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Anchoring environmental sustainability within trade unions

From policy to practice in the Norwegian labour movement

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Summary

Accelerating climate and environmental change requires action in all parts of society, including in the world of work. This thesis is a cross-sectoral and multi-level qualitative study of how three Norwegian trade unions—Handel og Kontor, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne—operate internally to engage with climate and environmental change as a political issue. The three cases chosen have formally decided to work on issues of environmental sustainability, which illustrates a broadening of the labour movement's traditional privileging of social and economic concerns. To explore this, I conduct a Critical Narrative Analysis, studying the interrelations of labour actors at different levels in the organisations. I do so through a document analysis and through interviews with union employees working with sustainability issues in the organisations' head offices, union representatives, and ordinary union members. With an entry point in the critical research tradition, I analyse how *agency*, *identities*, *role perceptions*, and *interests* affect *organisational change* processes, and the *anchoring* of policies, in order to transform them into practice with material outcomes.

I find that when the three trade unions develop internal policy documents and engage in "green" collective bargaining at the national level, they do so from their organisational identities, claiming their members' interests as workers and professionals. Furthermore, the trade unions develop discourses of environmental action that do not stretch outside the frames of the reformist and compromise-based Norwegian labour model, but ultimately act *as* trade unions—focused on social and financial interests. By exploring the perceptions and experiences of organised workers in relation to their trade union's environmental sustainability strategies, I suggest that the narratives of workers depend on their identities and interests at work, but also intersects with the same dynamics outside of the workplace.

I identify that there are unionised workers at the local level who are willing to participate in a sustainability transition in their role as trade union members, but they have not yet done so due to a lack of knowledge or tools to get engaged. I, thus, suggest that there are weak internal links—as in an insufficient anchoring of climate and environmental policies—between the organisational levels in all three trade unions, which hinders a broad operationalisation of the emergent climate and environmentally-related policies. Analytically, I conclude that anchoring is a relevant concept when exploring the (dis)connection between discursive and material change, i.e., how to transform environmental concerns into action.

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Any mistakes or inconsistencies in the thesis are my own.

Judith Marguerite Henriksson
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Abbreviations

CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CNA	Critical Narrative Analysis
CR	Critical Realism
ELG	Environmental Labour Geography
ELS	Environmental Labour Studies
HK	Union of Employees in Commerce and Offices (Handel og Kontor Norge)
KA	Norwegian Association for Church Employers (Arbeidsgiverorganisasjonen for kirkelige virksomheter)
KS	Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (Kommunesektorens organisasjon)
LO	Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (Landsorganisasjonen i Norge)
NHO	Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (Næringslivets hovedorganisasjon)
Nv*	A trade union for natural scientists in Norway. No English name. (Naturviterne)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIKT	Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (Kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandør)
Udf*	Union of Education Norway (Utdanningsforbundet)
UiO	University of Oslo (Universitetet i Oslo)

*Only used when referring to informants (see Table 1 and 2).

Contents

1. Introduction

Trade unions have a long tradition of getting involved in societal changes, often in coalition with other civil society organisations (Uzzell & Räthzel, 2012). Trade unions do so, for example, through engaging with environmental justice issues and environmental health risks (Snell, 2021). While trade unions' environmental concerns have traditionally revolved around workers' health and safety, as linked to their employment relations and direct working conditions, there is now an emerging interest in incorporating policies specifically concerned with climate and environmental change into the world of work. Such responses are crucial to mitigate global warming and environmental destruction, which are increasingly driven by the impacts of human activity on the Earth system (Steffen et al., 2018). Hampton (2015) states that contemporary capitalism exploits human labour and the environment in the same ways; however, workers, unlike nature, are privileged with the opportunity to mitigate their exploitation and damage to nature (p. 39).

In Norway, several trade unions are developing and implementing strategies for including ecological interests in their political agenda (Bergsli, 2021). My entry point in this thesis is in Holland & Jordhus-Lier's (2022) argument that changes in the physical environment, and the responses to those, will inevitably affect workers and their workplaces, therefore making it a concern for trade unions. I perceive this as a legitimate concern, since the production system's current conditions and potential future transformation depends on the actors within it, where labour is central (Stevis et al., 2018). To understand the interweaving of social, financial, and environmental concerns in the change processes of trade unions, both social scientists and the actors involved must themselves examine the internal processes of this development. An entry point to doing so is what I examine in this thesis: *Who* in the trade union does *what* to engage with climate and environmental change, and *why* do these specific strategies develop? I conduct a critical multi-level analysis of three Norwegian trade unions: Handel og Kontor, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne. The analysis is driven by qualitative data gathered from internal policy documents and collective agreements, and interviews conducted with employees, trade union representatives at different levels, and ordinary members of the unions. The organisations studied differ in size, affiliation, and what sectors they mobilise workers in. Commonly, they all actively incorporate climate and environmental change into their political agendas and everyday activities.

1.1 Research questions and relevance

The main objective of this thesis is to examine how trade unions operate internally to engage with climate and environmental change as a political issue. To do so, I explore the relationship between trade unions' formal stances on climate politics and members' understanding of the climate and environmentally related policies in three Norwegian trade unions. I, therefore, focus on the internal change processes in the trade unions and how the conditions in place enable and constrain the implementation of policies in practice.

My main research question is: *How are the environmental sustainability policies of trade unions anchored within their organisations?*

To answer the main research question and guide the analysis, I ask:

- *What strategies do trade unions adopt to engage with environmental concerns, as part of their political agenda and everyday activities?*
- *How do organised workers perceive and experience their trade union's engagement with climate and environmental change as a political issue?*

The questions inform each other. Exploring what sustainability strategies trade unions adopt to account for environmental sustainability allows me to examine how trade union members and representatives perceive the strategies of their unions. Hence, I can analyse the connection between organisational strategies and the experiences of those strategies in workplaces. I use *anchoring* as a heuristic tool that connects central themes in this thesis; anchoring can be applied to explore the link between what social actors are (their "being") and what they do (their "doing"), how roles and identities overlap, how segments of the organisations interact, and how the discourse at one level of societal organisation interrelates to what is said and done at another level.

This study provides both academic and political contributions. Academically, I contribute to Kleinheisterkamp-González' (2023) suggested field of environmental labour geography (ELG), by analysing how actors in the world of work relate to climate and environmental change as a political issue. My entry point is a recognition of labour as active agents, studying the relation between labour and the environment to bring insights into how "policy changes, social protest, and capital's own attempts to adapt, mitigate, and implement a transition drastically contest productive and social reproductive activities in spatial, scalar,

and geopolitical terms" (Kleinheisterkamp-González, 2023, p. 9). ELG provides a geographical dimension to the established field of environmental labour studies (ELS), which explores the interrelations between environmental and labour struggles. Broadly, ELS analyses how "workers in any kind of workplace and community are involved in environmental policies/practices and/or how they are affected by environmental degradation in the broadest sense" (Stevis et al., 2018, p. 440). I contribute what Coe (2021) refers to as a strength of labour geography: To explore the intersections between work and climate change (p. 452). I will return to the role of labour geography in this study in the theoretical chapter.

