cases we have the need to address the following research questions which, if answered, be believe could benefit employers and

decision makers in understanding the prevalence of empty labour and how this is perceived by employees and in extension, some of the underlying reasons for it (Styhre, 2013, p.24):

How do employees in two different organisations partake in empty labour?

How does different types of commitment affect organisational performance amongst employees, and support varying forms of empty labour?

By combining existing literature of different fields with our empirical findings, we hope to be able to highlight the gap that we found between empty labour and commitment and in extension advance the research regarding the social aspects of labour.

Through the findings of this study, our hope is that the reader will get a better understanding of first and foremost the concept of empty labour, secondly, the different types of commitment and how they affect the everyday life of an employee, and lastly, how it is all connected, empty labour, commitment, social context, individualism etcetera.

1.4 Outline of thesis

This thesis is constructed in the following way. After the introduction in chapter one, we will move on to present and examine the existing theoretical framework with the key concepts that our research will revolve around in chapter two. After this part, we will present our methodology in chapter three, how we approached the task, sampling selection and data collection etcetera, this section will end by focusing a bit on the limitations that we perceived. After this section, we will present our empirical findings in chapter four, based both on interviews as well as observations. Following the empirical section, the discussion in chapter five aims to combine our theoretical framework with our empirical findings in order to construct our new model for understanding the presented concepts. In chapter six, we will present our conclusions and suggestions for further research. Chapter seven will present our references, and chapter eight consists of our interview questionnaire.

2. Theoretical framework

The following chapter is structured in the following way. First, we will try to summarise the current literature describing the phenomenon that is empty labour, what types there are, what they depend on and how they are motivated. Secondly, we will describe the different types of commitment that we have found and why we argue that the framework by Paulsen (2015) is somewhat lacking and end the section by starting to introduce our own multidimensional model of commitment. Lastly, we will focus on collectivistic and individualistic cultures and how this plays a role in our new dynamic model of explanation.

2.1 Empty labour

As mentioned, empty labour is a sort of misbehaviour towards the organisation and can range from active resistance towards management to more subtle actions such as quietly wasting time while acting as if you are being productive (Paulsen, 2015). A broader definition would be to say that empty labour is everything and anything that is not your official tasks when at work, ergo what the organisation employs (and in most cases, pays) you to do.

While some may view empty labour all together as an act of resistance (Ackroyd & Thomson, 1999) and thereby being inherently destructive for organisations, there are other voices describing empty labour as something that can be beneficial for organisations enabling "individuals to balance and cross the boundaries between life realms" (D'Abate, 2005, p.144). Neither of these authors distinguish between different kinds of empty labour however, thereby treating it as unitary entity.

2.1.1 Different kinds of empty labour

According to the model describing empty labour, (Paulsen, 2015) there are two different dimensions of empty labour. The first one is called the potential output and describes the fact that effort and output are not rationally connected in the way one might think. The second dimension is the work obligation, and that describes how employees feels towards the employer/their job.

2.1.2 Potential output

In some jobs, for example when working as a cashier, employees do not possess the ability to affect output by increasing their effort/input they put into their job. If the cashier's only task is to sell over the counter and there are no customers available, they lack the possibility to increase the output they create in their work. In such a case, the potential output that the employee can control is limited and thereby it can be seen as "low potential output".

In contrast to the cashier's role, there are other jobs where the employee arguably can control the potential output. This would be the case with a person working in telemarketing for example. In this case the output from the job is very much dependent on the effort/input the person puts into the work; she/he can, theoretically at least, work a little harder and with this get a little higher output. Thereby, she/he always has something to do, which will increase output, if she/he chooses to. This can be seen as "high potential output".

To further clarify what this concept is about, the potential output is to what extent you can increase your work load/input, within the frames of your work description, and with this increase, also increase the output of what your job is meant to "create". So, if you have to wait for someone else to "finish" something for your job to "make sense", and additional effort at your part therefore will be in vain, your potential output is low. If you on the other hand never get to a point where this happens, and you therefore always can create more and more output, the potential output is high (Baldamus, 1961).

2.1.3 Work obligation

This dimension describes how employees relate to the "extras" within a job. As stated by Baldamus (1961, p.85-86): "You probably do certain things in your job not actually specified in your contract. Suppose you are justifiable dissatisfied but can do nothing about your grievance short of finding another job. Would you, in the meantime, drop the extras?"

The work obligation can be defined as "the employee's inclination to work within the frames of the firm regardless of collegial and managerial pressures." (Paulsen, 2015, p.84). Simply put, how obligated does an employee feel to work for the firm, not taking pressure into account?

Why this dimension becomes a crucial part in describing empty labour is because it to some extent will determine what sort of activities employees will engage in depending on each given situation. For example, a person that feels a high sense of work obligation, but who has a low potential output and therefore nothing to do, might invent other tasks somewhat related to the job. Hence, as they feel obligated they might feel that it would be wrong just sitting doing something that does not have anything with their work to do and thereby not benefitting their organisation in any way. This would not be the case with someone who has a low sense of work obligation. They might instead engage in other external activities that has nothing to do with their work or their organisation.

An important clarification to make here is that work obligation does not necessarily mean that you feel obligated to maximise your organisation's profit, you might also feel obligated to do your work because you feel that the work you are doing is important in other ways. Obligation is just a way of describing how obligated you feel towards your work and the tasks that accompany this. We will explore this concept considerably more further on.

From these two dimensions, according to Paulsen's theoretical framework, we will get the following types of Empty Labour:

	Low Potential Output	**High Potential Output**
Strong Work Obligation	Enduring	Coping
Weak Work Obligation	Slacking	Soldiering

Figure 1. Describing the dimensions that the type of empty labour that will present itself depends on.

As to make things clearer, we will describe all four types briefly, although they have not all presented themselves in our empirical studies. As we see in figure 1, in a case where an employee has weak work obligation combined with low potential output, is where *slacking* becomes actual. What this means is that you spend time, while at work, doing things for your own pleasure that have nothing to do with you work. As an example, a person that

has a low sense of work obligation, and has nothing to do, will make use of this time and find something more "enjoyable" to do instead of inventing other tasks since they in no way feel obligated to the output that they create. This sort of behaviour would not, in a correct manner, be described by what Weber (1978, p.968) refer to as the "purely impersonal character of the office, with its separation of the private sphere from that of the official activities." This would more correctly be described as what Fleming (2005) refers to as "cultures of fun", where a part of their work is to "play". Simply put, since they do not feel obligated or care about the output they create through their work, and furthermore have anything to do, they will engage in other, sometimes external activities, instead. D'Abate (2005, p.1023), brings up this occurrence, where the mutual understanding among those that slack often is "as long as the client is pleased, nothing else matters". Examples of slacking activities can be browsing the web, playing games and/or hanging out with your colleagues doing non-job-related things (Paulsen, 2015).

When a person has a low potential output, but instead feels a high sense of work obligation, they may find themselves in a situation of *enduring*. This can be induced by an uneven distribution of work tasks, meaning that from time to time you have nothing to do even if you want to, or just that their work load overall is low. In these cases, people in some situations may invent new types of tasks, designed as a way of enduring the time you have nothing to do, or simply endure. It is namely so that traditional work ethics are still a common occurrence, whereas wage labour is something that many ground their self-esteem in (Bauman, 2004; Beder, 2001). For people with a high sense of work obligation, a lot of time not having something to do can therefore be seen as problematic, whereas a potential consequence of this can be what is referred to as "boreout"; the excess of time doing nothing makes you unproductive. Boreout is defined by Philippe Rothlin and Peter Werder as: "Employees are understretched, unmotivated and immeasurably bored" (Rothlin & Werder, 2007, p.4). Enduring can thereby be seen as a failure to fully engage in the sorts of activities that employees that engage in "slacking" do. So, while someone who is slacking see down time as something you can use to have "fun" with and enjoy, an employee that endures see work as something that needs to be repressed. (Paulsen, 2015)

In a situation where a person has a high level of commitment combined with a high potential output, the empty labour will be about *coping*. What this means is that the employee care about the output that he or she will be able to produce, and that the amount that the employee can produce is almost unlimited; the more they work the more they will

produce. In such situations, the empty labour is used as a way of coping with the stressful conditions at work and is thereby created actively by the employee. This have been discussed by psychologists as well as management scholars, where coping can be seen as "neutralisation technique" (D'Abate, 2005: Sagie et al., 2003; Viven & Thompson, 2005). This can thereby be seen as a way of being able to continue to "produce output" at a high level. Thus, the coping method here is not a way of resisting towards the job itself, but is rather used as a method so they can continue to deliver on a high level. A way of seeing coping is therefore that it can be used to avoid stress and in extension burnout.

The last expression of empty labour is that which is called *soldiering*. This is exercised when a person has high potential output, but at the same time have a low work obligation. This means that a person will find themselves in a situation where more work will produce more output, thereby not finding themselves in a situation they have nothing to do. But at the same time, they do not feel committed towards the output. In practice, people who soldier will avoid doing their actual work. This phenomenon has been reported as early as the beginning of the 20th century where it was described as deliberately working as slow as possible (Taylor, 1919). The reasons for soldiering can range from economic incentives (prolonging work to get a higher salary) to a mere lack of interest (Paulsen, 2015).

As mentioned, despite its negative connotation, empty labour does not necessarily have to be a bad thing for the organisation, as it can be used to deal with stress for example. This means that an employee that is "wasting" time may avoid having to go on sick leave and thus avoiding being even more inconvenient to the organisation (Paulsen, 2015).

2.1.4 How subjects motivate their actions

From the expression of empty labour, we are here going to present four different ways that employees motivate the employment of empty labour.

The first one is called *adjustment*. As mentioned earlier, empty labour does not always present itself in a subjective way (in this case meaning active resistance) but rather because the potential output is too low. In these cases, employees adjust to the situation and make the "best" of their down time.

The second one is called *withdrawal.* In contrast to adjustment, where you just adjust to the situation that you find yourself in, withdrawal is more to be seen as a type of

"resignation that emanates from the employees wish to control, but also to avoid work" (Paulsen, 2015, p.129). In contrast to adjustment, the empty labour is created by the employee actively.

Furthermore, we have *direct dissent.* Compared to withdrawal, which often stems from a feeling of resignation regarding the current situation, direct dissent often comes from feelings of indignation. It can for example be seen as a way of "hitting out at the boss" due to resentment (Mars, 1982, p.32). Common things that can cause this type of indignation is having (in your opinion) stupid colleagues, working for an unethical organisation or having a bad boss for example. Time appropriation in this case (the creation of empty labour) can be seen as a "hidden revenge" towards the organisation/boss etcetera. Direct dissent does not, in most cases at least, originate from the indignation of "larger structures", and is mainly what separates it from the framed dissent.

Lastly, we take a short look at *framed dissent.* According to Scott (1991), there is a difference between transcripts that are formed as a way to "answer daily insults to dignity" and those who "confront elaborate ideologies that justify inequality, bondage, monarchy, caste and so on" (p.117-118). An example is that of a docker that motivates his fiddling with: "It's all insured and nobody's heard of an insurance company going broke. In any case, they've made millions out of this port and its us who do the work." (Mars, 1982, p.106). The main takeaway is that you are opposing some kind of structure, and that is what motivates the creation of empty labour in this case.

2.1.5 The meaning of work

Kaplan and Tausky (1974) have tried to summarise what gives your job meaning, taking several author's previous studies into account, (Friedmann & Havighurst, 1954; Morse & Weiss, 1955; Weiss & Kahn, 1960; Loether, 1964; Tausky, 1969) and concluded that there seems to be six different sorts of meanings, that you use to rationalise your work. Their typology for meaning of work can be summarised as following: 1. That it is an intrinsically satisfying activity, 2. Because you see it as a status and prestige bestowing activity, 3. Because work is a morally correct activity, 4. Because work is a source of satisfying interpersonal experiences, 5. Because work is an economic activity or 6. Work is a scheduled activity which keeps you occupied.

Furthermore, Kaplan and Tausky (1974), in their questionnaire when researching why unemployed people actually want to have a job, the most common answers were:

1) To make a living and support my family.
2) To get off welfare
3) To keep busy
4) I like to work
5) You get self-respect from working
6) To help others
7) It's natural to work, it's good for you
8) To get a sense of accomplishment and achievement
9) To have new experiences and be able to learn new things and improve myself
10) I do not know

These questions, combined with their typology of meanings of work, will, as we shall see further on, resonate to a large degree with the commitment constructs we will use. This brings us naturally to the different types of commitment.

2.2 Commitment

This section will begin with a short criticism of Paulsen's (2015) view of commitment, followed by a short explanation of the different types of commitment introduced by a range of authors. After this, we will try to introduce our own combined model for explaining commitment as thoroughly as possible.

2.2.1 The one-dimensional aspect of high commitment

As stated above, high commitment according is to what degree employees are inclined to work within the boundaries of the organisation, regardless of internal pressure within the firm. From the model that is presented by Paulsen (2015), commitment lies on a spectrum ranging from high to low. Hence, the model does not make any difference between different kinds of commitment and is thereby treating it rather one dimensional without taking into consideration different kinds of commitment. Consequently, this dimension does not take

into consideration if, and to what possible extent, different types of commitment might influence other sorts of commitment, and how these then will interplay in the way employees might engage in empty labour. This arguably is to simplify a quite complex phenomenon and would benefit from being extended to contain additional dimensions. This is by the authors thought of as a way of creating a somewhat more nuanced picture of how high commitment affects empty labour. As we will see in the empirical section further on, not one of our subjects had expressed that they were driven by either a high or low commitment, instead they all showed at the very least, two types of commitment affecting one another and in extension how the employee behaved and felt towards the organisation.

2.2.2 Dimensions of high commitment

In the following section, we will firstly present the most recognised and comprehensible models describing different sort of commitments. Thereafter we will go into detail what is said about each of the individual constructs/dimensions. This will be made as a way of uniting and separating the different models from each other, and from this build a refined model regarding commitment that will be used to extend commitment from one dimensional to multiple dimensions. This section will include a range of different authors and research as a way of constructing and deconstructing the different types of commitment that are mentioned in the literature, in order for our model to give the reader a good overview of the commitment constructs.

2.2.3 Commitment according to Morrow, Randall & Cote and Meyer & Allen

According to Morrow (1993) there are five universal forms of work commitment. The five types of commitment are as follows, affective organisational commitment, continuance organisational commitment, career commitment, job involvement and work ethic endorsement.

