



Multipartite Social Partnerships – A New Role for Employers and Trade Unions

BY
SØREN KAJ ANDERSEN
& MIKKEL MAILAND

FAOS
EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS
RESEARCH CENTRE
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

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The Role of Employers
and Trade Unions
in Multipartite
Social Partnerships

BY:

Søren Kaj Andersen,
Assistant Professor
&
Mikkel Mailand,
Assistant Professor

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The Copenhagen Centre
Blegdamsvej 56
DK-2100 Copenhagen
Phone: +45 35 28 85 80
E-mail: tcc@copenhagencentre.org

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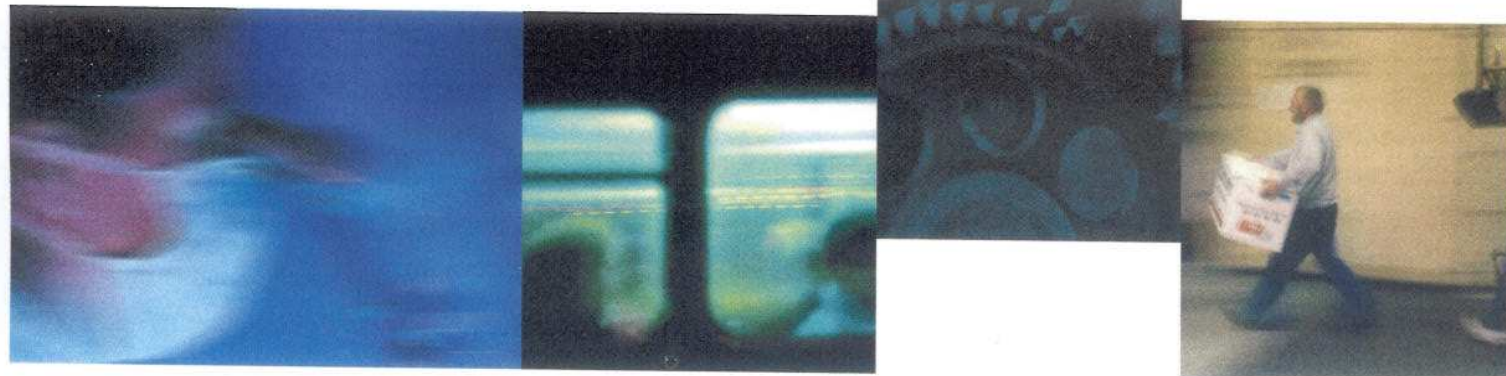
This pamphlet is published together with – and as a supplement to – the concluding report ‘The Role of Employers and Trade Unions in Multipartite Social Partnerships’. Seven separate country reports were published in June 2001.

The eight reports present a comparative study of both tri- and multipartite social partnerships in the UK, the Netherlands, Spain, Germany, Denmark, and at EU level. 127 representatives of employers, trade unions, public authorities, and NGOs and other actors attached to social partnerships have been interviewed.

Case studies of 20 local/regional level tri- and multipartite social partnerships were included in the research project. These case studies are available at www.copenhagencentre.org.

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Multipartite Social Partnerships

– a new role for employers and trade unions

WHY MULTIPARTITE SOCIAL PARTNERSHIPS?

The employers and trade unions in Europe have a long tradition of bipartite relations in collective bargaining systems. Tripartite partnerships between employers, trade unions, and public authorities, have also become more wide-spread. However, employers and trade unions are increasingly engaged in a third kind of cooperation: the multipartite social partnership. They include not only the three traditional parties of tripartism, but also new actors like NGOs, business networks, and commercial actors. Furthermore, we believe that multipartite social partnerships must be understood as a response to actual problems facing key-actors of society – among them the social partners



Social problems in the European societies are changing and new ways of handling them are required. Traditional welfare-state solutions may have reached a crossroad, where other key actors of society are directly or indirectly requested to take part in solving social problems. This is the key to understanding why multipartite social partnerships are becoming a more widespread phenomenon.

Multipartite social partnerships might cover a wide range of issues. However, in this pamphlet – and the project it refers to – focus is set on the main interest in partnerships that target the weaker groups on the labour market, long-term unemployed disabled, immigrants, young and elderly people. In other words the issue here is partnerships that aim to create *inclusive labour markets*.

The appearance of multipartite social partnerships suggest that employers and trade unions expand their activity from bipartite collective bargaining and tripartite partnerships to more complex relationships as well. The three forms of cooperation involving employers and trade unions are summarised in figure 1.

MULTIPARTITE VERSUS NEW SOCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

In previous published reports *The Copenhagen Centre* has defined 'new' social partnerships as partnerships where 'people and organisations from some combination of public, business and civil constituencies who engage in voluntary, mutually beneficial, innovative relationships to address common societal aims through combining their resources and competencies'. Although *The Copenhagen Centre* has not produced a corresponding definition of 'old' or traditional social partnerships, bi- and tripartite partnerships involving employers and trade unions in this context may be termed traditional partnerships. These partnerships tend to be quite institutionalised in the sense that they are embedded in a framework of rather strong organisations with a fairly long history of cooperation. In contrast 'new' social partnerships tend not to be institutionalised, and are often of a temporary character. The multipartite social partnerships we are investigating should