Politically, I broaden the debate on whether climate and environmental concerns are legitimate political issues in the labour movement, by analysing *how* such concerns integrate into different levels of trade unions. Hence, I answer Dahl & Hagen's (2023) call to examine what tools actors of the Norwegian labour market utilise to engage with concerns of climate and environmental change, how the issue of climate change has been incorporated into the Norwegian model of social partnership, and to what degree workers and (potential) trade union members support the engagement. Furthermore, providing both academic and political contributions, I engage in research that Hampton (2018) finds crucial when exploring trade unions' environmental engagement: To include union members who have not yet been initiators of change, and examine what they are prepared to do to mitigate the crises we face today. In doing so, I answer to what O'Brien (2018) requests in climate change research: I perceive individuals or groups as subjects or agents of change, rather than "objects to be changed" (p. 157). O'Brien's call is intertwined with the tradition of labour geography, where workers are perceived as active agents, as further conceptualised below.

1.2 Delimitations

This project is limited to the scope of a master's thesis. Many choices have been made to ensure a feasible and directed project. Some delimitations of the use of broad terms and concepts have guided the project, as well as some practical delimitations.

I study internal trade union processes while recognising the organisations' inter-group differences and their connections to the larger society, these are largely national level policies that unfold in practice on the local level. In this thesis, *scale* refers to the levels of societal organisation resulting from political and economic processes (Herod, 2011). The spatial domain—the scale—of this thesis is largely restricted to the national level, but I recognise the interrelations of the Norwegian context to the societal organisation beyond the national level,

i.e., how the climate crisis is a global issue with local effects. The reason for including a "conceptual delimitation" of scale is due to the framework it sets for the objectives and research questions of the thesis. Similar to scale, I apply *levels of organisations* as political and non-fixed. The levels of organisations concept overlaps with the concept of scale, but it is not the same. The levels of organisations are applied to my empirical data when referring to different levels in trade unions, i.e., the member level, the shop steward level, the county level, and the national level (referring to the "central" level of the organisation, i.e., the head office/secretariat). In doing so, I categorise the organisations into entities. However, I do not imply that these levels are separated, as there would not be any shop stewards or head offices if there were no members to represent. Such a perspective goes both for scale and levels of organisations. Consequently, if there was no nationally bounded labour model, no central level, or no shop stewards, the workers would not be members of, and would not be represented by, a formal trade union. In other words, "what goes on at one scale significantly shapes what goes on at another" (Herod, 2011, p. 252).

A second conceptual framing is my use of *climate and environmental change* to refer to all transformations of non-human nature with impacts on the social and physical landscape, primarily driven by human activity. *Climate* refers to long-term weather conditions in one place, including i.e., temperature and rainfall. The *environment* is a broader term for all natural conditions affecting life, including climate and biodiversity (Setsaas, n.d.). When I refer to the environement, it is ,therefore, the outer environment, as opposed to the working environment. Following Lövbrand et al. (2015), I emphasise that critical social sciences must recognise the political aspects of the current state of the Earth. Hence, I understand climate and environmental change as political issues that social actors must engage in. Using "environmental sustainability" and "ecological interests", I refer to social actors' engagement with climate and the environment.

For the practical delimitations, there are two critical aspects to discuss. First, this study only includes trade unions outside of the Norwegian oil and gas sector. The oil and gas sector is the largest industry in Norway, including investments, added value, revenues, and export value (Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, 2021). Oil and gas extraction accounts for 25% of Norway's greenhouse gas emissions (Meld. St. 1, [2021–2022], p. 111). Although recognising the immense impact of the petroleum industry, I wish to emphasise the necessity of transforming *all* sectors of the economy to meet national and international environmental goals, i.e., the Norwegian government's Climate Action Plan (Meld. St. 13 [2020–2021]) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UNDP, n.d.). By studying trade unions that have

championed the need to implement climate and environmentally related policies in the Norwegian world of work, I contribute to insights that stretch beyond the conflictual stage of the so-called "job versus environment dilemma" (Räthzel & Uzzell, 2011). Furthermore, there is already extensive research on how trade unions in the Norwegian oil and gas sector respond to the need for sustainability transitions, i.e., by researchers in the WAGE project (University of Oslo, n.d.). Second, I study trade unions and have not included employer representatives in my research project. I do so partly to build upon the tradition of labour geography, where workers are understood as active agents rather than mere inputs in economic activity. By focusing on members' perceptions of their trade unions' "green" policies, I contribute to insights from the workplace level, and the crucial actors in a sustainability transition: labour itself. It is also a conscious delimitation, due to the limited time frame of the project. Nevertheless, I stress the need to keep the employer side accountable for environmental concerns in the world of work, as elaborated on in Chapter 8.

1.3 Case presentation

In this section, I will briefly introduce the trade unions I study to set the scene for the thesis. A more comprehensive account of the case selection is given in Chapter 4, and the trade unions' environmental strategies are explored in depth in Chapter 5. HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne have formally stated that climate and environmental change are relevant political issues for them to incorporate into their political agendas. However, they do so from different entry points:

- **Handel og Kontor (HK)**, the Union of Employees in Commerce and Offices, represents workers in the private sector, with over 80 000 members working in service occupations, including commerce, finance, media, logistics, tourism, ICT, and knowledge-intensive industries. HK is affiliated with LO Norway, the country's largest trade union confederation. LO has close ties to the Norwegian Labour Party, and thus more broadly the social democratic tradition.

- **Utdanningsforbundet**, the Union of Education Norway, organises over 190 000 workers in education and training occupations at all levels of the education system, both in the public and private sectors. Utdanningsforbundet is affiliated with Unio, a politically independent trade union confederation for workers with completed undergraduate educations or above.
- **Naturviterne** organises workers with a minimum of a master's degree in the natural sciences. Naturviterne is a substantially smaller trade union than HK and Utdanningsforbundet, with 7000 members. Naturviterne is affiliated with Akademikerne, a politically independent trade union confederation that represents workers with graduate-level education.

From their different affiliations, sizes, sectoral presence, and type of members, the three trade unions represent various professional and political interests. HK organises many workers in low-paid jobs, for example, in the service sector. Naturviterne generally has members with a higher socioeconomic status, who more often work directly with issues of climate and the environment. In the case of Utdanningsforbundet, members are often lower-paid relative to their level of education, and are in terms of their work less directly affected by climate issues. A crucial point of departure for this thesis is that as the organisational identities of the three unions vary, their involvement with climate and the environment as a political issue is expected to be affected by the different interests of their members.

