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Dealing with sexual harassment in a Danish context

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1. Background and policy context in Denmark

In this section, KVINFO will outline the current situation regarding sexual harassment in Denmark. First, we will look at how #MeToo influenced the public debates and public opinion in Denmark. Then we will present the newly adopted legislation and the recent policy developments. Finally, we will look closer at sexual harassment in three different areas of the Danish society:

- The Labour market and work places
- In Education
- In Politics

1.1 The current situation and policy in the country regarding sexual harassment in the workplace, education, culture and in society as a whole

When #MeToo kicked off internationally in 2017/18, it did not change much in Denmark in terms of dealing with sexual harassment in society. Studies of this particular period in Denmark show that it got less media coverage than for instance in Sweden, and the coverage was mainly negative against #MeToo in some news outlets¹.

In a joint study from researchers at Roskilde and Malmö Universities found that #MeToo was received very differently in Denmark compared to Sweden. In Sweden, a range of groups, for instance lawyers, musicians, journalists and politicians took public action under the #MeToo. #MeToo was covered extensively in the news media; it received political attention and lead to political change, such as the rape consent law being passed in the Swedish parliament in 2018². Meanwhile in Denmark there were very different reactions to #MeToo. For instance, far less articles about #MeToo were

¹ Møhring Reestorff, C., (2019) Lektor: Danske medier underminerer #MeToo i jagten på hurtige klik, Videnskab.dk: <https://videnskab.dk/kultur-samfund/danske-medier-underminerer-metoo-i-jagten-paa-hurtige-klik>

² Askanius, T., & Hartley, J. M. (2019). Framing Gender Justice: A comparative analysis of the media coverage of #metoo in Denmark and Sweden. *N O R D I C O M Review*, 40(2), 19-36.

published in Denmark than in Sweden³ and it received very little political attention. Perhaps most importantly there was a backlash against the movement in the public debate. Møhring Reestorff (2019) did a study of the content of #MeToo articles published by nine Danish Media outlets on their Facebook pages from October 2017 to November 2018. She found that seven out of nine media outlets had double as many negative as positive updates regarding #MeToo in the period.

1.1.1 #MeToo and #OneAmongUs

This all changed in August 2020 when the popular television presenter Sofie Linde hosted a Danish Award Show, and in a speech talked about how she was approached by what she referred to as “a TV-hotshot” at a Christmas party at the Danish Broadcasting Cooperation. She was 19 years old at the time and this much older man asked her to engage in sexual acts or he would ruin her career. While some criticised her for using this platform to talk about this, many supported her and it led to a joint open letter from women in media who supported Linde⁴. Within a few days, 1.615 women working in the media industry had signed the letter and this led to taking it seriously by the media managers⁵. A similar open letter followed from young women in politics. Under the #OneAmongUs, the open letter was published alongside stories from women who had experienced sexual harassment in politics⁶. This all led to a range of studies and investigations of sexual harassment in organisations, such as political parties, media corporations etc. and creative sectors such as the music industry.

One of the main debates in Denmark in the past few years has been whether to regard and approach sexual harassment as an individual issue or as a cultural issue in organisations. Some organisations have engaged external consultants to investigate their culture, for instance linked to gender biases and norms, and levels of sexual harassment. Other organisations have employed law firms and lawyers to investigate either specific people within the organisation or the organisation as a whole using legal methods. The cultural investigations mainly use sociological approaches, uncovering tendencies, patterns, and organisational/structural factors. A different approach is lawyers investigating for instance singular cases of sexual harassment and advising organisations on how to handle the specific cases. Even though lawyers

³ Askanius, T., & Hartley, J. M. (2019). Framing Gender Justice: A comparative analysis of the media coverage of #metoo in Denmark and Sweden. *N O R D I C O M Review*, 40(2), 19-36.

