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COUNTRY REPORT



DENMARK

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breakback CASE STUDIES

THE TRADE UNION HR SERVICE TO SUPPORTS FREELANCERS
AIMS: REGULATE FREELANCE WORK
 PROVIDE SERVICES RELATED TO FREELANCE BUSINESS
 (E.G. COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT COVERAGE, TAX ADVISORY...)

BY TRADE UNION DM
 A PLATFORM TO RAISE AWARENESS OF NON-STANDARD WORK AND ITS RISKS AMONG ACADEMICS IN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE
 IT ORGANISES THEMATIC WORKSHOPS, NETWORK ACTIVITIES AND PUBLISH NEWS ARTICLES ON NON-STANDARD WORK

INNOVATIVE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN HILFR DIGITAL LABOUR PLATFORM AND THE TRADE UNION 3F
 IT IS A COMBINED COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT FOR BOTH SELF-EMPLOYED/FREELANCERS AND TRADITIONAL EMPLOYEES WITH NOVEL CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS MEDIATION

HK FREELANCE SERVICE BUREAU

FLEXWERKER

HILFR AGREEMENT



Break up to get back together

The impact of unionisation through innovative service provision on union membership and industrial relations

COUNTRY REPORT DENMARK

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The Danish country report

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A UNION STRATEGY THROUGH SERVICES PROVISION TO:

ENHANCE MEMBERSHIP

REVITALIZE ACTION

THE PURPOSE:

- HOW UNIONS RESPOND TO INDIVIDUALISATION
- EVALUATING IMPACT OF SERVICES ON MEMBERSHIP



FOCUS

breakback



RELAUNCH
AN INCLUSIVE
SOCIAL DIALOGUE

BREAK BACK HAS
3 MAIN
AIMS



GOALS

1. TO ASSESS WHICH
STRATEGIES TRADE
UNIONS ADOPT TO
OVERCOME WORKERS
DISAFFECTION

2. TO COLLECT
AND DESCRIBE
THE VARIETY OF SERVICES
PROVIDED IN 5 EU
MEMBER STATES

3. TO EVALUATE THE
EFFECTIVENESS OF
THESE MEMBERSHIP
REVITALIZATION
STRATEGIES

EVALUATE WHETHER
THE PROVISION OF SERVICES
LEADS TO A UNION
MEMBERSHIP INCREASE!

THE HYPOTHESIS:

TRADE UNIONS
ARE EXPERIMENTING
A "CUSTOMISATION"
OF THEIR ACTIVITIES





First part

Introduction

This report includes the Danish contribution to the EU funded project entitled “*Break up to get back together – the impact of unionisation through innovative service provision on union membership and industrial relations*” – (Breakback). The project is funded by the European Commission DG for Employment and Social Affairs (VS/2019/00789) and is coordinated by the Italian team involving (CISL, Italy and the University of Florence, Italy). Other project partners are besides FAOS, representing the Danish team, LSRC – Lithuanian Social Research Centre (LITHUANIA), UAB – UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA (SPAIN), DSPS-UNIFI – Università degli Studi di Firenze (ITALY) and DIESIS coop scrl-fs (BELGIUM).

The project aims to explore how European trade unions have responded to the recent membership trends and changes in selected countries, belonging to distinct industrial relations models and welfare regimes such as Denmark, Belgium, Lithuania Italy and Spain. Through a series of in-depth case studies in each of the five selected countries, the project examines individual trade unions’ strategies and actions to expand their membership base with a particular focus on service provision as an instrument to reach groups that tend to be less unionised such as non-standard workers, covering digital platform workers, freelancers, multiple jobholders and fixed-term workers. In this context, the locus of

analysis is notably on what can be considered innovative union services, defined as services that resemble path breaking initiatives or may involve a rethinking of traditional trade union activities in novel ways at least in the individual national context. Also part of these analyses, we explore how these innovative services are tied to individual trade union strategies for expanding their membership base as well as the selected initiatives relatively success in terms of their potential effects on recent membership trends and changes for the trade unions examined in each of the five countries. Moreover, the coordinating team of the project developed an analytical framework that classified different union services and initiatives according to how they follow different organising logics (Bellini et al. 2021). Following their work, trade union services can be classified into three broad categories defined as so-called: 1) *instrumental services* that target groups of workers and are important for collective actions; 2) *strategic services* that target individual workers, but may also be important for collective actions; and 3) *traditional individualized union services*, where there seem to be limited intention to develop a workers’ collective in the traditional sense (Bellini et al. 2021).

To address these project aims, the Danish country report comprises of three parts, where the first part briefly outlines the main features of the Danish industrial relations model, including background information on the recent main



economic and labour market trends, presentation of the key stakeholders and the main Danish trade union confederations. The first part of the report also includes a brief review of the Danish union density and how different trade unions have been affected by membership loss or growth within the last two decades. Through case studies involving three purposefully selected Danish trade unions, the second part of the report examines the recent strategies and actions, including examples of novel and traditional union services developed by the selected unions to retain and attract new members in order to tackle and thus reverse membership loss. The selected unions are the three Danish sector unions 3F (The United Federation of Danish Workers), HK (The Union of Commercial and Clerical Employees in Denmark) and DM (The Danish Association of Masters and PhDs). These three trade unions not only represent unions that organise unskilled and skilled blue-collar workers (3F), skilled and unskilled white-collar workers (HK) and highly skilled employees (DM), but they are also unions that have experienced different membership trends in recent years. HK and 3F are some of the largest Danish trade unions, but have in particular lost most members since the mid-1990s, while DM – a smaller union – has seen a significant membership growth during the same period. The third part of the report examines recent examples of novel union services by the three selected sector unions (3F, DM, HK) and assesses how they are linked to the selected union's strategies for expanding their membership base. Each of these three sector union has been innovative, but in slightly different ways. The three selected cases of innovative union services are more specifically the workers' collective "Flexwerker" by DM, the union-led freelance bureau by HK and the Hilfr agreement by 3F and the digital platform Hilfr, which is a novel company based collective agreement

regulating wage and working conditions in the Danish platform economy.

The report draws on 24 interviews with key stakeholders such as representatives from Danish trade unions, employers' associations, policy-makers and union and non-union members conducted in 2018-2021 as well as input from focus group interviews and policy labs, involving representatives from distinct unions, policy-makers, employers and non-standard workers. The interview data has been supplemented by desk research of policy documents, individual trade union's position- and strategy papers, their annual returns as well as relevant collective agreements, Danish labour law and other relevant research studies and statistical material.

The report is structured as follows and comprises of five chapters, besides this introduction: Chapter two presents a brief overview of the Danish industrial relations system, including its key stakeholders and the recent development in the overall union density as well as the recent membership trend of the main trade union confederation and their affiliated sector unions. Chapter three briefly introduces the selected sector unions (3F, HK and DM) and explores their recent membership development, before analysing their recent organising efforts in terms of their strategies and actions as well as examples of their innovative and more traditional union services. Part of this chapter is also a brief assessment of the impact of their various organising efforts on recent membership trends and changes. In chapter four, we analyse through in depth case studies three purposefully examples of innovative union services by 3F, HK and DM and explore how they are linked to the selected unions' overall strategies for expanding their membership base. In the last chapter, we summarise and compare our key findings and the main conclusions are drawn. ♦

Second part

The Danish industrial relations system

This chapter outlines the main features of the Danish industrial relations, including background information on the recent main economic and labour market trends, presentation of the key stakeholders and the main Danish trade union confederations. This part of the report also includes a brief review of the Danish union density and how different trade unions have been affected by membership loss or growth within the last two decades.

2.1 The Danish Industrial Relations System – Baseline information

Main economic and labour market trends

Denmark was hit relatively hard by the economic crisis in 2009 as well as in 2020 when the Corona pandemic swept across the country. The real GDP growth rate declined from 1.6 percent in 2007 to a negative growth rate of -5.8 per cent in 2009 (Eurostat 2021a). Alongside this development, the unemployment rate more than doubled between

2008 and 2010, and thus increased more rapidly than the general EU average although the share of unemployed continued to be lower than the EU average (Ibsen, 2011; Larsen and Navrbjerg, 2015; Eurostat, 2021b). Since then, the economy has somewhat recovered with real GDP growth rate being 1.5 per cent in 2018, but when the Corona crisis hit Denmark it was accompanied with rapid drops in GDP and rising unemployment levels (figure 1). However, the unemployment rate continues to remain higher than in the pre-crisis years, especially among the long-term unemployed and young people (figure 1.1).

Other recent Danish labour market trends include among others the change in the occupational structures and the emergence of new employment forms. Since the early 1990s the labour intensive private service sectors have expanded, while Danish manufacturing has shrunk from employing 19 per cent of the workforce in 1992 to 12 per cent in 2018 (Eurostat, 2021a; Ilsøe



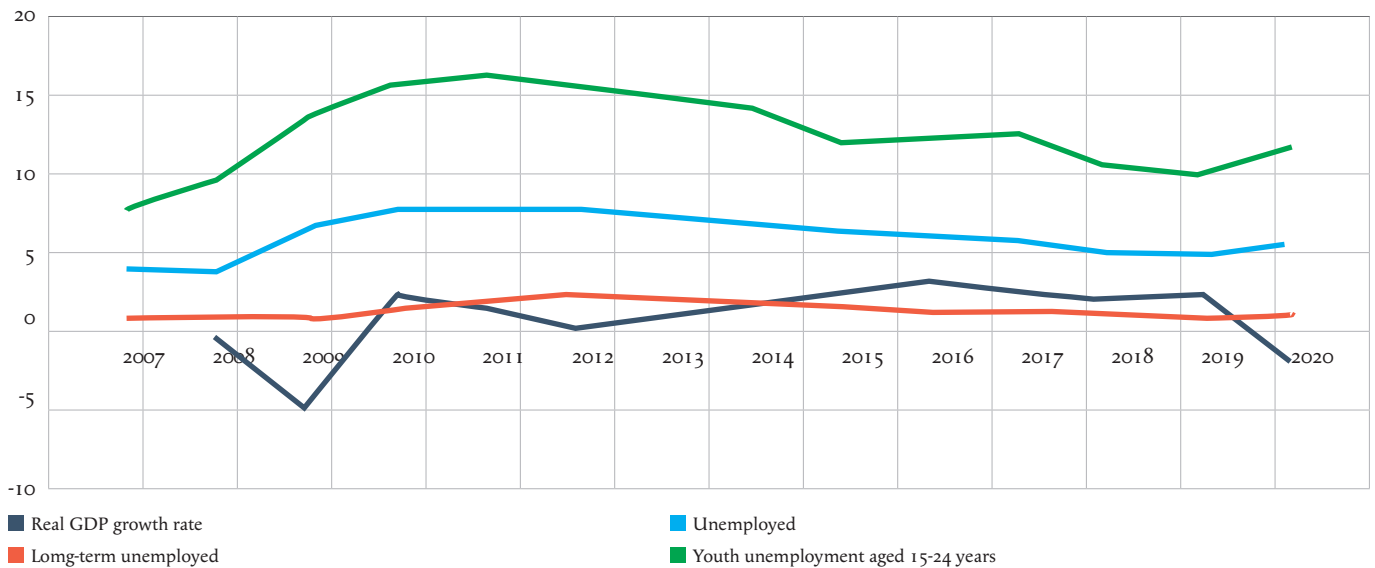


Figure 1.1 | The Danish labour market and economy in figures (in percent)
 Source: Eurostat (2021a; 2021b; 2021c): Note GDP is measured as chain linked volumes, percentage change on previous period; The share of unemployed is measured as a percentage of the total active population on the labour market.

and Madsen, 2017b). It is particular within private services that atypical work has become more widespread and the numbers are often higher than the aggregated national data. Recent figures suggest that 29 per cent of all employed on the Danish labour market held short or long part-time contracts, fixed-term contracts or worked as temporary agency workers, digital platform workers or solo-self-employed in 2015 (Rasmussen et al. 2019). Marginal part-time defined as contracts with less than 15 weekly working hours, along with digital platform work, are some of the fastest growing employment forms on the Danish labour market, although cross-sectoral variations exist in terms of the scope and type of atypical work (Larsen and Ilsøe, 2021; Ilsøe and Larsen, 2020; Rasmussen et al. 2019). The recent rise in atypical work, notably in some sectors, appears to have been accompanied with rising labour market inequalities. The risks of unemployment, in-work poverty, under-employment and low wages are higher among atypical workers compared to their peers with full-time open-ended positions (Scheuer, 2017; Larsen and Ilsøe, 2021). For example, 13 per cent of part-time workers experience in-work poverty compared to around four per cent of full-time employed in 2017; and such risks appear

greater in 2017 than 2003, especially for part-time workers, where the risks of in-work poverty have nearly doubled when comparing recent figures (Eurostat, 2019f). However, the share of involuntary temporary work and part-time work has marginally decreased during the last two decades: 38 per cent of temporary employees and 12 per cent of part-time workers struggled to find a full-time position in 2018 compared to 41 per cent of temporary workers and 14 per cent of part-time workers in 2000 (Eurostat, 2019j; 2019k). Moreover, atypical workers often struggle to accrue rights to statutory and collective agreed benefits such as unemployment benefits, sick pay, further training etc. due to strict eligibility criteria, which are often linked to past employment records and number of weekly working hours (Larsen and Mailand, 2018).

Danish Labour market regulation¹

Danish labour market regulation is characterised by a high degree of voluntarism, where wage and working conditions are primarily regulated through collective agreements negotiated and

¹ With permission from the Authors, this section draws heavily on the work by Larsen, Navrbjerg and Ilsøe (2019) and Larsen and Mailand (2018)

signed by social partners at sectoral and company levels (Due and Madsen, 2008). For example, Denmark has no statutory minimum wage, and wage-setting is exclusively left to social partners. In areas of the economy without collective agreements, wage-setting is left to the individual arrangements of the company and thus the market (Larsen et al. 2019). However, the state has a pivotal role in formulating the framework for regulations and labour standards on the Danish labour market. This is particularly the case in areas such as health and safety, equality rights, further training, holiday entitlement as well as working conditions for white-collar workers (The Salaried Employees Act), where Danish labour laws prevail. The state also collaborates closely with Danish trade unions and employers' associations, and through tripartite consultations, the state actively involves social partners in developing Danish welfare policy. In fact, social partners have in close coordination with shifting Danish governments increasingly addressed welfare challenges in their collective agreements – for example pensions, further training, sick pay and work-life balance policies (Due and Madsen, 2006; Mailand, 2008). In this context, the collective agreements often offer more extensive and generous conditions than the law (Larsen and Navrbjerg, 2018). Another key feature of Danish labour market regulation is that the relations between the involved parties – the state, unions and employers – are based on the premise of mutual respect for their diverging interests and consensus on how to resolve conflicts (Due and Madsen, 2008: 517).

The most recent labour market reforms regarding the regulation of wage and working conditions entail the revision of the Holiday Entitlement Act (2019) that came into force in 2020. The Danish government relaxed the eligibility criteria for statutory holiday entitlements for new labour market entrants following a written statement from the European Commission. The rule changes entail that newcomers to the Danish

labour market are eligible for paid holiday from their first day of paid work. Another key labour market reform concerns the recent adjustment of the unemployment benefit system in 2016. Here, the Danish government introduced more flexible eligibility criteria for accruing rights to unemployment benefits by counting in short-term temporary jobs and assignments irrespectively of their status as employee or self-employed. The reform also included new opportunities for extending the maximum benefit period by one year as well as reducing the benefit level for newly graduates without children. However, the reform of the unemployment benefit system did not fundamentally change the pre-existing unemployment system, although it represents a small step to include non-standard workers (Mailand and Larsen, 2018). Other recent Danish labour market reforms include the tightening of the eligibility criteria for unemployment benefits (2010), sick pay (2013) and social assistance (2016), where the Danish government strengthened the link to past employment records and number of weekly working hours. These rules changes, along with social partners increasingly agreeing to include more traditional welfare themes such as pension, further training, health insurance, sick pay, paid parental leave and holiday entitlements in their collective agreements, entail that the statutory and the collective agreed social benefits increasingly depend on employment status as well as collective bargaining coverage (Mailand and Larsen, 2018). However, during the Corona pandemic, there has been a series of novel policy responses that not only have relaxed the close ties to employment status, but also broadened the scope of social protection to new groups such as solo self-employed, freelancers and multiple jobholders. The Danish government, often in close collaboration with trade unions and employers association and with broad support across the political spectrum has eased especially atypical workers' access to unemployment benefits, sick



pay etc. and developed policy responses explicitly targeting freelancers, unemployed, students and people on social assistance to secure their income security during the Corona crisis (Larsen and Ilsøe, 2021).

Regulation of industrial relations

The very foundation of the Danish industrial relations model is the September Compromise from 1899, where the former Confederal Trade Union Federation LO (now FH since January 2019) and the Confederal Employers' associations (DA) signed a main agreement outlining the fundamental principles for regulating Danish wage and working conditions through collective bargaining and agreements. This set of principles has remained more or less intact and continues to outline the main framework for regulating wage and working conditions on the Danish labour market (Due et al. 1993; Larsen and Ilsøe, 2016). Therefore, the Danish collective bargaining model is institutionally anchored in collective agreements and not legislation. It is thus a highly voluntaristic system, where trade unions and employers associations hold a strong position in the labour market and through collective bargaining and agreements regulate wage and working conditions as mentioned earlier. The union density (64 per cent in 2018), the collective agreement coverage (84 per cent 2018) and the network of shop stewards (52 per cent of companies in 2010) is comparatively high (OECD, 2020; Larsen et al. 2010; DA, 2017; Arnholtz and Navrbjerg, 2021). However, wide sector variations exist as to the union density with only one in three employees being union members in some sectors such as retail, hotel and restaurants (Ilsøe et al. 2017; Toubøl et al. 2015). Likewise, the collective agreement coverage is considerably lower in private services (30-50 per cent) compared to for example manufacturing (88 per cent) and the public sector (100 per cent). Also, the shop steward coverage varies across sectors from 23 per cent in retail to 48 per cent in

manufacturing and 91 per cent in the public sector (Larsen et al. 2010).

Background information on the industrial relations system

In Denmark, there are three confederal trade unions represented by AC (The Danish confederation of Professional Associations), LH (The Association of Managers and Executives) and FH (the Danish Trade Union Confederation that is a recent merger between the two former main union confederations LO (The Danish Confederation of Trade Unions) and FTF (The Confederation of Professionals)). These peak organisations and their affiliated unions represent employees in both the private and public sector and they are organised by occupations. FH and their affiliated unions organise unskilled, blue- and white-collar workers, while AC represents academic groups and LH organises managers and executives. On the employer side, there are five main employer confederations in Denmark. DA (the Confederation of Danish Employers) and FA (the Financial Sector Employer Associations) represent employers in the private sector while KL (Local Government Denmark), Danske regioner (Danish Regions), Ministry of Finance represent public sector employers in the local government-, regional- and state sectors, respectively. The confederal organisations no longer negotiate collective agreements in the private sector, where collective bargaining is by and large left for social partners at sectoral and company levels. However, the private peak organisations continue to play a pivotal role in supporting the collective bargaining processes in the private sector. The situation is slightly different in the public sector, where the confederal unions and employers' organisations continue to be actively involved in the bargaining processes, which typically takes place through bargaining cartels, involving representatives from the peak organisations and their affiliates on both side of industry. In addition, both public and private organisations

on both side of industry are regularly involved in various tripartite bodies – ad hoc as well as more institutionalised committees for social dialogue and they collaborate closely with the Danish State.

Collective bargaining

Collective bargaining takes place at two levels in Denmark. The framework for collective bargaining is outlined by sectoral agreements arising from multi-employer bargaining, while local bargaining increasingly determines the implementation and interpretation of these agreements at company level. In this context, collective bargaining in the Danish private sector typically takes the form of cross-sectoral pattern bargaining. Social partners within manufacturing usually first conclude their sectoral agreement, which then inspire other bargaining areas (Due et al. 1993). In the public sector, there are not similar traditions for cross-sectoral pattern bargaining. However, the social partners in the state sector typically first sign their sectoral agreements, before the social partners at regional and local government levels conclude their agreements. However, the 2018 bargaining round in the public sector differs from this general picture as the regional sector signed their deal before social partners in the state sector had reached a settlement (Mailand and Hansen, 2019). Another key feature of the Danish industrial relations model is that collective bargaining has increasingly been decentralized towards the company level – a decentralisation process that started in the early 1980s. This development is a reflection of the need for ample flexibility at workplace level, where also the scope for company based bargaining has broadened to cover an increasing number of themes (Navrbjerg, 1999). The collective agreement covering manufacturing is particularly noteworthy as the parties locally can deviate in almost all areas from the sector agreement, provided local consensus between managers and shop stewards (Ilsøe, 2012a). However, local bargaining in most sectors,

including manufacturing, can only take place if a shop steward is present at the workplace, although exceptions exist such as within the graphic design industry (Larsen et al. 2018; Ilsøe, 2012b). Companies not taking part in multi-employer bargaining can join the sectoral agreement or negotiate their own company based agreement with the local union branches that often include among others tailor made solutions to that specific company. In this context, novel types of company based agreements have emerged in recent years that cover freelancers, digital platform workers and solo self-employed, who do not necessarily have the legal status as workers, but are instead considered private contractors and thus small businesses (Ilsøe and Madsen, 2017; Larsen et al. 2018).

Other key features of the Danish bargaining model include among others the high level of trust based relations between the social partners at sectoral and company levels along with the fact that social partners' rights to industrial actions are confined to the negotiations and renewal of collective agreements (Due et al. 1993; Ilsøe, 2012a; Larsen et al. 2010). During the settlement period, there is no resort to industrial action such as lockouts, strikes etc.; the so-called 'peace obligation' comes into force. This applies, even if company based bargaining typically takes place after the peace obligation has come into force (Due and Madsen, 2008: 518). Moreover, and unlike a number of other European countries, the collective agreements – sector or company agreements – are organised according to specific occupations of the employees and not the sector of the company. Therefore, in a manufacturing company, the production line may be covered by a collective agreement and have their own shop steward, whilst no agreement covers for example the office staff or other occupational groups in the company. In areas of the economy without coverage from Danish labour laws or collective agreements, wage and working conditions are left to the individual arrangements of the



company and thus the market, since Denmark has no tradition of legal extension of collective agreements.

Regarding workplace representation, the two main bodies for collective workplace representation are shop stewards and co-operation committees that are rooted in distinct multi-employer agreements. Shop stewards can be elected at any workplace covered by collective agreement and with five or more employees. Collective agreements, and not Danish labour law, solely regulate the rules and regulations regarding shop steward elections, their duties and employment protection. In addition, only union members can be elected as shop stewards and thus shop stewards are always union affiliated as well as the unions' representative at the workplace. With regard to co-operation committees, including information and consultation, these aspects are regulated in the private sector by social partners' co-operation agreement (2006), originally from 1947. The agreement compels employers to inform employees about staffing plans, the economic situation of the company, plans of restructuring and introduction of new technology (Cooperation Agreement, 2006: 7–8). However, the co-operation agreement includes no specific sanctions towards employers not adhering to the agreement. The agreement further stipulates that co-operation committees can be established in private companies with 35 or more employees and typically comprise of an equal number of employee and management representatives, where the shop steward is usually among the employee representatives. In firms without workplace Co-operation Committees, employees are to be informed individually and in groups. In the public sector, there are similar agreements for the set-up of co-operation committees, including procedures for information and consultations. The MED-agreement covers the local government and regions, while there is a separate co-operation-agreement covering the state sector. These agreements further stipulates

that co-operation committees can be established in local government and regional workplaces, with managerial responsibilities, while in the state sector, it is only in workplaces with 25 or more employees that have the right to establish co-operation committees (Navrbjerg and Larsen, 2021).

2.2 Trade unions

Denmark has a strong tradition of multi-unionism with the first trade unions emerging in 1870s; and at the end of the 19th century, confederal trade unions and employers organisations were well-established on the Danish labour market. Since then new trade unions and employers organisations have emerged, others have merged or even dissolved as labour market structures have changed (Due et al. 1993; Due and Madsen, 2005). Today, there are three main trade union confederations and they, along with their affiliated unions, organise members across distinct occupations in the public and private sector as mentioned earlier. Most Danish trade union organisations are organised in a three-fold structure comprised of the main trade union confederations, the sectoral unions and local branch unions. *The three main confederations* in Denmark are organised by occupation, and they coordinate and represent their members' interests vis-a-vis the political system and the employers. They also engage to varying degrees in collective bargaining depending on their delegated mandate. *The sectoral unions* are also organised by occupations and are affiliated to one of the three trade union confederations. The sectoral unions are typically engaged in collective bargaining at sectoral level, where they represent the interests of their members. *The local branch unions* are also to varying degrees involved in company based bargaining, but their main task is to offer services to workplace representatives, especially the shop stewards at individual companies. Alongside the more traditional trade unions, a number of alternative unions also exists in Denmark, and

they have become more widespread in recent years. In 1995, the alternative unions organised less than 3 per cent of all employed on the Danish labour market compared to more than 10 per cent in 2015 (Ibsen et al. 2015). The alternative unions differ from the more traditional unions, as they are typically not engaged in collective bargaining and therefore offer much cheaper membership fees, and some – especially the Christian trade union movement (KRIFA) – defer traditional means of industrial actions as they oppose the very idea that conflicts of interests exist between labour and capital (Navrbjerg et al. 2019). In the following, we briefly present the three main trade union confederations in Denmark.