1.4 Thesis structure

In **Chapter 2**, I set the scene for the larger context, by outlining the Norwegian labour and social partnership model, the broader sustainable development agenda, and emerging initiatives of labour environmentalism. **Chapter 3** provides a conceptual framework from a critical tradition. I frame my understanding of the interrelation between structure and agency, and identity, in which people act and contribute to social change in different roles from diverging and overlapping interests. I also present my analytical strategy, which allows for exploring the relation between the emerging discourses at the central level of the trade unions and the perceptions of these discourses among unionised workers. In **Chapter 4**, I present the research process; from the first stages of choosing cases to reflections on the interview format, and how my positionality and the limited scope of the project impacts inference. Moving to **Chapter 5**, I analyse HK's, Utdanningsforbundet's, and Naturviterne's formal

strategies for and framings of climate and environmental change as political issues, in turn answering the first empirical research question. In the second part of the analysis, **Chapter 6** explores how trade union members and representatives perceive their trade union's engagement in sustainability transitions. The narratives created by the participants are explored in relation to the discourses identified in Chapter 5. As the last part of the analysis, **Chapter 7** explores the internal anchoring and coordination of formal strategies at different levels of the organisation, contributing to a discussion of the main research question. In **Chapter 8**, I conclude with my main findings and suggest what must be done for accelerating the environmental engagement of trade unions.

2. Background

This chapter places my work in the larger context. I review the spatial and temporal embeddedness of the three trade unions presented above. All contexts in which social actors operate interrelate to broader traditions, relations and values, which together forms the social structures actors operate in (Danermark et al., 2002). To begin with, I give a background overview of the social setting that HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne are produced from, and simultaneously reproduce. Next, I present different strategies for engaging in sustainability trajectories in society at large, ranging from incremental transitions to deeper transformations and revolutionary practices. Lastly, I incorporate the perspective of trade unions and social, environmental and economic concerns in a review of labours' efforts to engage in sustainable development.

2.1 The past, the present, and the future of the Norwegian labour model

The characteristics of the Norwegian labour model must be accounted for, to provide context to the analysis of how the labour movement engages with climate and environmental change as a physical and political issue. Working life in Norway is underpinned by systems for wage formation and partnership. It is a system characterised by mutual trust and respect, a relatively well-regulated labour market, a qualified workforce, and good welfare schemes, which many scholars argue makes it well-equipped for future challenges (Alsos et al., 2019). 50% of Norwegian workers were organised in a trade union in 2021, with a higher share in public and municipal sectors than in the private sector (Nergaard, 2022). The critical stakeholders on the national level are the trade union confederations on the one side, and employers' associations on the other. The social partners engage in *social dialogue*, which refers to "negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy" (ILO, n.d., n.p.). The local representation system in the Norwegian working life is based on union representatives who make claims on behalf of their workers (Alsos et al., 2019).

The case organisations in this study are affiliated with three of the four union confederations in Norway: HK with LO, Utdanningsforbundet with Unio, and Naturviterne with Akademikerne. The fourth union confederation, YS, is not included in the study. The case selection is further discussed in the methodological chapter. In addition to the employer-

worker partners, the Norwegian state is a third mediating part in negotiations, establishing the system for tripartite cooperation. The state is often illustrated as a neutral part but is actively involved in politicising how capitalist production occurs, and thus works as a mediator between capital and nature (O'Connor, 1998, p. 165).

The politicisation of Norwegian working life has a long history, in which the traditional labour-capital conflict was gradually institutionalised in a compromise between the social partners. It is, thus, not a system established from consensus, but rather a balancing act between conflict and cooperation, resulting in a compromise where the partners do not necessarily agree, but value cooperation over conflict (Alsos et al., 2019; Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2019). The basic agreements (Norwegian: hovedavtaler) state the rights and obligations of the social partners. The basic agreements are accompanied by national collective agreements (Norwegian: hovedtariffavtaler), local collective agreements (Norwegian: tariffavtaler), and special agreements on the enterprise level (Norwegian: særavtaler). The Norwegian Labour Dispute Act regulates agreements between the employer and worker, and violations of the agreement can be sanctioned (Arbeidstvistloven, 2012, §9). Strikes, lockouts, and other disagreements do not commonly occur in Norway due to the peace obligation principle, which may force a resolution of disputes regarding the collective agreements.

The development of the compromises assumes that all stakeholders will benefit from increased productivity and the privileging of financial interests (Levin et al., 2014; Falkum, 2020). However, the issues of cooperation in the tripartite system vary over time (Alsos et al., 2019). The stakeholders continuously negotiate for new compromises on the national level and in workplaces (Falkum, 2020), which provides a window of opportunity for engaging with environmental issues (Bjergene & Hagen, 2020). Labour movements have a tradition of engaging in broader social issues, such as gender equality, education, and leisure activities (Uzzell & Räthzel, 2012), and this is also true in the Norwegian case. For example, the Norwegian labour movement has played an important role in establishing the welfare state. Through tripartism and basic agreements, labour actors have agreed upon the (re-)distribution of resources to provide measures for public health, education, and social equality (Falkum, 2020, pp. 107–108).

Dølvik & Steen (2018) argue that Norway's strong tradition of innovation and investments in technical, physical, environmental, and social infrastructures can be part of the solution for environmental sustainability. The challenge is whether the Norwegian labour model can respond to new issues using its past experiences, or if the labour movement is

stuck on maintaining solutions to problems initially raised in the early 1900s (Hernes, 2014). Alsos et al. (2019) state that Norwegian trade unions and employers' organisations still "focus on the core functions of their organizations of securing their members' interests in relation to safeguarding jobs and obtaining the best possible conditions for companies" (p. 33). Still, as this thesis illustrates, Norwegian labour actors increasingly call for an integration of environmental sustainability into the world of work.

2.2 Environmental, social, and economic sustainability

Sustainable development, as defined in the 1987 Brundtland report, means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (UN, 1987). Sustainable development has three dimensions: environmental, social, and economic. The dimensions must be understood as interrelated to ensure sustainability (FN-sambandet, 2021a). The labour movement has traditionally focused on the economic and social dimensions of sustainability, regarding the redistribution of resources between and within groups (Stevis & Felli, 2015). Incorporating environmental concerns into their political agenda, workers challenge the privileging of social and financial interests, as elaborated in the next subchapter.

The literature on sustainability strategies is manifold, and sometimes contradictory. *Transformation* refers to active and directional measures of entirely new ways of doing and being (Moore et al., 2014). Still, from a geographical approach to practice theory, Schmid & Smith (2021) frame most transformative strategies as ultimately reformist. For a societal change to be truly revolutionary, it must involve a movement of insurrection. A narrower restructuring of social organisation than transformations is that of *transitions*, solely "replacing or altering particular social patterns, often through sectoral or technological shifts" (Schmid & Smith, 2021, p. 254). Sustainability transitions, therefore, often limit solutions to those within the frames of capitalism (Feola, 2015). "Non-radical" greening approaches bear the risk of using transformations interchangeably with adaptation strategies, which justifies "business-as-usual" action (Blythe et al., 2018). From a critical perspective, a one-sided focus on transitions—or shallow transformations—will fail to consider capitalism's unsustainable and unjust character. The dominant "green capitalism" or "greening economy" trajectories are transition strategies, rather than transformations. Green capitalism combines economic growth and sustainable development with presumptions of rational choice agency and shifts in individual behaviour (Gäbler, 2015). Critical approaches question individually oriented solutions, instead highlighting the need for structural transformations.

2.3 Labour environmentalism

In this section, I elaborate on the need to explore the spatial and temporal context of labours' efforts to engage with the climate and the environment. The institutional and societal structure in which labour operates affects the initiatives taken, and the outcomes of it. Just as experiences of other social justice claims can establish certain strategies for considering environmental sustainability, so can the frames of the labour market or the labour model.