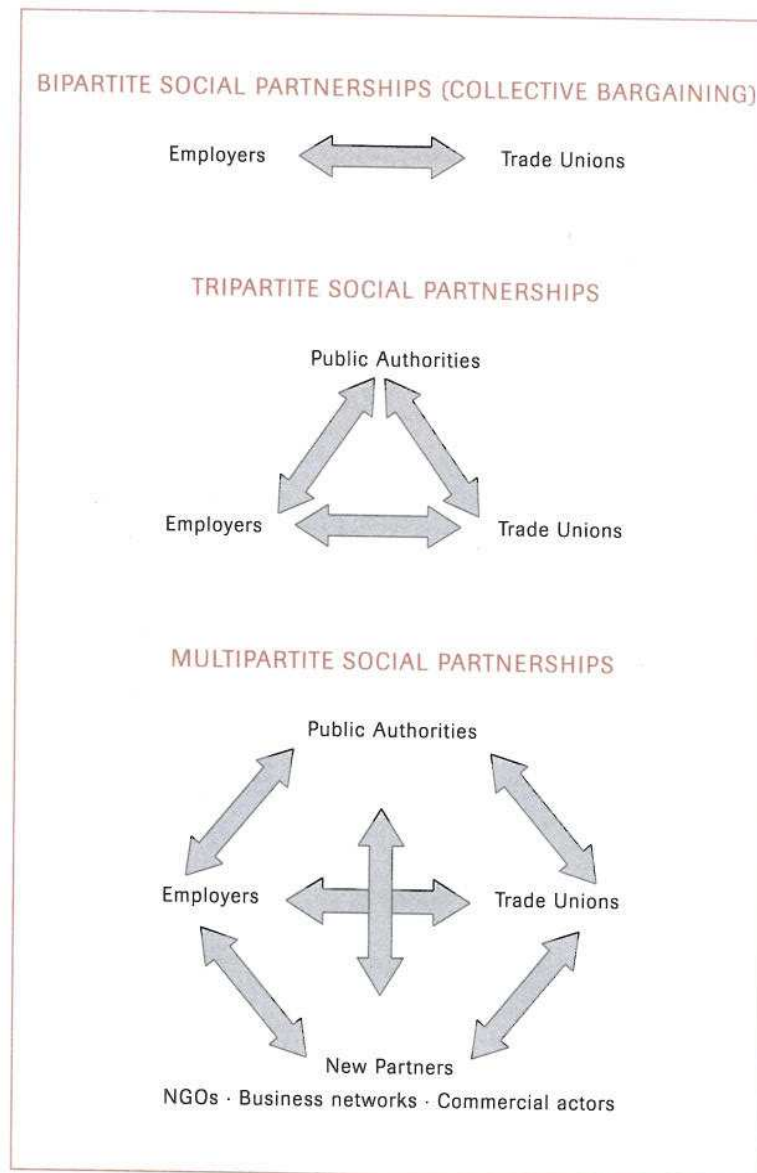


Figure 1

be understood basically as a crossover phenomenon as they belong partly to the sphere of traditional partnerships, partly to the sphere of new social partnerships – c.f. figure 2. In this way we want to emphasise that there are many other social partnerships – traditional as well as new ones – that we do not include in this study. We are looking at a specific fragment of the world of social partnerships.

CHALLENGES FOR EMPLOYERS AND TRADE UNIONS

Partnership initiatives are often taken in situations characterised by tensions between various parties due to problems like economic stagnation, unemployment, discrimination, the threat of social exclusion, etc. Nevertheless, the ability to create positive-sum games – or win-win situations – where all parties involved benefit from participating in the partnership is essential not least to the multipartite social partnership.

Consequently, a challenge for employers and *trade unions* – as well as other actors involved – is the ability to establish cooperative relations.

For the trade unions the NGOs can basically be seen as potential allies as they often share certain views and have

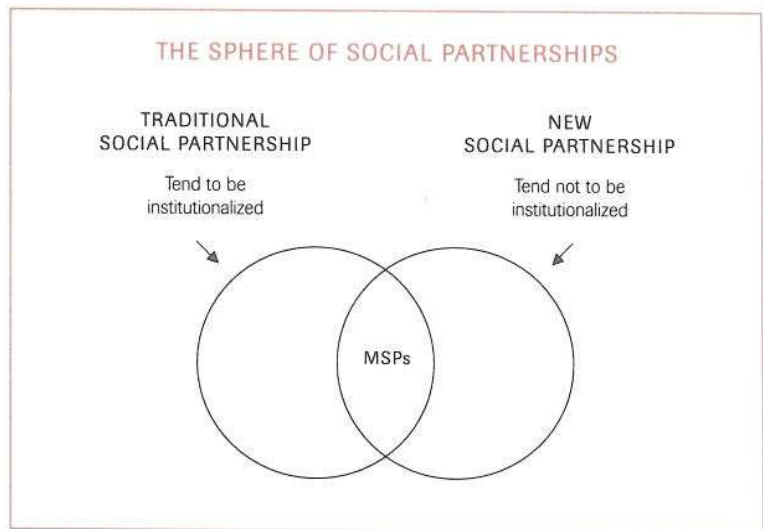


Figure 2

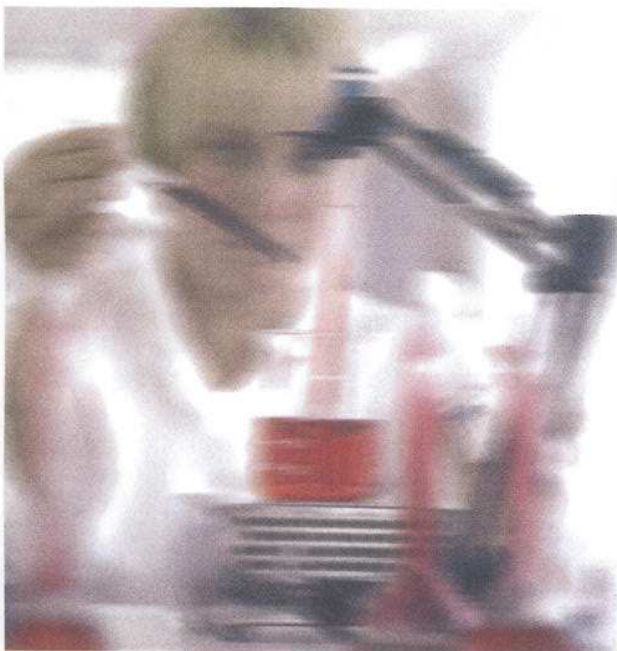
common agendas in specific policy areas. Nevertheless, competition for representation appears and other actors might, for various strategic reasons, choose to listen to and cooperate with one party at the expense of the other.

