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A literature review and content analysis of what economic factors are discussed to justify the rising suicide rates among young people; A comparative case study of the US and Sweden

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Abstract

The problem this study aims to focus on is that of rising youth suicide rates. These rates are synonymous with rising mental illness and are investigated in this study in the contexts of the United States and Sweden. The purpose of this study is to investigate the economic reality of young people in these two countries. The methodical approach of this study is to conduct a literature review to gather the necessary information to establish the economic reality. The theoretical framework that is fundamental to this study is the work of Durkheim and Standing. Durkheim theories regarding anomic suicide and anomie will help bridge the economic reality and its implications in the rising youth suicide rates. Standings theory of the precariat will provide new sociological perspectives on the implications of economic risk factors. The main findings of this study is that the trend of rising youth suicide rates will not be going away anytime soon. The economic reality and current approach to societal integration is detrimental to the mental health of the exposed individuals in both the American and Swedish context. In the American context there is a definitive need for institutions and the state to evaluate societal integration and social insurance if they intend to alleviate the anomic experience, while in Sweden with the existence of social insurance the issue is not as immediate but requires new approaches to integration and a focus on demographics that are at high risk.

Keywords

- *Anomie*
- *Anomic Suicide*
- *Precariat*
- *Societal Integration*
- *Social Insurance*
- *Social Mobility*

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Introduction

In recent decades the indication of “progress” seems to be more related to profits, with a lack of regard for the sociological consequences of said progress. It is my belief that a lack of transparency, and attempt to build sustainable long term growth, in regards to institutions, capital, and community has created an economic and political environment that potentially displaces and fails to integrate many of the young people of our communities. This belief is of course speculative in its nature and conducted based on personal observations and interactions. Nevertheless this speculation is the initial spark that led to the development of this paper and its subsequent research. The aspect that is being focused on is the mental well being of young people. To narrow that down even more it will be the sociological fact of suicide that will serve as the reflection of this mental well being. The general trends of suicide within the population is one that is declining, but the same can not be said for the trend rates of young people, were there is actually an increase in suicide rates. Youth suicide is a major concern in many countries across the globe, developed and “developing” alike.

Purpose and aims

The research problem that I have come across is that there seems to not be enough attention given to the understanding of why this rising trend exists and why it is specifically young people that seem to be the hardest hit by mental issues. The majority of action taken to combat suicide seems to be retroactive or set in motion once an individual is identified as a risk for suicidal thoughts or actions. It would be impossible to come to a definite conclusion to this research problem as it is too broad to try to study this on a global scale despite it appearing to be a global issue, therefore the study will be limited to two cases, the USA and Sweden. The purpose of this study will be to analyse the economic factors of the two contexts and conduct a comparative analysis in relation to the rising youth suicide rates. Part of the theoretical foundation for this will be the work of French sociologist Emile Durkheim. His work of categorising suicide, along with his theorisations of the motivations for suicide and his concept of social integration will be crucial in this analysis. Another aspect of this framework is the ability to check the validity of his theories in regards to the explanations or justifications that are provided for the trends of youth suicide within the Swedish and American context. The motivation behind this study is to identify the factors but also acknowledging patterns that are contributing to this rise in youth suicide. It is crucial that for our societies to prosper that our young people are properly integrated and that mental health is given the

proper attention and resources. It seems that something is inherently wrong sociologically if there is an increase of young people deciding to end their life before they even get the chance to live it.

With this purpose established, a research question has been formulated:

What are the economic factors that are discussed among national institutions to justify the rising suicide rates among young people?; A comparative literature review & analysis case study of the USA and Sweden.

Delimitations

The primary delimitation of this study is too narrow down the research to focus on the two cases that have been chosen. The USA and Sweden. It would have been more than possible to conduct this study on other countries around the world that face the same issue when it comes to rising youth suicide rates. Countries such as France, Japan, Germany, Britain all face the same crisis. (*Nippon 2020*) This unfortunately would have been too bold and provided me with too much information to process and analyse. The cases of the USA and Sweden will nonetheless provide me with enough material to conduct this study. The motivation to choose these two countries as the case studies for this paper are many. The primary motivation for the choice of Sweden was that is a case that I am already relatively familiar with in regards to the kind of economic reality that the youth face and their opportunities regarding social integration. The US was picked as a case study as a contrast to this familiarity. It was of my opinion that these two cases would provide the necessary contrast in terms of government structure, economic and social ideology, but still remain similar enough that there is a foundation for a comparison to be made. Another delimitation will be to focus on suicide as the defining reflection of mental health. Mental health is very complex and even so are the elements that contribute to a poor state of mental health such as depression and anxiety. These elements can contribute to suicidal action but to say they cause it is a simplification of the complexity of mental health, which is why the study will be limited to understanding the rising rates of youth suicide and not focusing on the aspect of increased depression or anxiety among young people. It is more than possible that an increase of mental illnesses will be inherently connected to an increase in suicide, and therefore will be contributing factors in the rising rates and be treated as possible justifications in the analysis. An additional delimitation to this study is to focus only on the economic factors involved in the rise of youth suicide. The crisis is very complex and there are

many possible elements that are crucially involved in the rising rates. The medium that is chosen for the research is the publishing of scientific reports, articles, and journals that discuss possible risk factors for why young people commit suicide along with information released by various national institutions.

Background

In the country of Sweden, a country that is seen as one of the most socially developed nations in the world, there exists a health concern that is not very prioritised when it comes to issues that face the prosperity of the nation. The concern is rising suicide rates among young people and children along with a substantial increase of mental health issues among this demographic. (*Karolinska Institutet 2021*) The overall number of suicides is relatively low, but it is not the quantity that is daunting but instead the overall trend. One report states that there is a 2.2% increase in the number of child suicides each successive year. (*Junozovic & Jakobsson 2022*) This upwards trend is not only limited to the demographic of children but exists in the wider demographic of young people and adolescents. (*Karolinska Institutet 2021*)