⁴ Faktalink: #MeToo i Danmark og i udlandet: <https://faktalink.dk/metoo-metoo/metoo-danmark-udlandet>

⁵Faktalink: #MeToo i Danmark og i udlandet: <https://faktalink.dk/metoo-metoo/metoo-danmark-udlandet>

⁶Politiken (2020), Oprør mod sexism: 79 vidnesbyrd: En blandt os blev til et politisk landsmøde spurgt af et mandligt medlem, om den korte kjole var et tegn på, at hun gerne ville kneppes af ham senere,: <https://politiken.dk/debat/debatindlaeg/art7938429/En-blandt-os-blev-til-et-politisk-landsm%C3%B8de-spurgt-af-et-mandligt-medlem-om-den-korte-kjole-var-et-tegn-p%C3%A5-at-hun-gerne-ville-kneppes-af-ham-senere>

conduct them, they are not legal cases, but can lead to legal action, depending on assignment/contract/terms of reference/mandate by the organisation

While there has been a focus on sexual harassment in some area of society, we have seen less focus on sexual harassment for instance in education, and in society as a whole. Furthermore, the focus tends to be in areas where the employees have longer university degrees and where women tend to have access to the media. In addition, focus have been mainly on white, middle/upper middle-class women, whereas sectors and areas with skilled or low-skilled workers have been more or less overlooked.

1.2 Sexual harassment in various sectors in Denmark

In this part of the paper, we look closer at sexual harassment in selected sectors in Denmark. We do so as there is not one single way of regulating and working with sexual harassment in Denmark, for instance there are different laws regulating different areas. We are also looking closer at how widespread sexual harassment seem to be in these sectors, this include a discussion about how sexual harassment is measured, and how questions are asked, have a direct impact on the level of sexual harassment reported.

1.2.1 The Gender Equality Act

Denmark has a range of laws dealing with sexual harassment in different area of society. The one piece of legislation, which overarches them all, is the Danish Law on Gender Equality. The purpose of the law is to promote equality between men and women. The Law covers all businesses, organisations, authorities, and individuals who deliver goods and services available to the public outside private- and family life⁷.

The Gender Equality Law states that unequal treatment of a person or persons based on their gender is prohibited. The law also states that harassment based on gender **AND sexual harassment is unequal treatment based on gender and as such prohibited.**

The law defines sexual harassment as:

“any type of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour with sexual connotations in relation to another person’s gender with the purpose or effect that it violates the other person’s dignity, specifically by creating a threatening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or unpleasant environment”⁸

In the following sections, we will look closer at sexual harassment in the following sectors:

⁷ Danske Love, *Ligestillingsloven: Lov om ligestilling af kvinder og mænd*:
<https://danskelove.dk/ligestillingsloven>

⁸ Danske Love, *Ligestillingsloven: Lov om ligestilling af kvinder og mænd*:
<https://danskelove.dk/ligestillingsloven>

- Labour market
- Education
- Politics

1.2.2 Sexual harassment in workplaces and the labour market

The Labour market in Denmark is mainly regulated by cooperation between the Government, employers- and employee associations. This is often referred to as “The Danish Model”. The government collaborates with the two sides on, for instance, working conditions through collective agreements⁹. This collaboration takes place in what is called ‘tripartite negotiations’.

1.2.2.1 *The Tripartite plan against sexual harassment in the labour market and workplaces*

The most recently concluded tripartite negotiations in Denmark were in regards to dealing with sexual harassment in the labour market and workplaces. The negotiations commenced in 2020 and were completed in March 2022. One of the main take away from the results of the negotiations is that sexual harassment is primarily seen as **a cultural issue** and as such, culture needs to be changed in order to deal with sexual harassment. However, there is also a focus on strengthening the laws in some ways.

The negotiations have resulted in a range of initiatives within five main areas.

The main areas are:

- 1. A clear set of rules regarding sexual harassment cases and higher payments to victims in severe cases**, for instance:
 - a. A clarification of employers’ responsibility in the Equal Treatment Act
 - b. A clarification of employees’ responsibilities in dealing with sexual harassment, among other things a duty to pass on information about sexual harassment if becoming aware of harassment and are unable to deal with it
- 2. A focus on sexual harassment in the individual workplace**, for instance
 - a. Focus on a healthy workplace culture in a cooperation between employer and employees
 - b. An increased focus on dealing with sexual harassment in mandatory workplace assessments

⁹ DJØF, *How the Danish labour market Works*,:
<https://www.djoef.dk/english/working-in-denmark.aspx>

3. **Increased knowledge about sexual harassment**, for instance
 - a. Annual statements on number of verdicts and guidance regarding sexual harassment from the Danish Working Environment Authority
4. **Focus on young people in vocational training**, for instance
 - a. Better conditions for apprentices who have raised sexual harassment cases against their employers
5. **The Alliance against sexual harassment**
 - a. An alliance working with prevention of sexual harassment in the Danish society, including labour market, education, culture etc.¹⁰.

