

# Future party leaders or burned out?

A mixed methods study of the leading members of the youth organizations of political parties in Sweden

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# Abstract

While career-related motives are not given much attention in studies on party membership, there are strong reasons to believe that such professional factors are important for young party members. This study is one of the first comprehensive investigations of how career-related motives impact the willingness of Swedish leading young party members to become politicians in the future. A unique survey among the national board members of the youth organizations confirms that career-related motives make a positive impact. However, those who experienced more internal stress were unexpectedly found to be more willing to become politicians in the future. The most interesting indication was that the factor that made the strongest impact on the willingness was the integration between the youth organization and its mother party.

Another important goal was to develop an understanding of the meaning of career-related motives for young party members. Using a set of 25 in-depth interviews with members of the youth organizations, this study identifies a sense among the members that holding a high position within a political party could imply professional reputational costs because some employers would not hire a person who is “labelled as a politician”. This notation of reputational costs contributes importantly to the literature that seeks to explain party membership.

*Key words:* Sweden, youth organizations, political recruitment, career-related motives, stress, party integration

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# 1 Introduction: The puzzling partisans

The average young person is not a member of a political party. But there is a small group of enthusiastic young men and women who not only join parties, but also become active members, and eventually seek leading political positions or elective offices. The question of what motivates, or discourages, these young partisans, who consider devoting their working life to politics, stands out as an important puzzle in light of the last decades' decline in party membership in established parliamentary democracies (Katz et al. 1992, Mair et al. 2001).

The decline of party members has thrown into question the capacity of the party system to fulfil its unique function as a link between citizens and representatives (SOU 2000a: 29). As Dalton and Wattenberg remind us, the conclusion made by the political scientist Schattschneiders in 1942 that “modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of political parties” has over the decades been shared and supported by several political scientists and analysts (Dalton & Wattenberg 2000:3). This means that the ability of parties to attract members is crucial for the democratic society, as we know it.

Much of the current literature on political participation pays specific attention to the fact that young people seem to be the hardest to attract to parties. Pedersen et al. conclude in their party member study of Denmark that “[t]he young are strongly underrepresented and the old strongly overrepresented among party members” (2004:372). Similarly, Hooghe et al. state that the parties' youth organizations have been losing members more rapidly than the overall parties (2004:51).

Also the Swedish parties and their youth organizations have lost a considerable share of their members over the last decades (Bäck et al. 2015:677). Only 5.6 per cent of the Swedish citizens aged 16 – 24 are members of a political party or a youth organization (SCB 2018:34). Furthermore, the political parties are among the institutions of society in which Swedish citizens express the lowest degree of confidence (SOU 2016:671.) But contrary to the overall picture of industrialized democracies (Bruter & Harrison 2009:1), the decline in party participation in Sweden has touched elder generations even more than the younger (SCB 2018). And when the Swedish Commission on Democracy of 2014 summarized its findings, the commission stated that “the idea of a party crisis” in the country generally can “be written off” because “there is no longer a decline in membership of the political parties” (SOU: 2016:669). This complex picture indicates that young Swedes, in general, are relatively strongly interested in party politics. This makes Sweden a relevant case for a study on the motives and ambitions of young leading party members. There are several reasons why young active party members deserve the attention of political scientists. One of them concerns resilience. Without disregarding grassroots, it is a matter of party

survival that there are some members who are willing to seek leading positions or stand as candidates for public office.

Hooghe et al. have demonstrated that youth organizations play a key role in party recruitment to the elected and appointed offices (2004). Similarly, Bruter and Harrison describe how the young are used as a “pool of personnel from whom parties may recruit candidates for public offices at an array of different levels of responsibilities” (2009:9).

The main goal for this study is to shed light on career building as a motive for party membership for young leading party members. It might be regarded as self-evident that the most active members also are most likely to see themselves as future politicians. But little is actually known about why and how young and active party members choose different directions in party politics. However, the few empiric studies that have been carried out on the topic demonstrate interesting results. Hooghe et al. (2004), in a study of the recruitment function of youth organizations of political parties in Belgium, confirms the conventional wisdom that some of the future political leaders are likely to be found in the youth organizations. Their survey study demonstrates that 41 per cent of all the city councillors in the Flemish region started their political career in a youth organization.

Another interesting finding regarding the ambitions of young party members is presented in Bruter and Harrison’s survey in six European countries (2009: 227). Nearly half of the respondents in this study say that they either want, or would consider, becoming an elected politician or getting a leading position within their parties (ibid). This contradicts results from earlier empirical studies that have demonstrated that very few party members are motivated by career-related motives (Heidar 2006:305).

Öhberg, in a study on the members of the Swedish national parliament in 1996, concludes that a fifth of the members held career-related ambition (2011:141). These members were often young persons with a strong socio-economic background and were also professional politicians when they entered the parliament (ibid.). Öhberg interestingly concludes that Sweden stands out as a country where career-related ambitions are believed to be non-existent (ibid.).

However, party membership is commonly regarded as one of the most time- and cost intensive of the various forms of political activism (Bruter & Harrison 2009:3, 9, 83) and it is obvious that the parties’ loss of members has caused increased pressure on the remaining active members. A smaller group of members must now perform the same tasks that were previously performed by a larger group. A worrying signal regarding the perceived workload of young party members appears in a preliminary analysis of 25 interviews with Swedish members of youth organizations, from the research project *Political Participation Among Young people – From Party Democrats to Social Media Activists?* This indication is endorsed by Bruter and Harrison’s description of parties that routinely use their young members as free labour (2009:83). This study intends to find out if some of the enthusiastic members get disappointed and discouraged because they find that the party or the youth organization demand too much from them. If these active young members, who can be assumed to desire a political

future, still do not want it, it is important that the parties and the whole society understand why, in order to find out what could be improved.

## 1.1 Purpose and research questions

This study makes the argument that career-related motives are important factors for explaining party participation among young people. Thereby, the study will make three important contributes to the literature. First, develop the knowledge of the meaning of career-related motives. Second, empirically validate the theoretical assumption that career-related motives impact the young leading members' willingness to become politicians in the future. Third, establishing a quantitative framework for detecting the impact of stress and party integration on the young leading party members' willingness to become politicians in the future.

- 1. How do members of political youth organizations understand career-related motives for party membership?*
- 2. How can the political youth organizations' leading members' motives and experiences of party politics explain their willingness to become politicians in the future?*

## 1.2 Method, theory and data

This study intends to explain the differences in the Swedish youth organizations' leading members' willingness to become politicians in the future as well as to understand their career-related motives for party membership. The selected target group is the members of the national boards of the eight youth organizations of the parties represented in the Swedish parliament. Because the national board seats are some of the highest positions within the youth organizations, the board members can be expected to be some of the most experienced members. Thereby, they can be assumed to give well-informed answers to questions about political ambitions and career-related motives. It is likely that these young men and women have been involved in internal party processes of candidate selection, and one can assume that a considerable share of them see themselves as candidates for elective offices. This makes them an appropriate group to study. The results can be generalized to other Swedish young leading party members on similar positions.

A special purpose survey is conducted uniquely for this thesis, and the survey is probably the first that has ever been conducted on young leading party members in Sweden.

One question of certain interest for this study is the suggestion in recent research that career-related issues might be more, and differently, important for

young party members than for others, (Scarrow 2015:156, Bruter & Harrison 2009, Öhberg 2011). A better knowledge of how the young members relate to this type of motive is necessary for understanding their willingness to become politicians. This ambition to provide a fuller, and more nuanced, understanding calls for a qualitative approach. As a former research assistant in the project *Political participation among young people - from party Democrats to social media activists?* I contributed to the collection of a set of 25 qualitative interviews with members of the youth organizations of Swedish political parties. These interviews will be used in this study by the authorization of senior lecturer in political science Malena Rosén Sundström at Lund University.

The research problem will primarily be understood through theories on incentives to party membership that are grounded in rational choice. This means that political participation is regarded as a “costly act” and party membership is assumed to be a product of individual calculations of costs and benefits. This theoretical logic suggests that people become, and remain, party members when they perceive that the membership is rewarding (Clark & Wilson 1961, Olson 1965, Seyd & Whiteley 1992).

This study intends to explain, as the dependent variable, a specific type of party member activity: the willingness of young members to become politicians in the future. Such individual planning is usually not mentioned in the literature on party membership (but see Bruter & Harrison 2009). But considering the exclusive and important gatekeeping role of the parties in the representative system in nominating candidates for office at all levels of government (Norris 2006: 89), there is a strong reason to give prominence to the mental work that is done when the members evaluate the possibility to make a political career. This argument aligns with Seyd and Whiteley who consider numbers of different dimensions of party activism in their empirical studies of members of the British Labour Party (1992).

Following the principle of most likely cases, this study will investigate how well one type of motive, that according to the incentives theories is the most probable explanatory variable, can explain the willingness of leading young members to become politicians in the future: career-related motives (Seyd & Whiteley 1992: 60, Bruter & Harrison 2009). This strategy makes it easy for the theory’s expected outcome to occur (Teorell & Svensson, 2007:154). If career-related reasons cannot explain the willingness to become politicians when tested on the members who are most likely to be willing, it is not likely that such benefits will be a strong motive for other party members. If this is the case, the parties will have reason to be worried about their possibilities to motivate young members by career-related incentives.

Career-related motives are in this study understood in a broad sense, in accordance with the theories that will be applied. Seyd and Whiteley identify, with reference to their study of the British Labour Party, three types of career-related motives (1992:60). The first type regards positions in political offices, described as harbouring “ambitions to become a local councillor, for example the local mayor, or even to be elected to the House of Commons” (ibid.). The second type of incentive refers to getting endorsed by the party to further careers in a



related organization such as the trade union movement. The third type concerns broader networking opportunities such as business connections that the member can get from the party membership in areas where the party is strong in local government (ibid). Scarrow distinguishes between, on the one hand, formal offices in the party or the public that members can achieve through their parties, and, on the other hand, general networking opportunities that party membership can give (2015:157). Taken together, this suggests that the young men and women who to some extent regard their party membership as a career springboard can be expected to consider a broad range of job opportunities within the party system and on the ordinary job market.

One important goal for this study is to find out why some of the young party members, who can be assumed to be most likely to desire a future as elected politicians, still may not want it. Specifically, the possibility that some members experience stress, and that this decreases their enthusiasm to become politicians, will be investigated. Considering the past decades' growing concern over stress-related mental health problems among young people, there is a good reason to raise the question whether the leading members of youth organizations experience stress from their party political engagement. If the study demonstrates that stress has a negative impact on the young members' interest in future political positions, this might indicate problems in the work environment in the parties and youth organizations. In order to capture this dimension, the effort-reward imbalance theory (ERI) will be used as a theoretical tool. This theory seeks to explain why some people experience an imbalance between efforts and rewards in working situations (Siegrist 2012, 1996). The theory suggests that people in a state of over commitment are more likely to experience imbalance.

Another goal for this project is to test whether the degree of closeness between the youth organization and the mother party has an impact on the willingness of members to hold elective offices in the future. This relation is referred to as party integration. The theoretical base for this assumption is the expectancy-value theory's suggestion that party activism is the result of both the members' individual calculations of benefits and their loyalty and affection for the group (Whiteley & Seyd 1996:217). This study assumes that the recruitment function of youth organizations of candidates to the parties is an area where the cultural and traditional differences between parties and youth organizations manifest in this link. Important to note is that this study will not provide a comprehensive analysis of the cultural or ideological differences between the youth organizations and the party. This means that any findings regarding the party integration must be interpreted as indications.

The study's purpose should not be mistaken for an ambition to predict the future of young members. The question of how this group of highly active members foresee a future in politics is interesting regardless of whether the plans are realised or not because it reveals how the young members evaluate their experiences in their parties and youth organizations.

## 1.3 Delimitations

This study is devoted to investigating how young leading party members are impacted by career-related motives. Therefore, one should not interpret the findings as being similar for political participation among young people in general. Furthermore, this study mainly seeks to explain party-membership as a result of a calculation of costs and benefits. But this thesis will not apply standard socioeconomic models (SES) that are commonly used in studies on political participation among young people. Moreover, it will not engage in the debate on whether political participation among young people should be understood as a cohort-effect that will last over time or as a life-cycle phenomenon.

## 1.4 Outline

Chapter 2 is devoted to demonstrating why and how Sweden is an appropriate case for this study. The argument is presented that the integration between the youth organization and its mother party is an important factor in explaining the leading members' willingness to become politicians in the future.

Chapter 3 identifies and discusses some theoretical explanations for the research questions set up in this study. The outcome of this exercise is to develop general expectations formulated as four hypotheses.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodological approach, presents the survey study and the sets of qualitative interviews that will be used and describes the measurement strategies.