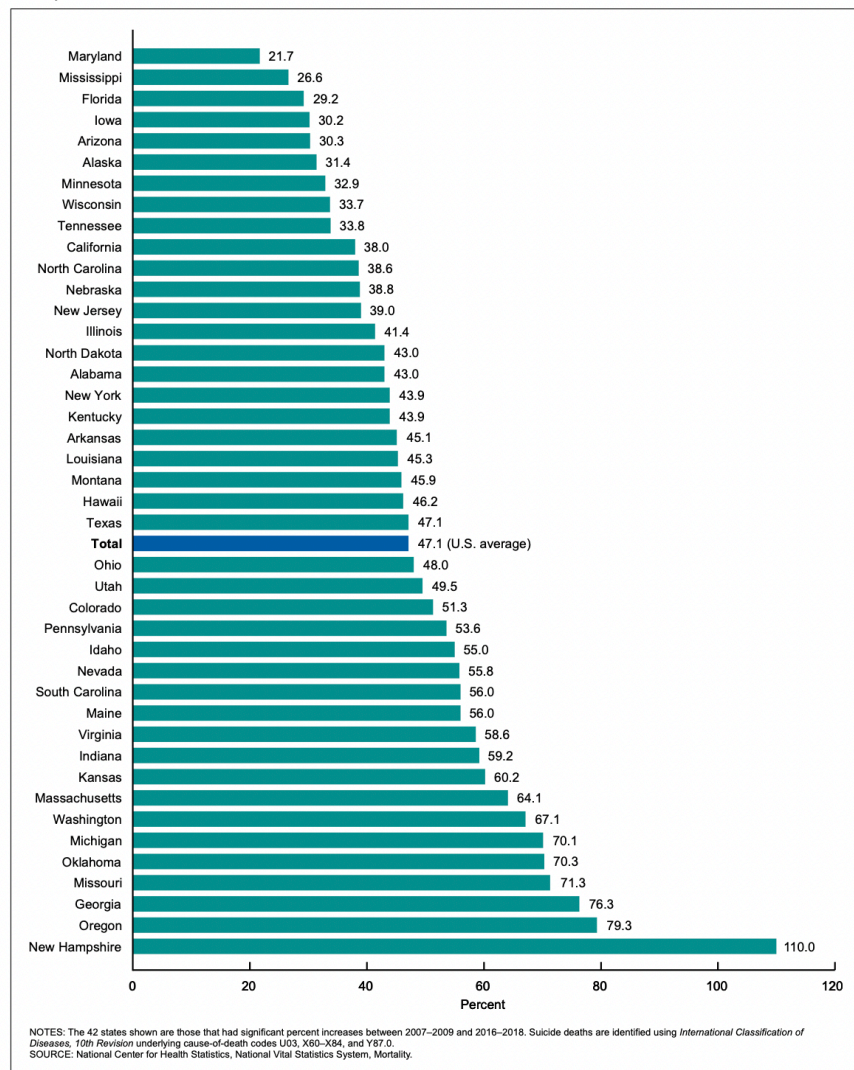
These trends should be considered as vital warning signs of anomie and an internalised suffering of society. There is a necessity to take preemptive action. One charity group known as Suicide Zero is actively trying to push for a greater allocation of resources to combat the trend. Their reasoning for resource allocation reflection is that the number of casualties of suicide is around six times higher than the casualties of traffic accidents yet the quantity of money invested in traffic safety is around 100-150 million kronor yearly while the amount of money invested in suicide prevention is a mere 3 million kronor (*The Local 2018*). This resource allocation indicates that there is indeed a lack of prioritisation when it comes to dealing with this trend of youth suicide and increase of mental illness among adolescents, and children.

The situation across the Atlantic in the USA is much more grave. Suicide in the US is a very serious health concern that affects every age group and demographic. It is the second leading cause of death among people aged 10-24, and with numbers on the rise. (*Americas Health Rankings 2021*) Not just the act of suicide but the ideation, attempt and completion of it. There is a report done by the Youth Behavioural Risk Factor Surveillance System that claim 18.8% of all high schoolers in the USA have seriously considered to attempt suicide with another 8.9% actually going ahead and attempting it. (*Americas Health Rankings 2021*) The reality is that there is a major increase in serious

psychological distress, along with mental health issues such as severe depression and anxiety that is being reflected in the rise of suicidal thoughts and attempts. The report provided by the National Center for Health statistics states that the suicide rate of people ages 10 to 24 increased by 57.4 % during 2007 to 2018. (Curtin pg.1 2020) This is the same upwards trend that is seen in Sweden but on an even graver scale. This increase is also a national concern as the national percentage increase was at 47.1% (Curtin pg.3 2020)

The graph depicted on the right stems from this report and shows visually the percentage increase of youth suicide across selected states of the US. Since the context of youth suicide trends has been provided for both cases there is also necessary context to provide regarding the economic and political environment that young people live in. As Durkheim theorises, social integration is one of the most fundamental factors of suicide. A key aspect of social integration is to be economically integrated in terms of labour, or ownership of property, thus providing a sense of economic independence. Prior to the pandemic the economy of Sweden showed strong signs of growth which the youth population benefitted from with lowered levels of unemployment and an increase of jobs (Youth Policies Sweden pg.33 2018). The year 2017 provided the lowest rate since the early 2000s in terms of youth employment at 17.84% (O'Neill 2022), with the ones profiting being the people that had skills and training that allowed them to transition easily into the labour market. (Youth Policies Sweden pg.33 2018)

Figure 1. Percent increase in suicide death rates among persons aged 10–24 years: United States and selected states, 2007–2009 to 2016–2018



The group of young people consists also of people that are at risk of struggling to find work, these risk groups are people that have not completed the necessary secondary education, people that are born outside of Europe, or people with disabilities that severely affect their capacity to work. (*Youth Policies Sweden pg.33 2018*) These risk groups are not limited to a Swedish context but it is important to note them as exposed to a lack of integration into the labour market which can put them at higher risk of exclusion which has the potential to lead to a development of mental health issues and ultimately in the worst case suicide. The positivity surrounding the labour market and the economy took a halt in 2020 with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic. The rates of unemployment for young people in the same year 2020 rose up to 24.11% (*O'Neill 2022*) The most recent data from the current year shows that the unemployment rate of people aged 15-24 is around 22.7% (*Eurostat 2022*) which shows that there has been a slight recovery since the start of the pandemic and that there is an increase of employment in the context of young people, but the reality is still that this percentage is rather high and depicts a scene of almost 1/4 young people in the country finding themselves without opportunity to enter the labour market. This has been dubbed in some cases as the “lost generation”. The labour market is not the only form of economic independence that is not accessible for young people, but a similar scene can also be seen in terms of property ownership. The image below taken from a report done by Hyresgästföreningen depicts the living situation for young people in Sweden between the years 1997 to 2021.

(*Hyresgästföreningen pp.7 2021*)

	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2021
Hemma hos föräldrar	15 %	17 %	18 %	21 %	19 %	19 %	21 %	22 %	23 %	20 %	24 %	27 %	24 %
Inneboende hos någon annan	7 %	5 %	5 %	6 %	6 %	6 %	6 %	7 %	7 %	7 %	8 %	9 %	6 %
Eget boende	75 %	75 %	74 %	72 %	72 %	71 %	72 %	68 %	66 %	67 %	67 %	61 %	68 %
Annat	3 %	3 %	3 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	2 %	3 %	3 %	6 %	2 %	3 %	2 %

There is a noticeable trend seen in terms of the percentage of young individuals who live at home or who have their own place. The percentage of young people who live at home has risen steadily since the late 1990s while the percentage of young people who have their own living situation has decreased in similar fashion. The young people that are living at home are doing so out of a lack of options the report claims. 84% of these individuals state that they would like to live in a different situation than to live at home. (*Hyresgästförening pp.4 2021*) Some of the explanations provided are that it is difficult to find a residence in the current property market, that they have no income to pay rent or to pay a mortgage with, lastly that they just simply can not afford to move out due to the

high prices seen in the property market. (*Hyresgästförening pp.10 2021*) This report of young peoples living situations is an example of how there is a lack of opportunity for young people to establish themselves as financially independent with their own residence, due to a multiple of economic factors. This lack of independence can lead to a feeling of exclusion for the young people that are stuck living at home and do not possess the opportunity to establish themselves within their community or as financially independent.