The Danish Trade Union Confederation (FH – Fagbevægelsens Hovedorganisation)

FH is the most recent and largest trade union confederation in Denmark with 79 affiliated unions representing 1,064,465 blue- and white-collar workers in the private and public sector in 2020 (Statistics Denmark, 2021). FH came into force in January 2019 following a union merger between the oldest and largest trade Union (LO- founded in 1898) and FTF (the Confederation of Professionals in Denmark – founded in 1952). Before merging, LO had 18 affiliated trade unions that represented around 788,000 workers ranging from unskilled to blue- and white collar employees in both the private and public sector. FTF was a slightly smaller Trade Union Confederation with 80 affiliated trade unions that represented around 450,000 white-collar employees in the public and private sector. Today, the largest affiliated unions under FH are historically affiliated with LO and include 3F (The United Federation of Danish Workers) with 218,922 members, HK (The Union of Commercial and Clerical Employees in Denmark) with 173,302 members followed by FOA (Trade and Labour) with 149,886 members in 2020 (Statistics Denmark, 2021). 3F organises unskilled and low skilled workers in manufacturing,

construction, transport, private services, agriculture and the fishing industries as well as the public sector. HK's members ranges from unskilled and skilled workers to employees with higher educational backgrounds like accountants, translators and IT specialists. FOA organises workers within the health and social care – child and elder care – sectors, where most members work in the public sector. In 2020, the three largest affiliated unions under the former FTF are Dansk Sygeplejeråd (The trade union for Nurses, 72,570 members) followed by Danmarks Lærerforening (the Teachers Union, 57,206 members) and BUPL (The Union for Child and Youth Educators, 55,037 members) (Statistics Denmark, 2021). FH has a prominent role on the Danish labour market when it comes to taking part in government led tripartite consultations and representing the voice of Danish workers in consultations related to the EU and other international bodies like ILO etc. Here FH represents its members' interests vis-a-vis the employers and the political system at national and EU level, respectively. FH is also engaged in collective bargaining in the private and public sector, provided the affiliated organisations have delegated bargaining mandate to the confederation. FH also takes part in various tripartite consultations led by the Danish government and is typically a key member on any governmental body involving social partners. When it comes to organising activities, FH also plays a role, although most organising activities are primarily developed within the member organisations, typically in their affiliated union's various subsections and local union branches in close collaboration with workplace representatives. Thus, important inter-union variations exist as to individual union's strategies and policies on organising activities, which tend to differ depending on the distinct challenges facing individual unions – aspects that we explore in chapter 3. However, there are some examples of confederal organising initiatives such as FH's



Table 1.1: LO and FTF sources of income for the most recent years (Million DKK)

	LO (year 2014)	FTF (year 2017)
Membership fees from affiliated trade unions	153	59,5
Income from joint social partner fund financed by Danish employers (DA/LO development fund)	22.4	:
Other sources of income	4,1	:
Financial investment returns	49	6,3
Total	228.5	65.8

Source: LO (2015); FTF (2017).

coordination of various seminars and workshops and network for member organisations as well as FH's different training programmes for union-affiliated workplace representatives organised and provided through the so-called FIU system, where organising activities form an important part of the training courses.

Financing

FH is financed through a mix of sources, where membership fees are the main source of income with 67 per cent of LO and 90 per cent of FTF total income arise from membership fees paid by their member organisations. Their alternative income sources include among others income from joint social partner funds that are regulated through collective bargaining, but financed by Danish employers; financial returns from investments and real-estate as well as various service provisions. However, the annual returns for FH are not yet publicly available. In addition, in Denmark, it is optional for trade unions to publish their annual returns, and as a result, only some Danish trade unions make their annual reports and accounts publicly available. The most recent publicly available annual returns from the LO and FTF indicate their sources of income and thus the type of income financing the new Trade Union Confederation FH.

A systematic review of the annual returns from some of FH's affiliated unions indicate that wide inter-variations exist among the group of member organisations under FH in terms of the composition of their income sources. For

example, membership fees represent between from 51 per cent and up to 94 per cent of the selected union's total income (Larsen, 2019). The alternative sources of income arise primarily from financial returns from investments, real estates, joint social partner administrated, but employer paid funds as well as union related services, while state funding is almost non-existent among Danish unions. However, the share of each individual component varies greatly across distinct sector unions with some having greater financial means from alternative sources than others (Larsen, 2019). Each affiliated trade union autonomously regulates their means of income and thus they individually determine the level of membership fees and the composition of their finances. Therefore, the membership fees may even vary from one local union branch to another as some unions such as 3F and Danish Metal have a highly decentralised economy, where individual local branch unions not only have their own budget, but they also have the autonomy to administrate and determine the level of membership fees (Larsen, 2019). The membership fee is typically a monthly flat rate, although some of the affiliated unions under FH operate with lower fees for part-time workers, students, apprentices and retirees, etc. Recent figures indicate that the membership fee varies from 239 DKK per month and up to 589 DKK per month among distinct trade unions under FH depending on the affiliated union, their local union branches and the individual member's age and employment status, respectively (Larsen, 2019).

Workplace representation

FH and their affiliated unions, especially those under the former LO have a strong presence at the workplace compared to other Danish trade unions (such as AC and LH), notably in the private sector. In the public sector, the situation is slightly different as trade unions under both the former FTF and LO have a strong workplace representation. A study by Larsen et al. (2010) indicate that 46 per cent of blue-collar workers and 54 per cent of white-collar workers are covered by collective agreements in the private sector, while all public sector employees are covered by collective agreements. However, the shop steward coverage is somewhat higher among blue-collar workers compared to white-collar workers, especially in the private sector, where nearly one in two shop stewards in Danish private companies are affiliated with a trade union under the former LO. The shop steward coverage among the unions affiliated with the former FTF is somewhat lower, particularly in the private sector (Larsen et al. 2010).

Strategic orientation towards challenges facing the Danish IR-system

Membership loss and securing the collective agreement coverage are some of the key challenges facing many trade unions under FH, especially those trade unions that are affiliated with the former LO. LO and its member organisations have lost more than one in three members since the mid-1990s. It is especially the affiliated unions 3F, HK and Danish Metal have been affected by member loss in recent years (Arnholtz and Navrbjerg, 2021; Ibsen et al. 2015; figure 3 below). By contrast, the former FTF and most of its affiliated unions have seen a rapid growth in their membership base since the 1990s (Statistics Denmark, 2019; Ibsen et al. 2015; Arnholtz and Navrbjerg, 2021; figure 2 and 3 below). To tackle their recent membership loss and attract new members, individual Danish unions under FH have to varying degrees lowered their

membership fees. They have also expanded their membership packages to include various services, ranging from different types of insurances, renting of summer houses, lower membership fees for selected member groups to business services targeting self-employed and freelancers – aspects that are explored in greater detail in part II of the report (Larsen, 2019).

Many trade unions under FH have also utilised their bargaining power and through collective bargaining expanded the coverage of their collective agreements to include new and emerging employee groups such as part-time employees, fixed-term workers, temporary agency workers, digital platform workers, freelancers, and subcontracted workers (Larsen and Mailand, 2014; Ilsøe and Madsen, 2017; Larsen et al. 2019). Many sector unions have also pushed for new and strengthened collective agreed social rights for various groups of atypical workers. In fact, Danish unions under FH have shifted their approach towards non-standard workers from trying to eliminate such forms of work to acknowledging, organising and increasingly regulating non-standard work through collective bargaining (Mailand and Larsen, 2011; Larsen and Mailand, 2018; Ilsøe and Madsen, 2017). This strategic focus is also reflected in the work programme for FH for the coming years, where the union density and the collective agreement coverage, including ways to strengthen the bargaining position of employees in the public and private sector are two of the seven main strategic areas of action for FH (FH, 2019).

FH has also recently organised a series of network for their affiliated unions to exchange good practices on cross-cutting issues that are deemed important by their member organisations such as non-standard work, employment rates and ways to strengthen the coverage of the Danish unemployment benefit scheme and increasing unemployment benefit levels (FH, 2020). In Denmark, it is optional for workers to join an unemployment insurance scheme; and in recent



years the share of workers being members of an unemployment benefit scheme has similar to the level of compensation declined (Ministry of Employment, 2016). Alongside this development, private wage insurance schemes has started to emerge. FH in particular are critical towards these private wage insurance schemes as they mainly target workers with high job security, while employee groups with low job security may struggle to join such schemes, which in turn may reinforce labour market inequalities. FH has together with other unions lobbied extensively to increase unemployment benefit levels and the expand the traditional unemployment insurance scheme while expressing their concern for the private wage insurance solutions, most recently during the Corona-crisis, where they succeeded in temporarily raising the benefit levels (FH- blog, 2020).

The Danish Confederation of Professional Associations (AC – Akademikerne)

The Danish Confederation of Professional Associations (AC) was founded in 1972. It is an umbrella organisation for its 25 affiliated trade unions, which represent professional and managerial staff graduated from universities and other higher educational institutions. Recent figures indicate that AC organises around 292,000 employees, including medical doctors, dentists, biologists, lawyers, engineers, architects, economists, academic staff at Danish universities etc. (Statistics Denmark, 2021c). The three largest affiliated unions under AC are IDA (The Danish Society of Engineers – 84,112 members) followed by DJØF (The Association for Lawyers and Economists – 66,243 members) and DM (The Danish association of Masters and PhDs – 36,503 members) (Statistics Denmark, 2021). IDA organises employees in the fields of technology, natural sciences and IT and has limited tradition for negotiating collective agreements at least in the private sector, where most members individually negotiate their employment contrast.

DJØF is the second largest union under AC and represents members studying or working in the areas of law, economics, management, politics, administration, business, academia etc. DJØF has a strong tradition of engaging in collective bargaining in the public sector, while less so in the private sector. DM primarily organises members in Danish academia in the areas of humanities, natural science and social science, but has also members in other parts of the private and public sector. DM is primarily engaged in collective bargaining in the public sector and less so in the private sector, which is a key feature for many Danish trade unions organising employees with higher educational backgrounds.

AC represents its members' interests vis-a-vis the employers and the political system and is involved in negotiating collective agreements mainly in the public sector, insofar their member organisations have delegated bargaining power to the confederation (Akademikerne, 2019). AC typically takes part in government led tripartite consultations, but has recently experienced that they received no invitation to participate in the government led committee on the digital economy, The Disruption Council, which stands in sharp contrast to FH, which was a member of the board. Moreover, organising activities are primarily developed within individual member organisations, typically their subsections and in collaboration with union affiliated workplace representatives.

Financing

AC and its affiliated unions' main source of financing arise from membership fees that are based on a flat rate. Each affiliated member organisations autonomously decide the fee rate; and in 2019, the individual membership fee ranged from DKK 263 to DKK 1075 DKK per months, depending on the sectoral organisation under consideration. The more specific details of the components of AC's income sources are similar to many of their affiliated unions

unavailable, as they are some of the Danish trade unions that have decided not to publish their annual accounts.

Workplace representation

AC and their affiliated unions has a slightly weaker presence at the workplace level compared to other Danish trade unions under for example the umbrella confederation FH. This is particularly the case in the private sector, where AC and their affiliated unions have limited tradition for engaging in collective bargaining and signing collective agreements at sectoral and company level, respectively. Instead, individual bargaining is more pronounced among the academic groups at least in the private sector. A survey by Larsen et al. (2010) indicates that only 10 % of private companies and even fewer had a shop steward affiliated with one of the 25 unions under AC (Larsen et al. 2010).

Strategic orientation towards challenges facing the Danish IR-system

In recent years, AC has seen membership growth with some of the largest affiliated unions under AC such as IDA – (The Danish Society of Engineers) and DJØF (The Association for Lawyers and Economics) having nearly doubled their membership base, while others such as DM (The Danish association for Masters and Phds) have expanded their membership base by one third (Statistics Denmark, 2021; see also Figure 3 & 4). However, AC and its affiliated members have yet to utilise their full membership potential in that their recent membership growth rarely seems to match the growth in potential union members among academics on the Danish labour market, which is also acknowledged among AC and its affiliated member organisations according to the interviewees. To attract new member and thus continue their positive membership development, many unions under AC have initiated series of actions that aim at potential members, notably in the private sector and among students in higher

education. These actions include among others various campaigns and introductory sessions about the role and activities of Danish unions with set-up of ad hoc coffee shops at Danish universities and other higher education institutions. Also part of these actions have been union-led workshops on ways for academics to find employment after graduation. Their recent campaign encouraging SME's to recruit academics as well as the academic campaign on employment opportunities for academics (akademikerkampagnen) are examples of such initiatives (AC, 2021g).

Some of the main challenges AC and its affiliated unions face are the low levels of collective bargaining in the private sector, where less than 10 per cent of academics are covered by collective agreements (Larsen et al. 2010; Most of the companies covered by collective agreements tend as well to be old state owned companies that have been privatized in last few decades according to the interviewees). The reason for the low collective bargaining coverage among academics in the private sector is historical and mainly due to the Danish Employers Association (DA) refusal to negotiate collective agreements covering academics (Due et al. 1993). Other contributing factors seem to be that many academics prefer to negotiate their wages and working conditions individually with their employer and often have higher wages and social benefits than those offered in the collective agreements. Despite relative weaker bargaining position in the private sector, different unions under AC have successfully negotiated and signed company agreements covering for example freelancers in the media, the IT, the pharmaceutical and the creative sector (Larsen et al. 2018). In the public sector, AC and its affiliated unions hold a stronger bargaining position and have utilised their bargaining position to successfully push for expanding the public sector agreements to cover new and emerging forms of non-standard workers as well as strengthening their wages and social rights as part-time workers, temporary agency workers,



fixed-term workers, freelancers, digital platform workers, external consultants and entrepreneurs. Strengthening the social rights of the rising share of PhD students and Post docs at Danish universities have also formed part of these actions, most recently during the 2021 collective bargaining round in the public sector (AC, 2019; 2020; Hansen and Mailand 2021; DM, 2021). This strategic focus on various groups of traditional and emerging groups of non-standard workers is also reflected in AC's vision and action programme for the coming years. Other themes that figure prominently in AC's vision and work programme is to strengthen further training opportunities, reforms of the unemployment benefit system, notably a call for raising the unemployment benefit levels and adjustments of the existing unemployment benefit rules and regulations to accommodate freelancers and entrepreneurs (AC, 2020).

The Association of Managers and Executives (LH – Lederne)

LH was founded in 1991 and represents managerial staff in the public and private sector. LH comprises of three affiliated organisations: 1) Lederne that organises managers and executives, 2) Virksom that organises self-employed and 3) PRO that represents white-collar workers that individually negotiate their wages, terms and conditions (Lederne, 2019; Pro, 2019; Virksom, 2019). In 2019, LH had around 105,000 members as well as 20 local union branches placed throughout Denmark (Lederne, 2019). LH does not negotiate collective agreements in the traditional sense as their members are expected to individually negotiate their terms and conditions

with their employer due to the nature of their employment contract and position as managers and executives. Instead, LH has negotiated and signed a series of collaboration agreements that typically support the terms and conditions outlined in the employment contract of individual managers and executives. Such agreements reinforce among others that wages, working hours, pensions etc. are left to individual bargaining between individual managers and their employers. These collaboration agreements also stress that managers are without coverage from collective agreements covering ordinary employees. However, at the same time, the collaboration agreements grant managers the rights to further training as well as stipulate that they are covered by the same general rules and regulations regarding overtime payments and shift work that apply to other employees within the company (DI and LO, 2007; KL and LH, 2018; LH and Dansk Byggeri, 2017). LH also actively takes part in the various government led tripartite consultations and committees, where some recent examples are the tripartite consultations on further training and retainment of older workers, where also representatives from AC and FH took part (Lederne, 2018).

Financing

LH's main source of income arise from membership fees and other services, which accounted for approximately 92 per cent of the organisation's total income in 2017 (Lederne, 2018; Table 2). Other sources of income include financial returns from investments, savings and real estate as well as income from different subsidiaries (Table 2).

Table 1.2: LH's sources of income for the most recent years measured in million Danish kroner

	LH (year 2017)
Income from Membership fees + other services	247,6
Financial returns from investments	3,6
Income from subsidiaries	16,3
Total	267,3

Source: Lederne (2018)

Similar to other Danish trade unions, the membership fee is a monthly flat rate, which was 528 DKK per month in 2019 (Lederne, 2019). However, and unlike most other Danish trade unions, the membership fee of LH has remained unchanged in recent years, which seems to be down to a combination of factors. The organization has been able to keep costs at a feasible level and at the same time been able to attract new members (Lederne, 2018).

Workplace representation

LH has similar to AC a weaker workplace representation as only managers within the public sector can appoint shop stewards representing their interest and in these instances LH affiliated shop stewards have a similar role as other shop stewards representing other employee groups. In the private sector, so-called spoke-persons can be elected in companies with more than 10 managers or entrusted employees. The company has to approve the spokes-person and the work tasks of the spokes-person depends on the company as well as the members' expectation and wishes. Therefore, there may be significant variations from one company to another in the work tasks of individual spokes-persons. However, they are often expected to assist members in cases of dismissals, inform about further training, but the spokes-person cannot engage in company based bargaining without the mandate from their union confederation LH. It is also the the union confederation LH and not the spokes- person that assists in conflict resolution (Lederne, 2021b).

Strategic orientation vis a vis challenges arising from the Danish Industrial Relations systems

LH has experienced that their membership base has expanded in recent years. Some of the priorities of the organisation has been to strengthen their political platform vis-a-vis the political system with the aim to have a more central role in the policy-making processes and not least secure their members' interests in terms

of lobbying policy-makers and the government (Lederne, 2018). The organization has also developed a range of new services and thus expanded their membership packages to include among others private pension's schemes, health and accident insurances, unemployment benefit insurance schemes in in order to retain and attract new members (Lederne, 2018).

2.3 Membership trends

In Denmark, the trade union density has overall declined since the mid-1990s, where the union density was 73 per cent in 1995 compared to 63 per cent in 2018 (Ibsen et al. 2015; Statistics Denmark, 2021c- authors own calculations; figure 1.2). Around 69 per cent of the Danish female workforce were union members in 2018 compared to 60 per cent of male workers – numbers that have changed slightly since the mid-1990s, where particular the share of male union members has declined (Figure 2). Moreover, young people aged less than 25 years and workers with another ethnic background than Danish are less likely to be union members. The Danish trade unions appear increasingly to struggle to attract these employee groups as the union density among these groups has decreased more rapidly than other employee groups on the Danish labour market (Figure 2). A series of studies also indicate that atypical workers (defined as temporary agency workers, fixed-term workers, part-time workers with less than 15 weekly working hours, freelancers and digital platform workers) are less likely to be union members. These employee groups are also more likely to work in companies without collective agreement coverage and workplace representation (Scheur, 2011; 2017; Larsen, 2011; Ilsøe and Madsen, 2017; Larsen et al. 2019).

It is particularly the trade union confederation LO and its affiliated trade unions that have lost most members, while other peak organisations such as AC, FTF and AC have witnessed a growing membership base (Figure 3). In this context, it is

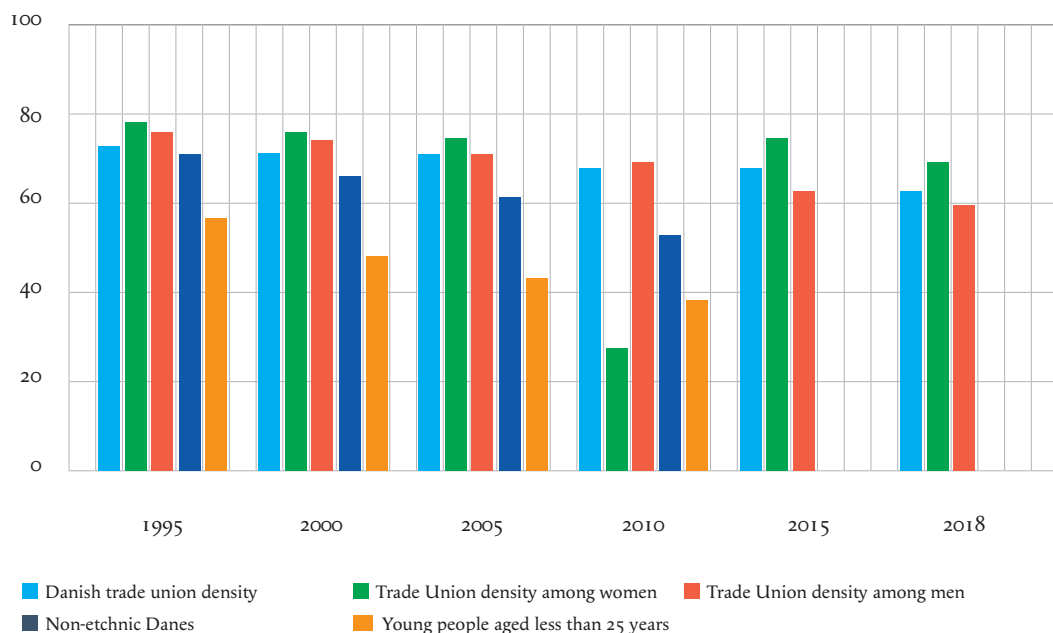


Figure 1.2 | The Union density on the Danish labour market as a percentage of all employed (1995-2018)
 Source: Due et al. 2010; Ibsen et al. 2011; 2015; Statistics Denmark (2021c) – authors own calculations based on the model developed by Ibsen et al. 2011 to ensure comparable data. Note numbers for ethnicity and young people are for the years 1994, 2004 and 2008 – more recent figures are unavailable.

important to note that around 2012, there was a data break, where Danish trade unions such as LO and their affiliated unions started to calculate their membership base differently by only including active members on the labour market, which partly explains the rapid decline around 2011. Likewise, the so-called yellow or alternative unions have more than tripled their membership base in the same period. However, these unions have not been able to attract all the members that LO and its affiliated unions have lost and thus the overall union density has declined (Figure 1.3).

When moving beyond the general aggregated data and exploring the recent membership trends among individual trade unions, wide inter-variations exist within the Danish trade union movement even among distinct unions affiliated with the same trade union confederations (Figure 4). HK, 3F and FOA are the three largest unions under the former LO, while the Union for Nurses, BUPL and the Teachers Union organise most members under the former FTF. The three largest unions under the trade union confederation AC is DJØF, DM and IDA, while KRIFA – The

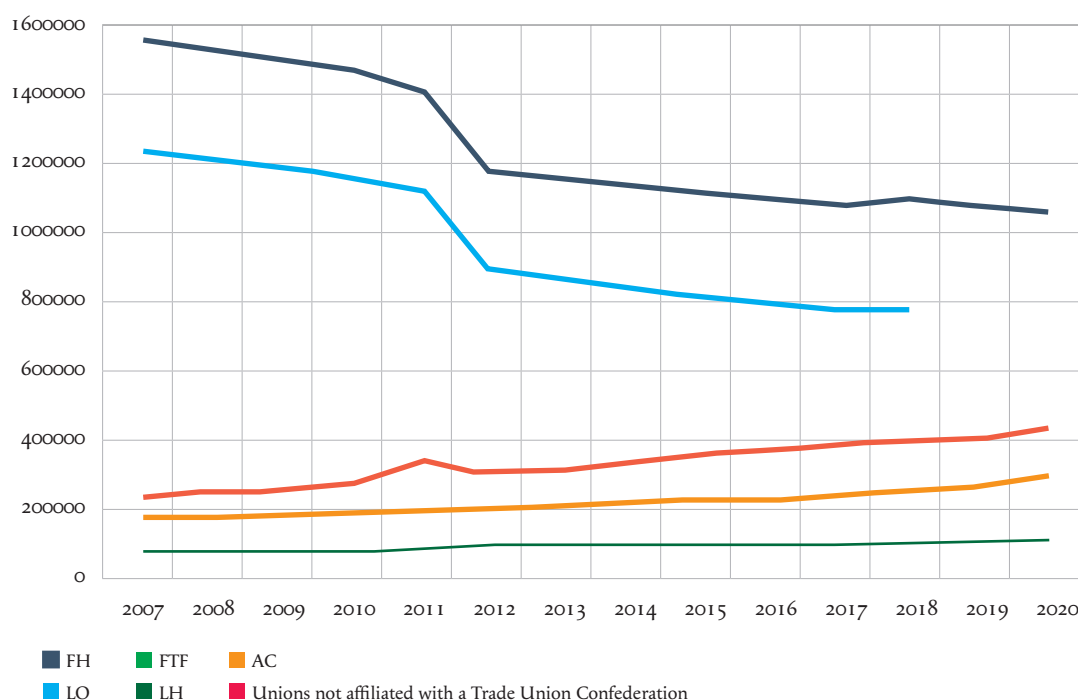


Figure 1.3 | Recent membership trends among the main trade union federations in Denmark and unions not affiliated with a trade union confederation in actual numbers (2007-2020)
 Source: Statistics Denmark (2021c) Note the rapid decline between 2011 and 2012 is not due to a sudden membership loss, but due to changes in the way union density is measured by Statistics Denmark, where only employed people are included after 2012.