Chapter 5 starts with an interpretative analysis of how young party members understand career-related motives. The result, presented as four broad themes, answers the first research question. Second, the impact of stress and party integration on the willingness of young party members to become politicians in the future is tested by the use of multiple regression technique.

In Chapter 6, the results are summarized and discussed.

## 2 Background

This chapter intends to demonstrate why and how Sweden is an appropriate case for a study on young leading party members' career-related motives and their future ambitions for party politics. First, some important features of the Swedish political landscape will be described. Next, the youth organizations and their function for the parties' recruitment of possible future politicians will be presented. The suggestion will be presented that the youth organizations' integration with their mother parties can contribute to explaining the leading members' willingness to become politicians in the future.

### 2.1 The changing political landscape of Sweden

Being a century old parliamentary democracy, Sweden is more fragmented than ever, with a record number of eight parties represented in the national assembly. The Swedish party system, which used to be stable and predictable, has become increasingly volatile (Lindvall et al. 2017: 90-91, 94, 179). Some parties that for decades have won seats in the elections today struggle to even pass the thresholds. As a consequence, coalitions have become the most common form of government on all levels. Most of the parties have changed their positions, and the political landscape is far more unpredictable than it used to be.

In particular, the political scene has become impacted by the growing success of the nationalist party Sweden Democrats, which crossed the four per cent-threshold for representation in the national parliament in 2010 and today is the third largest party (Lindvall et al. 2017: 16). Other parties have been unwilling to cooperate with the Sweden Democrats because of its nationalistic ideology and its roots in Swedish fascism. Consequently, government formations have become complicated (Lindvall et al. 2017: 95).

This development follows the development in several other democratic countries, and the similarities make Sweden an interesting case for studying the young generation of politically active citizens. One can assume that the development has an impact on the willingness of young citizens to commit to party politics, but we still do not know if this is the case and, if so, in what way. The increasing level of conflicts might lower young people's enthusiasm for party politics and it is possible that the young leading members think twice before they run for an elective office due to the increased unpredictability. On the other hand, if the young experience that profound ideological values are at stake, they might be more motivated to join political parties. Such a trend shift is suggested in a

feature article on the youth organizations election campaigning in 2018, published in the daily newspaper Dagens Nyheter (2018). The youth organization members that were interviewed in this article thought that this election was a high-stakes election that mobilized the masses and some of the youth organizations reported a 100 per cent increase in members during the last year. If this mobilization is still taking place and remains, it is likely that the young leading members will be more willing to represent their parties as candidates or elected representatives. The described setting makes Sweden an appropriate case because the young can be expected to reflect on and reconsider their engagement and future plans.

Considering that this study is conducted during 2018 when elections are held in Sweden it is likely that questions regarding recruitment to political positions are on top of the members' minds.



### 2.1.1 The young Swedish citizens' relation to politics

The young Swedish citizens' relation to politics appears to be complex. They are highly interested in politics, in terms of international comparisons (Bäck et al, 2015: 22), they are as interested in discussing politics as older Swedish citizens and they are actually more satisfied with democracy than older groups (Abdelzadeh 2015: 18). Still, the vast majority of young Swedes do not channel their political interest through parties. No more than 5.6 per cent of the Swedish citizens aged 16 – 24 are members of a political party or a youth organization (SCB 2018: 34). But the young peoples' party membership does not differ much

from other age groups: 5.3 per cent of all Swedish citizens are party members. As shown in Figure 1, the downward trend of the last decades in party membership has in fact been most clear among older citizens (SCB 2018). This contrasts with the development in other industrialized democracies where the decline in party participation has touched younger generations more than the elder (Bruter & Harrison 2009:1).

However, the parties and the youth organizations in Sweden have lost a considerable share of their members over the last decades (Bäck et al. 2015: 677), just like in other Western democracies. The number of Swedish party members decreased by 200 000 in the two decades that followed the beginning of the 1990:s (Erlingsson et al. 2015:7).

Like in countries with a similar development, scholars and authorities in Sweden have raised the question if the downward trend in party membership indicates a demise of mass-based parties and a new era of professionalized party organizations (Bäck et al. 2015:676). This would mean that party membership remains a minority activity in society and that the parties' remaining members to large extents are highly active partisans who commonly hold elective offices or are employed by the parties (ibid., SOU 2016:672). This would imply that future party members put more effort into their engagement and also get more rewards back. Furthermore, career-related motives and a desire for political positions would play a more prominent role in party membership. It shall be noted though that some political scientists reject the idea that a new type of professional party is taking over the scene (Hooghe et al. 2004:194).

To further complicate the picture, recent statistics of party membership in Sweden indicate that the negative trend has reversed. In 2016 The Swedish Commission on Democracy of 2014 suggests the decline in membership of the political parties has ceased (SOU: 2016:669). Erlingsson et al. support this suggestion by concluding that the parties report an increasing enrolment (2015:7).

Also the idea of a shortage of young politicians can be questioned in Sweden. The group of elected representatives under the age of 30 have actually grown at all levels from 1991 to 2014, and this trend has been most significant in the national parliament where the rate of young members grew from 1 to 11 percent (SCB 2016b:7). But the young are still clearly under-represented at all political levels (SCB 2016b, SCB 2016a) and especially so in the municipal councils.

The 2014 Commission on Democracy brought up the underrepresentation of young politicians in its summary as one of the most important democratic challenges. The commission identified two types of risks connected to the underrepresentation (SOU:2016: 680-673). First, the commission warned that the perspective of young citizens would not have "a sufficient impact on decision-making, at local and national levels respectively" (SOU: 2016:680-673). This concerns one of the core ideas of the representative democracy: the notion of representation of ideas, which means that the representatives shall reflect the political beliefs of their voters (Norris 2006:115). The second risk concerns the parties' possibilities for regrowth. The Commission warns that the "lack of experience among young people of holding an elected office deteriorates the conditions for the young generations' continued political career" (ibid.).

The Swedish Commission on Democracy's concern with the political careers of young Swedes shows that the issue constitutes an important problem with democratic implications. It is clear that the possibility of a future lack of eligible candidates among the partisans concerns the parties' key function as devices for leadership recruitment.

The fact that one in four local party organizations had difficulties identifying candidates for the 2014 general election (Erlingsson et al. 2015:7) underlines this risk. Furthermore, young politicians leave their assignments in municipal councils to a greater extent than other groups (ibid.).

## 2.2 The Swedish youth organizations

### 2.2.1 How the youth organizations view recruitment

Despite the lack of research attention, it is established that the Swedish youth organizations bear a special responsibility for recruiting new members to the parties and also provide that the parties recruit candidates for public offices from the young wings (SOU 2016:670). A rare example of an official publication that sheds light on this important function is a brief report from the Swedish Government Official Report published in 2000 (SOU 2000b). This report summarises a hearing where some leading members of the youth organizations<sup>1</sup> were invited to reflect on the parties' difficulty in recruiting younger members. Even though the report is slightly dated, it gives an important insight into the young leading members' understanding of the youth organizations' function for recruitment and political career building.

Four of the eight persons that participated in the hearing in 2000 today hold high positions in their parties:

- Gustav Fridolin, who represented The Young Green, is now a spokesperson of the Green Party and former minister of education.
- Lena Hallengren from SSU is minister for children, the elderly and gender equality for the Swedish Social Democrats.
- Gunnar Strömmer from MUF holds a prestigious and highly influential post as the Secretary of the Moderate Party.
- Fredrik Malm who represented LUF is a member of the parliament for the Liberal Party.

This indicates that future political leaders are found in the youth organizations. Interestingly, some participants in the hearing emphasized the independence of youth organizations from their mother parties. They concluded that the parties obviously wanted to recruit members and candidates from the

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<sup>1</sup> The Young Swedes was not yet established.

youth wings, but they stated that not all of the youth organization members want to be party members (SOU 2000b:508). Thereby, they resisted the picture of the youth organizations as a recruitment pool for the parties.

A second observation concerns the risk that parties take advantage of their most active young members. Some participants stated that the shortage of party members willing to take on political positions in municipalities causes a situation where the parties ask the most active young members to take too much work, and that they risk being worn out by the effort (SOU 2000b:508). This supports the idea that stress among highly active young party members might be an important problem.

Table 1. The Swedish youth organizations

<i>Youth organization</i>	<i>Mother party</i>
Moderate Youth League	Moderate Party (Moderaterna)
Centre Party Youth	Centre Party (Centerpartiet)
Liberal Youth of Sweden	Liberal Party (Liberalerna)
Young Christian Democrats	Christian Democratic Party (Kristdemokraterna)
Young Greens of Sweden	The Green Party (Miljöpartiet)
Social Democratic Young League	The Social Democratic Party (Socialdemokraterna)
Young Left	The Left Party
Young Swedes	The Sweden Democrats

### 2.2.2 Party integration

This study does not provide a full description of the youth organizations' cultures, traditions and ideologies. But it assumes that the youth organizations' traditional, cultural and ideological differences can be an important factor that affects the willingness of young members to become politicians. This study intends to explore this idea by preliminarily investigate a specific dimension of the mentioned differences: the closeness between the youth organization and its mother party. This relation will be referred to as integration.

As will be shown here, there are empirically grounded reasons to assume that integration plays a great part in explaining the motives and ambitions of members. Two of the eight organizations in this study stand out as very strongly versus very weakly integrated with their mother parties: The Young Left is loosely tied to The Left Party while The Young Swedes is very close to The Sweden Democrats. The Young Left presents itself on its website as different from the other youth organizations regarding the relation to the mother party by being "separate organizations that fulfil different roles" (Ung Vänster 2017). Furthermore, in a plan for the election year 2018, The Young Left states that its members will not mechanically support The Left Party as an "election machine" (ibid).

The Young Swedes, on the other hand, was founded by the leaders of the Sweden Democrats after the mother party had broken its ties with the original youth organization because of an ideological conflict (SDTV 2015)". The Young Swedes is thereby a product of the party. When the party chairman of the Sweden Democrats, Jimmie Åkesson, presented the Young Swedes in 2015 he stated that its primary function would be to "secure the regrowth of the party" (ibid). Åkesson also said that the main purpose of the youth organization would be to "attract young people to vote for the party" and "help regrow the party" between election seasons" (ibid). This means that The Young Swedes' is expected to supply the Sweden Democrats with candidates in the internal nomination processes. Taken together, if integration between the youth organization and the mother party affects the willingness of members to become politicians in the future, it is probable that the members of The Young Left are less likely to see a future in politics, while the members of The Young Swedes can be expected, to a large extent, to see a professional future in politics.



## 3 Theory and literature review

This chapter aims to identify some theoretical explanations for the questions that this study intends to answer: How can the political youth organizations' leading member's motives and experiences of party politics explain their willingness to become politicians in the future? And what do career-related motives mean to the members of the youth organizations?

The first section describes and discusses how the literature has used the rational choice perspective as a theoretical tool in explaining motives for party membership. The goal is to present career-related motives in its theoretical context. This theoretical perspective is the primary tool in the study and this section is, therefore, much more comprehensive than the following.

The second section introduces the expectancy-value theory as an appropriate theory for explaining the impact of party culture manifested as integration between the youth organization and its mother party.

The third section presents the effort-reward imbalance theory as a theoretical tool that could explain how stress can impact the young members' willingness to become politicians in the future.

The outcome of this exercise is to develop general expectations that will be tested in the remainder of the study. These expectations are presented as hypotheses at the end of each section.

### 3.1 What motivates party members?

#### 3.1.1 The rewarding party membership

Why do so few people become members of political parties? The rational choice oriented political scientists Seyd and Whiteley turn the question on its head and argue that the real puzzle of party participation is why anyone becomes a member at all (1992:57). Seyd and Whiteley, and several other like-minded scholars, build their argument on the economist and social scientist Mancur Olson's theory on collective action (1965). Referring to Olson's logic, these scholars claim that not even those who are most enthusiastically in favour of a party's politics, if they were rationally calculating, would become party members if their only reason were promoting the goals of the party by helping it implement its policies (1992:57). This argument draws on the economic assumption that party membership is the product of a calculation of costs and benefits. This implies that citizens will not become members if all the benefits they can get out of it are so-

called public goods, also referred to as collective goods, that the parties produce in the form of reforms and policies. Because such goods are likely available for all citizens regardless of whether they "bear the cost" of being party members or not, the rational individual would choose to free ride instead of becoming a party member (Seyd & Whiteley 1992:57-59, Olson 1965).