On the other side of the Atlantic in the USA, youth unemployment is not as intense of a concern as it is in Sweden. The rate of youth unemployment of July 2019 was 9.1%, peaking at 18.5% in 2020 (as a consequence of the pandemic), and is now most recently at 10% of July 2021. (*Bureau of Labour 2021*) Despite this initial comparison of youth unemployment rates between the USA and Sweden, youth unemployment is still an issue in the US. The unemployment rate for young people is much higher than the average unemployment rate (which as of March 2022 was 3.6%) (*Trading economics 2022*). There is a lack of balance with young people being proportionally higher at risk of remaining unemployed. This is not the only issue faced by the young people of the US. They are also less likely to own a property than the previous generations were at the same age (*Paz-Pardo 2022*). There is the same issue as well that they are taking longer to leave their parental homes stagnating their independence. This stagnation can be seen in the statistics provided regarding home ownership. The population born in the 1940s had a percentage of around 70% owning their own homes by the time they turned 35. This percentage dropped to 50% for people more in the 1980s (*Paz-Pardo 2022*). This is not the young people that this study is focused on but it shows the general trend of how home ownership is becoming more and more exclusive within the US and that it takes more years of earnings to be in a situation to afford your own home. This change in the amount of years of earnings required is the main explanation provided for the decrease in property ownership (*Paz-Pardo 2022*). This change of earnings can be attributed to multiple factors. Some of these factors are a scarcity of career-long positions and an increase of unequal earnings.

Existing Research/Previous studies

Relationship between Poverty and Mental Illness

Poverty is a fundamentally rather vague term. It can be interpreted in many different ways and that's why the concept of scale of poverty is something that is much more fitting when describing the context that young people find themselves in. If we use scale of poverty to define the economic situation of young people it can be understood that some of them can be considered to be living in poverty. Poverty in this sense would be defined by their lack of access to assets or property, facing a precarious labour market without guarantees of long term career opportunities or a stable income. An income that is also losing spending power as inflation increases and income remains constant. (*Hodge 2022*) Additionally in some cases a mountain of debt that accumulates and potentially spiral in an attempt to access social mobility through the use of education. This common theme then that exists among young people is that they do not have a lot of economic liberty and live in an environment where they do not have any independence or opportunity to establish themselves within the community economically. The reason this common theme is of importance to this study is the amount of pre-existing studies when it comes to the connection between poverty and depression. One of the studies of interest, a review of practice and policies in the perspective of poverty and mental health, makes five conclusive points. The first point being that mental health aspects of poverty are neglected in an international development policy. (*Lund pg.213 2012*) This point was seen similarly in another study. A study that focused on breaking the cycle of poverty and mental disorders in low-income and middle-income countries. Their study came to the conclusion that mental health issues and poverty exist in a negative cycle in the low-income and middle-income countries, but that there exists not enough information to understand how to break this cycle. (*Lund 2011*) They found that direct poverty alleviation interventions led to inconclusive results in terms of improving the mental health of people, but on the reverse when there was direct mental health interventions it led to a consistent improvement of economic outcomes. The defining conclusion of the study which links back to the neglect of mental health aspects of poverty in International development, is the call they make for an increase in the scale of mental health care. (*Lund 2011*) The study believes that this is not defined purely by a health and human rights importance but that it is of an utter must importance in respect to development. The second point made by the initially mentioned study is that there is an emergence of data stemming from low-income and middle-income countries that suggest strong connections between mental health

illnesses and low education, food insecurity, inadequate housing, low social class, low socioeconomic status and financial stress (*Lund 2012*). This connection is more than appropriate in my study of young people. It is shown in the background and in the existing context that some of these economic “triggers” are being currently lived by young people and are not limited to the level of development of the state. The factor that seems most relevant in the analysis of young people is the factor of financial stress and low social class. The remaining concluding points of the study are that mental illness and poverty exist in a negative vicious cycle that exists for as long as the individual is living in poverty, with effects lingering through the lifespan of said individual, while also the same conclusion is met that there is a need for increase of scale when it comes to mental health healthcare and to increase prioritisation of mental health for national and international development agendas (*Lund 2012*). This existing research shows the context of how mental health is something that is not prioritised enough from the perspective of development and is something that is influenced greatly by various economic factors. The conclusions made are based on the research that is limited to low and middle income countries, which is something that this study finds to be a gap in the research. The connections between mental health and economic vulnerability exists in “high income” countries or developed countries all the same if the concept of scale of poverty is considered. It might be irrational to compare the poverty of a young person living in the USA with the poverty of an individual living in a low income country, but in terms of perspective and scale they would potentially be facing the same amount of economic stress or pressure that can trigger mental health issues.

The previous research of the studies associated with mental health and poverty show a serious relationship between the two driven by a vicious negative cycle. The studies crucially call for a scale up of mental health prioritisation, a scale up that is for the benefit of the development of communities. A developmental aspect that is often not considered as crucial as economic growth. This relationship between poverty and mental health can be an important factor in understanding why suicide rates for young people are what they are in the context of the USA and Sweden.

Current situation regarding suicide USA.

Currently there are many different variables or justifications that are provided by the state institutions in Sweden and the US for the increase of mental health issues and the indirectly rising suicide rates for young people. The US will be the initial country that is researched in locating these risk factors that are provided by institutions. One of these institutions is the American Academy of Pediatrics, an institution dedicated to the health of all children in the US. It is important to keep in mind the complexity of suicide when trying to pinpoint certain risk factors or variables that contribute to the fact. It is highly motivated by the individuals context or environment and certain factors may play a greater role than others depending on the individual, suicide is also not necessarily triggered by one factor. With this in mind the American Academy of Paediatrics have published a list of risk factors that have been identified by the US centre for disease control and prevention. The first group of risk factors falls into the category of individual factors. These individual factors are as listed; Previous suicide attempts, mental health conditions (such as depression, anxiety), social isolation, and substance use. (*American Academy of Paediatrics 2022*) The second categorisation of risk factors is labeled as relationship factors. These are factors that are more related to an individuals entire social life or their childhood. The factors listed are; Adverse childhood experiences, bullying, family history of suicide, family or peer conflict (*American Academy of Paediatrics 2022*). The final category of risk factors proposed by the American Academy of Paediatrics is the community and societal factors. Those factors are as listed; Barriers to health care, stigma associated with mental health or help-seeking, access to lethal means, unsafe media portrayals of suicide, systemic trauma or marginalising experiences based on socioeconomic factors, race/ethnicity or gender/sexual identity. (*American Academy of Paediatrics 2022*)

These factors that are listed are definitely relatable in terms of processing the risk factors that can contribute to youth suicide in the American context, but they are not necessarily specific to the context of rising suicide rates among young people specifically. That said there are definitely factors here that are contributing to the young peoples context but there is little discussion or validation regarding the economic factors that are contributing to the instability of young peoples lives and futures that can contribute to a negative mental wellbeing and possible suicide. The categories that are established of Individual, relationship, and communal societal factors are useful in dividing the

risk factors into larger homogenous groups. The gap that this paper finds in this is that the national institutions treat suicide as a unilateral issue with general risk factors. This is understood to be detrimental to understanding suicide on a magnified perspective with risk factors affecting different demographics and socio-economic classes very differently. To improve the situation regarding suicide and start reversing the trend that exists in youth suicide there is a need to drastically improve the understanding of the economic, social, and political situation that young people find themselves in, by expanding on the contextual risk factors and not overgeneralising the situation.