Commercial actors in multipartite social partnerships are often companies delivering placement service, reintegration services or certain forms of education and training. In other cases they might be consultancies supporting the work in the social partnerships. It seems to be a fact that the scope of such commercial actors has been growing within the EU in recent years. The privatisation of specific welfare services is one important explanation for this development. Consequently, if trade unions wish to enter into partnerships for inclusive labour markets they will still more often have to handle the relationship with commercial actors.

Individual employers may have experiences with various forms of cooperation with NGOs, and/or they may take part in some kind of business network. With regard to *employers' associations* the picture differs, as in general they only have limited links to social NGOs, and often do not have any kind of formalised co-operation with business networks focusing on social problems. Often they emphasise that they represent the interests of all employers, and consequently have to underline that social obligations are basically in the hands of public authorities.

In addition to this, it is a challenge for both the traditional social partners to get beyond the traditional understanding of core interest and interests of core-members.

In some cases the traditional social partners have already succeeded in doing so, while in others they have not. For the trade unions the challenge is



to include the employment opportunities for unemployed members as well as unemployed non-members as areas of interest for the organisations. For the employers and the employers' associations the challenge is to acknowledge, that opening up recruitment procedures for the weaker groups in the labour market can be a way to solve problems of labour shortages as well as a way to improve the reputation of companies.

DRIVING FORCES BEHIND MULTIPARTITE SOCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

We stated above that multipartite social partnerships is a response to social problems that we experience in the European societies today. Consequently, this explains why multipartite social partnerships are becoming more widespread.

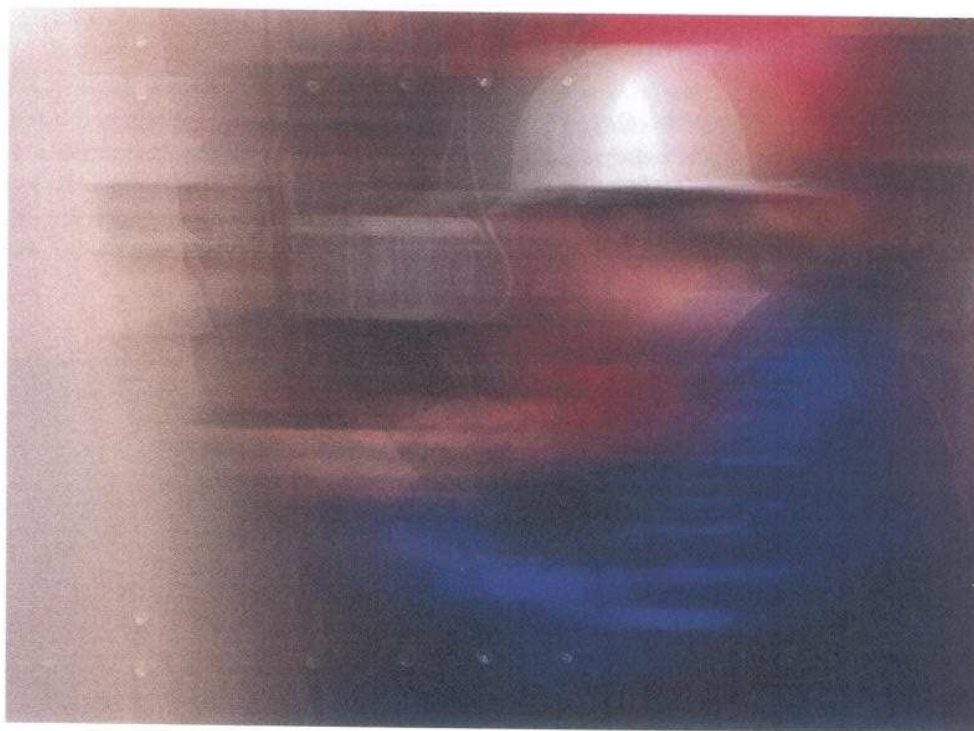
Firstly, it should be emphasised that the wish to overcome fundamental economic and social problems is an important motive for establishing multipartite social partnerships. Different parts of Europe have in recent years experienced dramatic structural changes within traditional industries. Consequently, key-actors of society seek new forms of cooperation, as no single actor is in a position to overcome the problems alone. Although such partnerships tend to incorporate several actors, they are far from always multipartite. Often various public authorities, employers' organisations (including chambers of commerce) and trade unions are the sole or by

far dominating participants of the partnerships. Hence they tend to have a tripartite structure.

Secondly, in answer to the question why multipartite social partnerships become more widespread, it could be argued that specific explanations both cover *new possibilities* and certain *constraints* for trade unions and employers in entering into multipartite social partnerships.

One example of a new social problem is a relatively low level

of unemployment combined with a high proportion of people from ethnic minorities and partly disabled persons among the unemployed. This has led to an enhanced attention towards what we term *new target groups* in partnerships for an inclusive labour market. This opens an opportunity for trade unions and employers organisations to take part in partnership initiatives in this field. One important argument for the trade unions in doing so would be that they assume responsibility for the weaker



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groups on the labour market and consequently go beyond the interests of their core members. The same argument applies to the employers' organisations, although the potential problem of labour-shortage is an important incentive for them to enter such partnerships. In general entering partnerships aimed at new target groups will potentially supply trade unions

“ *Entering partnerships aimed at new target groups will potentially supply trade unions and employers' organisations with additional political legitimacy.* ”

and employers' organisations with additional political legitimacy.

However, the dramatic *decline in trade union membership*, in four of the five countries studied, reduces the financial and organisational resources of the trade unions. Consequently, it might prove to be impossible for them to allocate resources to new partnership initiatives. This might especially be true of local/regional level initiatives, as trade union strongholds are often national level secretariats. In turn this could be an element in explaining why we are witnessing a development of predominantly tripartite social partnerships at national level (social pacts), while new forms of social partnerships developing at local/regional level at least to some extent by-pass the trade unions.