ELS—and now ELG—has evolved to account for the interlinkages between labour and nature, as all human activity transforms nature, while simultaneously being dependent on the existence of non-human nature (Räthzel et al., 2021). The point of departure for ELS and my thesis is workers' efforts to incorporate environmental concerns into the world of work, referred to as *labour environmentalism*. If the workers' perspective is neglected in sustainability transitions or transformations, those changes risk negatively affecting them, such as through job losses and deficient opportunities for continuous education, preventing them from transitioning into other jobs. Labour environmentalism links global issues and local labour struggles (Räthzel et al., 2018). For trade unions to engage in "new" subjects should not come as a surprise, since "working-class movements have more consistently than any other social collectivity set themselves on the side of various progressive causes. No other identifiable social force can match the labour movement's record of emancipatory struggles" (Hampton, 2015, p. 33).

As sustainability trajectories within and between societies differ, so do those in the world of work. Labour environmentalism, thus, is not a homogeneous line of reasoning, but a diverse movement of more or less radical perspectives (Barca, 2019, p. 227). Workers can organise bottom-up to demand environmental action, through working-class community organisations, as seen in the UK (Bell, 2021), and within socialist unions, as in Spain (Lundström et al., 2015). Similarly, experiences from other political fights and broader social justice struggles can be adapted to environmental concerns, as seen when South African trade unionists have adopted experiences from resisting apartheid to inform their environmental concerns as unionised workers (Räthzel et al., 2018). Internationally, the claim for a *just transition* is widely recognised today, as part of the Paris Agreement of 2015 and international workers' organisations like the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Just as the broader labour environmentalism concept is manifold, so are the interpretations and strategies of what a just transition should be (Stevis & Felli, 2015). Following Lipsig-Mummé (2015) and Hampton

(2015; 2018), demands for just transitions are generally used to promote strategies for compensating job losses and the need for reskilling to "green" jobs, but not necessarily challenging existing relations of production. Barca (2019) argues that initiatives identified as labour environmentalism in Western Europe have primarily revolved around reformist discourses. Trade unions have adapted to climate change politics dominated by neoliberal thought and ideas of ecological modernisation, correlating to Gäbler's (2015) definition of green capitalism and Schmid & Smith's (2021) definition of transitional strategies. Neoliberal policies claim that climate and environmental challenges can be mitigated with market-based instruments, partly picked up in the ecological modernisation framing which additionally stresses the need to regulate economic activities (Hampton, 2015, p. 44). Although such measures can drive social and technological innovation for more sustainable practices, it does not treat the underlying causes of climate and environmental degradation: the exploitation of non-human and human nature in capitalist production.

Zooming into the Norwegian context to provide a background to the potential for labour environmentalism, Halvorsen & Tiltnes (2021) find, from interviews with Unio-affiliated union representatives, that whereas sustainability is emerging as a relevant topic for collective bargaining, the efforts to discuss how this is done in practice are limited. Additionally, only a few of the informants Halvorsen & Tiltnes (2021) talk to have reflected on bringing the sustainable development agenda into collective bargaining in more concrete terms, albeit it is formally included in several basic agreements. Similarly, in the period 2017 to 2019, only a fourth of LO's shop stewards had worked with concrete measures related to climate and the environment (Bersgli, 2019). Newer data shows that around half of Norwegian workplaces have implemented local climate measures (Dahl & Hagen, 2023, p. 111). Furthermore, Jesnes & Steen (2016) find that the more time shop stewards have available to trade union work in general, the more likely they are to bring in the topic of environmental sustainability. It is likely to find similar patterns regarding the relation between resources and outcomes today, as the work with climate and environmental issues is often an added dimension to the already existing work of trade unions.

3. Theorising through concepts

This chapter approaches the study's objective by doing what Sayer (1992) suggests as crucial in social science: to give "concise definitions to important but vaguely understood terms through re-working their relations with other terms in the network" (p. 81). Applying concepts provides a language that enables us to discuss the properties of social phenomena (Sayer, 1992; Danermark et al., 2002). I understand theory as a sort of discourse, following Fairclough's (2010) argument that a theory is a way of constructing and reconstructing the world. A discourse, in turn, is applied as a concept where language frames and mirrors issues in its broader social context. This conceptualisation will guide my analysis of how trade unions operate internally to engage with climate and environmental change as a political issue. Therefore, the framings made in this chapter must be understood from the context I study: the emergence of ecological interests in the Norwegian labour model.

In this chapter, I position my research in the critical tradition of social sciences. I define and apply an understanding of the interaction between structures and agency, specifically exploring labour agency, identity and interest formation, and discuss how organisational changes are diffused and anchored internally within organisations.

3.1 Engaging in critical research

This thesis' entry point is in critical geography, which aims to challenge the scientific objectivity paradigm and advocate for unheard voices (Cope & Hay, 2021, p. 12). Social science is always shaped by what the researcher finds interesting. I perceive incorporating environmental sustainability into the labour movement's agenda as a crucial topic to further engage with, as I am interested in both trade unionism and the green transition of society more broadly. Interests, in turn, are shaped by how the researcher sees and understands the world.

A critical perspective explains how social structures, practices, and events drive uneven and unsustainable development, and also explores alternatives to dominant practices by examining how social change unfolds. This thesis focuses on what interests are framed and privileged in trade union politics, which I engage with critically through interacting with the formal discourses of trade unions and the individual perceptions of their members. The explanatory and exploratory objectives provide an analysis of *how* trade unions operate to engage with climate and environmental change as a political issue, and *why* they do so in

"that way". Hence, this thesis corresponds to Sayer's (1992) claim that social science must be critical of existing social phenomena and must identify alternatives. I identify the incorporation of environmental sustainability concerns into the trade union agenda as a necessary step to effectively transform society at large, as financial concerns are uncritically privileged in capitalist production today. Although Sayer's (1992) argument in many aspects correlates with my perspective, I challenge his claim that critical scientists are naive in their belief of the potential for intentional social change. In this thesis, I provide a case of ongoing changes in three Norwegian trade unions by studying the implementation of new policies, where the actions of labour actors provide opportunities to transform unsustainable practices.

My entry point is in the philosophical tradition of *critical realism* (CR), which developed as a response to the scientific paradigm of the positivist tradition. The CR approach to knowledge is that "science may be wrong at any moment … so theories in science can only be regarded as the best truth about reality we have for the moment" (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 23). No statements akin to natural law are proposed, as in the realist tradition; and simultaneously, the constructivist tradition of denying the existence of underlying structures is also rejected. Structures of reality constrain and facilitate actions, but they do not strictly determine outcomes. A *structure* is a set of possibilities in which agency is constrained—never free nor strictly determined—and, according to Bhaskar (2020), always dependent on human agency. *Agency* is the capacity to make choices that can turn into action. Nevertheless, structures may constrain agency from unfolding in practice. Agency and action are, therefore, not the same thing, but agency ideally transforms into actions. Hence, action refers to the practice of engaging in material change. In CR, mechanisms are perceived as structures that can generate events—through actions—and trigger non-deterministic outcomes that depend on the specificities of an object (Sayer, 1992; Yeung, 2019).