Christian trade union movement – is the largest union not affiliated with any peak organisation. These ten unions have experienced very different developments in their membership base since 2007. For example, trade unions like 3F and HK have lost more than one in three members; and this trend particularly accelerated around 2010 and continued up until 2020, but at a slower pace. Likewise, FOA and The Teachers Union have been affected by membership loss in recent years, but less so than HK and 3F (Figure 4). By contrast, membership growth has been the main trend among the other seven trade unions listed in figure 4. It is particularly the trade unions organising academics and highly skilled that have expanded rapidly during the last decade. For example, DJØF and IDA has nearly doubled their number of members since 2007, while DM has expanded their membership base with more than a third (figure 1.4). In addition, the largest alternative union – KRIFA – organises an increasing share of Danish employees, even if their experienced growth rate is slightly lower than among the academic unions. Likewise, the Union

for Nurses and BUPL have also expanded their membership base, but at a much slower pace than both the academic unions and KRIFA (Figure 1.4).

Reasons for membership decline

A number of studies aim to explain the recent membership decline among Danish trade unions. Some of the explanations provided in the literature include among others the shift in the occupational structure on the Danish labour market. Sectors representing the strongholds of the Danish collective bargaining model with strong traditions for high union densities such as manufacturing and construction employ less people than in the past, while less densely regulated sectors in terms of collective bargaining, union densities and workplace representation such as private services have expanded in recent years (Ilsøe and Madsen, 2017b). Other factors that may also influence the recent trends in union membership include among others various labour market reforms. In 2002, the former Danish (liberal) led government liberalised the Danish Ghent-system and as a result, employees

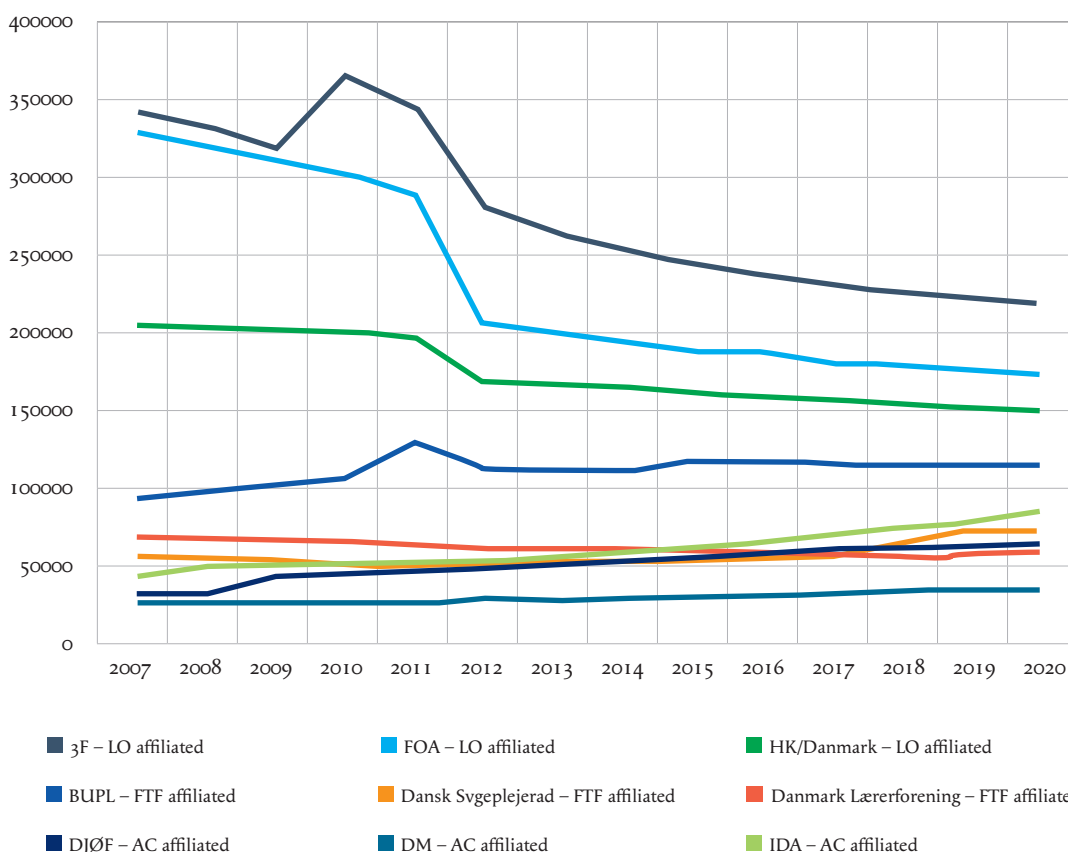


Figure 1.4 | Recent membership trend among the three largest unions affiliated with LO, FTF and AC in actual numbers (2007-2020) Source: Statistics Denmark (2021c). Note the rapid decline between 2011 and 2012 is not due to a sudden membership lose, but due to changes in the way union density is measured where only employed people are included after 2012.

no longer need to join a specific trade union to be covered by an unemployment benefit scheme (Kjellberg and Ibsen, 2016: 291). The same liberal leaning Danish government also decided to introduce a threshold for tax exemptions for union membership in 2010, whereby employees no longer had the rights to deduct their full union membership fees on their tax declaration, especially if the fee exceeded the threshold. In 2015, the social-democratic led government in office increased the threshold for tax exemptions for union fees from 3,000 DKK to 6,000 DKK per year (corresponding to D403 to €806 per year). However, some union members, especially those belonging to for example unions affiliated with FH continue to be unable to deduct their full union membership as their fees typically exceed the statutory threshold for tax deduction (Larsen, 2019). By contrast, many academic unions and especially the alternative unions often offer lower membership fees that are within the threshold for Danish tax exemptions, and thus their members are able to fully deduct their union fees on their tax declaration.

The European Court of Human Rights' ruling from 2006, where the Court deemed it unlawful that some companies force employees to be a member of a specific union also seem to have influenced the recent trends in Danish union memberships. This ruling appears to have benefitted, notably the so-called alternative unions as the ruling enabled them to expand into companies where the traditional trade unions used to dominate and in many places continue to be the dominant trade unions. However, different studies indicate that nearly one in ten companies informally continue to apply closed shop agreements and negotiate local agreements that favour union members (Larsen et al. 2010; Ilsøe, 2011). In addition, the rapid growth in alternative unions seems to be closely linked to the fact that they offer lower union fees compared to most of the traditional unions. In this context, a number of studies indicate that

the main reason why some employees opt for the so-called alternative unions or even choose not to be a member of a trade union at all is due to high union fees. Some may also opt for non-union membership as they are dissatisfied with the union services offered, while others have for political reasons chosen not to be union members (Navrbjerg and Larsen, 2011; Toubøl et al. 2015). Examples also exist of people, notably young people that tend to be unaware of the trade unions and their activities and for these reasons are not union members. Others fail to identify themselves with the occupational-based unions because they often change jobs of work on the margins of the labour market and therefore have decided not to join a union (Larsen et al. 2018).

Although many of the larger Danish sector unions have experienced membership loss, there are also a number of unions notably those under the umbrella of AC that organise academics and highly skilled that have seen a rapid membership growth. This positive membership development among AC and its affiliated unions may be attributed to a variety of factors. These include among others the recent union merger between LO and FTF into the new trade union confederation FH, where some unions decided to leave FH and instead join AC (Andersen and Hansen, 2019). Likewise, the recent public sector bargaining rounds in 2018 and 2021 with their series of industrial conflicts may have positively contributed to the expanding membership base of AC, as it is especially around 2018 that an increasing share of academics join AC and its affiliated unions (Arnholtz and Navrbjerg, 2021; Mailand and Hansen, 2018). Likewise, the changing workforce composition with an increasing share of workers with higher educational backgrounds compared to past generations seem to play a role as to the positive membership development experienced by most of the unions organising academics and highly skilled workers.

2.4 Summing up

The Danish labour market is changing. Some recent changes include a shift in the occupational structure on the Danish labour market, rising numbers of atypical workers particular in some sectors as well as a series of labour market reforms. These labour market reforms have not only tightened the eligibility of statutory social benefits, but also increasingly linked entitlements to past employment records and number of weekly working hours even if recent reforms adopted during the Corona crisis have relaxed the close ties to former employment records and broadened the scope of Danish social and employment protection. Different labour market reforms have also liberalized the traditional Danish Ghent-system and tightened employees' rights to tax exemptions regarding their trade union fees. These reforms, along with recent rulings from the European Court of Human Rights, seem to have influenced

in various ways the recent trends in Danish union memberships. The historical strong unions such as those affiliated with LO and less so FTF have lost members since the mid-1990s, while the academic unions, the alternative unions and some white-collar unions under the trade union confederation FTF have experienced a rapid growth as their membership base has expanded substantially especially throughout the first decade of the new Millennium. However, these unions have not been able to attract and organise all the members that LO and its affiliated unions have lost and thus the overall union density has declined in Denmark. Distinct trade unions have developed a series of strategies to tackle their recent membership decline. Some Danish trade unions such as 3F, HK and DM have been at the fore and developed novel measures to attract and retain new members – aspects we explore in greater detail in the second part of the report. ♦

Third part

Strategies to attract new members, make them stable and tackle membership decline

In Denmark, the organising activities by Danish trade unions to attract and retain members typically take place within individual sector unions rather than at confederal level. In this context, the organising activities tend to be developed in close collaboration between the individual sector union, their subgroups and different local union branches and affiliated workplace representatives (Navrbjerg et al., 2010). This is the very reason why our locus of analysis is on sector unions rather than the Danish Trade Union Confederation in this chapter. More precisely, the second part of this report explores the recent organising strategies by three purposefully selected Danish trade unions: 3F (The United Federation of Danish Workers), HK (The Union of Commercial and Clerical Employees in Denmark) and DM (The Danish Association of Masters and PhDs). These three unions are not only illustrative examples of Danish sector unions that organise distinct occupational groups (low-skilled,

medium-skilled and high-skilled labour), but they are also three sector unions that have seen different membership trends and have responded differently to retain members and attract new potential members during the last two decades (see also chapter 1: figure 1.4). To examine these unions' recent organising strategies and actions, we draw on interviews with key stakeholders and triangulate the interview material with desk research of secondary material such as union pamphlets, policy documents, position papers, collective agreements, the selected union's vision and work programmes as well as relevant research studies.

The chapter is organised as follows. Firstly we briefly introduce the three sector unions examined, including their organisational structure, membership base and the recent membership trend for each of the three selected sector unions including potential factors explaining recent trends and changes seen. Part of this chapter is as well a brief overview of the union

strategies and actions to increase membership rates and what paths, they pursue. In the third part of this chapter, we briefly examine how these three sector unions assess the effects of their recent actions and strategies on their recent membership trends.

3.1 Introducing the sector unions 3F, HK and DM and their recent membership trends and changes

3F and HK are the two largest sector unions in Denmark and they are affiliated with the Danish trade union confederation FH. DM is a smaller Danish sector union and is affiliated with trade union confederation AC that organizes academics and other highly skilled workers. These three sector unions differ in their institutional set-up and they have experienced very different membership trends in recent years – aspects we explore in the following sections, starting with the sector trade union 3F, then HK and DM.

3F – The United Federation of Danish Workers

3F is the largest Danish trade union with more than 218,922 members in 2020, corresponding to 8 per cent of all employed on the Danish labour market (authors own calculations based on Statistics Denmark, 2021c; 2021d). 3F organises unskilled and low skilled blue-collar workers in almost all sectors on the Danish labour market with the main sectors being manufacturing, construction, transport, private services, agriculture and fishing industries as well as the public sector. 3F has thus a highly diverse membership base. However, while all workers with employee status can join 3F, this is not the case for solo-self-employed as they are considered small businesses by 3F. 3F is affiliated with the Danish trade union confederation FH and consists of six subgroups or sub-sections covering each of the aforementioned sectors. 3F has more than 65 local union branches located throughout the country as well as nearly 4300 shop stewards

and 4300 union affiliated health and safety representatives, who represent the interests of the union and its members at workplace level (3F, 2021m). 3F is responsible for more than 194 collective agreements that are negotiated at sectoral level and 7.846 company agreements covering more than 30.000 companies (3F, 2021). The 65 local union branches act as autonomous entities with their own democratic structures and statutes and they have, similar to shop stewards, a bargaining mandate to negotiate and sign collective agreements on behalf of workers (Larsen, 2019). Both the local union branches and shop stewards also tend to be actively involved in developing and implementing the various union organising activities as well as servicing individual members (Navrbjerg et al. 2010). In fact, most organising activities by 3F are typically broadly outlined in their vision and work programme that are formally decided at the trade union congress that takes place every three years; and then further developed and transposed into specific actions within the six distinct subgroups of 3F, where the affiliated local union branches and workplace responsibilities are actively involved in the process (3F, 2019a; 2019b; Interviews with union representatives). There are also examples of cross-cutting organising activities, where all six subsectors of 3F come together and discuss and coordinate joint initiatives such as campaigns, research studies or new types of membership packages to attract new potential members (3F, 2019b). In fact, 3F has a specific confederal organising unit that offers advice and assistance to the individual sub-sections and local union branches related to various organising activities. In this context, it is also important to emphasise that the approach towards organising tends to vary across the distinct sub-sections and local union branches of 3F according to the interviewees. Thus there exist important intra-organisational differences as to the individual sub-sections and local union branches' adopted organising strategies and activities, although 3F



has outlined an overall joint strategy and vision in their three year work programme with the most recent covering the period from 2019-2022 (3F, 2019a; see also section 2.2).

Recent membership trends

Most union members of 3F typically hold a full-time position and are men (74 per cent), although there in recent years has been a slight shift from the traditional open-ended full-time position towards a more diverse membership base. An increasing share of members as well as potential members work as temporary agency workers, fixed-term workers, solo-self-employed, posted workers or part-time workers with few or no guaranteed working hours, notably in sectors such as private services, transport, construction and agriculture (Larsen and Ilsøe, 2020b; 3F, 2020). In recent years, 3F has lost more than one in three members; and this trend particularly accelerated around 2010 and continued up until 2020, but at a slower pace (Figure 2.1).

There are great variations as to the union density within the sectors that 3F organise. The union density is somewhat higher in sectors such as construction, manufacturing, transport and the public sector than private services and agriculture, fishing and forestry (3F, 2021q). Recent studies also indicate that the union density is typically

lower among women, young people, migrant workers and non-standard workers such as part-time workers, fixed-term workers, temporary agency workers and solo-self-employed working within the sectors and occupations that 3F typically organise on the Danish labour market (Larsen and Ilsøe, 2020b; Felbo-Kolding, 2018; Arnholtz and Andersen, 2016) In this context, recent membership figures from 3F suggest that the share of migrant workers having joined 3F has slightly increased in recent years, while 3F continues to struggle to attract young people and non-standard workers, notably those with few working hours (3F 2021p; Toubøl et al. 2015; Mailand and Larsen, 2020).

Reasons for membership trends and changes

The shrinking membership base experienced by 3F is often explained in the literature by changes in the occupational structure on the Danish labour market, where an increasing share of workers are university graduates compared to past generations (Toubøl et al. 2015). The union representatives interviewed also pointed to these structural changes when trying to explain 3F's recent membership loss. However, they also emphasised technological advancements and increased outsourcing as contributing factors, where different low skilled jobs have been outsourced to foreign entities, made obsolete or

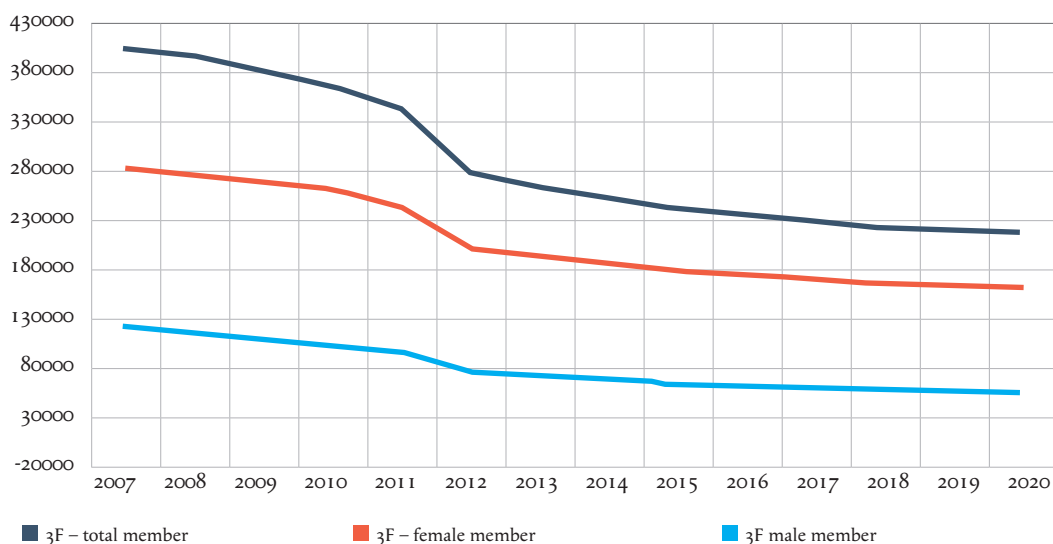


Figure 2.1 | Recent development in membership of 3F according to gender, measured in actual numbers (2007-2020)
Source: Statistics Denmark (2021a)
Note the rapid decline between 2011 and 2012 is not due to a sudden membership loss, but due to changes in the way union density is measured where only employed people are included after 2012.

replaced with new job tasks. Recent legal rulings by the European Human Rights Court that deem closed shop agreements illegal, together with the liberalisation of the Ghent system and other legal changes such as lowering the threshold for tax exemption for union fees, also seem to be contributing factors to changing Danish trade union landscape with 3F often losing members to the so-called alternative or yellow unions (Ibsen and Kjellberg, 2016; Interview with union representatives, 2019; see also chapter 1). The alternative and yellow unions typically offer lower union fees than 3F and their union fees tend to be below the upper threshold for Danish tax exemptions. However, the alternative unions have limited traditions of collective bargaining and thus rely on other unions' bargaining successes when it comes to secure their members wage and working conditions. In Denmark, all workers – union members and non-union members are typically covered by collective agreements, if a company has signed one or more collective agreement (Larsen, 2019).

The rise in both traditional and emerging forms of non-standard work and the changing demographic on the Danish labour market were also highlighted by the interviewees as contributing factors to recent membership trends and changes. Non-standard workers and young people are less likely to join unions and they tend to be overrepresented in some of the sectors that 3F organizes such as private services (Larsen and Ilsøe, 2021; Scheur, 2017; Toubøl et al. 2015). For example, one in two employees are non-standard workers in the Danish hotel and restaurant sector compared to nearly one in three in the industrial cleaning and social care sectors. By contrast, full-time work continues to prevail in Danish transport, construction, agriculture and manufacturing, ranging from 90% of all employed in manufacturing to 80% in agriculture, forestry and the fishing industries (Larsen and Ilsøe, 2020). These sectors are not only the seven main sectors, where 3F organizes low-skilled and

skilled workers on the Danish labour market, but they are also some of areas on the Danish labour market, which have seen a growth in both traditional and emerging groups of non-standard work such as subcontracted work, posted work, platform work and novel forms of solo self-employment and zero-hour contracts (Rasmussen et al. 2021a; Rasmussen and Hedenus, 2021; Bach et al. 2021; Ilsøe and Larsen, 2020). In this context, research suggests that the union density is particularly low among the emerging groups of non-standard workers such as platform workers, temporary agency workers, workers with zero-hour contracts as well as migrant and posted workers (Ilsøe et al. 2017; Ibsen et al. 2015; Bach et al. 2020; Scheuer, 2017; Arnholtz 2021). In this context, the interviewees also stressed that many workers had limited, if no knowledge of Danish trade unions, their work, role and services– aspects that echo other recent Danish and comparative studies on non-standard and emerging forms of work (Larsen et al. 2018; Ilsøe and Madsen, 2017; Arnholtz and Hansen, 2013; Larsen and Ilsøe, 2021).

HK – The Union of Commercial and Clerical Employees in Denmark

HK is with its 173,302 members the second largest Danish sector trade union, corresponding to 6 per cent of all employed on the Danish labour market (Authors own calculations based on Statistics Denmark, 2021c; 2021d). HK organises a broad group of workers, ranging from unskilled and skilled workers to employees with higher educational backgrounds such as accountants, translators and IT specialists. Unlike 3F, freelancers and solo-self-employed can also be union members of HK (HK, 2021e). HK is – similar to 3F- affiliated with the Danish Trade Union Confederation FH, and HK comprises of four broad sub-sectors: local government, the state sector, retail and other private sectors. HK private sector is the largest sub-sector with 66.618 member followed by HK local government with



around 44.000 members (HK, 2020d). HK has seven local union branches located throughout Denmark, where each local branch has sections representing all four subsectors. HK also has more than 2.337 affiliated shop stewards, more than 2.906 health and safety representatives and more than 250 affiliated educational ambassadors, who represent the interests of the union and its members at workplace level (HK-Handel, 2001b; HK-state, 2021b; HK-kommunal, 2020b; HK-private, 2019b). HK is responsible for several collective agreements that are negotiated at sector level as well as more than 3.000 collective company agreements (HK-Handel, 2001b; HK-state, 2021b; HK-kommunal, 2020b; HK-private, 2019b). The local union branches and shop stewards affiliated to HK have – similar to 3F – a bargaining mandate to negotiate and sign local company agreements, but unlike 3F there exist bargaining restrictions on HK and its local union branches, if they fall under the spell of what is often referred to as the so-called 50 per cent rule. The so-called 50 per cent rule only applies to HK affiliated unions in the private sector and stipulates that unless 50 % or more of the relevant employees at a particular workplace are union members of HK, a collective agreement cannot be negotiated nor signed. In case HK and its counterpart has successfully negotiated and signed a sectoral agreement, it will not apply for workplaces, where HK organises less than 50 per cent of the relevant employees (HK, 2020b). More specifically, and in other words, this so-called “50 per cent rule” entails that the collective agreement is only evoked, if more than 50 per cent of all workers at a particular workplace are union members of HK. Besides their active engagement in collective bargaining, HK’s local union branches and their affiliated shop stewards are also actively involved in developing and implementing the various organising activities to retain and attract new members (Navrbjerg et al. 2010; HK, 2020c). In this context, the overall strategy for HK’s organising activities are typically listed in HK’s vision and work programme that is

adopted at the trade union congress, which takes place every three years. These visions are then further developed and transposed into specific actions within the four individual sub-sectors/ groups of HK (local government, the state sector, retail and other private sectors) and the local union branches. However, there also are examples of cross-cutting organising activities which are also reflected in the main work programme for HK. For example increasing the union density, expanding the collective bargaining coverage and develop novel ways to improve members’ service satisfaction and loyalty are two of the four main strategic areas of action for HK in their most recent work programmes (HK-Denmark, 2021a; HK-Denmark, 2021b).

Recent Membership trends

HK organises workers across a broad spectrum of occupations within the public and private sectors. Most union members of HK are typically women (77 per cent), and although most members hold full-time open-ended contracts, an increasing share of HK’s members and potential members hold contracts other than the full-time open-ended contract (Statistics Denmark, 2020; Eurostat, 2020d). For example, there has been an increase in freelancers, external consultants, solo-self-employed, part-time workers with few or no guaranteed working hours as well as temporary employed, notably in sectors such as graphic design, gaming, translation and the creative industry, which are sectors and occupations that HK organises (Eurostat, 2020d; Larsen et al. 2018). Recent membership figures also indicate that HK has lost more than one in three members in the last decade and this trend particularly accelerated around 2010 and has continued at a slower pace up until 2018. In 2018, there has been a slight change, where HK turned a corner and experienced a slight membership increase among some of the occupational groups they organise such as dentist assistants, laboratory technicians, and IT staff in the public sector (Figure 2.2.; HK-

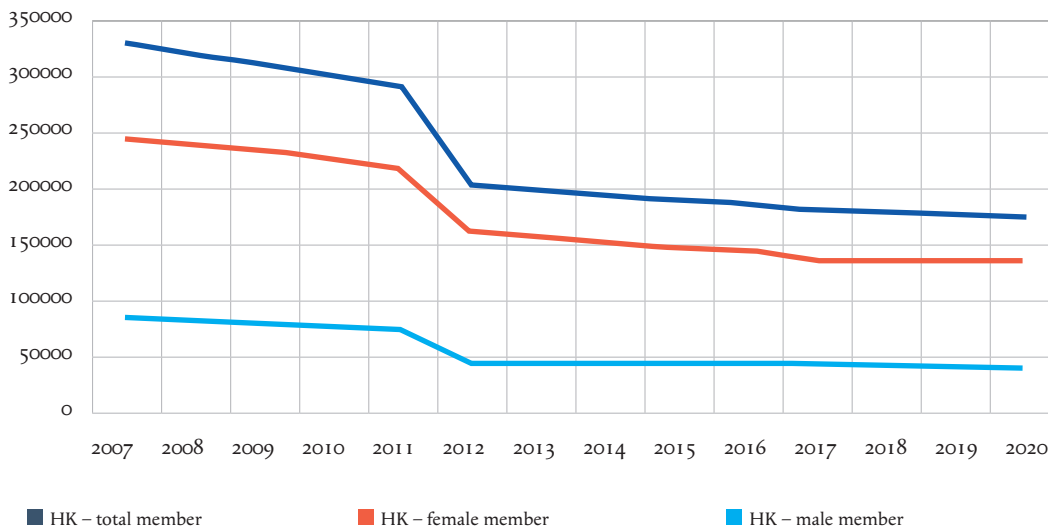


Figure 2.2 | Recent development in membership of HK-Denmark according to gender, measured in actual numbers (2007-2020)
 Source: Statistics Denmark (2021);
 Note the rapid decline between 2011 and 2012 is not due to a sudden membership loss, but due to changes in the way union density is measured where only employed people are included after 2012.

kommunal, 2021b; HK- HK stat, 2021b; HK-privat 2019b). In other sectors such as manufacturing and graphic design, the membership trend continues to slightly decline and the same goes for overall the membership trend of HK (figure 2.2).

