BAWEU – Danish country report

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introducing the BAWEU-project and the national report[1]

The title of the project is 'Business and Welfare – Companies' preferences and their collective action in the European Union' (BAWEU) – agreement number VS/2020/0141 – financed by European Commission's DG employment. The project covers Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Slovakia. The project is coordinated by the Italian research team (University of Milan).

The project has two specific research goals:

1. *To better understand how homogenous or differentiated business' preferences toward social policies are changing in a post-industrial and global economy*

2. *To better understand how the role of employers' associations is evolving in expressing and representing employers' preferences*

The research goals of the project lead to five main research questions:

- In the debate and in the welfare reforms, at what level of action are companies placed? How much does the business–unions–governments model still exist? How much are they willing to support a 'socialization of risk' and for what reasons?
- How much do companies support the need for collective action? In relation to social policies, are multinationals becoming rule makers in terms of individual action or in some cases (which ones?) do they also prefer to act collectively?
- In relation to welfare policy preferences, are there differences between manufacturing and the service sector and within these sectors?
- What is the role played at the EU level as a forum for companies to foster their social policy preferences and to discuss with institutions and trade unions? In this respect, how does the interaction among different national business associations work at the EU level (e.g. Business Europe)?

The current report includes only the findings from the Danish part of the project. There are three main sources of information: Desk research conducted September–December 2020; a qualitative interview study conducted November 2021 to March 2022 with 14 interviewees (see Annex A); and the Danish part of a survey[2] of all private sector companies with more

[1] Thanks to the project management as well as to Christian Lyhne Ibsen and Steen Navrbjerg, both FAOS, for useful suggestions throughout the project period and constructive comments to the present report. However, the responsibility for the content of the report is exclusively the author's.

[2] The survey covered all countries in the project and targeted companies in the private sector with more than 250 employees (workplace level) – however, smaller companies that reported a lower number of employees also answered to the survey as can be seen in S.1. In Denmark, 534 companies were contacted and 49 answered. Hence, the response rate was 9.2 %. In each table, the total number of companies (shown in the lower right corner of all tables as 'N') is the number that answered the specific question. Therefore, N is in most cases below 49. Moreo-

than 250 employees in the countries covered by the project, conducted May 2021 to February 2022 by the project's Slovakian team.

After this introduction – which summarizes the report's findings – the report includes information on a number of questions that have structured the empirical analyses of all the project partners' national studies. The findings are grouped into three sections following this introduction. Section 2 is about 'the who question'. This includes descriptions of the industrial structure in Denmark, of the structure of employers' associations (EAs) and of the largest Danish EAs. Furthermore, it includes information about multinational corporations (MNCs) and foreign direct investment. Section 3 addresses 'the what question'. It includes analyses – general as well as case analyses – with a focus on the aims of the EAs and two MNCs in the four selected welfare policy areas in the project: Pensions; unemployment; vocational education and training (VET); and family policies, and the content of these policies. The fourth section addresses 'the how question' about the different arenas the EAs use to work for their aims with regard to the four selected policy areas. It also includes a short presentation of the EAs' counterpart in several of these arenas, the Danish trade unions.

ver, it is not possible from the tables to know if the same companies that have answered are the same when looking across tables. The project management decided to use the survey despite the low number of responses, and decided to include answers from companies with less than 250 employees in order to bring the number of responses up. The author of this national report decided not to include questions/tables with fewer than 10 answers. The findings from the survey should be treated with care due to the low number of answers and lack of information of the representativeness for private sector companies in general on core parameters.

2. The who question

2.1 The structure of the national economy by macro-sectors and the main economic sectors

2.1.1 General trends in the country by macro-sectors

As indicated in table 2.1, when focusing on the four macro-sectors, Danish development follows the development seen in the EU-28 average, but the distribution between macro-sectors differs to some extent from it. The most marked difference is the relatively low level of 'industry', but consumption services are also below the EU average, whereas smart growth is slightly above the EU average and welfare services and public administration are clearly above. This is consistent with the classification of Denmark as belonging to a 'post-industrial model based on public and private Knowledge Intensive Service' (Colombo et al. 2022). The Danish development follows the EU-wide path towards less 'industry' and more 'smart growth'. This development can be described as a shift from a 'traditional balanced model with a strong public sector' in the 1990s to a current 'post-industrial model based on smart growth and public sector' (Colombo et al. 2020).

Table 2.1 Employees' distribution in DK and EU-28 over time (share of total employees, in percentage)

	Industry		Consumption services		Smart growth sectors		Welfare services and Public Administration	
	1997	2019	1997	2019	1997	2019	1997	2019
EU-28	26,0	19,1	35,1	36,2	11,2	15,4	27,4	29,8
Denmark	20,7	13,1	31,9	31,8	12,3	16,1	33,1	34,2

Source: Eurostat. NB: Agriculture is not shown in the table. Therefore the percentages do not add up to 100 %.

2.1.2 Enterprises' labour needs

Denmark has a vocational education and training system characterized by a strong role for social partners, a comparatively high level of public spending (especially for further training) and a so-called 'dual system' of education where apprentices in manufacturing, construction and private and public services alternate between school and workplace-based education and training for three to four years. Providing a sufficient number of so-called 'practical training places' for the workplace-based part is an ongoing challenge.

Table 2.2 Workers' profiles required in EU-28 and in Denmark (2019), in percentage

	Employees by skills' type			Employees by skills' type in industry			Job vacancy rate (by economic sector)				Unemployment in the previous year by skills' type			Unempl. rate (5 year-average)
	GH	SK	GL	GH	SK	GL	Total	Ind.	Cons.	Smart	GH	SK	GL	
EU-28	42.5	19.8	37.8	29.2	51.1	19.7	2.2	1.7	2.0	2.8	2.8	6.3	8.5	7.7
DK	49.1	13.3	37.5	43.7	37.7	18.5	1.7	1.6	1.7	2.7	2.8	3.2	6.8	5.6

Note: GH: General high skills. SK: Specific skills. GL: General low skills. Source: Project coordinators' own evaluation on Eurostat.

Although not visible in the description of the economic structure and national strongholds described above, the Danish workforce is on average relatively highly skilled, and in many branches a high-skill / high-wage equilibrium is still found, despite widespread pressure from globalization. As seen in table 2.2, general high skills are above the EU average, especially in industry (manufacturing). The table also indicates another feature of the Danish labour market, which is that the general high-skilled population has a similar level of unemployment to the general low-skilled population, whereas the EU average shows a much lower level for the former group. This relates to an ongoing debate, which was enhanced by the Great Recession, about the number of graduates that universities produce, especially in the humanities, which on average are harder to employ than the rest. Because of this debate, both the government in power and previous governments have tried to 'move' students from humanistic university education to vocational youth education. Hence, the faculties of the humanities (excluding social sciences) have seen severe cuts in recent years in both budgets and maximum uptake of students, and various attempts have been made to make it more attractive for young people to start youth education in areas with strong labour demands. So far, attempts seem to have been insufficient or unsuccessful. As in several other EU member states, strong competition among the youth and increased skills shortages can be foreseen in the coming years.

With regard to unfilled vacancies, table 2.2 depicts a Danish level that is below the EU average. This might reflect a high level of spending on the public employment service (the Jobcentres administered by the municipalities), so that the public employment service is well functioning comparatively – or it could have other reasons. What it does not reflect is the national debate. For at least a decade before the Great Recession and ever since (even though the economy recovered from 2013), employers have been reporting labour and skills shortages. One of the employers' complaints is that native Danes in general do not show sufficient willingness to accept physical, low-skilled private-service work, such as cleaning, which forces employers to hire migrant labour. Other complaints have been about skills shortages and bottlenecks in relation to an increasing number of especially skilled manual occupations. The response of some trade unions and Jobcentres has been that employers are too picky and risk-averse and that employers should use the infrastructure provided by the Jobcentres more.

Table S.1 Sectors and size of companies (survey), in numbers and percentage

	Industry (excluding construction)	Consumption services (including construction)	EU2020 "smart growth" services	Welfare state services and public administration	Total
0-249	21 %	43 %	29%	7 %	14
250-499	35 %	39 %	13%	13%	23
500-999	33 %	22 %	11%	33%	9
1000+	0 %	67 %	33%	0 %	3
Total	29 %	17 %	18%	14 %	49

Table S.1 shows the size and sector distribution from the 49 companies which answered the survey. Compared to the general distribution (table 2.1), the survey shows overrepresentation in industry and underrepresentation in consumption services, welfare state services and public administration, whereas smart growth services is close to the general distribution.

Table S.2 Type of workers according to the company's sector (survey), in numbers and percentages

	Industry (excl. construction)	Consumption services (incl. construction)	EU2020 "smart growth" services	Welfare state services and public admin.	N
Highly qualified workers	17 %	26 %	35 %	22 %	23
Craft, sales services and clerical workers (medium qualified)	23 %	62 %	8 %	8 %	13
Manual workers (low qualified)	64 %	36 %	0 %	0 %	11
Others	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	1
Total	29 %	38%	19 %	15 %	48

S.2 shows that the qualification levels among the workers varies considerably between the macro-sectors in the firms that answered the survey.

2.1.3 The role of small enterprises and the size of companies

In Denmark, there is a widespread perception that the companies are smaller – and that more employees work in small companies – than in most other European countries. However, as table 2.5 indicates, this perception is not accurate. Fewer employees work in micro-companies in Denmark than on average in Europe, and more work in companies with 10–250 employees, whereas the share working in companies with more than 250 employees is equal to the European average.

Table 2.3 The size of companies in selected European economies (share of total employed) (year 2017)

	Size of companies – total business economy*				Size of companies in industry (without construction)**				Size of companies in consumption services***				Size of companies in "smart growth" services****			
	Max 9	10-49	50-249	250+	Max 9	10-49	50-249	250+	Max 9	10-49	50-249	250+	Max 9	10-49	50-249	250+
EU-28	28.5	19.9	16.7	34.9	12.1	17.4	23.9	46.6	36.4	21.0	13.0	29.4	29.3	16.0	16.1	38.6
DK	19.9	23.8	21.1	35.2	8.9	17.5	27.5	44.6	22.7	25.5	18.4	33.4	22.8	20.1	20.6	36.6

Source: Eurostat. * Except financial, insurance activities, and public KIS. **= mining, manufacturing, electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities. ***= construction, trade, transportation and storage, accommodation and food service activities, real estate activities, arts, entertainment, recreation and other service activities. ****= information and communication, professional, scientific and technical activities, administrative and support service activities, financial and insurance activities. ****= public administration and defence, education and human health and social work activities.

More than 10 years ago, this pattern had already been described in a Danish study (Forsknings- og Innovationsstyrelsen 2008). The same study showed a near equal distribution of employment between the four size-categories used in table 2.3, but with a slightly higher share in the largest size-category.

A more recent Danish study has compared the sizes of Danish companies in terms of gross value added compared to other European countries. It finds that large companies in large

North European countries (the UK, France and Germany) make up a slightly higher percentage of gross value added than in Denmark, but that the distribution in Denmark is comparable to other small European countries (Deloitte og Kraka 2017).

2.2 The main economic sectors

Table 2.4 provides a more detailed picture of the development of the Danish economic sectors by NACE-codes than the one provided by table 2.1. Also drawing on Eurostat data, the table illustrates, firstly, that the Danish economy took some time to recover fully from the Great Recession when measured in numbers of jobs. Secondly, employment in the primary and secondary sector (the three first NACE-groups) has still not reached its pre-2009 level. Thirdly, employment in the public sector (most of the three last NACE-groups, in sum) as well as some private services subsectors has nearly stagnated. Fourthly, some private services have shown employment growth: 'Accommodation and food service activities' (especially restaurants and the tourist industry) has been on the rise, and so have 'Administrative and support service activities' and 'Professional, scientific and technical activities', whereas 'Arts, entertainment and recreation' has stagnated following employment growth until 2012.

Table 2.4 Full-time and part-time employment by economic activity NACE Rev. 2, DK, in percentage

Sector, NACE-code	*2008*	*2012*	*2016*	*2020*
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2,2	2,4	1,9	1,9
Manufacturing	14,3	12,5	12,3	10,9
Construction	7,2	5,6	5,4	5,9
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	15,1	13,7	13,9	14,9
Transportation and storage	5,0	4,8	4,0	4,6
Accommodation and food service activities	2,9	3,3	3,3	4,1
Information and communication	4,0	3,8	4,3	4,2
Financial and insurance activities	3,1	3,0	2,9	2,9
Administrative and support service activities	2,6	3,3	4,0	4,2
Professional, scientific and technical activities	4,9	4,8	5,4	6,1
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1,9	2,4	2,3	2,1
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	6,4	5,7	5,4	5,2
Education	7,4	9,3	9,3	9,0
Human health and social work activities	17,5	19,8	18,0	18,1
Total (in thousands)	*2.723*	*2.549*	*2.629*	*2.766*

Source: [lfsq_epgan2]. Note: * Figures for all years are for Q1. Only sectors with more than 50.000 employees are included. Hence, they do not sum-up to 'total'. Source: Eurostat.

Table 2.4 includes both full-time and part-time jobs. Whereas other types of non-standard employment do not show any marked change, marginal part-time work (below 15 hours a week) has been on the rise in general – from 6 % in 2008 to 14 % in 2015. Therefore, the table most likely paints a picture of a stronger recovery job-wise than has actually taken place. The sectors with the highest numbers of marginal part-timers are 'Accommodation and food service activities', 'Wholesale and retail trade' and 'Arts, entertainment and recreation' (Rasmussen et al 2019: Ilsøe and Larsen 2021).

A data-break around 2008 in the statistics (Eurostat and Statistics Denmark) complicates comparison before and after this year. A detailed study from a government agency illustrates what happened between 1999 and 2009 in terms of employment development between sectors. Whereas the overall employment level (measured as persons employed) grew steadily in the period, not that much happened in the relative share of employment, measured in full-time equivalents. The primary subsectors lost only 0.1 percentage-point, with the exception of mining (which increased 0.1 percentage-point), whereas all subsectors of manufacturing lost between 0.1 and 1.0 percentage-point, with the exception of the chemical industry on 0.0. Only three of the 26 subsectors included in the study showed a change of 0.9 percentage-point or more. These were the metalworking industry (- 1.0), business service (+ 2.3) and education (+ 0.9) (Forsknings- og Innovationsstyrelsen 2008).

With regard to industrial strongholds, industrialization came relatively late to Denmark, which remained agricultural-dominated – economically as well as in terms of employment – for a long time. Moreover, when industrialization took off in the second half of the 19th century, the agro-industrial cluster, including agricultural machinery production and food processing, became one of the strongholds (Johanssen 1988). This is partly reflected in the current strongholds (see table 2.3) where food-processing industries – in various forms – are still present. Path-dependency is to some extent also seen in relation to one of the other strongholds, shipping. Denmark's largest company in the late 19th century, the ship and steam-engine producing B&W from Copenhagen, was only one of several shipyards. None of these exists any more, but ships still play an important role in the economy due to shipping, which is still a stronghold thanks to multinational shipping company Mærsk, the largest Danish company by far.

Table 2.5 includes an overview of a number of recent studies of Danish economic strongholds. The studies do not apply the same methods to identify strongholds or use the same demarcations of branches. Still, shipping and the pharmaceutical industry (primarily due to the insulin-producer Novo Nordisk and a handful of other companies) are found in all or nearly all of the studies. It is important to note that economic importance in terms of turnover and/or exports is not in all cases mirrored in high levels of employment. This can be seen, for instance, in the textile industry, animation-games-movies and the wood/furniture industry.

Table 2.5 Danish economic strongholds according to three studies

Forsknings- og Innovationsstyrelsen (2009) Focus on*:* Net-export and productivity Strongholds: Shipping, retail, food-processing and beverage industry, tobacco industry (net-export). Shipping, textile industry, wood and furniture industry, toy industry (productivity)
Deloitte og Kraka (2017) Focus on: Present market positions and future expectations of market developments Strongholds (top seven): Shipping, pharmaceutical industry, clean water technology, health and social initiatives, repair and installation of machines, finance, retail
Danmarks Erhvervsfremmebestyrelse (2019) Focus on: Present and future clusters that will receive public support Strongholds: Environmental technologies, energy technologies, food-processing and bio-tech (incl. pharmaceutical industry), maritime industries and logistics (incl. shipping), life science construction, design-fashion-furniture, advanced production, digital technologies, finance, tourism, animation-games-movies

Explanatory note: 'Focus on' are the dimensions according to which each study measured the branches/industries, of which the best performers are found to be the strongholds.

2.3 The employers' associations – map and recent trends

2.3.1 Employer participation in employer associations

The density of employers' associations in Denmark is high, but the country diverges from most other EU countries in having a higher organizational density among trade unions than among employers, as shown in table 2.6.

Table 2.6 Employers and workers' collective action in Denmark (average 2010–17)

	Employers' organization density rate[a]	Union's density rate[b]	Sectoral organization of employment relations[c]	Number of Employers' Confederations	Effective Number of Union Confederations
Denmark	62.5	69.0	2.0	3	3.4

[a] Workers and salaried employees in firms organized in employers' organizations as a proportion of all wage and salary earners in employment;[b] Union density rate of private sector worker;[c] Workers and salaried employees in private sector firms organized in employers' organizations as a proportion of all wage and salary earners employed in the private sector. Source: Project management's own elaboration on ICTWSS database (version 6.1)

The distribution of members on company sizes (table 2.7) in Denmark shows an overrepresentation compared to the EU average (not shown in the table) in all size-categories. Moreover, larger companies are more often a member of an EA than smaller companies, just like in most other European countries.