In terms of climate action, the expected responses to climate and environmental change will vary depending on conditions in the structure. In this thesis, the Norwegian labour model's facilitating and constraining factors will act as a backdrop to illustrate how the environmental strategies of trade unions are reproduced in certain circumstances. Nevertheless, the structure of the labour model is driven by the mechanisms that Hampton (2015) refers to: Contemporary capitalism exploits human labour and the environment in the same ways. Whereas the trade unions are offered spaces—from the cultural discourse that climate and environmental change is a relevant issue to act upon—for getting involved in social dialogue with employers to suggest measures for increased environmental sustainability, the scope of those measures is expected to be restricted to the reformist

character of the labour model of social partnership. Hence, the trade unions act as a structure for actors to perform their agency and action, but they are, at the same time, social actors within the structure of the Norwegian labour model, and societal organisation at large. I will return to the interplay between structure and agency throughout this thesis, as I explore how organisational change processes, both discursive and material, unfold in HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne.

Furthermore, the changing climate will inevitably produce events which will affect our experiences of reality. Critical researchers must, thus, explore what enables and constrains the social responses to those changes. Processes of social change gained more attention in human geography in the cultural turn of the late 1900s, as a step away from the earlier paradigms of socio-spatial determinism. However, as Hsu (2019) argues, the shift from fixed entities to the processing of geographical configurations brought constructivist ideas that facilitates theories of process and agency over a given structure. In summary, CR in geographical inquiry can be a third alternative to the either "fixed" or "fluid" approaches. Here, the interaction between structure and agency becomes central, which I further elaborate on below.

3.2 Critical narrative analysis: a theory and an analytical strategy

The entry point for the analysis is a critical narrative analysis (CNA). CNA is applied as a theory to account for how language use and storytelling develops specific ways to represent the world, and what action must be taken. Further, CNA is applied as an analytical strategy to examine the interplay between institutional discourses and everyday individual narratives through storytelling (Souto-Manning, 2014a). I apply CNA to do what Souto-Manning (2014a) suggests: to explore, from a macro-analytic perspective, the impact of institutional and organisational change processes—as initiated through trade union policies—on the concrete experiences and perceptions of their members. Conversely, I also explore how the same perceptions and experiences shape the direction of trade union policies and organisational change processes.

CNA partly builds upon Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA), which analyses the interrelations between discourses and other objects, elements, or moments (Fairclough, 2010). *Discourse* refers to a particular way of saying, doing, and being, which we express through oral or written language, and its connection to values, beliefs, feelings, objects, tools, time, and places (Gee, 2014). Fairclough (2015) gives a similar definition,

arguing that discourse is when language is understood with other elements of social processes. My use of discourses resembles the Foucauldian tradition of understanding discourse as inherent to power, focusing on expressing power relations through language and practice (Foucault, 1971/1972). A relevant framing of discourses when studying trade unions—as representative organisations—is that discourses represent parts of the world from a particular perspective (Fairclough, 2003, p. 129). In other words, discourse is "an inherent and inseparable part of the social world, of the broader social context" (Souto-Manning, 2014b, p. 204). The stories behind policies and practices are expressed through conversational *narratives*, which are weaved together from individual concerns and the recycling of institutional framings (Souto-Manning, 2014a). This thesis uses narratives to refer to prominent "life stories" and the storytelling of smaller, everyday experiences. Although narratives often refer to personal perspectives, it is also a matter of storytelling beyond the individual. Loseke (2007) provides four levels of narratives, which are connected to identity formation: personal, organisational, institutional, and cultural. For social transformation to be effective, change must occur on all four levels. Loseke's (2007) categorisation of narratives and the interconnection between them is further elaborated on below.

Including narratives and discourses in geographical work enables an understanding of the contingent, the local and the particular in the larger frame it takes place in (Wiles et al., 2005). A geographical perspective of climate and environmentally related policies can also examine how knowledge and discourses on the issue are interrelated, contributing to an understanding of the mechanisms of why particular stories about climate and the environment emerge (Hulme, 2008). Through the analytical lens of CR, I can stretch my analysis of the chosen cases beyond the personal level, and explore the organisational, institutional, and cultural levels of framing issues and solutions.

The critical dimension of CNA and CDA refers to the political nature of all social interactions. When union representatives talk on behalf of workers, they do so from a particular position: produced by and reproducing particular framings of reality. Consequently, "critical researchers studying language have to understand the relationship between the system and the ways individuals narratively make sense of their lives" (Souto-Manning, 2014b, p. 203). Although CDA considers the interplay between structures and the strategies of social agents, it is criticised by Souto-Manning (2014a) for privileging meta-narratives and positioning everyday people as the subjects of institutional actions. In other words: a narrative analysis without CDA remains uncritical of power relations, whereas discourses are only powerful if they can transform practices into material change, which is only the case when

they are recycled by individuals in their everyday life (Souto-Manning, 2014a). Similarly, Fairclough (2010) says that the discursive construction of the world is only effective when the "right" conditions are in place. CNA and CDA, therefore, complement rather than compete as theories and methods for analysing social structures, agency, and change processes.

Applying an understanding of the interplay of structure and agency to answer how trade unions engage with climate and environmental change as a political issue, I examine how "structures constrain strategies, how strategies may contingently produce changes in structures, [and] how discourse as an element of strategies may contingently have constructive effects upon structures" (Fairclough, 2015, p. 49). Recognising the structure-agency relation is also crucial to CNA, as while structures can "colonise" agency— referring to how discourses beyond, or "above", the individual forms the way people think about an issue—it is done so through the unique concerns and experiences of the individual (Souto-Manning, 2014a). Nonetheless, the reproduction of structures is often not thought about in everyday life, but is unintentional and habitual (Sayer, 1992).

3.3 Agency for labour environmentalism

The interaction of structure and agency means that whereas structures restrict capital and labour, both simultaneously possess the capacity to change the landscape of capitalism (Kiil & Knutsen, 2016). This perspective is central to labour geography, which emerged from economic geography to account for the active participation of workers in shaping the economic landscape. Labour geographer Andrew Herod (1997) argues that both conventional and Marxist economic geography tends to approach workers as passive subjects, rather than active agents, reducing them to being inputs in capitalist accumulation. Just as capitalists have vested interests in financial returns on their investments, so do workers, in order to secure their social and biological reproduction (Herod, 2012). Labour geographers, therefore, study the spatial organisation of the economy and the broader society, to explore the conditions and characteristics of working life (Bergene et al., 2010).

In the case of climate and environmental change, the economic system and the physical landscape affects how labour is organised and reproduced. For example, droughts lead to changes in the agricultural sector, and global investments in renewable energy creates new industrial jobs in specific locations. A critical analysis assumes that labour does not hold the same resources as capitalists, and are less free to influence structural conditions (Herod, 2012). The opportunities for labour to act must be studied from the organisation of capital, the

state, the labour market, and broader society. As resources differ substantially across time and space (Coe & Jordhus-Lier, 2011), *labour agency* always has geographical and temporal dimensions related to the context and the actions of others (Coe, 2012). Hence, the traditions of trade unions are constantly changing due to conditional changes (Wills, 1998).