An alternative to this categorisation of work commitment is that of Randall and Cote (1992) which divides the types of commitment into, work group attachment, protestant work ethic, job involvement, career salience and organisational commitment.

The third model for commitment that we will use is that of John Meyer and Natalie Allen (1993). They argue that there are three different kinds of organisational commitment. Important here is to note that this is about the different kinds of organisational commitment and thereby inherently differs from the model presented by Morrow (1993) as well as that of Randall & Cotes (1992). The dimensions are as following; affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

Universal Commitment (Morrow)				
Work Ethic Endorsement	Career Commitment	Job Involvement	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment

Work Commitment Constructs (Randall & Cote)				
Protestant Work Ethic	Career Salience	Job Involvement	Work Group Commitment	Organisational Commitment

Organisational Commitment (Allen & Meyer)		
Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment

Figure 2,3,4. Showcasing the different constructs in the three different models.

The rationale behind figures two through four is to in an easy way visualise the similarities and also the differences that presents themselves in the models. As can be seen, some divisions are basically the same while others vary depending on the divisions made by the author(s) behind it. Our approach at this stage is to go through the different commitment constructs and then clarify eventual similarities and differences. From here on forth we will refer to constructs instead of dimensions.

2.2.4 Job involvement

Lodahl and Keiner (1965) defined job involvement as the "degree to which a person identifies psychologically with his work." (p.24). Job involvement according to these authors consider the internalisation of values regarding how "good" (as in goodness, not compensations or such) the job is (Southgate, 2006), and to what extent performance in the job affects a person's self-esteem.

In the work of Lodahl & Keiner (1965), however, the words 'work' and 'job' are being used interchangeably which has been target for discussion. Kanguno (1982), for example, meant that this definition of job involvement, which was presented by Lodahl and Keiner (1965), did not make the distinction between the work and job context; it could namely be argued that one can feel personally involved both in a specific job context as well as a general work context (Southgate, 2006). This means that a person can either feel committed to a specific sort of job, or work in general as something that you should do for the sake of work. Ellroy, Everett & Flynn (1991) means that whereas job involvement is more about how a person can satisfy their inner salient needs, work involvement instead is about normative beliefs about how you view and value work and is a result of cultural and social conditioning.

Gorn and Kanguno (1980) furthermore brought up criticism against that job involvement was to be seen as related to intrinsic needs, and disregarded the significance of extrinsic needs. What laid behind the criticism was that they thought that to be able to satisfy your intrinsic needs through work, could act as a facilitator for job involvement, but is in no way necessary for it to be present. From this, they thought of job involvement as something that were to be seen as psychological identification with the job and that it is dependent upon whether or not the job satisfies one's salient needs; if these were intrinsic or extrinsic where of less importance.

Following this, Kanguno (1982) developed and redefined the definition of job involvement to include "an individual's psychological identification or commitment to his/her job." (p.342).

Furthermore, due to that the earlier conceptualisation of job involvement did not recognise the different contexts, namely the specific job context and generalised work context, Ellroy, Everett, & Flynn (1991), believed that job involvement should be seen as a psychological identification with one's job. To feel job involvement in this sense is to be identified with the job (Ellroy et al., 1991).

What has just been brought up aligns with the ideas of Morrow (1983), whom in the development of the model chose to include Lawler and Halls (1970) way of measuring job involvement instead of that of Lodahl and Keiner (1965) due to the overlap in protestant work ethic (which soon will be explained in detail) that was expected in the original measurement scale. This overlap would be expected due to that if job involvement includes the general work context, which is that you feel committed to work as such, it would be considered an overlap in protestant work ethic. The measurement scale of Lawler and Halls (1970) focuses on things such as the degree of absorption in your work which is to be seen as closely related to psychological identification (Morrow, 1983). This same method of measuring job involvement was used by Randall & Cote (1992).

Continuing on this, Wiener & Yoav (1980) argue that the term job commitment and job involvement is used interchangeably a lot of the times. This is also in line with Kanguno's (1982) definition of job involvement, which states that commitment to one's job is part of job involvement. From now on, when referring to job involvement, we will therefore mean to what extent someone identifies with their job, which is to be seen as a sort of commitment.

2.2.5 Work ethic endorsement

There is a slight difference in the words that are being used, but are meant to describe the same thing (Cohen, 1993), and this is what we from now on will refer to as work ethic. This concept is defined in a similar way by both Blood (1969) and Mirels & Garett (1971) and basically means that a person finds hard work to be a good thing in itself and something that is to be considered an end in itself, rather than a mean to something else. So, someone that score high in work ethic will gain their sense of self-worth and moral stature depending on their willingness to work hard. One thereby could say that a person's job, career, organisation and/or union is to be seen more as an instrument to exercise high level of effort/work rather than important in themselves (Morrow, 1993). Fundamentally, work ethics therefore is about you working for the sake of work, and this is in this case the main motivator of your commitment.

As mentioned above, the work ethic is what is originally called the protestant work ethic endorsement and means that work in itself is good. One could also say that not to work in itself is bad. Luther, which were one of the founding fathers of the protestant

orientation within Christianity, namely hated those that just "drifted around", not working, and thought that they should be either banished or forced to work (Bernstein, 1997). Calvin, whose work as well was of great importance in the development of the protestant teachings, also damned the unemployed. According to him, there was nothing worse than not being of use to anyone, and just spend your days drinking and eating (Beder, 2000). Furthermore, Luther also stressed the "summon thought" which is basically that a person is born into a certain *context*, and a certain "work". This is thereby "something that man has to receive, append in, like a divine condition." (Weber, 1905).

This could arguably resonate in some degree to what Ellroy et al. (1991) elaborated on when talking about that work commitment in this sense is socially conditioned, meaning that how you view and value work is a social construct to some extent. Triandis (1972), in his work on subjective cultures, brings up a similar theme where he makes a distinction between the entitlement norm and the obligation norm. In this case the entitlement norm is your right to work, whereas the obligation norm is to be seen as the obligation for individuals within a society to work in order to contribute. Protestant work ethic could therefore, to a high degree, be seen as a social and cultural construct. As Randall & Cote (1991) writes: "The notion of obligations or duties derives from standards of reasoning about internalised personal responsibility and social or institutional commitment, in accordance with the protestant work ethic". This notion will be developed further on in the analysis.

For now, however, this construct is built upon the notion that work in itself is good and therefore makes you committed.

2.2.6 Career commitment and career salience

As for career salience, Greenhaus, (1971; 1973) defined career salience, as well as career commitment, as the "perceived importance of work and career in one's total life". From this, however, he added three dimensions to career salience to include 1) Relative importance in one's life, 2) General attitude towards work, and 3) Concerns for planning and advancement. Although Greenhaus distinguished these two constructs, in the way that he added three dimensions to career salience, these two concepts have been used interchangeably (Greenhaus, 1971; Weiner & Vardi, 1980). This also seems to be the case when studying the research of Randall & Cote (1992). However, according to Southgate, this constitutes a problem in the sense that the scales that are used describing them are meant to measure

different things. Whereas career salience is meant to measure the importance of one's career, career commitment on the other hand is for measuring how well one identifies with one's career (Southgate, 2005).

Until this day, these two constructs still overlap to some extent in in terms of that people use the career salience measurement scale when measuring career commitment (Southgate, 2005). What is important to illuminate here is that the career salience construct have received critique for a lack of congruence considering its definition compared to the measuring scale (Blau, 1985; Morrow, 1983, 1993; Morrow, Eastman & McElroy, 1991). Furthermore, the construct has received additional critique from Morrow due to potential "overlap" with constructs such as job involvement and organisational commitment (Morrow, 1983; 1993). From this, Morrow (1993) recommend not to use career salience when studying commitment research as it could lead to poor discriminant validity and reliability.

As for career commitment Blau (1985) reformulated this to instead include "one's attitude towards one's profession or vocation." (Blau, 1985, p.278). Blau (1985) argued that by using the term "profession or work", this was to be seen as more distinct from the constructs such as job involvement, as well as it is to be seen as a more assertive terminology than "work in general", and commitment towards a certain job as well as an organisation. According to this definition, career commitment should be seen as a concept aiming to explain the behaviour associated with the ability to cope with minor career setbacks in order to focus on the bigger picture consisting of career goals (Aryee & Tan, 1992).

What then interestingly becomes subject of discussion is that since Blau (1985) defines a career as "boundaryless and unpredictable", what is it then that a person is committed to, if we accept his notion that a career is both vague and unknown? (Southgate, 2006).

As a way to redefine the career as a concept, one suggestion is that of Corarelli & Bishop (1997), whom define a career as one's development of personal goals, attachments to, identification with, and involvement in these given goals. This amounts to that career commitment can be said to transcend occupation and tasks, a career can, and arguably does to a large extent today, involve several jobs over time and that career commitment thus takes on a longitude perspective (Corarelli & Bishop, 1997).

This amounts to that the definition of a career as a concept, stated by Corarelli & Bishop (1997) together with the definition of career commitment, stated by Blau (1985), will

be what constitutes the construct of career commitment which will be used further on in this thesis.

2.2.7 Organisational commitment

Randall & Cote (1992) used the definition of organisational commitment as the strength of the desire to remain a member of a given organisation, the willingness to exert effort to a high degree in order to benefit the organisation and to which degree one believes in and accepts the goals and the values of the given organisation. This definition is built upon the groundwork laid by Mowday, Streers & Porter (1979).

A main difference between the models becomes observable here. Whereas Randall & Cote (1992) use this commitment as one type of commitment, Morrow (1983), as well as Meyer & Allen (1993) whose whole model is about different kinds of organisational commitment, distinguish between different kinds of commitment towards the organisation. We have chosen to accept the notion that there are several different types of organisational commitment.

2.2.8 Affective commitment

This type of organisational commitment is constructed around the same idea in both models and is defined as to what extent you are emotionally attached to the organisation and identify with it and its goals. Meyer and Allen identify it as "positive feelings of identification with, attachment to, and involvement in, the work organisation." (Meyer & Allen, 1984, p. 375). Simply put, you reside within the organisation because you feel like it in the way that you are identified with, and positively attached to it.

2.2.9 Continuance commitment

This construct is about the cost that an employee will experience if they were to leave an organisation and is a part of both Morrow's (1993) as well as Meyer & Allen's (1993) models. One can argue it is a kind of risk/reward analysis that is made which makes you consider the benefits contra the drawback of taking another job. This can be due to social

reasons such as losing your friends, monetary reasons, as in getting a lower salary, or professional in the sense that you lose perceived social status or similar. Meyer & Allen, (1984), defines this as "the extent to which employees feel committed to their organisations by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving (e.g. investments or lack of attractive alternatives)" (Meyer and Allen, 1984, p.375).

According to McGree and Ford (1987), continuance commitment is a two-dimensional construct, and can be divided into personal sacrifice, meaning what you would lose if you leave, and the low alternative, meaning what the alternative to your current employment are and what you would gain from this.

2.2.10 Normative commitment

Seen from the organisational commitment perspective, this is something that differs Meyer and Allen's model from Morrow's. What this is about is that you feel committed out of obligation. If an organisation for example has invested money in you or in some other way "helped you", you might feel inclined to stay and work for the organisation not because you want to, but because you ought to (Meyer & Allen, 1993). This can be defined as the bond that is created between the individual and the organisation due to an obligation from the employee towards the organisation (Bergman, 2006).

2.2.11 Work group attachment

The main separation between Morrow's model and Randall & Cote's is this construct, which is called work group attachment, and refers to the individual person's identification with other members of the group, in this context, the organisation (Randall & Cote, 1974). When being hired by a company, an individual for example might have his/her needs gratified through guidance by a person or group within the organisation which in turn might influence the way the person view and relate to the organisation (Buchanan, 1974). Through this social involvement with people, emotional ties can be created to the organisation these individuals are within (Mowday et al., 1982). So, this construct simply describes the "social attachment" between individuals within an organisation (Randall & Cote, 1974).

2.2.12 What constitutes a solid model for commitment?

A main problem when performing commitment research is that of redundancy and overlap between different kinds of commitment (Morrow, 1983; 1993). So, in order to consequently divide and make use of different kinds of commitment, they need to be distinguishable from one another (Cohen, 1999). In other words, one type of commitment cannot systematically overlap another type of commitment. This is, according to Morrow (1993), also important in order to fully understand commitment; are they independent from the other sorts of commitment, or are they a consequence of another commitment?

According to Cohen (1999), results from a statistical analysis indicates that Morrow's constructs are independent variables. What should be stressed though is that Morrow's theory that job involvement is endogenous had no empirical support. The opposite seems to be the case in the meaning that someone that score high on job involvement, score high on the other because they enjoy everything with about their job more (Cohen, 1999).

2.2.13 Where does this leave us?

Morrow (1993) divides organisational commitment to include affective organisational commitment and continuous organisational. So far, the model of Morrow and the model constructed by Meyer and Allen overlap to a very high degree. However, affective committed is very similar to what is called organisational commitment in Randall & Cote's model. The main difference though is that Morrow has the construct of continuous commitment as someone that will think about what they stand to lose if they leave. This was again two dimensional in the way that you think of what you will lose, and at the same time what your alternatives are. Now, if you apply the social exchange theory on this, we as individuals want to be with people that reciprocate us and that we further can benefit from (Cohen, 1999). What this then means is that to be continuously committed is perhaps to be seen as a part of being what Randall & Cote refer to as being group work committed. This stems from that if you leave an organisation where you know people and where you have done a lot of favours and so forth, you will no longer be able to gain from these. This line of reasoning becomes even more congruent when it is clear that Cohen's (1999) research indicates that the construct of being continuously committed is an independent variable. So, to

feel group work committed can be seen as a part of being continuously committed. It is however not to be seen as to cover the whole construct.

Continuing on this, we have the normative commitment which is defined as the individual's bond with the organisation caused by an obligation on the part of the employee. If one then considers the way Mowday et al. (1982) and Buchanan (1974), refer to and talk about work group commitment, it would perhaps not be unreasonable to assume that normative commitment can also be a product of what Randall and Cote (1974) refer to as work group commitment. This in turn stems from that if a group of people treats you good and put in time and effort you might feel that you cannot leave them out of obligation. We thereby believe that the following division of group commitment would be suitable as a part of developing the theoretical framework:

Group work commitment	
Continance commitment	Normative commitment
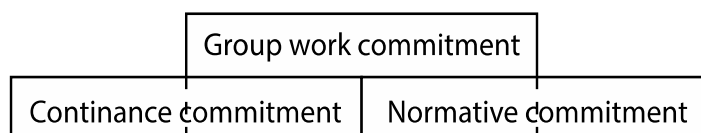
Figure 5. Group work commitment can be found in both continuance as well as normative commitment.