1.2.2.2 *Legislation on sexual harassment in the Danish Labour market*

While the tripartite negotiations are essential in the Danish labour market, sexual harassment in workplaces in Denmark is also regulated by two pieces of legislations: The Equal Treatment Act and the Working Environment Act.

The Equal Treatment Act is the Danish implementation of the EU-directive *of the principle on equal treatment for men and women regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions*¹¹. The definition of sexual harassment in the Equal Treatment Act is very similar to the one in the Gender Equality Law. However, while the Gender Equality Act is concerned with society as a whole, the Equal Treatment Act is specifically linked to the labour market. The Equal Treatment Act also defines sexual harassment as unequal treatment based on gender¹².

The Working Environment Act is more directly concerned with the responsibility of employers in the workplace: Employers are responsible for creating a safe and healthy working environment and preventing sexual harassment is seen as part of creating a safe and healthy working environment. This is more specifically regulated in the guidance provided from the Danish Working Environment Authority (WEA)¹³. In this guidance, sexual harassment is seen as offensive behaviour in the workplace

¹⁰ Beskæftigelsesministeriet 2022, Trepartsaftale om initiativer til at modgå seksuel chikane på arbejdspladser,

<https://bm.dk/media/20425/aftaletekst.pdf>

¹¹ EUR-Lex (2002), Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions (Text with EEA relevance):

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32002L0073> &

Beskæftigelsesministeriet, Lovgivning om Ligestilling:

<https://bm.dk/arbejdsomraader/arbejdsvilkaar/ligestilling/lovgivning-om-ligestilling/>

¹² Retsinformation, Bekendtgørelse af lov om ligebehandling af mænd og kvinder med hensyn til beskæftigelse m.v.: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/lta/2011/645>

¹³ Retsinformation, *Bekendtgørelse af lov om arbejdsmiljø*:

<https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/lta/2017/1084>

alongside for instance bullying and violence in the workplace. In this guidance, it is stated that:

“It is offensive behaviour when one or more people in the company severely or repeatedly subjects one or more people in the company to bullying, sexual harassment or other forms of degrading behaviour in the work. The person or persons subjected to the behaviour must see the behaviour as degrading. Whether or not the person subjecting others to the behaviour did so intentionally or due to thoughtlessness is beside the point”¹⁴.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights just recently analysed both laws governing sexual harassment in the workplace in Denmark. Based on this, they concluded the Working Environment Act has a more narrow definition of sexual harassment in the workplace than the Equal Treatment Act¹⁵. Where the Working Environment Act states the offensive behaviour needs to be either severe and/or repeated, in order to be sexual harassment, the Equal Treatment Act does not hold such stipulation. Instead, the Equal Treatment Act states that any form of unwanted sexual attention is sexual harassment.

Based on a sample of public sector workplaces, the Institute found that there is a tendency to use the Working Environment Act narrow definition in workplace guidelines rather than the one from the Equal Treatment Act. The Danish Institute of Human Rights recommends a mainstreaming of the definition of sexual harassment in the Danish Labour Market so the Working Environment Act is in line with the definition with the Equal Treatment Act and thereby the EU-directive¹⁶.

1.2.2.3 Levels of sexual harassment in the Danish Labour market

There is no clear picture of the levels of sexual harassment in the Danish Labour Market as a whole¹⁷. Some unions and workplaces have conducted studies of their own organisation or industry, but there is a general lack of knowledge in Denmark. One of the key issues is that the national surveys of the working environment in Danish workplaces for years only asked one specific question about sexual harassment, and this question has some limitations.