Table 2.7 Share of companies that are members of an EA (percent for each type of company) (2013)

	Companies with at least 10 employees	Companies with 10-49 employees	Companies with 50-249 employees	Companies with 250+ employees
Denmark	59	57	75	81

Source: Project-managements own elaboration on Eurofound ECS microdata.

With regard to sectors, a bit more variation is found. A survey from 2010 shows variation from 42 % to 83 % (see table 2.8) and found that construction, transport and manufacturing clearly have a higher organizational density than design/IT, office/administration and retail.

Table 2.8 Organizational density on sectors, in percentage

	Manufacturing	Construction	Design & IT	Office/admin	Retail [trade]	Transport	*Total*
Organisat. density	71	83	42	43	55	79	*62,5*

Source: Navrbjerg og Ibsen 2017:37.

The EAs' own longitudinal data on organizational density shows a rather stable picture with a small increase from 1997 to 2008 and a small decline in the period after. There is a widespread perception that it is the business association services (including, inter alia, counselling of individual companies and political lobbying), and not the employer services (including collective bargaining), which has made it possible for the EAs to sustain their high organizational density. The introduction of differentiated memberships illustrate this, in that it is more often business association services than employer services that the companies sign up to. Moreover, differentiated membership might itself be a reason for their success in sustaining the number of members. It is especially the larger EAs that offer differentiated memberships.

A recent study (Navrbjerg og Ibsen 2017) of 171 Danish EAs proposes a typology of Danish EAs. The first type is the multi-branch EA, created though waves of mergers during the past 30 years or more. This type of EA comprises network organizations with collective service with regard to, e.g., collective bargaining, labour law and political lobbying (both at national and EU level), but also with a strong division into branch units and additional regional units offering business services. In this way, the multi-branch EAs aim to balance the need for power concentration and economies of scale with the need for differentiated services and closeness of the member firms. Danish Industry (DI), Dansk Erhverv and – previously – Dansk Byggeri (Danish Construction Association) are all EAs of this type.

The second type is single-branch EAs on the domestic market. Member in these are firms which typically operate only on the Danish market with production or services that are difficult to outsource. These EAs are mostly focused on employer services, including collective bargaining. The largest EA of this type is DA-member TEKNIQ Arbejdsgiverne, which is the Danish mechanical and electrical contractors association, working in electrical, plumbing, heating, ventilation and metalworking industries. With approximately 7,900 firms and self-employed workers as members, covering 55,000 employees, the organization is the fourth-largest Danish EA. The organization itself has 80 employees (www.tekniq.dk).

The third type is single-branch EAs on the international market. This type of EA has been exposed to internationalization and outsourcing and they have therefore often both restructured their services so they are not only supplying employer-targeted services, but also business services, including international lobbying activities. Their member base has typically also changed. An example of an EA of this type is DA-member Danish Association for Graphic Communication & Media (Grakom) with 450 member companies and 25 employees in the organization (www.grakom.dk).

The survey included a number of questions relevant for this section. Table S.3 shows that more than half of the companies are not members of an EA. As the numbers are not weighted by company size, we cannot say if this implies an underrepresentation compared to the general situation in Denmark. However, it is in line with expectations that more companies are members in industry than in smart growth services.

Table S.3 Member of any employers' association by sectors (survey), in numbers and percentages

	Industry (excl. construction)	Consumption services (incl. construction)	EU2020 "smart growth" services	Welfare state services and public administration	Total
No	33,3%	62,5%	87,5%	50,0%	57,5%
Yes	66,7%	37,5%	12,5%	50,0%	42,5%
N	12	16	8	4	40

Table S.4 shows the type of EA of the companies. The answer 'sectoral/industrial' dominates, which is according to expectations. However, the large number of 'not answered' could indicate that the companies in general did not find the categories correct or relevant. One problem is that the categories could be perceived as not exclusive (sectoral agreements have national coverage), and another problem might have been that it was not sufficiently clear what was meant by 'peak' organizations and 'professional' organizations.

Table S.4 Type of employers' association (survey), in numbers and percentages

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Number of responses	Percent	
Sectoral/industrial	11	61,1 %	84,6 %
National/peak	2	11,1 %	15,4 %
Professional	5	27,8 %	38,5 %
Total	18	100,0 %	13

Note: this is a multiple response frequency report. Respondents could answer more than one category. The percentage of responses shows the percentage of responses to the total number of responses.

Table S.5 shows the reasons for not being a member. Two answers dominate and make up just under half of the answers: 'We don't know the services provided by the employers association' and 'No relevant employers' association in the field'.

Table S.5 Reasons for not being member (survey), in numbers and percentages

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Number	Percent	
We think we can pursue our companies' goals by ourselves	3	10,0 %	16,7 %
Employers association does not sufficiently address our needs	2	6,7 %	11,1 %

We don’t know the services provided by the employers association	3	10,0 %	16,7 %
We don’t know the added value of the membership	6	20,0 %	33,3 %
A lack of personal capacities	1	3,3 %	5,6 %
No relevant employers association in the field	8	26,7 %	44,4 %
Total	23		18

Note: this is a multiple response frequency report. Respondent could answer more than one category. The percentage of responses shows the percentage of responses to the total number of responses.

2.3.2 The main employer associations (by macro-sector)

Below, the focus will be on employers' associations in the private sector exclusively. First, a short history of the evolution of the Danish EAs:

According to Martin and Swank, the Danish Employers Federation – the forerunner to the Confederation of Danish Employers (DA, 'Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening') – was created in 1896 partly due to challenges arising from democratization. It seemed unlikely at that time that the conservative Right Wing Party could continue to resist pressure from the labour–farmer alliance and hold onto government power forever, which it had possessed since the introduction of democracy in 1849. By establishing an EA, a new actor was created in an arena where the right-wing political forces thought they had a better chance to win. Moreover, the small size of the firms at that time also contributed to the need for an employer confederation, and the aim to withstand pressure from organized labour – and even to destroy it (as was the strategy until 1898) – played a role in establishing the confederation. The confederation was strengthened vis-a-vis the sectoral organizations when the state delegated power and included the confederation in corporatist arrangements, the first of which was the set-up of the labour court and a national arbitrator in the period 1907–10 (Martin and Swank 2012:50-66).

Reflecting the EAs' origin in multiple guilds, and the relatively late industrialization in Denmark, the structure of the EAs remained fragmented for much of the 20th century, with multiple organizations. However, a first wave of mergers between the mid-1960s and mid-1980s reduced the number of member organizations in DA from 250 to 170. A second wave of mergers from the late 1980s until the mid-1990s reduced the number further. This centralization of organizations happened simultaneously with a decentralization of collective bargaining, with the pressure to decentralize bargaining coming from globalization, the creation of a cross-class alliance between manufacturing employers and a high-skilled union, and repeated conflicts during collective bargaining rounds in the second half of the 1970s. The decentralization of collective bargaining was an important driver for the centralization of the EAs, because the EAs acknowledged the need for decentralization of the wage formation, but at the same time wanted a degree of control over the processes and outcomes. By merging the EAs, and providing them with a coordinating and framing role in the negotiation processes, both aims could be met at the same time. Hence, sector-level framework agreements with room for company-level bargaining became the norm and national-level bargaining with the participation of the confederations became much less used. This industrial relations model is labelled 'centralized-decentralization' as it combines centralization of organizations with decentralization of bargaining (Due et al. 1993; Navrbjerg og Ibsen 2017).

There are now only two 'real' *confederations* left in Denmark, DA and Danish Employers' Association for the Financial Sector (FA, 'Finanssektorens Arbejdsgiverforening'). Besides these, the Association of Christian Employers has a cross-sectoral member base. They have no organizations as members, but around 1,000 member firms (ka.dk). Finally, a smaller number of EAs exist that are not affiliated to any confederation.

DA is by far the largest confederation. The waves of mergers described above have reduced the number of member organizations from 150 in the mid-1980s to only 12 today. The centralized-decentralization process led to the creation of one dominant member-organization (Danish Industry, DI) (see below). In 2012, another employers' confederation – the Danish Confederation of Employers' Associations in Agriculture (SALA) – became a member of DI, reducing SALA to a sectoral federation. DA's member organizations have around 25,000 member companies and represent companies employing 49 % of employees in the private sector (Madsen et al. 2016; Jørgensen and Bühring 2019; Navrbjerg and Ibsen 2017).

Since 2012, the only other employers' confederation besides DA has been the Danish Employers' Association for the Financial Sector (FA), which has around 200 members and represents around 3 % of the Danish labour market (Jørgensen and Bühring 2019).

The largest organization for the self-employed is SMVdanmark, but this is not exclusively an organization for the self-employed in that, as the name indicates, it also organizes other small and medium-sized enterprises. SMVdanmark includes 90 (mostly smaller) member organizations and some 16,000 individual employers (dhv.dk). As a rule of thumb, solo self-employed can be members of pure trade associations, whereas only self-employed with employees can be members of the employers' associations. However, some employers' associations are open to all – for instance the Danish Publishers Association offers membership to all publishers including the solo self-employed (Jørgensen 2009).

Among the *sector federations*, it is possible to point to three as the most important ones. DI is by far the largest in that it accounts for more 62 % of DA's total payroll. DI has 10,000 member firms and around 600 employees in the organization and is, by nearly all measures, the largest Danish employers' association. DI originally only represented manufacturing companies, but it has since entered the private service sector as well, to the extent that only 41 % of member companies are now found in manufacturing (www.danskindustri.dk). With the inclusion of Dansk Byggeri (see below), DI also expanded into construction. To some extent, DI has developed into a de facto confederation and DA will only exist as long as DI finds it useful and as long as there exists at least one other very large and strong sector federation. Currently, only Dansk Erhverv qualifies as such an organization. For now, DI needs DA in order to secure coordination with employers who are not members of DA and in order to mediate in cases of disagreement with Dansk Erhverv.

Interviewees from both inside and outside the organization have pointed to qualitative changes in DI. Simultaneously with the gradual development towards its status as the all-dominant EA in Denmark, DI has moved from always arguing from a 'pure' employers' perspective towards increasingly balancing this with a societal perspective. A recent change that partly reflects this development is that since 2019 DI has argued for earmarked parental leave for men. In 2019, this position was in sharp contrast to the position both in DA and in DI's closed counterpart on the trade union side, the Danish Metal Workers' Union. According to some of the interviewees, the new position on earmarked leave is also part of an upgrading on gender equality issues both in DI itself and among its members' managements.

The second-largest employer federation is, as mentioned, the Danish Chamber of Commerce (Dansk Erhverv), which was established in 2007 by a merger of two trade and commerce-oriented federations. It has 16,000 member companies and 260 employees work in the organization, but it provides no information on how many employees their member companies have or the share of DA's total payroll. Today, Danske Erhverv's member companies come not only from commerce but also from other private services. Hence, although the organization's English name signals something else, it is an employer's organization rather than a chamber of commerce. Like the other large EAs, Dansk Erhverv takes part in sector-level collective bargaining (in commerce and a number of other private services) as well as in political lobbying activities.

Figure 2.1 Overview of the largest employers' associations in Denmark

Peak EA: Confederation of Danish Employers (Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening, DA)
Sector EA: Danish Industry (DI)
Sector EA: Danish Chamber of Commerce (Dansk Erhverv)
Sector EA: TEKNIQ Arbejdsgiverne (TEKNIQ)
Sector EA: Association for the Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Industry in Denmark (HORESTA)

Peak EA: Danish Employers' Association for the Financial Sector (FA)

SMV EA: SMVDenmark (SMVdanmark)

Independent EA: The Association of Christian Employers

The third-largest employer federation was, until recently, the Danish Construction Association (Dansk Byggeri). Dansk Byggeri was established in 2003, when two larger construction employer confederations merged. It organizes 5,700 member firms, representing 73,000 employees, primarily in the construction sector. In September 2020, Dansk Byggeri became a branch section of DI, making DI an even more dominant EA on the Danish labour market. The rationale for Dansk Byggeri merging with DI was partly because they expected to be able to provide the same service for a lower price and partly because DI was already organizing some architects and consultancy companies in the construction sector and a joint organization therefore would facilitate cooperation (Dansk Byggeri 2020). Besides these official statements, according to interviewees the aim was also to get access to DI's strong political lobbying resources.

The interviews

The interviewees who made statements about these issues have found that the competition for members between DI and Dansk Erhverv has intensified in recent years (see also Ibsen et al., forthcoming). And since these two organizations together represent a large majority of the wage-sum of all EAs, it is fair to conclude that competition in general has increased in recent years between Danish EAs. The two organizations still have their respective strongholds in the manufacturing industry (DI) and retail and commerce (Dansk Erhverv), but competition in other parts of private services as well as in, e.g., the medical-medico industries is fierce. The interviewees pointed to both good and bad consequences of the competition. On the good side, the intensified competition has forced both organizations to improve their organizations' services. On the bad side, unhealthy competition to be the first to address a company and too much attention being paid to marketing were mentioned.

Whereas competition for members has intensified, the interviewed EAs did not report increasing difficulties in reaching agreement *within the federations* in relation to the four welfare policies areas in focus in general.[3] According to some of the interviewees, consensus has even increased. Hence, the earmarked-leave issue was an exception to the general picture. However, even in vocational education – the area which, more often than other areas, is described as a 'consensus area' – internal disagreements among the EAs are found. One example is present thinking among politicians and experts for boosting the very small undergraduate labour market in Denmark at the expense of the large labour market for Masters students. The smart-growth members of DI are unsurprisingly more sceptical towards such a development than the members from the traditional industries. As another example of tensions in DI in relation to education, a tripartite agreement on practical training places was negotiated in 2016, which was planned to include an economic incentive model favouring companies that provided their share of practical training places and penalizing those that would not do so. That led to intense discussions and disagreements both within and across the employers' associations, but in the end an agreement was possible (Mailand 2020).

The interviewees did also report some general differences between different types of companies in relation to staff-related issues apart from the four areas in focus. For instance, large companies were mentioned as having the capacity to work proactively with international recruitment, smaller firms not. Regarding the four policy areas in focus, however, the interviewees had difficulties in pointing to systematic differences. In Dansk Erhverv, a number of members are so-called socio-economic companies (e.g. non-profit nursing homes), which sometimes takes different and more 'generous' positions on social policy issues – pensions being

[3] It could be argued that interviews might not be the best method to uncover sensitive issues such as these, in that some interviewees might be unwilling to report on them.

one of them – than the other members of Dansk Erhverv. Another example of differences in positions (on the edge of the four areas in focus) has been seen between Dansk Byggeri and DI – at least before Dansk Byggeri became a member of DI – and also within Dansk Byggeri. A large share of Dansk Byggeri's member base consists of micro-companies specialising in services targeted at private households. These do not have the same possibilities for exploiting the opportunities of migrant labour as the large construction or manufacturing companies have and might rather fear (unfair) competition from smaller foreign construction firms.

In relation to issues or areas beyond the four chosen for the present project, internal disagreements in the EAs are deeper, according to the interviewees. The environment is an example of such an area. For an organization such as DI, which includes both large influential companies using large amounts of gas and fuel, and large influential companies producing green energy, striking the right balance on environmental issues has not been an easy task.

Regarding consensus *between the federations,* it is difficult to judge if this has changed in recent years. The earmarked leave was, for a short period (as mentioned), an issue on which DI and the confederation DA did not agree, but they became aligned after a while. However, in recent years the interest organization for the self-employed with employees and small and medium-sized companies – SMVdanmark – has, according to the organization itself as well as other interviewees, often taken different positions to the larger organizations such as DA, DI and Dansk Erhverv. It has politically taken a journey to the right and is often deliberately placing itself to the right of the larger EAs in order to maximize their political influence. To support this development, it has recruited staff from the liberal think tank CEPOS (see section 4.3.1). However, SMVdanmark is joining forces with the large EAs in cases where they agree on issues. They have also until recently had a formal agreement with DA on not addressing issues about passive and active labour market policies, but SMVdanmark terminated the agreement during the Covid crises when they experienced how the numerous help packages blurred the lines between labour market policy and industrial policy.

2.3.3 Type of association

Martin and Swank (2012) have proposed a typology of EAs and their relations with other actors. In the 'macro-corporatist' model, employers organize into hierarchically ordered groups, and the peak association negotiates broad political agreements with labour and the state through collective bargaining and tripartite policy-making committees. In the 'sectoral coordination' model, employers wield power largely at the industry level. Employers' associations within specific industries engage in significant coordination with corresponding labour unions, but the encompassing multisector peak associations are much weaker and the state is largely absent from negotiations. In the 'pluralist' model, employers are represented by multiple conflicting groups, with many purporting to aggregate business interests and none having much policy-making authority (Martin and Swank 2012; Colombo et al. 2020).

Martin and Swank themselves see Denmark as an example of the macro-corporatist model. They do so, because the employer and trade union confederations historically have played important roles in regulating both pay and conditions as well as welfare policies. Even after collective bargaining was decentralized – primarily to the sector-level – around the 1990s, the confederations still played important roles in developing labour market and welfare reforms, thereby contributing to a sustained high level of solidarity in Denmark, relatively centralized coordination and the much-celebrated flexicurity model.