To explain what we mean by this, is that group work commitment would not be the most suitable way of measuring commitment since this would tend to infringe on two other constructs that explain commitment. For this reason, group work commitment will be excluded from the construct that we will use in this thesis. By instead using continuance and normative commitment (both of whom contains this construct), in contrast to including group work commitment as well, it would not be considered an independent construct in relation to the other constructs. For now, the following types of commitments are suggested: continuance, normative, career, affective and work ethic commitment.

Having presented this, we would like to present the following assembled model regulating high commitment and the commitment constructs we are going to discuss in our analysis:
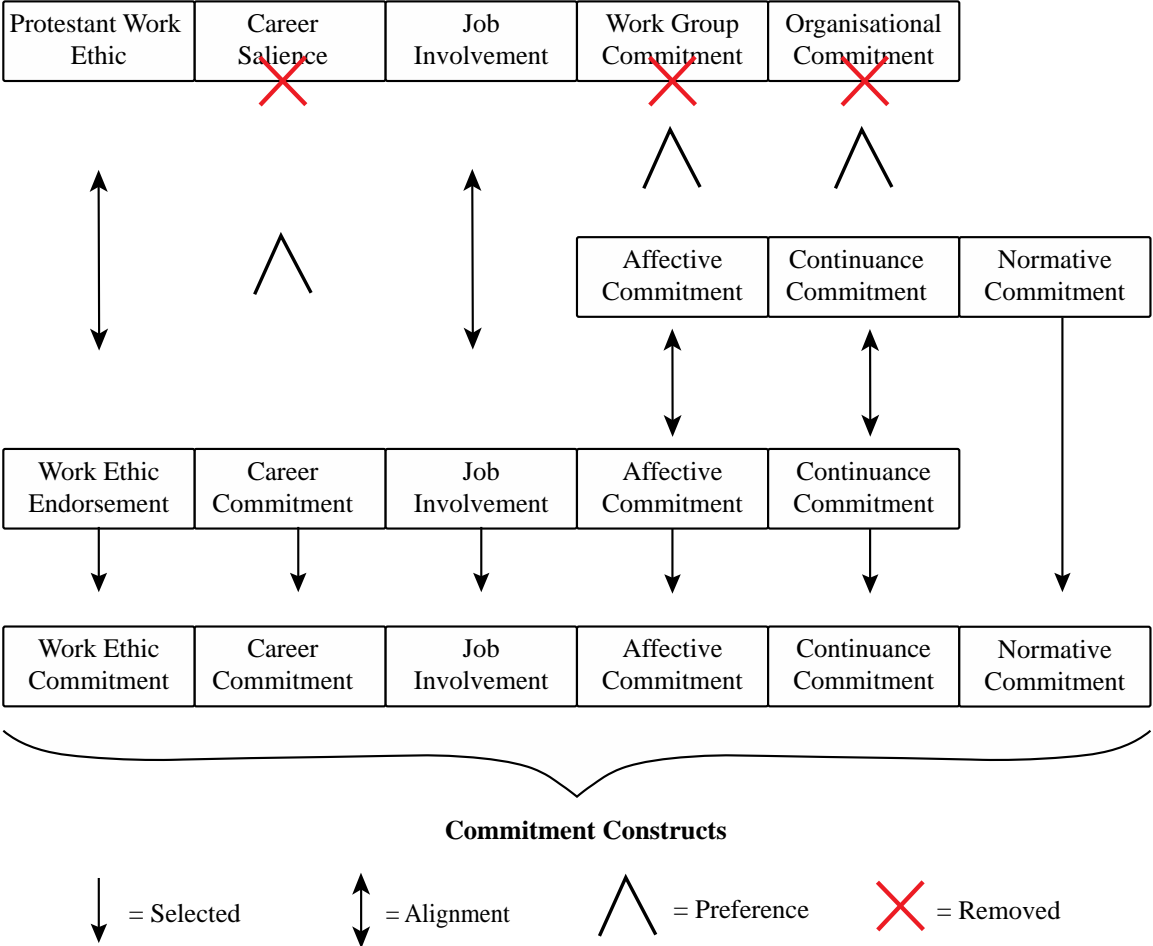
Figure 6. This figure is meant to showcase how and where the three models by Morrow, Randall & Cote and Meyer & Allen regarding commitment overlaps in terms of constructs, where they differ and which construct that is preferred. In extension, how this amounts to our commitment constructs (bottom row).

2.3 Collective versus individualistic cultures

In this section, we would like to introduce some differences between individualistic and collectivistic cultures as this will be part of the discussion and are seemingly able to affect the type of commitment one feels. As will be shown in the empirical

section, how you relate to certain aspects of working life is highly dependent on how you view yourself, your colleagues and the organisation in terms of collectivistic or individualistic traits.

2.3.1 Goal Prioritising

According to Hofstede (2001) there are a number of differences between individualistic cultures and collectivistic cultures. For one, in a collective culture, people tend to prioritise the goal of the collective before their own, whereas people in individualistic cultures instead tend to prioritise their own goal. So, while an individualist focuses on their own pursuit of goals, a collectivist places their focus on the pursuit of the goal of a group. This will, according to Trompenaars (1994), result in that in contexts where people are collectively focused, they will take actions that serves a community and/or society while this may not be the case in individualistically focused contexts.

2.3.2 Identification

Other than the prioritising of goals, the way an individual sees him- or herself differs depending on the context. While people from collectivistic cultures see themselves as interdependent of others that are members of their group, someone from an individualistic culture instead see her-/himself as independent from others. In other words, depending on what kind of person you are collective/individualistic wise, you will define yourself differently (Triandis, 1995).

2.3.3 In-group and out-group orientation

People from collective cultures will make a more distinct difference between people in their group versus people in other groups (Ardichivili, Maurer, Wenting and Studenmann, 2006). When studying behaviours among Chinese and American managers, where China is considered a collective culture and U.S an individualistic, Chow et al., (2000) found that those from China were more unwilling to share information with "outsiders", or out-group members, than the Americans. Hutching and Michailova (2004) claims that a

person's membership in a group when observing a collective culture, in this case China, affects all the daily activities and "is the source of identity, protection and loyalty…" (p.87).

2.3.4 Personal image (fear of losing face)

Hwang et al. (2003) argue that there are at least two dimensions to take into consideration in a social context meaning that you will either try to enhance your image or avoid losing it, namely *miansigain* (try to gain face) or *miansiloss* (avoid losing face). According to the authors, there is a positive correlation between miansigain (gain face) and being an individualist. This was found through that for example American student where more inclined to ask question in class, and the reasoning behind this is that asking question is not only a way to attain more knowledge, it is also a way of attaining prestige and recognition (Hwang et al. 2003; Ardichivili et al., 2006).

3. Methodology

This chapter focuses on presenting and explaining the methodology that has been used when conducting our research. Firstly, we will elaborate on why we chose the method that we did, and then move on to introduce the design and the aim of the research. After this, we will explain the process of choosing case organisations and interviewees and in the same section continue with focusing on how the data was collected and further analysed. Finally, we will present what we perceived to be the main limitations with our research.

3.1 Research approach and design

A qualitative method was used in order to analyse two workplaces profoundly. The reason, amongst others, of conducting qualitative interviews is that it gives us the chance to be able to show the perspectives of the employees (Yin, 2011). Since the examination was performed from the notion that we needed to dig deep to get answers to the research questions, the exercise of symbolic interactionism was a thorough theme. Hence, the primary focus was on conducting interviews (that was recorded and further on transcribed) in combination with observations of participants as part of a field study in the workplace being analysed. The method focusing on interviews combined with extensive field studies is described by Prasad (2015) as an anthropological stance, in order to understand the answers that we get, we have to understand the "native inhabitants" of the culture that we want to understand, in our case, two different organisations. This is why we have placed a lot of focus on actually observing the workplaces rather than just asking about things that arguably could be hard to define and put into words, such as certain cultural aspects. The interview questions were framed in a way so that it places focus on how interviewees make sense of things going on rather than what is objectively going on and furthermore was meant as a way of giving the respondents some control regarding where the interview was going (Prasad, 2015). In addition to the symbolic interactionism, the intention was to turn to the hermeneutics tradition, the interpretation of texts (Prasad, 2015). The aim to do so was by critically examining transcripts from the standpoint of the theoretical framework.

As mentioned, the nature of things that is to be studied is such that it was quite likely that it was not to get directly stated in interviews or directly tangible in terms of what was being said or observed. Therefore, there was a need to research how employees make sense of the different aspects of their work and then further interpret this to get to the deeper

meaning and thus observe the full picture. For example, employees may enjoy empty labour and/or not really recognise it as not relevant for their job description. What was also important to take into consideration was the possibility that power asymmetries of different kinds may influence the answers that were given. This can range from trying to save face for example by not openly stating that they consciously slack, or do things that are not relevant, due to potential reprisals if their manager would find out, to group pressure or other different kinds of social dynamics in the workplace. It is stated by Paulsen (2015) that safety lies in anonymity, meaning that employees may not have been willing to be completely open about their daily procedures.

Due to these ambiguous elements and potential misinformation it was important to construct interview questions that makes it possible to retrieve as much information as possible and that did not place any judgment or virtue in the answers given. In practice, semi structured interviews were used, loosely based on a questionnaire with open-ended questions giving room for a decent amount of personal reflections and allowing the interviewee to steer the interview to some degree, as well as the authors, if needed.

The expectation by doing so was to get a transcript that offered the possibility to be examined and interpreted more deeply. Furthermore, the framework of Strauss and Corbin (1998) for coding, dividing the task into three steps, was used. Firstly, key concepts, metaphors and such when listening and transcribing interviews was identified. The second step was to group the data from the first step and create sub-categories. The final step was to integrate the theoretical framework as much as possible. The interviews were conducted over a variety of meetings, in order to adapt to the availability of the interviewees. Furthermore, case studies of the employees in the work environment was as mentioned performed which thereafter was combined with the findings in the interviews.

Apart from what has been mentioned, during the analysis of the transcripts it was of utmost importance to have in mind whether it was an employer or an employee that was responding, as ideals, assumptions and standpoint differs immensely. With the assumption being that employers should see the bigger picture for the organisation while employees could choose to only focus on themselves.

By conducting our research in this manner, we aimed to get as much information as possible and hopefully were able to either strengthen or perhaps disregard certain aspects of our theory when we combined what we have been told with what we have observed in an ethnographic way.

3.2 Case organisations and sample selection

As for the process of selecting case organisations, it was quite simple. We wanted to compare two very different organisations. Our connections with former students and acquaintances led us to one multinational organisation residing in the north-western parts of Skåne with far beyond 100 employees, and another quite small, local organisation in Lund. Our assumption from the beginning was that not only the aim of the organisations themselves would differ, but also perceptions and "ideals" between groups of employees at the different organisations as well. The different organisations are described in a lot more detail during our empirical section as a sort of background.

The samples, or the interviewees, have been selected in a varying manner. At first, we conducted an initial interview with a manager at one of the organisation whom in turn picked a few employees for us to interview. Upon our return and later visits, we had a larger degree of freedom in this aspect and could more or less ask anyone if they were willing to partake in an interview. At the second organisation, we interviewed everyone that was available. We have tried to get a good sample selection by interviewing both males and females of different ages (the youngest being 20 years old and the oldest being 50+ years of age) and also by interviewing as many subjects as possible. To this extent, we have conducted fourteen interviews and a lot more informal "chats" with people at different steps in the organisation. The length of the interviews ranged from the shortest being a mere 20 minutes to the longest being almost two hours, and most interviews have been conducted at the given organisation, although not within reach of colleagues or superiors. Most of our observations have taken place while visiting organisations for interviews as we found it to be particularly interesting when we had answers given by employee's fresh in mind.

3.3 Data analysis

As mentioned, we used a semi-structured approach where we had several questions prepared beforehand, but depending on the information given and the type of interview subject, we chose to adapt our questions during the course of the interview in order to get relevant answers. The main themes stayed the same however, focusing on empty labour, working hours, feelings towards the organisation/employer/compensation etcetera, values and the future. All interviews have been conducted in Swedish, as to why our translated quotes in the empirical section from time to time may seem a bit incorrect,

grammatically speaking. Further taking into account that more than a few of our subjects express certain words in English even during a conversation in Swedish.

Considering that we conducted interviews at a number of occasions, revisions regarding the questionnaire was made throughout the process as well as conscious decision to disregard certain concepts we focused on originally and replacing them with others more fitting to our aim. Our basic questionnaire can be found under Appendix A, although it is worth mentioning that we first and foremost used it as a way of remembering topics, and we did not stick to the exact formulation of questions, the "right" order of asking them and such as we wanted the interviews to be as fluent and open as possible, more like conversations between peers.

By listening to our audio recordings of interviewees again and again, we managed to focus on details from the interviews that if not recorded and transcribed, probably would have been lost on us (Silverman, 2006).

When interviews had been transcribed, we chose to make it clearer for ourselves by colour-coding certain themes or aspects that appeared in the texts, in accordance with Yin (2003).

3.4 Limitations

While we believe that qualitative studies are preferable in this (and many more) cases, it does come with its limitations, mostly regarding the way that data is gathered.

We have tried to be as open minded and objective as possible, but from a critical perspective, it would be dishonest to believe that our own personal assumptions and ideas has not at all influenced our standpoint and the way that we draw conclusions from our data. To counteract this risk, we have tried to get an as inclusive theoretical understanding as possible, and hopefully this will not have affected our research.

From a more obvious perspective, we cannot disregard the conception that the interviewees from the larger organisation may have been selected to provide us with an image that the organisation wants to impose. However, since we were able to interview without interference of superiors and the organisation itself and further since we were given the opportunity to pick interview subjects of our own choosing after the first visit, we do not believe this to be an actual issue.

We do not know at this point if our interview subjects were being dishonest or perhaps leaving out certain parts of their stories in order to come across better, although we see no reason this should be the case since everyone is anonymous in the final version. One employee we interviewed did appear to be partly dishonest regarding a certain aspect of the everyday work, which we elaborate on further in the empirical section, but from what we can tell, this was an isolated incident with a very recent hire.

