

# Abstracts

## **Yellow or Red? Introduction of free choice in the union market**

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Since 2000 »yellow trade unions« have had a growth in memberships of 321 per cent. During the same period, unions belonging to the LO have lost a fourth of their members. Unions that are parties to collective bargaining are in deep crisis. Part of the explanation for this is the liberalization and free choice in the »union market« in 2002 with the law on cross-occupational unemployment benefits funds. Using multivariate logistic regression analysis of panel data for Danish employees, the relationships between union membership and a number of personal, economic and workplace characteristics are investigated. The analysis shows that e.g. low income, debt and private sector employment are positively related to »yellow« membership, whereas the effects are negative for membership in LO-unions. In contrast, vocational training and employment in larger companies are positively related to membership in LO-unions while opposite effects for »yellow« membership.

## **Membership movements and crisis in the Danish model of Labour Market Negotiation**

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The past decade thousands of Danish wage earners have turned their backs to the traditional labour movement in Denmark choosing instead the »yellow« or alternative organizations. By using survey data the article shows which specific traditional trade unions are most severely affected by the competition from the alternative organizations. In addition the article examines why wage earners choose to shift from a traditional trade union to an alternative organization. Especially the two traditional trade unions HK and 3F lose members to the alternative organizations. These two trade unions are more vulnerable to the competition from the alternative organizations in terms of both utility based – and normative motives for a trade union membership. Lastly, the article discusses the future consequences of this flight of members in relation to the regulation of the Danish labour market.

## **The Christian Trade Union and the Danish Collective Agreement System**

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Power and legitimacy of Danish trade unions are based on organizing workers in a »unitary trade union movement«. The strong negotiating position as a result of its monopoly on labour is transformed into institutional power in the agreement system and the political system as well. The Christian Trade Union seeks to provide an alternative in a parallel system of agreements. At the same time they try to challenge the monopoly of the agreement system. The article analyzes how The Christian Trade Union influence the unitary trade unions loss of power by examining the activity of the collective bargaining system and important institutional pillars.

## **The Challenge from East – Trade Union Strategies and Eastern European Migrant Workers**

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Eastern European labour migrants has proven to be a significant challenge for Danish trade unions due to their lower expectations regarding wages and working conditions and the unions limited success in organizing the migrants. The strategic response of Danish trade unions has been based partly on organizing and coverage of collective agreements, partly on a political dimension pushing public authorities and politicians to act against

social dumping. So far the unions have only managed to organize a minority of the new labour migrants. They have had some success in convincing the employers to include certain steps against social dumping in the collective agreements, however there has also been clear limits to this bipartite cooperation on this issue. More convincingly, the unions have created considerable political attention around the issue of social dumping. This has been based partly in on a tripartite dialogue which today has by and large become institutionalized, and partly on a media-strategy aimed at creating attention around Eastern European labour and the concept of social dumping.

## **The Loss of Union Power and the Crisis of Corporatism**

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The weakened position of the trade union movement has attracted much attention during several years including losses of membership and more difficult conditions for mobilization of members. Less attention has been given to the weakening of the labour market organizations – and especially the trade unions – in relation to formulation and implementation of labour market policies. Here the trade unions have lost influence, now being in a consultative role only as to the political decision making processes and no longer a permanent corporatist actor (in boards, counsels, commissions). The municipalization of employment policy has further contributed to this weakening of the role and power of trade unions. In this article the historical development of these changes are analyzed with a special focus on the changed institutional power of the trade union movement due to New Public

Management reforms of the employment system. These new forms of steering have huge importance as to the loss of institutional power, and to a much stronger degree than previously recognized – also by the central trade union actors themselves.

**Unions and welfare state retrenchment:  
Union federations and welfare-to-work  
reforms in Denmark, Germany and the US**

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The centres of this study are the welfare-to-work reforms that exemplify the welfare state retrenchments during the 1990'es and

2000'es in Denmark, Germany and the U.S. The analysis explores the differences in the approaches and the political processes of the three countries. The unions and union federations played varying roles and had different impacts on the preparations and implementations of the reforms due to structural, political and historical diversity. The study shows that the Danish federation experienced a change in its political role towards its traditional social partners and political allies as a reaction to its lack of inclusion on the political process. The German and American federations experienced a smaller change partly due to internal ambivalence and partly due to other political priorities. As a result, the unions are weakened, and there is a need for them to redefine their self-conception in the social policy agenda.