In the cases I study, the backdrop to the agency of labour is a regulated capitalist market, the structure of Norwegian tripartism, and the specific political agendas of HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne. Zhang & Lillie (2015) state that labour rights are negotiated at the national level, establishing and binding working classes and labour markets. As the Norwegian labour model and its social partners set the scene for, and regulates how, employment relations unfold across the national level, there exists common features for all forms of labour agency on a national level. Nonetheless, the differences between sectors, industries and regions within the Norwegian labour market must also be recognised when studying the strategies of individual trade unions and the response of their members.

Acknowledging the diverging conditions for labour agency, it is crucial to recognise that whereas workers can be agents of constructive change, they might as well be preservers of existing social conditions. Workers do not always act to change circumstances, even if given the opportunity. This approach follows Sayer's (1992) claim that agency can be habitual and unintentional, sometimes resulting in inaction. At the same time, a lack of action can also result from agency that is played out as resistance. Kalt (2022) examines how trade unions engage in green and just transitions and conceptualise trade unions as agents of transition or defenders of the status quo. Studying coal transitions in Germany and South Africa, Kalt (2022) finds that agency can be reactive and defensive when the transitions threaten the interests of workers. I elaborate on the diverging identities and interests of workers below, emphasising that interests can both motivate action, or the lack thereof.

The diversity of labour agency in sustainability transitions also varies in its form. Labour agency can be "informal or formal, individual or collective, spontaneous or goal directed, sporadic or sustained, and it can operate on different scales. It can unite and compound, and yet it can also fracture and fragment" (Bezuidenhout & Buhlungu, 2011, pp. 257–258). Just as there are many strategies for engaging with climate and environmental change—ranging from transitional to transformational and revolutionary—organised labour is not a single entity or movement (Barca, 2019). Trade unions engage with a broad range of social issues, and the heterogeneity of workers results in the fact that all members cannot be expected to support all of the aspects of their trade union's politics. Coe & Jordhus-Lier (2011) argue that "even within the workplace, loyalties and identities are riven between

occupational roles or even union affiliations" (p. 218). Hence, the diversity of agency and interests depends not only upon the spatial and temporal aspects derived from the societal level, but on workers' relation to, for example, the means of production, their age, and their gender (Herod, 2001).

In a study of trade union responses to climate change in South Africa, Räthzel et al. (2018) find that individual agency can act as a spark for collective agency, arising from the passion and competence of particular individuals. Nonetheless, the outcome of actions from individual agency must transform into collective action, which is decisive for fulfilling the aim of the trade unions: to represent workers *as* workers. Lundström (2018) contributes to the theory development of ELS by building upon Gramsci's concept of the *organic intellectual*, by acknowledging the role of individuals in trade unions' development of climate and environmental policy. An organic intellectual is, in terms of union climate politics, an individual who challenges the dominant ways of doing things by introducing climate change as relevant to workers' everyday experiences (Lundström, 2018, p. 547). Organic intellectuals can be identified at any level of an organisation, but the surrounding structures condition their effect. In a similar line of reasoning, Charli-Joseph et al. (2018) identify that collective action emerges from the interactions between individual beliefs, intentions, values and perspectives.

Hence, collective agency depends on individual agency, as the collective is made up of—but is not the same as—individuals. CNA supports this argument, assuming that institutional discourses are only effective when individuals reproduce them daily (Souto-Manning, 2014a). Simultaneously, individuals can only impose changes when connections to collective demands are in place, since "policies without the power to implement them are ineffective" (Kleinheisterkamp-González, 2023, p. 8). The importance of internal connections between and across levels of organisations is central to this thesis' objective of exploring the anchoring of policies.

3.4 Identity as the "being" of social actors

The concept of *identity* has close connections to that of agency, as identity refers to various ways of being through time and space, developed for different purposes (Gee, 2014). Identity, thus, is the "being" of someone or something, whereas action refers to their "doing". Following the logic of the structure-agency relation, individual or collective identity shapes agency (and potentially action), and vice versa. In CNA, identity is defined as the interconnections between social practice's intimate and public spheres (Souto-Manning, 2010,

p. 26). Considering the socially situated character of identity formation, it stretches beyond the individual, similar to the various situated characters of (labour) agency. Thagaard (2018) discusses the role of identities in narratives, and claims that the cultural setting of an individual is mirrored in the stories of past experiences and events. Hence, identity becomes crucial when studying how trade union members perceive their role and agency concerning their organisations' policies on climate and the environment. The strategies trade unions adopt, and their internal anchoring, essentially refers to both the "being" and the "doing" of the organisation and its members.

3.4.1 The multi-level identity of social identities

Loseke (2007) provides a theoretical framework for understanding identity formation at different levels of social change. Identity formation refers to the process of developing a sense of self that is made up of beliefs, values, interests, and experiences. Correlating with CNA, Loseke (2007) studies the relations between different levels of being and doing, arguing that narratives—as stories that are produced and reproduced—creates identities and, thus, actions taken at different levels of social life. Hence, for social change to be effective, it must transform narratives at four levels: cultural, institutional, organisational, and personal. Conceptualising identity as multi-level correlates with the analytical lens of CNA, in exploring ways of "doing" and "being" at different levels, and the perspective of structure and agency as interdependent.

Cultural identities refer to the narratives of rights, responsibilities and normative expectations of how to be and act in the world. I apply an understanding of the cultural level as corresponding with the broader societal setting. However, following the discussion on heterogeneity within and between groups of social actors, cultural identities do not always apply identically to all relevant social actors, but play out in unique ways from different experiences (Loseke, 2007). Thus, it is a generalisation of societal traditions and values, and the experiences thereof.

Also reflecting the macro-level, *institutional identities* are expressed in policymaking, producing and being produced from normative expectations at the cultural level. An institution is a socially constructed structure with regulative, normative and cognitive elements (Scott, 2013). The Norwegian tripartite model is an institution which consists of norms, rules and perceptions of how the labour market should unfold. Although institutions can provide social stability, they continuously develop and change (Falkum, 2020).

Policymaking is a highly normative process, and the framing of social issues and solutions inevitably shapes the conditions for individuals and groups. Rochefort & Cobb (1994) argue that framing an issue in a certain way is an attempt to persuade others, since "policy statements are always statements of values, even if some value positions are so dominant that their influence goes unexamined or so unrepresented that their neglect goes unnoticed" (p. 8). To account for the conditions and implications of institutional problem definition, Loseke (2007) suggests that studies of these processes should consider that not all those affected by policies will have a say in policymaking. Additionally, there are no guarantees that those consulted are accurately represented, considering the complexity of individual experiences and understandings. The non-linear process of accurately representing the identity and interests of others is further elaborated when discussing what interests trade unions act upon in their climate and environmental strategies. For example, in the collective bargaining of Unio and Akademikerne, they represent much more bounded professional identities than the case of LO. At the same time, the heterogeneity within Unio and Akademikerne, and even within Utdanningsforbundet and Naturviterne, should not be downplayed, as is accounted for when answering the research question of how unionised workers perceive and experience their trade union's environmental strategies.