Changes in *the ideological climate* present a mixed picture with regard to especially the role of trade unions in multipartite social partnership. As Soviet Communism vaporised, a more pragmatic ideological climate developed within and around most trade unions throughout Western Europe. This has paved the way for a more intensive cooperation with the employers and public authorities and opened the possibility of establishing contacts to new partners. Furthermore, the emphasis the European Union has put on the development of social partnerships in projects financially supported by the European structural funds can be interpreted as policy-initiatives embedded in an ideological climate that supports the development of multipartite partnership strategies.



Multipartite Social Partnerships – the logic of partnerships

HOW ARE MULTIPARTITE SOCIAL PARTNERSHIPS KNITTED TOGETHER?

Social partnerships are based on the pooling of resources. All participants deliver specific resources needed for the functioning of the partnership. It is necessary to establish win-win-situations where all parties involved benefit. To assure this a process of consensus seeking, where the actors define common interests and concentrate on these, must take place. This process does not externalise all issues of conflicts and does not imply that all partners have equal influence.

A fundamental question in relation to social partnerships is the motive of the different actors (public authorities, employers, trade unions and new partners) to meet the challenges of social exclusion on a joint basis instead of trying to solve the problems unilaterally. Our findings suggest that the actors establish partnerships because no single actor have the resources to solve the problems alone successfully and are therefore dependent on interaction – or more precisely resource exchange – with other actors. In other words, partnerships are based on interdependence. The resources exchanged can be divided into legal resources (the legal rights to carry out certain tasks), financial resources (money), legitimacy (the possibility to act on behalf of others), organisational resources (the organisational capacity building primarily on membership) and information (knowledge of certain problems/groups of society).

In the following section the focus will be on multipartite social partnerships, but basically the internal dynamics described are the same in tripartite social partnerships. What differ is the specific resources exchanged.

RESOURCE INTERDEPENDENCE

The interdependence of the actors is illustrated by looking at what resources the actors provide for the partnership. The most common reasons for public authorities to establish partnerships with employers and trade unions (and sometime

new actors) is the need for information, organisational resources and legitimacy in the processes of formulating and implementing policies for labour market inclusion. To formulate the policies of the partnerships



Actors establish partnerships because no single actor have the resources to successfully solve the problems alone. “



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the public authorities depend on the information the organisations possess about their members' need and wishes. To implement the policies of the partnerships the public authorities need the organisational resources and the legitimacy these organisations have in the eyes of their members and the public.

Our study shows that *trade unions, employers and new partners*, on the other hand, are dependent on the financial resources derived from public authorities in order to implement the partnerships. Moreover, they are often also dependent on the legitimacy and legal resources of the public authorities to influence

partnerships that are part of public policy. This helps to legitimise these organisations vis-à-vis their members, as the partnerships provide their members with political influence, employment opportunities (for employees) and labour supply (for employers.).

These forms of interdependence are seen in most of the social partnerships at all levels (local/regional, national and supra-national). However, there are some exceptions. Firstly, in a few cases the partnerships are not dependent on public funding. Secondly, in some of the partnerships the organisations' dependence on the public authorities' legal

resources and legitimacy is absent or not profound.

Furthermore, the specific resources exchanged are not exactly the same in multipartite social partnerships and in tripartite social partnerships. This happens as NGOs and commercial actors provide the partnerships with different or complementary resources compared to those provided by the traditional social partners. Firstly, in addition to giving the NGOs influence on public policy the NGOs are sometimes involved as *intermediaries* between individual firms or public authorities on the one hand and specific target groups on the other hand.



NGOs and commercial actors provide the partnerships with different or complementary resources compared to those provided by the traditional social partners.

Consequently, NGOs, and to some extent commercial operators, possess organisational and informational resources which give them access to certain groups of society and enable them to deliver certain services, that the traditional social partners cannot deliver. Secondly, the legitimacy of the employers' associations and trade unions differs from the legitimacy of the NGO. The former can claim to be representative for certain groups which the latter rarely can and rarely do. Nevertheless, the NGOs act as advocates for certain groups and are involved in public policies as such.

Another reason why the pattern of resource exchanges is different when NGOs are involved is the fact that NGOs – like the commercial actors – sometimes are subcontractors to partnerships. In these cases the pooling of resources is limited to financial resources (from the public authorities to the NGOs/commercial actors) and organisational resources (the other way).

Summing up, interdependence and the pooling of resources

emphasise one important dimension of why such partnerships come into existence, and why the actors can overcome disagreements and conflicts: Entering a partnership is often a necessity for actors to achieve specific goals – like reducing unemployment/avoiding labour shortage. This is the case because no individual actor has the resources to handle the task alone.

CONSENSUS-SEEKING

However, the pooling of resources does not happen automatically. To get the pooling running it is necessary to establish positive-sum games – or win-win situations – where all parties involved benefit from participating. To assure that this happens a process of consensus seeking must take place.

Consensus seeking is a process where the actors define common interests and concentrate on these. To obtain this situation, issues that could create conflicts must to some extent be left out of the agenda, if they are not of significant importance to the

partnership – otherwise negotiations and consultations on these issues could obstruct the functioning of the partnerships. Issues to be excluded are for instance zero-sum game issues traditionally related to the collective bargaining systems. This process is necessary both before the partnerships are established, but also as an ongoing process. If the process is carried out successfully, it is possible for



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the actors in the partnership to establish cooperative relations in spite of the partly divergent interests. The core of these common interests – of the consensus – can often be described as an acknowledgement of a common interest in (re-) employment of marginalised groups – although for different reasons.

The fact that it has been possible to deploy these common interests by common action in the social partnerships analysed has to do with at least two additional features. Firstly, a common acknowledgement of the interdependence between the actors – that is, the interdependence of resources. Secondly, a shared belief in the right way to challenge marginalisation: namely by improving the employability of the marginalised people through active measures. This is

important because these measures make up the core content of most social partnerships for inclusion analysed here. The shared belief in employability is reflected in the near catch-all consensus on activation which has been established in all five countries during the 1990s.