We further want to point to the fact that we had to almost cherry-pick literature when it comes to the concept of commitment. A lot of research has been done in the field, and we had to try and focus on the parts that were recognised as influential, applicable in our case, with our research aim, and disregard a lot of other potentially useful information as it would otherwise become overwhelming and unclear.

Furthermore, we chose not to try and measure commitment on a scale as some authors propose that you should (Blau, 1985; Lawler & Halls, 1970). This was a conscious choice on our behalf as we did not want to complicate the framework by mixing quantitative and qualitative measurement. In extension, Randall & Cote (1991) as well as Cohen (1999) and Morrow (1983) all suggest that you need a much larger sample size than what we had in order to get a reliable framework, which when considering our time limitation and case organisations, was not possible for us.

Apart from this, we feel that the exact meaning of certain words and concepts that we have talked about may have been a bit unclear for the interviewees at first, but we placed a lot of focus during the interviews themselves to make sure that everyone grasps the basic concept of things, and in practicality, this is not something that we feel actually impacted answers.

4. Empirical findings

In this chapter, we will focus on presenting the data acquired from our qualitative research. We have chosen to structure this section by listing each topic that we have found to be relevant for our research question and further present the data for each subheading. First and foremost, however, we will present general information and background regarding our two case organisations and the employees that we have either observed or interviewed. Secondly, we will highlight our findings regarding the concept of empty labour, how it presents itself and how it differs from organisation to organisation. After that, we will explore our findings regarding commitment in all forms that we have observed. As we shall see in the commitment section, meaningfully committed is not built upon previous literature, instead this is a concept developed by the authors to fit our empirical findings and the gap that we identified in the literature.

4.1 Background findings

Our first case organisation, although hard to categorise, is what we would like to call a brokerage firm that connects individuals looking to loan money or gather their unsecured debts to a favourable interest rate, with banks that in turn are willing to offer this service. A significant part of their business plan is to call customers that at one point or another has been in contact with either the organisation or the banks, and thus registered and accessible to the sellers, and offer additional loans or ways to structure their existing loans. As a result of successfully connecting customers with the banks, the organisation receives a "kickback" from the bank that eventually gets the customer. Ergo, the customer does not pay for the organisation's services, the bank in question does, which according to several interviewees we have met removes the stigmatised classical role of the telemarketer, as to why we are hesitant to use the word telemarketing to describe the company.

Apart from the main task of providing loans and gathering debt, the organisation also offers a range of financial services such as comparing costs for electricity, certain additional insurances and so on. The common denominator is that its services are exclusively targeted towards individuals. The organisation has offices in a few countries, but stem from Sweden and was founded in 1999, although under a different name than the current one. The office where we have conducted our research is located in the north-western parts of Skåne and employs around 150 people. According to the information presented by our first interview

subject, employees work from 8.45 in the morning until 18.00 in the evening, they have a lunch break for half an hour and additionally half an hour in personalised breaks. Apart from this standard working day, a rotating schedule makes sure that there are always some employees at the office until 20.00 (that in this case starts later in the day as well) Monday through Thursday and during a few hours on the weekend, to offer availability to customers that are unavailable during standard hours in the week.

The organisation offers a monthly base salary to sellers of close to 20 000 Swedish crowns that can be boosted through provision based selling. According to the statistics that we have seen when speaking to managers the average monthly provision seems to be around 5 000 to 8 000 Swedish crowns, with some sellers earning as much as close to 30 000 Swedish crowns in addition to the base salary. After visiting the organisation and speaking to several employees and a few managers, we have found that they have several control mechanisms in place to make sure that employees are performing and not doing things they are not supposed to. These mechanisms are mostly seen through the lens of improving performance and tracking how an individual is evolving in his/her role and can measure anything from the number of calls made during an hour, average speaking time per customer, the percent of people saying yes and so on. While this does seem rather strict at a first glance, if goals are met, managers are willing to accept a certain degree of personal breaks, where employees for example browse the web or play ping pong in the break room. During our visits to this organisation, we have formally interviewed two managers (at different levels of the organisational hierarchy) and eight employees. Apart from this, we have conducted informal talks, listening sessions (during employee sales calls to potential customers) and observations around the office. From here on out, this organisation will be referred to as organisation X.

The second organisation that we have researched is a somewhat smaller, but on the other hand arguably a more exclusive firm. It is a well-known clothing store in central Lund. The store has a calm and quiet atmosphere which may stem from it being located on an arguably exclusive address. The store is having an obvious focus on higher end items that sell for what we and arguably most would consider premium prices, thus attracting a certain crowd of potential customers, that may come to expect a quite high amount of service etc. when shopping in such a store. The store itself was founded in 1979 by one of our interview subjects and one other. Today, the organisation employs a total of six people, including its co-founder and is thus significantly smaller than our other case organisation. The organisational structure is described by interviewees as quite flat with the founder/CEO obviously at the top, working closely with one or two more senior employees, and just below them in the

hierarchy, the rest of the employees are found. Both the CEO and one of the senior employees that we spoke to describe the organisation as a family business, building upon arguments that a significant part of the employees over the years (and to this day) have some sort of family tie to the founder and thus arguably feels some sort of commitment to the organisation, maybe even before entering it. As described by one long-time employee: "… we are kind of like small family so we workshop and help each other and such. Everyone makes sure that everything is going well and so." […] "Actually, I think that we have only ever hired one person that we knew nothing about beforehand."

This is further strengthened by the CEO and what she told us about hiring through connections rather than doing it in a more public fashion: "When my business partner was still alive we took out an ad in the newspaper many, many years ago, but that did not work for us, it was really hard to sort out the right candidates and such, you really need to feel that chemistry when you work as closely together as we do."

In contrast to the aforementioned and described organisation, this store does not have any sort of automated control mechanisms in place, instead they seem to rely on different forms of commitment and a "leading-by-example-culture". Effectively meaning that everyone is more or less expected to do their job, or at times of less "action" in the store, do things that benefit the organisation rather than just "wasting time". The standard working day consists of opening the store at 10.00 and closing it at 18.00, although some preparations before and after has to be made each day, leaving employees with roughly eight working hours a day, not accounting for lunch breaks and such. The standard although shifting constellation of employees during weekdays is one at the register and two "on the floor", ready to assist customers entering the store. The number of employees mainly increase during special weekends and around the holidays etc. Since monetary incitements never came up during any of our interviews, even when asked directly, we chose to not delve deeper into compensations for employees, although we have no reason to expect that they are anything other than fair in accordance to Swedish law and unions. We have conducted interviews with four organisational members at somewhat different steps in the almost non-existent hierarchy, including the CEO. Apart from this, we have at several occasions spoken unofficially with one other employee in particular, and both of us have been visiting the store more or less regularly for at least four years, not taking into consideration our more serious observations made during the last few months. This organisation will be referred to as organisation Y from this point forward.

4.2 Empty labour

When it comes to the concept of empty labour, we early on found that only two concepts, coping and enduring, of the four categories presented by Paulsen (2015), were relevant for our organisations. The first part of this section will focus on the prevalence of coping that we found clear indications of at organisation X, the second part will in turn focus on enduring, which we in turn found to be common at organisation Y. Thus, we chose to narrow the scope to just include relevant and observable practices in our case companies. What we have been able to observe thus far is that the type of empty labour seems to be quite constant within the organisation but differ between the two.

4.2.1 Coping

Employees in organisation X expressed, at several occasions, the need to take a break from the rather monotonous work that is calling potential customers, a need that was acknowledged by managers as well. As expressed by one employee:

> It is in order to recharge your batteries. I mean, you could call a hundred people, and yeah, maybe sixty of those are just a dial tone and the rest of them are you talking, trying to make a sale, and then you may need to take a break after a couple of hours.

Or as another employee put it:

> The main reason is to relax a bit. To wind down a bit because… It helps me, or at least my productivity. I feel that if I speak constantly for half an hour, I might need two-three minutes at the side of that. So, I would say that that is the main reason.

Conducting empty labour as a way of increasing your performance at your actual tasks by taking small breaks in order to "charge your batteries", a term used by several employees, heavily suggests coping as mentioned. And the fact that the managers knows and accepts this in addition to nearly all of the employees reporting the same thing thus far leads us to believe that this is without malicious intent, and that it actually could be beneficial for the seller's performance and in extension the organisation. In addition to what we found during our interviews, we observed that several employees moved around a bit in between calls, for example going to a colleague a few seats over and talking for a few minutes before getting back to your own seat. As stated by one manager:

> It is not optimal, but we understand that it is hard to keep focus here and now on customer, customer, customer… we tend to sit pretty long sessions, we do not have more breaks than other organisations and we understand that it is mentally demanding, and from this perspective it is fine (to take breaks) as long as everything else works that is. […] We do not measure performance before and after (breaks), but it feels as if you get more energised, and apart from this, it is also highly appreciated on a personal level to get away a bit. […] I would not say that we look between our fingers, it is rather as if as long as the sellers keeps their targets and efficiency, it is fine that they browse the web from time to time, we do not really place any values in doing so as long as you are focused once you actually reach a customer and that you are prepared.

The two managers did not acknowledge their own need to do so however, both suggesting that they simply had such a wide variety of tasks that boredom never becomes an issue, complemented by their moral obligations towards higher ranking managers and the organisation as a whole as well as their need to act as role models for the employees. As stated by one manager: "I honestly do not have that much down time, or rather very little down time."

"It also connects to the image that I should project to my team. Even if I had the time to check Facebook for example, it sends out the wrong signals if I should choose to do so." We have, however, observed that this particular person is online quite often during workdays in the Facebook-chat. However, since we are not sure whether or not you are being shown as online depending on you being logged in on your phone, home computer, tablet or anything else, it is a bit speculative to draw the conclusion that he is actually conducting empty labour simply by being shown as online.

The image aspect reportedly also goes for sick leave for example, something that arguably is hard to affect with just your attitude, although apparently something that is in consideration by managers:

> It is like… take presence for example, if I were sick all the time, I mean, am I supposed to sit in a "rehab conversation" and tell my colleague that you should not be sick as often or so, it kind of falls on its own absurdity. The image aspect of it is important, that you show that you are loyal, that you are hardworking, that you do what you are supposed to do.

As mentioned, this suggests that when being in a position where you are supposed to have some sort of "moral high ground" compared to your colleagues, the image that you project is

of utmost importance. Even though it may clearly depend on things that are out of your direct control.

4.2.2 Enduring

In organisation Y however, coping did not seem to present itself. Instead employees, no matter their status in the hierarchy, are more or less expected to create small tasks throughout the day, depending on the need to do their actual tasks. As expressed by one employee: "It is mostly that you have a wide array of tasks, so there is always something to do. And if you have absolutely nothing to do, well then you could always clean."
These tasks can range from vacuuming, rearranging clothes, unpacking deliveries and so on. The varying nature of working in a boutique is argued to counteract any sort of boredom that may arise otherwise when there is a lack of customers. This is something that we have observed on several occasions when visiting the store, employees walking around doing some light cleaning or rearranging until they are needed elsewhere, by a customer for instance. As expressed by the CEO when asked about a regular working day: "A regular working day? Well, I have been here for almost forty years now, and I can tell you that once you actually open the door you do not know what is going to happen. Which is the nature of service work."

On the other hand, the lack of being able to influence your own output and in turn the creation of small, not overly important tasks, suggests enduring. Ergo that you make time pass by doing something, rather than doing nothing. Although there are no official controlling mechanisms in play at organisation Y, it was reported that employees are not allowed to use their phones during the working hours while sitting at the cash register for example, unless you are expecting an important call or something alike (except for one employee that manages emails and such on behalf of the organisation from her phone). As told by one employee: "If someone's phone buzzes and you quickly glimpse at the screen, that is of course fine. But you are not supposed to just stand around." Or in the words of another employee:

> There is not supposed to be a lot of down time where you just stand around doing nothing. If you for example are checking Instagram, then you do that in the interest of the job, so that is one possibility. A little bit of inspiration from designers and so on.

Strengthening the notion that employees can create tasks that actually benefits the organisation, instead of just checking Instagram for yourself.

4.2.3 Slacking

Although we did not observe anyone slack whilst we were visiting either of the organisations, a few of the interview subjects at organisation X expressed that they would indeed engage in slacking if it did not harm their performance and in extension their compensation. One manager at the same organisation speculated as well that this would be the case, had it not been for his presence amongst the team. This notion, that slacking may occur under certain given circumstances, will prove to be of importance in the upcoming analysis. This did not seem to present itself amongst our interviewees at organisation Y however.

This difference in types of empty labour effectively leads us into the next subheading, commitment.

4.3 Commitment

When it comes to what types of commitment we found to be prevalent, it actually not only differed between organisations but between employees as well. Our data suggests that depending on what type of commitment you feel, and thus towards whom your loyalty lies, will affect the type and quite possibly even the amount of empty labour that you conduct. To structure this section, we will provide quotes and observations that suggests different types of commitment, starting with career commitment and a short paragraph regarding continuance commitment, followed by existential commitment, affective commitment and lastly, we will look at job involvement.

As we shall see, there is one way of motivating commitment that has not yet been elaborated on, as we have not found theoretical support for it, but still appeared in the interviews. This is what we from now on will refer to as meaningfully committed and is that you feel that what you are achieving for others, not taking you or your direct social context (as an organisation for example) into account, feels meaningful and therefore makes you committed to work hard. This construct was founded by the authors of this thesis. One thereby could say that what you achieve through your work feels important, not taking selfish or organisational interests into account. This will be elaborated further on in the thesis.

4.3.1 Career commitment

This type of commitment as we mentioned is built upon the framework developed by Blau (1985) and further Corarelli & Bishop (1997). Firstly, we interviewed employees that expressed career commitment, as stated by one entry-level employee at organisation X:

> I mean, I am putting in work here and always doing my best so that I one day will be able to advance and climb up the ladder, I do not want to do this for the rest of my life. Firstly, I would like to become a team leader and then you have to show what you want and make sure that you are on your toes at all times.

Another employee corroborated this statement by telling us that: "I want to climb you know. It is quite important for me. It feels like this is a good corporation and the things that you do you know, that you like your job and that the customer is happy in the end. I put a lot of focus on that.". This clearly indicates a form of career commitment, as effort is used as a way of potentially boosting your own career.

This type of commitment towards your career was not at all prevalent from what we have been told or from what we could observe at organisation Y. This could in our opinion stem from a number of reasons such as the size of the organisation and the flatness of the hierarchy, ergo that you do not really have the possibility to advance that much, at least not in this organisation. Another reason could be the fact that as stated by the CEO, they hire a lot of students and such that arguably have not yet decided what they want to do for the rest of their lives, and because of this they treat the workplace as a short stop in the overall span of their lengthy careers, arguably connecting to what Corarelli & Bishop (1997) writes about the longitude perspective of one's career.