¹⁴ Arbejdstilsynet, AT-vejledninger: Krænkende handlinger, herunder mobning og seksuel chikane: <https://at.dk/regler/at-vejledninger/kraenkende-handlinger-4-3-1/>

¹⁵Institut for Menneskerettigheder (2022) Dansk lovgivning bør kun have én definition af seksuel chikane på arbejdsmarkedet <https://menneskeret.dk/nyheder/dansk-lovgivning-boer-kun-definition-seksuel-chikane-paa-arbejdsmarkedet>

¹⁶ Institut for Menneskerettigheder (2022) Dansk lovgivning bør kun have én definition af seksuel chikane på arbejdsmarkedet <https://menneskeret.dk/nyheder/dansk-lovgivning-boer-kun-definition-seksuel-chikane-paa-arbejdsmarkedet>

¹⁷ Borchorst, A., & Agustin, L. R. (2017). Seksuel chikane på arbejdspladsen. https://vbn.aau.dk/ws/portalfiles/portal/264775360/Seksuel_chikane_p_arbejdspladsen_Online.pdf

The Danish Working Environment Authority (WEA) has recently taken over the task of conducting the national survey of the work environment among employees in Danish workplaces, including sexual harassment. Unlike previous surveys, they asked two rather than one questions in regards to sexual harassment:

“Have you been subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace within the past 12 months?”¹⁸ (This is the single question asked in previous surveys)

And

“Have you been subjected to unwanted sexual attention in the workplace in the past 12 months, which you would not classify as sexual harassment?”¹⁹ (An additional question)

In 2021, 2,4 % of the employees surveyed replied that they had been sexually harassed within the past 12 months. 4,4 % replied they had been subjected to unwanted sexual attention, which they did not themselves classify as sexual harassment.

The difference in results raises two issues:

- How is sexual harassment defined in the survey?
- What is the difference between unwanted sexual attention and sexual harassment?

Neither of this is specified in the survey. It may be that the incidences reported as unwanted sexual attentions may in fact be cases of sexual harassment.

Based on this we could say that the level of sexual harassment in the Danish Labour Market is somewhere between 2,4 % and 6,8 % if we consider some or all of the unwanted sexual attention is in fact sexual harassment. This survey is the most extensive study of sexual harassment in Denmark as the survey was sent to 63.391 employees in Danish workplaces across sectors and industries, and with 30.099 responses, the response rate was. 47, 5 %²⁰.

However, this national survey does not necessarily provide us with the full picture of the amount of sexual harassment in Denmark.

Firstly, the questions from WEA lack a definition of the term *sexual harassment* in both the question and the questionnaire itself. This is important, as, we know from research that women for instance will define more forms of sexualised behaviour as

¹⁸ Arbejdstilsynet (2021), *National Overvågning af Arbejdsmiljøet blandt Lønmodtagere*, : <https://at.dk/media/7324/spoergeskema-noa-l-2021.pdf>

¹⁹ Arbejdstilsynet (2021), *National Overvågning af Arbejdsmiljøet blandt Lønmodtagere*: <https://at.dk/media/7324/spoergeskema-noa-l-2021.pdf>

²⁰ Arbejdstilsynet (2021), *Datagrundlag i National Overvågning af Arbejdsmiljøet blandt Lønmodtagere*: <https://at.dk/media/7323/datagrundlag-noa-l-2021.pdf>

sexual harassment than men will²¹; different genders define sexual harassment differently²².

Secondly, it is important how questions about sexual harassment are framed, and it is very clear from studies, that different questions lead to different results. Where questions like the ones we find in WEA tend to lead to underreporting, while questions asking about specific forms of sexual harassment, will lead to higher levels reported¹.

We will illustrate this link between questions asked and levels of sexual harassment reported with two different examples from Danish studies.

Example 1: PROSA

In 2020, the trade union PROSA, who organise the IT-workforce in Denmark, together with KVINFO conducted a study of sexual harassment within the IT-workforce. In a survey, members of the union were asked the general question “*Have you been subjected to sexual harassment?*”. In addition, they were asked 10 questions in which sexual harassment had been operationalised. These were about being subjected to unwanted comments about their body or looks and being subjected to unwanted physical touching like kisses or hugs etc. The results were that:

- 2, 5 % of the men and 21, 4 % of the women replied that they had been subjected to sexual harassment over the course of their working life, when asked the general and not specific question about sexual harassment²³
- 12 % of the men and 44, 5 % of the women replied yes to having been subjected to at least one of the specific forms of sexual harassment when adding the results from the specific questions²⁴.

Example 2: The Danish Trade Union Confederation (FH)

In 2019, the Danish Trade Union Confederation conducted a survey about gender and equality among its members, this included questions regarding sexual harassment:

- When asked the question “*Have you been subjected to sexual harassment in your current or previous workplace?*” one in ten women and one in 20 men replied yes.