There are great variations across distinct groups of workers as to their likelihood of being union members of HK. HK, similar to 3F, struggles to attract young people below 30 years and migrant workers, while there is an overrepresentation of older workers among HK's union members (HK-Denmark, 2018b; 2021b). Also non-standard workers and migrant workers working within the sectors and occupations organized by HK seem less likely to join HK according to Danish union representatives (Interview: HK, 2020; 2021; Toubøl et al. 2015).

Reasons for membership trends and changes

HK has similar to 3F experienced membership decline since the mid-1990s and some of the contributing factors listed in the literature are fairly similar for the two sector unions such as the changing occupational structure, technological advancements, increased outsourcing, recent court rulings deeming closed shop agreements illegal and the liberalization of the Danish Ghent system as described in chapter 2. For example, in Danish retail, one of the largest Danish retail chains had strong traditions of closed shop

agreements compelling all workers to join HK. However, this practice was abandoned with the European Human Rights Court ruling against such agreements, which subsequently led to HK-retail losing members (Ibsen et al. 2012: 89f; HK-Handel, 2021b).

Recent demographic changes may also contribute to HK's shrinking membership base. HK has an overrepresentation of older workers of 55+ years among its members and they are retiring in these years, while HK struggles to attract younger people. Other contributing factors to HK's membership decline is as well that fewer young people are enrolled as apprentices as part of their education and the number of administrative positions has been reduced in the public sector due to austerity measures, financial cutbacks and outsourcing (HK-kommunal, 2020b; HK-privat, 2019b; HK-state, 2021b). In addition, the rise in traditional and emerging forms of non-standard work seem to contribute to lower union densities in the sectors and the occupations, which HK organizes. For example, non-standard work has increasingly replaced the traditional full-time position in sectors such as graphic design and printing, which have historically been some of the strong holds of the Danish trade union movement with very high union density (Jørgensen, 1999; Grelle, 1999). However, today HK organizes less one in three workers in these sectors (Larsen et al. 2018).



Although HK has lost more than one in three members since the mid-1990s, the figures also suggest that there has been a slight reversal of the membership loss since 2018. This may be attributed to the public sector bargaining round in 2018, which attracted much media attention due to the threat of lockout and strikes by both sides of industry. The 2018 bargaining round thus gave HK and other public sector unions a platform to draw attention to their role and value as bargaining parties (HK-Denmark, 2021b; Mailand and Hansen, 2018). The sub-groups of HK representing workers in the state, regional and local government sector experienced subsequently and for the first time since the mid-1990s a membership boost during Spring 2018, where the public sector bargaining round took place. However, while the subgroup of HK representing the state sector succeeded in continuing expanding their membership base, the subgroups of HK organizing administrative staff in the regional and the local government sectors were unable keep up the momentum of 2018 and has since then seen a slight membership decline (HK-Kommunal, 2020b; HK-Denmark, 2021b; HK-stat, 2021b). Also the recent Corona crisis and the collective bargaining round in the private sector in 2020 appears to have boosted the membership base of HK, notably in the private sector among dental assistants and freelancers. In this context, HK nation-wide organizing campaign for improving wage and working conditions among dental assistants also seem to have been a contributing factor to their expanding membership base in this area of the labour market (HK-Denmark, 2021b; HK-private, 2021b; Interviews with HK representatives, 2020; 2021).

DM – The Danish Association of Masters and PhDs

DM organises around 36,504 workers with an educational background in natural sciences, IT, Humanities and social science, corresponding to 1,3 per cent of all employed on the Danish

labour market (Authors own calculations based on Statistics Denmark, 2021c; 2021d). Freelancers and solo self-employed can similar to workers with employee status join DM as union members, whereby DM similar to HK differs from 3F, where solo self-employed cannot join 3F. DM is affiliated with the trade union confederation AC and is the third largest sector union under AC. DM comprises of five sub-groups (public sector, self-employed and private sector, science, students, managers and pensioners). DM has a slightly different structure as 3F and HK as DM does not have local union branches, but has instead seven national-wide clubs and different local union led clubs at individual workplaces. However, it is only some sub-groups of DM that have traditions for such nation-wide – or local clubs (DM 2021b; DM, 2019). In addition, DM has around 1,500 shop stewards and health and safety representative who are present in more than 500 workplaces as well as various network for members (DM, 2021a). DM is responsible for more than 202 collective agreements that are negotiated at sectoral or confederal level in the public sector or primarily at company level in the private sector (DM, 2021c). Although their collective bargaining coverage is typically higher in the public sector, their collective agreements have reportedly a positive knock on effect on the wage and working conditions in areas of the labour market without collective bargaining coverage. Both DM's public and private collective agreements tend to be used as a sort of bench mark by workers and unorganised employers according to the union representatives of DM and recent research studies (Andersen et al. 2021; Hansen, 2020). The nation-wide clubs and local workplace clubs have, similar to shop stewards affiliated with DM, a bargaining mandate to negotiate and sign local company/workplace agreements in both the public and private sector. However, in the private sector there is a strong tradition that wage negotiations take place individually between the academics and their employers. Moreover,

there is also a long tradition that other aspects of academics' working conditions are negotiated individually with their employer, notably in areas without collective agreement coverage, although the Danish Salaried Employees Act regulates important working conditions for academics and other higher skilled workers in both the private and public sector. Besides their involvement in collective bargaining, DM's different club and affiliated workplace representatives are also involved in initiating, developing and implementing different organising activities to retain and attract new members. In fact, one of the four key ambitions in the vision and work programme of DM for the coming years is to continue to attract more members and ensure that the organisation remains relevant to its members by developing among others innovative and grass-root organising initiatives (DM, 2019).

Recent membership trend

DM has seen a rapid membership growth in recent years and has expanded its membership base with more than one third between 2007 and 2020, notably after 2013 (figure 2.3). It is mainly the share of women that has increased rapidly in recent years, while the membership increase for men has been more modest (figure 2.3). DM can be considered a female dominated union with 65 per cent of their members being women and

in some of DM's sub-groups the share of women is slightly higher (Statistics Denmark, 2021c; Interview with DM union representative, 2020).

Reasons for membership trends and changes

The expanding membership base experienced by DM and other unions representing academics and highly skilled is often explained in the literature by changes in the occupational structure on the Danish labour market (Ibsen et al. 2015). An increasing large share of workers attain university degrees and this combined with the fact that DM has been fairly proactive at the universities and other higher education institutions seem to be some of the contributing factors to DM's recent membership growth according to the interviewees. Other contributing factors to DM's expanding membership base may also be the recent public sector bargaining rounds which have attracted increased media attention during the last few bargaining rounds in 2018 and 2021. This increased attention was largely down to threats of industrial action and organised demonstrations by the public sector employees to improve wage and working conditions in the public sector (Mailand and Hansen, 2018; 2021). This has reportedly raised the awareness among potential members as to the importance of trade unions and their roles in improving wage and working conditions. Also the financial crisis in

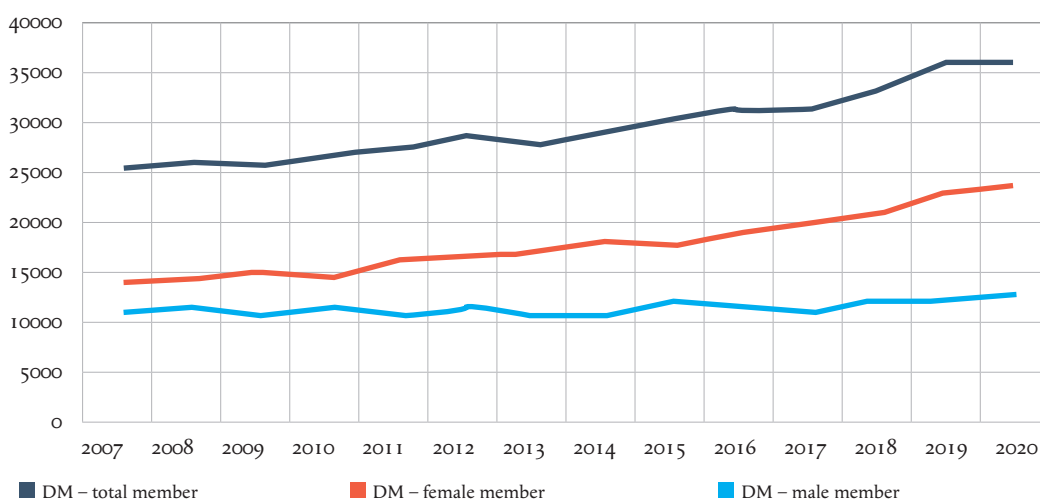


Figure 2.3 | Recent development in membership of HK-Denmark according to gender, measured in actual numbers (2007-2020)

2008-2009 as well as the most recent Corona-crisis may have boosted the membership rate, notably as DM and other unions representing academics and highly skilled reportedly have experienced that potential members join these unions to seek help and advice when faced with rapid changing economic cycles that impact their working life in different ways. In this context, it is also important to emphasise that although DM together with the other Danish sector unions representing academics and highly skilled have seen a rapid expansion of their membership base, they do not appear to have been able to utilise the full potential of their recent “window of opportunity” to attract new members: Their recent membership growth seems to rarely match the growth in potential union members among academics and highly skilled on the Danish labour market – aspects DM and the other unions representing academics and other highly skilled workers also are aware of according to the interviewees (Interview: DM 2019; 2020; AC, 2019; Psykologforeningen, 2020).

The recent changes in the Danish workforce composition (notably in some sectors such as academia, the creative industry and among high-skilled professionals in the IT and science sectors) towards increased shares of non-standard work may also have impacted the recent membership trends and changes according to the interviewees. For example, non-standard work has become more widespread in the creative industry and it is one of the sectors, where DM organizes academics. Recent figures suggest that 13 percent of all employed in the Danish creative sector are fixed-term workers, 30 per cent hold part-time jobs with less than 15 hours per week and 14 per cent are freelancers or solo-self-employed (Rasmussen et al. 2021; Eurostat, 2021g). Also in sectors such as higher education and in the sector covering professionals, science and IT are non-standard work not only more common than just two decades ago, but these sectors are also areas of the Danish labour market, where DM organizes

and represents different occupational groups of academics (Rasmussen et al. 2021; DM, 2021b). The changing employment practices may thus be a contributing factor as to why DM seemingly struggle to utilize their full member potential as non-standard workers similar to academics in general are less likely to join a union, often for different reasons (Larsen et al. 2018).

3.2 Strategies and actions put in place to increase membership – 3F, HK and DM

Attracting and retaining members is a key concern among all three selected sector unions (3F, HK and DM) and it is one of their key goals listed in their individual vision and action programmes for the coming years (3F, 2019a; HK-Denmark, 2021a; DM, 2019a). 3F, HK and DM have thus initiated a series of strategies and actions to attract new and retain members. In this section, we briefly examine their overall strategies and approaches towards organising as well as list examples of recent union led actions and initiatives.

3F – recent organising strategies and actions

Overall strategies and approaches

3F’s overall strategies and approaches towards organising are outlined in different policy documents such as their vision plan (initially from 2016, but renewed in 2018), organising plan (initially from 2017, but renewed with a new action plan in June 2021) and their recent vision and action programme entitled “work and policy principles” covering the period 2019-2022. In their latest vision and work programme one of the 17 policy visions is to “work for high union densities on the labour market with focus on retention, recruitment and visibility” (3F 2019a: 6; 2019b). More specifically, their overarching organising strategy comprises of four broad initiatives that besides the *vision plan* and *organising plan* also include *strategic organising tools* and *targeted organising activities*. In this context, 3F’s *vision plan* is their long-term strategy

that aims to reinforce 3F's role "as strong and professional organisation which through political statements, strength and size seeks influence". Part of this vision is to strengthen 3F's organising efforts by developing the different initiatives based on facts and knowledge about potential members as well as agree to a series of joint and fairly broad organising initiatives that will apply to the individual sub-groups and local union branches affiliated with 3F. The broad organising efforts listed in the vision plan include among others retainment of members that have not yet paid their union fees, strengthen the visibility of 3F at vocational schools and the set-up of a call centre that on a daily basis contact potential new members, new students and graduates (3F 2019b). With respect to the *organising plan* and the more recent and renewed *2021 action plan*, 3F and its different sub-groups and local union branches agreed in 2017 that each individual union branch would develop their own tailor made organising plan that is expected to be institutionally embedded in the individual union branches and their various activities. The overall aim with the organising plan was to develop a joint strategy for increasing the union density within each of 3F's six subgroups as well as strengthen the workers' collective through setting a series of explicit targets. These targets include among others to increase the retention rate of new members from 76 per cent to 86 per cent, attract more students and graduates as members as well as encourage more members of the unemployment insurance fund to join 3F (3F, 2019b; 2019a). The recently renewed and adopted *2021 action plan* on recruitment and retention broadens and strengthens this focus by explicitly developing policies on both organising new members and the membership retention as an integrated part of 3F's organising efforts and overall aims. The 2021 action plan also emphasises the exchange of best practices as to which organising efforts that appear more successful than others along with targeted organising actions for low density sectors.

Additionally, the 2021 action plan also aims to strengthen the relations between 3F and its members through regular contact with individual members, the introduction of a welcome package for new members, along with initiatives to develop the organising efforts and skills among workplace representatives and ways to improve union services on further training (3F, 2021a). When it comes to *strategic organising tools*, the recent efforts involve the set-up of the strategic tools "3F in numbers" and the CRM-system for listing organising activities, which are joint databases that provide data on the recent membership trends and list the different organising initiatives, respectively. These databases enable 3F and its affiliated branches to follow the recent membership development as well as assess the effects of their different organising efforts (3F, 2019b). With respect to the *targeted organising activities*, these comprise of various nation-wide joint organising initiatives that aim to involve several local union branches and sub-groups. The targeted organising activities include various nation-wide campaigns often targeting specific sectors, workplaces or worker groups, and aim not only to expand the membership base of 3F, but also aim to raise the wage and working conditions for these groups through greater awareness of their labour rights and expanding the collective agreement coverage on the Danish labour market. In fact, the recent vision and action programme entitled "work and policy principles" covering the period 2019-2022, in various ways reinforce this two-folded aim. Besides having an explicit aim to strengthen the work for organising and 3F's outreach to foreign workers in Denmark, the programme also include the vision to improve members' understanding and interests in collective agreements and the shared responsibility to defend and improve their collective rights. Other sub-goals include among others ways to improve the union democracy and visibility of 3F at the workplace as well as expanding the collective agreement coverage to all ➡

workplaces, including non-standard workers and prevent social dumping, where 3F will explicitly work for ensuring “sufficient hours to live off” for different groups of atypical workers (3F, 2019b; 3F, 2019a).

From strategies to actions

3F and its different sub-groups and local union branches have in different ways transposed the overall visions and strategies on organizing into a series of actions. These actions cover a plethora of activities, ranging from traditional union services such as negotiating and expanding collective agreements, workplace representation, industrial actions and attracting new members through nation-wide campaigns and traditional organizing methods to legal assistance and union services targeting individual members. Some of these activities resemble what can be considered innovative union services at least in a Danish context in terms of 3F rethinking the traditional union activities such as collective agreements and union organizing in novel ways. Below, recent examples of 3F’s organizing initiatives- novel as well as more traditional union services are examined.

Innovative union services – Collective agreements in the platform economy, Wolt-workers group

With respect to collective agreements, different sub-groups of 3F such as 3F- private service and 3F-transport have negotiated and signed novel collective agreements that not only expand the collective agreement coverage to new areas of the Danish labour market such as the digital platform economy, freelancers and solo self-employed, but also deals with conflict resolution in novel ways (Ilsøe, 2020; Ilsøe and Larsen, 2021). An example of these innovative collective agreements is *the Hilfr- agreement*, which is the first company based collective agreement regulating wage and working conditions in the platform economy at least in Denmark. In addition, the Hilfr- agreement offers novel ways of expanding the collective bargaining

coverage to solo-self-employed and deals with conflict resolution in an innovative way – aspects that are explored in greater detail in chapter four. Another example of a novel collective agreement is the first sector agreement covering food delivery couriers including those working as platform workers – the so-called *Just- Eat agreement*. This sector agreement was negotiated and signed by 3F and the Danish Chamber of Commerce in Spring 2021. *The Just-Eat agreement* guarantees food delivery couriers a minimum of 8 weekly working hours, guaranteed shifts of at least 4 hours, a minimum hourly wage (124 DKK per hour), overtime payments and a series of other collective agreed social benefits (Ilsøe and Larsen 2021). Part of the agreement is as well novel regulation on the usage of mobile devices and tracking of couriers when on and off-duty (3F and Danish Chamber of Commerce, 2021).

The Wolt-workers group is an example of an innovative way of organizing platform workers. The Wolt-workers group is a group of digital platform workers that work as food delivery couriers for the Finnish owned digital platform WOLT that operates in Denmark. The Wolt-workers group initially emerged outside the traditional Danish trade union movement when a group of couriers came together to find ways to improve their working conditions. The Wolt-workers group was later affiliated with 3F, where 3F started to offer free office space for the Wolt-workers group to host their meetings and has since then assisted these workers in different ways according to interviewed union representatives and platform workers. For example, 3F- transport has among other helped the Wolt workers’ group with their different campaigns, strikes and demonstrations as well as taken part in the ongoing negotiations with the digital platform WOLT (Interviews with union representatives, 2020; 2021). According to the interviewees, the main aim is to find novel ways to regulate the wage and working conditions on the

platform through collective agreements without jeopardizing the flexibility often tied to digital platform work for both sides of industry.

Traditional union led activities with a novel twist: Campaigns, social media & digital union services
Besides these examples of innovative ways of organizing workers and lift wage and working conditions, 3F has also relied on more traditional union led activities. These include a series of *nation-wide campaigns* aimed at organising cleaning staff in Danish hospitals – the so-called “dirty cleaning” campaign (den beskidte rengøring) and the campaign entitled “clean respect “ (“Ren respekt”), – along with the 2019 bus-driver campaign entitled “Press Stop” (tryk stop). Other recent nation-wide campaigns include the Uber-campaign and other ongoing organising efforts among platform workers and other drivers working as solo-self-employed couriers. These nation-wide campaigns are initiated by the individual sub-sections of 3F and tend to involve a large group of local union branches that join forces to push for greater awareness and lift wage and working conditions through collective bargaining in certain areas of the labour market. Part of these actions are as well to raise the union density in the affected sectors, promote capacity building along with strengthening 3F’ bargaining mandate and political impact through strengthening the workers’ collective in individual workplaces (3F, 2019b;2019a). Common for these actions is that it is very much the traditional organiser model that underpins these actions, where the aim is first and foremost to raise awareness about certain causes such as lack of overtime payment, lack of breaks etc. and then develop a joint narrative among the affected workers why it is important to be a union member and to join forces to improve working conditions (Arnholtz and Ibsen, 2021). This is done by actively engaging the affected workers – union members as well as non-members along with local union branches and local politicians- in a cause they deem important and illustrate by

example that through joined forces it is possible to change and improve the situation (Interviews 3F; 3F, 2019b; 2019a).

To support the different organising activities, 3F and its sub-groups have also relied on *social media*, notably various facebook groups and have as well *recruited union consultants* with different language skills to be active on these social media to reach new groups of workers such as migrant workers and platform workers. Moreover, 3F has *digitized different union services* and offers them online. They include among others a website that offers various online videos and guidelines that aim to offer inspiration to workplace representatives and local union branches on ways to organize workers and graduates (3F 2021g). Part of these actions includes the development of an annual action plan for individual workplace representatives that aim to help them structure their various activities such as organising introduction and recruitment meetings for newly started employees and thus potential members at their workplace (3F, 2019b). In this context, 3F and its affiliated subgroups, local union branches and workplace representatives can also rely on the different strategic tools for organising such as the aforementioned databases like “3F in numbers” and the CRM-system for listing organising activities to map potential members in distinct sectors as well as to seek inspiration for different organising activities.

Individualized union services: legal assistance, training private insurances & lower union fees

The actions by 3F to attract and retain members also involve a series of individualized union services, covering more traditional and more recent union services, which 3F has promoted via different media campaigns and advertisements etc. The more *traditional union services* include collective agreement coverage, access to collective agreed social benefits such as occupational pensions, leave entitlements, further training



along with workplace representation, legal assistance and advice on job search etc. Other and often *more recent union services* include various *private insurance schemes* such as discount on a series of private insurance arrangements such as accident-, housing-, critical illness insurance as well as private wage insurance that covers up to 80 percent of former wage income in case of unemployment, provided the unemployed meet the eligibility criteria. Other examples of individualized union services are union member's access to cheaper car loans and mobile subscriptions, free tickets to football matches and access to holiday rentals of union-owned summerhouses in Denmark and abroad (3F, 2021p). The individualized union services also cover *lower union fees* for certain groups of workers such as apprentice, students, young people and part-time workers. Most recently 3F decided that students can be union members for free, if working in one of the sectors that 3F organizes, but their membership package differs slightly from traditional union membership as they only have access to certain union services (3F, 2021p).

HK – recent strategies and actions

Overall strategies and approaches

HK's recent strategies and approaches towards organising activities are rooted in their congress decision from 2012, where HK and its affiliated subgroups and local union branches adopted a joint strategy entitled The "*Organising Trade Union*" (Den organiserende fagforening – DOF) with the broad slogan: "together you are stronger" ("Sammen er du stærkere") (HK-Denmark, 2018b). This overarching organising strategy forms the very core of HK's organising activities and has since then been strengthened, renewed and institutionally embedded in the various union and organising activities of HK, its four subgroups (HK-private, HK-state, HK-local government, HK-retail) and the seven local union branches (HK, Denmark, 2018b; HK-Handel, 2021b; HK-private, 2019b; HK-state, 2021b; HK-

kommunal, 2020b). This is also reflected in the up-coming congress in October 2021 and the proposed vision and work programme for the coming years (2022-2025). Here, the main theme is to strengthen the workers' collective and three of the four overarching goals for the coming years relate to strengthen the union density in different ways in line with the vision of the organising trade union (DOF). (HK-Denmark, 2021a; 2021c). The aim of HK's strategy for the organising trade union was initially and still is to reverse recent membership decline by revitalising HK as a trade union that will "be relevant for and in close proximity with its members while at the same time respecting HK's historical roots" (HK, 2018b). It comprises of three sub-strategies with the broad headings of 1) *engaging and involving members*, 2) *improving service provision and communication* and 3) *changing the internal union culture*. (HK, 2018b). Since 2012, the implementation of the DOF strategy has entailed a substantial transformation of HK as a trade union, where employees working for the union have had to rethink ways to put the individual member at the very centre of union activities, engage in knowledge-sharing and cross-sectoral collaboration as well as co-operation between the different local union branches (HK-Denmark, 2018b; 2021a; HK-private, 2019a; HK-state, 2021a; HK-kommunal, 2020a; HK-handel, 2021a). With regard to the sub-strategy to *engage and involve members*, the focus is very much on strengthening the union democracy in different ways (HK-Denmark, 2018b; 2021a). As to the second sub-strategy on *improving service provision and communication* the aims are to continuously develop union services to ensure they match the members' demands and needs; and thus improve members satisfaction with HK's service provision and in this way strengthen members loyalty towards HK. This includes among others to illustrate the added value by being member of HK as well as meeting members and potential members at eye-level by offering services

matching their situation (HK- Denmark, 2021a, 2018b: 2). Regarding the third sub-strategy on *changing the internal union culture* entails that members always are the first priority of HK and that HK continues to develop an organisational culture, where employees working for the union embrace a relevant and member-driven focal point (HK, 2018b: 2).

In their more recent vision and work programme covering 2022-2025, HK sets some explicit targets for increasing the union density, notably among certain employee groups such as people with medium and higher educational backgrounds as well as workers aged 18-40 years. These are groups, which HK often struggle to organise, and to utilise the full member potential among these emerging groups of workers, HK intends to reach out to young people already in elementary schools as well as strengthen their existing organising activities at vocational educational institutions, universities and other higher educational institutions (HK-Denmark, 2021a). Part of this strategy is also to develop a cross-cutting joint action that unites HK and its sub-groups and local union branches initiatives, involve knowledge sharing and exchange of past experiences with organising people with medium and long-educational attainments (HK- Denmark, 2021a). Also part of their vision and work programme for the coming years is to explore potential membership packages and fee levels to attract and retain members as well as increasingly offer high quality digital solutions and online services without jeopardising the personal and face-to-face relations with members (HK- Denmark, 2021a; 2021b). The individual sub-groups' vision and work programmes echo the overarching organising strategy on strengthening the union density with for example HK-local government setting a specific target for increasing their union density to 80% in the sectors and occupations they organise (HK-kommunal, 2017a; 2020a). Other subgroups have not listed specific targets, but they all emphasise the importance of boosting

their membership base, notably by attracting and retaining students, apprentices and young people as union members (HK-private, 2019a; HK-handel, 2021a; HK-state, 2021a). Strengthening the collective bargaining coverage, especially in the private sector is also a key priority among the HK subgroups, representing workers in the private sector with the overall aim to abolish the aforementioned 50% rule (HK-private, 2019a; HK-handel, 2021a).