Martin and Swank's classification of Denmark – and Danish EAs – as macro-corporatist could be criticized for understating the role of sector-based regulation which followed from the process of centralized-decentralization. The authors might only partly be right when they describe Denmark as macro-corporatist. It is partly so in welfare policy (including the four areas in focus in the present project), whereas institutional arrangements have traditionally been rather voluntaristic when it comes to in-work issues such as pay and conditions, because of the limited role for the state in the regulation of these in the private sector (see also Deeg et al. 2013). Focusing on regulation of wages and conditions only, Denmark matches the sectoral coordination model well. As mentioned, in this model employers wield power largely at the industry level – employers' associations within specific industries engage in significant coordination with corresponding labour unions, whereas the encompassing multisector peak associations are much weaker and the state is largely absent from negotiations. However, as argued by other observers, although the regulation of wages and conditions does not resemble corporatism that well, the regulation of welfare and of employment issues other than wages and working conditions is to a large extent corporatist and has the confederation as important actors (e.g. Mailand 2005; 2020). Moreover, the peculiarity of the dominant organization on the employers' side, DI, also blurs the picture. As mentioned above, although formally a sector federation, DI is more and more developing in the direction of a de facto confederation.

2.4 The role of transnational companies in the economy

With regard to foreign direct investment (FDI), table 2.9 shows that inward stock is much higher than the EU average, whereas outward stock is much lower. Table 2.10 provides more detail on transnational companies (aka multinational corporations, MNCs) in Denmark. Focusing on 'inwards', Denmark, with 20 %, has the highest number of employees (after Slovakia) working in MNCs. The much lower share of MNCs measured in number of companies is related to the large size of the MNCs – a feature not unique to Denmark.

Table 2.9 Foreign direct investments: Outward and inwards FDI stocks in EU-28 and DK (% of GDP)

	Outwards	Inwards
EU-28	45.8	63.7
Denmark	67.8	43.8

Source: Eurostat

Furthermore, table 2.10 indicates that the differences between macro-sectors are small with regard to the MNCs' share of both companies and employment.

Table 2.10 Main indicators for Multinationals by industry, Denmark

Source: Project manager's own elaboration on OECD and Eurostat online databases. [1] Using the NACE classification, this sector includes mining, manufacturing, electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities. [2] Using the NACE classification, this sector includes construction, trade, transportation and storage, accommodation and food service activities, real estate activities, arts, entertainment, recreation and other service activities. [3] Using the NACE classification, this sector includes information and communication, professional, scientific and

	Inward [5]				*Outward [6]*			
	Industry (excl. construction)[1]	Consumption services (incl. construction)[2]	EU2020 "smart growth" services[3]	Tot MNCs (% total enterprises)	Industry (excl. construction)[1]	Consumption services (incl. construction)[2]	EU2020 "smart growth" services[3]	Tot MNCs (% total enterprises)
Share of MNCs to all enterprises	4,5	2,9	3,1	3,1	11,5	4,5	3,3	4,7
Share of employed people in MNCs to all	25,5	26,7	20,9	19,9	85,0	42,8	95,1	64,3
Value added at factor cost in MNCs (% total value added)	17,3	17,3	21,2	18,1				

technical activities, administrative and support service activities, financial and insurance activities. [4] Using the NACE classification, this sector includes public administration and defence, education and human health and social work activities. [5] This table contains figures on the activity of affiliates under foreign control by industry. [6] This table contains figures on the activity of affiliates under domestic control located abroad by industry.

MNCs in Denmark have only been studied to a limited extent. A survey-based study from 2011 targeted MNCs with at least 500 employees worldwide and a minimum of 100 employees in Denmark. The survey distinguished between Danish-owned companies (113) and foreign-owned (304) MNCs. The Danish-owned MNCs accounted for 26 % of all the companies, whereas 21 % were from other Nordic countries, 31 % from the rest of Europe and 16 % from the US. Whereas the Danish-owned companies are primarily found within manufacturing and construction, the foreign-owned MNCs are equally spread between this sector and the 'services' and 'retail and wholesale' sectors. In total, 'manufacturing and construction' was heavily overrepresented compared to the Danish labour market in general. This finding does not necessarily diverge from those in the tables where construction is separated from manufacturing. The foreign-owned MNCs were substantially larger than the Danish MNCs, but employment in both categories was increasing (Minbaeva and Steen E. Navrbjerg 2011).

Among the study's many findings, some were focused on 'discretion', defined as the extent to which a subsidiary has autonomy over different areas of human resources (HR) policy. In general, subsidiaries enjoy a high level of discretion with regards to communication, employee involvement and employee representation.

With regard to pay and performance, however, foreign-owned subsidiaries show a below-average level of discretion, which the authors found was because it serves as an important motivator and is also decisive for the profit of the enterprise. The data indicate that companies originating in the US generally grant less discretion to their subsidiaries when compared to the population in general. Subsidiaries with a Swedish HQ enjoy an above-average level of discretion (Minbaeva and Steen E. Navrbjerg 2011).

2.4.1 The interviews

The interviews with EAs did not provide much information about the MNCs. However, MNCs were mentioned as in general being less committed to the various Danish welfare and labour market institutions, although wide variation was found in levels of commitment among foreign-owned MNCs as well as Danish-owned MNCs. Regarding the four policy areas in focus, however, the interviewees could only point to few examples of systematic differences. Among these were fewer representatives in tripartite bodies in the education and unemployment areas, and a tendency to provide fewer practical training places to the Danish dual-education system (see also section 3.3 with MNC case studies).

2.4.2 The survey

The survey includes information on MNCs. Table S.6 shows that little more than 1/5 of the sample had foreign private ownership. This mirrors the fact that a fifth of employees in the private sector work in a foreign-owned company, according to official statistics (Danmarks Statistic 2022). Furthermore, that the foreign-owned companies are mostly European is also shown in other studies such as Minbaeva and Navrbjerg (2011).

Table S.6 Type of ownership and geographic areas (survey), in numbers and percentages

	Domestic private ownership	Domestic public organization	Foreign private ownership	N
Northern Europe (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Luxemburg, Netherlands)	71,1 %	21,1 %	7,9 %	38
Eastern Europe (Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia)	66,7 %	0,0 %	33,3 %	3
Western Europe (France, Germany, Italy, Ireland)	25,0 %	0,0 %	75,0 %	4
Extra-EU (Japan, UK, USA)	0,0 %	0,0 %	100,0 %	3
Total	62,5 %	16,7 %	20,8 %	48

Table S.7 includes information on the ownership and organization of production of goods, more precisely on whether cooperation between companies takes place. The differences are not huge, but it shows a small tendency for domestic private companies to cooperate more than those with foreign private ownership.

Table S.7 Production of goods, assembly of parts or delivery services on the type of ownership

	Domestic private ownership	Domestic public organization	Foreign private ownership	N
Yes, this is mainly carried out in collaboration with one or more other companies	73,1 %	3,8 %	23,1 %	26
Yes, this is mainly carried out internally within our company	58,8 %	17,6 %	23,5 %	17
No	40,0 %	60,0 %	0,0 %	5
Total	64,6 %	14,6 %	20,8 %	48

Table S.8 is similar to S.7, but focuses on design and development. Again, there seems to be a tendency that domestic private companies cooperate more than foreign private companies, but as in S.7 the findings are uncertain because the number of answers – especially from the foreign-owned companies – are few.

Table S.8 Design and development of new products or services according to the type of ownership

	Domestic private ownership	Domestic public organization	Foreign private ownership	N
Yes, this is mainly carried out in collaboration with one or more other companies	79,2 %	0,0 %	20,8 %	24
Yes, this is mainly carried out internally within our company	61,5 %	23,1 %	15,4 %	13
No design and development take place	36,4 %	36,4 %	27,3 %	11
Total	64,6 %	14,6 %	20,8 %	48

3. The 'what' question

3.1 The characteristics of the welfare state in the country[4]

In this section, the four areas of social policy will very shortly be described with regard to the most important contents of the policies and the roles that the employers/social partners play.

3.1.1 Pensions

The Danish pension system, of which only the first and second pillar are addressed here, is primarily characterized by a strong second pillar in the form of the collective agreement-based occupational pensions. The first pillar is made up of the citizen/residence-based Old Age Pension and ATP lifelong pension. The Old Age Pension is by far the most generous pension scheme of the two.

The Old Age Pension Scheme was introduced in 1922. The ATP lifelong pension ('ATP Livslang Pension') was – under a similar name – introduced in 1964 by legislation, some decades before the occupational pension scheme started to spread (see below). The ATP lifelong pension was initially an additional pension for employed persons, but from the 1990s it was changed to allow for other groups in addition to the employed to be covered by the scheme. Today, nearly all citizens aged between 18 and 65 are covered by this compulsory scheme (ATP 2017).

Another scheme that should be mentioned, although it is gradually being phased out, is the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme (VERS, 'efterløn'). The scheme was introduced in 1975 during the economic crisis as a way to allow older employees (some being worn out) to withdraw (at age 60) prior to pension age (67 years), thus creating job openings for young people. The scheme is employment-based in that entitlement requires membership of an unemployment insurance fund. Like Unemployment Insurance (UI, 'arbejdsløshedsdagpenge'), the financing is shared between the state and the insured, but in the case of VERS the state finances around 80 % of the expenses. Nearly ten times as many signed up for the scheme as planned. Therefore, it became a barrier to the political priorities of increasing labour supply by postponing the age of retirement from the labour market. From 1998 onwards, it has been reformed several times (see also below) and has been made less and less attractive.

The social partners can influence the first pillar pensions mainly through lobbying and consultation, when they are consulted by the government, which is not always the case. The social partners' influence is much stronger in the second pillar, the occupational pensions.

The occupational pension represents the second pillar of the Danish pension system. Some of the collective agreement (CA)-related occupational pension funds have a long history, but it was only after a series of decision-making processes in the second half of the 1980s, including

[4] Large parts of this section are reformulated and shortened sections of Mailand and Larsen (2018).

a social pact and extensive tripartite committee work, that consensus on a model relating occupational pensions to collective agreements was established. Thereafter, the CA-related occupational pensions became the norm in all the sector-level collective agreements, private as well as public (Due & Madsen 2003). The contribution to the occupational pension fund is paid as a percentage of the employee's wage, typically shared so that the employee pays 1/3 and the employer 2/3 of the contribution. The percentage-share of the wage has increased gradually since the CA bargaining round in 1991. Currently, the total percentage contribution varies between 12 % (found in most private sector collective agreements, where some collective agreements include a possibility to prioritize extra pension savings) and 19 % (found in some public sector collective agreements). Importantly, most collective agreements include thresholds for minimum employment periods before earning occupational pensions. This threshold has in several collective agreements been reduced in recent years and now stands in most of the collective agreements at between 2 and 6 months (Larsen 2017; Larsen and Mailand 2014). In 2003, it was estimated that 92 % of all employees were covered, albeit not all to the same extent. The opinion of the Social Democratic-led government from the 1990s was that the problem of coverage was minimal, since the aggregated savings from the Old Age Pension, the ATP lifelong pension and the occupational pensions would together provide nearly every pensioner with more than 60 % of previous income (Due & Madsen 2003; Mailand 2008). However, it is now widely perceived that the total coverage of the Danish pension system is insufficient.

3.1.2 Unemployment

The area of 'unemployment' covers both passive and active labour market policies (ALMP).

With regard to the *passive policies*, social protection for unemployment is basically divided between UI for those who are insured by the trade-union-administered unemployment insurance funds, and those who are not insured. If the latter group fulfil certain requirements, they can receive social assistance (SA, 'kontanthjælp'). Since more than 70 % of the workforce are members of an unemployment insurance fund, the UI-system covers more people than the SA-system. The unemployment insurance funds – the organizations responsible for the administration of UI – are co-financing UI with the state. The state funds approximately 2/3 of the expenses of UI, and the remaining 1/3 is funded by the unemployment insurance fund members. The maximum replacement rate is 90 %, higher for low-income than for mid- and high-income groups. Most of the funds are affiliated to the trade unions, and the employers have no direct role in relation to them.

SA is the basic, traditional benefit for uninsured unemployed residents. Since 2016 (and during the period 2004–11) a so-called 'Social Assistance Ceiling' has existed in order 'to make work pay'. In its present form, the ceiling varies according to age, civil status (single or married /co-occupant) and the number of dependent children (STAR 2017). A special low level of SA – de facto targeting (newly arrived) immigrants and refugees – has existed in various forms and under different names since 2001. The present name is the Integration Allowance ('Integrationsydelse'), which was reintroduced in 2015.

The role of collective agreements in relation to income security, in the context of social protection for unemployment, has traditionally been limited in that, until recently, only a few collective agreements – e.g. in the financial sector – included severance payments. This could be seen as reflecting the so-called Danish flexicurity model. However, after 2007, severance payments were introduced in the manufacturing sector and spread to other private sector collective agreements and can partly be seen as a reaction to the crisis, and partly as a reaction to the reduced income security caused by, inter alia, the 2010 reform (see below) (Mailand 2015). Today, most private sector collective agreements include severance payments (for the total period) depending on seniority and starting after three years of employment (di.dk 2017). However, severance payments remain limited in scope and depth. Also, for non-manual workers, severance pay continues to be limited. The Salary Workers Act (2009) gives employees the right to one month's salary, but only after 12 years of employment. After 17 years the employee has the right to three months' salary (LBK nr 1002 af 24/08/2017). A more widespread development has been a tendency for employees to sign up to additional unemployment insurance schemes, administered by the trade unions, which top-up the standard scheme. This has been a way to de facto increase the replacement rates for the mid- and high-income groups, which are close to the EU-15 average (Mailand 2015).

Regarding the *ALMP*, Denmark is the EU-country with the highest spending in the EU. Traditionally, ALMP in Denmark has had a strong human capital dimension, emphasizing job training, job-rotation and especially education as activation measures. However, from the turn of the century the so-called 'work first approach' influenced the policies, in that job search, early interventions, sanctioning and make-work-pay initiatives (in the form of reduced levels of benefits for some client groups) became more prominent. In the 2010s, the activation regime, including the work first elements, spread so that people with various forms of sickness and disabilities were also met with activation requirements and reduced benefit levels. The decade also saw a reduction in the maximum benefit period for UI (from four to two years) whereas the UI benefit level was not reduced. Still, the gradual reduction of the compensation rate continued.

Both employers and trade unions have important roles in ALMP through their ad-hoc involvement in reforms and representation in tripartite councils at national as well as at regional/local levels. However, their role is mostly limited to lobbying and consultation, although at the regional level they possess some decision-making power. The local implementation of the active policies are in the hands of the municipal Jobcentres (e.g. Mailand 2020).

3.1.3 Vocational Education and Training

Vocational education and training covers both initial vocational education and further training (continuous vocational training, CVT). As described above, Denmark has a vocational education and training system characterized by a strong role for social partners, a comparatively high level of public spending (especially for further training) and a so-called 'dual system' of education where apprentices in manufacturing, construction and private and public services alternate between school and workplace-based education and training for three to four years. Providing a sufficient number of so-called 'practical training places' for the workplace-based part is an ongoing challenge.

The institutional set-up in both sub-areas within vocational education and training (VET) grants both employers' associations and trade unions a relatively strong role, which includes some degree of real decision-making power. Their formal role is foremost their participation in tripartite bodies at all levels: In inter-sectoral tripartite councils advising the minister; sector-based tripartite bodies called 'Further Training Councils'; and boards of the individual schools and training centres. In general, even though the competences to design the courses has remained at the sectoral level, the tripartite boards at the schools have been granted more and more responsibilities regarding the schools' budget and supply of courses since the late 1980s due to a decentralization of competencies, at the same time as introducing market-stimulating ways of steering the schools.

Regarding initial training, this is nearly exclusively funded by public sources (apart from the periods on practical training places when the students are paid a salary by the employer). Moreover, the students receive a state grant while studying. The share of a youth cohort completing one of these education courses has dropped from more than 40 % in the early 1990s to 24 % in 2018. Moreover, the drop-out rates are high and have on average been close to 30 % for a number of years, though they have recently dropped to around 25 % (Danmarks Statistik 2019). The declining share of a youth cohort and the still high drop-out rates have caused concern among politicians and social partners and have led to reforms (see below), as the labour demand for these students is high and these occupations are seen as key for the continued economic success of the country.

CVT has to a larger extent in Denmark than in most other EU countries been publicly financed. Moreover, with 27 % of employees participating in CVT within the last four weeks in 2017, Denmark ranks third among EU countries. However, longitudinal measurement shows a downward trend. The annual indicator of 'adult participation in learning' has been reduced from 32 % to 27 % in just three years between 2014 and 2017 (Eurostat 2019).

3.1.4 Family policies

Here, family policies will be demarcated to policies supporting employees' transition in and out of the labour market in connection with childbirth, and childcare for pre-schooling period (up to the age of 5–6 years).

In Denmark, early childcare, together with parental leave and social benefits schemes, forms the core of Danish work-life balance and family policies, which are based on universal citizen rights, funded through general taxation, provided on the basis of need and subject to some means-testing (de la Porte et al. 2022). However, the collective agreements top-up benefits in several cases.

With regard to leave, all parents have a right to parental leave – what varies is the extent of this right and the level of cash benefit entitlement during the leave period. The birth-related leave period is be divided into four parts: 1) 4 weeks of 'pre-maternity leave' before the expected birth; 2) 14 weeks of 'maternity leave' after the birth; 3) 2 weeks of 'paternity leave' after the birth (or within the first 14 weeks after the birth following agreement with the employer); and 4) 32 weeks of 'parental leave' to each parent which they can share. All parents can receive the Childbirth Social Allowance ('barselsdagpenge') for the first three periods and for parts of the fourth period (i.e. 32 weeks), if they meet certain requirements. The question is whether this allowance is topped up to the level of previous wages or not.