4.3.2 Continuance commitment

This construct is based upon the definition of continuance commitment offered by Meyer & Allen (1984). While continuance commitment might be somewhat less prevalent than a lot of our other constructs of commitment, it did appear occasionally. At organisation X, two employees expressed that they felt as if they were in the right place for them personally in the organisation, they did not have the ambition to climb further, but at the same time, they did not want to get demoted either. These two individuals expressed that they were

happy with their compensation and workload, they both have families that they to some extent provide for, and thus we found that they can be said to be continuance committed, even though this was not the only type of commitment that was prevalent in their respective cases.

When it comes to continuance commitment, it can be quite hard to tell whether or not this is the main motivator or if it is secondary. Several employees at organisation X expressed that they felt strongly regarding the compensation provided, but most argued that this was not the main reason as to why they felt committed towards the firm. Arguably, some of the sellers have more obligations than others, since the team is consisting of people ranging from barely out of high school to people up to 50+ years of age, a point that one manager also pointed out as potentially affecting performance. This could arguably lead to some sellers "needing" the job more than others, perhaps increasing the prevalence of continuance commitment and in extension perhaps even the type of empty labour that these employees conduct.

Two people at organisation X put it quite bluntly, stating that they "really like money" and because of this they did not want to lose this reliable stream of income, and that that was their main motivator for performing well at the workplace.

4.3.3 Meaningful commitment

As mentioned, this type of commitment was constructed by the authors to fit the empirical findings of our ethnographic study, and is not supported by available theory.

Some employees reported that they felt like they were doing a job that actually benefits people, in this case connecting what they do with their own psychological "profile" to provide meaning for themselves. For example, one manager at organisation X claimed that he first and foremost wants to help people, and by being a part of an organisation that helps decrease unnecessary spending (by gathering loans to a more favourable interest rate) he felt that he was helping people rather than just selling something without intrinsic value.

Another example of this is an employee at organisation Y that expressed the satisfaction she got from meeting a former customer at a later time, when that customer was wearing something that she knew she was responsible for acquiring and later on selling to this person. Although arguably not as meaningful as helping people manage their finances and getting out of debt, she still felt that this motivated her to put in a little extra effort when purchasing and later selling garments.

Apart from these two individuals, several more expressed that they felt that they did something good for someone else by doing their job in a correct manner.

4.3.4 Normative commitment

As this is a type of commitment that was not expressed by most authors, we chose to base the definition on what Meyer & Allen (1993). Another manager, still at organisation X, reported that he felt a normative commitment in the regards that he felt obligated towards the organisation that, as he described, took a leap of faith by hiring him as he was quite unexperienced at the time. This exact sentiment was also communicated from a seller that expressed gratitude towards the organisation for hiring her, as she had been laid off from her previous workplace and had a somewhat hard time finding a job after that, until applying as a seller for organisation X.

Although not as clearly stated, some of the younger sellers at organisation X further reported that they were very happy with their workplace, as it was the best organisation that they have worked for thus far, and a lot of them got this position as their first real job, in their own words. And while it did not get explicitly stated during our interviews, gratitude towards the employer for hiring the individual, leading to normative commitment, seemed to be present at organisation Y as well.

4.3.5 Affective commitment

This construct as well is based upon the definition of Meyer & Allen (1984). As for this construct, affective commitment was highly observable at organisation Y. Practically everyone that we have spoken to (unofficial "interviews" as well) expressed that you feel obligated to be a good employee as you get close to the people you work with, your manager and in extension the store (and the brand) itself. As one long-time employee put it:

> … I have grown up with this, so I have been running around here since I was little. And in our family, it has always been "the store, the store" and that we should think about representing ourselves in a good manner and such, as not to hurt the image in any way. […] I have a lot of emotional commitment towards this. I mean, if a thief got in here for example, I would lose it…

The manager goes even further in her description: "I mean, it becomes kind of like your baby, that is why it is so hard to stop working."

She further tells about difficulties in detaching yourself from your job and that the store is always "lurking" in the back of your mind, as she puts it: "If I go into another store and garments are hanging askew, or unbuttoned or so, I start folding, buttoning and such, ha-ha. So, it is a lifestyle." And: "… if I am free one day and go to IKEA for example I end up looking at rugs or so that could fit into the store's atmosphere."

As another employee expressed herself: "I think it is a lot about giving and receiving. If I am needed and have nothing else to do, of course I come here to help, and I know that I in return can expect to be able to, for example, go to the hospital on short notice if I needed to."

This obvious focus on the collective dimensions and not just yourself among employees, in addition to our observations, leads us to believe that the enduring type of empty labour is really the only thing needed to pass the time and feel valued by the organisation and its members.

4.3.6 Work ethic commitment

This type of commitment is based on what Blood (1969) as well Mirels & Garett (1971) presented, and basically means that work in itself is good. Several employees at both organisation X and at organisation Y expressed that they felt like when you are at your workplace, you should work, and not do anything else. "When at work, you work" as one interviewee at organisation Y put it. Interestingly enough, this seemed to correlate to some extent with the higher the age of the employee, the more focus on work ethics that was prevalent. Of our interview subjects, working because you should work and not because it benefits you or the organisation first and foremost presented itself amongst the subjects that were a bit older. Arguably suggesting that this is could be a traditional value that to some extent has lost ground in today's society, although this is of course speculative and hard if not impossible to prove.

4.3.7 Job involvement

Job involvement as we see it is constructed from a range of authors, with the definition made by Kanguno (1982), and further elaborated by Ellroy et al. (1991), to be seen as the most prominent and recognized.

As for this section, we will aim to examine some of the interviewees responses in relation to job involvement. Job involvement is something that we have found clear

indications of at both organisations that we examine. For example, at organisation Y, the CEO has difficulties detaching herself from the store in her spare time. As presented in previous sections, she has her own store in mind when visiting other, possibly unrelated stores, and in extension to the quotes previously presented regarding her visiting IKEA, seeing her own store as her baby and such, she also expressed the following: "… you never let it go completely, I can wake up in the middle of the night and think that I should do something in particular with this or this."

And even though she claims to have the ability to not be as involved as she used to be, she finds it hard not to be and spends around six or seven hours at the store any given day. Regarding the fact that she has been doing this for almost forty years, she also tells the following: "There are a lot of people in my age that have retired, but I do not know, I do not know what that would be like…"

This however, does not seem to be anything new in her case, as she puts it:

> I had my last child in -91 and I went to the hospital on a Saturday, delivered him on Sunday and then when Friday came I was back here. And then I worked all the time, I was never on maternity leave. It sounds weird, but that is just how it went.

Although arguably not as clear cut, this sort of difficulties detaching yourself from your work and your workplace was quite observable at organisation X as well. It was reported by managers and sellers alike. For example, one manager, when asked about his preference regarding working hours told us the following:

> For my part, I would easily want another hour, I mean, it happens a lot that you feel around five in the afternoon that "darn, I am not done yet". Then… I have become better at dislocating myself from the job, but in the beginning, I brought a lot of mental stuff home, I was kind of like sitting and dwelling on stuff that I did not yet finish, sometimes I could be doing stuff on the train home and such…

When asked whether or not this was because of expectations from the organisation and managers, his response was this:

> I would say yes and no. You are expected to deliver your results at the predetermined occasion, but that does not automatically mean that you are supposed to work from home.   But on the other hand, I cannot really show up with an unfinished report if it is supposed to be done, so it is kind of like…

He reports that it happens from time to time, around once a month, that his superior or something administrative needs attention outside of the regular working hours. This also happens when it comes to his team, that occasionally people for example call in sick at, in his own words, "unholy hours". Regarding his feeling about this, he is quite divided:

> A lot, a lot is about building relations, it is super important. And I know that if I by a simple text message can have a very positive impact on someone by like "darn, he actually takes time for me at ten in the evening", and that text takes maybe 30 seconds for me to compose and have a huge positive impact, then it is like this, hard to rationally decide that you are not going to answer… it is a tough balance, really, and it is something that I struggle with a lot.

It should further be mentioned that this particular manager makes a distinction between eventual messages from his team and his superiors, as he puts it, his superiors or other parts of the organisation will not bother him unless it is something very important while sellers arguably can be a bit more "needy".

Some sellers as well reported that they struggle with leaving their work at the workplace. As one seller put it regarding his relationship with one other seller in particular, but also with the superiors:

> We motivate each other to and from work as well, so that we do not just let things go once we get in the car, we continue to talk about our job and such. So, it is a lot about the colleagues, about the coaches and so on. The support you receive from there motivates us a lot.

This was, however, not seen as a problem, rather as a way of discussing what you are doing and how you could improve yourself, and something that he and his friend/colleague appreciated and felt was good for them. Dedication towards the job was also very prevalent, with most interview subjects stating that they are there "to work", stressing high work ethics and interest in the activities conducted. Another aspect is the pride that some sellers take in their work, arguing that they are actually helping people:

> I think that it is very interesting and fun to speak about our product, especially with clients. It is nice when you can actually help someone and positively impact their financial wellbeing, by like, if someone has a high interest rate and you are like, "ok, we can actually help them with this". You can make a difference, have a positive impact in contrary to if you for example are selling mobile carrier subscriptions.

According to our distinctions, this can also be seen as a meaningful commitment, although we have chosen to bring it up here as it is about the job in itself as well. On the other hand, at least one seller reported that he felt that there was some sort of moral clash between helping people with their financials and at the same time getting a higher compensation as a seller when your client agrees to apply for a larger loan. It was not an issue that he felt was super important however, just something that he thought was a bit dubious. As he put it:

> Considering that the provision you get is to a large extent dependant on the average loan amount that your customers apply for, the higher the sum, the more provision you get. On the other hand, it is a very delicate process of how you are supposed to do this, you are not supposed to pressure the customer in any way, but you should still get them to apply for a higher sum. So that is a common clash I think. I would rather that you get the same provision no matter the volume of the actual loan.

He followed up by stressing that the organisation is in no way unethical in his mind, but that this particular issue was something he felt could be improved. For example, Swedish law states that you need a reason as to why you are applying for a loan:

Let us say that the customers have a loan of 100 000 SEK and are now looking for 300 000 SEK. Then we must come up with a reason for that extra amount as well. […] What do they want the money for? And that is where it can get a bit contrived on our part when you are stressing "do you want that? Do you want this?". […] This could of course be initialised by the customer as well, and in that case, it is very appreciated.

Arguably, this particular seller had at some level a moral issue with this way of "pushing" the product in order for the organisation and himself to gain as much as possible.

When it comes to job involvement, it is quite clear both through observations conducted by the authors as well as formal and informal interviews that all of the people that we have interviewed feel some sort of identification between their job and themselves. As previously stated in quotes and further strengthened by informal talks, the given salary is in most cases not the main motivator, but that it in organisation X helps employees feel appreciated and that they are not mere cogs in a machine. As stated by one employee: "I believe that I would have accepted this job even if we had a lower base salary, but it does provide comfort in your everyday life and that you feel that the company is actually betting on you, you feel appreciated and seen sort of.". Which in extension arguably could lead to a normative commitment.

While this is quite important for most people, a majority said that it was a clear benefit as it helps them relax to a certain degree, which otherwise could potentially negatively affect their output, but the main reason as to why they identify with the work they do is because of the ability to actually help people. Something that according to interview subjects, is not that common in the telemarketing industry as a broader concept. There was however one employee that said during our interview that he believed that he, and most others, would (in his own word) "slack" if there were less controlling mechanisms in place, something that one manager speculated would be the case as well: "I do believe that there is a certain "the-cat-is-away"-effect when I am not around, for sure."

When discussing organisation Y, it would possibly not be too absurd an idea that the CEO/co-founder of the organisation has some sort of intrinsic motivation, since her own financial wellbeing is probably connected to the performance of her firm to an unspecified degree. Although as mentioned, salaries or compensation overall never came up during our interviews there, as to why this is somewhat speculative.

As we argue further on in this thesis, since job involvement presented itself amongst all of our interview subjects, it is quite important to showcase in this section. However, since it was prevalent everywhere, to a varying extent of course, it also loses its importance when dividing constructs into categories.

5. Discussion and analysis

In this chapter, we will combine our theoretical framework with our empirical findings and divide the different commitments into categories as a way of increasing the understanding for the rationale that will be presented.

The first part will be to clarify some concepts that will be used further on when explaining the different commitment types. Secondly, the type of commitments that have been read up upon will be divided into three subcategories, which will be explained thoroughly. This will be done so that the reader gets a better grasp of the properties that can be found in each type of commitment, what unifies them and what makes them unique from each other. This will be a crucial part in being able to follow the line of reasoning in the analysis.

Having done this, the constructs will be divided into two main groups of commitments which will constitute the fundament of the analysis that will be done here. Lastly, a hypothesis about how commitment affects the sort of empty labour that is employed will be presented.

5.1 Concepts regarding commitment

We will begin by defining some key concepts regarding commitment briefly. First of all, when we are referring to *input*, this means what a person actually does at an organisation in practice. This can range from saying what people should do if you are in the role as a manager, call people and sell things if that is your assignment, to assembling things physically so they represent a product and so forth.

What is meant by *output* is what your input actually results in for the organisation, the outside world and you as an individual. For example, someone can sell a product or a service whereas the output for the organisation in this case will be that they have sold a product or a service (and thus earned money) and someone else will have acquired this given product or service (in exchange of money).

What we mean by *desired outcome* is what you wish to gain with your input to the organisation. Taking the salesman as an example again, his input will be that he puts in time and effort when calling people and trying to sell products and/or services to them. In this case, the output will again be that the organisation sells more and earns money and that

someone will have a new product or service when the transaction is complete. However, if this salesman sells things solely to earn money, his desired outcome will not be the same as this particular output. He just wants to earn as much money as possible. If he then earns money, the output will be a part of his desired output, however, the desired outcome is the *motivator behind the input*. In a lot of cases arguably, but not always, the desired outcome will be somewhat intertwined with the actual output. For this reason, we would here like to do a distinction. When we only mention output as a motivator this will exclude what the person will gain from it him/herself as well as the organisation where the person is working. This will be explained in more detail later.

The *target* refers to who or what that is the target for the desired outcome, and this we will see is the unifying factor for the first division of the commitments constructs.