²¹ Borchorst, A., & Agustin, L. R. (2017). *Seksuel chikane på arbejdspladsen*.

https://vbn.aau.dk/ws/portalfiles/portal/264775360/Seksuel_chikane_p_arbejdspladsen_Online.pdf

²² Villeseche, F., Muhr, S. L., & Holck, L. (2018). *Diversity and Identity in the Workplace: Connections and Perspectives*. Palgrave Macmillan.

²³ PROSA (2020): *Knæk Tønen*

https://www.prosa.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/Politik/Chikane_i_it-faget/Kn%C3%A6k_tonen.pdf

²⁴ PROSA (2020): *Knæk Tønen*

https://www.prosa.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/Politik/Chikane_i_it-faget/Kn%C3%A6k_tonen.pdf

- When asked a range of more specific questions regarding sexual harassment – and adding the results – every third women and every fourth man replied yes to having experienced at least one of the forms of sexual harassment
 - The most common form of harassment amongst the women were comments or jokes with sexual content
 - The most common form of harassment amongst the men were comments about their looks, which they found offensive²⁵.

To sum it up, there is not one single answer to how widespread sexual harassment is in the Danish labour market. It varies depending on the question. What we do know regardless of how it is studied is that:

- **More women than men report being subjected to sexual harassment**
- **More young people than people in the older age groups, report having been subjected to sexual harassment**

We lack knowledge about how gender interplays with other factors, for instance ethnic background and sexual orientation when it comes to sexual harassment. One study from HK, the trade union for employees working in administrative post etc., showed twice as many LGBT+ members had been subjected sexual harassment within the past 12 months, compared to heterosexual members of the union²⁶

1.2.2.4 How is sexual harassment dealt with in the Labour Market

The ASTRAPI (Active Strategies for Prevention and Handling Sexual Harassment Incidents) EU-project found that despite robust legislation in the EU Member States there are still barriers in dealing with sexual harassment in workplaces, for instance:

- *“Lack of awareness about and implementation of the law, including of obligations on employers to prevent sexual harassment”*
- *“A patriarchal culture persists and is reflected in a culture of male dominance and of sexism at work and in society”*
- *“Sexual harassment remains a taboo subject and this means there is a silence and under-reporting on the issue. Victims do not report cases to their employers and even less take cases through the courts because they fear that there will be negative consequences for them”*

²⁵ Fagbevægelsens Hovedorganisation & Epinion (2019). *Balance og Ligestilling*. <https://fho.dk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/fhrapp-sexchikane-2019.pdf>

²⁶ HK (2021), Ny undersøgelse: Hvert tiende HK-medlem i hovedstaden har været udsat for krænkelse: <https://www.hk.dk/aktuelt/nyheder/2021/03/08/information080321>

- *“Discrimination and gender inequalities are faced by women working in the most precarious and insecure jobs, who are both the most vulnerable to sexual harassment and the least likely to report sexual harassment”²⁷*

The organisations we have worked with also often struggle to find effective ways of dealing with sexual harassment, and the first step is perhaps to acknowledge that there are no easy fixes. Some of the issues we have found in our studies of sexual harassment in workplaces in Denmark are:

- Mandatory Workplace Assessments are rarely used effectively to identify and deal with sexual harassment in organisations. Usually one single question about sexual harassment is asked, which we have already seen is ineffective. Further to this, there is often a fear of being recognised if reporting sexual harassment in these assessments, even if they are anonymous.
- “Open door politics”, in many organisations managers will say “My door is always open” indicating members of staff can always come and talk about sexual harassment. This is however only effective if there is a culture of trust in the workplace²⁸, yet some managers will reach the conclusion that there is not sexual harassment if no one reports it.
- A good policy will not prevent sexual harassment in itself. What we often find is that organisations are unaware of the role of gender and gender norms, and organisational hierarchies play in with sexual harassment. Instead of just writing a policy or code of conduct, it is necessary to work with norms in the organisation and address gender and power inequalities²⁹ in order to deal effectively with sexual harassment. The tripartite agreement has a focus on changing culture, which is an important step in the right direction.

1.2.3 Sexual harassment in Education

Each educational institution, whether it is college, vocational training or further education, holds the responsibility of dealing with sexual harassment within their institution.