The shaping of *organisational identites* can respond to the policies implemented on the institutional level. Trade unions develop narratives of a common identity for—and of—workers, related to the broader social setting, as they claim to represent their members' interests. Still, "narratives of organizational identity do not always—or perhaps even usually––stem from social policy. Some places rather begin their work with the formula stories and cultural identities constructed by social activists" (Loseke, 2007, p. 670). For example, the organic intellectuals in Lundström et al. (2015) who initiate environmental labour agency "from below" illustrate that policymaking does not always emerge from "top-down" processes. Further, relating to CNA, I adopt Souto-Manning's (2014a) concept of institutional discourses as pivoting between Loseke's (2007) levels of institution and organisation. I do so because I define national trade unions as organisations rather than institutions. At the same time, the traditions of Norwegian trade unionism are closely connected to the Nordic model of tripartite cooperation, where they act as an institution in the nationally regulated world of work.

Considering the individual level, *personal identities* reflect the combination of private concerns interconnected with culture and history. Individuals construct narratives to make sense of their, not always easily handled, practical experiences (Loseke, 2007). This

corresponds to CNA, where personal narratives illustrate how individuals travel between multiple identities, and how we make sense of our knowledge and experiences (Souto-Manning, 2014a). Understood with the three levels of identity formation through narratives, it is crucial to examine when workers choose to embrace organisational narratives, and when they are rejected or challenged.

Relating my research questions to Loseke's (2007) different levels of identities, I allow for an analysis of this coordination process, or the lack thereof. The first empirically driven question of this thesis asks what strategies trade unions adopt to engage with environmental concerns as part of their political agenda and everyday activities, directly responding to Loseke's (2007) theories of institutional and organisational identity and Souto-Manning's (2014a) theories of institutional discourse. Furthermore, the second question explores how organised workers perceive and experience their trade union's engagement with climate and environmental change as a political issue, which aims at the interrelations between the "higher" levels and the personal identities of labour.

3.4.2 Connecting identities to role perceptions

Workers only sometimes act in their subject position of being a worker, or a trade union member, as actions are always interrelated to other societal processes. Class, gender, and race are other relevant variables to how workers act at and outside the workplace (Coe, 2012). Through an intersectional lens, skills and social, economic, and geographical factors differentiate labour. Intersectionality refers to the interaction of categories of difference and exclusion (Alberti et al., 2013). In analysing how people perceive their identities and agency, narratives become crucial, as "language allows us to be things. It allows us to take on different socially significant identities conceptualised as *roles*. What is said, who said it, and why, are crucial analytical dimensions to my analysis. Nevertheless, as mentioned, structures may constrain individuals or collectives to act in certain roles for specific purposes.

Jordhus-Lier (2021) argues that citizens are not given the space to act upon climate and environmental concerns as workers, only as voters and consumers. Although I recognise the limited space for environmental labour agency, this framing diminishes the interplay of identities and role perceptions. As a citizen, you cannot separate your role as a worker from that of a voter when participating in elections. Still, Jordhus-Lier's (2021) argument effectively illustrates how individually oriented solutions to the climate and environmental crises dominate both public discourses and practices today. A survey by Ipsos (2021) shows

that most climate-conscious action in Norway is taken in the personal sphere through making changes at home, such as energy and water-saving measures, recycling, and minimising food waste. Acting in the role of a (unionised) worker—as cases of labour environmentalism may exemplify—is an alternative to the limiting of environmental agency to areas outside of work. Hagen (2021) frames the role of workers as crucial in sustainability trajectories, by arguing that it is in the role of workers that we contribute the most to climate and environmental change. On the one hand, all production of goods and services requires natural resources. On the other hand, the wages we make through labour are used in our role as consumers, contributing to emissions and the exploitation of natural resources.

To further reflect on the roles of workers, one can inhabit several subject positions within the workplace. In a focus group study with shop stewards in the Norwegian petroleum industry, Houeland & Jordhus-Lier (2022) find that although informants recognise their environmental agency as workers, or in arenas outside the workplace, it was generally not perceived as the task of shop stewards to take on climate action in practice. Combining the points that the self-perceptions of shop stewards are limited to working on direct working conditions, and the recognition of trade union members as a non-homogeneous collective, Galgóczi (2021) provides an efficiently summed-up account of the complex subjectivities of trade unions in sustainability transitions:

> As higher climate ambitions raise the pressure on work organisations, it is unions at the plant level that face the consequences, and their task of interest representation becomes harder. This contradiction of roles often appears in tensions between different levels of trade union action. (Galgóczi, 2021, p. 548)

As trade unions are representative organisations, the individual and collective interests of workers are negotiated through union representatives. I adopt a definition of representation as "making present someone or something that is absent" (Wauters et al., 2014, p. 426). Saward (2006) questions the assumption that the identities of others can be easily represented, as no groups have one unified identity that is free of conflicts and variations. Consequently, trade unions cannot accurately depict the identities of particular members, as they only represent workers in their role as workers, and as part of a collective (Cella, 2012; Jordhus-Lier, 2013; Snell, 2021).

3.5 Interests in trade unions

As the identity and interests of workers vary, so do the interests of trade unions in different sectors and industries, and members can feel either more or less accurately represented by their trade union. *Interest* develops motivation for action. Organisations often experience conflicts of interest in prioritising goals and measures, and in distributing resources within and between groups in the organisation, as resources are scarce (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2019).

A traditional Marxist perspective frames interests in the world of work from the capital-labour conflict. Conceptualising interests as a matter of class struggle effectively recognises the exploiting mechanisms of capitalist production. At the same time, restricting the analysis to class interests downplays the diversity of trade unions. I do not argue that class is irrelevant, but that it should work as an entry point to other analytical categories. As Alberti et al. (2013) state, class is a crucial point for analysis, but should not downplay other aspects of individual identities. Considering the intersectionality of identities and interests, I cannot expect to find that all members in the study will consider the importance of the financial, social, and ecological interests of their trade unions on equal terms. Therefore, a horizontal approach that incorporates the diversity of interests can be added to the vertical class perspective. Hernes (2014) does so, by reflecting on how climate and environmental change may impose labour-capital conflicts *and* conflicts between sectors.

Although the labour movement was born out of a broader class struggle, trade unions today are more often than not directed towards specific segments of the labour market, to represent sectoral or professional interests. Although this thesis disagrees with Ackers' (2015) claim that trade unions should be rejected as class organisations, formal trade unions in Norway today commonly attract members based on professional identity. In this study, Utdanningsforbundet and Naturviterne are professional associations and trade unions, whereas HK is a more general workers' organisation, still framing interests from their members' professional concerns and interests, as elaborated on in Chapter 5. Studying the environmental strategies of trade unions, Kalt (2022) identifies that the choices workers' organisations make depend on contextual conditions, including "sectoral interests, organisational identity, internal structure, coalitions, political- and socio-economic environment, governance context and public discourse" (p. 499). Considering the three dimensions of sustainable development—environmental, social, and economic—I categorise trade unions into two broad interest positions: business unionism and social unionism.