Consensus often goes further than to a shared belief in the value of improving employability. It often – but not always – includes a shared belief in the usefulness of the specific active measures themselves, such as subsidised jobs, job-training and education and training. Despite this the different partners do have diverse interests and different priorities in some regards. Navigating these waters and identifying the common interests are what consensus seeking is all about.

Importantly, consensus seeking does not remove all controversial issues from the agenda of the partnership. Some remain as conflicts within the partnerships. Examples of such controversies are: fear that employers and trade unions cannot act beyond self-interest; scarce financial resources; the level of pay or benefits for clients of the social partnerships; the distribution of decision-making power between different administrative levels; the inclusion or exclusion of wage-issues in the partnerships; the substitution of subsidised jobs for ordinary jobs; the trade unions' wish to control pay and conditions in the partnership; disappointment at employment effects; competition for representation; and competition for media attention.

Another important element with regard to partnership-internal factors should be mentioned here. Some actors possess more encompassing and diversified resources than other actors, and might formally lead the partnership or dominate it in other ways. Often we found that public authorities – but in some cases also employers' associations and trade unions – were the dominating actors in the multipartite social partnerships.



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Multipartite Social Partnerships – a cross-level phenomenon

WHERE ARE MULTIPARTITE SOCIAL PARTNERSHIPS FOUND?

Multipartite social partnerships, where employers, trade unions, public authorities and new partners are all taking part are found to be a limited, but growing phenomenon in all the countries studied and at EU-level, although with strongest appearance at the local/regional level. Only in the UK are multipartite social partnerships more or equally important than tripartite partnerships. Where found, the multipartite social partnerships tend to complement rather than replace existing tripartite social partnerships. The influence of the new partners tend to be limited and much weaker than the traditional social partners in policy formulation, whereas the new partners in some countries have important roles in the partnerships as suppliers of certain services and as intermediaries.

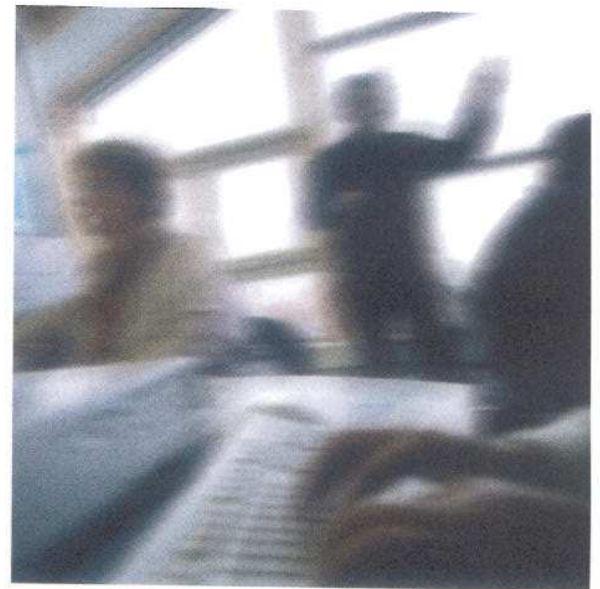
The studies of different countries and politico-administrative levels show that the development towards multipartite social partnerships is far from following a straightforward path and, moreover, that this form of partnership is not equally important everywhere.

THE FIVE COUNTRIES AND THE EU-LEVEL

In *Denmark*, multipartite social partnerships have so far clearly been complementary to traditional social partnerships, in that the multipartite partnerships are developed in a policy field (social policy) different from the one where most traditional social partnerships are found (labour market policy). However, the



overall influence of new partners is still limited and the traditional social partners, at local/regional level, especially the trade unions, continue to become more influential.



Nevertheless, NGOs are consulted at the strategic level with regard to policies on social inclusion, whereas their participation in service delivery in connection to the

partnerships is rather limited. The involvement of commercial actors has hitherto been rather limited. One employers' network – the Danish Network of Business Leaders – has had some influence.

In *the Netherlands*, the picture is less clear. Only one multipartite social partnership, as we have defined it, could be identified at the national level and they seem to be rare at local/regional levels. However partnership initiatives between two or more actors (excluding the trade unions) are plentiful at the local/regional levels. Since traditional partnerships still exist, these new partnerships could be seen as complementary.

Nevertheless, the withdrawal of employers' associations and trade unions from local level partnerships for labour market inclusion studied in this research project, and the more limited influence granted to them concerning policies for inclusion, could indicate that the new forms of partnerships are actually replacing the traditional social partners. However, specific social partnerships are partly based on funding coming from the collective agreements. Consequently, employers and trade unions have an important role to fulfil in such partnerships. Further, in the partnerships studied there is evidence suggesting

that the traditional social partners need various forms of 'intermediaries' that can establish and maintain close relation to the groups of people the partnership initiatives are targeting.

In *Germany* the tripartite relations between employers, trade unions, and public authorities continue to play a key-role in initiatives for labour market inclusion. The Alliance for jobs has confirmed the importance of the corporatist patterns of cooperation. Local partnerships and territorial pacts can be seen as complementary initiatives, as they are new initiatives developing side-by-side with the existing tripartite bodies. It should be noted that both local partnerships and territorial pacts tend to be multipartite, but it seems like trade unions typically only participate in the pacts. Consequently, multipartite social partnerships, defined as partnerships that include employers, trade unions, public authorities as well as new partners, like various forms of NGOs, are few.

In *the United Kingdom*, it can be argued that multipartite social partnerships for inclusion is an alternative rather than a complementary form of social partnership because tripartite social partnerships (with the participation of only public authorities, employers and trade unions) is a very rare phenomenon. The trade unions clearly hold a weak position with regard to partnership initiatives. Even in the formulation of national level



policy strategies concerning social inclusion trade union representation is no stronger than that of the NGOs'.