²⁷ ASTRAPI-EU project (2020), EUROPEAN TOOLKIT FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY TO PREVENT AND HANDLE SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORLD OF WORK
<https://astrapi-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ASTRAPI-Sexual-harassment-toolkit-EN.pdf>

²⁸ Berlingske, 2020, Ledere har en rolle i at stoppe krænkerkultur

<https://www.berlingske.dk/politik/forsker-ledere-har-en-rolle-i-at-stoppe-kraenkerkultur>.

²⁹ ASTRAPI-EU project (2020), EUROPEAN TOOLKIT FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY TO PREVENT AND HANDLE SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORLD OF WORK
<https://astrapi-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ASTRAPI-Sexual-harassment-toolkit-EN.pdf>

The Teaching Environment Act governs the teaching environment in all educational institutions³⁰. The law states that each institution must have an anti-bullying strategy; a similar strategy on sexual harassment is not included in the law.

The Danish Ministry of Children and Education, who are responsible for primary and secondary education, conducts annual surveys measuring pupil and student well-being in primary and secondary education. The surveys for students in upper secondary education and vocational training contain a single question regarding sexual harassment or unwanted sexual attention³¹. Surveys among pupils in primary and lower secondary school does not contain any questions on sexual harassment.

The figures from 2021 show 14 % of all pupils in upper secondary education had been subjected to unwanted sexual attention (this is using a single question), 15 % of the girls and 12 % of the boys.

In March 2022, the Danish Parliament held an open hearing on sexism and sexual harassment within the educational system. The authors of this paper participated in this alongside the Danish Institute of Human Rights and a range of educational institutions³². The hearing highlighted that various institutions have taken some measures in dealing with sexism and sexual harassment, but the hearing also highlighted the need for further action in some areas.

One area in need of focus is general upper secondary education. 70 % of young people in Denmark continue onto general upper secondary education after completing primary and lower secondary school, and as mentioned, 14 % of the pupils had been subjected to sexual harassment according to the latest surveys. Yet it is not mandatory for the schools to have a policy on how to handle sexual harassment in the school.

Only students in vocational training, which in Denmark includes an apprenticeship in a workplace, are covered by the tripartite negotiations and by the WEA.

1.2.4 Sexual harassment in Politics

Sexual harassment in politics has been a big issue in Denmark, and most political parties have conducted studies of sexual harassment within their parties. These studies show varying levels of sexual harassment in political parties, and in combination with gender inequality.

³⁰ Danske Love: *Undervisningsmiljøloven*:
<https://danskelove.dk/undervisningsmilj%C3%B8loven>

³¹ Undervisningsministeriet, *Spørgeramme til den nationale trivselsmåling på de gymnasiale uddannelser* <https://www.uvm.dk/-/media/filer/uvm/udd/gym/pdf18/okt/181031-spoergeramme-til-trivselsmaaling-paa-gym-udd.pdf>

³² Folketinget, *Åben høring om håndteringen af sexismen og seksuel chikane i uddannelsessystemet* <https://www.ft.dk/da/aktuelt/nyheder/2022/04/liu-hoering-om-sexisme>

We have conducted studies for three of the main parties in Denmark and a general study of gender and sexual harassment in local politics in Denmark. Some of our findings were:

Gender and culture in city councils (2021)

We found sexism and sexual harassment in local politics, and found this was linked directly to limitations for female politicians in their political work. These limitations were in relations to which political topics female politicians can engage in, for instance we found female politicians would refrain from debating issues around gender. We also found female politicians would withdraw from both social gatherings and political meetings to a larger extent than male politicians, for instance to avoid certain people or situations³³.

Radikale Venstre (2021)

We found that the organisational settings were not robust in dealing with cases of sexual harassment and sexual assaults. The organisational framework and blurry boundaries between social and political life, as well as private and professional settings caused insecurity and lack of trust in the leaders and the organisation³⁴.

Socialistisk Folkeparti (2021)

We found that expectations of physical appearance based on gender stereotypical norms occurred for both men and women in the party. Women were expected to dress "nicely" to attract votes through the male gaze on their "sex appeal", whereas men were expected to live up to a "working class man" idealisation and cultivation³⁵.