On the report issued by the Centre of Disease control risk factors such as financial problems, criminal problems, legal problems, job problems and loss are all listed as individual factors (risk and protective factors). (*Centers for disease control and prevention 2022*) This is another massive gap that this study finds. These factors should all be considered as societal factors or community factors. There seems to be a lack of responsibility taken by the state if factors such as employment precarity or loss is considered to be the individuals problem and not something that the state contributes to potential negative mental aspects. In the background of this study we have understood the economic precarity that young people face in the US of today. They take on massive debts to put themselves through their educations in hopes of finding a career, a career that is harder to find with a lack of long term jobs on the labour market and a minimised spending power with income being outpaced by inflation in recent years. On top of this young people have very little hopes of being homeowners and finding economic independence in the economy of the US today. With this context and understanding of young peoples economic situations it is highly questionable that these factors, that contribute to stress/anxiety/depression, should be listed as individual factors instead of societal factors that influence suicide rates.

The inclusion of criminal and legal problems as individual factors can be seen as more complicated in terms of its influence as a societal or individual problem. It is this study's opinion that the path of criminalisation in general and its subsequent legal consequences are a ramification of an individuals local environment. The local environment in turn is directed by the states commitment to the development of said community and opportunity creating for its residents in terms of education, resources, infrastructure, and public services. Therefore the factors of criminal and legal problems should be treated perhaps as societal factors once again, as these life choices are products of the community that they exist in. It is also not always true as it is possible for individuals to conduct criminal activities with a corrupt motivation but if an individual is committing crime to make

money for example, due to a lack of alternatives to survive, and is subsequently put through the legal system, it is the belief of this study that this should be treated as a societal factor.

Current situation regarding suicide EU

Since this study is interested partly in the situation in Sweden regarding youth suicide rates and the justifications provided, it is also of benefit to establish understanding in a greater EU context. Part of the conducted research led to a report published by the WHO regarding adolescent mental health in the European region. The ages discussed in the report extend between 10 and 19. The report focuses on the situations that adolescents can find themselves in that can negatively form their mental health as they become adults. The first factor that can lead to a negative mental wellbeing is that of negative experiences (*WHO 2018*). The term negative experiences is rather broad and seemingly can be interpreted in many different ways, but the report highlights a few examples of these negative experiences as family conflict, or bullying. These types of experiences can have an immense effect on the development of an adolescents key cognitive and emotional ability. It seems these negative experiences then are factors where the adolescent is in a situation where they feel powerless (*WHO 2018*). The report also touches on the socioeconomic conditions and how certain environments can lead to a reduction of opportunity, learning & social interaction, and an increase in exposure to factors such as substance abuse or pain. Another aspect that can lead an adolescent down a negative path of mental well being is family violence which the report claims is a crucial predictor of issues further down the line of substance abuse and criminal activities (*WHO 2018*). These potential consequences also expose the individual to even more risk factors that have been covered in this study already such as debt, unemployment and a lack of integration into society. The report additionally includes lots of statistics regarding mental and behavioural health problems among adolescents living in the EU. The ones that stand out are as follows;

More than one in ten adolescents were regular weekly drinkers by the age of 15 (9% of girls and 16% of boys). • Half of all mental health problems in adulthood have their onset during or before adolescence. • Depression and anxiety disorders are among the top five causes of the overall disease burden (measured in terms of disability-adjusted life years). • Suicide is the leading cause of death among adolescents (10–19 years old) in low- and middle-income countries and the second leading cause in high-income countries in the European Region. (WHO 2018)

There is a lot to process from these statistics but something that can definitely be seen as crucial when trying to understand why youth suicide rates are what they are among the US and Sweden is

the fact that half of all mental health problems in adulthood have their onset during or before adolescence. This fact helps with understanding why the rates of youth suicide are trending upwards while overall suicide rates are trending downwards, if half of all mental health issues, such as anxiety/depression, emerge during or before adolescence it shows that young people potentially have suffered for the majority of their short lived life. This type of continual mental stress and conditioning of these illnesses can potentially lead to drastic action such as suicide being taken. This report does not go a long way in establishing justifications or understandings of why youth suicide is trending upwards in the Swedish or American context, but what it does give this study is the fundamental understanding of how important the stage of adolescence is when it comes to exposure to risk factors or the establishing of risk factors that eventually can possibly lead to suicide.

Increase of mental illness in Sweden among youth population

After researching the existing American institution discussions regarding youth suicide or suicide risk factors, and researching the EU context with a report established by the WHO it was time to research the institutional discussions regarding youth suicide in Sweden. The institution in discussion is the *folkhälsomyndigheten* which is the public health agency in Sweden. The work they have done regarding youth mental health is based on the fact that since the middle of the 1980s the number of adolescents that suffer from repeating mental health issues have doubled, with almost half of all 15 year olds suffering. (*Folkhälsomyndigheten 2022*) They reach five conclusions regarding possible variables that have contributed to this phenomenon. The first variable has to do with the fact that the school system is working less productively. The report motivates that school performance is decreasing while the stress of school performance is increasing in connection with the increase of negative mental health aspects seen in adolescents (*Folkhälsomyndigheten 2022*). The decrease of school performances is seen under the timeline of 1995 to 2012 and is judged based on international reflections, with lowered school performances being indicators of introspective issues faced by the young population of children and teens. Simultaneously the existence of mental health concerns is seen more commonly among adolescents that suffer from stress regarding school performances, with this increase of stress being seen coexisting with the increase of negative mental health issues of students. This combination of lowered performance and increase of stress when it

comes to school is concluded with a lowered productivity of the school system and is seen as a contributing factor to the rise of mental health concerns among the young population of Sweden. (*Folkhälsomyndigheten 2022*)

After discussing the impact of school the report goes on to discuss the precarious labour market and how it can possibly be involved in the crisis. This increase of precarity and increased demands of education and skill to be employed plays a role in the development of stress among young people, stress that exists even at the level of school where the repercussions of a young persons commitment to school performance can shape their future when it comes to labour and employment opportunities. This awareness the report claims can potentially accelerate the mental issues that young people face (*Folkhälsomyndigheten 2022*). This paper has already touched on the precarious labour market and how a lack of integration can potentially be a risk factor for youth suicide but the element of additional stress leading to an increase of mental illnesses that the report by folkhälsomyndigheten highlights is an interesting component that can be relevant in terms of understanding the increase of youth suicide.

The report also makes conclusions regarding the socio-economic perspective and its role in this problem that is being faced by the Swedish society. Folkhälsomyndigheten claim that the amount of families with children exposed to economic precarities has decreased since the decade of the 1990s if you use indicators as standard income or economic aid. Therefore they conclude that it not possible in absolute terms to claim economic precarity has played a role in the increase of mental illness among the youth population even though the scientific consensus is that exposure to economic precarities is a major contributing factor to introspective issues (*Folkhälsomyndigheten 2022*). This almost dismissal of economic factors playing a contributing factor in the increase of mental illness among the youth population in Sweden is seen as a gap in the research by this study. Without having to say in absolute terms that economic precarities are playing a role in this increase, it is necessary to reflect on theories such as economic integration and economic independence when it comes to the mental well being of the youth population.