Furthermore, the NGOs in the UK are playing important roles in delivering various forms of services at the local level and as intermediaries. However, they cannot be termed core actors in the local level partnerships studied.

In *Spain*, multipartite social partnership is a rare phenomenon at the national level, but these partnerships are more often found at the local and regional levels. Nevertheless, the tripartite institutions are still far more important also at this level. Therefore multipartite social partnership could be said to be complementary to existing tripartite partnerships, which have a shorter history here than in any of the countries studied. In *Spain* it is worth paying attention to the fact that some NGOs run programmes for labour market inclusion similar to those led by the public authorities, but without cooperating much with other actors. The role of the new actors is also limited at the national level and more weightily at the local/regional levels. The traditional partners, nevertheless, are the most

important partners despite of the widespread involvement of commercial actors, and NGOs, as subcontractors in active policies. Contrary to the other countries in focus here competition between the NGOs and the trade unions is more pronounced than cooperation. The role of employers' networks in social partnerships for inclusion is limited.

At the *EU-level*, the dominant trend is the establishment of NGO involvement in the civil dialogue, including the NAPs for inclusion, parallel to the social dialogue and the involvement of trade unions and employers in the European Employment Strategy. So far, multipartite partnerships are of limited importance. However, it should be noted that the EU Multi-stakeholder Forum on CSR signals the establishment of a multipartite social partnership as employers, trade unions, NGOs and employers' networks will all participate in the forum. Apart from this initiative some interaction between NGOs and trade unions takes place, but rarely in relation to social and labour market policies. Moreover, there seems to have developed almost a division of labour



between the partnerships with the participation of traditional partners (the social dialogue and the European Employment Strategy) and the partnerships with participation of NGOs (the civil dialogue and the NAPs for inclusion).



The relations between the traditional and the new actors in the partnerships are in most countries more often characterised by cooperation or by a division of labour than by conflicts.

REPLACING, COMPLEMENTARY OR ABSENT?

It can be concluded that multipartite social partnerships as defined are becoming more widespread, although today the extent of such partnerships today is limited in most of the countries studied. However, employers, trade unions, public authorities and the new actors (NGOs, business networks, and commercial operators) are in various ways cooperating in

social partnerships. In this sense these partnerships are not *absent* anywhere. Further, where they are found they tend to *complement* rather than *replace* existing tripartite social partnerships.

Regarding the roles of traditional versus new partners, the findings suggest that the two to some degree supplement each other in social partnerships. Moreover, the relations between the traditional and the new actors in the partnerships are in most

countries more often characterised by cooperation or by a division of labour than by conflicts. However, power-relations between the two groups tend not to be equal. The traditional social partners tend to be the dominant participants in the partnerships, due to the fact that they possess more organisational resources and legitimacy.

Table 1 Tripartite social partnerships (TSP) and Multipartite Social Partnerships (MSP) at EU-, national and regional/local level

	NATIONAL LEVEL	REGIONAL/LOCAL LEVEL
THE NETHERLANDS	strong tradition for TSPs, only slight presence of MSPs	strong tradition for TSPs, partly being replaced by new forms of partnerships
THE UK	no TSPs, MSPs developing	TSPs, MSPs developing
DENMARK	extensive TSPs in labour market policy, MSPs developing in social policy	extensive TSPs in labour market policy, MSPs developing in social policy
GERMANY	extensive TSPs, no development of MSPs	extensive TSPs in some Länder, feeble development of MSPs at local level (but stronger development of other new forms of partnerships with new partners)
SPAIN	occasional TSPs, only weak presence of MSPs	TSPs developing at regional level, feeble development of MSPs at local level
EU-LEVEL	some TSPs in relation to employment policy, some development of MSPs/ other new forms of partnership with new partners.	

Types of social partnerships

Public authorities tend to be the dominant actor in multipartite as well as other forms of social partnerships for inclusion. The partnerships can be subdivided according to the degree of public authority influence. A continuum can be constructed, going from the consultation partnership with strong influence of the public authorities via the sub-contracted partnership to the self-governing and single employer partnerships with weaker influence of the public authorities, and stronger influence of other actors, typically employers and trade unions



As stated above, the public authorities often – but not always – dominate the social partnerships for inclusion, traditional as well as multipartite. In general, the partnerships studied have shown that the role of public authorities (national governments, ministries, regional governments, municipalities,

etc.) is a very important factor in the way the partnerships work, no matter in what country and at what level the partnership is found. However, their influence varies from partnership to partnership, and we have developed a typology of social partnerships in the form of a continuum related to the

The role of public authorities is a very important factor in the way the partnerships work, no matter in what country and at what level the partnership is found. “



influence of the public authorities versus other actors in the partnerships. The continuum contains of four different types of partnerships, labelled the consultation partnership, the sub-contracted partnership, the self-governing partnership, and the single-employer partnership.

The consultation partnerships are part of the politico-administrative systems and sometimes even provided by statute. The public authorities most often both initiate and finance these partnerships. Moreover, they tend to be the most powerful actors.

At the core of these partnerships is a consultation (more rarely a bargaining) process, where the public authorities consult the other actors in order to facilitate the implementation of their policies, whereas the participation of employers

and trade unions provides them with financial resources and legitimacy. The consultation process is often focused on strategies/policy formulation whereas the actual implementation/delivery is the responsibility of the institution that the tri- or multipartite consultation body is linked to – e.g. a ministry or a public employment service institution.

The trade unions are to a varying degree active and influential in these consultative bodies. In general, the employers' representatives on these bodies tend to be the less active part – however, in labour markets with labour shortages they tend to show more interest in the activation of unemployed. NGOs – representing e.g. disabled people – are involved in some of these partnerships, but do not normally have the same influence as the employers and the trade unions.