5.2 Division of commitment

In this section, the different divisions of commitment will be presented and explained both in theory as well as in practice. This will, as earlier stated, be used as a way of introducing the reader to the thought behind the analysis that later will be based on these prepositions.

Important to note here is the fact that we have chosen not to include job involvement as a distinctive construct, as it was present in all of our interview subjects to some degree. We therefore argue that this will not add any value to our upcoming analysis and instead just clutter the framework, as it would be expressed everywhere, and is thus to be seen as redundant at this point. It is however, still very much present of course.

Furthermore, we would like to do the reader aware again of that a person can "express" several commitments at once, and that this section should be seen as a way to elucidate more what is the fundament in each commitment construct. This will be done in order to strengthen the points that will be made further down in this analysis.

5.2.1 Individual commitment

The meaning of individual commitment in this thesis is the sort of commitment that stem from what working hard at your workplace can do for you as a person. What is meant by this is that you will put effort into the input you deliver so that you will benefit from it yourself as an individual. Under this category goes continuance and career commitment, as they both place a lot of focus on your own rewards for doing your job at the given organisation and further what you as an individual may miss out on if you are not doing your job correctly or even leave the workplace entirely. To illustrate:
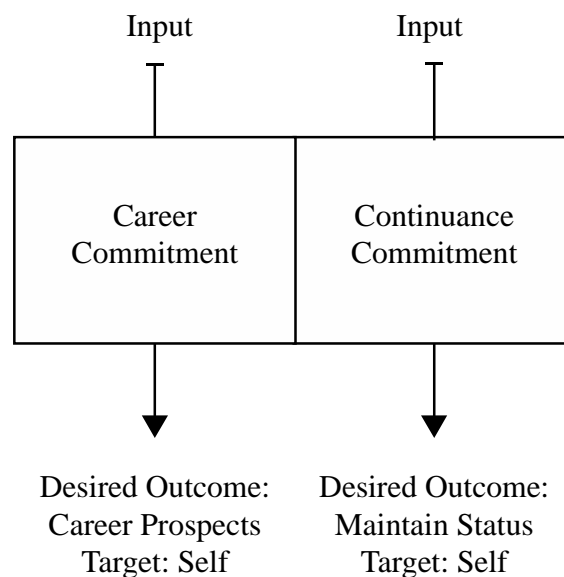
```
        Input              Input
          |                  |
   +--------------+--------------+
   |              |              |
   |   Career     |  Continuance |
   | Commitment   |  Commitment  |
   |              |              |
   +--------------+--------------+
          |                  |
          v                  v
  Desired Outcome:    Desired Outcome:
  Career Prospects    Maintain Status
   Target: Self        Target: Self
```

Figure 7. Describing, given a certain type of commitment, what you wish to be affected by your input and whom that is the target for this.

In both of these cases you will be committed to what you do and thereby be willing to invest your time and effort, namely provide input for the organisation. As illustrated in figure 7, the target for this input is the "self", and consequently one will relate to the input in terms of what they themselves will gain from this.

Starting with career commitment, someone that is driven by this will be it due to their career, which is defined as: "development of personal goals, attachments to, identification with, and involvement in these given goals" (Corarelli & Bishop, 1997). Here the personal aspect becomes quite evident; you are driven out of your personal goals to work hard. This pattern could also be observable for an employee as to why he felt career committed: "I mean, I am putting in work here and always doing my best so that I one day

will be able to advance and climb up the ladder…". It then becomes quite clear in this sense, that a career committed individual puts effort into their work (input) in order to achieve their desired outcome, which is career prospects, whereas the target for action becomes yourself, or as we have chosen to call it, self.

Continuing on continuance commitment, someone that is driven by this type of commitment will think of what they stand to lose if they leave the organisation. As defined by Meyer & Allen: "the extent to which employees feel committed to their organisations by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving (e.g. investments or lack of attractive alternatives)" (Meyer & Allen, 1984, p.375). As with career commitment, someone that is continuance committed, will emanate from themselves as to why they should deliver input to the organisation where they work. This kind of commitment was also found in our interviews. As stated, there were several employees at organisation X that had no intention of climbing the ladder, but at the same time enjoyed their current work, as to why they felt committed to deliver results (input), in order not to be demoted. Or as two other employees at organisation X put it, stating that they "really like money", and did not want to risk their revenue stream.

The observant reader might notice here that continuance commitment is part of organisational commitment and think that it is contradictive to put this under the category that symbolises yourself as a target. However, continuance commitment again is about targeting you, and is thereby what you stand to lose in terms of social status, money and so forth if you leave an organisation, not what the organisation would lose. The consequence of this might be that you strive to benefit the organisation, but benefitting the organisation is not your desired output, it is more of a by-product of you doing what is expected of you to maintain your position, which is to be seen as the actual desired output. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that what we refer to as maintain status, is not social status primarily, but your current status (as in status quo) that you find yourself in as a member of a certain organisation. This can of course include social status, but can also refer to other things.

To conclude, these two commitments are divided into this category due to that the target of the input is the person delivering the input, whereas the commitment stems from what you can use your hard work to in terms of output, to gain yourself. From those that target themselves with their input, there is another category that targets a group/person within an organisation and/or the organisation as such with their input; *the socially committed.*

5.2.2 Social commitment

This type of commitment is as just stated that you feel committed towards an organisation and/or a group/person within that organisation. These include the affective and normative commitment. To illustrate:
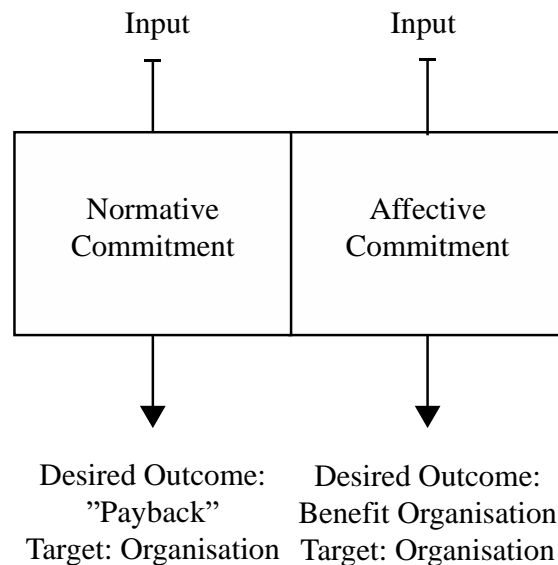

Figure 8. Describing, given a certain type of commitment, what you wish to be affected by your input and what that is the target for this.

In the case with normative commitment, this stem from that you feel obligated towards the organisation and can be defined as the bond that is created between the individual and the organisation due to an obligation from the employee towards the organisation (Bergman, 2006). For this reason, we have chosen to call this desired outcome "payback", meaning that you feel obligated to deliver input because you want to repay your "debt". This would in practice amount to that you will work hard to benefit the organisation, whereas the target for the input will be the organisation. This type of commitment was for example found in especially one of the managers at company X who told us that he felt obligated to work hard because the company had taken "a leap of faith" in hiring him, as he was unexperienced at the time. This same sort of sentiment was also communicated by another employee, whom felt gratitude towards the company for hiring him/her.

As for affective commitment, this is to what extent you have "positive feelings of identification with, attachment to, and involvement in, the work organisation." (Meyer & Allen, 1984, p.375). In this case, you will therefore be committed to work hard and deliver input because you want to benefit the organisation and/or a group within the organisation. This type of commitment was highly observable in organisation Y, where, as an example, one of the employees told us that she was brought up alongside the store and that she had been running there since, and that she therefore had a lot of positive emotions towards the firm. In this case, the employee was also committed and ready to put a lot of work (input) to benefit the organisation. A main motivator in this case seemed to be to benefit the organisation, whereas the target in this case was the organisation. Another type of affective commitment was of those in organisation X who thought that they cared about their performance because they felt strongly for the particular "sales team" they were in.

The critical reader may here raise the objection that if you take it one step further, to be socially committed is something you do for your own sake, meaning that you do it for your own good because you would feel bad if you did not. However, we would like to make the distinction between who you aim to benefit with your direct action and what drives you to do it; as we arguably do everything that is not an obligation because we "want to" in some sense. What we mean is what you aim to achieve that will make you feel good. All commitments logically must stem from that you do it because if feels right to do it, otherwise you would not do it. But the question is; what do you feel like to do in order to feel good? This is what we aim to answer.

To conclude, the common denominator that unite these two types of commitment is that the input both targets an organisation and/or a group/individual within an organisation. So far, we have read up upon those whose target are themselves and an organisation and/or a group/individual within that organisation. As we shall see next, there is a third category of committed employees that does not seem to specify any target for their input; *the existentially committed* as we call them.

5.2.3 Existential commitment

This category was named from the notion that the individual that is driven by this seems to be driven by something "greater" than themselves or their direct social

conditions. In this group, we have the meaningfully committed and the work ethic committed. To illustrate:
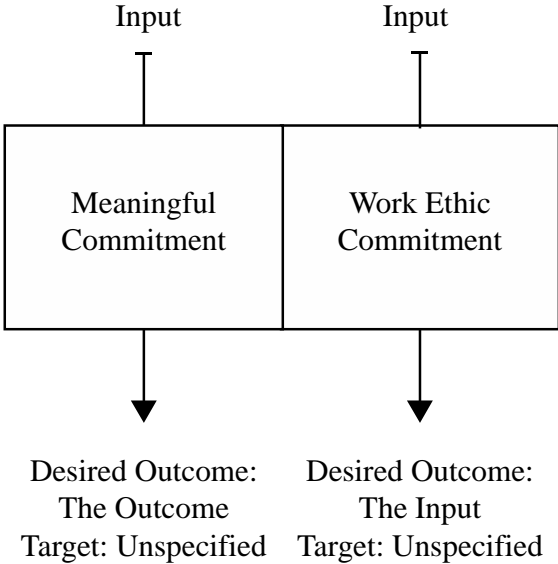

Figure 9. Describing, given a certain type of commitment, what you wish to be affected by your input and what/whom that is the target for this.

To begin with meaningfully committed, the theory that is available on commitment does not seem to express meaningfully committed in the way that we would like to think about this through what have been stated in the interviews. For us to illuminate this issue we would here like to bring up the research of Kaplan & Tausky (1974), which presented, as mentioned, a "typology of meanings with work", which basically states that you will find your job meaningful because it is 1. An intrinsically satisfying activity, 2. Because you see it as a status and prestige bestowing activity, 3. Because work is a morally correct activity, 4. Because work is a source of satisfying interpersonal experiences, 5. Because work is a necessary economic activity or 6. Because work is a scheduled or routinized activity which keeps one occupied (Friedmann & Havighurst, 1954; Morse & Weiss, 1955; Weiss & Kahn, 1960; Loether, 1964; Tausky, 1969). If you view this in relation to work commitment one will see that these two very much resemble one another. One thereby could make the assumption that commitment, and to what extent you feel that your work is meaningful, to a large extent correlate. Arguably the reason for this would be that if you are committed towards something, your work will feel meaningful due to the commitment. We would like to

separate the notion that a job may feel meaningful, from what it means to be meaningfully committed.

In their research, Kaplan & Tausky (1974) in their questionnaire got two answers, when asking why people wanted a job, that illumines this difference; "to get a sense of accomplishment and achievement" and "to help others". In the typology, there is one; an intrinsically satisfying activity. So, what we would like to pin point here is that when you feel meaningfully committed you feel committed because you feel that what you accomplish in your job is meaningful, as in the output per se being important, not what you or your organisation potentially gain from it. For this reason, we chose to state that the target is unspecified, as it could vary, but cannot per definition, be specified. It is namely so that if you define a certain target you would either do it for your sake (for example get money to your family – which then becomes continuance because you work in order for you to get money) or for an organisation (which then would be normative or affective commitment). This type of commitment could be found in several of the employees at organisation X in the sense that they actually related to what they did as something that benefits people. Note here the nature of the commitment; they were committed in helping people in general as something that made the world a better place, they had no specific customers that they wanted to help above others.

An employee at company Y seemed to express a similar type of commitment in the sense that she had a feeling of satisfaction when someone bought something from the store which she had decided should be part of their collection of garments. This we would argue is a different thing from being committed towards the company or yourself in the meaning that she felt a special kind of satisfaction when she felt that she could contribute to someone having a nice shirt for example. In this case, the commitment towards the organisation and herself did not seem to be present at this particular moment in increased career prospects or similarly, this was another kind of satisfaction she felt. She felt that she had made a difference for someone through her act. Who the person in question were did not seem to matter at all to her.

Even though, for self-evident reasons, we in this field study did not find any empirical proof for it, we believe that this kind of commitment is to be found in a larger extent amongst personnel working in health care, within the police force, amongst fire-fighters and so forth. We base this assumption partly of the fact that to feel that what you do is considered "meaningful work", in this case nurses, improves performance significantly (Tong, 2016).

When framed in this way we hope that the reader will get a better picture what we mean by being meaningfully committed.

To summarise, someone that would be solely meaningfully committed will deliver input into the organisation because of what this results in in terms of output, taking neither themselves or the organisation into consideration. The desired outcome in this case would be the output, whereas the target for input is unspecified. And here again is an important point that needs to be made. If a person's target becomes specified, one can no longer talk about this sort of commitment; hence it will become either socially and individually based.

The other construct under this category is that which is referred to as work ethic commitment and is, as we have elaborated on earlier, that a person finds hard work to be a good thing in itself and something that is to be considered an end in itself (Blood, 1969; Mirels & Garett, 1971). This seemed to present itself amongst some interview subjects, through statements such as "when at work, you work", when asked how much time a day they spent doing other things than their primary work tasks. In practice, this would amount to that they did not use their phone during work hours and not engage in more breaks than what was necessary. The reason for this approach towards work might have different origins, we have discussed a few and will discuss more about this later, but basically originates from that a person finds the input that one deliver into the organisation meaningful in itself. For this reason, the desired outcome in this case is the input, whereas the target is unspecified. Crassly, a person that is only work ethic committed namely does not care how anyone will benefit from it; they just want to work because that makes them feel good.

To conclude, what unifies meaningful commitment (which again is our own construct to match our empirical findings) and work ethic is that the target for the input is unspecified. Hopefully having made the reader somewhat aware of our line of reasoning, we would like to continue to the next section.

5.3 Dividing the commitment constructs into two categories

In this section, we intend to divide the different constructs into two main categories: subjectively and contextually committed. This categorisation will prove itself important in order to make a coherent inference in the last section of this discussion.