The final section of the report is regarding the unclear importance of digital medias. With a massive increase of usage among the young population over the last decades it is definitely something that should be considered to possess influence over mental health. The report concludes it is unclear wether this increase of mental illness can be attributed to the increase of usage of digital medias,

and that future research should be done to determine the relationship (*Folkhälsomyndigheten 2022*). This element is something that is of interest to this study as Internet usage, social media, and digital media is something that adolescents and young people are most likely exposed to consistently everyday. The consequences of this exposure is very complex and something that has not yet been reflected on by our societies. It is something that everybody takes for granted without introspectively considering the influence it has on our mental well being or psychology.

Interpersonal theory of suicide

With suicide being a growing topic of discussion over the last decades there exists plenty of relevant sociological theories that contribute to the discourse surrounding the sociological fact. One of these theories is the interpersonal theory of Joiner. (*Mueller 2021*) Part of his interpersonal theory of suicide hypothesises that the desire to commit suicide stems from an individuals unmanageable feelings of *perceived burdensomeness* and a sense of a *thwarted belonging*. (*Chu 2017*) These feelings are built on the foundation of Durkheims integration theory as both of these feelings will contribute to a feeling of disintegration into the society. The idea of thwarted belongingness builds on the fundamental need that humans have to feel like they belong. When this need is not met it can potentially cause countless negative health consequences. The desire of suicide, along with the ideation, attempting and potential fatality of the attempts are all included in these negative health consequences. The elements of the term thwarted belongingness are deemed as loneliness and a lack of mutual care. On a magnified scale the loneliness and lack of mutual care can be attributed with having fewer friends, isolation as in living alone, belonging to a non-intact family that perhaps also suffers from internal conflicts, and finally the act of socially withdrawing either intentionally or unintentionally. (*Chu 2017*) The second aspect of the interpersonal theory that has been researched is that of perceived burdensomeness. The main takeaway to understand perceived burdensomeness is that victims of suicide will commit the mistake of feeling expendable. That they reflect on the negative feelings and thoughts they have in a way that convinces themselves they are a burden by experiencing liability and self hate. This is why the indicator of perceived is crucial in understanding this element of the theory. (*Chu 2017*) These two elements of the Interpersonal theory are important factors in the context of understanding why suicide rates are on the rise for young people, as it is possible that they could be experiencing perceived burdensomeness, and a feeling of thwarted belongingness on a different scale than other demographics.

Theoretical/conceptual framework

Durkheim's theory of Anomie

The theoretical perspective that this study aims to view suicide through is that of anomic suicide. Emile Durkheim introduces the term anomie to represent a social state with diminishing regulations, where the decline of social integration causes feelings of disorientation, insecurity, and deprivation (Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* 2002). A lack of social integration may also lead to the delegitimising of social values along with the issue where an individual's aims are detached from legitimate actions (Graeff & Mehlkop 2007). The economic factors that the youth population are exposed to provide an environment where the individual's socio-economic aims are detached from legitimate actions. This detachment combined with the increase of economic insecurity and lack of integration puts individuals at high risk of mental suffering. The development of mental illness and the factors of stress generated by the anomic state can eventually in the worst cases lead to suicide (Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* 2002). This leads to the assumption that the majority of the suicides committed by the youth are considered anomic suicides from living in a state of anomie. It is beneficial to this study to use Durkheim's theories when trying to understand how a society can contribute to rising suicide levels in a particular demographic. His belief that society exerts a power over the individuals, and is not just a power attracting the sentiments and activities of each individual implies a relationship between the way this power is regulated and the social suicide rate (Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* 2002). Based on this framework we can assume there exists equally a relationship between the regulative action of society and the suicide rates of the youth population. With youth suicide rates trending up in both contexts, Sweden & the USA, it is necessary to reflect on this relationship and maintain a better understanding of contributing risk factors.

Guy Standing's emerging social class *The Precariat*

The idea that the state of anomie is a massive driving force behind youth suicide is relevant in the theory provided by Guy Standing regarding his social class the precariat. The precariat is defined as experiencing detrimental feelings regarding their role in society. These detrimental feelings are considered anger, anomie, anxiety and alienation (Standing *ch.1* 2011). Additionally, frustration seeps from a dependence on temporary employment that presents little opportunity of social mobility. With little opportunity of social mobility, individuals are left in despair, stuck between self

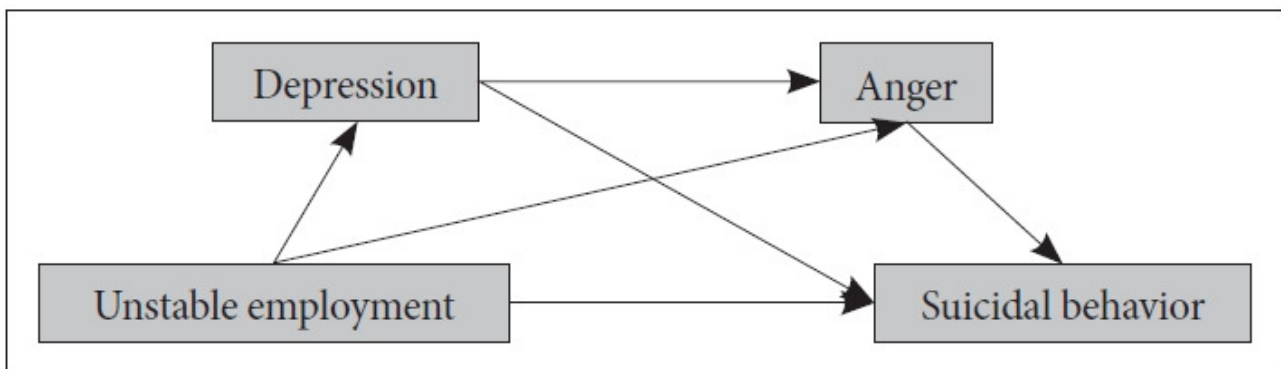
exploitation and disengagement (*Standing ch.1 2011*). This despair felt by the precariat is accelerated by the lack of career opportunities, or lack of options where the individual can work passionately and with motivation that exists besides survival (*Standing ch.1 2011*). With this economic reality and detachment between an individual's aims and legitimate actions the social class is prone to anxiety. The anxiety is there because of the persistent insecurity related to their livelihoods. The precariat has no time to reflect or safety net to rely on, a small mistake or external factors can be enough to tip the scale (*Standing ch.1 2011*). This amount of stress and anxiety combined with the absence of social mobility alienates the precariat from being integrated into society. Standing believes that the removal of labourist forms of social insurance without an equal alternative leads to a vacuum where there exists no mechanism to create solidarity (*Standing ch.1 2011*). For solidarity to grow or social integration to occur the individual needs to feel stability and predictability. These two elements are crucial in the integration of individuals but they are both lacking for the precariat. The precariat does not possess the fortune of stability or predictability. Due to the lack of those two elements and a structure where social mobility is limited there is no chance for social insurance to develop. Without social insurance, stability, and predictability the precariat is even more isolated and prone to anomie. The reality of the precariat on top of this is the demand to be infinitely adaptable, without the possibility to be in control of their destiny due to the lacking of social mobility the precariat must be flexible with the market and remain adaptable. The infinite adaptability enhances the lack of stability the precariat faces (*Standing ch.1 2011*).