All children have the right to full-time daycare (i.e. 30+ hours per week) from the age of 26 weeks and up until compulsory schooling. The Danish Daycare Act sets restrictions on childcare fees with parents only having to pay up to 25 % of total childcare costs, and it requires teaching plans for children aged 0–3 years (de la Porte et al. 2022).

Like in the pension and VET areas, collective agreements play an important role. Childbirth Social Insurance is, in most collective agreements, 'topped up' with a so-called 'wage during parental leave' – which, however, does not always provide the right for the employee to full-wage compensation. The regulations vary between (and within) sectors. In summarized form, the most important features in four of the largest bargaining areas are as follows: In the large bargaining area of private manufacturing and general service (FH/DA bargaining area), the mother has the right to full wage compensation during the 4 weeks of pre-maternity leave and 14 weeks of maternity leave, whereas the father has the right to full-wage compensation during 2 weeks of paternity leave. In addition, the parents have, together, the right to 13 weeks of parental leave with full wage compensation that they can share. There was until recently a maximum amount (ceiling), but the social partners agreed to remove this from the collective agreements during the 2017 collective bargaining round (Beskæftigelsesministeriet 2013; DI 2017). The collective agreements in other large sectors, such as the financial sector, the state and the municipalities, have similar regulations, although there are variations with regard to the number of weeks for each of the four types of leave (Beskæftigelsesministeriet 2013; Finansforbundet 2017). Importantly, eligibility thresholds for entitlement to full wages during leave varies between 6 months and 9 months depending on the specific collective agreements.

3.2 Main employer associations' positions in relation to social policy

In this section, the employer associations' positions with regard to the main reforms (mostly after 2008), within the four selected policy areas, will be presented. The cases will – to the extent that is possible – be classified according to the four dimensions (Colombo et al. 2020) of 'welfare effort' (increase of spending vs. cost-containment), welfare administration (public vs. private), welfare boundaries (occupational vs. universal), and welfare logic (social protection vs. social investment). In order to contextualize these selected cases, they are introduced by an overview of all post-2008 reforms in the area.

The four cases, forming part of the four area analyses, are summarized here:

	Welfare effort	*Welfare administration*	*Welfare boundaries*	*Welfare logic*
Early pension reform '20	(increased spending)	public	occupational	social protection
Unemployment Insurance Reform '15	in between	mix private-public	occupational	social protection
Tripartite agree. on sufficient labour supply '17	in between	private	occupational	(social investment)
Implementation EU work-life balance directive '19	increased spending	mix private-public	universal (occupational)	mix social investment-social protection

Note: ( ) = minor element of the reform

3.2.1 Pensions post-2008

The first important recent reform in the policy area after 2008 was the Liberal-Conservative government decision in 2011 to reduce the VERS-period from five to three years and tighten the offsetting rules, so that today the real value of the VERS is less than 25 % of the maximum unemployment insurance rate. After the reform, the number of VERS claimants declined substantially to 28 % of all 60–64 years olds. Further reductions have taken place since.

The Senior Early Retirement Pension was introduced in 2014. It was targeted at senior citizens with a reduced capacity to work, some of whom had been affected by the 2011 VERS reform. To be eligible for this benefit the person must have been in employment for a minimum of 27 hours per week for at least 20–25 years, have been in employment 'recently', and be a maximum of five years from the pension age. The benefit level was 100 % of UI (borger.dk). The scheme never became used to any notable extent.

Preparations were made for a more encompassing reform of the pension system, with the setting-up of a Pension Commission in 2014, which had the participation of the social partners. The Commission was asked to look especially at the problem of the offsetting rules for taxes and various publicly financed benefits, which implies that the incentives for contributing to a private pension were in some cases inadequate. The Commission was also asked to look at groups with insufficient pension savings. However, the Commission was wound up when the Liberal-led government took office in 2015 after four years of Social Democratic-led government.

The Senior Pension Scheme was introduced in 2019 to replace the not much used Senior Early Pension Scheme. There are fewer administrative burdens in the new scheme. Requirements are similar to the old scheme, but it allows persons up to 6 years off pension age to apply and allows for a maximum work capacity of only 15 hours a week (borger.dk).

Case: Early Pension Reform 2020

In the general election, which led the Social Democrats back into power in the summer of 2019, the party did not promise to relaunch the pension committee. Instead, their key promise to their electorate was to introduce a reform allowing for a 'differentiated old age pension' to allow persons who have had an especially burdensome work-life to leave the labour market with a type of old age pension earlier than others. The party had already aired their wish for a differentiated pension in 2018. The beneficiaries would be the Social Democrats' core electorate. Such a reform could be seen as a partial replacement of the de facto demolished VERS.

That the government gave high priority to the issue was evident from the timing of the first meeting with the social partners on the issue, which took place in August 2019, less than two months after the general election. However, the Danish Confederation of Employers (DA) was both prior to and during the meeting very sceptical about the initiative. The main argument of DA in this early period – as well as during the whole decision-making process – was that a differentiated pension, no matter how it was designed, would reduce labour supply, and this at a time when labour and skills shortages were rising in the Danish labour market. The trade union confederation FH strongly supported the government plan for a differentiated pension and preferred a tripartite agreement on the issue prior to the parliamentary process – which they had announced already in February 2019. The government also wanted tripartite negotiations in order to facilitate the political negotiations, which could be foreseen to be difficult. In order to convince DA to participate in such negotiations they aired the opportunity to include issues of employer interest, such as labour migration, in the negotiations. After the August meeting, DA declared themselves not ready for tripartite negotiations (Altinget 8. August 2019).

It never came to the point where tripartite negotiations could be initiated. DA was persistently critical and not interested in quid-pro-quos. Hence, instead of the tripartite arena, DA lobbied the opposition and attempted to influence general opinion through a large number of press-statements and analyses, published on their own webpage, in newspapers and other media. All of these contributions were variations on the same argument: That an early pension would reduce labour supply. For example, to back up their argument, DA presented studies arguing that persons in their early sixties are not absent from work due to sickness more than others and that an early pension was therefore not needed (DA 19. September 2020).

Contrary to the senior pension, and with similarity to the Old Age Pension and ATP, the Early Pension should be an individual right and subject to individual judgements of public authorities. An important question was who, then, should have the right to the Early Pension. FH was unable to suggest a model due to internal disagreements (Altinget 8. oktober 2019) and DA remained very sceptical about the whole idea. Hence, the minority government could not lean on a joint suggestion from the social partners, and not even on a proposal from a united trade union. Among the trade unions, some supported a model reserving the Early Pension for the – according to the health and safety authorities – most burdensome occupations. Similar models already existed in the Netherlands, Belgium (Finans 19. September 2021) and other countries, but according to interviewees the government never had this kind of model in mind.

In August 2020, the government published its proposal. The proposal was based on seniority (at least 42 years in employment) at the age of 61. The implication is that a person needs to have been 'in the labour market' from no later than the age of 19. Because of this, the vast majority of persons covered by the Early Pension Scheme would be manual employees, especially from manufacturing and construction. The government proposal was passed by parliament in October 2020 with only minor amendments. In the adopted version, the main features of the political agreement of the scheme are:

- At age 61, 44 years in employment provides a right to 3 years of early pension, 43 years, 2 years of early pension and 42 years, 1 year of early pension.
- The Early Pension benefit level is set at a level similar to the Old Age Pension and equal to around 70 % of the maximum of the unemployment benefit. However, a large share of those receiving Early Pension will also have the right to receive VERS, making the de facto generosity of the new scheme higher for this group.
- 'In the labour market' includes employment, unemployment with unemployment benefits, birth-related leave, leave due to sickness, practical training, and education after youth education.
- Part-time employment down to 18 hours a week counts as full-time employment.
- It is possible to supplement the Early Pension with paid employment up to a maximum income.
- If a person has private savings of more than approx. 270,000 euro, the Early Pension is reduced. At 670,000 euro is it phased out (Regeringen et al. 2020).

The total annual budget for the Early Pension Scheme will be 450 million euro, equal to around 20 % of VERS before it was gradually reduced. DA struggled until the very end to influence the decision-making process and sustained their criticism, also after the political agreement was signed (DA 10. oktober 2020).

Regarding the first of the four dimensions (i.e. welfare effort), the Early Pension Reform is an example of a (limited) increase of spending rather than cost-containment. The dimension of welfare administration is showing public rather than private administration. With regard to welfare boundaries, *de jure* a universal rather than occupational model was selected. *De facto,* however, it will nearly exclusively be limited to manual occupations in manufacturing and construction. The welfare logic is clearly social protection rather than social investment.

DA did not change their position on the reform after the law was implemented.

The positions of the main employers' associations

The interviews have provided additional information on the EAs' main positions on pension issues. The issue was seemingly not very high on the EAs' agenda during the period the interviews were conducted (November 2021–March 2022). Nevertheless, the Early Pension Scheme was addressed and got, as expected, a negative evaluation from the EA interviewees due to its foreseen negative impact on labour supply. Moreover, although the EAs often question the quality of ALMP, the fact that the Early Pension Scheme would be financed by a near 10 % cut in the overall budget for ALMP was criticized during the interviews.

A second pension theme from the EA interviews was the occupational pensions' connection with the collective agreements. The EAs support the continuation of these pensions and some even see them as a cornerstone of the Danish collective bargaining system. The occupational pension schemes could also be seen as being in the employer's interests as they reduce other wage increases and increase the pension funds' investment in private companies – however, this factor was not mentioned during the interviewees. A will to protect occupational pensions had consequences for the position of some of the EAs on a third pension-related theme from the interviews, namely the Pension Commission. This Commission – chaired by a former CEO from DA/former minister of employment – concluded its work in April 2022 with a report including proposals for a revision of the overall Danish pension system. Some of the EA interviewees were worried that the proposals would include state-financed pension supplements for those not covered by the collective agreements. This could, according to these interviewees, be problematic, as the covered employees have 'paid' for their occupational pensions with wage restraint. Among other unintended consequences, it could lead to disincentives for further increasing the collective agreement-based occupational pension schemes.

3.2.2. Unemployment post-2008

The area of unemployment (passive and active labour market policy) has seen a much larger number of reforms since 2008 than the pension area. Here, only the most important will be summarized.

There have been plenty of ALMP reforms in the period, some targeted at unemployment in general, some targeted at more specific groups. With regard to the latter, as described above, reforms in this period implied that people with various forms of sickness and disability also now faced activation requirements and, on top of that, reduced benefit levels.

The most important 'general' *active labour market policy* reform since 2008 is possibly the Employment Policy Reform of 2014, which aimed at simplifying and de-bureaucratizing ALMP and getting rid of 'meaningless activation', as the Social Democratic minister of employment (now prime minister) expressed it. Moreover, the reform protected education-based activation after attacks on it due to its questionable employment effects. The reform was prepared in a committee without the direct participation of social partners, but the social partners were still consulted in various ways. The reform led to: A regional fund for short vocational education as an activation tool to improve the skill levels of employees with few or outdated competences; six weeks of 'vocationally targeted education'; a right and duty to one activation offer (repeated activation abolished); improved job counselling for companies; a reduction in the wage-subsidy job periods (to avoid abuse of the system); a new Regional Labour Market Council with a stronger role for social partners to replace the local employment councils; and more decision-making power for the municipalities and less bureaucracy (Beskæftigelsesministeriet 2014).

The frequency of new initiatives within *passive labour market policy* has also been high, even though the period has only included two major general reforms. The first of these is the Unemployment Benefit Reform from 2010, which was agreed upon among the Liberal-led government and its supporting party without consulting social partners or opposition parties. The reform increased the employment threshold for receiving unemployment benefit from six months to 1 year and shortened the maximum benefit period from four to two years, and was met with strong protest from both the trade union movement and the opposition, while the employers' associations not surprisingly welcomed it. The de facto veto-power in relation to UI, which the trade unions had exercised more or less successfully throughout the 2000s, was apparently gone.

Case: Unemployment Insurance Reform 2015[5]

When the Social Democrats came into power in 2011, they were not able to roll back the UI 2010 reform, because their social liberal government partner sustained its support for the reform. The Social Democrats' inability to roll back the reform or make a new one developed into a major problem for the party, not least because the reform's consequences turned out to be much more severe than expected. The government estimated that only 2,000–4,000 people would exhaust their right to unemployment insurance before they had found a job. However, the government was proved to be wrong on both estimates. After the Great Recession, the employment level only started to rise in 2013 and at least ten times as many people than estimated exhausted their right to unemployment insurance before they had found a new job (AK-Samvirke 2013).

However, in 2014, towards its end of term, the government announced they would set up an unemployment insurance commission. It would only report its recommendations after an election. Although the Unemployment Insurance Commission could be seen as the first tripartite pre-legislative commission in years, it was still not a 'classic' tripartite commission, in that the social partners were only granted four of the ten seats. Five were given to academic experts and one to a civil servant from the Ministry of Employment.

The Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) gave high priority to the Commission. After the failure to strike a tripartite agreement in 2012, it was important to demonstrate that they were still a relevant actor in the labour market and the formulation of welfare policies. Moreover, the issue of UI was a core issue for the confederation. The role of the DA in the Commission was not to come up with new suggestions but to be defensive, and make sure that LO supported a model based on a 2-year maximum benefit period without changing the system created in 2010 in too many other ways. DA was, for various reasons, forced to change their representative several times.

For the employers, the experts' suggestion of increasing the number of employer-paid days of UI (which until the reform was only the first day of unemployment) was controversial and DA tried to avoid it. LO on their part tried to avoid having their members pay for the changes through reduced UI for the newly educated or in other ways (Mailand 2020).

[5] Where nothing else is stated, the sources of this case are Mailand (2019) and Mailand (2020).

It took only three days from the signing of the tripartite agreement until the political agreement was also signed (Regeringen et al. 2015). The reason for the speed of the process was that the Liberal-led government – as well as the social partners – wished to prevent any possibility of mobilization against the fragile consensus of the tripartite agreement. The reform adjusted, rather than changed, the 2010 reform. It included, inter alia, more flexible eligibility criteria by counting in short-term temporary jobs, an opportunity to extend the maximum benefit period by one year (if the person had taken on sufficient employment during the benefit period), and reduced benefit levels for new graduates without children. The more flexible eligibility criteria represent a small step to include non-standard employees better in the UI-system.

The next important change in UI is a proposal from 2022. Again, it rather adjusts than changes the 2010 reform. Moreover, the 2022 proposal is not even a UI reform, but a section within a broader economic reform, which has not yet passed in parliament. Still, the reform is important in that it introduces a higher level of UI for part of the unemployment period – the first three months – than the rest of the period. Such a division has been discussed before, but never been agreed upon. The funding for the reform comes from cuts in the UI level for new graduates – a group which had their UI level reduced in the 2010 reform as well.

Regarding the first of the four dimensions (welfare effort), the UI reform with its (near) budget neutrality is neither an example of increased spending, nor cost-containment, but something in between. The dimension of welfare administration is showing a mix of private (the unemployment benefit funds) and public administration. With regard to welfare boundaries, as UI is limited to the members of the (mostly) occupationally divided unemployment benefit funds, it leans more towards an occupational model than a universal one. The welfare logic is social protection rather than social investment.

The positions of the main employers' associations

As in the case of pensions, not all of the interviewed EAs have formulated policies and positions on passive and active labour market polices. Some would leave these issues to the large federations they are part of – DI or Dansk Erhverv – and to the confederation DA (see also Ibsen and Navrbjerg 2017 for a description of this division of labour). And others would, due to their emphasis on the 'business' rather than the 'employer' part of their operations, not even indirectly relate to these policy areas. However, most of the interviewed EAs have formulated policies and positions on labour market policies.

Clearly, the labour market policy issue which occupied the EA interviewees most was labour supply. This issue relates to both active and passive labour market policies, as well as to education, labour migration and other areas. Labour supply is an 'all-time favourite' among employers but, in recent years, increasing problems in getting sufficient qualified labour has moved the issue even higher up the agenda. Also, ALMP is accordingly an important issue, especially for DA and the large federations. As mentioned above, despite the EAs often having criticized the performance of the Jobcentres, the budget cuts for ALMP were criticized. However, not by all. SMVdanmark has aimed for a reduction of the ALMP, which they find too large compared to the effects of the policies.

It is mainly DA and the large federations DI and Dansk Erhverv who formulate opinions on unemployment benefits. The large EAs acknowledge generally the important role that unemployment benefits play for the Danish flexicurity model, but at the same time they strongly sign up to the 'make work pay' principle, which emphasizes making unemployment benefits lower than minimum wages. In 2018, DI took an unusual stand and stated that further cuts in the UI were not needed and could endanger the flexicurity model (Praefke og Munkholm 2018). In relation to the recent UI changes from 2020, the EA interviewees expressed support for the proposed reduction in UI level for the newly graduated, but were sceptical about increasing the UI level for the first three months for other unemployed people. In relation to this, DA has recently stated that 126,000 (or around 5 % of all) full-time employees in Denmark have an income below the new UI maximum and therefore lack an incentive to work (DA 2022a), whereas the Ministry of Employment finds it is only 43,000. The difference seems to be related to whether the occupational pensions and the 'labour market allowance' are included or not (DA 2022b).