But despite the free-rider option, a non-negligible share of the citizens in democratic countries freely choose to join political parties, and some of them devote considerable time, energy and commitment to the engagement. Why do they do this? This puzzle is known as the paradox of participation (Bäck et al. 2011:74), or the paradox of party membership (Scarow 2015:156). The traditional solution of scholars to this paradox is to point to benefits that are reserved for party members only. Such benefits are commonly referred to as selective incentives. Mancur Olson, who used his theory to study labour unions, exemplified selective incentives with how the unions offer their members beneficial insurance policies, welfare and seniority rights (Olson 1965:73, 75). Since the unions' traditional work for higher salaries and better working conditions are public goods, such benefits are not rational motives for membership, reasoned Olson (*ibid.*).

However, the political scientists who draw their studies on Olson's theory have found that selective incentives are insufficient to fully explain party membership. Seyd and Whiteley, for instance, argue that a model that only takes selective incentives into account, and thereby excludes the party's political output, "does not allow individuals to think in solidaristic terms, to want to promote the interest of the group as a whole" (1992:61). Thus, some political scientists developed models that include collective incentives, and those theories are today broadly accepted and used in empirical studies.

Mancur Olson's insights have become highly influential, but most of the theoretical models that are used in empirical studies to explain motives for party membership draw on Clark and Wilson's classical theory on how organizations distribute incentives to individuals in order to induce them to contribute activity (1961). Their model distinguishes between purposive, solidary, and material incentives. Political scientists have interpreted the categories to fit the context of party membership. Young and Cross, for instance, (2002:549) interpret them as follows: purposive incentives refer to the political output – the contributions of members to achieving the party's ideological goals and policy. Solidary incentives concern the social aspects of party membership, such as the joy of meeting like-minded people or other social or recreational opportunities. Material incentives are personal rewards, for example career-related opportunities such as patronage appointments, government contracts or more general inducements.

Clark and Wilson categorize the motives by how they are manifested and not by for whom they are available. Some of the labels can, as shown in table 3.1, be divided into selective versus collective incentives, referring to availability for only members versus for everyone.

Wilson developed the original model further by distinguishing between inclusive selective benefits that are available to all members and exclusive selective benefits that only a few members can enjoy (1973:37). Seyd and

Whiteley developed an even more comprehensive model that includes both selective and collective incentives and also psychological elements of altruism and solidarity (1992).

The inclusion of collective incentives requires a rational argument for why a benefit that anyone can achieve, such as the realization of a party's policy, would motivate an individual to join a party. The common answer of scholars is that a member has some possibilities to influence the outcome of the parties' work (Bäck et al. 2011: 7) and that this counts as a benefit.

However, the development of models that include a wide array of motives to party membership is contested. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) have warned the rational choice-inspired scholars for overstressing their models by including different kinds of psychological benefits. The matter at stake is the falsifiability and analytical power. Other scholars have pointed out that the empirical studies that have been conducted are inconsistent because of the wide diversity of models. Bäck et al. suggest that the inconsistency is the main reason why the empirical studies show such conflicting results and they conclude that this problem makes it difficult to establish the empirical viability (2011:75).

Drawing on both Clark and Wilson and Seyd and Whiteley, Scarrow developed a framework that provides a good overview of the different types of incentives (Scarrow 2015:157). This study uses Scarrow's framework to present career-related motives to party membership in its theoretical context. The main function of the framework is to show how the various motives are categorized<sup>2</sup> depending on how they are manifested and for whom they are available. Career-related motives for party membership, which is the main interest for this study, is, as shown in table 3.1, categorized as a form of selective and exclusive incentive, which means that it is only available for some party members. Career-related motives are distinguished into political, referring offices controlled by the party or government and to material that concerns the member's possibility to build a professional network (2015:157).

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<sup>2</sup> The theories label the benefits differently, but the exact labelling is less important than the categorization for this study.

Table 3.1. Benefits for party members

	<b>Collective</b>	<b>Selective</b>	
	<i>Members and others</i>	<i>Inclusive: all members</i>	<i>Exclusive: some members</i>
<b>Social and psychological</b>	1. Group identity	2. Leisure Activities Make a difference	3. Status
<b>Material</b>	4. Policy benefits	5. Services: credit cards, consumer discounts Education and training	6. Patronage. Career opportunities: networking
<b>Political</b>	7. Positive: advance a cause Negative: oust current government or combat political threat	8. Influence: party decisions Information Self-actualization	9. Influence: Party and government decisions Office: party, public or quasi-public jobs

Scarrow, 2015: 157

### 3.1.2 The unclear importance of career-related motives

Career-related motives have been acknowledged as a rational incentive to party membership ever since Clark and Wilson invented their model (1961). But the contemporary literature most commonly states that career building has minor importance for an individual's decision to become, and remain, a party member (Heidar 2006:305). Scarrow, in a summary of the empirical studies of the last decades on incentives to party membership, concludes that few party members bring up career benefits or other material rewards as their main reasons for joining (Scarrow 2015:158). Young and Cross' survey on Canadian party members is one of the studies that thus far have demonstrated the highest scores for careerist reasons. 14 percent of Young and Cross' respondents said that general career help was "very" or "somewhat" important in their decision to join (2002:558).

Instead, party members consistently place political or ideological incentives, categorized as collective, at the top of their lists when they are asked in surveys why they joined. For instance, more than half of the Danish party members in a

study by Pedersen et al. mentioned ideology as one of the four main reasons to join (2004:370). This aligns with the suggestion in the literature that both material and social benefits for party membership have lost relevance during the last decades because the traditional ways of parties to reward only members had dwindled (Heidar 2006:304-305, Young & Cross 2002:549). The common argument is that the role of parties as social vehicles has weakened in most societies (Heidar 2006:304-305) and that the widespread professionalization and formalization of public services has limited the possibilities of parties to practice patronage, or, in other words, rewarding members by the use of public resources (Sarrow 2015:171).

Sarrow argues that the development of parties from identification with well-defined social groups to catch-all parties implies that the parties no longer can rely on social benefits to inspire membership (2015: 173). Instead, she suggests that selective political motives play an increasing role to motivate party members. But, summarizing her own study of 19 democracies, she argues that only a few political parties attract supporters primarily because of collective political motives such as particular leaders or ideas (ibid.). She predicts that “new types of selective and inclusive political benefits are emerging as important tools for stimulating party affiliation and intra-party participation” (ibid.).

Regarding previous empirical studies on motives to party membership, Sarrow concludes that the “researchers have posed questions about membership motives in different ways, which hinders precise cross-party comparisons” (2015:158).

The divergent pictures of the importance of career-related motives raise the question of how well the studies have measured career-related motives. This question leads back to the theoretical definitions: what do career-related motives to party membership mean?

Probably, the first thing that comes to mind when career-related motives are mentioned in the context of party membership is the building of a political career. This is theoretically logical: the possibility to get elected to a political office is a straightforward example of an exclusive selective incentive. Because the parties control the process of recruitment to elected and appointed offices in representative democratic systems (Norris 2006:89), only members of political parties can become politicians. In the same vein, Whiteley and Seyd point out the parties’ exclusive recruitment function as one of their’ “distinctive advantages” when they compete with advocacy organizations in attracting members (1996: 219).

However, the scholars describe career-related motives in different ways. Clark and Wilson describe material incentives, that have “a monetary value or can easily be translated into ones that have” (1961:138) and this is commonly regarded as including career-related or professional motives. Whiteley and Seyd state, in their study on active British party members, that “it has long been recognized that political leaders or ‘entrepreneurs’ can be exempt from the paradox of participation, because they have incentives such as interesting, well-paid jobs and elective office” (1996:219). Whiteley and Seyd importantly point out that career-related reasons do not necessarily refer to a political career: “(...) [o]thers may be

interested in business connections that party membership might bring in areas where the party is strong in local government” (1992: 60). Similarly, Scarrow, states that parties “also offer members’ opportunities for career advancement that do not rely on state resources, such as chances for professional networking” (2015:172). Bruter and Harrison confirm in their study of young members that: “the prospect of becoming a politician (...) or simply deriving a job from one’s political involvement (...) can be a very serious source of motivation for a young person” (2009:23).

However, this literature review demonstrates that the mentioned empirical studies have failed to consider the broader professional ambitions as a motive to party membership that the theories stipulate. Seyd and Whiteley, for instance, measured career-related motives among members of the Labour Party by the following statements: “a person like me could do a good job of being a local Labour councillor” and “Labour would be more successful if more people like me were elected to Parliament” (1992:105). These questions do not capture the scholars’ own theoretical description of “business connections that the party membership might bring in areas where the party is strong in local government” (1992: 60). Bruter and Harrison in their study of young party members compile career-related motives with ambitions for party politics in and identify a “professional-minded” type (2009:23). Thus, they make no attempt to distinguish between political and material career-related incentives. Young and Cross, though, capture the two categories of career-related incentives in their survey on Canadian party members (2002:558). They asked their respondents to grade how well two statements corresponded with their reasons for becoming a member: “I thought it would help my career” and “I thought it would help me get a government job” (ibid). But they do not consider the distinct categories in their analysis since they compile the two items as one measurement for career-related reasons.

Taken all together, it seems that the importance of career-related motives has not been appropriately tested in the mentioned studies. Thus, the conclusion in the literature that few party members are motivated by career-related reasons must be questioned.

### 3.1.3 How career motives impact young and active members

How do career-related motives specifically impact young and active party members? Drawing on Clark and Wilson and Seyd and Whiteley, Bruter and Harrison developed a specific theoretical model for explaining young party membership (2009). They identified three types of young party members, each driven by specific sets of incentives and with characteristic preferences, attitudes, and behaviours (2009:227). First, so-called moral-minded members, who primarily join parties to in answer to a sense of moral duty. This type constituted a large majority of almost 40 per cent of the respondents. The second type, labelled as social-minded, represented 34 per cent of the respondents. The third type,

referred to as professional-minded, was introduced as members that “join political parties with a distinct intention to tie their professional future to politics” (2009:224). The professional type constituted a considerable minority of 26 per cent of the members. Interestingly, across the three types, nearly half of the respondents stated that they wanted, or would consider, becoming an elected or getting another leading position within their parties (ibid.).

Bruter and Harrison’s study indicates that career-related motives probably are more important for young party members than for the older (2009:20-24). Considering that the age of 18–25 is a stage of life when long-term moral, social and professional decisions are being made, Bruter and Harrison suggest that party membership can offer “a number of professional and quasi-professional opportunities” which can be highly motivating for young people who navigate “on an increasingly competitive job market” (ibid.). Scarrow confirms this idea, suggesting that the young are “more focused on building careers than those at other life stages” (2015:158-159.). The studies reviewed here support the assumption that career-related motives are important for young party members.

One important note is that career-related benefits, as shown in Table 3.1, are categorized as selective and exclusive. This means that these incentives are available for only some party members. In this vein, Seyd and Whiteley conclude that selective incentives, in general, “only accrue to those individuals who actively work for the party, and are judged as being worthy for nomination to these positions by other party members” (1992:60). Specifically, Whiteley and Seyd argue that those members that desire a political position have to “serve an ‘apprenticeship’ within their party organization before they are chosen for elective office” (1996: 219). Using an economic language, the scholars conclude that activism from this perspective can be seen as an “investment which must be made if the individual has ambitions to develop a future career in politics” (ibid.). Scarrow categorizes both types of career-related motives as selective and exclusive, and one can thereby conclude that all dimensions of career-related motives require an active party membership.

Another important aspect of investments required for career-related incentives regards the competition for offices. Bruter and Harrison conclude that the number of elected functions that a party can provide is limited, and they thereby expect that fewer young party members are motivated by career reasons than by social or ideological incentives (2009:23). Considering all of this evidence, it seems that career-related motives have an inherently costly side, because some special investment is required in order to achieve the benefit.

This study intends to explain how experiences of the young leading party members, gained over time, impact their willingness to become politicians in the future. The assumption here is that these members need to overcome the paradox of participation at several times during their time as party members. Heidar supports this idea by stating that “[o]ne’s decision to join a party as a member (...) and one’s decision to engage in various party activities may involve parts of the same calculus, but the two decisions need not be taken for the same reason(s)” (2006:307). Heidar’s argument has the important implication that the motives to party membership are not static but formed and reformed in a process. This means

that one type of motive becomes an internalised part of the party membership if it gets realized, and it becomes replaced by other motives over time.

### 3.1.4 Summary and discussion

Thus far, this chapter has demonstrated that young party members are likely to be more strongly motivated by career-related incentives than older groups, because they are at a formative stage of life. However, the literature does not give an exact definition of the meaning of career-related incentives. Scarrow distinguishes political career-related motives from material by whether the party controls the recruitment or not (see Table 3.1). But we actually do not know if the members perceive the two categories separately. It is possible, maybe probable, that a young career-motivated party member holds the door open for both politics and other jobs. Thereby, it is unclear how the construct should be measured.