The theoretical framework of Standing presents the precariat as a social class whose existence is regulated by feelings of insecurity, anxiety and alienation. Combined with a lack of social insurance and social mobility the reality of the precariat is a state of anomie. The theoretical framework of Durkheim provides this study with the understanding that a state of anomie for an individual can result in anomic suicide. Besides anomic suicide Durkheim's theory of society's regulative action over individuals implies a relationship between the regulator action of society and the resulting youth suicide rates. A relationship that will further be reflected upon in the analysis. This combined framework provides this study with an excellent foundation to analyse the rising youth suicide rates seen in the USA and Sweden. The reality of anomie, faced by the precariat, along with the importance of social integration and exposure to economic risk factors will be reflected on within the American and Swedish context. Standing's theory is not necessarily related to suicide as a sociological fact as his theory centres on the insecurity of labour and economic precarity, in contrast to Durkheim's theory that argues suicide is a function of variations in moral and social integration.

The argument to include Standings theory nonetheless in this paper is that this state of economic precarity can be argued to be a crucial element of the modern society in regards to anomic suicide. Standings theory provides the fundamental understandings of the consequences of economic precarity and the detrimental social integration it brings, and in turn the theoretical role that this economic reality could play in the rise of youth suicide rates.

The theory of the association between Unstable Employment and Suicidal behaviour in Young-Adult precarious workers.

In the country of South Korea there is growing emphasis on understanding the relationship between unstable employment and suicide. The theoretical conclusion that was made is that there exists an association between job insecurity and suicidal behaviour. (Seong 2021) The association is interposed with risk factors such as depression and discontent, factors that have the ability to detriment social integration or spiral. The study finds that high levels of unstable employment increase depression levels, while low level of unstable employment increases anger. (Seong 2021) Both factors that potentially lead to an increase of suicidal behaviour. The model below taken from the study is a visualisation of the hypothetical consequences that job insecurity and labour precarity can cause. (Seong 2021)



The addition of this theory is to compliment the previous theories that have been mentioned. Durkheims theory provided us with the basic understanding of suicide as a sociological fact and the specifics of anomic suicide as well as the reality of living in a state of anomie. It also provided the understanding of how variation in moral and social integration can lead to suicide. Standings theory explores job insecurity and economic precarity and the reality that is lived by individuals facing these unjust economic circumstances. This last theory affirms how these economic circumstances

that are described by Standing have the potential to be a possible contributing factor in the rising youth suicide rates, and that economic circumstances can subsidise a state of anomie.

Method

The method was to do a literature review of the economic factors contributing to the rise of youth suicide across the USA and Sweden. This method was picked because there was sufficient material in academia and institutional reports to conceptualise. Supplementary methods that were not applied could be qualitative sample data, field research, and quantitative data analysis. The US was picked as a case because the country is suffering from rapidly rising youth suicide rates and an impending economic recession. With a lack of social security and social mobility the reality of anomie is possible and should be further explored. Sweden was chosen to provide an ideologically different economy to the American context. Despite fundamental differences Sweden also suffers from rising youth suicide rates albeit on a smaller scale. With a more welfare driven approach to society it provides some social security and support. These two countries will provide the basis of the comparative analysis in the greater context of rising youth suicide rates. The comparative analysis will provide the discussion of the similarities and differences that are discovered in the economic realities of the two contexts. As the study is designed to be a literature review there were various methods that were used to conduct the review. The first step of the method was to search for the relevant literature.

The term youth was defined in this study loosely as the ages of 18-30 in regards to the analysis as this is the age spectrum that was most often used in the information that was found. Information regarding adolescents and teens was still deemed as relevant and used in the previous research to establish context. It seemed unenlightened to disregard these generations as part of the context as the problem of rising youth suicide risks is very much relevant in the earlier years of young adulthood and perhaps should almost play a larger role in the sociological understanding of suicide. The search was limited to primarily targeting national institutions and their publications. After searching for the relevant literature the sources were evaluated to validate the relevancy of the information. The referenced statistics and information were then evaluated to ensure they came from reliable institutions within the two contexts. The final aspect of the method was to identify themes that were evident across different sources in the literature review. The data that was collected stems from a culmination of articles, reports, publications made by various Swedish and

American institutions or relevant publishers. Search engines such as google scholar were the main source of finding these publications, while the websites of the national institutions also provided heavily to the information collected. The keywords that were used in the search were as follows; youth suicide rates, rising youth suicide rates, youth suicide risk factors, economic contributors youth suicide, social integration youth, anomic suicide youth.

The literature review accompanied various limitations. Part of the limitations of this study is that the age group of young people is different depending on the context of the institution. For some the demographic of young people stems from the ages of 10 all the way to 25, while for some it is limited to 10-18. Despite this the age group limitations is not inherently detrimental to the study because of the extensive understanding of how mental illness can develop at a young age and develop as the individual ages. A second limitation of the literature review is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as it can be interpreted as an outlier in the greater scale of economic environment and mental health of young people. It is definitely an aspect to consider for the course of this study but to go in depth of the repercussions and impact of it would require its own study.

ANALYSIS

This study has now established that suicide rates are increasing among young people in both the context of the United States but also in Sweden. The relevant national institutions as seen in the previous research had two different perspectives when it came to understanding the contributing risk factors. The perspective in Sweden was that school is working less efficiently and the subsequent stress of school was the most leading factor in the increase of mental health issues and self harm among adolescents and young adults. Little confidence was taken in the speculation of risk factors among the Swedish institution with uncertainty lingering regarding the influence of risk factors. The American institution approached the issue differently. They categorised the risk factors into 3 categories; Individual, relationship, communal/societal. The perspective here that this study felt was detrimental was the categorisation of financial risk factors as individual factors.

In the theoretical framework we established anomie, anomic suicide and the precariat. Anomie and anomic suicide have its own risk factors that should be considered by the perspectives of the state institutions. The risk factors for anomie that the theory provides us with are many. The first is a decline of social integration that causes feelings of disorientation, insecurity and deprivation. The second is the detachment of aims from legitimate actions, with the final being economic insecurity. The risk factors or defining variables of the precariat share similarities with that of anomic suicide but deserve their own mention. The first is the frustration of dependence on temporary employment that provides very little in the way of social mobility. This frustration and despair is accelerated by the lack of career opportunities. This precarity also leads to an economic environment that is persistently insecure. The precariat is lacking in terms of stability and predictability by being infinitely adaptable to the market. This theoretical perspective provides the fundamental risk factors that will be explored and should be considered in the perspectives of the state institutions when trying to understand rising suicide rates. They are economic insecurity, lack of social mobility, stability, predictability, adaptability, social integration, and the detachment of aims from legitimate actions. These risk factors are also contributing factors of anxiety and depression and play a role in the development of anomie.