5.3.1 Subjectively committed

As the name of this category indicates, what we mean by being subjectively committed is to what extent, and in what way, an individual relates to him/herself in relation to others. To be subjectively committed is akin to what authors as Hofstede (2001), Ardichivili et.al (2006), Triandis (1995) refer to as being an individualist.

An individualist, for example, will tend to prioritise their own goal over the goal of the group. (Hofstede, 2001). This will amount to that contexts where people are collectively focused will take action that is preferable for the society/community, whereas people that are individualistic will do this to a lesser degree (Trompenaars, 1994).

Individualist will furthermore make a lesser distinction between in-group members and out-group members whereas people from collectivist cultures value the membership in a group highly, and because of this, it affects all daily activities and "is the source of identity, protection and loyalty…" (Hutching and Michailova 2004, p.87). Hwang et al. (2003) also found that people from individualistic cultures where more inclined to engage in certain activities that where associated with attaining prestige and recognition.

Lastly, the most apparent difference which aligns with the subjective and collective commitment the most, is that people that are collectivistic tend to see themselves as interdependent from others, whereas individualist see themselves as independent from others. (Triandis, 1995). Continuing on this, the subjective commitment stems from that an individual emanates from him/herself in their endeavour to achieve things and put a lot of effort into their work. We would here like to attempt to do the following clarification, as a way of increasing the understanding of this division that we have made. The clarification we would like to propose for someone that is subjectively committed is: your willingness to put effort into your work in order to achieve a certain goal, where you view yourself as the pursuer of this goal, emanate from yourself, and invariably strive towards this goal as an independent entity.

Perhaps not so surprisingly, the individually based commitment constructs (continuance and career commitment) will be placed under this category. However, there is one additional commitment construct that also will be placed under this category: meaningfully committed. This will be explained in detail below.

5.3.2 Contextual commitment

As for contextual commitment, this refers to the commitment that one feels in a context related to other people and the context that you are in. This would to some degree mean to be a collectivistic person. As we have mentioned, this means that you prioritise your group/organisation's goals before your own and furthermore see yourself as interdependent from others. Someone that is contextually committed is therefore to be said to be driven by a context, imagined or real, and thus strives to be in alignment with this particular context. This can be defined as your willingness to put in effort in order to match yourself with a given contextual/social setting. Under this category we will find the socially committed, meaning those that feel committed to an organisation and/or a group/individual within that organisation. What then is left is the work ethic commitment which also will be placed under this category. It is here that we feel that additional motivation for this is needed. Hence, as argued earlier, neither meaningfully or work ethic committed individuals have any specified target for their input, whereas they were placed under the category existentially commitment. Now, however, we have chosen to make a split between these. This is what we will devote the paragraphs below to explain.

5.3.3 The difference between meaningful and work ethic commitment

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, the construct work ethic commitment stems from what is referred to as protestant work ethic, and is the notion that work in itself is good. Arguably, this partially have its foundation in the fact that two of the greatest influencers of protestant religion damned the unemployed and held the ideal that one was supposed to work, highly (Beder, 2001; Berinstein, 1997; Weber, 1905). From this, one could also make the case that to not work is bad in itself. If you then accept this view as something that has affected society for a long time, this will in turn affect people in it, and the way we relate to things, which in this case is work. People will therefore relate to work that it is something you should do because it has become a social rule and people will judge you if you do not. Thereby, to be part of the social context, which in this case is to consider society, you should work and pull your own weight so to say.

As mentioned before, this line of thought resonates to a large degree with what Ellroy et al. (1991) claims, which is that work commitment, meaning how you view and value your work, is much to be seen as a social construct. This is also very much similar to the ideas of Triandis (1972), who made a distinction between the entitled norm and the obligation norm. In this case, the obligation norm represents an obligation to contribute to the society through work. If we then bring up meaningful commitment again, it is here that the difference between these two constructs becomes observable.

In the case with meaningful commitment, as we have stated before, it is that you feel committed because you feel that you make a difference in some sense. This could further be argued to be a sort of social construct, but we will here illuminate why this differs and is to be seen as a subjective form of commitment.

Someone that is meaningfully committed is committed towards delivering input because of what this can be translated to in terms of output. Their commitment so to say, lies in the output, and does not take into consideration what themselves or the organisation could potentially gain from it. As mentioned before, why someone who is meaningfully committed believes that their input is meaningful is not due to what they or someone in the direct social context will gain from it (the organisation for example), but the output per se to the external world, set apart from themselves. For this reason, theoretically, someone that is meaningfully committed does not care so much about how much work they put into their work; the main importance is how much "meaningful output" they can create. So, the work (or input) will feel meaningful as long as it creates more output that the person believes is meaningful. If a person that is only meaningfully committed can no longer create any more meaningful output with their input, they will no longer feel compelled to work, and this is the crucial difference between someone that is work ethic committed. Since they do not really care about how much output they actually create, they will feel committed towards work regardless of if they can produce more output or not (theoretically at least). What matters to those that are work ethic committed is that they work.

Going back to meaningfully committed, this way of relating to work seems to resemble the way that career and continuance committed people relate to it; they will work hard and put in effort, as long as their "subjectivity" benefits from this. And this is again the main difference between the two categories. You simply relate to the input in regard to what is in it for you. In this way, you are the judge of the input and output, and you do not feel any

direct obligation to work for the sake of work. This is not the case with someone that is contextually committed.

In the case with employees that feel committed towards the organisation (or individuals/groups within an organisation) you judge yourself based on how others judge you in another matter. This seem to, according to our interviews, make a substantial difference to how one relates to time when you have nothing to do, and the sort of activities one will engage in. Again, taking someone that is mainly meaningfully committed, this sort of person cares mainly for the output, not caring so much how much work that was needed for it, the work ethic committed individual instead cares mainly about the actual input. Therefore, not to do anything is not a part of their "arsenal" used to dealing with down time. This way of relating to time where you have nothing to do, seems to be very similar to someone that is normatively and affectively committed, and is the reason as to why we have chosen to divide them into the same category as work ethic commitment. This categorisation is namely thought of describing the different ways one relates to time where you have nothing to do, which in extension will decide what type of empty labour strategy one will engage oneself in.

Before continuing we want to illustrate this division with the following image:

Subjective Commitment			Contextual Commitment		
Career Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Meaningful Commitment	Work Ethic Commitment	Normative Commitment	Affective Commitment
Individual Commitment		Existential Commitment		Social Commitment	
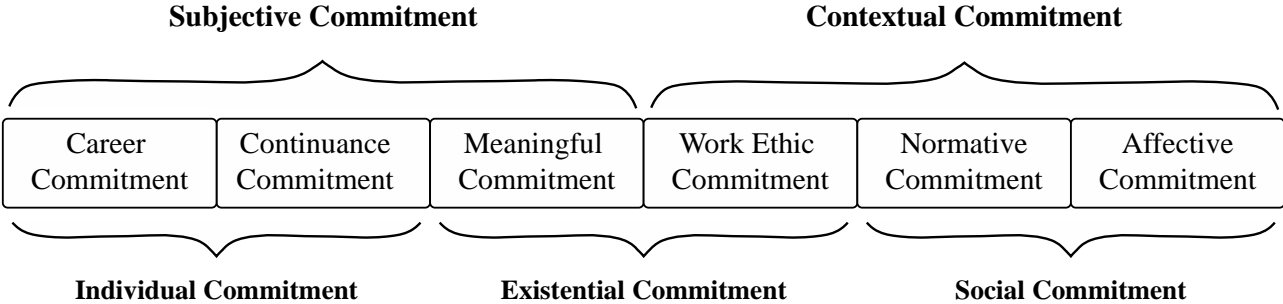
Figure 10. Showcasing the current division of commitments into firstly, whether it is either an individual, existential or social commitment, where existential is the one category that crosses the boundary between subjective and contextual. Furthermore, the constructs are divided into either subjective or contextual.

Our next section will be about explaining this behaviour in theory as well as in practice.

5.4 Highly committed employees employing low commitment strategies

As described in the theoretical framework of this thesis, employees that are highly committed will theoretically employ high commitment strategies. This can take two forms; enduring or coping. From this, an employee will either actively free themselves from work to be able to produce more output, or invent new tasks in order to endure the boredom or stress associated with the everyday work. Which type of empty labour that is being used will depend on if they have high or low potential output, meaning that they will always have things to do, or at times find themselves in situations where they have nothing to do.

To make this to align with what we previously have mentioned in this analysis, if you yourself can control the output that you create through your work, and thereby have high potential output, you will with your input produce more and more output. In one of our case studies where employees where engaged in "telemarketing" (thought the employees or managers did not want to refer to it as such), their output is additional sales of services provided, which in turn will be making the organisation money as well as increasing their own provision. In this case, they could theoretically always put a little more effort into their input in terms of sales opportunity, which in turn will result in a higher output. These employees are therefore seen as having a high potential output. They can arguably produce more output with more input. According to the model of empty labour, if these employees are highly committed, they will engage in coping. Which means that they will actively free themselves of work in order to be able to increase the amount of input that will be translated to output. This does undoubtedly seem to be the case in practice, taking interviews and observations into account.

The alternative to coping in this high potential output situation is what is called soldiering. In this case employees will have much to do, but they do not feel obligated towards the output in any way. This will lead to that they actively free themselves from work (delivering of input), not so that they can produce more output later, but because they do not want to engage in it at all. This theoretical case assumes that they have a low type of commitment.

This can now be put into contrast with the other organisation we visited which was a clothing store. In this case, they at some point had customers entering the store, and at other times they did not. If we then assume that the output that the employees will "create" through their input is that they sell a garment, there will be times where their input in terms of "selling" will be redundant; there simply are no customers to sell to. In this case, the employees are not able to create more output with more input, whereas the potential output is

low. In this case, according to Paulsen (2015), they will engage in enduring which is to come up with other tasks to do. This also seems to be exactly what we found. In the words of one manager we spoke with: "If you have nothing to do, you find something to do". Which was further expressed by several employees in other words.

As for the alternative of enduring, that is what is called slacking. What this means is that they find themselves in the same situation as someone that is enduring in terms of output, but the difference being that they have a low sense of obligation/commitment towards the output. Since you do not feel obligated towards the output in any sense, you will have no problem engaging in external activities that have nothing to do with the actual work. Hence, employees will neither invent other tasks nor just wait, instead people will engage in other activities that they enjoy themselves, such as browsing the web, chatting with colleagues or whatnot. This is what differs those who slack from those that endure.

5.4.1 High potential output

What we found in our empirical framework is that people that only seem to be subjectively committed will, if it gains their "subjectivity", employ a high commitment strategy in the form of coping when the potential output is high. This can be exemplified at organisation X by noting that a lot of employees that seemed to only be subjectively committed took small breaks in order to be able to sell more. Thus, condoning in empty labour not as a way of relaxing, but rather in the same way that a race car driver who stops to get his tires changed. It does take a few moments and in a short perspective can be seen as meaningless, but in the longer run it will probably be beneficial to the performance. The rationale behind this, in the cases where they were solely subjectively committed, was that they had a notion of "what is in it for me?". Now, since they could earn quite a lot of money, had good friends they could hang out with and also had decent career prospects, they were ready to work hard to attain this. Another incitement we noticed was that someone thought of this as a learning process; what he learned here he could use in the future to improve his career and also that employees thought of what they did as meaningful, what they could do for others outside the organisation where a motivator. However, what united them was what they themselves could gain in terms of their subjectivity. Their work context focused on themselves. They were highly committed towards this, and consequently ready to work hard, employing a high commitment strategy, namely coping, to produce more output.

What we also found was that people that seemed to be contextually committed also appeared to employ coping as a strategy when the work load was high. The main motivator in these cases was that they liked the company, that they felt obligated towards the company, and further, although less frequent, that when you are at work you should work.

In the case where an employee seemed to be both contextually and subjectively committed, coping seemed to be present as a strategy in order to increase the output.

5.4.2 Low potential output

As for the low potential output, the analysis looks a little bit different. In the case where someone only seemed to be contextually committed, and the potential output was low, the main strategy for when you find yourself in a low potential output situation, seemed to be enduring. This again stem from that you feel obligated in some sense to work and thereby it would feel wrong on some sort of level to slack. These people came up with other things to do, or "waited" obediently, and did not involve themselves in external activities for the mere sake of enjoyment.

In the case where employees where both contextually and subjectively committed, the same pattern seemed to be observable; the employee feels a moral obligation due to the fact that they feel obligated towards an organisation, or their work ethics, and therefore chooses not to engage in external activities to enjoy themselves.

The last group of employees though, which is of most interest for us in this analysis, are those that are only subjectively committed and find themselves in a situation with low potential output. Considering the answers we have received in interviews, combined with what we have observed at the work places, this group seems to engage in slacking instead of enduring. What is important to pin point here is that the kind of situation we are talking about here is a state of affairs where if an employee feels that the input they put into the organisation does not "improve" their subjective commitment, they will instead engage in external activities.

Someone might for example give the impression that they work hard because they want to give a good impression to the manager so that they might be promoted in the future, but as soon as the manager is not there (as we have seen was the case in organisation X) they will instead engage in other activities that are not meant to improve the input, which

later can be translated to output, in any way. And this line of reasoning is what we think is behind this apparent approach. We believe this to stem from the fact that since subjectively committed individuals emanate from themselves, meaning that their context and what they do is seen and judged by themselves primarily, when this incitement occasionally is removed from the picture, the whole commitment construct is disestablished. The consequence of this we would say is that a person can be highly committed, and thereby employ a high commitment strategy, but if the circumstances are right (or wrong if you will), instead employ a low commitment strategy.

As an example, a worker at company X told us that he would definitely work hard and take breaks, so that he could deliver more results. However, this would only apply when he had something to gain from it himself. If a situation would present itself where no one saw him, and he had nothing to do that could improve his situation, he would have no ethical problem to slack instead.

Another person we talked to seemed to care for how a part of the organisation was doing financially and so forth, but this was more about that it would look good for him/her, and/or the group he/she was in, if he/she delivered. So, he/she cared partly for the organisation's wellbeing, but arguably only for his/her personal gains. There was no attachment to be found between this individual and the organisation. Only the outcome if the organisation had a good performance mattered.

A third example is that of yet another employee that were for most part subjectively committed, in terms of career and continuance, but at the same time contextually committed because he thought that the company had given him a chance and he owed them. In this case, he stated that he presumably would not choose to slack, but instead endure in a situation where there was nothing for him to do regarding his tasks. Though, because he stated that there were barely any such times where he had nothing to do, this is somewhat speculative.