To further complicate the matter, this study seeks to explain the willingness of young members to become politicians. How this construct is interpreted is fully described in Chapter 1 (p. 4), but the important argument is that “willingness to become a politician” here refers to the mental work that is taking place when a party member considers becoming an elected representative. This is understood as an important party member activity in this study. Thus, the “willingness to become a politician” is not regarded as a motive to party membership, but as a dimension of party membership that the study seeks to explain.

Obviously, the question arises whether the members’ willingness to become a politician and his or her career-related motives are two separate constructs. This study argues that this is the case. The willingness is attributed to an active evaluation of a concrete possibility, while the motives refer to a general conviction that the membership might have diverse beneficial career-related consequences. Moreover, it is logical that the motive precedes the willingness. Taken together, the theories suggest that career-related motives positively affect the young leading members’ willingness to become politicians in the future.

*Hypothesis:*

*H<sub>1</sub> There is a positive relationship between young leading party members’ career-related motives and their willingness to become politicians in the future.*

## 3.2 The expectancy-value theory

The assumption that party membership is a product of an individual’s calculation of costs and benefits is contested. One of the common objections is that clearly irrational behaviours, such as commitment to lost causes, the fanatic service of a charismatic leader or the love of labour, are difficult to explain by the rational choice models (Reisman 1990:147). The founder of the collective action theory Mancur Olson himself acknowledged the rationality-criteria’s limitations (ibid.).



His recommended solution was to change theoretical track rather than go too far in trying to interpret all behaviour as rational (Olson 1965:50). Sometimes, concluded Olson, “it would perhaps be better to turn to psychology or social psychology than to economics for a relevant theory” (ibid.).

Several researchers who study political participation have followed Olson’s recommendation. One model from the social psychological literature, commonly used by political scientists, is the expectancy-value theory that explains behaviour in terms of expected benefits and social norms (Whiteley & Seyd 1996:217). The expectancy-value theory assumes both that rational choice operates in individuals, and that their environment affects the actions of those individuals. As described by Whiteley and Seyd in a theory developing article: “On the one hand individuals are seen as utilitarians who calculate the benefits of different courses of action, although in this model no distinctions are made between the private and collective benefits of political action. On the other hand they are seen as actors embedded in a network of social norms and beliefs” (1996:217). The important insight for this study is that the expectancy-value theory allows for seeking explanatory factors in organizational differences. Conformingly, Heidar recommends the expectancy-value theory for studies that seek to explain party membership (2006:311). His main argument is that the party variable has attained surprisingly little attention in the empirical studies that seek to explain party membership.

### 3.2.1 Summary

The expectancy-value theory suggests that the actions of party members are partly explained by their organizational environment. Referring back to the empirical arguments presented in Chapter 2 (p. 11), the dimension that this study will investigate is the relation of the youth organization to the mother party, referred to as party integration. This study’s expectation is that the leading members of the youth organization that is most closely tied to their mother parties are most willing to become politicians in the future. The members of the youth organization that is less integrated with the mother party are expected to be less willing to become politicians in the future.

*Hypothesis:*

*H<sub>2</sub> Higher integration between the youth organization and the mother party has a positive impact on the relationship between young leading party members’ career-related motives and their willingness to become politicians in the future.*

### 3.3 The effort-reward imbalance theory (ERI)

Partly drawing on the expectancy-value theory, the medical sociologist Siegrist developed the effort-reward imbalance theory (ERI) to explain how the social and psychological dimensions of work-life impact human health and disease (2012). This model is not commonly used in political science, but it has been highly influential and used in research that explains experienced stress.

A very short description of the ERI-theory is that it intends to explain individuals' states of imbalance between efforts and rewards in their work, and high-cost/low-gain conditions are considered particularly stressful (Siegrist 1996). As opposed to the expectancy-value theory that assumes that rationally calculating individuals avoid or minimize high-cost/low-gain conditions, the ERI-theory suggests that individuals sometimes stay in the state of imbalance, despite the cost, for structural reasons, because they are socially constrained (Siegrist 1996:31).

The theory defines two different sources of high effort at work, an extrinsic source, referring to the demands at work, and an intrinsic source, concerning the motivations of the individual worker in a demanding situation (ibid.). The two types of stress will in this study be referred to as external versus internal stress.

The theory suggests three types of situations when imbalance can occur. First, when the employee has a poorly defined work contract or lacks alternative work opportunities. Second, when the employee accepts the imbalance for strategic reasons. Third, when the employee "exhibits a specific cognitive and motivational pattern of coping with demands characterized by an excessive work-related commitment" (Siegrist 2012). The theory also identifies so-called over-committed people who "suffer from inappropriate perceptions of demands and of their own coping resources more often than their less involved colleagues who are likely to be in a state of imbalance at work (ibid).

#### 3.3.1 Summary

This study assumes that the ERI-theory is applicable to the leading members of the youth organizations. This is supported by Bruter and Harrison's study on young European party members that identifies a group of "intense party-holics" – a core of "hyperactive" members who work for the party every day (2009:16). As described by Bruter and Harrison: "These are usually either high-ranking party officials at the local, regional, or national level, or people who have become employed by the party. Sometimes, they are even high-ranking executives who cumulate their 'voluntary' position (for instance, locally) with a salaried one (for instance, regionally or nationally, or to take care of specific aspects of the party's activity such as its website or its communication)" (2009:16).

Taken all together, there is a reason to assume that some young leading party members perceive stress that has a negative impact on their willingness to become politicians in the future.

*Hypotheses:*

*H<sub>3</sub> Experienced external stress has a negative impact on the relationship between young leading party members' career-related motives and their willingness to become politicians in the future.*

*H<sub>4</sub> Experienced internal stress has a negative impact on the relationship between young leading party members' career-related motives and their willingness to become politicians in the future.*

## 4 Method and data

This chapter describes how the study will be methodologically performed. As a start, the overall approach is presented and motivated. The second section is devoted to introducing the two sets of data. The first subsection provides a presentation of the qualitative interviews and introduces the chosen strategy for analysis and interpretation. The second subsection is devoted to presenting the survey study uniquely made for this thesis. Some implications regarding the relatively small dataset are highlighted and discussed. This section also gives arguments for how the main variables in this study will be measured. The challenge in measuring the dependent variable “willingness to become a politician” is addressed.

### 4.1 The approach

This study has two main goals. First, to explain under which conditions career-related motives impact the willingness of young leading party members to become politicians in the future. Second, to exploratory investigate how different members of youth organizations understand career-related motives. Together, these intentions call for a mixed methods design. The benefit of this approach is that it permits both developing a more complete understanding of career-related motives, from the young party members perspective, and testing the hypotheses of causal relationships that were presented in the previous chapter.

The first question the study intends to answer concerns one of the perennial issues in political science: why are some people party members? This question is typically answered by asking the members about their motives in survey studies (Scarrow 2015:158), and this study will follow this tradition. Collecting answers from many respondents has the advantage that it permits a statistical multiple regression technique. This technique allows for investigating how the assumed explanatory factors – career-related motives, experienced internal and external stress and party integration – together impact the willingness of members to become politicians in the future and also show the isolated effect of each factor when all the other factors are controlled for. Thus, it is the best methodological strategy for this study’s purpose.

The quantitative part of the study is non-comparative and focuses narrowly on young leading party members. The main argument for not including other groups is that the existing literature does not demonstrate how these members explain

their willingness to become politicians in the future. Knowledge of this specific group is important in itself because it lays the ground for future research.

The strategy to narrowly study a specific dimension of party membership follows the suggestion made by Bäck et al. that party participation is multidimensional and that explanations of political participation, therefore, “must be mode-specific to a significant extent” (2011:75, Öhberg 2011: 20-21).

A special purpose survey on the target group provides new empiric data necessary to answer the research questions. However, there are certain drawbacks associated with survey studies. The respondents could misunderstand the question, or might not know or recall the answer (Fowler 2009:12, 15). Furthermore, knowing that career-related motives to party membership are seen as socially questionable within parties (Heidar 2006:305), there is a risk that some members do not give true answers. Another disadvantage is that subjective states of mind, such as motives and ambitions that this study intends to capture, are not directly observed in the first place and, therefore, complicated to measure (Fowler 2009:16). But Scarrow concludes that the party members’ responses in surveys on party membership are valuable even if they differ from the “truth” (2015:158). This study agrees with Scarrow’s suggestion that also less “truthful” answers “shed light on stories that they tell themselves and their friends and family about what makes party membership worthwhile” (ibid.).

Another disadvantage that needs to be considered in the analysis is that survey studies can only capture a limited array of factors. Thus, there is an inevitable risk of bias resulting from leaving a variable out which directly or indirectly is the cause of the outcome that the study seeks to explain (Aneshensel 2013:423).

Furthermore, one must acknowledge that a cross-sectional single survey study can only give a snapshot of the population at a particular moment in time. This means that it will be difficult to draw certain conclusions about causality before other future studies replicate the findings.

Because the knowledge of the political ambitions of young party members is so limited, the study purposes to identify and characterize career-related motives in the context of young party members. Therefore, this study uses a set of new in-depth interviews with 25 members of youth organizations. The interviews have two functions. First, providing a nuanced understanding of the willingness of young party members to become politicians in the future. Second, answering the research question of how the members of political youth organizations understand career-related motives.

One important note is that the two datasets are not completely independent of each other. Some of the national board members of the youth organizations participated in both the interview study and the survey. This implies that the result of one of the datasets cannot, and will not in this study, be independently tested or confirmed by the other, following Creswell’s recommendation (2018:225).

## 4.2 Data

### 4.2.1 The interviews

The interviews derive from the research project *Political Participation Among Young people – From Party Democrats to Social Media Activists?*. The interviews were of semi-structured character and followed a topic guide covering different aspects of political participation. The interviewees were, for instance, asked about why they became members, their experiences of being a party member and about future plans in party politics. The interviews lasted around an hour each and were in the form of personal meetings. Together, they provide a rich description of how Swedish young party members experience their engagement, expressed in their own words. Such a large interview study on members of Swedish youth organizations has rarely, as far as this study can demonstrate, been conducted. Thereby, the interviews give an exclusive opportunity to shed light on this important group.

Seidman's description of the purpose of in-depth interviewing as "an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (2013:9) is valid in this study, which strives to better understand political participation through young peoples' own words.

As a research assistant, I was responsible for recruiting the interviewees. 25 young members were recruited, mainly through the parties and youth organizations. The selection of interviewees followed a principle of maximum variation sampling (Seidman 2013:56) regarding demographics such as age and gender, as well as experiences as members. The participants were equally distributed between the eight youth organizations that are tied to the parties in the national assembly, and at least one national board member from each organization was represented. All of the participants were aged between 17 and 26, and a small majority, 15 out of 25, are male.

Each interviewee was informed about the project, guaranteed that their responses were anonymous, informed that participation was voluntary and that all collected material would be stored safely with identity data separated from transcripts (Seidman 2013:60-80, Creswell 2018:92-98).

I conducted the interviews in shared responsibility with senior lecturer Malena Rosén Sundström. The interviews took place during 2016 and 2017.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed according to the idea that using the exact words of the participants is the most reliable way to capture their feelings and thoughts (Seidman 2013:117). During the process of data collection and transcription, I got the opportunity to start getting to know the data and starting the analysis, a strategy recommended by Kvale (Kvale & Brinkman 2014:235). Creswell describes how the qualitative analysis typically starts in the interviews, or the other form of qualitative data that may be included in the study (2018:181-183). The researcher builds "patterns, categories and themes from the bottom up by organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of

information” (ibid.). When a comprehensive set of themes is established from the dataset as a result of this analytic process, the researcher deductively searches for evidence that supports each theme. This means that theories and previous research is brought in when the first stage of the analysis is done. This study followed at large part the described principles, but the theories and the literature were present during the whole process, in dialogue with the empiric data.

The preliminary analysis that took place during the data collection revealed an interesting pattern: several of the interviewees mentioned pressure when they were asked about the negative aspects of their party political engagement. A tentative question rose in the project of whether the young party members perceive that their organizations demand too much of them. This indication was brought in as a preliminary idea at the start of this study, but it was elaborated independently from the qualitative data.

In reviewing the literature, this study found weaknesses regarding the understanding of career-related motives to party membership, described in Chapter 3. Therefore, this project addressed the question of how young members understand career-related motives structured by using qualitative interviews. Therefore, career-related motives and the young members’ future plans for politics were pre-given categories in the analysis even though no strict framework was used. This strategy limited the scope of, and directed, the qualitative analysis. However, the analytic focus within these limits was the empiric data and the interpretation purposed to reveal meanings. Kvale describes this process as “mining” after meanings by coding and condensation, and the goal is to “bring out what is already there in the texts” (2007:104-105). The tools used were not more advanced than hand coding combined with software spreadsheets.