3.2.3 Vocational Education and Training post-2008

While the period did not provide a great deal of new CVT initiatives, a major vocational education reform was agreed upon in 2014. The aim was to increase the quality of vocational education and to increase the share of the youth cohort choosing this kind of education. In 2013, the government set up negotiations on a 'Vocational Education and Competency Education in the Adult and Further Education System' with strong social partner representation to prepare for reform, but disagreement about how the quality of the education should be improved prolonged the discussion and it did not achieve a consensus. Nevertheless, LO and DA later published a paper (LO and DA 2013) on their demands for the reform. This plan was more ambitious than the government's. The government's subsequent reform proposal included several of LO and DA's main recommendations (Carstensen and Ibsen 2015; 2019). Thus, a form of tripartite consensus was obtained in the end, and one of the basic features of the Danish model – that it can be difficult to ignore joint ideas from LO and DA – was confirmed.

Until 2017, the post-2008 period did not provide many CVT initiatives, either with tripartite processes or without. One of the few was an amalgamation, in 2009, of the two national tripartite advisory councils for general adult education and for CVT respectively into the National Council for Education and Continuing Training. They were amalgamated in order to strengthen the links between the two areas. One single tripartite agreement from the period is worth mentioning. In February 2013, the Liberal-Conservative government introduced the Growth Plan DK. One of several aims of the plan was to strengthen CVT. The use of publicly funded CVT – especially the AMU – was declining at the same time as the business cycle was improving. Taken together this could have contributed to a situation where companies could not receive sufficient qualified labour.

The growth plan aimed to strengthen CVT through initiatives under eight different headings at a total cost of one billion DKK, including the introduction of the opportunity for adults to undertake vocational basic education (not only further training), more flexibility in the AMU system and upgrading of more skilled workers to qualifications at a professional level. The specific initiative was agreed with the social partners, whereas the Growth Plan itself was a political agreement. Hence, it was a tripartite agreement on the implementation, but not on the policy formulation, and the government and the social partners did not consider it to be a 'tripartite agreement'.

Case: Tripartite agreement on sufficient labour supply 2017[6]
In 2017, the government invited its social partners, with whom it had completed a tripartite agreement on refugees earlier in the year, to further tripartite talks, this time under the heading of 'sufficient labour supply', to address three themes: 1) prevention of barriers to recruitment; 2) practical training places – more skilled workers; and 3) continuous vocational training (CVT). The aim of the first theme was to improve the already high level of geographical and vocational mobility. The reason for the second theme was the (long-lasting) problem of providing a sufficient number of practical training places for the vocational element of the dual system, while the third was to address a notable decrease in the otherwise comparatively high use of CVT. Both the second and the third theme are relevant for VET, but since most of the negotiations under the third theme were postponed and the second theme was the core of the negotiations, the focus below will be on the second theme.

LO had a strong interest in increasing the number of practical training places because this would improve the quality of their young members' education and most likely improve their employment opportunities later in life. In addition, they had a strong interest in the negotiations for procedural reasons, in that this second phase of the negotiations was supposed to include issues of greater interest for LO. The EAs also had a strong interest in expanding the number of practical training places but, with no additional public funding for it, the fact that some of their members would have to deliver more than previously, in one way or another, naturally made this an area of particular interest for them and also implied diverging interests among them according to the extent to which they were small or big providers of training places. The government's interests also included a greater supply of practical training places.

DA rejected early in the process the government's suggestion that they should deliver a 'practical training guarantee', stating they it was beyond their competence to do so. With the exclusion of a guarantee from the agenda, the decision-making process focused at an early stage on models for economic incentives to stimulate the companies to set up practical training places. Three major challenges had to be addressed. Firstly, the fact that economic incentives

[6] Where nothing else is stated the sources of this case are Mailand (2019) and Mailand (2020).

were being introduced without additional public funding meant that some companies were going to have to pay for not providing their quota of practical training places, and the EAs therefore had strong and diverging interests in the negotiations. Secondly, the government wanted to provide more favourable conditions for vocational education within areas of high labour demand. However, since this demand fluctuates over time, some kind of forecasting was needed – and accurate forecasting is difficult. Thirdly, diverging interests in the trade union movement was also a challenge, though perhaps not so big as the other two. For obvious reasons, LO wanted a focus on low-skilled workers, whereas FTF and AC (also) wanted to focus on further training, which could be of benefit to their members. These challenges made the process long and difficult. The employers – who in this round were the actors most under pressure – took a long time to agree amongst themselves on an economic incentive-based model, and it was, unsurprisingly, difficult for them to reach the necessary consensus between the parties.

The employers suggested very detailed mathematical models, including forecasting, which did not get support from the other two actors, who found the models too complicated. However, there was an understanding among the other two actors that it was basically about internal distributions of the economic burden on the employers' side. At some point in the process, the government informed the employers that they could decide on the model, but that they had to finance it themselves.

Finally, an agreement was signed in August 2016 (Regeringen og arbejdsmarkedets parter 2016b). The most important points were: 1) vocational education in areas with high labour demand to receive a bonus of 670 euro for each practical training place they set up; 2) a target for establishing 8,000–10,000 more practical training places within four years; 3) a reduction in the contribution to the Social Partners Educational Contribution (AUB) for those companies that reach their target for practical training places, and an economic penalty for those that do not; 4) a bonus to companies that are increasing their numbers of practical training places, to be agreed during 2017 with the social partners.

Regarding the first of the four dimensions, welfare effort, the tripartite agreement's part on practical training places was again an example of a budget-neutral reform and, hence, showing neither increased spending nor cost-containment. The dimension of welfare administration is showing private rather than public administration, in that the companies still decide if they want to establish the practical training places or not, but the agreement has a public administrative dimension as well. With regard to welfare boundaries, the agreement is clearly an occupational model rather than universal. To the extent this policy area can be 'labelled' social at all, the welfare logic is clearly social investment rather than social protection.

The positions of the main employers' associations

The VET issue was the only issue that all EAs without exception formulated positions on. The EA interviewees support the dual system of vocational education. Like the trade unions, they are using extensive resources in the development and day-to-day operation of these educations.

With regards to the content of education, some of the EAs are working actively for improving the educational opportunities for their members. Hence, SMVdanmark is aiming for more focus on self-employment in the education system, and the EA of IT companies, IT-Branchen, works for more IT in the primary and lower secondary schools ('Folkeskolen'). Regarding the IT industries, interviewees pointed to difficulties in establishing the dual education known in so many other occupations in Denmark. Among the challenges mentioned were getting the companies interested in providing practical training places and finding the right and representative unions to develop the education with. Other EAs worked on initiatives less clearly linked to their own members – for instance SMVdanmark, who aims for transferring resources from the comparatively generous and mostly university-related student allowances scheme (Statens Uddannelsesstøtte, SU) to vocational education.

Four cross-sectoral challenges were mentioned across the interviews:

Firstly, the high drop-out rates from the Danish vocational schools (which also in a comparative perspective is high) (Eriksen 2022) was something that some of the EA interviewees expressed concern about. Secondly, another worry of the interviewed EAs was the question about financing the needed lift in the basic education level. The EAs acknowledge the need to address the challenge of insufficient basic reading and maths skills among the adult population. The classic position of the EAs has been to show willingness to finance vocational education as long as it is vocational, but to be reluctant to finance education for basic skills, because the EAs find that this is for the state only to finance.

A third issue of concern mentioned by several of the EAs was that vocational education now not only has to struggle with a shortage of practical training places in some areas but increasingly also a lack of students. Hospitality, electrician and carpentry courses were mentioned as some of the many areas now lacking students. Fourthly, a rather persistent VET issue was also mentioned in the interviewees: The difficulties of obtaining sufficient use of the funds for further education and training, not least the funds which are part of the collective agreements, but also newer funds such as those connected to a tripartite agreement from 2016 (see section 3.2.3). Both the bureaucratic demands of the funds and the lack of interest among especially lower qualified employees were pointed to as barriers for use of the funds. In relation to the latter barrier, some of the EA interviewees found it problematic that the trade unions reportedly were always asking for extensions of educational opportunities and rights when their members have a lukewarm attitude towards them. Hence, although the interviews found the VET area a relatively easy one to establish consensus on – both between EAs and between the EAs and the trade unions – different aims were found.

3.2.4 Family policies post 2008

Although it was prior to 2008, it is necessary to mention a reform from 2002. This reform introduced the four-period pattern of leave presented above. It also extended the total birth-related leave periods to one year – with the right to Childbirth Social Allowance. This was a substantial increase from the previous half year of total leave, although paternity leave as part of the reform was reduced from four to two weeks. Other parental leave reforms involve the rollback of a paid 52-week childcare leave (not mentioned above) in 2004, which was phased out by 2011 – this leave was never used as much as birth-related leave. Furthermore, the implementation of the EU's revised directive on parental leave (2010) gave Danish parents new rights to request flexible working after returning from parental leave as well as a strengthening of the maternity, paternity and parental leave protection (Lov 2012/1 LSF 105).

In December 2019, following pressure from left and centre parties, parents' groups and the relevant sectoral trade unions, the government decided to gradually introduce minimum staff–child ratios in Danish childcare, which guarantees one adult per three children aged 0–3 years. This reform is expected to be fully implemented by 2025, although the government has already started to finance this new scheme in their budgetary plans for 2020 and promised legal changes to reflect this decision in 2020/2021 (Regeringen et al. 2019; de la Porte et al. 2022).

Case: Implementation of the European work-life balance directive 2019[7]
Although not a national initiative, the case is illustrative for the Danish employers' position towards European policy initiatives in the family policy area.

The European work-life balance directive is revising the parental leave directive from 2010, but is more than just a revised version of the old directive. The directive was adopted in August 2019 after long negotiations among the EU-institutions. Most importantly, it provided: 10 days paternity leave with pay at the minimum rate of sickness benefit level; 2 months of earmarked maternity leave for paid fathers and mothers at the rate to be determined by each Member State; 2 months' parental leave for each parent; 5 care days per year for parents and relatives of carers without pay; and a right to request flexible working hours (including telework, flexible working hours or reduced working hours).

The position among Danish political parties, both to the left and right in parliament, has been sceptical. During the negotiation of the directive, the Conservative-Liberal government (2015–2019) was openly hostile to the directive. In the European Council, Denmark opposed the directive. In the European Parliament, Danish MEPs from left and right opposed. Since then, the Social Democratic government followed in the same footsteps. The arguments have been the subsidiarity principle (that these matters should be regulated exclusively at the national level), that it should be up to the families themselves to decide how to divide the leave periods and that further leave arrangements should be left for the social partners to bargain on.

The Danish social partners were, during the negotiation of the directive, also mostly sceptical due to the fear that the EU would force the Danish state to legislate more on parental leave, and thereby undermine the authority of social partners on parental leave. On the trade unions side, some FH member organizations – especially the general workers union 3F and the metal workers union – initially opposed parts of the directive on the grounds that it undermined the Danish labour market model as well as due to uncertainties about who would carry the associated financial costs.

[7] Where nothing else is stated, the sources of this case are Arnholtz et al. (2020) and de la Porte et al. (2020b).

During the negotiation phase of the directive, DA was among the most outspoken critics of it. However, after the adoption of the directive some of the main employers' associations changed position. By 2019, DI announced that they no longer opposed statutory earmarking. Their motivation may be driven by concerns of keeping politicians and implicitly the EU at arms-length, rather than a genuine interest in promoting gender equality, especially in the light of Danish employers' longstanding opposition to earmarked leave for fathers. After DI changed its position, Dansk Erhverv also changed its position. It had previously been very sceptical and its change in position is similar to DI, mainly due to retaining regulatory powers, even if a double expansion would entail additional costs on business.

These changed positions are to some extent reflected in collective agreements. Following the adoption of the directive, these trade unions together with their employer counterparts have extended their earmarking of paid leave for fathers, in line with the aims of the directive in order to minimize foreseen state intervention. Most importantly, in February 2020, the social partners within the lead bargaining manufacturing sector (DI and CO-industri) extended the earmarking of paid parental leave for fathers from five to eight weeks with full-wage compensation, in order to be in line with the EU directive. Subsequently, all other private sector social partner organizations followed suit. In a few sectors, the requirement of earmarking paid leave had already been implemented prior to the adoption of the directive. In these sectors, such as banking, social partners aim to keep the status quo, since they already offer 12 weeks of fully compensated parental leave per parent.

In September 2021, DA and FH agreed in a bipartite recommendation on a new model for maternity leave, which earmarked 11 weeks of parental leave for each parent. The recommendations were passed on to the government. And in March 2022, a new law on parental leave was passed in the parliament, which followed the recommendations of the social partners.

A classification of the reform on the four dimensions could be like this: Regarding the first of the four dimensions, welfare effort, the directive points in the direction of increased spending rather than cost-containment. Although some sectors in Denmark already complied with the minimum requirements prior to the adoption of the directive, others did not. Hence, increased spending can also be foreseen in Denmark. The dimension of welfare administration, in the case of implementation of the directive in Denmark, shows a combination of private (the social partners and their collective agreements) combined with public administration (legislation). With regard to welfare boundaries, the agreement is universal, in that it covers all citizens, although the implementation in the case of Denmark will have an occupational dimension. The welfare logic could be argued to be both social investment, in that it facilitates labour market participation, and social protection, in that it – also in a Danish context – will increase the benefit level for some during parental leave periods.

The positions of the main employers' associations

Not all EAs had much to say about work-life-balance policy, but most had. Work-life balance policies have many dimensions, but it seems currently to be the parental leave issue that occupies the minds of the interviewees most. As already described above, some of the EA interviewees found that gender equality issues in the last couple of years have moved up the agenda and that real changes are seen in both the EAs and in the managements of their member organizations.

Whereas most of the major changes – until the earmarked leave was agreed – took place in the first decade of the millennium, the fund for parental leave for the self-employed was introduced in 2020. According to SMVdanmark, they were the main architects behind the legislation for the fund, which obliged all self-employed workers to contribute and top up the previous leave allowance of approx. 2,400 euro per month to a maximum amount of approx. 4,100 euro per month (SMVdanmark 2020).

3.3 Company positions in relation to welfare policy

In this section, the findings from the survey are presented alongside the findings from the interviews with the two selected MNCs. The two MNCs were selected as being large in the sense of having more than 1,500 employees in Denmark, making both of them among the top-40 employers in the private sector. The other selection criteria was that one of the MNCs should be foreign-owned, whereas the other one should have Danish ownership. Other differences of the two companies are that one of them can be seen as a medium-low tech service sector company, the other as a medium-high tech manufacturing company.

Having only two companies, selected in the described way, implies that they cannot be used for generalizations. However, they are illustrating different ways that large companies – in this case two MNCs – work with the four chosen issues and how they relate to the EAs they are members of.

3.3.1 Findings from the survey

Table S.9 shows medium to high general support for the government's welfare policies. The support seems somewhat higher for unemployment benefits, disadvantaged groups, welfare and education than for old age pensions and childcare benefit. Several interpretations of this are possible – one could be that the companies consider individual or CA-based sources to be better financial sources for the old and childcare than for the rest of the services. The difference between work-life balance and childcare services is perhaps surprising in that they could be said to be closely connected.

S.9 How much responsibility companies think governments should have (mean of the score 0 to 10)

	Mean
Ensure a reasonable standard of living for the old	5,69
Ensure sufficient childcare services for working parents	5,87
Ensure a reasonable standard of living for the unemployed	7,72
Ensure better work-life balance of workers	8,45

Ensure labour integration of disadvantaged groups	8,6
Ensure an adequate education to the youth	8,87
N	28

Table S.10 shows opinions on the effect of welfare (costly or making people lazy). There is a near-equal split between those who are concerned about the effect of welfare services on the cost to business and those who are worried about the risk of so-called 'welfarism' ('making people lazy').

Table S.10 Opinion on effect of welfare (companies that neither agree nor disagree on the two sentences)

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Number of resp.	Percent	
Cost businesses too much in taxes/charges	14	53,8 %	93,3 %
Make people lazy	12	46,2 %	80,0 %
Total	26	100,0 %	15

Note: this is a multiple response frequency report. Respondent could answer more than one category. The percentage of responses shows the percentage of responses to the total number of responses.

Table S.11 shows an interesting support for welfare (lack of support for welfare reductions) in that it includes very few 'spend less' answers. One interpretation could be that sufficient funding of education (which in S.9 was valued most) is of great importance for the companies, but it could also reflect an overall support for welfare policies.

Table S.11 Looking at the system of social protection and education in your country, do you think that the government should spend more or less?

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Number of responses	Percent	
Spend more	74	33,3 %	231,3 %
Spend less	4	1,8 %	12,5 %
Spend as much as now	92	41,4 %	287,5 %
I don't know	52	23,4 %	162,5 %
Total	222	100,0 %	32

Note: This table show aggregate responses of several questions with multiple responses

S.12 indicates that the first interpretation of S.11 could be right, as the scores for VET and, especially, general education in S.12 are high.

Table S.12 More precisely in which policies the government should spend more?

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Number of resp.	Percent	
Unemployment benefits	5	6,8 %	21,7 %
Old age pensions	5	6,8 %	21,7 %
Social assistance to the poor	6	8,1 %	26,1 %

Vocational education and training	13	17,6 %	56,5 %
Education in general	19	25,7 %	82,6 %
Labour market programmes	15	20,3 %	65,2 %
Pre-school and early childhood education	11	14,9 %	47,8 %
Total	74	100,0 %	23

Note: this is a multiple response frequency report. Respondent could answer more than one category. The percentage of responses shows the percentage of responses to the total number of responses.

However, S.13 challenges this interpretation. The answers include a (for employers perhaps surprising) lack of support for a 'work first approach' to ALMP in that the most frequent answer by far is to give the unemployed more time to improve their qualifications, whereas there is not much support for increasing spending on education or for any of the other possible answers. A weakness of the questions could be that they do not include answers relating to the content and type of active measures, which are often indicated to be the employers' main concern.