From strategies to actions

HK and its four subgroups and local union branches have initiated a variety of actions to transpose their overall vision and strategies for the organizing trade union. These activities range from traditional union services such as negotiating and expanding collective bargaining, strengthening workplace representation, industrial actions and attracting new members through advertisement, campaigns, social media and traditional organizing methods to legal assistance, business like services and traditional union services targeting individual members. Similar to 3F, some of HK's organizing activities resemble what can be considered innovative union services at least in a Danish context. To facilitate the development of innovative union services, HK established and funded with 24 million DKK (corresponding to €3,2 million) an innovation unit – the so-called HK Lab in 2017. THE HK lab was initially only for a four year period, but in 2020, HK decided that the HK lab would be an integrated in-house unit within HK from May 2021 (HK, 2017e; HK, 2020e). This HK lab employs two full-time staff and aims to initiate, develop and test innovative union services, including developing novel union products and business models as well as designing the future trade union of HK and addressing the future of work. Part of the HK-lab is also to explore and propose ways for developing HK as a digital union (HK, 2020e; 2017e). Some of the innovative union services involve rethinking



traditional union activities such as collective agreements, workplace representation and union services in novel ways, while others resemble path-breaking initiatives that in some instances appear to blur the traditional employer-employee split such as the HK service bureau for freelancers, their business-oriented services and consultancy for freelancers (Larsen et al. 2018).

Innovative union services: HK service bureau for freelancers, the union for e-sport, educational agent and collective agreements for freelancers and platform workers

HK service bureau for freelancers is an example of an innovative union service by HK. The freelance bureau is union-led and non-for profit organization that was set up in 2018 as a pilot project with the aim to regulate the freelance market, secure wage and working conditions for freelancers and assist them with various services related to freelance business. The novelty of the freelance bureau is also that HK acts as both the employer and employee representative and signed a collective agreement that covers freelancers working through the freelance bureau – aspects that are explored in greater detail in the case study in chapter 4). Other examples of innovative union services by HK are their new organisation for e-gamers as well as their collective agreements for freelancers and platform workers. The *new organisation for e-sport* is another example of an innovative union service by HK. It is a joint initiative between HK-private and another Danish sector trade union – the Danish Union for Elite Athletes (DEF). The organisation for e-sport was set-up in 2020 and aims to organize gamers within the emerging sector of e-sport as well as represent, protect and develop their social and financial interests before, during and after their e-gamers career in an area of the Danish labour market, which is fairly unregulated or considered by many as the “wild west” (E-sport spillerforeningen, 2021; FH, 2020; HK, 2020g). The organisation for e-sport is open to all

professional and non-professional e-sport gamers and offers advice and legal assistance on contracts within the areas of e-sports, commercial rights, alternative career paths further training, accident insurances, holiday entitlement and pensions. HK and DEF also aims to negotiate and secure fair working conditions during events (E-sport spillerforeningen, 2021; HK, 2020g). Union members of HK can join the e-gamers union for free and members of the E-gamers union can join HK without having to pay union fees (E-sport spillerforeningen, 2021; HK, 2020g). The most recent development is that this joint-venture initiative is put on hold as DEF for financial reasons have had to change their priorities regarding e-sport, while HK has continued to strengthen its actions in this area, most recently by launching an e-gamers tournament at the vocational schools.

Educational agents is yet an example of an innovative union services, which was initiated by HK in 2015. HK’s educational agents represent a novel form of workplace representation that aims to promote further training and education among employees and local management in the individual workplaces (HK-private, 2018a; 2019b). The educational agents are appointed among the workers, but are without the traditional protection that apply to other forms of workplace representatives such as Danish shop stewards and health and safety representatives (HK-private, 2018a; 2019b). Besides their main task to promote further training and education at the workplace, the idea behind educational agents is also that they could potentially be the voice of employees in workplaces without other forms of workplace representation according to the interviewees (Interview HK, 2021). The initial target was to have more than 1000 educational agents by 2019, but this has since then be adjusted to 500 agents in the most recent vision and work programme of the subgroup HK private (HK private, 2019a; 2019b). To support and strengthen

the coverage of educational agents in Danish workplaces as well as assist them in their work, the subgroup HK-private has also set-up a network group with representatives from the central further training team and each local union branch to exchange best practices and methods to appoint more educational agents (HK-private, 2019b). HK has also negotiated and successfully signed novel collective agreements covering freelancers and platform workers. *The Voocali agreement* between HK –private and the digital platform Voocali that provides translation services is an example of such a novel company agreement regulating wages and working conditions in the digital platform economy (HK and Voocali, 2018). The Voocali agreement was signed in 2018 after five months negotiations and guarantees among others minimum hourly wages for translators working through the platform, payments for assignments and payment in case assignments are cancelled (Digital platform observatory, 2018; HK, 2018d). The agreement also includes rules and regulations in case translators are expelled from the platform as well as procedures for the portability of data allowing users to transfer their user-ratings when leaving the platform (HK, 2018d). However, this platform agreement was cancelled in 2020 and replaced by an accession agreement to the sector-level agreement focusing solely on payments (Ilsøe and Larsen, forthcoming). HK has also initiated negotiations with other providers of translation services such as Danish the Danish Refugee Council about a company agreement covering translators working as platform workers, but the bargaining parties thus far been unable to reach an agreement (HK, 2021f).

Collective agreements covering freelancers are others examples of innovative collective agreements. HK together with the Danish union of Journalists and their counterpart the employers associations Kooperation has successfully negotiated and signed three *collective agreements for freelancers*

covering photographers, journalists and graphical designers in the media sector (Larsen et al. 2018; HK privat et al. 2020). These three framework agreements include among others minimum payments for different work assignments, wage supplements for unsocial hours, coverage of driving expenses, rules for property rights, GDPR along with procedures for conflict resolution (HK private et al. 2020). These agreements have been met with criticism from different sides as they may potentially class with Danish and EU competition laws due to the risk that the agreements can be considered involving fixed service prices. The bargaining parties were aware of these potential violations with the legal framework, but also stressed that these agreements, although only covering a small part of the freelance market seemingly have a positive knock on effect on the wages and working conditions in areas of the Danish labour market without collective agreement coverage (Larsen et al. 2018; Interviews with union representatives, 2020; 2021). These agreements for freelancers are often used as a sort of benchmark by freelancers and their clients according to the Danish interviewees.

Traditional Union services with a novel twist:

Nation-wide Campaigns,

The digital union, & abolishing the 50 % rule

Besides their range of innovative union services, HK has also relied on more traditional union services to attract and retain members notably young people, students, apprentice, temporary agency workers, freelancers and migrant workers (HK-private, 2019a; 2019b; HK-Denmark, 2021b; HK-kommunal, 2020b; HK-stat, 2021b; HK-detail, 2020b). These include among others a series of nation-wide campaigns and projects such as the cross-sectoral and follow-up project from 2020 entitled “The membership journey from student life to working life”. This project aims to boost HK’s membership base by mapping the service needs of young people and illustrating the added



value of a union membership when young people as graduates move from the introductory student membership package to a traditional full-time membership package. In doing so, HK has visited and set up various workshops at vocational and higher educational institutions to inform about their activities and how they can assist members with their first job, work-related challenges tied to the shift from student –to working life, their professional identity etc. (HK-Denmark, 2021b). In fact, HK's different sub-groups and local union branches have a long tradition of initiating organizing campaigns, where they on an annual basis visit vocational and higher educational institutions to inform about their activities to attract and retain members (HK-private, 2019b; HK-state, 2021b; HK-kommunal, 2020b; HK-handel, 2020b). Another and related initiative is the 2020 campaign entitled "Newcomers" (Ny-begynderkampagnen) that aims to promote further training and education among members and potential members. In this campaign, HK illustrates how the union can assist their members and potential members when new career paths emerge and in relation to the future of work. Social media, online digital tools and various news sites, radio, cinemas etc. were used as channels for promoting this campaign (HK-Denmark, 2021b). Besides, their nation-wide campaigns targeting young people, HK also initiated a slightly different, but novel digital campaign in early 2020 as a response to the Danish Employers Associations for Dentists (Tandlægeforeningen) voting against the collective agreements they had negotiated with HK for dental assistants. The digital campaign differs from the more traditional union led campaigns in that it took place online via various facebook groups as HK was unable to utilize its usual tools to organize workers due to the Corona crisis and subsequent national lockdown. The digital campaign via the facebook groups was an online fora where members and non-union members working as dental assistants could join and express their concerns about the

situation. The digital campaign enabled HK to mobilise workers and subsequently reach a compromise with the Employers Associations for Dentists sign a collective agreement (Hjorth and HK-privat, 2021: 117-122).

Actions to expand the collective agreement coverage and not least abolish the so-called 50 per cent rule in the private sector have also formed part of especially HK's subgroups representing workers in the private sector. In doing so, HK has systematically visited and mapped private companies affected by the 50% per cent rule that stipulates that only if 50 per cent of more of the employees are union members of HK do collective agreements apply (HK-privat, 2019b; 2019a). To assist this process, HK has developed a strategic tool to identify potential private companies – the so-called organizing landscape "faglige landskab" that has proven pivotal in their attempts to organize new companies (HK-privat, 2019b). Other strategic tools to support their different organizing activities involve HK and its subgroups extensive use of social media, including facebook groups and linked in groups as well as their digitalisation of various union services in line with their overall aim of a digital union. HK has also established a so-called organiser's team and networks with the aim exchange of good practices on ways to attract potential members and secure collective agreements. Part of this process has also been the recruitment of part-time and full-time union consultants as organisers to map companies for potential members and election of workplace representatives along the lines of the traditional organiser model. In these instances, the union consultants together with a group of workers identify a joint cause and then through these actions illustrate the role and importance of unions (HK-handel, 2021b; HK-privat 2019b; HK-kommunal, 2020b). Some of HK's sub-groups such as HK-retail also use the recruitment of part-time organizers as a sort of incubator for recruiting talented and future union representatives while

others have systematically integrated organizing as a key element in their educational programmes for workplace representatives (HK-handel, 2021b: 4; HK-kommunal, 2020b; HK-private 2019b). In addition, HK has strengthened the elements on organizing in their training of shop stewards, where they underpin the elements of 10 basic organizing principles and provides not only shop stewards but also other forms of workplace representatives and union representatives with theoretical and methodological informed tools to carry out organizing activities and develop union-employee relations to retain and attract members (Hjorth and HK-privat, 2021). There are also examples of cross-country collaboration with unions in other European countries, Australia and the USA where HK exchange good practices and gain inspiration on novel ways to attract and retain members as well as how to deal with new players such as Amazon and union busting (HK-handel, 2021b).

Individual union services –, career telephone, legal assistance, private insurances digitized communication

HK offers similar to 3F a plethora of individualised union services, ranging from more traditional union services including collective agreement coverage, access to collective agreed social benefits, workplace representation, legal assistance, further training and advice on job search to more recent services. The more recent union services include business like services, and consultancy about legal advice regarding intellectual property rights and how to start a business as a freelancer – services that share some resemblances with services offered by Danish employers and business associations (Larsen et al. 2018). HK has also started to offer stress-coaching, private pension schemes for workers without collective agreement coverage, cheaper private insurances in case of accidents and critical illness as well as discounts on housing insurances etc. Private wage insurances in case of unemployment,

which cover up to 80 per cent of former wage income, are also offered by some of HK subgroups (HK-state- HK-local government, HK-private), provided the unemployed member meet the eligibility criteria (HK- Denmark, 2021h); 2021b; HK-private, 2019a; HK-stat, 2021b; HK-kommunal, 2020b). Unlike, the other subgroups, HK retail decided not to offer such private wage insurance schemes as part of their membership package, mainly because of the associated costs for members and the fact that most of their members would be unable to benefit from this scheme as they struggle to meet the eligibility criteria. Instead HK-retail offers the option to individual members, the possibility to join a private wage insurance scheme if they request it (HK-Handel, 2021b). Differing membership packages also form part of the individualized union services, where lower union fees apply to part-time workers, freelancers, students, apprentice and young people. For example, students can be union members for free, but have restricted access to the different union services compared to paying members. The membership package and levels of union fees also vary across occupations and sectors which HK and its subgroups organizes (HK, 2021j).

To support the different individual union services match individual member's needs and demands HK and its different subgroups have also strengthened and developed their digital communication with members to ensure that the union communicates with their members on their terms (HK-Denmark, 2021b; HK-kommunal, 2020b; HK-handel, 2020b; HK-stat, 2021b; HK-privat, 2019b). Part of this process has been to target and time relevant information to individual members based on data and knowledge about their situation. For example, HK has developed individualized website for their members – the so-called My-HK (MitHK), where only the most relevant digital tools are listed when individual members login to their site. Likewise, information and newsletters



send via emails to members are targeted specific groups. For example, students and apprentices only receive information about wage increases, advice on internships at times when relevant, while a specific programme ensures that unemployed members gain information about relevant courses and systematic assistance with job-searches (HK-Denmark, 2018b). In addition, HK implemented in 2019 a so-called call-back function, where members can choose to be called back without losing their queue position when there is an available employee to help them, if the telephone line is busy (HK-Denmark, 2021b). Also part of their service package is the so-called HK chat-bot, virtual reality courses and the Career-phone (Karriere-telefonen) where HK offers services dealing with common questions on employment contracts, pay (HK-chat-bot), virtual realities courses on dealing with exams stress for apprentices and advice on training and further education (the career-phone). The latter involves a team of advisors offering consultancy and feedback on job applications, CV's etc. Part of this action is as well a series of targeted online courses about job interviews, appraisals, etc. (HK-Denmark, 2018b; HK, 2020e; HK-kommunal, 2020a).

DM)

Overall strategies and approaches

DM's strategies on organising efforts are, similar to 3F and HK, outlined in a series of policy documents such as their *strategic work document* entitled "DM in future", *congress resolutions*, their *principle programme* and *work programme*, with the most recent covering the period 2019-2022 (DM, 2019a; 2019c; 2019d; 2019e; 2019f). In this context, the strategic work document entitled "DM in the future" forms the very foundation for DM's vision and mission as well as their work programme for the coming years (2019-2022). The strategic work document also outlines together with the principle programme what is considered DM's core tasks and underpins the importance of

increased emphasis on union members in terms of strengthening networks and the union democracy (DM, 2019f; DM 2019c).

With respect to DM's vision and mission, their overarching vision is that "DM is to be a dynamic, strong and visible trade union with more members, more active members, higher union density and an organising work form" (Authors own translation DM 2019b: 4). Part of this overarching vision is as well their mission in the form of four broad objectives such as 1) more members should consider DM relevant; 2) Members knowledge and commitment should come more into play in DM 3) more members should use DM more actively and 4) an increasing share of academics should join DM (DM, 2019g).

The implementation of their vision and four broad aims are among others reflected in DM's most recent work programme, where one of their three strategic focal points for the coming years is tied to various organising activities under the broad heading of "*more members in stronger workers collectives*". They further list eight strategic targets, which include among others the aim to strengthen and support the development of workers' collectives and different grass-root initiatives and networks based on joint interests, common causes, shared occupations or sectoral affiliation etc. Other strategic targets include the aim to develop DM's union services and ways of communication, so they appear relevant to their members and potential members' situation as well as support workplace representatives with their tasks to engaging other workers in union related activities in individual workplaces. In addition, DM aims to increase their union density and influence in Danish workplaces and higher education by strengthening their organising efforts through a close collaboration between workplace representatives and the central union administration (DM, 2019a: 2).

Also part of their most recent work programme is the strategic focal point entitled the "future of work", which may also have positive knock on

effects on their organising efforts. This strategic focal point aims among others to secure wage, working and living conditions for non-standard workers as well as workers on the future labour market by strengthening the collective bargaining coverage, increase members' employment rates as well as keeping an eye on the development of non-standard and emerging employment forms (DM, 2019a). In this context, DM has a particular focus on young people, notably students and trainees, including their working conditions, to ensure that student jobs and internships do not replace regular employment (DM, 2019a). Moreover, the recent digitalisation trends and access to further training and education are also considered main priorities of DM in their recent vision and work programme (DM, 2019a).

DM's work programme supplement in different ways their other union policies on various organising activities such as their congress solutions and DM's basic principle programme which defines and outlines the overall framework for DM's interest representation, individual union services, collective bargaining and other forms of interest representation (DM, 2019a:1; DM, 2019c). For example, DM has adopted a congress resolution on precarious work, where DM will continue its focus on the precarious labour market and work actively to secure decent working conditions for members in non-standard employment (DM, 2019e). Another congress resolution aim to strengthen professionalism and co-determination at Danish universities to promote democratic processes and strengthen academic staff and students' influence on course content and organisation of higher education (DM 2019d). Likewise their principle programme lists the core tasks of DM, which among others include strategies to strengthen organising efforts at workplace level, organise members in strong workers collective and networks that contribute to improving their wage, working and living conditions (DM 2016a). Besides these core tasks, DM also strives to improve their service

provision by digitising services and ensuring that the membership packages match members' demands and needs according to their work and life situation (DM 2019e; 2019d). Part of these core tasks is also to develop and facilitate strategic alliances and partnerships with relevant key actors to support their members in different ways (DM, 2019d).

From strategies to actions

DM and its five subgroups have developed a series of actions to implement their overall vision and strategies on strengthening their organizing efforts. These include a plethora of activities, ranging from fairly novel union services such as novel community based networks emerging from the grass-roots, facilitation of employee owned companies and business like services to more traditional union services like collective bargaining and expansion of collective agreement coverage, notably in the private sector, strengthening workplace representation, offering legal assistance, consultancy, further training and a variety of other services. Examples of these initiatives are examined in the following sections.

Innovative union services: Community based networks, Flexwerker, TER, start-ups as employee owned co-operatives

Community based networks for members was an initiative that was launched in 2016 and later renewed in 2019, where DM seeks to facilitate and financially support grass-root initiated networks as well as union led networks that are established within areas that DM considers strategically important (DM, 2016a;DM, 2019f). The role of these network is to strengthen different forms of workers' collective and subsequently integrate these networks into the activities of DM (DM, 2019f). Part of this initiative is also that DM financially supports these community based networks through the so-called activity scheme (aktivitetspulje). Moreover, DM also assists these community based networks in various ways by



for example facilitating contact to other potential members, offering available office space and light catering for network meetings and other arrangements, setting up a digital membership platform etc. The community based networks are based on voluntary work and do not have their own budget, but are expected to be financially self-sufficient (DM, 2019 – Kongresoplæg DM I fremtiden). *Flexwerker* and *TER* are examples of such grass-root driven networks while *the network on sustainable transition of society* and *the network on equality* are examples of a union-led network. *Flexwerker* is an example of a novel union service. It is a grass root initiative that emerged outside the established trade union movement with the aim to create a platform and raise awareness of non-standard work and its associated risks among academics within humanities and social science. *Flexwerker* had initially no ties to the trade union, but DM decided to financially support *Flexwerker* as a community based network and integrate it as part of their union activities and services. *Flexwerker* has later developed into an employee-owned co-operative and thus operates independently of DM – aspects we explore further in one of the case studies in chapter 4. Likewise, the *Temporary Employed Researcher's forum (TER)*. *TER* is a similar grass-root driven network that was established in 2018. *TER* thus is a community based network and forum for collective actions among academics in non-standard employment, notably young researchers and PhD students. It aims to share best practices and improve working conditions and the career perspectives for this groups of workers both inside and outside Danish Universities (DM, 2021f).

The union led network on sustainable transition of society is one of the largest community based member network within DM and it is a very proactive network in that it hosts a variety of events, presentations, etc. It was established in 2019 and focuses on sustainability, green jobs and organising efforts to discuss the various climate problems and develop joint actions (DM, 2019h).

The forum on equality is another example of a union-led network for members. It addresses different topics tied with distinct forms of equality including equal pay, equal opportunities for education, employment and career development as well as sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination (DM, 2021b).

Actions to promote and support *employee owned co-operatives or companies* are yet an example innovative union services by DM. *DM's interest in supporting the development of employee-owned co-operatives/companies* is due to the fact that this company form involves high levels of employee involvement and employee influence on work organisation, which is deemed important by DM's members. In this context, DM has developed a series of workshops, courses and policy proposals to support the development of democratic companies and start-ups and thus implicitly contribute to job creation and new job opportunities (DM, 2019j). Part of these initiatives have also been the development of various business-like services and partnerships with various business organisations. For example, DM together with the business and employer organisation – the Co-operative and the think-tank Democratic business launched a joint tutoring programme for academics wanting to test their entrepreneurial aspirations entitled: “from academic to entrepreneur” in 2020. The programme targets students, newly graduates and other groups of academic; and offers business advice, guidance on how to develop sustainable and democratic start-up companies as well as courses on business development law, marketing, investment opportunities etc. (Kooperationen, 2020a).

Traditional Union Services with a Novel Twist: Nation-wide Campaigns, Collective Bargaining and Strategic Partnerships

Besides their range of innovative union services, DM has also relied extensively on more traditional union services such as nation-wide

campaigns, expanding collective bargaining coverage, lifting academics wage and working conditions, strengthen their network of workplace representatives and employee-involvement at workplace level.

Some of the nation-wide campaigns and projects initiated by DM in recent years include their nation-wide campaign to raise the awareness of DM's activities among young people, notably how the union can assist students at higher education when they experience problems in their student jobs. The campaign covered themes such as wages, sick leave, holiday entitlements and was reportedly well visited (DM, 2019b). Other union-led campaigns include the nation-wide demonstrations in 2017 and 2018, where more than 6.000 people decided to March for Science to demonstrate against pseudo-science and fake-news, along with the increasing politicization of science and restrictions on academics freedom of science research (forskerfriheden). DM has also funded various research projects and, analyses and workshops which focus among others on non-standard work and the associated risks of precariousness among academics to promote a more knowledge-based and informed debate on these issues (DM, 2019b).

Expanding the collective bargaining coverage through negotiating and signing company based and sectoral collective agreements, along with *lifting wage and workings for academics*, also form part of DM's variety of organizing efforts. In this context, DM has particularly targeted SMEs in the private sector and non-standard workers, notably early career academics, PhDs and Post Doctoral in higher education according to the interviewees. For example, during the public sector bargaining round in 2018 and 2021, DM succeeded with strengthening the rights to parental leave with full wage compensation for Post Doctoral students and temporary workers. In 2021, DM also succeed to extend the collective agreement coverage to hourly paid university teachers and thus lift their rights to paid sick-, parental and short-term leave

and possibilities for wage supplements, which has been a repeated demand of DM for the last 20 years or more (DM, 2019b; DM 2021g; Mailand and Larsen, 2011).

Developing strategic partnerships also form part of DM's various traditional union services. In March 2021, DM together with the trade unions DSL-representing workers in so-called green jobs and JA-representing academics in the fields of nature, environment and food science merged their administrative offices to offer and strengthen their union services targeting the so-called green jobs – a partnership that will come into force in January 2022 (DM, 2021k). Another example of recent partnership involves DM and the two Danish employers associations – Danish Industries (DI) and the Danish Chamber of Commerce (Dansk Erhverv). This partnership aims to find joint solutions to address the high unemployment rate among newly graduates from higher education and has thus far resulted in 10 recommendations (DM, 2020n).

Individual union services: Legal assistance, private wage insurances, digitized communication, further training and online-learning

DM offers similar to HK and 3F various individualized union services including both traditional and more recent union services. The traditional union services involve among others collective agreement coverage, collective agreed social benefits, workplace representation, legal assistance, further training and advice on job search, newsletters etc. The more recent and sometimes novel union services range from business like services, and consultancy about how to start a business, development of business plans, marketing strategies, courses on stress-coaching and conflict mediation for managers etc. Also part of these membership packages are access to loans, cheaper insurances, advice on taxation issues, career workshops, mentoring programmes and community based networks (DM, 2021p). DM also recently started to offer



private wage insurances to their members, where unemployed receive up to 80 per cent of their former wages, provided they qualify for support (DM, 2020k). DM also offers some of their union services as online services and has thus digitised a broad range of their union services. For example, several courses are available online to members and workplace representatives. Likewise, DM has implemented a series of online digital tools to calculate wages, leave entitlements and access to other social benefits that are available to members along with their launch of individualist web platform for members, chatbot, podcasts, webinars and increased usage of social media and various online platform such as facebook and linked in groups (DM, 2019b). Part of their individualised union services is their differentiated membership packages that unlike 3F and HK also apply to groups other than students, which then have restricted access to the various union services. For example freelancers, solo-self-employed, part-time workers and unemployed pay a lower union fee, but they do not have access to certain union services such as advice on taxation issues, member meetings, the tutoring programmes etc. (DM, 2021p).

3.3 Comparing 3F, HK and DM's strategies and actions: Differences and similarities

Looking across the three sector union – 3F, HK and DM – have all prioritized to develop a series of strategies and actions to retain and attract members in recent years, even if they have seen different membership trends. 3F and HK has lost nearly one in three members, while DM has gained a substantial number of new members in the same period. Their recent organizing initiatives cover a plethora of strategies and actions, ranging from the more traditional union services such as collective bargaining, nation-wide organizing campaigns and strengthening workplace representation and legal assistance and training to innovative union services, often

involving novel ways of rethinking traditional union services as well developing digital solutions and path-breaking union services. In this context, HK and 3F have negotiated novel collective agreements covering freelancers and platform workers as well as initiated similar to DM a series of nation-wide campaigns to boost their membership base. HK, 3F and DM has also seen and supported in different ways alternative forms of workers' collective emerging from the grassroots within their respective sectors and occupations. Unlike 3F and DM, HK has also developed novel forms of workplace representation in the form of educational agents as well as set-up their own in-house and union led freelance bureau.