#### 4.2.2 The survey

Since there is no survey currently in existence that includes the necessary questions for conducting a study on the topic, it was necessary to develop a special purpose questionnaire (Appendix 2). The goal was to develop a set of indicators that would be both reliable and valid measures of the underlying theoretical ideas of career-related motives, experiences of stress and the dimension of party membership that this study seeks to explain: willingness to become a politician in the future.

Since the questionnaire has no past records, two established measures were taken in order to secure consistency and repeatability. First, the questions were developed in dialogue with established questionnaires such as the Swedish SOM and the ESS, and Bruter and Harrison’s study on young party members (2009). Second, a pilot test was conducted to make sure that the questions could be asked and answered as planned. Two young former national board members of two different youth organizations served as pilot testers. Following Fowler’s recommendation (2009:119), the testers were asked to both answer the questions and “think aloud” as the questions were posed and to comment on unclearness

regarding wording and meaning. For the questions that regarded subjective perceptions, an 11-point Likert scale was used in order to capture a relative estimation rather than an objective value.

The population in the study is young leading members of the political parties. The sample selected to represent this population is the members of the national boards of the youth organizations of the parties. They are referred to as party members, even though some of them only are members of the youth organizations because the distinction is not important for the questions posed in this study.

Because of the small population, the chosen strategy was full sample, which means that everyone was selected. The sample, in total including 94 respondents, was identified between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2018. The board members were identified through the youth organizations where they in most cases were officially presented on the web page.

The data was collected over the telephone in accordance with Fowler's recommendation that the telephone is a good choice for interviews with busy people when the surveys are work related (2009:72).

All respondents were sent an email where they got information about the study (Appendix 2). Each respondent was then contacted by either mail, telephone or, in some cases, through employees at the youth organizations. The survey was conducted in the spring and summer of 2018 (from the 18<sup>th</sup> of May until the 19<sup>th</sup> of July). The 73 responses equal a high response rate of 78 per cent. The respondents were aged between 18 and 31. A small majority, 53 per cent, were men (Appendix 1). This means that the male respondents were slightly overrepresented in comparison to the sample. The non-responses were reasonably equally distributed among the organizations. 5 of them were refusals and 16 could not be reached. There was no considerable systematic trend for the non-responses that can be assumed to bias the findings.

### 4.3 Measurement

The small size of the dataset, containing 73 observations, implied some statistical restrictions. The most common rules of thumb for social science stipulate 10-15 cases of data for each predictor for a reliable equation (Field 2013:313). This limitation prevents a situation where the results are of little significant value because they do not generalise with other samples. This study restricted the independent variables to six in the models where the hypotheses are tested. Thereby, it was not possible to test the impact of all the eight youth organizations in one model. Furthermore, some socio-economic and demographic variables, usually included as control variables in studies like this, will here be excluded in order to restrict the number of predictors. However, even though differences in socioeconomic resources are known to impact young persons political participation, it can be assumed that these factors are less important for explaining



the ambitions of the leading members because they already hold high positions within the parties.

Measuring the variables is an important methodological challenge. First, the meaning of the construct “willingness to become a politician in the future” must be defined. What this study intends to capture is a “readiness” – being prepared for action – rather than a desire or a dream. The obvious way to capture this construct would be to, straightforwardly, ask the respondent about his or her willingness to become a politician. However, there is a risk that the word “willing” would cause a social desirability-effect. Bruter and Harrison conclude that few of their respondents mention the desire to have a political career as a key reason for joining a political party because “(t)his is tied to a dominant social norm about not promoting oneself” (2009:20). Similarly, Heidar argues that career seeking is not always a socially acceptable motive for joining a party (2006:305). Öhberg suggests that this is especially true in Sweden: career ambitions are so controversial in the Swedish setting that some party members do not even want to state whether they are willing to stand as candidates (2011:11).

It is also possible that some leading members perceive that they are expected to be willing, and that they do not want to share possible doubts. Therefore, this study uses the more neutral word “likeliness” to measure “willingness”. The respondents were asked to estimate the likeliness that they in ten years from now will either hold an elective office or run as a candidate in an election. The word likeliness captures the willingness, because an unwilling respondent would hardly state that it is likely that he or she foresees a future as a politician.

“Becoming a politician” can refer to several positions. Because the most traditional manifestation of being a politician is to be an elected representative, this study measures the construct by the items standing as a candidate in an election or being an elected to a political assembly. It is likely that a considerable share of the board members that participate in this study already have started careers in politics. But this does not make the future perspective less interesting to investigate. The future is interpreted as “in ten years”, which is a reasonable time frame for a young person.

The variable “career-related motives” is measured by the two items “I get positions with a high level of responsibility where I learn a lot” and “It gives me important qualifications”. Together, the two statements intend to capture both types of career-related motives: political referring to positions that can be achieved directly through the party (political) and the material that refers to broader networking. The idea is to mirror a general sense of possibility to grow and learn through the party membership. Since the theories are not precisely formulated, there is a risk that specific questions would be too narrow and thereby miss the target.

The other independent variables “external stress” and “internal stress” correspond with the two types of efforts identified in the ERI-theory: extrinsic (work pressure) versus intrinsic (personal coping, e.g. a high need for control) (Siegrist 1996:1). The intention is to capture the two most salient manifests of negative stress that are described in the ERI-theory. The respondents were asked to grade how well the following statements corresponded with their experience of

their political engagement: “the demands that I experience from the youth organization and the party are too pressing” and “the demands that I put on myself are too pressing” on scale from 0 (not at all true) to 10 (very true).

## 5 Analysis

The first part of this chapter presents the results from the analysis of the 25 qualitative interviews. Four major themes are presented that cast a light on the young members' understanding of career-related motives to party membership, and each presentation ends with a summary and a discussion. The themes, together, answer the first research question of how the young party members understand career-related motives.

The second part presents the result from the survey study among the members of the youth organizations' national boards. The results from the regression analyses that were used to predict the impact of career-related motives on the young leading party members' willingness to become politicians are presented, interpreted and analysed. This analysis answers the second research question.

### 5.1 Qualitative analysis

This introductory section gives an overview of the thoughts and feelings of the interviewees about the possibility of devoting their future to party politics. The 25 young men and women that participated in the interview-study are referred to as P1-P25. Some of them were highly active and held high positions, while others were grass root members. Thus, it is not surprising that a variety of perspectives were expressed. It shall be noted that most of the answers that are used in this analysis come from the participants who were most actively engaged in their parties and youth organizations. However, it is logical that those participants who are the best informed about the professional possibilities within the parties talk have the most to say about the issue.

When asked an open question of how they pictured themselves in party politics in ten years from now, some of the participants said that their goal was to become an elected representative.

*My vision is to become a member of the national parliament (P9).*

*Yes, indeed, I could see myself as a full-time politician (P24).*

Other participants were, for diverse reasons, not interested in elected positions.

*I would not have the energy (P21).*

*I have never liked the idea of being a politician. I am more ideologically oriented (P25).*

Other informants echoed the described friction between being a politician and being ideologically oriented. It was suggested that a position as a representative would be too restricted by formal rules.

*I do not want to engage in boring things. It is not the best way to channel my engagement and influence (P12).*

*The ordinary issues; detailed development plans and tariffs... It would make me lose some of my passion (P1).*

Some of the participants who rejected the idea of standing as a candidate in an election still considered working professionally for the party by being employed by the organization.

*The tactical and strategic parts have always been the most interesting to me (P19).*

In one case, the participant wanted to work with politics, but outside the party system:

*I would like to become an opinion writer, spreading the ideology through text and speech (P1).*

There were also some comments concerning other peoples' expectations. While talking about this issue one interviewee said that some people expect her to desire a political career just because she was highly active in a youth organization.

*"Climbing the ladder" – that's what my family think that I plan to do. But that's not what I think (P4).*

One individual, who had been highly active and held positions in her youth organization, reported that the leaders of her youth organization pushed the most active members to make a political career.

*They have, actively created a hierarchy in the youth organization and shaped a culture of advancement. (...) You are expected to see a career path (...). (P3).*

This interviewee gave examples of how the youth organization stimulated career seeking.

*They have invented more positions tied to the national board that are actually not necessary. Everyone knows it, but it goes: "if we tie this position to the national board, people will feel that it is more important, better. (...) They want to*

*give more people positions, because they want to keep people active for a long time (P3).*

Another participant, who was a new member of his youth organization, stated that he wanted an “ordinary career”.

*There are other things that interest me more than politics. I want to become an architect. (...) I do not think that I can choose both (P13).*

Together, the interviews demonstrate that the question of attaining positions in, or through, the party engages the active members. Several of the participants proved to be well informed about what possibilities were available, what the alternatives would require and how it mirrors their personal interests. This confirms that career-related questions are important for young active party members and thereby need to be considered to fully understand their party engagement.

When the young participants in this study expressed themselves, they made clear that becoming a politician is not the dream for everyone. The sense among some of the participants that other people expect them to desire a political position raises the question if the common knowledge about the ambitions of young politicians is based on a stereotype.

A finding that has not previously been described is the example of the youth organization that encourages the active members so eagerly that one participant in this study felt unease. It shall be acknowledged that a full understanding of the meaning of this participant’s words would need a broader context that this study cannot provide. But even without the context, it should be a warning signal that a highly active member experiences that the organization enforces a hierarchical structure in order to deliver future politicians. There is a risk that the youth organization unintentionally pushes away members who are committed and ambitious but still need room to reflect and find their roles in party politics.

### 5.1.1 Theme 1: Against professionalization of politicians

The notion of politics as a public charge stands out as a clear theme when the participants reflect on the possibility of tying their professional future to politics. Interestingly, those participants who took the strongest stand against a professionalization of politics were also the most interested in becoming politicians themselves. Some of the interviewees said that their membership needed to be ideologically, or emotionally, grounded. This is illustrated by the comments below.

*It is not written in stone, my membership in this party. It is important that one dares to doubt. Otherwise, you risk losing yourself (P6).*

*I will not stay in the party in order to build a career if I feel that the politics or the movement change (P20).*

Some participants strongly rejected the idea of keeping the party engagement as any other job. For example, one participant who held high positions within her party and also was employed by her party, declared the principles for her engagement:

*I will not stay if I no longer feel the same passion. (...) You can easily see this as any job or position. But it is not! One needs to hold on to the willingness to change the world (P10).*

There was a sense among the participants that one should not spend a whole professional life within the party system.

*I have problems with people that have been politicians their whole life, people who have never had an ordinary job (P8).*

Some of the participants, who were highly active members, knew that they could get the party's support to put their candidacy forward in an election. But some of them hesitated because they wanted to establish an "ordinary career".

*It is possible that I will be a full-time politician in ten years, but I think I will wait. It is better to have experience from a so-called ordinary life, work and family (P19).*

Commenting on this issue, one participant, who held several positions in her party, said that she actively have chosen an education that "is close to political issues, but not designed for working with politics" because she wanted to be professionally independent of the party.

Another participant reported that he had decided not to stand as a candidate in the election to the national parliament in 2018 because he was about to finish his university education and wanted to get work experiences.

*I have really good contacts with the party right now, because I was a regional chairperson in the youth organization until recently. So this might be my opportunity... But I am not ready to take it (P23).*

Challenging Bruter and Harrison's distinctive categorization, these results show that the participants that could be categorized as professional-minded *also* express strong ideological standpoints, manifested as a rejection of the idea of politics as a profession. This suggests that the career-seeking young politician is more complex than he or she might appear at first sight.

The strong ideological standpoints that some interviewees express is highly interesting in the light of the development of the Swedish political environment described in Chapter 2. The parties that are represented in the Swedish national

parliament navigate in an increasingly fragmented, and also polarized, landscape which means that they change positions and the members can be less sure about what coalition parties, and what policies, that their parties can consider. The principles that some participants in this study expressed that they will not remain party members at any price can be understood as a reaction to the unpredictability

Some of the participants point out a timing dilemma. The opportunities to advance within the party often come at a time when they are also occupied with full-time studies or job seeking. The frustration that some participants expressed is important to recognise, because it may help us to better understand the ambivalent feelings that some young party members have about a possible career in party politics. This should also be important information for the parties that are eager to promote their young members. The age of 18-25 is a time of life when most people find their place in life and also make professional choices with profound long-term implications. If some of the most active young members experience that they would lose their “one-shot” if they slow down or pause their party engagement, there might be a risk that they drop out of the parties. Thereby, parties would risk future difficulties in finding members that are willing to seek elected offices.

### 5.1.2 Theme 2: Possibilities that open and doors that close

In response to the question “what is the main advantage of being a party member”, several participants in this study mentioned career-related benefits. For example, one interviewee who held a position in the national board of her youth organization, described herself as a “careerist”.