Table S.13 What the government should do (respondents who agree with the sentences)?

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Give to the unemployed more time and opportunities to improve their qualification before they are required to accept a j	19	45,20%	86,4%
Increase old age pensions to a higher degree than wages	5	11,9%	22,7%
Lower the statutory retirement age and facilitating early retirement	4	9,5%	18,2%
Cut back spending on education and families in order to be able to finance more spending on old age pensions and unemployment	1	2,4%	4,5%
Increase spending on education in general, even if that implies higher taxes	4	9,5%	18,2%
Increase spending on education in general, even if that implies cutting back spending in other areas such as pensions	4	9,5%	18,2%
Increase spending on childcare services, even if that implies cutting back spending in other areas such as pensions	1	2,4%	4,5%
Increase spending on childcare services, even if that implies higher taxes	1	2,4%	4,5%
Increase spending on vocational training, even if that implies higher taxes	3	7,1%	13,6%
Total	42	100,0%	22

Note: this is a multiple response frequency report. Respondent could answer more than one category. The percentage of responses shows the percentage of responses to the total number of responses.

The question in S.14 got more responses from more companies. The most frequent answer is that the companies should play a more important role in the education system, but there is a near-even spread between the three questions related to pensions, education system and ALMP incentives. Importantly, the questions do not separate between individual private pension schemes and CB-based ones, which the companies also might have interpreted as private pension schemes. The low score for private schools might be because 'privat skoler' in Danish is referring to primary and lower secondary levels only. This part of the school is mainly seen as a task for the state by EAs.

S.14 What role should private providers have in the welfare state (respondents who agree with the sentences)?

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Private schools should play an important role in the education system	8	6,0 %	18,2 %
Private pension schemes should play a more important role than public pension schemes	22	16,5 %	50,0 %
Companies should play a more important role in the education system (specifically in vocational courses)	28	21,1 %	63,6 %
Public incentives should be given more to companies than unemployed people in order to help the latter to find a job	24	18,0 %	54,5 %
Total	82	100,0 %	44

Note: this is a multiple response frequency report. Respondent could answer more than one category. The percentage of responses shows the percentage of responses to the total number of responses

3.3.2 MNC 1: IKEA Denmark

The name of the well-known Swedish-founded MNC that designs and sells furniture, kitchen equipment and home accessories is made up of the initials of its charismatic founder, Ingvar Kamprad Elmtaryd Agunnaryd. Since his death in 2016, IKEA has been controlled by INGKA Holding B.V., based in the Netherlands, which owns the Ingka Group, which in turn takes care of all IKEA products and services. IKEA Denmark employs a little more than 3,000 employees (making it the tenth-largest private sector employer in the country) and operates five stores with a sixth in the making. Moreover, IKEA Denmark includes a central store, a call-centre and a Danish head-quarter. The Ingka Group formulates the general policies and targets of IKEA, but leaves quite some room for the national departments such as IKEA Denmark, including in relation to personnel matters such as those covered by the four areas in focus here.

In terms of the composition of the workforce, the largest groups are sales employees, logistics workers (including warehouse workers), customer relations employees and restaurant employees. At a slightly higher skill level, the Communication and Interior Design department is responsible for the design of the rooms in the warehouses and is staffed with graphic designers, interior designers, carpenters, etc. Still higher up the skill-hierarchy is the People and Culture and the financial department. Finally, IKEA has its own drivers, who deliver products to customers. All these staff groups are covered by collective agreements, most often in the form of the sectoral agreements, but for a minority of the groups, IKEA and shop stewards/local trade union branches have signed local agreements. IKEA Denmark has a very large share of part-time employees and a high annual labour turnover. The management considers both these features problematic and tries to reduce them.

IKEA Denmark has been growing in terms of turnover and employment for decades, including during the Great Recession and the Corona crisis. Their approach to the four policy areas should be seen in the light of these favourable economic conditions.

Unemployment
It is the active rather than passive policies which are most relevant in the case of IKEA Denmark. And the active unemployment-related initiatives of IKEA are addressing both the employees of the company as well unemployed persons outside the company. Regarding employees who experience a substantially reduced capacity to work, the company uses standard programmes in the 'toolbox' of Danish ALMP, such as the flexijobs, which allow it to hold on to an employee on a reduced number of working hours. IKEA also opens its doors to the unemployed. Some of these are referred to IKEA via the local Jobcentres and are employed in, e.g., company practice ('virksomhedspraktik'). IKEA Denmark is also represented on one or two of the local employment councils connected to the municipal Jobcentres. In accordance with their diversity agenda, IKEA also runs its own special programmes for disadvantaged groups such as ethic minority women, young immigrants, and refugees. What IKEA Denmark has not been 'tested' on is its handling of mass redundancies, simply because the company has expanded more or less permanently. However, despite this, IKEA Denmark went through a major restructuring process in the early 2000s, and it was not possible to relocate all affected employees to other positions within the company. Some were dismissed, but the number was below 30, which is the threshold for mass redundancies for companies with more than 200 employees.

Vocational Education and Training
IKEA Denmark provides practical training places mostly in relation to their sales, logistic and interior design departments. Most IKEA employees are graduates from these three dual-education programmes, which the company also takes part in developing. The restaurants are mostly staffed with unskilled workers. The company has tried to establish an education in this area, but failed. Among the challenges have been that the large share of pre-prepared products in IKEA's restaurants does not relate to existing segments.

Regarding further training, on-the-job training is key, but IKEA has also to a large extent developed its own programmes, including a management trainee programme over 12–18 months for 30–35 employees annually. Moreover, IKEA Denmark uses the further training funds connected to the collective agreements, but finds a double challenge in this regard: lack of knowledge and attention on the employee side and too complicated application procedures.

Pensions
IKEA Denmark operates standard pensions schemes for employees and managers. On the top of these, a global bonus scheme (named 'Tack', which is Swedish for 'thanks') with a strong retention and pension dimension was introduced in 2014 on the initiative of IKEA's Swedish founder. The pension bonus is based on IKEAs global performance and the amount paid is the same for all managers and employees, but graduated according to working hours. The bonus is only transferred to the employee's pension account after five years of employment.

Work-life balance

IKEA Denmark has a number of special policies, including a parental leave scheme and a possibility for employees with children below age six to leave early from work four days a week. The company has been a frontrunner for establishing special conditions for male gay couples with children, and due to this it established cooperation with the Ministry of Equal Opportunities.

Being a company with megastores that aim to be accessible when customers are not working, in late afternoon, evenings and weekends, in itself brings work-life challenges. In order to protect the work-life balance of employees, the collective agreements have regulations on the number of monthly evening and weekend shifts. These two factors creates incentives to use part-time work, which in the case of IKEA Denmark is above 60 %. Accordingly, there are no widespread demands among the part-time employees (a little more than half of whom are under 30 years old) to work full time, but the management wants to increase the number of full-time employees as well as to decrease the annual turnover of employees, which currently stands at 34 %, and which unsurprisingly is highest among the part-time employees.

The relations with EAs

IKEA Denmark's main EA is Dansk Erhverv, in which their CEO is a board-member. Their use of Dansk Erhverv's services are not so much in relation to the four policy areas as in relation to labour law issues. Also in relation to the repeated lockdowns and reopenings during the Covid pandemic, the company used the EA's services and advice extensively.

3.3.3 MNC 2: Topsoe

Topsoe (previously known as Haldor Topsøe) is another large MNC carrying the name of its founder. Haldor Topsøe was a Danish engineer, who studied with the world-famous physician Niels Bohr and in 1940 established a company based on catalysis, which at that time was a little-used chemical process. Catalysis is used to speed up the production of sulphuric acid and is now used in the production of 90 % of all commercially used products. The companies' catalysts are used in the production of 50 % of fertilizers produced globally. Recently, Topsoe has moved away from its previous position as a mainly chemical company and upgraded its activities in the green energy area and the company is today in the global frontline when it comes to technologies to counteract pollution and in technologies to clean up fuel and optimize the use of it. Topsoe now aims to be recognized as the global leader in carbon emission reduction technologies by 2024. The company is much engaged in developing solutions for decarbonizing hard-to-abate sectors such as steel, cement, chemicals, shipping and aviation by producing essential renewable energy carriers, fuels, and chemicals of the future, such as green hydrogen, green ammonia and eMethanol (www.topsoe.com; Jacobsen 2015).

The company has 2,200 employees worldwide, divided into: 1,110 in the Lyngby (headquarter), northeast of Copenhagen; 600 in the production plant in Frederikssund, further northeast of Copenhagen; and 200 in Houston and Bayport (production plant), USA. The remaining employees mainly work in sales offices around the world. With a use of 10 % of its turnover on R&D, the company is relatively knowledge-intensive (Danskindustri.dk 2022). The descriptions below focus nearly entirely on the company's Danish facilities.

The economic condition of the company has not always been as healthy as it is today. In 1972 the company ran into financial trouble, part of the company was sold and the remaining company got several owners. However, in 2007 the founder bought all the shares in the company. Today, the company is still family owned, although under another COA as Haldor Topsøe died in 2013 (Kuf.dk 2022).

Vocational education and training

Topsoe is a relatively knowledge-intensive company. The choice of keeping a large part of their manufacturing production in Denmark implies that the Danish part of the company includes a large number of skilled and unskilled workers. Being knowledge-intensive, their interaction with the education system is extensive and spread between qualification levels. The company is a major employer of PhD and Masters' graduates from vocational schools and the nearby Technical University of Denmark, as well as of graduates from other parts of Denmark – such as the Copenhagen Business School and Roskilde University – and other parts of the world. Regarding specific education, they include chemical engineers, process engineers, mechanical engineers, laboratory technician, process-technologists, process operators and industrial operators.

Topsoe is involved in a large number of different fora to encourage an interest in science and to ensure that Danish vocational education stays relevant and attractive. Among these is the national-level 'Technology pact', founded in 2018 together with the Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs, the Ministry of Higher Education and Science and the Ministry of Children and Education. Topsoe has a tradition of working closely with the Danish education system, which also entails that the company is represented at the boards of vocational schools and gymnasiums. They are also part of a panel of employers at the University of Copenhagen. In addition to this, Topsoe frequently visits public primary and lower secondary schools (Folkeskolen) in order to create an interest in and understanding of science and what it can be used for. In line with this, Topsoe is, for instance, involved in a municipal project to promote an interest in science from pre-school to the final year in Folkeskolen.

The company has a strong focus on the continuous training of its employees. The vast majority of employees have a development plan and take part in three development talks a year. Moreover, monthly meetings between employee and manager is recommended to talk about development and well-being. The development activities follow a model prescribing that 70 % of employee development happens through on-the-job activities, 20 % through feedback, coaching and mentoring and 10 % through formal internal or external courses. External course providers include e.g. AMU and the Danish Technological Institute, depending on previous educational background as well as role and responsibilities in the company.

Being a company working with chemical processes, safety is of high importance. All employees are introduced to safety principles and mandatory training curricula are required for specific roles.

Unemployment

Topsoe is involved in active policies in different ways. The company has been through a couple of downturns and organizational restructuring, the latest in 2020 where 200 employees, ranging from management level to production, were dismissed.

In case of termination of employment, employees covered by the Salaried Employees Act (mostly white-collar workers) will be provided with a compensation package that includes participation in an outplacement programme. Topsoe has been working with the same outplacement partner for several years due to the fact that their success rate for reemployment is high. Employees covered by the collective agreement for the manufacturing industry (mostly blue collar workers) will be provided with assistance according to this sectoral agreement.

For many years, the production plant in Frederikssund has cooperated closely with the local Jobcentre in order to attract operators. Different promotion activities are being used. These include open house events (where jobseekers can visit the plant) and the possibility to work as an operator through job trials ('jobprøvning') or via an internship ('virksomhedspraktik').

Work-life balance and pension

Topsoe employs a wide range of employees from production, R&D, sales, to support functions such as finance and HR. This indicates that work-life balance comes in many shapes and forms depending on employee roles and responsibilities, interests and career aspirations.

Topsoe strives to be a great place to work, which means that the company continuously works to improve working conditions to attract and retain the best talent. Below are a few examples of what is currently offered to employees working in Denmark in order to create a work-life balance.

With regard to working time flexibility, the company offers different types of leave schemes and provides the opportunity to work from home for most groups of employees (with the exception of e.g. operators at the Frederiksund plant). The latter opportunity (working from home) has been extended and systematized after the Corona lockdowns, which gave the company important experiences in the field. Recently, Topsoe – like other Danish companies – have had to revise their rules on parental leave, in order to comply with changes related to a new EU directive. Moreover, mandatory regular health checks by doctors are offered to employees working night shifts. This is mainly relevant for employees working at the production site in Frederikssund.

With regard to international mobility, being a company with offices and production plants in many countries around the world provides opportunities to relocate life and family to another country for a period of time to gain new experiences. This is, however, primarily relevant for employees working in certain roles within the company. The company reimburses some expenses in connection with this mobility, whereas others can be negotiated. For some this provides an opportunity, but for others work-life balance will be challenged. This is especially true in a country like Denmark where the labour market participation of both men and women is high.

Regarding pensions, Topsoe offers pension savings. For employees mainly working in the Frederikssund production site, the pension follows the occupational pension scheme which is part of the collective agreement for the manufacturing industry. Moreover, all employees are covered by health insurance and receive a yearly bonus. Finally, it is possible for all employees to buy employee shares in the company.

The relations with EAs

Topsoe is a long-time member of DI. They are not represented on the general board of DI, but are on the boards of the DI branches, DI Process Industry and DI Energy. Topsoe uses DI's labour law service. Furthermore, it cooperates with DI in relation to various education and labour supply issues. An example of such cooperation is getting more students to sign up to STEM education.

Topsoe is not a member of other Danish EAs but is a member of other Danish business organizations such as Hydrogen Denmark ('Brintbranchen'), which organizes companies working with hydrogen, power-to-x, and the Danish Environment Technology Association ('Dansk Miljøteknologi'). In addition to these, Topsoe has membership of 25 business organizations and other types of organizations globally.

3.3.4 Assessment

Both IKEA Denmark and Topsoe illustrate the point made from the interviews with EAs, that although MNCs – especially foreign-owned ones – might be less committed to the various Danish labour market and welfare institutions than companies are on average, there do also exist MNCs of various ownership models that are committed to these institutions. The two companies should probably not be taken as an expression of the average approaches of MNCs working in Denmark towards the four chosen areas or other areas for that matter. Both companies emphasized social responsibility in various ways long before CSR became a 'plusword and buzzword'. Some would even see the companies' approach – especially IKEA's – as paternalistic.

4. The 'how' question

In what follows, less weight will be put on the content of the four chosen welfare policies and more on how the employers – both their associations and the individual employers – attempt to influence it. In the first section (4.1), only the parts of the trade unions' activities that differ from the employers' associations will be addressed. Section 4.2 considers the position of self-employment. The trade unions' role in collective bargaining and tripartite arrangements are to a large extent similar to the role of employer associations, and this will be presented in 4.3.

4.1 The characteristics and role of the trade unions in general and in the four policy areas

Before describing the unique roles of the trade unions, a brief description of the trade unions is in order. Until very recently, there existed three trade union confederations. The largest and oldest of the three, the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), was founded in 1898. Most of LO's member organizations started at the local level as craft unions, but developed over time into nationwide associations (Madsen et al. 2016). The craft base continued to be important for the unions for a long time and is still reflected today in the structure and demarcation lines of the unions. LO's members represented both manual and non-manual workers, in the private and public sectors. LO's member organizations, which used to be formally linked to the Social Democratic Party but now retain only informal links, had around 840,000 members in 2015 (Jørgensen 2015). After the decentralization process described above, LO was no longer directly involved in collective bargaining, but continued to be involved in the coordination of it and in the processes of arbitration and consolidation. However, LO was still the main organization regarding inter-sectoral issues and involvement in tripartite arrangements and lobbying.

The second-largest trade union confederation was until very recently the Confederation of Professionals in Denmark (FTF), with around 350,000 members. FTF for the most part represented unions whose members were public sector employees, like civil servants, teachers and nurses, but FTF also included some private sector non-manual workers, particularly in banking and finance. FTF was also involved in tripartite arrangements, whereas collective bargaining was the prerogative of its member organizations.

In spring 2018, LO and FTF decided to join forces in order to strengthen their position vis-a-vis the employers and the government (Andersen and Hansen 2019). The two organizations merged in January 2019 into 'FH – Danish Trade Union Confederation'. Since the Danish chapter only focuses on the period up to the end of 2017, the possible consequences of this merger are not analysed, and LO and FTF are referred to by their old names.

The third confederation still exists. It is the Danish Confederation of Professional Associations (Akademikerne, AC), with around 200,000 members (320,000 if students and other non-employed members are included). AC represents graduate-level employees in the public and private sectors (workers-participation.eu). Unlike LO and FTF, AC is directly involved in collective bargaining.

Beyond the umbrellas of these three confederations, ideologically alternative – or 'yellow' – unions such as the Christian Union have increased membership steadily during the last 10 years. These unions are involved in intense competition with LO's member organizations for recruiting members. In 2012, some 220,000 employees were members of the ideologically alternative unions.

The level of trade union density (including the 'yellow unions') in Denmark stood at 67 % in 2013 (OECD 2014) but had dropped to 64 % in 2018 (Andersen and Arnholtz, forthcoming). This union density, however, is still comparatively high. It had been steadily declining since 1996 from around 75 %, and the decline has mostly taken place among the unions of skilled and unskilled workers, as well as among unions representing clerical and commercial employees (i.e. the 'old' LO members of FH), whereas membership of AC and the yellow unions has increased in recent years (Madsen et al. 2016). The declining membership of FH challenges its legitimacy as the core of the Danish trade union movement and its status as the main voice of Danish employees.