The subcontracted partnership is the one where the public authorities subcontract policies for inclusion to a social partnership, because this partnership has performed, or is expected to perform, better than the public authorities. Apart from providing the financial resources, the public authorities will most likely also participate at the strategic level. Public authorities also tend to be directors, etc. of this kind of partnership, but other actors could be in leading positions as well.

The subcontracted partnership also differs from the consultation partnership in that the subcontracted partnership is not only engaged in formulating strategies/policies, but also in the implementation/delivery of the measures.



A CONSULTATION PARTNERSHIP – THE SOCIAL-ECONOMIC COUNCIL (NL)

One of the most prominent institutions in the Dutch consultation economy is The Social-Economic Council, SER. This is a tripartite institution consisting of representatives of employers associations, trade unions and so-called crown appointees (independent experts). SER advisory reports, especially those supported unanimously by the council, are considered to be a potent signal to the national administration. Among others, SER has in recent years produced advisory reports concerning the health care insurance system, corporate social responsibility, social and economic policy and pensions.

A SUB-CONTRACTED PARTNERSHIP - NÆSBORG-FOUNDATION IN NÆSTVED MUNICIPALITY (DK)

The foundation is the sole subcontractor of the private job-training part of Næstved municipality's active policies. The project was initiated and is financed by the municipality. The foundation has a mediating function between the municipality and the private companies. It tries to stimulate private companies by its operation (for instance the no-cure, no-pay principle) and attempts to treat the unemployed as customers, not clients. A tripartite board is attached, and the day-to-day administration is in the hands of a former consultant from the employers' confederation.

Like the consultation partnership, the subcontracted partnerships are tri- or multipartite. NGOs play an important role in some of these partnerships, most often in delivering, less frequently in policy-formulation. Like in the consultation partnership, the employers tend to be the less active partner.

Public authorities are not the leaders of all social partnerships on inclusion. We have found two types in which they are not. We call the first type the *self-governing partnership*. These partnerships are self-governing in the sense that they have neither direct organisational links to the public authorities, such as the consultation partnership, nor the indirect close financial links of the subcontracted partnership. This means that the institutional set-up of these partnerships is

free from the traditions and demands of the public-administrative systems.

Public authorities are, however, not necessarily absent in these partnerships. They are sometimes directly involved, but with a less dominant position than in the types of partnerships mentioned above.

Even when the public authorities are not directly involved, they can be an important actor, because they sometimes create a framework for the partnership or are a "shadow" initiator or regulator of the partnership. This is for instance the case in some bipartite partnerships, where the employers and trade unions "take over" former responsibilities of the state through collective bargaining or other forms of bipartite communication.



It is not possible to generalise about the leadership and power relations of these partnerships, because they differ significantly. In none of the selected cases have NGOs been in dominant positions, but they are, nevertheless, important actors in some of them.

A special type of self-governing partnerships is the *single-employer partnership*, which can be either bipartite or tri-/multipartite. The single-employer partnership is basically independent of public authorities for the same reasons as the self-governing partnership. What distinguishes it from the self-governing partnership is that the employer partner is not an employer association, but a single employer, who both participates in the policy formulation of the partnership and in the delivery.

A SELF-GOVERNING PARTNERSHIP - INITIATIVE FOR EMPLOYMENT (INITIATIVE FÜR BESCÄFTIGUNG) (D)

The main objective has been to create new employment opportunities through innovative employment projects at the regional level involving partners in the private economy, the trade unions and other interested parties. The initiative was set-up by the three major industrialists, and eventually turned out to be Germany's largest private 'kooperative gesellschaftliche strategie', intending to transcend the traditional institutional and geographical borders of employment policy across the country. Today 19 networks are in function. They produce a wide range of initiatives tailor-made with a view to regional problems.

This feature has important consequences for the way the partnership works. Firstly, since only one employer is receiving all the people from the target group this employer has to carry all risks and all benefits of the employers' role – risks and benefits are not dispersed. Secondly, the single employer tends to be the dominant actor of the partnerships – without

this willingness to provide jobs or job-training opportunities, there will be no partnership. To what extent the single employer can use this position depends, of course, on the other partner's possibilities to replace that particular employer by another employer.

The other partners' interest in participating in this special kind

of partnership could be that this particular initiative is believed to provide opportunities for inclusion, for instance because of the direct access to 'real workplaces'. The motives of the single employers in this kind of partnerships are not different from the motives of the employers' associations in the other types of partnerships, but the risks differ as mentioned.

A SINGLE-EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIP - TESCO SEACROFT PARTNERSHIP IN LEEDS (UK)

When opening a new retail store in an area of deprivation, Tesco agreed to change its normal recruitment procedures. They provided a large number of local unemployed people with a job-guarantee in the new store, on condition that they completed a tailor-made training course at a local training centre, funded by various public sources (mostly the by the employment service's New Deal). The Employment Service, local MPs, a trade union and the city council were also involved. The partnership is financed by the employment service.

Table 2 summarises the most important features of the continuum.

Table 2: Types of social partnerships for inclusion

	CONSULTATION PARTNERSHIP	SUBCONTRACTED PARTNERSHIP	SELF-GOVERNING PARTNERSHIP	SINGLE-EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIP
DEFINITION	public authorities consult employers and trade unions; partnership part of the political-administrative system	public authorities subcontract to the partnership; public authorities provide finance and part of the rules	partnership is self-regulated and linked to a territory; public authorities may be involved	partnership is self-regulated and linked to a single employer; public authorities may be involved
CONTENT/ OUTCOME	strategies	strategies + implementation	strategies + implementation	strategies + implementation
ACTORS	tri/multipartite	tri/multipartite	bi/tri/multipartite	bi/tri/multipartite
INITIATOR	often public authority	various local/regional	various	various local/regional
STRUCTURE	often top-down	mixed	often bottom-up	bottom-up
POWER	public authorities lead the partnership	public authorities often, not always, the leader	various	employer leader of the partnership

Multipartite Social Partnerships – conclusions and outlook

Still more often employers and trade unions are engaged in a new kind of cooperation: the multipartite social partnership. They include not only the three traditional parties of tripartism, but also new actors like NGOs, business networks, and commercial actors. The development of the multipartite social partnerships must be understood as a response to actual problems facing key-actors of society.