*The main advantages [of being a party member] are the networking possibilities that open up. (...). Developing contacts for the future and improving yourself by being politically active. (...). I must admit that I am a careerist. (...) I like the combination of believing in a cause and seeing a personal future in it (P6).*

However, several of the participants who think that their party membership could be beneficial for their professional career also point out career-related risks. The comments below illustrate their concern that the party membership could hinder their professional opportunities outside the party system.

*The party engagement can open up possibilities in politics, but it can shut other doors. (...) You get labelled, associated with political activism (P1).*

Also some other participants who were highly active members brought up the concern about being “labelled” or “categorized” as a politician.

*I am a little worried about my future career, with the Internet and everything. This [the party membership] will never get away from me (P6).*

Another participant reported that she had held several high positions in her party but she did not mention most of them on her CV.

*I don't want to show my political opinion [on the CV] because I am afraid that people will have opinions about it (P3).*

One participant, who is a member of The Sweden Democrats, said that several of the active members of the party have experienced stigmatisation.

*Many people have lost their jobs since it has become known that they are active members of the Sweden Democrats (P15).*

Overall, this result confirms the theoretical assumption that career-reasons are important motives for young and active party members. But the most striking result to emerge from this analysis was the strong sense among some participants that the party membership not only implies career-related benefits but also costs. In reviewing the literature, this study established that career-related incentives require an investment in an active party membership (Chapter 3). But the result presented here suggests that the benefit itself has both a costly and a beneficial side. The dilemma expressed by participants is that the benefit of making a political career has the costly consequence that possibilities for a career outside the party disappear because employers would not hire a politically active person. The result demonstrated here points out the important implication that some young party members probably reject political positions in order to secure other career opportunities.

Scarrow is one of few scholars who have noted that being a party member could imply “reputational costs” (2015:135). Scarrow describes such reputational costs as “economic liabilities and social stigmas that might be associated with partisan affiliation” (ibid.). She exemplifies that some people may experience that a certain job situation is incompatible with a party membership.

But the notation of reputational costs has thus far not been considered in empirical studies that seek to explain career-related motives to party membership. The results presented in this study suggest that reputational costs are a central part of the career-related benefits that must be taken into account.

Reputational costs could explain the somewhat counterintuitive finding in this study that some young men and women who are committed enough to hold high positions in their youth organizations or parties still feel uneasy about being “labelled as a politician”.



### 5.1.3 Theme 3: The work-life-politics balance

When asked about their weekly activities as party members, several participants in the study described an endless row of meetings, preparations, and other obligations for the youth organization and the party. Not surprisingly, the sense of an overwhelming workload was strongest among those participants who held several high positions in their youth organizations and parties. Some of the interviewees experienced that they, or other members, were in a state of unhealthy stress.

*I have thought about counting the hours of party work, but I think that it would be too depressing (P9).*

*I spend on average four hours a day on the party or the youth organization. Saturdays and Sundays are often busier because we have our conferences on weekends. (...). The line between your job [for the party] and your engagement gets blurred (P10).*

*Everyone who holds a seat on a board hits the wall. It is inevitable (P25).*

Those who combined full-time studies with a highly active party membership described an especially pressing situation.

*When I was an advanced level-student and had four meetings in one week... I almost hit the wall. There was so terribly much to do. I have adopted a more restrictive principle for my work for the party (P1).*

*I have been tearing my hair out because I prioritized the party instead of writing my school assignments (P9).*

*Your multi-life requires that you read documents on the bus or before you go to sleep (P8).*

One participant, who held several high positions, felt that he had to be active in social media and follow the news, and that he, therefore, never could relax.

*Personally, I think that it is very hard to log out. Not checking the mail, or the chat, or reading the news when you are travelling. You are so afraid that you will miss something important (P9).*

Another participant who was employed as a political secretary and also held positions in the youth organization and the party confirmed:

*Politics takes so much of your life. (...) When you wake up and when you go to bed, it is politics. (...) (P5).*

This participant thought back to a time when he worked as a fruit delivery driver.

*I sometimes think that it would be nice to just sit there and drive. When you have finished your work at three in the afternoon, you are done and you can just relax. You don't have anything else to worry about (P5).*

Overall, these results confirm the problem highlighted in Chapter 2 (p. 10) that the parties sometimes, as a consequence of the declining membership load the young members with too many positions.

The sense of an overwhelming workload that some participants describe here could be interpreted as the state of over-commitment that the ERI-theory identifies: suffering “from inappropriate perceptions of demands and of their own coping resources more often than their less involved colleagues” (Siegrist 2012).

Several participants describe that their work for the party is not clearly defined and that they have to define their own limits. For several of the interviewees, their total work for the party is a mix of loosely defined voluntarily engagement and positions that can be paid and more restricted. Thereby, it is logical that their total work is not clearly defined. But the result presented here suggests that more knowledge is needed about how the young members experience the workload.

The partisans' experiences of blurred limits correspond with the type of poorly defined contracts that, according to the ERI-theory, is a typical warning signal for a state of stress. Reminding that those party members who want to become elected representatives have to “serve an ‘apprenticeship’ within their party organization, it is likely that some ambitious young members them accept imbalance for strategic reasons, as the ERI-theory suggest.

It is well known that the parties and the youth organizations generally get considerable manpower resources, voluntary as well as paid work, from the young members (Bruter & Harrison 2009:9). The results of this study highlight the importance of a better understanding of how young party members experience the demands and expectations that their activities require. That some of the most active young party members work so hard for their parties and youth organizations that they perceive unhealthy stress is a warning signal not only for the parties for society at large.

#### 5.1.4 Theme 4: Party membership as an education

When asked about the advantages of party membership, some of the participants in this study mention the type of internal training that the parties offer their members. The purpose of such training is often to teach the members laws and party statutes that dictate the procedures for performing tasks within the party (Scarrow 2015: 164). But, as some of the participants note, the knowledge could be valuable in other settings too.

*When I first joined the party, there was a lot of emphasis on training and personal development. Networking. Learning things that one wasn't taught in school (P19).*

*I constantly notice how much knowledge I have gotten through the youth organization which is valuable in other settings too. Speaking in front of audiences, rules and forms for board meetings (P12).*

*You get lots of knowledge and experiences that can be useful in studies and in working situations. You learn how to handle people. You meet so many people and talk a lot (P15).*

Party training and education are rarely mentioned as a benefit in the literature on motives to party membership. The result presented here suggests that this type of incentives needs to be taken into account in order to fully understand how young party members view career-related incentives. Including this factor in future studies might show that the material or economic, selective economic incentives are more important motives than the earlier studies have demonstrated.

## 5.2 Quantitative analysis

This section opens with a descriptive presentation of the career-related motivations of the respondents, their experiences of stress, and their willingness to become politicians in the future. Next, the results from the OLS are presented, interpreted and discussed. This section addresses the four hypotheses and the second research question.

Significance levels were set at the 5 % level and data management and analysis were performed using SPSS 25.0. The full variable coding is provided in Appendix 3.

### 5.2.1 Descriptive statistics

A good way to start an analysis of the willingness of young leading party members to become politicians in the future is to investigate how they view different future possibilities in party politics.<sup>3</sup> The members' willingness to become politicians in the future is measured by an item where the respondents were asked about the likeliness that he or she in ten years from now will be an elected candidate or put his or her candidacy forward in an election. As shown in Table 5.1, the mean score for this variable was 5.92 on the 0-11 scale. This result

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<sup>3</sup> The respondents were asked to grade all the alternatives and not to choose between them.

suggests that the average young leading party member is rather willing to become a politician in the future. This result can be compared with Bruter and Harrison's study on young party members that demonstrated that nearly half of the respondents either wanted or would consider becoming an elected politician or getting a leading position within their parties (2009: 227). In that light, one could have expected that this study would result in a higher mean score because it focuses on the leading young members who are expected to be the most willing to become politicians. However, the median score of 7 suggests that the typical young leading member is slightly more willing than neutral or unwilling. Since the distribution of responses is slightly skewed, the median is the more robust value. In general, therefore, the result suggests that the respondents are slightly more willing than not willing to become politicians in the future.

One interesting finding is that the respondents were slightly less willing to hold a leading office within the party than to become a politician, the mean score for this variable was 5.67 and the median score was 6. One possible explanation for this result is that those members who are willing to become a politician also are willing to hold a leading internal position. This possibility is supported by a high Chronbach's alpha value of 0.89 that shows that the items are highly correlated. On the other hand, considering the indication from the qualitative part of this study that some party members think that being politically active implies reputational costs, one could have assumed that the members who consider a high political position would prefer an internal position that would imply less publicity. On the other hand, a leading internal position, for instance, a paid job as a party secretary, can be understood as a manifest of the professionalization of politics that some interviewees in this study reject.

Table 5.1 Willingness to future party activities. N=73.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Std dev</i>
Party member	8.53	9	1.63
Office within party	6.66	7	2.29
Elected/Candidacy	5.92	7	2.79
Lead. office within party	5.67	6	2.39

The next step of the descriptive analysis purposes to estimate the importance of the three types of incentives that according to the literature are most relevant for young party members. This preliminary analysis follows Bruter and Harrison's threefold typology of moral (political), social and professional motives to party membership. The results, presented in Table 5.2, follow the expectations from the literature. The respondents regard the ideological motives as the most important

aspect of their party membership with a mean score of 9.16. Next follows the social motives with a mean score of 7.26. The mean score for career-related motives given by the respondents was 6.16 on the 0-10 scale. It can, therefore, be assumed that the group of young leading party members are moderately motivated by professional benefits.

This result adds to the growing body of research that indicates that career-related motives are important factors for explaining young peoples' active party membership, even though the other types of motives are more important for the respondents.

Because no comparable study has been conducted before, it is difficult to say whether this result is remarkable. However, considering Bruter and Harrison's suggestion that the members who hold the highest positions in the youth organizations should be stronger motivated by career-related motives than others, the mean score 6.16 can be considered as unexpectedly low. It is important, though, to bear in mind the possible bias in these responses from a social desirability-effect. As described in Chapter 4, careerism is not always regarded as a socially acceptable motive for being a party member, and the membership can be tied to a norm about not promoting oneself.

The high mean score for ideological motives, 9.16, adds to the result presented in the qualitative analysis that the most active members who hold the highest positions are strongly motivated by ideological incentives.

Table 5.2 Three main types of incentives. N=73

<i>Incentive</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Std dev</i>
Moral/Ideological	9.16	10	1.07
Social	7.26	7	1.76
Professional/Career	6.16	6.50	2.29

The next part of the descriptive analysis is devoted to the independent variables – the factors that are assumed to have an impact on the leading members' willingness to become politicians in the future. Table 5.3 demonstrates to what extent the respondents experience internal and external stress. What stands out in the table is that the significant differences between the scores for internal versus external stress. The mean score for internal stress of 6.34, a middle-value on the 0-11-scale, suggests that that the respondents are moderately concerned about the press that they put on themselves. On the other hand, the mean score of external stress of 3.97 indicates that the respondents are rather little concerned about the demands that come from the youth organization or the party.

The result presented here contrasts with the results from the qualitative analysis in this study where several interviewees reported that they were very pressed by the work for the youth organization and the party. However, the interview study did not distinguish between internal and external stress. One possible explanation for the unexpectedly low scores for stress demonstrated here can be that the respondents were asked if they experienced "too" high demands.

It is possible that the respondents, in accordance with the ERI-theory, are in the state of over-commitment that the ERI-theory which would imply that they “suffer from inappropriate perceptions of demands and of their own coping resources more often than their less involved colleagues” (Siegrist 2012). This would imply that they do not perceive very high demands as too high. Another possible explanation could be that party internal norms stipulate that the members work hard without complaining. However, further work needs to be done to evaluate these possible explanations.

Table 5.3. External and internal stress. N=73

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Std dev</i>
External stress	3.97	4.00	2.3
Internal stress	6.34	7.00	2.2

The next factor that was assumed to impact the willingness of young leading members to become politicians in the future is the level of integration between the youth organization and its mother party. Table 5.4 provides the results obtained from the preliminary analysis of how the willingness of members to become politicians in the future differs between the youth organizations. The result broadly supports the expectations set up in this study. The members of The Young Left are the least interested in becoming politicians in the future with a mean score of 1.64 on the 0–10-scale. Also following the expectations, the members of The Young Swedes are the most willing to become politicians with a mean score of 8.30. No expectations were formulated for the other youth organizations. The current findings, while preliminary, support the assumption that the differences between the youth organizations/parties are associated with the differences in the members’ willingness to become politicians in the future. This also accords with the assumption that the members of the youth organization that is expected to be the less integrated with the mother party are the least willing to become politicians in the future when the members of the youth organization that is expected to be the most integrated with its mother party are the most willing to become politicians in the future. Several questions about this link remain to be answered, but despite the exploratory approach, this study has gone contributes to our understanding of the impact of party-related differences on the ambitions of the members.