Since the 1990s, another important development has taken place. As part of the 'centralized-decentralization' process described above and as a reaction to technological development, a move towards fewer organizations – similar to that in the employers' organizations – took place on the employee side. This development has been most notable in LO, where the number of member organizations was reduced from 40 in 1980 to 18 in 2017. In FTF, the number only decreased in the years 1980–2000 from 133 to 104 and to 69 in 2017, while the number increased in AC in the years 1980–2000 from 19 to 22 and further to 25 in 2017 (Due and Madsen 2001; the confederations' webpages).

Like the employers' associations, the trade unions service their members in various ways, including providing legal advice and bringing cases to court. However, there is at least one role that the trade unions have but employers' associations do not: Administering unemployment insurance (UI) funds.

The UI funds have deep historical roots. The first UI act was adopted in 1907 and was inspired by the Belgian Ghent system. Hence, the law established self-governing UI funds, divided according to occupation and affiliated to the unions but under public supervision and with a ceiling for total government grants, from municipalities and the state, of a maximum of 50 % of total expenditure (Pedersen 2007). It is surprising that such legislation – which gave unions a significant part of the control of UI and led to wide-ranging double membership of UI funds and trade unions – could be unanimously passed through parliament with a right-wing majority. However, it was important for the right-wing majority that as many union members as possible joined the UI funds to make them economically sustainable. Possibly, the right-wing majority trusted the state control of the system and hoped that formal separation between trade unions and UI funds would be a real separation (Due and Madsen 2007).

Based on recommendations from a tripartite commission established in 1964, legislative amendments were introduced in both 1967 and 1969, which, inter alia, made part-time employees eligible for UI. The rule, which is still in existence, that UI should amount to 90 % of previous income, but with a fixed ceiling, derives from these legislative changes. The legislative changes also established the public employment service, AF. AF took over the role of matching available jobs and job seekers from quasi-municipal public employment offices and from trade unions, UI funds and other non-governmental actors.

Finally, in 1979, the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme (VERS) gave 60–66 year-olds the opportunity to retire from the labour market with 80–100 % of the maximum UI if they had been members of a UI fund for 10 years (Pedersen 2007). The introduction of the scheme increased membership of the UI funds. Later it became possible for self-employed people to be members of UI funds.

Whereas the Social Democratic-led governments of the 1990s succeeded in reducing the maximum benefit period from being de facto unlimited to four years, the Liberal-led governments, in the following decade, had little luck in their attempts to continue this development and to change the UI level. What the Liberal-led governments were able to introduce in 2002 was the opportunity for the UI funds to recruit beyond their main occupation by introducing cross-occupational UI funds. A side-effect of the 2002 law was a weakening of the so-called Ghent effect, i.e. the widespread 'double membership' of trade unions and UI funds, due to the fact that the UI funds were administered by the unions. The 2002 law clarified that it was possible to choose alternative UI funds (Due and Madsen 2007).

The reforms from the Great Recession (2008) onwards are described in section 3.

4.1.1 The survey

Table S.15 shows that most companies in the survey have employee representatives, which is not surprising. The survey does not separate between shop stewards ('tillidsrepræsentanter') and health and safety representatives ('arbejdsmiljørepræsentanter'). As expected, the majority of companies have employee representation and the smart growth industry has fewer representatives than the other sectors.

Table S.15 Presence of employee representation by sectors

	Industry (excl. construction)	Consumption services (incl. construction)	EU2020 "smart growth" services	Welfare state services and public administration	N
No	23,5%	47,1 %	29,4 %	0,0 %	17
Yes	33,3%	29,2 %	12,5 %	25,0 %	24
Total					41

Table S.16 shows that union representatives are in the minority, which is not in line with the general picture of Danish companies. This should be seen in connection with the fact that EA-members, contrary to the general picture, make up the majority of the companies that answered the questionnaire, as seen in table S.3.

Table S.16 Type of employee representation

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Numbers	Percent	
Trade union	12	31,6 %	50,0 %
Workers' trustee or a single employee representative	14	36,8 %	58,3 %
Works council	12	31,6 %	50,0 %
Total	38	100,0%	24

Note: this is a multiple response frequency report. Respondent could answer more than one category. The percentage of responses shows the percentage of responses to the total number of responses

4.2 The direct political weight of the self-employed in the country

In Denmark, the share of self-employment is clearly below the EU average, and the difference is highest for those who are self-employed without employees (sole traders), especially in industry and consumption where the share is close to a third of the EU average (see table 4.1). In 2017, the total number of self-employed people, as well as the number of people who were self-employed without employees, was the lowest in the EU (Danmarks Statistik 2018). Over the years, several explanations have been given for the low presence of self-employment in Denmark, including a lack of an entrepreneurial culture, a near-total absence of knowledge of entrepreneurship in primary and lower secondary schools and within these schools' counselling for educational pathways, the large public sector, and barriers to finance for start-ups. However, so far the author of this report has not found any research projects on the issue, so the above explanatory factors seem mostly speculative.

Table 4.1 Self-employment as a part of total employment, in percentage

	Share of employment				Share of adult population			
	% self-employed with employees	% self-employed with employees + family workers	% self-employed without employees		% self-employed with employees	% self-employed with employees + family workers	% self-employed without employees	
			Industry, Consumption	Welfare Smart growth			Industry, Consumption	Welfare Smart growth
EU28	4.0	4.9	6.8	3.5	2.3	2.8	3.9	2.0
DK	3.4	3.8	2.4	2.2	2.2	2.4	1.5	1.4

Source: Project managers own calculation on Eurostat data

The three largest occupations of the Danish self-employed are 'wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants', 'agriculture, fishing and quarrying', and 'financial intermediation, business activity', which in sum occupy around 60 % of the Danish self-employed (Jørgensen 2009).

The largest organization for the self-employed is SMVdanmark, but this is not exclusively an organization for the self-employed in that, as the name indicates, it also organizes other small and medium-sized enterprises. SMVdanmark includes 90 (mostly smaller) member organizations and some 16,000 individual employers (dhv.dk). As a rule of thumb, sole traders can be members of pure trade associations, whereas only those who are self-employed with employees can be members of the employers' associations. However, some employers' associations are open to all – for instance the Danish Publishers Association offers membership to all publishers including sole traders (Jørgensen 2009).

A minority of the Danish trade unions are organizing sole traders under certain conditions. The largest of these is the Union of Commercial and Clerical Employees in Denmark, which is the second-largest union in Denmark organizing mainly white-collar workers, among them employees in the IT sector, workers within graphic design and employees within administration. HK has created a section called HK/Freelancer for sole traders. Most of the members of HK/Freelancer are women who work in the graphical trade, in publishing, and as correspondents and translators (Jørgensen 2009). Also a number of trade unions within the so-called creative industries organizes sole traders or 'hybrid workers' (employees combining wage-labour with solo self-employed activities) (Larsen & Mailand 2018).

Because of their relatively limited numbers, the political strength of the self-employed in Denmark is most likely comparatively limited too. However, within this first phase of the literature review it has not been possible to find studies on this issue.

4.3 Type of engagement/involvement in policy making

In this section, two different types of the employers' attempted influence in welfare policy will be analysed. The types have been developed by the project coordinators. One is *engagement*, which is about the individual employer's participation in company-level collective bargaining and the individual employer's role through informal actions such as lobbying. The other type is *involvement*, which is about the employers' collective formal role in collective bargaining (at the cross-sectoral or sectoral level) and tripartite arrangements (at the national, policy area or regional/local level). However, lobbying is also a type of involvement, when it is conducted by employers collectively.

Table 4.2 Various forms of employer engagement and employer involvement

	Unilateral	*Bipartite*	*Tripartite*
Engagement (individual)	Lobbyism	Company collective bargaining	
Involvement (collective)	Lobbyism	National and sector collective Bargaining	Tripartite arrangements (social pacts etc.)

4.3.1 Engagement

One of the few recent general studies of Danish *individual employers' lobbying* is a quantitative study of the 500 largest Danish companies' political strategies and contact with the political system (parliament, government and public authorities). This study showed that around 33 % of the companies had connections to the political system in order to influence decisions in specific cases (such as environmental issues concerning the firm's production, or plans for physical extensions of the company's premises), whereas around 20 % had contact with the political system in order to influence the formulation of general rules (legislation etc.). This is the case although to some extent there seems to be a division of labour between the companies and the employer's association, of which the vast majority of the 500 companies are members. Hence, the employers' association more often makes contact with the political system with regard to general rules and the companies more often in connection to specific cases. The study also found a lack of trade-off between the different forms of lobbying activities. A large share of the largest companies among the 500 have close and frequent contact with the political system, as well as with their employers' associations; at the same time, they frequently use the media to influence various forms of agenda setting. The study does not separate the companies by ownership type (domestically owned companies vs. foreign-owned etc.). Moreover, the larger among the 500 companies unsurprisingly have more contact, of all types, with the political system than the smaller ones (a point confirmed in Ibsen og Navjrbjerg 2017). Finally, the study found that the use of employed (external or internal) lobbyists was limited. In sum, the authors find it indicated that the larger Danish companies are important political actors (Christensen og Nørgaard 2003). However, the last-mentioned finding might be outdated already. Several of the larger Danish companies have introduced – or extended the number of – lobbyists among their own employees (Berlingske Tidende 10. marts 2008) and also the use of external lobbyist consultancies on a contractual basis has increased.

Another general and large-scale study should be mentioned. However, this is not a study of business lobbyism per se, but of networks between decision makers. Through a study of a large number of powerful decision-making fora, the authors located who they see as the 423 'most powerful' Danes. Through network analysing technics, these are ranged according to the outreach of their networks and the person's centrality in them. Unsurprisingly, many top managers from EAs (9 %) and managers or board members from companies (24 %) are among the 423 most 'powerful', while surprisingly many trade union leaders (13 %) and (maybe) surprisingly few politicians (8 %) and top-level civil servants (7 %) are included. Among the ten networks with the biggest outreach, four are DI-based networks (no other EAs or trade unions are on that list). Among the ten persons with the highest 'centrality' in the study, one is from DI and four are CEOs from private companies (and four are from trade unions). Of the ten personal networks with the biggest outreach among the EAs, six are from DI. One person from SMVdanmark is on that list (as number 10) as the only representative of an organization for the self-employed (Grau Larsen et al. 2015).

Although, as mentioned, only a few general studies exist of employers' lobbyism in Denmark, a number of case studies have been conducted. One was a study of a heritage tax reform from 2017. The study uses Culpepper's (2011) hypothesis that employers are good at getting their priorities through in low profile issues and areas ('salient policy'). Under the radar, employers, employers' associations and their allies managed to convince the Liberal-Conservative government and their right-wing populist supporting party to lower the tax from 15 to 5 %, without much debate or protest from the opposition (videnskab.dk: Dagbladet Politiken 11. April 2017).

A further type of lobbyism to be mentioned is the so-called 'business clubs' (erhvervsklubber), where business leaders pay slightly lower than the maximum allowed for anonymous donations and meet with various top-level politicians. The first of these clubs was established less than 10 years ago, but now four Danish political parties – two liberal parties, one conservative and the Social Democrats – have such clubs (Kristensen 2018).

Moreover, the VL groups should be mentioned. They are organized by the Danish Management Society, set up in 1965, as groups of business leaders from the private as well as public sector. The society conducts its activities primarily through the VL groups, which meet at regular intervals with the official aim to share experiences, knowledge and ideas across industries and sectors in Denmark. The VL groups have about 4,000 members, organized into around 115 network groups (VL groups) with 30–40 members in each of them. Their meetings are naturally good platforms for lobbying. VL group meetings are closed, whereas the annual meeting 'VL-døgnet' is open to the public. Membership is by invitation only. In other words, it is not possible to buy access to a VL group (vl.dk).

Finally, the various Danish think-tanks – many established only within the last 20 years – should be mentioned. The most successful of these (measured on media impact) is probably the Center for Political Studies (CEPOS), a self-declared liberal think tank. CEPOS does not declare who their financial sources are, but it is likely that their funding sources include a number of larger companies. If so, this think tank exercises a sort of indirect lobbying (among other activities) for some Danish companies. This type of lobbyism is mostly about influencing public perception and the agenda-setting stage of various decision-making processes, and less about influencing specific political decisions at later stages in the process.

Company level bargaining is addressed below.

The survey

The survey has provided answers from the companies related to engagement within the companies themselves. Table S.17 illustrates that most of the companies responding to the survey have company policies related to the four welfare policy areas in focus, but that the large majority of those policies covered some employees rather than all.

Table S.17 Coverage of company level policies

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Numbers	Percent	
No	175	31,5 %	473,0 %
Yes, to all employees	84	15,1 %	227,0 %
Yes, to less than 50% of employees	237	42,7 %	640,5 %
Yes, to more than 50% of employees	52	9,4 %	140,5 %
I do not know	7	1,3 %	18,9 %
Total	555	100,0 %	37

Note: This table show aggregate responses of several questions with multiple responses.

Table S.18 focuses on the type of specific policies within the four welfare policy areas which have been decided exclusively on the company's own initiative. The answers illustrate that the majority of companies completing the survey have such policies, related to different forms of VET activities, job creation, flexible work arrangements, teleworking/telecommuting and study leave.

Table S.18 Policies decided exclusively on company initiative

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Numbers	Percent	
Premiums paid to voluntary (not compulsory) occupational pension schemes	2	0,8 %	5,7 %
Premiums paid to voluntary (not compulsory) unemployment allowances schemes	4	1,7 %	11,4 %
Participation/funding of dual system of education or apprenticeship programmes (at-school- education combined with train	26	11,0 %	74,3 %
On-the job or continuous training	23	9,7 %	65,7 %
Extra statutory maternity/paternity leave	11	4,6 %	31,4 %
Job creation scheme	19	8,0 %	54,3 %
Sheltered employment/Employment scheme for people with disability	15	6,3 %	42,9 %
Requalification scheme or life-long learning	18	7,6 %	51,4 %
Employer subsidized child- care (on-site or off-site)	10	4,2 %	28,6 %
Flexible work arrangements (e.g. job sharing, flexime)	20	8,4 %	57,1 %
Teleworking or telecommuting	18	7,6 %	51,4 %
Part-time work	27	11,4 %	77,1 %
Additional paid days off/extra paid vacation days	15	6,3 %	42,9 %
Study leave	23	9,7 %	65,7 %
Leisure benefits (sport, culture)	6	2,5 %	17,1 %
	237	100,0 %	35

Note: this is a multiple response frequency report. Respondent could answer more than one category. The percentage of responses shows the percentage of responses to the total number of responses.

Table S.19 focuses only on the MNCs, hence the low number of answers. It indicates relatively decentralized decision making with regards to welfare, although a third found the headquarters to have a great influence on this issue.

Table S.19 Influence of headquarter on company welfare (only if the company is a multinational)

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Small extent	23	44,2%	176,9%
Great extent	13	25,0%	100,0%
I don't know	16	30,8%	123,1%
Total	52	100,0%	13

Note: This table show aggregate responses of several questions with multiple responses.

The survey also included a number of questions related to engagement in the form of lobbyism and consultation. In S.20 the answers for both 'Government' and 'Legislator/Parliamentary' consultation are shown, as the answers were the same. It is unsurprising that only a small minority of companies feel consulted to a great extent, especially as the majority of the companies from the survey are not members of an EA and they to some extent are excluded from the Danish model of labour market regulation. Unfortunately, the survey did not include the answer 'never consulted' or the like, which might have made the answers more useful.

Table S.20 Level of direct Government and direct Legislator/Parliament consultation companies in policy making

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Numbers	Percent	
Small extent	181	91,9%	452,5%
Great extent	11	5,6%	27,5%
I don't know	5	2,5%	12,5%
Total	197	100,0%	40

Note: This table show aggregate responses of several questions with multiple responses.

Table S.21 makes attempts to provide a picture of different levels of consultation between the different policy areas, but the levels seems to be very much the same across areas.

Table S.21 In which policies companies are less directly consulted by Parliament/Legislator

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Numbers	Percent	
Pension Policy	36	19,9 %	97,3 %
VET	35	19,3 %	94,6 %
Family policy	36	19,9 %	97,3 %
Active Labour market policy	37	20,4 %	100,0 %
Passive labour market policy	37	20,4 %	100,0 %
Total	181	100,0 %	37

Note: this is a multiple response frequency report. Respondent could answer more than one category. The percentage of responses shows the percentage of responses to the total number of responses.

4.3.2 Involvement

The focus in this section will mostly be on sector- and national-level collective bargaining and tripartite arrangements, and less on lobbying. In the private sector, cross-sector (national) *collective bargaining* does not take place. The main level is the sector-level, with the manufacturing industry as a very clear lead bargaining sector. Collective bargaining coverage in the private sector stands at around 74 % (Jørgensen and Bühring 2019), but this is an issue of debate. It has not been in decline in general, but not surprisingly, some sector variation exists.

After the process of centralized-decentralization described above, the dominant type of collective agreements is the framework agreement, where minimum requirements (in some sectors including wages) are set at the sector level, but where much discretion is left for the company-level employers and shop stewards. However, the depth of the decentralization varies, with construction and most parts of the manufacturing industry more decentralized than the food-processing industry and the transport sector, and wide variation within the private service sector. In parts of the private sector, in low value added sectors (such as cleaning), there is often not much company-level bargaining going on. In general, collective bargaining for manual workers is less decentralized than for white-collar employees, although variation across sectors is found (Andersen og Hansen 2019; Mailand 2020).