What we then would like to propose is this. In order for Paulsen's theoretical framework for empty labour strategies to apply, an employee needs to be contextually committed. Now, if the case where that those that where subjectively committed only applied low commitment strategies, the model would be intact in the meaning that high commitment really is to be seen as contextually committed. However, what we have found was that people that are subjectively committed will deploy high commitment strategies in some cases,

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namely coping, if it gains their "subjectivity", but low commitment strategies, slacking, if the high commitment would not be beneficial for them individually. It is possible that those who are subjectively committed would engage in soldiering as well, this however would be hard to prove. We did observe on a few occasions, and heard during interviews, that employees would work less if the manager was not there. We do however not feel sure enough to define this as actively resisting work as the support for this was quite low.

Having said this, we propose the following model in an attempt to develop the theory behind empty labour:

Type of Commitment and Empty Labour Strategy

Subjective Commitment
- Meaningful Commitment
- Continuance Commitment
- Career Commitment

Contextual Commitment
- Work Ethic Commitment
- Affective Commitment
- Normative Commitment

High Potential Output
$\rightarrow$ Coping

Low Potential Output
$\rightarrow$ Enduring

High Potential Output
$\rightarrow$ Coping

Low Potential Output
$\rightarrow$ Slacking

High Potential Output
$\rightarrow$ Coping
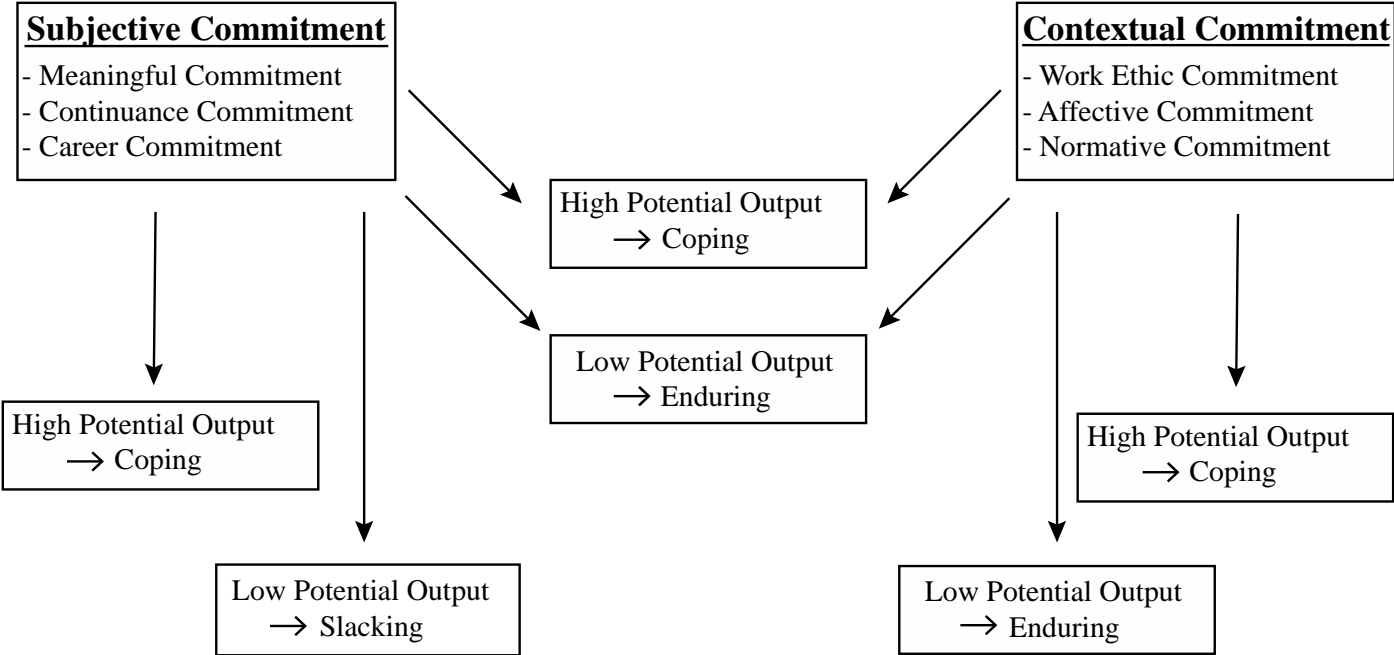
Low Potential Output
$\rightarrow$ Enduring

Figure 11. Constructing a new model for incorporating how output and different types of commitments affect which type of empty labour strategy that will be used.

Theoretically, as well as practically, we would like to explain this model in the following way. A person that is contextually committed and that finds him-/herself in a situation with nothing to do (low potential output) will feel that it would be wrong to slack and engage in activates that has nothing to do with their work or organisation. They would thereby "fail" to engage in external activities and choose to endure the situation. This sort of

behaviour was as earlier stated found in organisation Y among more or less all the employees we interviewed, due to affective commitment. At organisation X this was also found, but mostly due to normative commitment, because the organisation had given the employee(s) a "chance" or because of work ethic commitment, through the sentiment that when you are at work you should work and not engage in other activities. This normative line of reasoning could also be found in organisation Y. Even though we did not explicitly identify normative commitment at organisation Y, it would not be unreasonable to assume that this also were present to some degree.

This same person would, if they had very much to do (high potential output) engage in coping as a way to be able to produce more output since they feel committed to a certain context. This type of rationale again seems to be most prevalent in organisation Y. As one employee expressed it; "…of course I come here to help, and I know that I in return can expect to be able to, for example, go to the hospital on short notice if I needed to.". Due to their strong ties with the store they were ready work hard in situations when this was needed, and did so without hesitation. This way of relating to work was, once again, found in people that were work ethic committed as well as in the way that they were ready to work for the sake of work. Interestingly, as stated earlier, this seemed to be mostly expressed by older employees

Another person that is both subjectively and contextually committed will, due to the contextual commitment still feel that in situations where the potential output is low, that it would be inherently wrong to engage in slacking. If we instead consider a situation where the potential output is high, the employee would arguably engage in coping to be able to continue to produce high levels of output. As mentioned before, one manager at organisation X for example presumably would not engage in slacking, but instead enduring because he felt normatively committed. This same employee was also subjectively committed, meaning that he "likes money" in his own words, and wanted good career prospects. In this case, what prevented him from engage in potential slack seemed to be his contextual commitment.

The third type of person though, that is only subjectively committed, would in a situation where the potential output is high, as long as it would gain his/her subjective cause at least, engage in coping. However, if a situation presents itself where she/he has absolutely nothing to do, why would they then feel that it would be wrong to slack if there is no attachment to the context (group, brand, organisation, colleagues' etcetera)? This could very clearly be seen in organisation X. As one manager expressed it, when he was not there, the

employees did not put the same effort into their input, meaning that an important part of their "hard work" was to look good for the manager. And further that a large part of his work was just "being there" and being available. This was also strengthened by some of the employees. One employee in particular, as earlier stated, said that if he had a moment where he had nothing to do that would not benefit him personally, he would engage in slacking instead. It goes without saying that he mainly cared about his career prospect and the money he was making at the company. This person was, as we have understood it, quite successful in terms of output. What this illustrates quite clearly is this: An employee that is only subjectively committed, but highly so, will work hard and put effort into their input, but only as long as it benefits them. Therefore, coping will be present when the potential output is high, here making the assumption that more output will benefit the individual, but slacking present when the potential output is low.

To illustrate further, one can again take an example of a person that thinks that the output of an organisation is meaningful, thereby to be seen as meaningfully committed, and therefore feels as long as he can improve the output in certain ways, that what he does is meaningful. We can assume here that he is only meaningfully committed. If he then finds himself in a situation where he cannot do anything to improve this output, maybe because of bureaucracy or anything of the sort, he would, according to the model, instead slack due to no moral attachment towards the organisation and/or work itself. This is because he does not think that he is ought to do anything, he is just committed towards improving the output and if he cannot do this through additional input, he would presumably do something else that has nothing to do with his work. The commitment construct in this case is again disestablished and no commitment is to be found.

Another person though, that feels the same sort of meaningful commitment but feels that he is ought to work because he feels that working is good in itself will come up with other tasks because he believes that one should work – not slack. This again stems from the collective nature, we believe that when you are in a context of people, you will feel obligated to a higher degree to do things and that it feels right when doing so. So, the thought that we have based this view on is that someone that is driven by their subjective commitment will see this in a more rational way akin to "how can I best achieve what I want", whereas the more collective thought is about "I will in every situation do my best to support the context so that I will carry my own weight". Again, the solely subjectively committed person might feel that he/she wants to help people and is meaningfully committed in this way, but will do it from an

individualistic perspective in the sense that he/she does not feel that he/she will be judged, or simply doesn't care, by a potential group of people that pursue this same goal or are in this person's context. So, there is no group commitment accompanied with subjective commitment. So basically, a truly subjectively committed employee will not engage in meaningless activities for the sake of the activity; there has to be an incitement in order for him/her to do it which is also rationally based and if this incitement is temporarily removed, so is the commitment construct, leading to that they will fall into low commitment strategies. This is again what separates the construct of someone that is contextually committed. The contextual commitment is to be seen as more "stable" compared to the subjectively as the subjectively committed person in this case is more "opportunistic" in his/her nature and willing to bend, or simply ignore, ethical rules to a higher degree.

6. Conclusion

In this thesis, we have read up upon different types of empty labour "strategies" and that what type of strategy that will be used depends on the potential output combined with to what extent an employee is committed. Our initial critique was that the model that is designed to determine the type of strategy treated commitment as either high or low, meaning that it was one dimensional. From this we therefore developed our own multidimensional model for high commitment and found through interviews that there can be different kinds of commitment, within the frames of our model, that will result in high commitment strategies. Our research questions we feel have been answered to some degree. We have been able to showcase how employees in two different situations relate to their tasks and what they do when they do not, for any reason, do their official job. Furthermore, we have tried to construct a framework in order to clarify how this depends on commitment and output, in order for the reader to understand the varying forms of empty labour and the rationale for partaking in them.

From this we encountered the issue that there seemed to be one additional form of commitment that where not mentioned in the theoretical framework; a sense of what you accomplish in your job per se is important. We therefore included this in our further analysis to be referred to as meaningfully committed.

When observing our results, we seemed to find that there was a misalignment with the model over high commitment and empty labour in the sense that we had employees that where highly committed, and thereby engaged in high commitment strategies, but during certain circumstances, instead choose to engage in low commitment strategies. This was both stated in interviews and observed as part of the field study. Having encountered this gap between theory and practice we realised that the theory perhaps was in need of restructuring. In this restructuring, we developed a new division of commitment constructs to include either subjective or contextual commitment.

Having done this, we formulated a hypothesis which would make the theory align with practice. The thought behind it is as following: If an employee is contextually committed, the model for empty labour strategies stand, meaning that if the potential output is high the employee will engage in coping, whereas if the potential output is low, the employee will engage in enduring. If a person only is to be seen as subjectively committed, and have a high potential output, this person will, if it gains their subjective cause, engage in coping.

However, if the person instead finds him-/herself in a situation where the potential output is low, and enduring would not gain their subjective cause, they will instead engage in slacking. It would be possible that if this person finds him-/herself in a situation where potential output is high, but that engaging in this work will not favour their subjective cause, that they would engage in soldiering instead. This was however not observed, whereas this is purely speculative.

To conclude, a contextual committed individual will engage in a high commitment strategy mainly, whereas someone that is solely subjectively committed can chose to engage in either a high- and/or a low commitment strategy depending on the conditions. We therefore argue that the model that is meant to describe empty labour strategies might benefit from some remodelling to include several constructs of commitment.

6.1 Suggestions for further research

As for our suggestions for future research, we feel that there is a need to increase the focus on what different types of commitment can mean for different types of empty labour and strategies for employees. As it is today, we argue that commitment is seen as one-dimensional and not that important other than high-low types, which we argue is too simple for such a complex matter.

Apart from this, we suggest that the analysis that we have made, where meaningfully committed acts as a construct, should be up for scrutiny and in extension, revised. We developed the concept as a way of bridging the gap that we argue can be found when it comes to research regarding commitment and in extension empty labour.

Furthermore, considering that we only had a very limited amount of time, our empirical background is not as extensive as we would have preferred. Therefore, we argue that there is a need to conduct similar research on a much larger scale, in order to see whether or not our assumptions and conclusions can be regarded as statistically sound. Apart from this, it would perhaps be of interest to incorporate a quantitative dimension (as we mentioned in the theoretical overview) as a way of exploring to what degree people identify with the different types of commitment, considering that you are likely to show traits of more than one. This will most likely need the study to be way more extensive in regard to the data collection however.

The limitations we brought up in the methodology section further indicates where our thesis may lack in validity, further arguing that one main issue being that we would need a larger sample size in order to be able to draw any general conclusions as well as perhaps including other workplaces as they may differ from the two that we have chosen to examine.

7. References

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8. Appendix A

Interview questionnaire

- Guarantee anonymity
- Tell us a bit about yourself (age, gender, education etcetera)
- Title? Official tasks?
- How long have you been at the organisation?
- Describe a regular working day
  - What do you do other than your primary tasks?
  - Please tell us about the last time you did something other than your work-related tasks at work
- Please describe the relationship between yourself and the organisation
  - How do you perceive (if there are any) control mechanisms?
  - What is freedom at work for you? How much freedom do you have?
- You told us earlier that you do other things than your primary tasks, what are the main reasons for this?
  - Do you ever feel that this is "wrong"?
  - How would you say that this affects your productivity?
  - Are you allowed to do other things than your "normal" tasks?
- When/how did you first notice that you could work actively less than eight hours a day? What did you do instead?
- How long should a working day be according to you?
- Would you be able to get as much done as you do today, if the working day was shorter?
- To what extent do you get affected by what your colleagues do at work?
  - Do you believe that your acting affects your colleagues? Both when doing your "job" as well as when you are doing other things.
  - What is your perception of what colleagues do during a working day?
- How do you think that your productivity and the time spent on other things as well is affected by a shortened working day?
  - Would you still be able to get as much done if the day was shortened?
- Given a day where you have less to do, how does that feel? How do you deal with it? What do you do?

· For managers: how do you perceive the productivity to be affected by employees doing things other than their official tasks? How is their well-being affected? Does it happen that you do other things than your tasks? If so, why?