Table 5.4. Willingness to become a politician, mean/organization.

<i>Youth organization</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std dev</i>
Young Left	11	1.64	1.36
Young Christian Democrats	8	5.25	3.33
Young Greens of Sweden	10	6.00	2.36
Liberal Youth of Sweden	10	6.40	1.78
Centre Party Youth	8	6.88	2.23
Social Democratic Young League	10	6.70	1.16
Moderate Youth League	6	7.17	2.79
Young Swedes	10	8.30	1.25
All	73	5.92	2.79

To summarize, the combination of findings presented in this section support the conceptual premises for the hypotheses set up in this study. However, being non-comparative and cross-sectional study cannot tell if the respondents differ from other groups, or if the result has changed over time. A natural progression of this work is to include more groups of party members and to study the importance of career-related motives over time.

## 5.2.2 Result

This results section opens with a preliminary analysis purposed to assess the ability of career-related motives, ideological motives and social motives to explain the willingness of young leading members to become politicians in the future. Table 5.3 shows the result of an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. No considerable violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity and multicollinearity or homoscedasticity appeared.

As can be seen from the table, career-related motives have a positive impact on the willingness of young leading party members to become politicians in the future. For every one unit increase in career-related motives, the willingness increases with 0.65 on the 0–10-scale. The social motive, on the other hand, has a significantly negative impact. For one unit increase in social motivation to party membership, the willingness to become a politician in the future decreases with 0.35. The ideological motive has no significant impact. Though expected, this result provides important empirical support for the assumption that stronger career-related motives are positively correlated with a high willingness to become a politician in the future. Before this study, evidence of this central relationship was purely anecdotal.

Table 5.5 Three types of motives to willingness to become politicians.

N = 73

	B
Constant	2,4 (2.83)
Career-related	0.65* (0.13)
Ideological	0.22 (0.27)
Social	- 0.35* (0.18)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.22

Unstandardized beta, standard errors in parentheses.

\*p<.05, two-tailed test of significance.

Turning now to answering the second research question set out for this study, a multiple regression<sup>4</sup> of three models estimate how the members' career-related motives impact their willingness to become politicians in the future, and how this relationship is impacted by their experienced stress and difference in party integration. Because the plot of standard residuals indicates a possible violation of the assumption of homoscedasticity, the models were run with robust standard errors. No violations of the linearity, multicollinearity and normality, except for the earlier mentioned skewness that is assumed to have a major impact on this study's result were shown.

The first model, shown in Table 5.6, includes career-related motives and gender. The two factors explain 20 per cent of the variance of the young leading members' willingness to become politicians in the future.<sup>5</sup> This explanatory power can be regarded as "modest fit" in social science (Muijs 2011:145). This means that most of the variance in the outcome is explained by factors that are not included in this model. The result presented in the table supports the first hypothesis set up in this study that career-related motives have a positive impact on the young leading party members' willingness to become politicians in the future. For every one unit's increase in career-related motives, the willingness increases with 0.57 when gender is controlled for.<sup>6</sup>

In the second model, experiences of external and internal stress are added to the variables career-related motives and gender. The inclusion of stress-variables strengthens the explanatory power of the model slightly: the explained variance rises to 27 percent, which is considered as "modest fit". When the stress-factors are included, the career-related motives make a significant positive impact on the members' willingness also in this model, and the impact is slightly stronger than in the first model (0.60). This result does not support possible assumptions that experiences of stress would affect the impact of career-related motives on the members' willingness to become politicians in the future.

<sup>5</sup> Adjusted R square: 0.20.

<sup>6</sup> Gender did not make a significant impact.



Table 5.6. Three models testing predictors on willingness to become politician

<i>Variable</i>	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant	2.67 (0.90)	0.38 (1.31)	2.50 (1.51)
Career	0.57* (0.13)	0.60* (0.12)	0.22 (0,15)
Gender	-0.64 (0.61)	-1.19 (0.63)	0,01 (0,52)
External stress		-0.13 (0.11)	0.10 (0,12)
Internal stress		0.45* (0.18)	0.31* (0.15)
Young Left			-4.26* (0.77)
Young Swedes			2.18* (0.83)
Adjusted $R^2$	0.20	0.27	0.55

This table contains OLS (ordinary least squares) regression.

Unstandardized beta values, robust standard errors in parentheses. \* $p < .05$ , two-tailed test of significance.

The gender-variable is a dummy (0=male, 1=female). Young Left and Young Swedes are dummy variables (1=member).

The most striking figure in this table is the significant positive impact of internal stress on the respondents' willingness to become politicians in the future. For one unit increase in the respondents' experienced internal stress, their willingness to become a politician in the future increases with 0.45 units when external stress, gender and career-related motives are controlled for. This contradicts the expectation that stress would make a negative impact on the young members' willingness to become politicians in the future. Experiences of external stress don't make a significant impact. Thus, the results presented here do not support the third and the fourth hypotheses that internal and external stress would impact the young members' willingness to become politicians in the future.

A possible explanation for this unanticipated finding could be that the causality works in the other direction than expected. This would mean that the members' willingness to become politicians in the future *causes* their feelings of demanding too much of themselves. Another possibility is that the earlier mentioned idea that the respondents that experience stress are in a state of over-commitment and, therefore, "suffer from inappropriate perceptions of demands and of their own coping resources" (Sigerist 2012).

However, when interpreting this result, it shall be noted that the assumption that the experienced stress would have a negative impact on the young leading

members' willingness to become politicians in the future was based on a best guess. Looking back at the ERI-theory, it actually indicates that internal stress would make a positive impact. The theory suggests that people who are in a state of effort-reward imbalance often stay on their positions, even though it is not rational, because they lack other options or feel restricted. Following this reasoning, one can assume that a young member intends to move on with his or her political career despite, or because of, the internal stress.

This study offers some important insight into the impact of stress on young party members' ambitions. But if the debate is to be moved forward, a better understanding of the environment of the youth organizations and the parties, from the young members perspective, needs to be developed.

The third and final model includes the effect of integration between the youth organization and the mother party on the career-related motives, stress and gender. Table 5.6 shows that the inclusion of the party variable strengthens the explanatory power of the model significantly. 55 per cent of the variance in the members' willingness to become politicians is explained by career-related motives, stress, party integration and gender. This is commonly regarded as "strong fit" (Muijs 2011:145).

The result, shown in Table 5.6, follows the expectations. The members of The Young Left are predicted to be 4.26 units less willing to become politicians in the future compared to all the other members when the effects of career-related motives, gender and stress are controlled for. The members of The Young Swedes are predicted to be 2.18 units more willing to become politicians in the future compared to the other members and with all the mentioned variables controlled for. This result supports the hypothesis in this study that a higher integration between the youth organization and the mother party has a positive impact on the relationship between the young leading party members' career-related motives and their willingness to become politicians in the future. Furthermore, it supports the assumptions that the two youth organizations that stand out as remarkably weakly integrated versus remarkably strongly integrated with their mother parties are the most versus the least willing to become politicians in the future. The main arguments presented in this study are that the leaders of the Swedish Democrats strongly have expressed that an important function of the young wing The Young Swedes is to secure the parties regrowth, while The Young Left strongly identifies itself as being individual from the party. Thereby, it is probable that the members of The Young Swedes are impacted by the party leaders expectation on them while the members of The Young left probably are affected by the tradition in the organization of being independent of the party system.

Unexpectedly, the career-related type of motives that is the main independent variable in this study does not make a significant impact when the party integration is included. The positive significant impact of internal stress remains but is slightly lower than in the second model.

A remarkable result is that the inclusion of the party integration strengthened the models' explanatory power considerably. This supports the suggestion by Heidar that the differences between the parties are important factors for explaining party membership. However, it shall be noted that there are several sources of error tied

to party integration variable that must be considered. It must be regarded as probable that there are several differences between the youth organizations, apart from the integration, that together contribute to explain the impact on the respondents' willingness to become politicians in the future. For instance, this study did not investigate how, and in that case, why, the career-related motives differed between the youth organizations. Furthermore, an important limitation of this study was that only the impact of the two youth organizations, that were expected to be most versus least integrated, was measured as a consequence of the small sample size (Chapter 4). To summarize, the present study has, despite the exploratory approach, gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of the impact of career-related motives, stress and party integration on young leading party members' willingness to become politicians in the future. But to develop a full picture of the impact of the party variable, more comprehensive studies will be needed.

## 6 Summary and discussion

This project is the first comprehensive investigation of how career-related motives impact young Swedish leading party members' willingness to become politicians in the future and how this relationship is impacted by their experiences of stress and party integration (but see Öhberg 2011). The study is also, to the best of my knowledge, the first to thoroughly examine how the members of the youth organizations understand career-related motives. This final chapter summarizes the findings and suggests some broader implications that could guide future work.

### 6.1 Summary

An initial objective of this project was to develop a fuller knowledge of career-related motives by investigating how such motives are understood by members of the Swedish youth organizations. With respect to this first research question, an analysis of 25 in-depth interviews with members of youth organizations identified four broad themes that shed new light on the meaning of career-related motives from the young members perspective. The most important finding was the notion of professional reputational costs. Some interviewees reported that the benefit of building a political career has the costly consequence that career possibilities outside the party could disappear because some employers would not hire a person who is politically active. Another important result was the insight that several of the most active young members who consider becoming politicians, somewhat counterintuitive, take a stand against a professionalization of politics. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that some of the most active members experienced that their engagement for the party was overwhelmingly stressful. This study refers to this problem as a “work-life-politics balance”. Last, the importance of education and training that the parties arrange for members was highlighted.

The second research question sought to determine the impact of career-related motives on the young leading party members' willingness to become politicians in the future, and how this relationship is affected by, first, experienced stress and, second, the integration between the party and the youth organization. The result confirmed the expectation: career-related motives have a positive impact on the young leading party members' willingness to become politicians in the future. Also following the expectations, the members of the youth organization that was least integrated with its mother party – The Young Left – were least willing to become politicians in the future, while the members of the youth organization that

was strongest integrated with its mother party – The Young Swedes – were most willing to become politicians in the future, when the impact of stress, career-related motives and gender were controlled for.

Contrary to what was expected, this study did not find that the respondents' experiences of external stress had a significant negative impact on their willingness to become politicians in the future. Another unanticipated finding was that the respondents' experiences of internal stress correlated positively with their willingness to become politicians in the future. A third unexpected outcome was that the impact of career-related motives disappeared when the party integration-variables were included.

## 6.2 Discussion

This study has raised some important questions about the nature of career-related motives to party membership. The literature review identified inconsistencies in previous studies on career-related motives for party membership. An important conclusion to be drawn is that future studies, in consequence with the theories, must acknowledge that career-related motives to party membership refer both to a political career and to a professional career outside the party.

The most important implication to emerge from this study was the notation that advancing within the party can be disadvantageous for the members' possibilities to establish an ordinary career. The suggestion that a party membership can cause professional reputational costs has previously been highlighted by Scarrow, and this study supports her arguments. The identification of reputational costs challenges the theories that seek to explain motives to party membership because these models have thus far only considered the beneficial professional consequences of being a party member.

The notation of professional reputational costs is especially worrying considering the finding that emerged from this study that some of the most active young members reject the idea of spending a whole working life within the party system. Some members who consider making a political career make clear that they also want to establish a professional career independently from the party. If advancing within the party means losing possibilities to get a job outside the party, this is a difficult dilemma for the young party members.

Reputational costs stand out as an important problem in the light of the trend of eroding popular trust of parties. Scarrow goes as far as claiming: "contemporary party members in all types of working environments are likely to encounter hostility to all parties" (2015:135). This bleak picture is supported by Bruter and Harrison whose study demonstrated that a considerable share of the young party members thinks that "society at large hates and misunderstand them" and that they need to prove their good intentions (2009:232). If this is true, it is not surprising that some interviewees in this study fear that being "labelled" as politicians.

The result presented here raises the possibility that some young and ambitious party members choose not to advance within their parties because they think that employers outside the party system would not want to hire someone who is known as politically active. Thus, there is a risk that the parties will have difficulties in finding members who are willing to seek political positions, and this would be a democratic problem. Recognizing reputational costs may help us to better understand how the active young party members navigate within the party system. Still, despite the analysis presented here, we should acknowledge the significant work still to be done in understanding the nature of, and the impact of, reputational costs.