With these risk factors of precarity, anomie and anomic suicide as the hypothetical foundation to understand the rising suicide rates, the analysis of the two national contexts will begin. The first aspect of the economic environment of young people in America that will be considered is unemployment rates of young people. For the demographic of young people (ages 16-24) the unemployment rate of the US nationally was 10% in the month of July 2021 (*Bureau of labour 2021*). This is an improvement from the unemployment rate of 18.5% from the month of July 2020. (*Bureau of labour statistics 2022*). The high rate seen in 2020 is attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and should be considered as an upheaval event. The unemployment rate of young people in July 2019 was 9.1% showing that this years current rate is perhaps not as positive as it seems in comparison to the rate of 2020 (*Bureau of labour 2021*). These numbers on their own do not provide much of a description of the economic precarity faced by young people but when contrasted with the national unemployment statistics they provide us with a clearer perspective. For the general demographic the unemployment rate for April 2022 was at 3.6% (Bureau of Labour Statistics). The average youth unemployment over the last two decades has stayed at around 8% higher than adult unemployment, with another important factor to consider being the lifetime wage growth where 66% of it is made in the starting ten years of an individuals career (*Rockefeller*

Foundation 2014). The higher percentage of unemployed young adults in context is perhaps not a strong enough indication on its own to state that anomic suicide is growing but it is an indicator that there is a growing lack of career opportunities for young people available and is one variable of social mobility that is restricted. On top of that it is an indication that there is a delay occurring with the accumulation of lifetime wage growth with young people not finding themselves in a position to start their career.

When analysing the economic environment and social mobility potential of the young people in America one aspect that is crucial to the discussion is that of student debt. With costs of colleges soaring and an increase of competition in the labour market there is an increase of incentive to take on student debt. About one third of American students are in a situation where they need to borrow money to obtain an education (*Kurt 2022*). This national student debt has reached record numbers in the last years. The average student loan debt is now at an average of \$40,904 with this number coming from the year 2021 (*Kurt 2022*). The collective amount of student debt owed by students is a staggering \$1.75 trillion dollars (*Kurt 2022*). This is not limited to young people as the demographic of students is made up of all ages but it is an indication of the growing costs of obtaining an education and the increased economic pressure faced by young adults in their chase for prosperity. One study finds that in their sample 70% reported that the financial circumstances played a crucial role in the choice of pursuing an education, and is an indication of the economic environment out pricing and excluding a large demographic restricting their social mobility (*Harvard University 2022*). Social insurance is a major contributor to social integration. Without social insurance there is a vacuum that is filled with insecurity and despair. Without universal healthcare or insurance offered in the USA young adults need to look at private options for a sense of security or depend on their parents. In the USA the ages of 19-34 suffer from the highest uninsured rates of any other age demographic in the country (*Conway 2021*). This rate was 15.6% as of 2019, with a 0.4% increase from 2018 (*Conway 2021*). The uninsured young adults are exposed to higher chances of insecurity and instability. Without the feeling of safety, any potential mistake or accident can lead to economic upheaval and cause an anomic environment.

The analysis has now touched on the environment of unemployment and social insurance for young people in the USA. The next factor that is contributing to the growing economic precarity is the rising cost of housing and rent. During the year of 2021 the median value of a home increased by 17%, and increased by 156% over the last 22 years (*Dunaway-Seale 2022*). The lack of affordable

housing excludes people from the luxury of ownership. This drives people to rent as there is little to no affordable housing available specially for people that are at the start of adulthood and have yet to find opportunities to build a career or pursue an education. The renting crisis is almost another on its own separate from the lack of affordable housing. There is a growing disparity between rent and income occurring in the US. The national median rent price has increased by 149% since 1985, while income has only grown by 35% (*Dunaway-Seale 2022*). This 4x difference has led to many outcomes, some people have had to spend even more of the monthly income on rent, while some can not keep up and have had to downgrade or lose their home. With this difference in growth between rent and income, around 58% of renters are currently living pay check to pay check (*Dunaway-Seale 2022*). This is definitely an ongoing crisis in the USA that seems to only be growing. The context of increasing rent and housing prices places many people in the vicinity of risk factors. As of the year 2019 the average rent nationally was \$1,097 facing a 6.82% increase over the previous years (*Department of Numbers 2019*). With a federal minimum wage of only \$7.25 per hour (\$1,256 monthly) (*United States department of labour 2022*) and workers under the age of 25 making up 48% of minimum wage earners there exists an economic environment for young people that detaches their aims from any legitimate actions (*US Bureau Of Labour 2020*).

The factors that have been established so far; higher risk of unemployment, lack of social insurance, student debt and out pricing of education, increased disparity between living conditions and income, are more than likely going to be driving factors in the increase of economic insecurity, anxiety, lack of stability and predictability faced by young people.

With youth suicide becoming an ever increasing public issue in America, with an increase of 56% in suicide rates through the years 2007-2017 of people ages 10-24 (*Curtin pg.1 2020*) there is some validity brought to Durkheims theory at least on the national scale. As the economic situation brings with it elements of stress, insecurity, deprivation, frustration, the reality of many young people is that of anomie and a lack of social integration. This is perhaps reflected in the rising youth suicide rates that are seen at the same time as the rising economic precarity, and is perhaps an indicator that anomic suicide is the perspective to best understand the rising youth suicide rates and in so validates the theory of Durkheim. With the suicide rates increasing significantly in 42 out of the 50 states (*Curtin pg.1 2020*) there is additional need to look at a more local context to decidedly make any conclusions regarding this but on a national scale there is evidence that the economic environment and its factors are a driving element in the increase of youth suicide in the US.

Social mobility is one of the most important factors in countering a state of anomie. The variables involved in social mobility differ but can potentially be seen as work opportunities, social protection, fair wages, education access, health, working conditions and effective institutions (*World Economic Forum 2020*). It is clear from the economic environment that many of these variables are limited for the demographic of young people. The opportunity and access to education without financial support is possible but comes with the cost of massive debt and an insecurity regarding employment. By being also the highest uninsured demographic and the highest percentage of minimum wage earners with ever increasing living costs they will be at high risk of suffering from a lack of social mobility. This lack of social mobility faced by young people leads to the conclusion that they should be considered as part of the precariat or at least the ones that face these economic risk factors (excluding young people with privileges or inherited wealth). This validation of Standings theory additionally adds to the greater context here that there is a state of anomie existing as the reality of the precariat is also an anomic one. Identifying economically with the precariat should be considered as a risk factor as the state of anomie they face is intertwined with anomic suicide.

With the validation of the theories in the American context it is now time to look at the Swedish context. To begin the economic environment and risk factors will be looked at. The first factor is debt. The majority of the debt undertaken by the American youth is for the purpose of obtaining an education, this is in contrast to Sweden where education is state provided and is free of cost. Despite this there has been an increase in the amount of people needing help with issues of debt. According to Kronofogden (the Swedish enforcement agency in charge of debt collection) there has been a record number of people looking for restructuring of their debt. The increase can be seen across all ages with an increase of 38%, but specially in the demographic of young people between the ages of 18 to 30 there has been an increase of 124% (*Kronofogden 2021*). This number doesn't necessarily prove anything or is enough to claim that the young people in Sweden are suffering from an increase in the pressures of debt as was seen in the US, but it is interesting as the growing discourse around debt seems to be growing in a precarious way with many people facing uncertainty or stress towards handling it with it specifically being seen among the younger population.