HK and DM also offer business like services to freelancers and solo-self-employed, which stands in sharp contrast to 3F, where freelancers and other solo-self-employed are unable to join 3F as members, unless they also have the status as employees. These business like services may blur the traditional employer-employee divide not least when trade unions as it is the case of HK's service bureau for freelancers also take on the traditional employer responsibility by signing collective agreements for freelancers and granting freelancers working through the bureau the status as employees and not self-employed. In fact, the series of actions by the three Danish sector unions can broadly speaking be classified as initiatives following different organizing logics according to the analytical framework developed by Bellini and colleagues (2021). Following their work, there seem to be examples of actions by the selected Danish unions that resemble the so-called instrumental services, which target groups of workers and are important for collective actions. These include for example 3F, HK and DM's nationwide organizing campaigns. Other types of actions by the three Danish sector unions appear to resemble more *strategic services* that target individual workers, but may also be



Figure 2.4 | Examples of different organizing logics underpinning Danish union services
 Source: Inspired by the work by Bellini et al (2021)

important for collective actions. The collective agreements covering platform workers and freelancers are examples of such strategic actions. The last category of union services concern *traditional individualized union services* such as legal assistance, training, job-search etc. where there is limited intention to develop a workers' collective in the traditional sense (Bellini et al. 2021). Figure 2.4 illustrates and compares the different organizing logics underpinning Danish union services based on by selected examples of the three unions various organizing initiatives.

3.4 Perceptions of the role of service supply

The effects of the union strategies and actions by 3F, HK and DM to expand their membership base are difficult, if not impossible to assess, not only because some of their initiatives are fairly recent, but also due to the fact that a number of other factors may influence the effects of their actions and recent membership trends such as the recent Corona crisis. With this in mind, we will briefly explore how 3F, HK and DM assess the success of their individual organising efforts in terms of their impact on recent membership trends, starting with 3F, then HK and DM.

3F
 When reviewing 3F's internal evaluation of their plethora of organising initiatives as to their effects on recent membership trends, these assessment suggest somewhat mixed results with some organising efforts appearing more successful and measurable than others. For example, the recent series of nation-wide campaigns for industrial cleaners and bus-drivers appear to have had a positive knock-on effect on recent membership trends, which is also echoed by the interviewed union representatives. More than 600 cleaning assistants took part in the 2017 campaign "Clean Respect" at Danish hospitals and subsequently 267 new members joined 3F's subgroup for private services, the annual 2 per cent public budget cuts in Danish hospitals were temporary suspended and working conditions for cleaners were improved, which reportedly exceeded the expectations of the union according to the interviewees (3F, 2019b; Interviews 3F union representatives, 2020). Also the 2018-2019 bus driver campaign entitled "push stop" appeared somewhat successful in that it involved 10 organizers, 44 local union branches and more than 9 out of 10 workplaces in the bus driving sector. During and after the campaign more than 730 new

members joined 3F-transport and led to the union density among bus drivers increased by 6 per cent. Moreover, 3F succeeded with the “Push stop” campaign that several workplace representatives were elected in companies with limited or no tradition of workplace representation in the sector. 3F also managed to attract the attention of local politicians in several Danish municipalities with their push stop campaign in terms of the need to improve working conditions of bus drivers as well as to strengthen the workers collective among Danish bus drivers (3F, 2019b; Interview union representatives of 3F). The strengthening of workplace representation and contact with local government politicians was similar to the increased union density considered a success by 3F, not least because it created a platform for future organizing and capacity building efforts (Interview union representatives of 3F).

It is more difficult to assess the effects of other organizing efforts such as the novel collective agreements covering platform workers and the Wolt’s workers collective. Research suggests that for example the Hilfr-agreement may appear successful in regulating wage and working conditions with a steady increase in the number of platform workers being covered by the collective agreement as workers and not self-employed. However, the effects on the union density seems less clear, not least because hardly any platform workers active on Hilfr tend to be union members – aspects that are also explored in the case study in chapter 4 (Ilsøe and Larsen, 2020; 2021b). Likewise, the effects of 3F supporting the Wolt’s workers collective on their recent membership trend is difficult, if not impossible, to assess, but seem to have raised awareness about the wage and working conditions of couriers working as platform workers among the general public. This has subsequently added pressure on Wolt and other digital platforms offering similar courier services according to the Danish union representatives. The effects of other forms of collective agreements as well as individualized

union services on recent membership trends are also difficult, if not impossible, to measure. In this context, it is also important to note that while 3F may be successful in attracting new members, there is a constant flow of members leaving and joining the union for different reasons, making it even more difficult to disentangle how and what different organizing efforts impact the union density of 3F (3F, 2019b; 2019a). When asking the interviewed union representatives they all, in line with 3F overarching organizing strategy, point to the importance of organizing efforts emerging from the shop floor through the mobilization of workers and thus resemble bottom-up driven initiatives. This strengthens not only the collective muscle for collective action, but also the workers collective at individual workplaces by developing a joint narrative that by uniting forces, it is possible to change things according to the interviewed union representatives.

HK

HK has in a series of evaluations and policy documents evaluated the potential effects of their different organizing efforts. Since 2012 when HK and their subgroups adopted their overarching strategy “the Organising Trade Union” and subsequently started to implement its different sub-strategies and targets, HK has gradually reduced their membership loss each year, and has even managed to reverse the membership decline in some sectors and occupations. However, HK’s union density remains below the 80% target of HK’s subgroup HK-local government (HK-Denmark, 2021b; HK-kommunal, 2020b; 2020a). This suggests that the organizational transformation of HK towards the Organising Trade Union may have contributed to limit their membership loss, even if it is difficult to disentangle the direct impact of the strategy. When exploring the effects of other organising efforts such as the different initiatives to improve members’ service satisfaction, various internal evaluations suggest that members’ service

satisfaction has steadily increased across all of HK's subsectors and local union branches since 2012 (HK-Denmark 2021b; HK-private, 2019b; HK-Handel, 2021b; HK-stat, 2021b). For example, in the past HK scored fairly low on their union services on further training and education, but has since then managed to reverse this trend with members being more positive than just a few years ago (HK-Denmark, 2021b). The different evaluation reports indicate that the career-phone, the so-called call-back function and online courses and advice may have contributed to this positive development (HK-private, 2019c; HK-Denmark, 2021b).

HK also seems to be somewhat successful in organizing an increasing share of young people, notably apprentices and students despite the fact that the membership potential in terms of the pool of apprentices enrolled in vocational training continues to decline. In fact, 18.000 students has joined HK in the last few years (HK-Denmark, 2021b; HK-privat 2019b). In this context, HK together with its affiliated subgroups, local union branches and workplace representatives have initiated various organizing efforts aimed at young people, notably apprentices and students. These actions have involved company visits and workshops at different vocational- and higher educational institutions and may have contributed positively to increase the union density among young people within the areas HK organizes (HK-Denmark, 2021b). Likewise, HK has also been fairly successful with their service bureau for freelancers in that it has rapidly expanded in recent years, notably during the Corona crisis, where an increasing number of freelancers joined the bureau. However, HK-freelance bureau is open to both union and non-union members and freelancers registering with HK service bureau for freelancers do not necessarily join HK as union members – aspects that are further explored in the case-study in chapter 4. In addition, the e-sport organisation is yet an example of a fairly

successful organizing initiative, but it is difficult if not impossible to assess how it has boosted HK's membership base. Likewise, the digital campaign for dental assistants also prove to be fairly successful in that HK not only managed to conclude a collective agreement covering dental assistant, but they also gained 185 new members during and after the campaign. In fact, HK was awarded what can be considered the “organizing OSCAR” by UNI Global Unions for their digital dental assistant campaign due to its novelty and path-breaking approach to organize workers (Hjorth and HK-privat, 2021).

Other organizing efforts by HK and its subgroups appear less successful. For example, the subgroup HK-private did not reach its initial target of more than 1000 educational agents by 2019, but saw a more modest success with around 250 educational agents being appointed and their numbers seemingly continue to increase according to the interviewees (HK-private, 2019c). Likewise, HK has yet to succeed with the removal of the so-called 50 per cent rule that restricts collective bargaining in companies, where HK organizes less than 50 per cent of the relevant workers. In fact, the 50 per cent rule appears to continue to be an up-hill struggle for the HK's subgroups organising workers in the private sector. In addition, HK has been fairly successful with concluding collective agreements regulating wage and working conditions of freelancers and platform workers. However, these agreements effects on the union density is less clear, not least because platform workers and freelancers generally speaking are less likely to be union members, even if some platform workers and freelancers has joined HK as union members according to the interviewed union representatives. In this context, the interviewed union representatives of HK stress – similar to 3F – the importance of organising efforts emerging from the shop floor and thus the role of union representatives contributing to mobilizing workers by illustrating the added value of Danish trade unions through various causes such as



successfully negotiating collective agreements and how their services can assist and help individual members and potential members.

DM

The internal evaluations of their various organising efforts by DM, along with the assessment of the union representatives and users, indicate among others that DM has successfully improved their members' satisfaction with their service provision within the last few years. DM has also managed to more than double the share of members, who would recommend DM as a union to join since 2016 (DM, 2019). In fact, DM has seen a rapid membership growth as mentioned earlier and seems increasingly successful in attracting young people with more than 1.200 students having joining DM between 2016-2019 (DM, 2019b; Statistics Denmark, 2021c). Also when it comes to expand their collective agreement coverage, does DM appear somewhat success as they have negotiated company based agreements with 50 workplaces in the private sector between 2017 and 2018 (DM, 2019b). DM has also succeeded with strengthening workplace representation, expand the collective agreement coverage as well as increased the number of community based networks that are either examples of grass-root initiatives or union-led. For example, the number of union led clubs at workplace level has increased and more than 50 community based networks have been established according to the interviewed union representatives and DMs internal evaluations (DM, 2019b). Some of these community based networks resemble grass-root initiatives, where groups of academics and highly skilled have joined forces and set up different forms of networks and organisations with Flexwerker being one example of this (DM, 2019b). In this context, the interviewees, in line with the overall vision of DM, stated that the grass-root initiatives are pivotal to strengthen the workers' collective and continue to attract and

retain members. However, with an increasingly diverse membership base, it may become more difficult to find common ground across the different groups, which could potentially be new challenges for DM in the future according to the interviewees. Nevertheless, these community based networks have reportedly inspired policy development within DM on various topics such as non-standard work, gender equality, green jobs etc. (DM, 2019b; Interview with union representatives, 2020; 2021).

3.5 Summing up

3F, HK and DM are examples of three very different Danish sector unions that not only differ in size and organizational structure, but they have also seen very different membership trends in the last two decades. 3F and HK has lost nearly one in three members, while DM has gained a substantial number of new members in the same period. Technological advancements, union mergers, the changing occupational structures and employment practices on the Danish labour market seem together with recent industrial actions, the liberalization of the Ghent-system and the recent economic recessions to be some of the contributing factors to the changing trade union landscape in Denmark. The Danish unions – illustrated through three purposefully selected sector unions – 3F, HK and DM – share some commonalities when it comes to their various organizing efforts. They have all adopted a plethora of strategies and actions that fall into different categories of services, where some reflect examples of innovative services while others resemble examples of more traditional union services such as organizing collective agreements, strengthening workplace representation, offering legal assistance and advice on further training and job search, but often with a novel twist. For example, the two trade unions HK and 3F has signed novel collective agreements covering freelancers and platform workers as well as initiated similar to DM a series of nation-wide-

campaigns to expand their membership base. The three selected unions have also seen and supported in different ways alternative forms of workers collective, often emerging from the grassroots outside the established Danish trade union movement. Moreover, they have digitized many of their union services and utilized the new opportunities for online communities through various social media platforms such as facebook, linked in etc. to reach new groups on the Danish labour market. The effects of these organizing efforts on recent membership trends

are difficult, if not impossible to assess due to the variety of contributing factors that may impact recent membership trends such as demographic changes, changing occupational structures and shifting economic cycles. With this in mind, the 3F, HK and DM seem in their various evaluation reports to suggest that their organizing actions to varying degrees have been successful not least with respect to regulating wage and working conditions, while it is less straightforward how their organizing efforts have influenced recent membership trends. ♦

Fourth part

Services provided by trade unions (directly or through partnership) and connection with strategies of unionization

The third part of this report examines recent examples of novel union services by the three unions 3F, HK and DM and explores how they are linked to the selected overall strategies for expanding their membership base. In doing so, we first present a brief overview of old and new union services by the three selected sector unions, before reflecting on the case selection of the individual innovative services examined for each of the three selected sector unions. We then present the three case studies and compare the three selected innovative services before summarizing our key findings.

4.1 Old and new union services: an overview

The three selected trade unions (3F, HK and DM) provide both a series of traditional and more innovative union services as described in chapter 2. Table 3.1 presents a brief overview with examples of the various union services offered


by 3F, HK and DM and indicates that the three unions offer fairly similar membership packages when it comes to collective bargaining, workplace representation and legal assistance. However, their more individualised union services seem to vary and cover a plethora of services (see table 3.1). In this context, it is also important to note that HK, 3F and DM operate with differentiated membership packages, where young people combining paid work with their studies often have limited access to certain services, as they typically join the unions without having to pay membership fees. While DM also offers differentiated membership packages to part-time workers with less than 10 weekly working hours, freelancers and solo-self-employed, this is not the case for HK and 3F, where all union members with the exception of young people and students in principle have similar access to the union services offered by HK and 3F (DM, 2021h; HK, 2021h; 3F, 2021h). 

Table 4.1: Examples of services provided by the Danish trade unions 3F, HK and DM

DM Services overview	HK services overview	3F services overview
Collective bargaining and agreements, workplace representation	Collective bargaining and agreements, workplace representation	Collective bargaining and agreements, workplace representation
Private Wage insurance scheme covering up to 80% of previous earnings provided eligibility criteria are met	Private Wage insurance scheme covering up to 80% of previous earnings provided eligibility criteria are met	Private Wage insurance scheme covering up to 80% of previous earnings provided eligibility criteria are met.
Advice on wage and employment conditions	Advice on wage and working conditions, access to wage statistics	Advice on wage and working conditions, check of wage slips
Career counselling and career interviews	Counselling on job search, career and online tools (with expertise in the specific occupation and trade area), including personal advice regarding employment	Personal and legal counselling
Advice on application, resume and LinkedIn	Guidance and recommendations on wage negotiations	
	Access to job databases	
Legal case processing incl. legal assistance (In DK; only people in academic employment, incl. students with non-academic job in case of work accident case).	Legal advice and guidance	Legal aid (also for private matters, i.e. divorce, inheritance, etc.)
Debt collection assistance for freelancers (however no debt collection for self-employed)	Legal aid after 3 months of paid membership, Free debt collection assistance for solo self-employed, Financial support for freelancers to attend further training, covering up to 20.000 DKK per year	Free online legal assistance/guidance
Tax advice for employment in foreign countries (Deloitte)		Advice /testament and other legal documents (including 5 hours free counselling by legal advisors from TestaViva (legal bureau))
Loans from social security funds (sociale sikringsfond) (2) Medlemmer kan søge om lån, når deres arbejdsplads går i betalingsstandsning		
Mentoring programme (also for vacant graduates, part-time members cannot participate)	Courses and career development free of charge	
Career workshops for graduates		
Discount on course programmes		
Tool courses for students		
Graduate talent programme (graduates in employment, part-time members cannot participate)		
Member network meetings and job development		
Members' forums (medlemsfora) + Professional Forum (Fagligt Forum)		
Members' meetings on working life and professionalism (faglighed)		
Advice on mental work environment and stress counselling	Help in case of dismissal Stress-coaching	Assistance for dyslexic members
Psychological assistance - only in Denmark		Benefits for seniors
Social counselling - only in Denmark		Benefits for young people
Shopping discounts and cash benefits	Shopping discounts	Shopping discounts (PlusCard – 1,300 shops/webshops).
Press cards (only issued to members who work in communication/press)		Arbejdermuseet
Magisterbladet (member magazine) + newsletter		Discounts on tickets for football games.
		Holiday rental homes across Denmark and Europe + discounts on holiday Centre at Malta (min. DKK 300 (€40) per person).
	Discounts on private insurances	Discounts on private insurances (personal accident, critical sickness, car, home etc.)
Flexwerker	HK- service bureau for freelancer	
	Company and sectoral agreements for platform workers & freelancers	Company and sectoral agreements for platform workers & freelancers

Source: 3F website, HK website, DM website

4.2 Case-study selection

The selected in depth case studies include examples of the innovative services offered by 3F, HK and DM. Each of these three sector union has been innovative, but in slightly different ways. The three selected cases of innovative union services are more specifically the workers collective “Flexwerker” by DM, the Service bureau for freelancers by HK and the Hilfr agreement, which is a novel company based collective agreement regulating wage and working conditions in the platform economy (Table 4.2).

Innovative collective agreement with digital labour platform

In 2018, the cleaning platform Hilfr and the trade union (3F) negotiated and signed the first ever platform agreement in Denmark, which includes highly innovative aspects such as covering workers as well as dealing with conflict resolution in novel ways. For 3F, the aim was to improve platform workers’ wage and working conditions as well as attract new members within the emerging digital labour market. In the case study, we also interviewed union representatives organising workers on other digital platforms such as Wolt, which provides courier services. The case study addresses issues present across these platforms. The case study is an example of a union service that was initially employer led, but was also welcomed and supported by the Danish trade union 3F, which entered into negotiations and

signed a novel company based agreement that in many ways deviate from a traditional collective agreement (Ilsøe and Larsen, 2021).

HK Service Bureau for Freelancers

In 2018, the trade union HK established a non-profit union led freelance bureau to support freelance workers and to regulate the freelance market. HK service bureau for freelancers is fairly novel in that it employs freelancers operating through the bureau as workers, offers them collective agreement protection and assists with various services related to freelance business such as invoicing, tax returns, work contracts etc. against a fee of 8 per cent of the value of individual projects. The initiative is ground-breaking and interesting as the trade union HK *de facto* becomes an employer when freelancers operate through the bureau. The service therefore blurs the traditional distinction between employer associations and trade unions.

Flexwerker

The trade union DM (Danish Association of Masters and PhDs) supports the community-based network for academics in non-standard employment entitled Flexwerker. Flexwerker was a grass root initiative, where a group of academics decided to create a platform and raise awareness of non-standard work and its associated risks among academics within humanities and social science. The target groups of flexwerker

Table 4.2: Basic features of the selected case studies

	Flexwerker	Service bureau for freelancers	Hilfr collective agreement
Trade union	DM	HK	3F (PSHR)
Single service, service package, or association	Single service	Service package	Association
Type(s) of service	Magazine, workshops, network	Invoice assistance, administrative work, tax payment etc.	Collective agreement
Target group	Academic atypical employees, freelancers, solo self-employed	Freelancers (solo self-employed)	Cleaning labour platform providers (solo self-employed)
Primary objective(s)	Supportive network, focus on precariousness among academics	Improved working conditions	Improved working conditions and wages
Membership renewal as an explicit/implicit objective	Implicit	Implicit	Explicit

are freelancers, solo self-employed, temporary and part-time workers. Flexwerker had initially no ties to the Danish trade union movement, but DM decided later to financially support the activities of Flexwerker and integrate the network as part of their union services. Flexwerker was set up in 2020 as an employee owned cooperative. DM supported this transformation by including Flexwerker into a joint tutoring (an incubator) programme designed to form new employee owned co-operatives. Flexwerker continues to have close ties with DM.

In the next three sections, we present the three case studies (3F-Hilfr collective agreement, HK's service bureau for freelancers, Flexwerker), where we briefly examine their history, innovative dimensions, their potential impact on recent membership trends and the user experiences based on interviews with key stakeholders conducted between 2019 and 2021.

4.3 Case study: 3F-Hilfr collective agreement

In 2018, the digital labour platform Hilfr and the trade union 3F signed the first ever collective agreement for digital platforms in Denmark and one of the first worldwide (Ilsøe 2020). The bargaining process was initiated by the platform, whereas 3F was initially hesitant to negotiate due to the overall lower levels of wage and working conditions in the platform economy compared to parts of the cleaning sector covered

by collective agreements. The Hilfr agreement was signed by the chairman from 3F Cleaning and Private Services Sector and the founders of Hilfr. The Danish Prime minister, the CEO of the Confederation of Danish Industries and the chairman of 3F participated at the launch of the agreement, which was held in the headquarters of 3F with the attendance of the international press (Hilfr blog 2018).

In Denmark, most platform workers are not covered by existing labour laws and collective agreements as their legal employment status is disputed with some defining them as self-employed and others as workers (Ilsøe & Larsen, 2020). The Hilfr-agreement was signed with these legal uncertainties in mind and the agreement can thus not to be considered a blueprint of platform workers as solo-self-employed by the Danish trade union movement according to the interviewees. The Hilfr-agreement offers a unique opportunity for platform workers to be covered by a collective agreement and represents in many respect a novel example of a collective agreement with its new options for workers to choose their own employment status just to mention a few (Ilsøe, 2020).

Methods used

The present case study is explorative and draws on a combination of focus group interviews and individual interviews with union representatives, representatives from employers' associations, representatives from the digital labour platform Hilfr and a number of their platform workers (service users) as well as government representatives. The interview data has been triangulated with relevant policy documents, pamphlets as well as online material on the platform agreement.

We interviewed a union consultant and a local union branch representative, who works with platform workers (including food couriers) on a day-to-day basis. We also interviewed two users, who were Super Hilfrs and two

Basic facts of the service

- **Name of service:** Platform collective agreement.
- **Union affiliation:** The agreement was signed by 3F Cleaning and Private Services Sector and the digital labour platform Hilfr. Membership is not required to use the service, and workers can choose to work with or without collective agreement coverage on the platform.
- **Type of services:** Collective agreement for cleaning platform workers.
- **Size:** Approximately 70 workers are covered by the agreement.

Source: Ilsøe & Larsen 2021

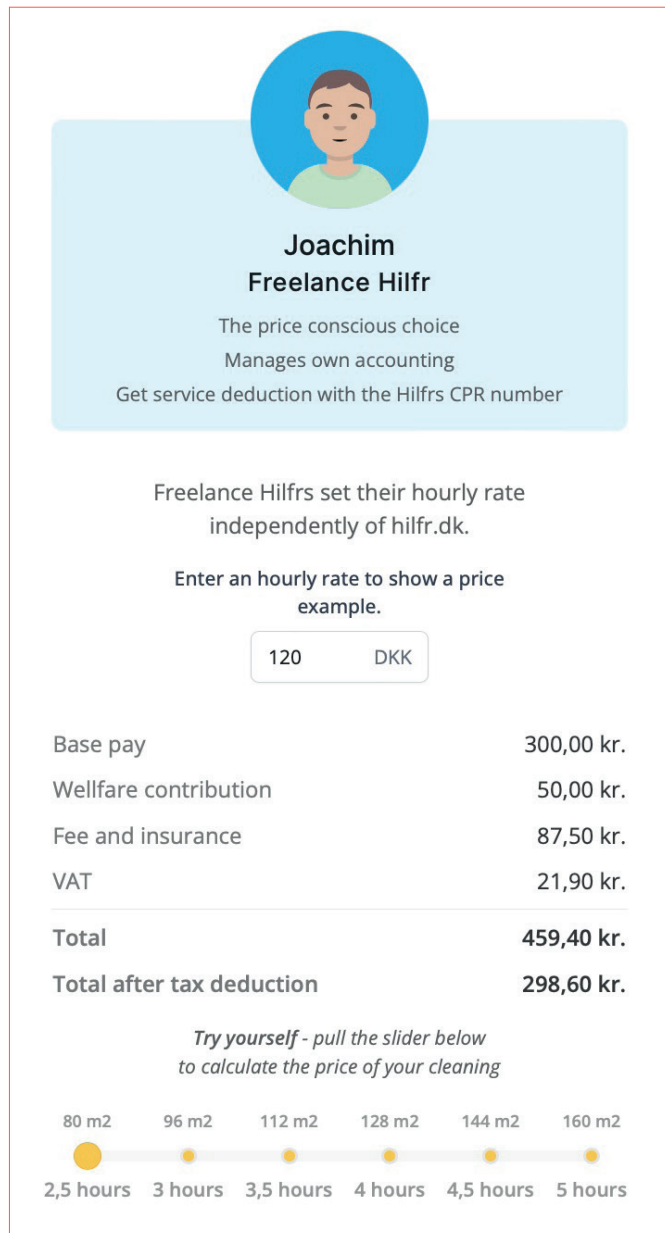


freelancers affiliated with the platform. Moreover, we conducted a focus group interview with participation from platform workers, Hilfr platform founders, trade union and employer association representatives, and representatives from the Danish Ministry of Employment.