Multipartite social partnerships are – like other types of partnerships – based on the pooling of resources. All participants deliver specific resources needed for the functioning of the partnership. It is necessary to establish win-win-situations where all parties involved benefit. To assure this a process of consensus seeking, where the actors define common interests and concentrate on these, must take place. This process does not externalise all issues of conflicts and does not imply that all partners have equal influence.

Multipartite social partnerships where, employers, trade unions, public authorities and new partners are all taking part, are a limited, but growing phenomenon in all the countries studied as well as at the EU-level, although with the strongest presence at the local/regional level. The multipartite

social partnerships tend to complement rather than replace existing tripartite social partnerships. The influence of the new partners tend to be limited and much weaker than that of the traditional social partners in policy formulation, whereas the new partners in some countries have important roles in the partnerships as suppliers of certain services and as intermediaries between specific target groups and public authorities, individual companies, etc.

Multipartite partnerships contain challenges for employers and trade unions. If they want to joint these partnerships they need to develop cooperate relations with new actors (NGOs, business networks, commercial actors). This may be a challenge because traditional and new actors may disagree on certain issues and because some degree of competition for representation exists between new and traditional members in some countries – for instance between trade unions and NGOs or between employers' associations and business networks. Moreover, the employers and the trade unions need to go beyond the traditional understanding of core business-interests/the interests of core-members.

In Europe today, social partnerships for inclusion co-exist and mix with marketization as ways to coordinate and regulate society. Marketization and social partnerships are, nevertheless, expressions of different visions of society and the relative weights of the two are first and foremost a political choice. Trade unions and employers' associations – as well as other actors – are able to influence this choice through their ability to solve social problems in the partnerships where they participate.



Publications from the TCC research programme 'The Role of the Social Partners'

Throughout Europe employers and trade unions have increasingly entered into partnerships with the aim to create inclusive labour markets. Why has this happened, who are participating in these partnerships apart from employers and trade unions, and how can national differences in social partnerships be explained?

These questions are the background for the TCC programme "The Role of the Social Partners". A series of publications has been published and they are available for download and online ordering free of charge at www.copenhagencentre.org



FROM COLLECTIVE BARGAINING TO SOCIAL PARTNERSHIPS: NEW ROLES FOR THE SOCIAL PARTNERS IN EUROPE.

Edited by Carsten Kjærgaard, Diskus A/S and Sven-Åge Westphalen, TCC, Copenhagen 2001

Bringing together five of Europe's leading thinkers in the field of labour market and social policy development, this anthology offers distinct perspectives on a development that will influence labour market and social policy profoundly in the years to come. Commented by representatives of six central actors at the national and the European scene.



SOCIAL PARTNERSHIPS IN EUROPE - THE ROLE OF EMPLOYERS AND TRADE UNIONS. SEVEN COMPARATIVE REPORTS.

By Søren Kaj Andersen and Mikkel Mailand, FAOS, Copenhagen 2001

A series of country studies looks into how, why and when labour market organisations enter into social partnerships with a socially inclusive agenda. Including in-depth case descriptions from The Netherlands, Germany, the UK, France, Denmark and the EU.



THE ROLE OF EMPLOYERS AND TRADE UNIONS IN MULTIPARTITE SOCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

By Søren Kaj Andersen and Mikkel Mailand, FAOS, Copenhagen 2002

Providing an excellent overview of specific and concrete partnerships across Europe,

this report concludes the TCC programme "The Role of the Social Partners". It gives an extensive analysis of drivers and triggers, dynamics and barriers for the social partners to interact with the new actors entering the centre stage of social and labour market policy development and implementation.

- FAOS - Employment Relations Research Centre - is a Research Centre at the Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen. FAOS was formed on 1 January 1990. Since its formation, FAOS has focused on studies of the labour market, industrial relations and, in recent years, employment relations, applying Danish, Nordic and European perspectives.

FAOS' goal is to add to the existing fund of basic knowledge of employment relations, thus extending our understanding of the complex pattern of development currently taking place on Europe's labour markets. FAOS publishes research results and to maintain a dialogue with the labour market parties and with the relevant administrative/political institutions.

FAOS has the status of a national centre under the European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO)

Visit www.faos.dk for further information and contact details

- THE COPENHAGEN CENTRE (TCC) is an international institution established by the Danish Government in 1998. TCC serves as an intermediary for governments, businesses, social partners, agencies and civil society organisations in improving forums for innovative activity and debate.

TCC aims to promote new social partnerships for social and labour market integration between business, government and society in order to provide opportunities for the less privileged to be self-supporting, active and productive citizens.

TCC's core tasks are to develop and disseminate knowledge about new social partnerships, to organise and facilitate networks with a CSR focus and to inspire and motivate all sectors to implement best practises in their strategies and operations.

All publications from TCC are available free of charge at www.copenhagencentre.org



FROM THE FOREWORDS TO THE MAIN REPORT 'THE ROLE OF EMPLOYERS AND TRADE UNIONS IN MULTIPARTITE SOCIAL PARTNERSHIPS':

For me, the core message is that partnership cooperation is not a one-size-fits-all solution. This report shows amply that flexibility and adaptability should – and does – prevail. I think this is good news for all stakeholders who want to contribute to shaping the future welfare societies in Europe.

Claus Hjort Frederiksen, Minister for Employment, DK

The role of the traditional social partners must be strengthened and renewed. There is still an important role to fulfil in the traditional bipartite collective bargaining system, but the challenge calls for involvement in new areas and cooperation with new types of partners.

Niels Fog, chairman of the Danish Employers' Confederation,

Hans Jensen, chairman of the Confederation of Danish Trade Unions