The relevance of the Danish collective agreement in a study of social policy has first and foremost to do with the fact that the collective agreements –especially for the last 30 years – have gradually come to include several social policy issues, as also described in section 3. This is especially the case with pensions, continuous education and training, child-related and other leave arrangements and to some extent also health and safety issues and active and passive labour market policy issues. Often a collectively agreed regulation adds to existing legislation in the area, creating so-called 'double regulation' (Due og Madsen 2006; Mailand 2008). In a few cases, the collectively agreed regulation replaces existing legislation.

Tripartite arrangements are highly relevant for employers' associations of social policies. The tripartite processes always respect the principle of parity, so that trade unions and employers' associations have an equal number of seats. Due to the voluntarist tradition of industrial relations, wages and working conditions are rarely addressed in these arrangements, although it does happen. Frequent tripartite issues are ALMP, VET/CVT and, recently, labour migration and labour market integration of ethnic minorities.

Unemployment benefits (both unemployment insurance and social assistance) and family policies are less often addressed. Table 4.3 provides an overview of the issues in the 1987–2017 agreements. In Denmark, there is no general permanent tripartite forum covering all socio-economic policies, as known in some other European countries, but tripartite bodies exist for specific policy areas such as ALMP, VET, CVT, Health & Safety and labour migration, embedded directly in ministries or more loosely connected to them. In all of these areas except labour migration, there are additional tripartite bodies at regional, local or school level. All of these tripartite bodies, as well as those at the national level, are almost exclusively taking care of policy implementation. When social partners are involved in policy formulation in these areas, their involvement happens ad hoc. For a period from the mid-1990s until the early 2010s, this involvement was more often in the form of 'tripartite talks' (consultation) than 'tripartite negotiations' (concertation). The setting up of pre-legislative tripartite commissions was also absent in this period. However, since 2012 (where the negotiations did not lead to an agreement) there have been frequent tripartite negotiations of the concertation type, and 2015 saw the first tripartite pre-legislative committee for a long time (Mailand 2019; Mailand 2020).

Table 4.3 Overview of tripartite agreements in Denmark, 1987–2017

Year	Name	*Government**	*Areas*
’87	Common Declaration	Conservative	Wages, pensions and savings
’91	Zeuthen Committee	Conservative	ALMP (Unemployment insurance)
’98	Labour Market Reform 3	Social Democrats	ALMP (Unemployment insurance)
’99	Continuous Training Reform	Social Democrats	CVT
’02	Four-partite negotiations on integration	Liberals	ALMP and integration policy
’03	East Agreement	Liberals	Labour migration
’04	Globalization Council	Liberals	CVT, education, research, entrepreneurship, etc.
’06	Continuous Training Reform	Liberals	CVT
’07	Quality Reform	Liberals	CVT (Work envir., elderly in labour ma.)
’08	Laval Committee	Liberals	Labour migration
’12	Acute agreement 1	Social Democrats	Unemployment insurance (ALMP)
’13	Vocational Education Reform	Social Democrats	Vocational education
’14	Unemployment Insurance Commission	Social Democrats	Unemployment insurance
’16	Tripartite negotiation labour market integration (round 1)	Liberals	ALMP and integration policy
’16	Tripartite negotiations sufficient and qualified labour power (round 2)	Liberals	Vocational education (ALMP)
’17	Implementation of Enforcement directive	Liberals	Labour migration
’17	Tripartite negotiations CVT (round 3)	Liberals	CVT

Source: Mailand 2012: 2019; 2020. NB. Secondary subjects are in brackets. Working environment agreements are not included.

With regard to the period after 2017, the years 2018 and 2019 included a few additional tripartite agreements. But from the beginning of the Covid crisis, the number exploded. Using a more exclusive approach than table 4.3, the Danish trade union confederation FH found 21 agreements in 2020–21 (FH 2021). However, several of these are extensions of temporary wage-compensation schemes, short-term work arrangements and other Covid-related agreements. In stark contrast to the government approach to a previous crisis, the Great Recession from 2008, the government's approach this time was to spend, not save. This is one of the most important reasons for the much larger number of tripartite agreements, in that it is much easier to agree on spending than on cutting. Still, among the 21 agreements there are also non-Covid agreements within all of the projects' four focus areas but pensions, as well as agreements on the work environment and other issues. Moreover, compared to the longer time period, relatively high tripartite frequency seems to be continuing after the end of the Covid pandemic, raising the question of whether Denmark is becoming (even more) macro-corporatist. There might be a limit to the development. Some of the EA interviewees found that the tripartite tool is presently overused due to FH's eagerness to demonstrate its raison d'être.

The survey

The survey included some questions that are relevant for this section on involvement. Mirroring the answers from S.3, which showed that the majority of the companies in the survey are not members of EAs, S.22 finds that a (small) minority of the companies are also not involved in collective bargaining. Those that are involved do not follow the expected pattern, in that the smart growth industry has the highest share involved in bargaining.

Table S.22 Involvement in collective bargaining by sectors

	Industry (excluding construction)	Consumption services (including construction)	EU2020 "smart growth" services	Welfare state services and public administration	Total
No	15,8 %	31,6 %	36,8 %	15,8 %	19
Yes	40,9 %	40,9 %	4,5 %	13,6 %	22
Total	29,3 %	36,6 %	19,5 %	14,6 %	41

NB! The percentages in this and the other tables are not weighted with the number of employees in the companies.

S.23 relates only to those companies that are covered by collective agreements. It shows a domination of company agreements. It might have been difficult for the companies to separate 'national' from 'industrial/sectoral' bargaining, in that the latter also have a national scope.

Table S.23 Level of collective bargaining

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Numbers	Percent	
Company	15	50,0 %	68,2 %
National	8	26,7 %	36,4 %
Industrial/Sectoral	6	20,0 %	27,3 %
I do not know	1	3,3 %	4,5 %
Total	30	100,0 %	22

Note: this is a multiple response frequency report. Respondent could answer more than one category. The percentage of responses shows the percentage of responses to the total number of responses.

Table S.24 shows that more companies that are members of an EA feel involved to a small rather than a great extent in discussions of the EAs' policies.

Table S.24 Members' employers' associations. How much they are involved in discussions on policy

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Numbers	Percent	
Small extent	52	65,0 %	325,0 %
Great extent	28	35,0 %	175,0 %
Total	80	100,0 %	16

Note: This table show aggregate responses of several questions with multiple responses.

Table S.25 shows that companies are more satisfied than dissatisfied with the policies of the EAs. A possible explanation for the large number of neither-nor answers could be the large share of non-member companies in the survey.

Table S.25 Level of satisfaction on the policy action of employers' associations

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Numbers	Percent	
Not satisfied	40	12,6 %	100,0 %
Satisfied	148	46,5 %	370,0 %
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	130	40,9 %	325,0 %
	318	100,0 %	40

Note: This table show aggregate responses of several questions with multiple responses.

5. Summary and conclusion

5.1 The 'who' question

This section described the industrial sector in Denmark and the structure of Danish EAs. Regarding the four macro-sectors, the most marked difference is the relatively low level of 'industry', but also consumption services are below the EU average, whereas smart growth is slightly above the EU average and welfare services and public administration clearly above. This is consistent with the classification of Denmark as belonging to a 'post-industrial model based on public and private Knowledge Intensive Service'.

Denmark was hit relatively hard by the Great Recession, but from a very favourable point of departure. Employment growth after the Great Recession only started in 2013. Strongholds of the Danish economy are found in several sectors. Shipping and the pharmaceutical industry are often emphasized. Fewer employees work in micro-companies in Denmark than on average in the EU, and more work in companies with 10–250 employees, whereas the share working in companies with over 250 employees is average.

The organizational density of private employers' organizations (EAs) in Denmark stands at around 62 % but Denmark diverges from most other EU countries in having a higher organizational density among the trade unions than among employers. Construction, transport and manufacturing have higher employer organizational density than design/IT, office/administration, and retail.

There are two employers' confederations, the Confederation of Danish Employers (DA, larger, general) and the Danish Employers' Association for the Financial Sector (FA, smaller, financial sector). DA is dominated by one organization, the Confederation of Danish Industry (DI), traditionally organizing manufacturing, but now with a broader base.

Martin and Swank (2012) place Denmark in the macro-corporatist model, but a classification in the sector coordination model would in some regards be more fitting. According to Navrbjerg and Ibsen (2017), there are three types of EAs in Denmark: 1) Multi-industry EAs, which are network organizations with a collective service, e.g. with regard to collective bargaining, labour law and political lobbying (both at national and EU level), but also with a strong division into branch units and additional regional units offering business services. 2) Single-branch EAs on the domestic market, member firms of which typically operate only on the Danish market with production lines or services that are difficult to outsource. These EAs are mostly focused on employer services, including collective bargaining. 3) Single-branch EAs on the international market. This type of EA has been exposed to internationalization and outsourcing and they have therefore often restructured their services so they are supplying not only employer-targeted services but also business services, including international lobbying activities.

With regard to foreign direct investments, Denmark shows outward investment above the EU average and below-EU-average inward investment. MNCs are heavily overrepresented in manufacturing and construction.

The interviews found that DI had developed from a pure employer organization towards a broader business organization, which increasingly had to argue from a societal point of view due to its status as the dominant EA. Moreover, the interviews found intensified competition between DI and the second major sector organization, Dansk Erhverv (The Danish Chamber of Commerce), whereas there were no clear indications of increasing difficulties in reaching consensus within the EAs (with the exception of SMVdanmark) or systematic differences between the EAs with regards to the four policy areas in focus.

The interviews delivered little information about the MNCs. Still, they confirmed the expectations that foreign-owned MNCs are less committed to the institutions of the Danish labour market model, although wide variation between the MNCs was found.

The survey, which unfortunately got a low response rate (9.2 %) and answers from only 49 companies, shows an overrepresentation in industry and underrepresentation in consumption services and welfare state services, but in terms of skill levels it shows that the domination of skilled workers matches the general distribution in the Danish labour market. Moreover, the majority of companies answering the survey were not members of an EA, contrary to the general situation, whereas the dominance of sector organizations is in line with the general picture. For the non-members in the survey, the most important reasons for non-membership were no added value of membership, lack of knowledge of the services provided and non-existence of relevant EAs. With regards to different types of ownership and organization of production, the survey indicated that domestic firms cooperate more with other firms in production as well as in the design of products.

5.2 The 'what' question

This section first described the four selected welfare areas. The pension area is first and foremost characterized by a strong second pillar, in terms of occupational pensions. The 'unemployment' area includes relatively generous (for low-wage earners) voluntary unemployment insurance, but with declining replacement rates. Moreover, it includes ALMP/activation policies with high spending and high coverage, and some role for the social partners. The vocational education and training area is characterized by a strong role for social partners, a comparatively high level of public spending (especially for further training) and a so-called 'dual system' of education (combination of school-based education and firm-based training). The core of the family policies (focus on parental leave and early childcare) is based on universal citizen rights, funded through general taxation, provided on the basis of need and subject to some means-testing, but with top-up opportunities through collective agreements.

The general description is followed by four cases post 2008, one from each area. The cases are classified according to four dimensions: Welfare effort (increase of spending vs. cost-containment), welfare administration (public vs. private), welfare boundaries (occupational vs. universal), and welfare logic (social protection vs. social investment).

The *Early Pension Reform 2020* is an example of (limited) increases in spending rather than cost-containment. Regarding welfare administration, the reform is showing public rather than private administration. With regard to welfare boundaries, a universal rather than occupational model was selected. De facto, however, it will almost exclusively be limited to manual occupations in manufacturing and construction. The welfare logic is clearly social protection rather than social investment.

The *Unemployment Insurance Reform 2015* with its (near) budget neutrality is neither an example of increased spending, nor cost-containment, but something in between. The dimension of welfare administration is showing a mix of private (the unemployment benefit funds) and public administration. With regard to welfare boundaries, as unemployment insurance is limited to the members of the (mostly) occupationally divided unemployment benefit funds, it leans more towards an occupational model than towards a universal one. The welfare logic is social protection rather than social investment.

The *tripartite agreement on sufficient labour supply 2017* (among other things a VET reform) is again an example of a budget-neutral reform and, hence, showing neither an increase of spending nor cost-containment. On the welfare administration dimension, this reform privileged private, rather than public, administration, in that the companies still decide if they want to establish practical training places or not. With regard to welfare boundaries, the agreement is clearly an occupational rather than universal model. To the extent that this policy area can be 'labelled' social at all, the welfare logic is clearly social investment rather than social protection.

Regarding the first of the four dimensions (welfare effort) in the case study *implementation of the European work-life balance directive*, the directive points in the direction of increased spending rather than cost-containment. Although some sectors in Denmark already complied with the minimum requirements prior to the adoption of the directive, others did not. Hence, increased spending could be foreseen. The dimension of welfare administration in this case study shows a combination of private (the social partners and their collective agreements) and public (legislation) administration. With regard to welfare boundaries, the agreement is universal, in that it covers all citizens, although the implementation in the case of Denmark will have an occupational dimension. The welfare logic is both social investment, in that it facilitates labour market participation, and social protection, in that it – also in a Danish context – will increase the benefit level for some during parental leave periods.

The EAs were invited to tripartite negotiations in the three first-mentioned cases, but they declined to take part in the first case, which they instead attempted to influence through lobbying and media. The EAs strongly opposed the content of the first and the fourth case. In the second case, they took a 'watch-dog'/defensive position, whereas the EAs in the third case were very active in formulating the compromise.

The interviewees added information on the EAs' position on the four policy areas. Pensions were not that high on the agenda, but the EAs praised the occupational pensions linked to the collective agreements and disliked the newly introduced Early Pension Scheme.

The EAs are preoccupied with labour supply and supports generally for ALMP (but sceptical towards some forms with low employment effects). In 2018, DI took the unusual step to argue against further reductions in the general level of UI in order to protect the flexicurity model, but DI has since then supported cuts for isolated groups.

VET was the only issue that was prioritized highly by all interviewed EAs. Four issues in particular were addressed: The high drop-out rates from VET schools, adults with a lack of basic reading and numeracy skills, the lack of practical training places/lack of students, and insufficient use of VET funds connected to the collective agreement.

With regards to work-life balance, some of the EA interviewees reported that gender equality issues have moved up the agenda in the last couple of years and that real changes are being seen in both the EAs and in the managements of their member organizations. A temporary, but remarkable, disagreement between DA and DI on earmarked leave could be observed a couple of years ago.

Moreover, the section includes short analyses of two MNCs and their effort in relation to the four chosen policy areas. Both IKEA Denmark and Haldor Topsøe illustrates the point made from the interviewees with the EAs, that although MNCs – especially the foreign-owned – on average might be less committed to the various Danish labour market and welfare institutions than companies are on average, there exist also MNCs of various ownership that are committed to these institutions.

The survey showed a medium to high support for the government welfare policies, especially for unemployment benefits, disadvantages groups and various forms of education.

5.3 The 'how' question

This section began with a description of the comparatively strong Danish trade unions. Trade unions perform many of the same roles as EAs with regards to collective bargaining and participation in tripartite governance structures. However, trade unions also administer unemployment insurance funds, something which EAs do not do.

Lobbying is an important form of *engagement.* The few existing studies confirm that the private companies are important political actors. Business networks have existed for a long time, for instance in the form of so-called VL groups. Newer fora for business influence are the think tanks and business clubs.

One form of *involvement* is collective bargaining. The main level is the sector level (although the sector agreements often leave substantial room for company-level bargaining). The manufacturing industry is a very clear lead bargaining sector. Collective bargaining coverage in the private sector stands at around 74 %, but the exact number is a matter of controversy.

Another form of involvement is *tripartite arrangements*, which are highly relevant for employers' associations and social policies. The tripartite process nearly always respects the principle of parity, so that trade unions and employers' associations have an equal number of seats. Due to the voluntarist tradition of industrial relations, wages and working conditions are rarely addressed in these arrangements, although it happens. Frequent tripartite issues are ALMP, VET/CVT and, recently, labour migration and labour market integration of ethnic minorities. Unemployment benefits (both unemployment insurance and social assistance) and family policies are less often addressed. During and after the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of tripartite agreements exploded.

The survey showed, as expected, that the majority of companies have employee representation and the smart growth industry has fewer representatives than the other sectors, whereas it is not in line with the general situation in the Danish labour market for companies with trade union representation to be in the minority. Moreover, the majority of the companies had company policies related to the four welfare policy areas. The specific policies were most often related to VET activities, job creation, flexible working arrangements, teleworking/telecommuting and study leave. The companies reported in general that they were consulted only to a limited extent by the government and the parliament.

With regards to MNCs, most companies found their headquarters to have a small rather than great influence on workplace-level welfare policies. The survey also included questions on their involvement in collective bargaining. Mirroring the underrepresentation of companies with EA membership, companies involved in this activity were also underrepresented compared to the general situation in that a little less than half the companies were involved. Those that were involved pointed to the sector level as the most important. Finally, concerning the companies' relation to EAs, the large majority were only involved in discussions with EAs to a small extent and were either in-between or satisfied with the actions of the EAs.

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Annex – Interviews: employers' associations, trade unions, ministries and companies

All interviews were conducted November 2021 – March 2022 and all interviews were transcribed (with the exception of ^ conducted September 2022). Interviews marked with * and ^ were online interviews, the rest were face-to-face interviews. All interviewees received a draft of the report in September 2022, which they were invited to comment on.

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