Overall, the studies highlight how gender and sexual harassment can thrive within a highly competitive environment where people compete for power. Power is an important aspect of sexual harassment as sexual harassment is embedded in the organisation's unequal distribution of power³⁶. For example we see this when men subjects women to sexual harassment to a larger extent than women subjects men to sexual harassment, just as we see people in power subjecting people without, or with less power, to sexual harassment³⁷ⁱⁱ.

³³ KVINFO (2021): *Køn og Kultur i kommunalpolitik*

https://kvinfo.dk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/KV21_KVINFO-RAPPORT-KOeN-OG-KULTUR-I-KOMMUNALPOLITIK.pdf

³⁴ KVINFO (2021): Omfang og karakter af forskelsbehandling og seksuel chikane i Radikale Venstre
<https://www.radikale.dk/media/dabp3uru/kvinforapport03032021.pdf>

³⁵ KVINFO (2021): Undersøgelse af omfanget og karakteren af seksuel chikane og forskelsbehandling på baggrund af køn og seksualitet i SF
https://48r2f488pqt46pvdu14s1d21-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/endelig_rapport_sf_kvinfo_150421.pdf

³⁶ Reinicke, K. (2018). *Mænd der krænker kvinder- refleksioner i kølvandet på #MeToo*. Samfundslitteratur

³⁷ Reinicke, K. (2018). *Mænd der krænker kvinder- refleksioner i kølvandet på #MeToo*. Samfundslitteratur

The rules and legislation around sexual harassment in political parties in Denmark are quite complex. Employees in political parties are covered by the rules and legislations governing the in the Labour Market. However, volunteers do a lot of work in political parties. Only if the work they do is equal to the work done by an employee, are the volunteers covered by rules regarding volunteer work from the WEA³⁸. Even if the volunteers are covered it is difficult to know who in a political organisation holds the employer responsibility of creating a safe work environment and deal with sexual harassment.

Turning to the elected members of political parties in parliament and local councils, they are not governed by any of the rules and regulation regarding sexual harassment, as the public elects them and thus only voters and the political party itself can regulate if a MP subject other to sexual harassment.

2. The Alliance against sexual harassment

As part of the tripartite negotiations completed in 2022 it was agreed to form an alliance with the purpose of preventing sexual harassment in the Danish society, and as such, it is the only initiative in the agreement, which addresses sexual harassment outside of the labour market and workplaces.

The Alliance held its first meeting in June 2022 and the work is only in the early stages. The next meeting will be held on 3rd September; hopefully we will be able to elaborate on the work in the alliance at the seminar in September.

2.1 The composition of the Alliance, it's goals and target groups

The current members of the Alliance are³⁹:

- Various Unions and union confederations
- Employers confederations
- Universities Denmark
- University Colleges Denmark
- The Danish Sports Confederation
- The Danish Youth Council
- The Women's Council
- The Danish Women's Society

³⁸ Arbejdstilsynet, AT-vejledninger: Arbejdsmiljøarbejde i almennyttige foreninger med frivilligt arbejde: <https://at.dk/regler/at-vejledninger/arbejdsmiljoearbejde-almennyttige-foreninger-frivilligt-arbejde-1-1-1/>

³⁹ The Alliance against Sexual Harassment: <https://seksuelchikane.dk/en/>

- KVINFO (Køn, Viden, Information og Forskning)/ KVINFO is Denmark's knowledge center for gender and equality⁴⁰
- Institute for Human Rights

It is possible the Alliance will expand, as it is still open to new members. Any nationwide organisation who wishes to engage in the work and contribute towards cultural changes in the Danish society, can apply to become members.

The Alliance will contribute towards:

- *“A continuous focus on the prevention of sexual harassment*
- *Workplaces, educational institutions, cultural institutions discuss the need for developing clear guidelines and initiatives towards combatting sexual harassment.*
- *The dissemination of knowledge on sexual harassment and the exchange of good practices on prevention”⁴¹*

2.2 The activities of the Alliance

Since the Alliance is new, the activities are yet to be determined. As of now (June 2022) it seems the Alliance will primarily deal with sexual harassment outside the labour market, and rather focus on education, sports, leisure and culture.

Currently the Alliance has established a website with the purpose of gathering and disseminating knowledge about sexual harassment in various sectors/areas of life in Denmark. Each member of the Alliance is currently submitting examples of good practice and studies to be published on the website.