Moving on from debt to youth unemployment, the current rate is 25.6% (*Torstensson 2022*). This number is the total number of unemployed youth in the possible labour force. The recent pandemic had a major significant on the unemployment rates with 84,000 people between the ages of 15-24 leaving the labour force in November 2020 in comparison to November 2019 (*Torstensson 2022*). The national unemployment rate in Sweden as of march 2022 was 8.2% of the total labour force (*Statistiska Centralbyrån 2022*). This pattern is the same as seen in America but is actually even more evident in the Swedish context, where the unemployment rate among young people is noticeably higher than the national employment rate. This again can be seen as an indication of the lack of career opportunities available for young people which could perhaps be a global pattern but would require extensively more research to state definitively. In the American context this gap between youth unemployment and national unemployment was layered with additional economic precarities that are not as evident in the Swedish economic context. This goes to say then that the unemployment rate in Sweden can not be seen as contributing distinctively to the rising suicide rates as it is not accompanied by the other various economic risk factors to the extent seen in the American context. The high unemployment rate can although be causing a lack of integration into society which in turn could possibly enable the risk factors of anomic suicide described by Durkheim. Without suffering from the unfair wages, and debt to the extent that the young people in America are there still seems to be relevant economic factors affecting the psychology of young people in Sweden as the youth suicide rates are increasing.

According to the same institution as mentioned previously, Kronofogden, the youth of Sweden have a lower economic standard and have a noticeable worse development in comparison to other demographics of Swedish society. Their report on the economic problems faced by the youth population of 2008 provides many insights into the economic environment of that time. With housing prices increasing the youth population struggle to establish themselves in the market and are driven to renting units second or third hand (*Adler & Larsson 2008*). This is similar to what was seen in the US and Sweden today where the growing disparity between rent and income combined with exclusion from the housing market places the youth in a precarious situation regarding where they should live. Housing is not the only economic problem faced by the youth in Sweden, but they also suffer from having higher set prices for accommodation, insurances, loans, and living costs compared to other age groups (*Adler & Larsson 2008*). There exists also some difficulty regarding consumption. As the demand of consumption ever increases in the society it puts younger people at risk because they possess the smallest economic margins out of the population (*Adler & Larsson*

2008). Consumption also allows for the building of lifestyles and identity that can be debilitating to maintain if lowered consumption has social consequences (*Adler & Larsson 2008*). These economic issues are from the 2008 report published by Kronofogden but despite being 14 years old they tell us of issues that are similar to that of today's context and can perhaps show that this economic environment isn't just a consequence of the upheaval faced by the pandemic.

It seems then that in the Swedish context young people face exposure to certain economic variables that are risk factors of anomie and precarity. The consequences of this exposure are not as impactful as they are in the US as individuals possess a sense of social security and insurance where they don't feel the same lack of stability or predictability that is evident in the US. Despite this the trend of youth suicide is still increasing, as certain people are at an even higher risk of disintegrating from society if they are born into certain circumstances. Young people whose parents are unemployed have a 70% higher chance of failing to find labour (*Statistiska Centralbyrån 2022*). This is just one example of the at risk people that exist in the demographic of young people who are at risk of suffering from the economic environment. The themes of increasing housing prices and a lack of career opportunities is clear in both contexts and is detrimental to the integration of young people. Evidently the biggest contrast between the two countries seems to be the scale and also the level of precarity. The precarity faced by the young people in Sweden seems to be more related to the context of the individual and the circumstantial risk factors. As a homogenous group young people are exposed to higher unemployment and are at risk of failing to establish economic independence, but despite this there exists a social safety net that alleviates some of the instability and disintegration. In the US the precarity seems to be much more widespread with the economic environment being so demanding that the only way to establish economic security or stability is to inherit it. Without inheritance or luck the individual will find themselves in a situation where they are exposed to many of the symptoms of anomie described in the theoretical framework by Durkheim.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the literature ultimately focused on the economic factors that are seen as potential justifications for the rising youth suicide rates. It is evident that there is an economic reality faced by the youth population that could be labeled as precarious and could theoretically be a contributing factor of the rising rates. The relationship between economic precarity and social integration is one of the utmost importance in understanding how the economic reality could play a role in the rising rates. The factors contributing to the rising rates are by no means limited to purely economic components. The potentiality of what could be contributing to the rising rates seen across the youth demographics is a study that would introduce countless different influences all with a varying degree of importance, with some existing on a global scale.

The trend of rising youth suicide rates and an increase in mental illness is not only limited to the context of the two countries USA and Sweden. In the country of South Korea suicide has been the leading cause of death for young people since 2007. (*The Korea Herald 2020*). Next to Korea in Japan the same issue is seen where suicide is the leading cause of death among people aged 15 to 34. In the “western” countries such as France, Germany, Canada, Britain, and Italy suicide is the second leading cause of death among people aged 15 to 34. (*Nippon 2020*). It is clear that there is a global phenomenon occurring that is effecting the demographic of young people the hardest. The relevancy of understanding social integration and doing more to mitigate anomic environments is more important than ever. The economic reality of many young people around the world seems to be a gateway to depression, anxiety and a lack of security. These are only some of the factors that contribute to an anomic environment and more should be done to provide social insurance. Besides the economic factors covered in this study there are plenty more that could be contributing to this context. Economic factors that have not been covered but could be contributing are inflation and wealth inequality. An aspect to all this that plays a large role that wasn't covered in the study is the poverty cycle. The poverty cycle is formidably a fundamental part of the precariat class and a state of anomie. People, whose reality is that of either the precariat or a state of anomie, that are stuck in the poverty cycle would be extremely exposed. Being stuck in a repeating generational cycle of poverty only enhances the lack of social mobility. On top of the economic factors faith in institutions is failing, with corruption and impending climate change repercussions accelerated by greed. It is impossible to conclude that the rising youth suicide rates are merely a product of the economic environment as the issue of mental illness and anomie is very complex and context heavy.

Factors such as substance abuse that affects 1 out of 7 young adults in America is a factor that should not be dismissed, with young adults in America being the biggest abuser of painkillers, ADHD stimulants and anti-anxiety medication. (*American Addiction Centers 2020*). The reality of digital media usage is also a factor that needs reflecting upon. American kids between the ages of 8-18 spend an entire 7.5 hours per day in-front of screens. (*Centers for Disease control and prevention 2018*) The psychological and neurological consequences of this and the culture of a digital social life seems to be under contemplated in our societal discourse.

Finally this is an issue that needs action promptly and globally. There seems to be little hope of an economic turn around for the exposed individuals with many still dealing with the repercussions of 2020. After the recent pandemic youth unemployment around the world dropped by 8.7% while employment in adults dropped 3.7% with low income countries being effected the most. (*Fleming 2021*) The consequences of economic upheaval or precarity can spiral into decades of financial despair. The state should therefore work to alleviate the precarity experienced by young people at risk. Living precariously prohibits the individual from thriving and contributing to society. This public health crisis will not be mitigated by retroactive actions or the continuation of an individualistic social insurance policy as seen in the US. Extensive research needs to be done on the psychological value of social integration with effort being placed on those exposed to the most risk factors.

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