Another interesting finding to emerge from the interview-study was that some of the most active members expressed an ambivalence regarding a possible future as elected politicians. They thought that becoming a politician would imply conflicts with their political ideals, and some of them declared that their party membership “is not written in stone”. This result is interesting in the light of the all-time high fragmentation of the Swedish political landscape. The election year 2018 was a time where most of the parties changed political positions, new coalitions were formed. It must be regarded as possible that some of the young members, who are ideologically committed, feel unease about their parties’ development and, therefore, are not sure if they will be active party members in the future.

Furthermore, some of the interviewees thought that becoming a politician would imply less passion, ideology and too much “boring things”. This indication should be taken seriously given the description by Bruter and Harrison that the parties are acting on an increasingly competitive “market place” when trying to attract politically engaged young people. The number of parties, social movements, interest and advocacy groups that seek new members has grown, and, on top of that, the pressure on people’s time, money, and effort has increased – and party engagement is regarded as one of the most time- and cost intensive of all types of political activism (Bruter & Harrison 2009:2, 8-9). Furthermore, some scholars argue that the young generation rejects hierarchical forms of political participation (Inglehart 1971, 1990). In this vein, Whiteley states that that “young cohorts of political activists prefer to get involved in single interest pressure groups and in other types of voluntary organizations, rather than in parties” (2007:2). Given this background, the evidence presented in this study that some highly active young party members think that becoming a politician would kill their political passion must be seen as a warning sign for the parties. Not every young party member can be expected to desire becoming an elected representative, but the parties, and the representative democracy at large, need at least some young members to be willing to take positions.

However, the result of this study underlines the importance of career-related motives for young party members, and this insight should be good news for the parties. Scarrow, as mentioned in Chapter 3, suggests that selective political incentives, including the members’ opportunities to attain political positions or other benefits controlled by the parties, will be increasingly important to inspire party membership. This would mean that the parties, after all, could inspire young

members by using their exclusive role in the representative system in nominating candidates for office at all levels of government. But the results presented in this study strongly suggest that the parties must consider the young members' conflicting feelings regarding the possibility to become politicians.

Despite its exploratory nature, this study offers some insight into how the ambitions of the young leading party members are impacted by differences between the parties and the youth organizations. The findings support the suggestion by Heidar that explanations to party membership sometimes need to be found in the party-organizational dimensions such as culture, norms and traditions, and it confirms that the theoretical incentives' models can be fruitfully combined with social psychological theories.

A further study with a focus on the youth organizations and the parties should be undertaken in order to develop a full picture. This could be a good way to solve a puzzle concerning the impact of stress that remains from this study. The title of this thesis – *Future party leaders or burned out?* – was formulated out of the idea that the young leading members who experienced stress would be less willing to become politicians in the future. But contrary to the expectations, those members that perceived more internal stress were more willing to become politicians in the future. This would be a fruitful area for further work.

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# Appendix 1

## The survey

### Sample and response rate

Table 7.1 Sample and responses

<i>Org</i>	<i>Sample (per cent of total)</i>			<i>Responses (per cent of total)</i>		
	N (%)	W %	M %	N(%)	W %	M %
MUF	10 (11)	40	60	6 (8)	33	67
SSU	14 (15)	71	29	10 (15)	70	30
KDU	11 (12)	36	64	8 (11)	25	75
CUF	9 (10)	56	44	8 (11)	62	38
LUF	11 (12)	45	55	10 (14)	40	60
YG	12 (13)	67	33	10 (12)	40	60
YL	15(16)	67	33	11 (15)	64	36
SDU	12(13)	17	83	10 (14)	20	80
Total	94(100)	51	49	73 (100)	47	53

# Apendix 2

## Questionnaire

### Introduction letter

Information ohm examensarbete och forskning om ungdomsförbunden

Hej!

Jag studerar statsvetenskap på masternivå vid Lunds universitet och jag skriver till dig för att mitt examensarbete, som också ska användas i forskning, handlar om ledande företrädare i de politiska partiernas ungdomsförbund.

Genom en enkätundersökning via telefon ska jag undersöka hur ni som tillhör ungdomsförbundens förbundsstyrelser upplever ert politiska engagemang och hur ni tänker om samhällsengagemang i framtiden.

Jag kommer att ringa upp dig, och vill du medverka i enkäten så ställer jag frågorna under telefonsamtalet och skriver in svaren i ett anonymiserat formulär. Att besvara enkäten tar inte mer än 15 minuter. Deltagandet är frivilligt och alla uppgifter som samlas in skyddas av sekretess och användas enbart för forskning. Du är också försäkrad anonymitet – inget i min uppsats kommer att kunna spåras till dig.

Min plan är att skriva en vetenskaplig artikel om resultaten från uppsatsen i samarbete med lektorn i statsvetenskap Malena Rosén Sundström vid Lunds universitet.

Några av enkätfrågorna kommer att användas i ett forskningsprojekt om makteliter inom civilsamhället. Detta projekt leds av professorn i socialt arbete vid Lunds universitet Håkan Johansson och finansieras av Riksbankens jubileumsfond. Genom min enkät undersöker Håkan Johanssons forskningsprojekt om ungdomsförbundens styrelsemedlemmar också är engagerade utanför partipolitiken.

Jag hör av mig, och jag hoppas att du vill medverka!

Vänliga hälsningar,

## Questionnaire

De första frågorna handlar om dig som svarar.

1) Är du

*1 Kvinna*

*0 Man*

*NA Annat*

2) Hur gammal är du?

—

3) Vilken utbildning har du?

0 Ej fullgjord grundskola

1 Grundskola

2 Studier vid gymnasieskola, folkhögskola (eller motsvarande)

3 Examen från gymnasium, folkhögskola (eller motsvarande)

4 Eftergymnasial utbildning, ej högskola/universitet

5 Studier vid högskola/universitet

6 Examen från högskola/universitet

7 Studier vid/examen från forskarutbildning

4) Vad är din huvudsysselsättning?

### Om ditt politiska engagemang

5) a Vilket ungdomsförbund är du medlem i?

—

b Är du också medlem i moderpartiet?

1 Ja

0 Nej

6) Hur länge har du varit medlem i a) ungdomsförbundet b) partiet (om du är partimedlem)?

a\_ år

b\_ år

7) Vilka förtroendeposter har du i ditt ungdomsförbund och/eller ditt parti? Det kan vara interna poster, politiska förtroende uppdrag eller ett avlönat jobb som exempelvis politisk sekreterare, eller kandidat på en lista inför valet.

8) Har du någon ledande position, exempelvis som ordförande eller styrelsemedlem, i en förening eller en frivilligorganisation utanför partipolitiken?

1 Ja

0 Nej

b Om ja, vilken/vilka? –

9) Är någon av dina föräldrar engagerad i ett politiskt parti, exempelvis som förtroendevald, styrelseledamot eller motsvarande, oavsett nivå?

1 Ja

0 Nej

10) Har någon av dina föräldrar någon ledande position, exempelvis som ordförande eller styrelseledamot i någon förening eller frivilligorganisation utanför partipolitiken?

1 Ja

0 Nej

10b Om ja, vilken/vilka\_

11) a Hur blev du rekryterad till ungdomsförbundets styrelse?

Svara vad som var det första steget?

0 Jag nominerade mig själv

1 Jag blev tillfrågad/uppmuntrad av någon i ungdomsförbundet eller partiet

2 Jag blev tillfrågad/uppmuntrad av valberedningen

11 b Blev du rekryterad på annat vis?

1 Ja

0 nej

11 c Om ja, hur?

12) Hur tänkte du om styrelseuppdraget innan du fick det?

Svara på en skala från 0 till 10 där 0 motsvarar ”ville inte alls ha uppdraget” och 10 motsvarar ”ville absolut ha uppdraget”.

13) På en ideologisk höger-vänster-skala, var skulle du placera dig själv om 0 motsvarar mycket långt vänsterut och 10 motsvarar mycket långt högerut?

14) Den här frågan gäller dina tankar om framtiden. Svara på en skala från 0 till 10 där 0 motsvarar ”helt osannolikt” och 10 motsvarar ”helt sannolikt”. Om tio år, tror du att du kommer att...

a) Vara partimedlem

b) Ha ett internt förtroendeuppdrag i partiet

c) Ha kandiderat i val eller vara invald i en politisk församling

d) Ha ett ledande uppdrag, exempelvis som ordförande eller styrelseledamot, inom partipolitiken

e) Ha ett ledande uppdrag, exempelvis som ordförande eller styrelseledamot, i en förening eller en frivilligorganisation utanför partipolitiken?

f) Ha ett jobb, eller annan livssituation, som inte går att kombinera med att vara partipolitiskt engagerad

15) I det bästa framtidsscenario du kan tänka dig, vilket politiskt uppdrag skulle du helst vilja ha?

0 Ledande kommunalråd

1 Riksdagsledamot

2 Statsråd

3 Politiskt sakkunnig i riksdagen eller regeringen

4 Eu-parlamentariker

5 Partiledare

6 Statsminister

16) I det kommande valet i september, hur sannolikt tror du det är att ditt parti når sina mål för valresultat? Svara på en skala från 0 till 10 där 0 motsvarar helt osannolikt och 10 motsvarar helt sannolikt.

17) Hur bedömer du risken för att ditt parti tappar så mycket väljarstöd i det kommande valet att det förlorar dagens styrkeposition? Svara på en skala från 0 till 10 där 0 motsvarar mycket liten risk och 10 motsvarar mycket stor risk.

18) Hur viktiga är följande påståenden för dig i ditt politiska engagemang? Svara med en siffra från 0 till 10 där 0 motsvarar ”inte alls viktigt” och 10 motsvarar ”mycket viktigt”.

a) Jag hjälper partiet att vinna val

b) Jag driver viktiga idéer och ideal

c) Jag kan bidra till att förändra samhället

d) Jag möter människor som delar mina värderingar och åsikter

e) Jag får ansvarsfulla positioner där jag lär mig viktiga saker

f) Jag får viktiga meriter

g) Jag har roligt

19) Hur väl stämmer följande påståenden med hur du upplever ditt politiska engagemang? Svara med en siffra från 0 till 10 där 0 motsvarar ”stämmer inte alls” och 10 motsvarar ”stämmer helt”.

a) Jag kan inte påverka politiken så mycket som jag vill

b) Det är svårt att få de förtroendeposter eller liknande som jag skulle vilja ha

c) Det partipolitiska engagemanget tar mycket tid

d) Jag blir indragen i konflikter

e) Kraven från ungdomsförbundet och partiet är för pressande

f) Kraven som jag ställer på mig själv är för pressande

g) Att bli stämplad som politiker hindrar mig från att göra andra saker som jag vill.

# Appendix 3

## Variable coding

### **Gender:**

0 = male respondent, 1 = female respondent, NA=Other

### **Occupation:**

0 = student 1 = employed by the party/youth organization 2 = full-time position as a politician/ head of the youth organization. 3 = employed outside the party/youth organization 4 = unemployed

### **Youth Organization:**

0 = MUF, 1 = SSU, 2 = KDU, 3 = CUF, 4 = LUF, 5 = Young Green, 6 = Young Left, 7 = Young Swedes

### **Willingness to different future party activities:**

The respondent is asked about the likeliness that he/she in ten years from now will...

- a) Be a party member 0 = “Completely unlikely” 10 = “Completely likely.
- b) Hold a party-internal office 0 = “Completely unlikely” 10 = “Completely likely. Scale: 0-10.
- c) Hold an internal leading office within the party. 0 = “Completely unlikely” 10 = “Completely likely. Scale: 0-10.

### **Willingness to become a politician in the future:**

The respondent is asked about the likeliness that he/she in ten years from now will put his/her candidacy forward in an election/be elected in a political assembly. 0 = “Completely unlikely” 10 = “Completely likely. Scale: 0-10.

### **Career-related motives:**

The measure is created by two items. The respondents is asked about the importance of the following statements in his/her party political engagement: “I get positions with a high level of responsibility where I learn a lot” plus “It gives me important qualifications.” 0 = “Not important at all” 10 = “Very important. Scale: 0-10. Chronbachs Alpha: 0.68.



**Ideological motives:**

The respondent is asked about the importance of the following statement in his/her party political engagement: "I help the ideas that I support to triumph". 0 = "Not important at all" 10 = "Very important". Scale: 0-10.

**Social motives:**

The respondent is asked about the importance of the following statement in his/her party political engagement: "I meet people who share my values and beliefs". 0 = "Not important at all" 10 = "Very important". Scale: 0-10.

**External stress:**

The respondent is asked how well the following statements correspond to how he/she experiences his/her party political engagement: "The demands that I experience from the youth organization and the party are too pressing". 0 = not at all true, 10 = very true. Scale: 0-10.

**Internal stress:**

The respondent is asked how well the following statements correspond to how he/she experiences his/her party political engagement: "the demands that I put on myself are too pressing". 0 = Not at all true 10 = Very true. Scale: 0-10.