The first external activity will take place in September 2022 at Ungdommens Folkemøde, which is a democratic festival for the youth of Denmark.

Following the first meeting in the Alliance, the Gender Equality Department of the Ministry of Transportation, will develop a framework for the future work in the Alliance, including what issues and sectors to work with initially. It is also the intention that the Alliance will initiate a study about sexual harassment.

The Alliance will initiate campaigns, studies, conferences, meetings and similar activities where members can share and develop knowledge and experiences. The budget for the Alliance is approximately 5 million Danish Kroner (approximately 672.237 Euro). It is yet to be decided how the budget will be spent.

2.3 Institutional arrangements and procedures of implementation

The Alliance on Preventing Sexual Harassment falls under the Gender Equality Department of the Ministry of Transportation. The Gender Equality Department has

⁴⁰ KVINFO: <https://kvinfo.dk/about-kvinfo/>

⁴¹ The Alliance against Sexual Harassment: <https://seksuelchikane.dk/en/>

the main task of developing and coordinating the government's politics on gender equality and facilitate initiatives to enhance Gender Equality.

The implementation will take place through different tracks, which are yet to be determined.

2.4 Expected results of the policy and its impact on preventing sexual harassment

It is very early in the process in terms of assessing results and impact of the Alliance. However, as we have seen in this paper, there has been no joint effort in working with sexual harassment in Denmark and the Alliance is an improvement in this regard. The Alliance may contribute to a more consistent and coherent effort in Denmark.

There is a need for focusing on sexual harassment outside workplaces in Denmark: in education, in leisure and sports for instance and the Alliance can contribute to this work. Further to this, many different organisations working together on the issue, and the fact that the Minister for Equal Opportunities is chairing the Alliance, are major strengths. It gives the Alliance potential power to contribute towards change in society.

The Alliance can play a part in highlighting the need for developing tools and guidance across different sectors. There is however also a need to clarify how the Alliance will work effectively with areas outside the labour market. The majority of members in the Alliance are representing employers and employees, yet it seems the Alliance will mainly focus on areas outside the labour market. It needs to be established what the role of employer's and employee organisations will be in regards to the aim of working in other sectors. It is also essential to assess if all relevant partners are included in the Alliance, there could be a need for engaging more organisations from the creative arts, media and culture sectors for instance.

The tripartite negotiations concluded that socio-cultural changes in workplaces are needed in order to prevent sexual harassment. This focus on cultural change is also the basis of the Alliance. The authors of this paper view this as a major strength as culture is essential in working with sexual harassment. However, it is a very wide scope of the alliance to change culture. In order to change culture it is necessary to establish what in the current culture that needs changing. This is not clear in the Terms of Reference on which the Alliance is based. In the Terms of Reference, only one study is included: A biannual survey from the National Centre for Work Environment Research, which only contains the single question regarding sexual harassment, mentioned earlier in the paper, which leads to underreporting of the levels of sexual harassment. Further, this study is also only looking at the labour market and not across the other areas of life in Denmark. It would strengthen the work in the Alliance if it were based on wider knowledge about sexual harassment, and the structural and organisational contexts within which it takes place, for instance in sports and leisure. It will be important for the Alliance to base its work on accurate knowledge to make sure the activities address actual challenges in organisations and sectors.

3. Main questions and issues for debate at the meeting

- How are different groups impacted by sexual harassment?
 - How do we protect groups that are more vulnerable?
 - How do we reach groups in a vulnerable (less stable) position in the organisation, such as interns, freelancers, and short term employed?
 - How do organisations approach sexual harassment from an intersectional point of view in regards to overlapping discrimination grounds such as gender, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ability, age, etc.?
- How is the definition of sexual harassment operationalised in different Member States?
 - What do organisations need concerning framework and tools in order to operationalise guidelines and procedures within their organisations?
- How do we measure sexual harassment in ways that reflect the realistic levels in organisations and society
 - How do we study sexual harassment on both an individual, organisational, and structural level?
- How do we identify and work with good practice examples across cultural and organisational structures/contexts?
- How can we create lasting cultural change to prevent sexual harassment in:
 - Organisations outside of the labour market
 - Society as a whole
 - Sectors and industries that are very prone to sexual harassment due to factors such as gender imbalance, high ratio of atypical employment, stressful working environment due to the nature of the work, close contact with patients, costumers, or voters, etc.

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