The Hilfr- agreement and examples of its novel elements

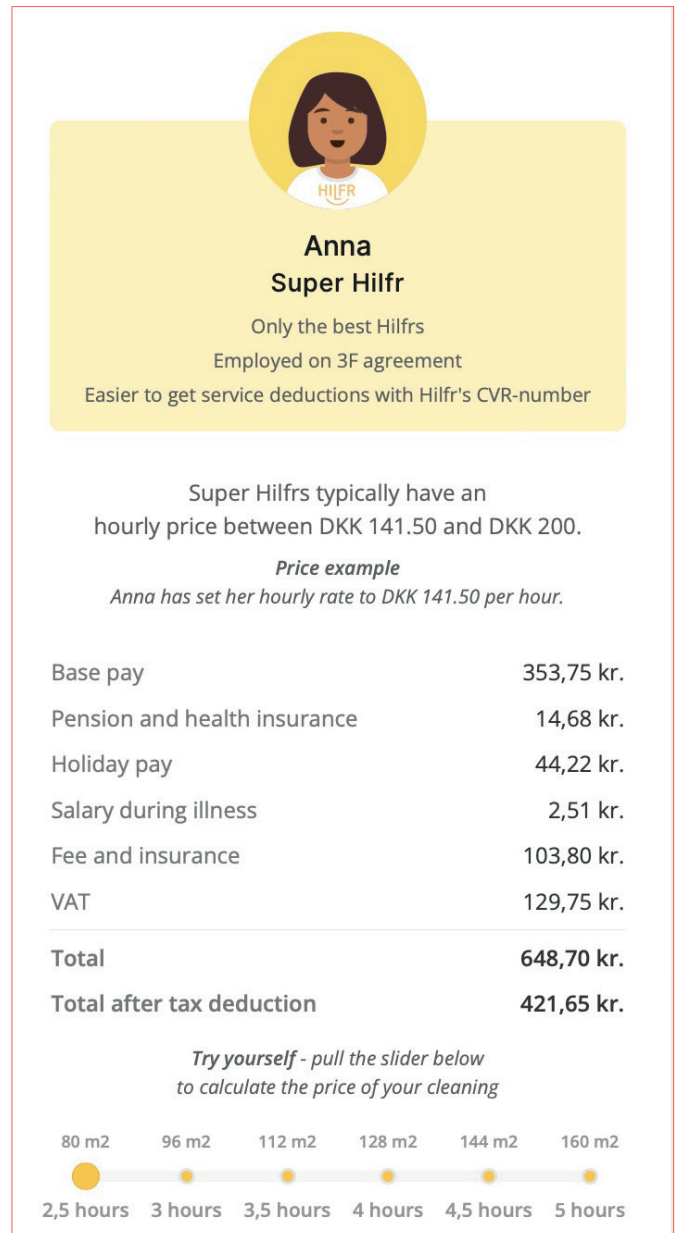
The Hilfr agreement aimed to offer an alternative to the less regulated market for cleaning services in private households and targeted experienced platform workers as well as private customers.

Figure 4.1 | Price example calculator from Hilfr website
Source: <https://hilfr.dk/en/cleaning-prices>



While the agreement does not per default cover all Hilfrs, the individual worker can choose to offer their cleaning service as a so-called ‘Super Hilfr’ covered by the collective agreement. After 100 work hours via the platform the employment status of the platform worker automatically change from freelancer to employee – i.e. the so-called Super Hilfr -unless the platform worker object to this (Ilsøe 2020).

The agreement guarantees the Super Hilfr rights to accrue access to pensions, paid holiday entitlement and sick pay, in addition to a minimum hourly wage of DKK 141.21 (€18.98) per hour. When being a freelancer, the individual Hilfr must report their own taxable income



generated via the platform to the Danish Tax Authorities. For Super Hilfrs this is automatically reported by the Hilfr platform². Moreover, when customers choose Super Hilfrs they know that the pay is at a minimum level and that taxes are paid (no undeclared work) (Ilsøe 2020). On the Hilfr webpage, they provide a price example calculator, showing the differences between Freelance Hilfrs and Super Hilfrs (Figure 1). This also have implications for potential customers' possibilities to claim the statutory tax reductions when purchasing cleaning services for private households. Private households can only qualify for such tax reductions provided that taxes have been paid of the income the platform worker received for providing the cleaning services (Ilsøe and Larsen 2021).

The organizational dimension

The union 3F has in recent years experienced membership loss. The union has lost more than one in three members within the last decade as illustrated in chapter 2. It is especially within sectors such as private services, agriculture, fishing and forestry that the union density is particularly low. These sectors are also characterised by an increase in traditional and emerging forms of non-standard work such as platform work, part-time contracts of few or no guaranteed working hours and temporary employment (Larsen & Ilsøe 2020). To respond to the declining union density within the sectors that 3F typically organise, 3F has initiated a number of union initiatives and discussions on organising strategies to retain and attract new members. Some of these strategies aim to reach new groups by identifying and supporting different grassroots activities. Part of the overall strategy is to organise these new groups of potential members by illustrating the good

example of what unionising can actually change rather than waiting for members to join and then act, according to the union representatives interviewed. Although the Hilfr agreement initially was not part of this overall strategy, the trends of membership decline and the growth of new forms of work, in addition to the strategic aim of showing the good example, motivated the union to participate in negotiations, initially led by the platform company. In fact, it was negotiations in the Government led Disruption Council with representatives by the digital platforms and 3F that reportedly sparked the negotiations and led the social partners to explore the possibilities for regulating digital labour platforms via collective bargaining. The experiences with the platform agreement has spurred further union action and focus points, in the attempt to organise platform workers.

When it comes to organising platform workers, an important point for a local union branch interviewee was that they prefer not to force union membership on anyone, but instead provide facilities and support for the platform workers, who wish to discuss the current working conditions, when working via a digital platform. The focus for those active within the local union branches is on 'doing union', and the union representatives interviewed consider the group of active platform workers as a sub-branch within a local union branch, even if they are not union members. Although this approach is in line with the overall organising strategy of 3F to illustrate by example what unionizing can in fact change, the 3F faces some challenges in recruiting members among groups of foreign workers. 3F union has allocated a considerable number of resources on raising awareness among platform workers about the Danish trade union movement and the Danish collective bargaining system, since many platform workers originate from countries with very different traditions for collective bargaining and strikingly different trade union experiences. In general, the Danish trade unions

2. Tax deductions can only be obtained if the income is taxable and declared by the cleaning contractor. In Denmark, every-one has a personal income tax allowance at D 5505,28, which is only taxed 8 % in labour market contribution, a gross tax paid by all employees to help finance labour market expenses).



often struggle to organise these groups of workers, which has motivated a number of joint social partner initiatives to combat social dumping and secure that wage and working conditions especially among migrant workers correspond to statutory and collective agreed labour standards (Arnholtz & Andersen 2018; Jäehrling et al. 2018; Ilsøe & Madsen 2017).

The difficulties often associated with organising groups such as migrant workers, young people and platform workers have raised awareness within 3F about the importance of using social media platforms. According to the union representatives interviewed, social media platforms are paramount to organising platform workers, especially those originating from outside Denmark. For example, platform workers rarely meet in person, as there is no physical workplace, where platform workers can casually meet their “co-workers” / other platform providers. This issue has been raised by other research as well (Ilsøe 2017). Therefore, 3F invests considerable resources in trying to reach platforms workers via social media, especially by organising or tapping in on already existing online groups for platform workers via Facebook or WhatsApp. The power of social media in relation to new forms of work organization is to share information such as news articles by union representatives, political discussions or similar type of digital pamphlets. Facebook and WhatsApp are also used as a discussion forum and to organise events and activities.

Lastly, only few platform workers are union members which may question the legitimacy of the novel platform collective agreement. In Denmark, Danish trade unions have in principle the mandate from workers to sign collective agreements and the affected workers have the possibility through ballots to voice their opinion and vote in favour or reject the proposed collective agreement. In the case of the Hilfr-agreement, the challenges tied to 3F’s bargaining mandate are twofold in that there seemingly are firstly

issues related to the unions’ bargaining mandate due to the low union density among platform workers, and secondly with respect to carry out ballots to allow the platform workers to reject or accept the collective agreement according to the interviewees. Collective agreements traditionally represent organised workers’ demand for well-regulated work conditions and wages. However, the platform collective agreement is also to some extent to protect the wage and working conditions of “ordinary” employees in the private cleaning sector by addressing undeclared work and social protective gaps with regards to wages, holiday and sickness pay, etc.

Moreover, the Hilfr agreement also seems to have spurred new discussions and led to various attempts to negotiate new platform agreements with other digital labour platforms or even a potential sector level agreement covering platform workers. In Spring 2021, 3F Transportation signed a sector level agreement on food delivery with The Danish Chamber of Commerce, which was implemented by the company Just Eat that facilitate service delivery in Autumn 2021 (Ilsøe and Larsen 2021).

User profiles and trends

Most platform workers using Hilfr are young people, typically migrants, students and long-term unemployed and non-union members, reflecting some of the tendencies among low wage service work described by other research (Ilsøe 2020; Ilsøe & Larsen 2020; Oppegaard et al. 2019; Kalleberg & Vallas 2017). They often use the platform to gain a foothold on the Danish labour market, which can be especially difficult for migrant workers with limited local language qualifications, young people and individuals with reduced work capabilities due to language barriers and high productivity demands (Jesnes & Rolandsson 2020, 22; Ejrnæs 2006; Kongshøj Madsen 2004). Moreover, many Hilfr workers tend to work few hours on the platform and often their online income is a supplement to their

main source of income rather than their main job (Ilsøe et al. 2021). This is also often a main reason why many Hilfr workers tend not to be union members as membership fees are often considered too high (full-time membership fee D 744 per year; part-time membership fee: D 564 per year), especially when considering that most platform workers earn less than D 3,356 per year from their online platform tasks (Ilsøe & Madsen 2017).

Service assessment

While the Hilfr agreement attracted substantial media attention and the Prime Minister and other important people participated in its launch, the number of Super Hilfrs has increased slowly after an initial period of rapid growth. In spring 2021, approximately 70 Super Hilfrs compared to 200 Freelance Hilfrs had been active on the Hilfr platform within the last three months (Ilsøe and Larsen 2021).

Trade unionists

Following the strategy described in the aforementioned sections, 3F's main aim by participating in negotiations of collective agreements is for workers to experience what the union is about before (hopefully) joining the union as a member. Although not turning membership rates, the Hilfr agreement may have raised awareness at a broader level, i.e. more involvement of non-member platform workers since the agreement was signed, according to a union interviewee: For example, a local union branch has seen a significant increase in platform workers attending local union meetings and organising initiatives targeted platform workers. A union representative interviewee stated that in some local union branches, they operate with differentiated membership fees due to the workers' limited work hours on the platform. Most cleaners active on the Hilfr platform tend, similar to their peers active on other platforms such as couriers, to be mainly students that use their paid platform activities to supplement their

main income such as student allowances etc. (Ilsøe et al. 2021). For these reasons some local union branches offer significantly lower membership fees to platform workers.

Workers / Users

The platform workers interviewed appreciate among others the responsibility taken on by 3F to secure a safe work situation for both workers and customers in the online labour market. Although few platform workers are union members, those interviewed emphasized that the agreement made them more comfortable to choose Hilfr over other cleaning platforms, – findings which are also echoed by other recent Danish studies on digital platforms and their users (Ilsøe 2020; Ilsøe and Larsen, 2021).

Moreover, the users highlighted that working through the Hilfr platform is in fact a very good opportunity for foreign people studying in Denmark, as there is easy access to a paid job, flexible scheduling of work hours and the worker learn about the country at the same time (Ilsøe 2020).

Employer assessment / platform company

According to a Hilfr CEO interviewee, the issue of *representation* was initially perceived as a challenge, as the union did not seem to be in sync with what the workers wished for in a collective agreement. Later, the union conducted a focus group among Super Hilfrs, which increased the knowledge on both sides. The Hilfr CEO also echoes a point raised by the interviewed union representatives in that many of the platform workers are foreigners, who often have limited knowledge of the Danish collective bargaining model (Ilsøe 2020).

Summing up: First collective agreement paving the way for new discussions

The Hilfr agreement as a union service is innovative in many ways. For example, it allows employees to choose their employment status, while collective agreements traditionally secures



only the rights for individuals with employee status. Moreover, traditionally, collective agreements arise from organised workers (and unions) pressure, but in this instance, the first negotiations of the agreement was initiated by the employer.

Moreover, for the Danish trade union 3F, the agreement was not initially considered a union service to attract new potential members, but mainly to secure wage and working conditions. Instead, the organising potential of members was mainly seen as a positive side-effect. This view echo 3F's overall organising strategy to fight for a well-regulated labour market to attract members, rather than the other way around. Moreover, 3F has a unique tradition to seek out/identify grass root activities (members and non-member initiatives), and connect these within the union. This is partly an experience from the larger campaign activities among employee groups, i.e. bus drivers as described in chapter 3. Signing the collective agreement with the Hilfr platform seems to have inspired the union 3F to devote more time and resources to activities among platform workers, for instance among food courier service workers. Thus, the agreement seems to have inspired for further action on securing well-regulated wage and working conditions among platform providers.

4.4 Case study: HK service bureau for freelancers

What is HK service bureau for freelancers?

In fall 2018, The Union of Commercial and Clerical Employees in Denmark (HK) launched an independent, but non-profit company called HK Service Bureau for Freelancers. While the union-led company in principle employs the freelancers, it does not have all traditional employer responsibilities, such as the managerial prerogative, involving instruction of work tasks. Instead, it is client company similar to temporary work agencies that hold the managerial prerogative, while it is the individual freelancer

Basic facts of the service

- **Name of service:** HK's S Service Bureau for Freelancers
- **Union affiliation:** The Union of Commercial and Clerical Employees in Denmark (HK) administrates the service, but membership is not required to use the service. However, most users are union members.
- **Type of services:** Invoicing service and advice on freelance tasks in exchange for 8 % fee. Most tasks are within IT and graphic design. Freelancers are covered by collective agreements when working.
- **Size:** From January to August 2020, 34 users invoiced 127 tasks in total, varying from 2 to 160 hours. 14 users only used the service one time and 20 used it repeatedly.

Source: Interview with trade union representative; HK 2018.

that finds and administrates their own projects. The freelance bureau also offers various business services such as help with auditing, tax returns, management of contracts, invoices, payments, sick pay, plus accident insurance, in exchange for a fee, currently 8 per cent of the value of individual contracts or assignments. It is only freelancers – union members as well as non-union members – primarily offering assignments related to administrative work that can join the service bureau. Thereby, the service bureau for freelancers is open to freelancers that are not union members of HK or other unions. Registration with the bureau is free of charge, and fees are only charged when freelancers use the freelance bureau as a service for new contracts and projects. In addition, the union offers legal advice and guidance regarding the freelancers' contracts with clients, but only if they are HK union members. In addition, there are limitations as to the number of times freelancers can use the freelance bureau for their individual assignment, where the upper limit is three successive assignments corresponding to three months full-time work.

At the time of writing, the freelance bureau administrates around 15-20 invoices per month. The year 2020 seemed to be a year of growth for the freelance bureau, even though marketing activities (i.e. advertising the bureau) have been paused due to the corona pandemic. In fact, in September 2020, the bureau had turnover record and has continued to expand throughout 2021.

However, the size of the freelance bureau in terms of the number of people, amount of work hours and tasks varies considerably according to seasonal fluctuations, etc.

HK administrates and finances the freelance bureau, which at the moment is financially sustainable, meaning that the service fees paid by the users is equal to the costs of administrating the service, in accordance with the aim of the bureau being non-profit. In October 2020, the freelance bureau employed a handful of union employees that work part-time with the bureau and combine their work tasks with the bureau with other tasks within the HK union. One person handles the telephone and mail inquiries. 2-3 persons are back-up in case this person falls ill or is otherwise unavailable. One person administrates the payments where the individual freelancer decides if they want a monthly or two-week payslip while there is one person responsible for invoicing the clients. Another is the controller and lastly, there is the project manager which deals with politics and development of the service.

Methods used

The present case study is explorative and draws on interviews with actors involved with the HK service bureau for freelancers. The interview data has also been triangulated with relevant policy documents and pamphlets as well as online material on HK's union strategies, motives and actions.

We interviewed a union consultant working with the service, a local union branch representative and two freelancers invoicing tasks through the bureau. The first freelancer interviewed complete tasks for different clients while the other freelancer interviewed has worked full-time for a single client/organisation for 1.5 years invoicing the hours worked each month via the bureau. The union representative interviewee provided contact information for the recruitment of the two freelancer interviewees.

History and objectives: Addressing the future of work and associated risks for members

Prior to setting up the Service Bureau for Freelancers (in fall 2018), HK established a development lab in 2017 with two objectives: 1) How to improve members' competences in the future of work; 2) How to address or lift new forms of work and work life arrangements in the future labour market. For the latter aim, the union representative interviewed was contacted by the lab due to the person's thorough knowledge on the issue of non-standard work. The interviewee had hosted several seminars for freelancers on the issue of freelance provision, and had noticed an insecurity among freelancers regarding issues like VAT, company registration, tax payments, invoicing activities, order confirmations etc. Subsequently, the work on developing the freelance bureau started to evolve; and it was very much an attempt to provide a solution for these members to test the freelance career without the insecurities and risks often associated with freelance work such as underemployment and lower levels of social and employment protection (Larsen & Ilsøe 2021; Larsen et al. 2018). The union considered the service bureau a viable way to address some of these challenges often associated with freelance work. A concern prior to launching the bureau was whether the solution would violate Danish and EU competition laws in terms of risks of price-fixing, i.e. cartel formation between enterprises (LO 2016: 26). However, to this day, there have been no cases (Larsen et al. 2018). Thus, the HK Service Bureau for Freelancers is an example of a novel union-led response that aims to secure wage and working conditions for freelance workers. The freelancers using the bureau are covered by collective agreements when working through the bureau. It is the sectoral collective agreement covering salaried employees working with commerce, science and administrative service work that applies for the freelancers working



via the Bureau. This sectoral agreement is negotiated between the employer association Danish Chamber of Commerce (DE) and the trade union HK (HK Privat et al. 2020/2023). This is an untraditional arrangement, as the trade union HK then in theory is both employer and trade union for the freelancers working through the bureau. The agreement secures that freelancers working via the Bureau accrue a number of collective agreed social benefit rights such as paid sick leave, holiday, pensions, paid overtime etc., provided they meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the collective agreement. Wage levels are, in line with the collective agreement, subject to individual wage bargaining between the individual freelancer and employer. However, HK has set a lower hourly wage threshold for freelancers working through the bureau, corresponding to the lower quartile of comparable jobs within the sector in order to prevent social dumping. Only freelancers that comply with this minimum wage level are allowed to use and work through the HK bureau, which differs from other types of invoicing services, in that they may decline potential users due to the price charged by the freelancer. While non-members of HK tend to be rejected with reference to them undercutting themselves, their peers and the business in general, the situation is slight different for freelancers who are union members. Freelancers that are union members of HK are thus offered advice by the Bureau on how to renegotiate a more appropriate fee or timeframe with the client. The fact that freelancers gain the status as employees rather than self-employed when working through the HK bureau also allow them to accrue rights to unemployment benefits, insofar they meet the eligibility criteria. Moreover, the Bureau also provides an accident insurance, but only for freelancers working through the bureau on assignments concerning deskwork. Freelancers that are involved in craftsmanship (i.e. construction and building services) cannot use

the bureau, as this type of work is not covered by the accident insurance of the service bureau due to the high insurance premiums involved.

The organizational dimension of the bureau

Although HK's Service Bureau for Freelancers was not initially a strategic recruitment initiative, the bureau forms part of HK's broader organising strategies. HK's overall organising strategy involves among others the idea of meeting their members at eye level for the union to appear more relevant to members, i.e. aiming for more relational contact on an everyday basis, rather than to convince non-members to sign-up without showing *why* unionising matters (Ibsen & Scheuer 2017; HK-Denmark, 2021b; HK-privat, 2019b). In fact, HK's service bureau was reportedly an attempt by HK to secure better working conditions and wages for freelancers. Moreover, there also seems to be an organising element in launching the freelance bureau in that the freelance bureau is open to both union members and non-members, but only union members have access to all services offered by the Bureau. This includes, for example, the series of seminars on freelance work and various services related to price-setting and task conditions. Thus, the bureau may have a positive knock-on effect on attracting new potential members and incentivise freelancers using the Bureau to become members of HK.

While the Service Bureau itself is open to non-members, the combination of other parameters may have attracted new potential union members (and possibly new Bureau users). Firstly, the union has strengthened its effort to provide quality services for its members working as freelancers. For example, on top of the services provided by the bureau, individual local union branches offer advice and various service for freelancers, which has been part of HK's overall strategy of more eye-level relational work. However, in Autumn 2020, HK initiated a process

of centralising the advice service for freelance work provided by the individual local branches with the aim to anchor the various freelance services centrally within the sector union. This centralisation process is still ongoing and has reportedly been initiated due to individual local branches tend to receive few inquiries regarding freelance work. This infrequency of users seeking advice, challenges to some degree the knowledge building among the advisers at the local union branches. Thus, the centralisation of services aims to strengthen the union's advice service to freelance members.

The union representatives interviewed highlighted that the infrequent inquiries for advice may be due to either 1) that there are few freelancers when counting at local branch level, or 2) that members are unaware of the freelance services in the individual local union branches because it is not advertised sufficiently, causing members not to seek help. Thirdly, the corona crisis has caused HK to reconsider this infrequency of requests for freelance advice. In fact, the union has recently seen an increasing number of participants at the seminars on freelance work. This may partly be explained by the fact that all freelance seminars converted to online activities due to the Corona crisis and subsequently national lockdown. This growing interest of online seminars has reportedly given HK reasons to believe that the volume of members considering freelance work may be more widespread than first assumed, since many participate in these online activities. In addition, the union has seen an increase in members during the Corona crisis, a crisis that has caused increasing unemployment rates, but seemingly also has made it more legitimate for members to seek help on issues with freelance work, especially online. The combined effects of these factors may thus have contributed to increased membership rates as well as attracted more users to HK's service bureau for freelancers. . Lastly, HK wishes reportedly to set-up a network

or other forms of collaboration around the service bureau, to increase the user segment further. There have also been discussions internally within HK to anchor their Bureau within the broader Danish Trade union movement, involving other relevant trade unions under the broad umbrella of the Danish Trade Union Confederation (FH). For instance, the trade union Danish Association of Professional Technicians (TL) has a similar initiative for their members that was set up in 1992, but it has a slightly different set up. Unlike HK service bureau for freelancers, , the freelance bureau by TL targets specific occupational groups such as designers, artists etc. and has in the past applied differentiated membership fees depending on whether users were union or non-union members (Larsen et al. 2018).

User profiles and trends

The service's user groups comprise of different profiles. The two main groups are firstly *unemployed*, who need to meet eligibility criteria for unemployment benefits and wish to strengthen their CV and secondly *part-time workers* that wish to supplement their employment with freelance assignments. Other groups include older workers that combine their early retirement pensions with freelance assignments as well as a smaller group of full-time freelancers, who seek a simple yet full solution to administrate freelance work.

Whereas some of the users of the HK Service Bureau work as freelancers voluntarily, others seem to work freelance more *involuntarily*. For example, one of the users interviewed had been working full-time for the same client for 1.5 years. The corona-crisis has emphasised this issue: During Spring and summer 2020 many workers, notably freelancers lost their jobs or work tasks and subsequently, HK saw an increase in users, notably among those who were unemployed before the Corona pandemic and had nearly exhausted their rights to unemployment benefits. ➡

Service assessment

The union HK consider the returning users a proxy for success

The union interviewees consider the number of freelancers that return to use the services offered by the freelance bureau as a proxy that the bureau is seen as useful and offers relevant services by the freelancers. According to a union interviewee, it is to some degree surprising that there has not been any cases or even reluctance towards the untraditional approach, i.e. that the union de facto employs its own members. Although there has been no official complaints, the union interviewee reported that some users have been reluctant towards the fact that the HK union logo is visible on invoices sent to their clients. However, this wish by some freelancers to remove the HK union logo has thus far been rejected by the union with reference to that the union does not wish to conceal that the Bureau is union-led. Moreover, the union representatives interviewed also consider the increasing number of freelancers affiliated with the bureau, as an indication that its services are highly relevant and in many respect successful, despite it being untraditional, yet an innovative approach.

Users are highly satisfied, but request additional task provisioning service

In this case study, the users interviewed appear in general highly satisfied with the services provided by the Bureau. In addition, the union consultant interviewed highlights that they have mainly received positive responses from their users. According to our interviewees, users tend to be especially pleased with escaping the paper work associated with freelance work, i.e. filing tax returns and the annual VAT accounting. The simplicity of the service is stressed as a major attraction, including that the payment paid from the HK Bureau is simply theirs to spend with no subsequent tax, VAT or similar payments. In addition, the users interviewed highlight the efficiency and fast responses by the bureau as a

very positive aspect of the service. One thing that is repeatedly requested by users, both according to the union representative as well as interviewed users, is for the bureau to add a match function to the service, i.e. online platform that facilitates the contact between potential business clients and the individual freelancer ala the emerging labour platforms seen in a number of countries worldwide. However, while this to some extent resembles a platform that HK already has (job bank for traditional, full-time or permanent positions), a task matching service is considered to be too expensive for the union to manage, if the jobs offered are only of e.g. 5 hours duration on average, according to a union interviewee. However, there seems to be a need among users for an easier and more secure access to work tasks.

Summing up: High satisfaction with bureau but indication of need for safer provision of jobs

Summing up our case study, the union led service bureau for freelancers is perceived by the users interviewed as successful. In addition, the case study suggests that in the future, the bureau will perhaps be anchored between several actors within the Danish trade union movement. The study also indicates a wide interest among both users, clients and within the trade union in developing a safe gig platform. At the time of writing, no platform companies are involved in developing such a platform in collaboration with the trade union movement.

Despite an attempt to move services closer to the members and be more in touch with members on a day-to-day basis, HK aims to centralise its advice services on freelance work rather than having local union branches to provide services. The idea is to anchor and administrate the freelance services with the sector union. In addition, the corona crisis seems to have paved the way for more online interaction and perhaps opened for a more legitimate interest among people seeking advice on freelance work. These trends combined with

the service bureau seem to have attracted more union members.

In sum, the HK service bureau for freelancers resembles an attempt by the trade union HK to test the grounds of union-led responses in the areas of regulating freelance work. It is a novel response to the risks often associated with freelance work. However, this initiative to set up a union-led freelance bureau also seems to pose some challenges that are yet to be answered. I.e., that the union in fact employs members in order to support them. This arrangement seems to blur the traditional employee-employer divide as well as raise a series of questions related to how disputes are to be solved and how traditional means of industrial action will unfold in a situation, where a trade union in a sense represents both sides of industry. At the time of writing, there has not yet been any cases, but it calls for further research into such dynamics and not least follow how this will evolve in the future.

4.5 Case study: Flexwerker

Flexwerker is a workers collective for a group of non-standard workers, mainly academics. They describe themselves as an experiment that aims to unite a community of workers, where the only common denominator is the lack of an open-ended full-time position.

Basic facts of the service

- **Name of service:** Flexwerker
- **Union affiliation:** The Danish Association of Masters and PhDs (DM) supported and financed the service, while the service was initially member driven. Two DM union members approached their union DM, suggesting to anchor the service project in the union. Membership was not required to use the service.
- **Type of services:** Thematic workshops and network activities and a single-publication magazine in print discussing flexible work.
- **Size:** The collective hosted around 10 workshops with varying participation. Many users only attended one workshop, others attended several. At a magazine launch event, around 200 participated during the event and 2500 magazines were printed with 250 being handed out at the launch and since then, all copies have been handed out. Today, the Flexwerker collective is a cooperative bureau of five people.

Source: Interview with service providers; Flexwerker 2019; 2020.

The initiative emerged as a grass-root initiative in 2017 where two female academics wanted to engage and mobilise people around the theme of non-standard work that reached beyond just forming a group and the ongoing academic debates. The initiative thus evolved without any ties to the Danish trade union movement. It was first later in 2018 after the two female academics approached the the Danish trade union Danish Association of Masters and PhDs (DM) and DM subsequently liked their ideas and agreed to financially support the activities of Flexwerker that the initiative was tied to the union. . Both the union and the initiators saw great potential in the collaboration to engage members and reach out to different groups of non-standard workers. Today, Flexwerker is organised as a cooperative with five people that each share the ownership. The types of services provided by Flexwerker is mainly organising thematic workshops and various and networking activities that aim to provide a trust-based and safe space for sharing work experiences regarding non-standard work. Flexwerker also aims to provide a platform for non-standard workers to share their work experiences with a broader audience such as the trade union movement, the employers and the wider public debate. Today, Flexwerker continues to work on these issues, but they also offer consultancy work in the fields of communication, design, facilitation and research for unions and others with interests in labour market related issues.

Methods used

The present case study is the first research conducted on this specific union service and therefore the case study is highly explorative. We interviewed the two founders and original initiators of Flexwerker, along with four union representatives affiliated with DM and three service users of Flexwerker, who have participated in activities organised by Flexwerker. The interviewees were recruited first by contacting a union representative, who



participated in an article about Flexwerker in DM's newsletter. This union representative then provided the contact details for the other union representative, who then provided the contact details for representatives from Flexwerker. The Flexwerker's project managers facilitated the contact to the services users taking part in our study.

The interview data has been triangulated with desk research of a range of documents such as the initial project description, meeting notes from general assemblies, articles published in the union member magazine, policy documents on union strategies and actions representing the academic professionals and other web sources.

History and objectives

In 2017, two female academics took the initiative to form Flexwerker. Their main aim was to raise awareness of wage and working conditions of non-standard workers within academic professions, notably in social science and humanities. Their target groups were not only the broader public debate, but also non-standard workers and the Danish trade union movement, notably DM, which reportedly tended to overlook issues related to non-standard work. In fact, the Flexwerker initiators wanted to use Flexwerker as a platform for non-standard workers to develop a common identity as well as share their personal stories that they may feel are private, but tend to be fairly common among most non-standard workers.

The Flexwerker initiative aimed to address the ambivalences towards non-standard work within DM, including raising awareness of the risks often associated with flexible work, such as involuntary non-standard work and non-standard workers' struggles to qualify for unemployment benefits. According to the interviewees, DM tends to offer one-size-fits-all services, and organise their services around the idea of the traditional full-time open-ended contract whereby non-standard workers and their situation to some degree receive less

attention. This is not unique for DM, but seems to be challenges facing other Danish trade unions. In fact, the Danish trade union movement tend to have difficulties when it comes to include issues related to non-standard workers' situation, even if individual unions' strategies have changed in recent years from trying to ignore and exclude atypical workers to increasingly representing their interests and consider such groups during collective bargaining and policy development (Larsen & Mailand 2018).

As a response to these ambivalences, the Flexwerker founders send a project description to one of the members on the board of the trade union DM Private sector (DMP), who then presented the project to the rest of the board of DM. The project was then handed over to the DM secretariat for consideration. The DM secretariat found that the Flexwerker had a unique approach due to their positive and proactive strategies for coping with non-standard employment without having standard employment as an ideal. Moreover, the idea of a co-creation process leading to an analogue magazine and the strong appeal of developing an identity of non-standard workers from the Flexwerker was considered as an added value to the traditional services of DM.

The Flexwerker initiative introduced the term "Flexwerker" (Dutch for temporarily employed (Flexwerker 2019)), and the project description marked the launch of Flexwerker as a form of organisation. Today, Flexwerker has organised themselves as an employee owned cooperative, comprising of five people³ each with shared ownership. The concept Flexwerker is considered by the two founders in a Danish context to be a

■
3. Flexwerker is registered as a co-operative society with limited liability (in Danish an 'A.M.B.A.'). It is a company form with demand of two or more participants and the company is aloud to a varying number of participants – i.e. free exit and entry. There are no capital requirements and the company is regulated by a special limited business law in addition to the company's own by-laws, and must submit an annual report. There is equal voting rights regardless of capital contributions. The company must conduct business, and is obliged to promote the financial interests of the participants. Participants are not personally liable for the company obligations – only the company property is liable (the limited liability) (Erhvervsstyrelsen 2020).

concept free of the negative associations often tied to alternative and emerging forms of work. For example, concepts often used to describe these emerging forms of work are *non-standard work*, *precarious employment*, *hybrid work*, *insecure work*, etc. (Flexwerker 2019). According to the Flexwerker founders, these more traditional descriptions of emerging forms of work tend to be highly normative and often fail to capture the workers' own experiences – including both the constant flexibility demand and the joy of flexible work.

Following the green light from the DM secretariat, Flexwerker began to develop their services in collaboration with a handful of people from not only the trade union DM, but also the initiators' own network. One of the main initiatives proposed by Flexwerker was to produce and publish a magazine that included the perspective of flexible workers. The magazine would include stories of personal work experiences told by flexible workers as well as explore alternative ways of organising when the unions appear less engaged. In the process of producing the magazine, Flexwerker arranged several workshops with the aim of producing content to the magazine. They also arranged around 10 workshops that were open to both union- and non-union members. The format of the various workshops differed, involving physical artefacts and objects, for example creative cut-out collages of former job applications, creating self-portraits of paper, book pages and pictures, sewing banners to draw a parallel to the tradition of banners in the Danish trade union movement (Flexwerker 2019). In addition, Flexwerker organised a series of workshops, podcasts, linked in and facebook posts, blogs and projects on other related themes that non-standard workers – union members as well as non-members deemed important such as dealing with Corona crisis as a non-standard worker (Flexwerker, 2021).

In June 2019, the magazine “Flexwerker” was launched at an event in Copenhagen with around 200 participants and around 250 magazines were

handed out. The content of the magazine was produced at the aforementioned workshops and included co-authored pieces on the flexible work life by the collective during fall 2018 and spring 2019. More than 100 people contributed to the content of the magazine (Flexwerker 2019). Since then, Flexwerker has among others struggled with a lack of resources and sense of purpose before the organisation with the help from DM emerged into a workers co-operative. This transition process gave the founders the opportunity to secure a more solid ground for the organisation both in terms of funding and utilising their knowledge-based resources to develop their collaboration with DM, other trade unions and various key stakeholders on issues related to flexible work, non-standard work and self-organising activities, etc.

The organizational dimension

While DM has seen an increase in member rates in the last decades (see chapter 2 and 3), there seems to be room for improvement when it comes to their organising approach when asking the interviewed trade union representatives and members. According to the interviewees, the community based network and bottom-up approach from 2016 (strengthened in 2019), tend to be highly valued *in theory* by DM, but appears to meet some challenges when transposing these ideas into *practice*. For example, some of the interviewees reported that DM in the past seemed somewhat distanced from its members in non-standard employment, but this has reportedly changed with the launch of Flexwerker and other union activities related to non-standard work. These activities, not least Flexwerker, illustrated the importance of endorsing grass-root initiatives emerging from the shop floor to better apprehend and address the members' wishes and concerns. According to the interviewees, these insights seem to have contributed to DM adjusting their focus and aims in order to appear more relevant in the eyes of their members and potential members, including non-standard workers. The latter is



also reflected in DM internal evaluation of their various union activities (DM, 2019). In fact, DM has reportedly changed their perception of their members and experienced organisational changes that increasingly emphasise the role of member driven networks and activities as institutionally embedded activities of DM. In the last few years, community based network activities involving and targeting different member groups within DM have been a main strategy to develop networks and engage members – standard as well as non-standard workers – in the various union activities. In this context, Flexwerker, seems to have sparked new discussions and served as a starting point for developing new and member-driven activities and dialogues.

User profiles and trends

Flexwerker as a union service targeted people with flexible work lives, and thus attracted various groups of non-standard workers such as multiple jobholders, part-time workers, temporary employees, freelancers and solo self-employed. The users work in both the public and private sector and some with jobs in both sectors as well as across several occupations. At the workshops and magazine launch, participants were primarily young people working in the culture and knowledge based sectors and with an overrepresentation of women. Both union and non-union members were welcome at these events but the founders estimate that most participants were union members, although there was no registration of union membership during the service activities.

Service assessment

Trade unionists

As described in the previous sections, the traditional membership base of DM has changed in recent decades, with a higher share of members being in non-standard employment. While this change in member structure was perhaps less clear to the union more broadly speaking, the

Flexwerker service contributed to changing this perception within DM and motivated the union to reconsider its organising strategy. Flexwerker has in many respect sparked debates and initiatives on various member driven activities and networks within DM. In fact, the union has seen an increase in both the numbers of members engaging in such networks and in the emergence of new grass-root initiated networks. However, the effects of such networks on recent membership trends is less clear, if not impossible, to disentangle.

Users

The interviewed users especially highlighted the activities by Flexwerker, which involved specific actions on issues associated with flexible work, such as not having a physical workspace and missing a workers' community. Some of the interviewees stressed that they had earlier participated in presentations and activities organised by DM, where the 'solutions' presented often were rather fluffy and tended to be of less relevance to flexible workers' situation. In addition, the interviewees stressed that it was a relief to meet people at the workshops organised by Flexwerker that understood that the flexible work life was not necessarily a last resort or an involuntary situation, but in fact an opt-in choice and enjoyable to many of the attendees. In addition the workshops organised by Flexwerker seemed to succeed in creating a confident space to share the vulnerability and mobilise people to come together to take action. For example, one workshop was held during a weekend and provided in many respect an overall framework to create a "a sense of belonging" among the participants. This sense of a "community spirit" appeared in many ways to respond to the sort of loneliness and feeling of not fitting in and form part of the traditional labour market. In fact, Flexwerker was perceived by interviewed users as an innovative approach to an issue that the Danish trade union movement often struggle to address.

Another positive aspect emphasised by the user interviewees was that the workshops involved physical artefacts and objects, for example making creative cut-out collages out of job applications and self-portraits of paper and pictures. The task of the sowing a banner to represent the group of flexible workers was especially received positive by the interviewees as it paralleled the tradition of banners in Danish trade union movement. In fact, the banners were afterwards brought to International Workers' Day on 1st of May. In addition, the magazine produced continue to be used as an organising instrument at workplace level as a starting point for conversations with potential members.

Summing up the case study

Flexwerker is a workers collective that initially emerged as a grass-root initiative and was later tied to the Danish trade union DM, which partly funded its various activities. Part of the Flexwerker initiative was to arrange a series of workshops for flexible workers as well as initiate and publish a magazine, which continues to be used as an inspirational catalogue and as starting-point for conversations among members in organising activities. The bottom-up approach (member-driven service) was considered novel to the DM union, but also posed some challenges along the way. However, the Flexwerker service seems to have changed the trade union's understanding of member involving activities in general, and have resulted in a series of new union led initiatives in the form of community based and member driven *networks*. While these network activities have no formal political power, they represent a space for members to meet up and address various issues related to their working lives; and to provide relevant information to the union on these issues. Moreover, the workshop services were open to both union members and non-union members. This was important, as the workshops also addressed the lack of awareness of risks associated with flexible work among social

partners, including the trade union movement more broadly. Therefore, all interested workers should be able to participate regardless of union membership. In this context, the Flexwerker initiative appears to have created a platform for non-standard workers to air their voice, and even paved the way for formal networks for various member groups in the trade union DM.

4.6 Summing up – Comparing the three case studies

The three selected case studies of innovative union services share some similarities, but also important differences when it comes to the processes around their development and aims, target groups and potential impact and ties to the selected sector unions' other strategies and actions to expand their membership base.

A common feature across the three services of the Hilfr-agreement, HK's service bureau for freelancers and Flexwerker is that they all emerged as grass-root initiatives with Flexwerker and the Hilfr-agreement initially emerging outside the established Danish trade union movement. HK's service bureau for freelancers was the result of a union-led grass root initiative that emerged as an idea from their in-house HK- lab that was set up in 2017 to facilitate the development of innovative union services. Moreover, the initial strategy for developing these three initiatives were primarily to raise wage and working conditions among distinct groups of non-standard workers such as freelancers, digital platform workers, fixed-term workers and multiple jobholders and through these efforts aim to have positive knock-on effects on the union density. The effects on the union density is less clear in all three case studies. However, we do find that these initiatives together with other and often related union activities seem to have led to greater awareness of non-standard work and the associated risks both among the Danish trade unions and across different groups of non-standard workers. In fact, non-standard work appears to be high on the agenda in nearly



all Danish trade unions and has also increasingly become a key theme on the collective bargaining agenda in most sectors including those we study. In this context, we also see that these three initiatives to varying degree appear to have sparked new debates and discussions within the individual unions when it comes ways to approach and develop services targeting employees in non-standard employment. In fact, they seem in different ways to have inspired new innovative service development in their respective unions. When it comes to the differences identified across the case studies, we find that their target groups differ slightly, and they have in different ways inspired new innovative service developments in their respective unions. For example, the Flexwerker initiative appears to have contributed to strengthening the ideas of community-based and member driven networks within the trade

union DM, where this form of workers' collective have mushroomed within DM in terms of both union-led and grass-root initiated networks. Also the Hilfr agreement seems to have served as a source of inspiration for other company-based and sector agreements that aim to regulate wage and working conditions in the Danish platform economy. Likewise, the HK service bureau for freelancers seems to have not only served as inspiration to other parts of the Danish trade union movement, but also stirred some debate. This is largely because the HK service bureau for freelancers to some extent blurs the traditional employee-employer divide by offering business-like services to freelancers and solo-self-employed as well as by taking on the traditional employer responsibility through signing a collective agreement as both the employer and employee representative. ♦

Conclusions

Summing up the main findings – conclusions and perspectives

In this report, we have addressed the main aims of the project that were common to all five national country studies. These include among others how European trade unions have responded to the recent membership trends and changes in the selected countries, their union strategies and actions adopted to expand their membership base. Our locus of analysis is particularly on innovative union services as an instrument to reach groups that are on the margins of the European trade union movement. The analyses comprised of three broad subsections: 1) a brief overview of the Danish Industrial Relations Model and its key stakeholders as well as recent union membership trends; 2) sector case studies of three purposefully selected Danish unions (3F, HK, DM) that organise different groups of workers, but have seen very different recent membership trends; and 3) in-depth case studies of selected union services (Flexwerker, HK-freelancebureau and the Hilfr-agreement) offered by 3F, HK and DM

respectively. Our main findings are:

- *Declining union density in a changing labour market:* The Danish labour market is changing, where some of the main changes involve shifts in the occupational labour market structure, declining union density (from 73 per cent in 1995 to 63 per cent in 2018), rising numbers of non-standard workers (one in three of all employed are non-standard workers in Denmark), notably in some sectors. There has also been a series of recent labour market reforms that combined with other changes seem to have contributed to the changing Danish trade union landscape in different ways. For example, recent labour market reforms such as the liberalization of the traditional Danish Ghent-system and the tightening of employees' rights to tax exemptions regarding their trade union fees, along with recent rulings from the European Court of Human Rights, seem to have influenced in various ways the recent trends in Danish union memberships. The historical



strong unions such as those affiliated with FH have lost members since the mid-1990s, while the academic unions and the alternative unions have seen a rapid growth with more workers joining these unions throughout the first decade of the new Millennium. However, these unions have not been able to attract and organise all the members that FH and its affiliated unions have lost, and thus the overall union density has declined in Denmark. Young people, migrant workers and non-standard workers are less likely to join a trade union as union members, and their union density is therefore comparatively lower than among other groups on the Danish labour market. Three purposefully selected sector unions were examined in this report (3F, HK and DM) as they are examples of three very different Danish unions that not only differ in terms of who they represent, their size and organizational structure, but they have also seen very different membership trends in the last two decades. 3F and HK are some of the largest Danish trade unions, organizing skilled and unskilled blue-collar workers (3F) and skilled and unskilled white collar workers (HK), but have lost nearly one in three members since the mid-1990s (although at a slower pace since 2014). DM is a smaller union organizing highly skilled workers/academics and has more than tripled their membership base during the same period, notably since 2018.

- *Innovative and traditional organising efforts to attract and retain members.* Danish unions have initiated a series of initiatives to reverse their recent membership loss. In this context, 3F, HK and DM are examples of Danish unions that have been at the fore and developed a series of novel measures to attract and retain members. Their various organizing efforts comprise of a plethora of strategies and actions that fall into different categories of services. Some of their recent initiatives reflect examples of innovative services in that they resemble path breaking initiatives or involve a rethinking of traditional

trade union activities in novel ways at least in a Danish context. These include for example union-led freelance bureaus, novel forms of workplace representatives such as educational agents, innovative collective agreements for freelancers and platform workers and union-led business services. Other union initiatives can be characterized as more traditional union services and actions such as nation-wide organizing campaigns, collective agreements, strengthening workplace representation, offering legal assistance and advice on further training and job search, but often with a novel twist. For example, several Danish unions have digitized many of their union services and utilized the new opportunities for online communities available through the various social media platforms such as Facebook, linked in etc. to reach new groups on the Danish labour market.

- *Flexwerker, HK's freelancebureau and the Hilfr-agreement – examples of innovative measures:* Our indepth case studies of three innovative union services such as Flexwerker, the Hilfr-agreement and HK's service bureau for freelancers share some similarities, not only by being innovative at least in a Danish context, but also on a number of other parameters. A common feature across these three union services is that they all resemble as grass-root initiative with Flexwerker and the Hilfr-agreement initially emerging outside the established Danish trade union movement. HK's service bureau for freelancers was the result of a union-led grass root initiative that emerged as an idea from their in-house HK- lab that was set up in 2017 to facilitate the development of innovative union services. Moreover, the three unions' initial strategy for developing innovative services were primarily to raise wage and working conditions among distinct groups of non-standard workers such as freelancers, digital platform workers, fixed-term workers and multiple jobholders. Increasing the union density were thus not the main aim, but

the three unions hoped that these efforts would with time have positive knock-on effects on the union density. In addition, we find that these novel initiatives have in different ways inspired new innovative service development in their respective unions. For example, the Flexwerker initiative appears to have contributed to strengthening the ideas of community-based and member driven networks within the trade union DM, where this form of workers' collective have mushroomed in recent years. Also the Hilfr agreement seems to have served as a source of inspiration for other company-based and sector agreements that aim to regulate wage and working conditions in the Danish platform economy. Likewise, the HK service bureau for freelancers appears to have not only served as inspiration to other parts of the Danish trade union movement, but also stirred some debate. The HK service bureau for freelancers blurs to some extent the traditional employee-employer divide by offering business-like services to freelancers and solo-self-employed as well as by taking on the traditional employer responsibility through signing collective agreements as both the employer and employee representative. Thus, critics stress that the union-led HK service bureau for freelancers may offer a path breaking solution to respond to some of the challenges associated with non-standard work. However, this initiative has also triggered a series new challenges, not least by blurring the traditional employer-employee divide that may have future implications for the very foundation of Danish Industrial Relations model. For example, who negotiate and represent the interests of workers and employers in such a constellation, where HK represents both sides of industries when it comes to collective bargaining and industrial actions.

- *The effects of the organizing efforts less clear:* It is difficult, if not impossible, to assess the effects of the Danish unions different organizing efforts due to the variety of contributing

factors that may impact recent membership trends such as demographic changes, changing occupational structures and shifting economic cycles. With this in mind, 3F, HK and DM imply in their various evaluation reports that their organising efforts have had some effect, not least with respect to regulating wage and working conditions, while it is less straightforward how their organizing efforts have influenced recent membership trends. This is also the case when it comes the impact of the innovative union services examined such as Flexwerker, HK's service bureau for freelancers and the Hilfr-agreement. However, we do find that these initiatives together with other and often related union activities seem to have led to greater awareness of non-standard work and the associated risks among, not only the Danish trade unions, but also among different groups of non-standard workers. In fact, non-standard work appears to be high on the agenda in nearly all Danish trade unions and has also increasingly become a key theme on the collective bargaining agenda in most sectors including those we study. In this context, we also see that these three initiatives to varying degree appear to have sparked new debates and discussions within the individual unions when it comes to how to approach and develop services targeting employees in non-standard employment. In fact, they seem in different ways to have inspired new innovative service development in their respective unions.

- *Organising logics underpinning Danish union services.* Different organizing logics seem to underpin both the innovative and more traditional Danish union services and recent actions. In this context and in line with the overall analytical framework developed by the project coordinators (Bellini et al. 2021), we identified three broad categories of union services: 1) *instrumental services* that target groups of workers and are important for collective actions; 2) *strategic services* that target



individual workers, but may also be important for collective actions; and 3) traditional individualized union services. Following their work, the nation-wide organising campaigns by 3F, HK and DM, along with their various efforts to develop community based networks and novel organisations for interest representation for emerging groups of workers on the Danish labour market, seem to be examples of the so-called instrumental services in that they seek to develop or strengthen existing and novel forms of workers' collective. Other types of actions by the three Danish sector unions appear to resemble more *strategic services* that target individual workers, but may also be important for collective actions. The collective agreements covering platform workers and freelancers are similar to some of the union supported grass root initiatives emerging outside the traditional Danish trade union movement such as Flexwerker and the Wolts workers group

examples of such strategic actions. Examples of the more *traditional individualized union services* include the various legal assistance, training, job-search etc. where there is limited intention to develop a workers' collective in the traditional sense.

In sum, the empirical analyses of Danish trade union services, including three in-depth case studies with purposefully selected union services by 3F, HK and DM are illustrative examples of ways that Danish trade union movement have attempted to renew itself by developing innovative and sometimes path-breaking initiatives by rethinking traditional union services in novel ways. It will be interesting to follow how these innovative services evolve and manifest themselves within the wider Danish trade union movement. However, they seem already to have served as a source of inspiration both within and outside the individual unions examined. ♦

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Appendix 1: List of interviewed organisations for this project

- Confederation of Danish Industries (DI)
- Danish chamber of Commerce (Dansk Erhverv)
- Danish Ministry of Employment
- Flexwerker: Founders of Flexwerker, users and trade union representatives of DM
- Hilfr agreements: Owners of the platform Hilfr, users and the trade union representatives of 3F
- HK-freelancebureau: initiators of HK-freelancebureau, users and trade union representatives of HK
- The Danish Association of Masters and PhDs (DM) its subsectors
- The Danish Confederation of Professional Associations (AC – Akademikerne) The Danish Trade Union Confederation (FH)
- The Union of Commercial and Clerical Employees in Denmark (HK) and its subsectors and local union branches
- The United Federation of Danish Workers (3F) and its subsectors and local union branches
- Voocali, owners of the digital platform Voocali and trade union representatives of HK
- WOLT, owners of the digital platform WOLT, users and trade union representatives of 3F
- Focus group interviews with union representatives of 3F, HK, Danish employers association (DI), digital platform owners of Hilfr, Wolt, platform workers/users, Ministry of Employment.
- National policy lab: 65+ participants were registered and took part in the debate on innovative union services and their effects on regulating wage and working conditions as well as membership trends and changes

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