Business unionism refers to the discourse of restricting union activity to issues of economic redistribution (Stevis & Felli, 2015). Reflecting the traditions of trade unionism in the US, business unionism privileges the occupational interests of workers, "a function which is subverted if their operation is subordinated to broader socio-political projects (Hyman, 2001, p. 3). Broadening the interests of trade unionism beyond occupational benefits, as is the case of Norwegian trade unionism—but still prioritising financial interests—an "economistic" position privileges financial interests and contractual terms over a broader social agenda (Alberti et al., 2013). The recognition of ecological interests from the economistic position does not equal the prioritisation of ecological interests, as commonly identified both within the labour movement and in more comprehensive societal transitions (Hampton, 2015, p. 38).

Zhang & Lillie (2015) propose self-interests as a crucial factor for labour to mobilise in trade unions, claiming that the solidarity of workers in trade unions emerges from individuals' efforts to promote their interests through collective action. Organising collectively is, thus, not an act of altruism but a tool for realising self-interests. Nevertheless, self-interests *can* be altruistic, stretching beyond the individual's financial interests. The broadening of interests in the trade union's organisational identity can therefore be defined as a shift away from the more economistic position which represents workers as workers in the workplace, as opposed to their interests from their other roles outside the workplace (Alberti et al., 2013; Räthzel & Uzzell, 2011). If members rather adopt a solidaristic position beyond the self, Zhang & Lillie's (2015) claim is challenged. As workers do not always act in their role as workers, solidarity beyond self-interest is expected in the manifestation of roles and identities beyond the workplace/trade union. For example, when acting in the role of a parent, workers can act in solidarity with the next generation.

Solidaristic bonds can challenge trade unions' economistic position, and include social justice claims that stretch beyond safeguarding jobs in a just transition, as is the case of *social unionism*. A non-revolutionary account of social unionism is Hyman's (2001) definition of social democratic unionism, where gradual improvements of social welfare are demanded through the trade union. All trade unions engage in social sustainability issues, but not necessarily beyond the socio-economic interests of their members. Discussing the rationales for getting involved in labour politics, Budd & Zegelmeyer (2010) define social unionism as agendas that "reach far beyond competitiveness and profitability to also shape the psychological and economic well-being of individuals … and the quality of a country's democracy" (p. 2). Strategies of social unionism mobilise workers outside arenas of collective bargaining (Ross, 2007), as illustrated by Bell's (2021) study of labour environmentalism as

community organising. Engaging in broader social issues allows for building solidarity with other actors nationally and internationally within the labour movement and other social movements. For example, solidarity at the global scale is central to mitigating climate and environmental change. "Green collective bargaining", as seen in the UK and Australia (Goods, 2017), can act as a tool to recognise socioecological struggles beyond the workplace. However, in raising institutional concerns for green regulations in the world of work, no new arenas for action are developed. Whether bargaining for green collective agreements can be considered a case of social unionism is contextual, depending on the breadth and scope of demands. As labour environmentalism is manifold, it can reach outside the workplace or be spatially and temporally limited to ensure a just transition only to those at the workplace. Whatever the position taken by members, the crucial factor for trade unions is to be representative organisations, as Hampton (2015) efficiently sums up: "whether trade unions can act for workers' interests in general and for more universal human interests depends to a high degree on how their members and leaders perceive the idea of solidarity" (p. 35). I will return to the types of trade unionism in the analysis of HK's, Utdanningsforbundet's, and Naturviterne's climate and environmentally related concerns.

3.6 Discursive and material change

Conceptualising processes of change is critical to CNA and my thesis, as discourses and narratives essentially refer to framings of what is and what could be at specific points in time and space. Imaginations of alternatives to current practices are critical for envisioning sustainable futures, and determining who should do what in proceeding from imagination to change, in practice (Adloff & Neckel, 2019). Imaginations produce identity narratives at different levels, although substantially reflecting established narratives and discourses. The process of imagining alternative practice is referred to as a *discursive change* in this thesis. Change processes that result in alternative ways of doing things through actions are referred to as *material change*. Discursive change can be limited to agency—as ways of being, thinking, and saying—whereas action refers to ways of doing and material outcomes. A material change could be if a union had, e.g., negotiated subsidised public transportation for their members, or developed routines for recycling in the workplace. Importantly, processes of change start in discourses (Fairclough, 2015), in the way we talk about things, for example, in the argumentation for why climate and environmental change are relevant issues in trade union politics. Hence, when trade unions act upon climate and environmental change, they

produce discourses that do what Fairclough (2003) proposes: the trade union represents and imagines directions of change, to create a world different from current conditions. What matters for the outcome is the prioritisation of the three dimensions of sustainable development, as discussed in the previous section. This line of reasoning applies to climate and environmental changes, as well as material changes: the discourse of economic growth in capitalism has led to the exploitation of non-human and human nature, clearly representing a privileging of financial interests.

However, discursive change does not automatically lead to changes in beliefs, habits, and actions (Fairclough, 2010). Reviewing responses to climate and environmental change from the perspective of labour actors, Goods (2017) finds that a range of environmental strategies have developed, but lacks empirical data of those strategies having transformed into action. My objective responds to the core of this finding: to explore the connection between trade unions' formal policies and ambitions, and the transformation of those strategies into practice. For discursive change to produce material outcomes, anchoring between policies and practices, and between social actors and various levels of social organisation, is crucial.

3.6.1 Changes in institutions and organisations

Institutions and large organisations are characterised by stability, but as they are social constructions, they can also be transformed (Scott, 2013). Considering the discursive and material changes in organisations, a change has become institutionalised once it is the norm of an organisation. In critical research, establishing a norm involves naturalisation, when "particular ideological representations the status of common sense … no longer visible as ideologies" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 44). Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2019) propose that whereas change is often assumed to be intentional, much research shows that organisational change occurs independently of what the human intentions and ambitions are behind, as illustrated in Sayer's (1992) claim that agency and action are often unintentional and habitual. The prevalence of habitual agency does not downplay the political aspect of it, but rather the opposite: the ideology has become the norm, and specific ways to act are considered so natural they are not even reflected upon (Rochefort & Cobb, 1994).

I adopt Fairclough's (2010) four-step analytical framework to account for the difference between discursive and material change. The framework is an ideal type that might not unfold on the given terms in practice, as conditions vary through time and space. As a first step, *emergence* refers to the development of new discourses through recombining elements

of existing discourses. The second step, *hegemony*, is when some (and not other) perspectives are established as hegemonic in the organisation. Hegemony is here applied as an "organisational hegemony", a dominant way of "doing" (action) and "being" (identity), which in various degrees overlaps with the hegemonic discourses in society at large. Following this, a *recontextualisation* occurs when hegemonic discourses diffuse to other scales and segments of society, i.e., from the local to the national level, or vice versa, and between organisations. For my study, it is relevant to understand recontextualisation as an internal process. The hegemony of an emerging discourse at one level or part of a trade union is only effective if it is diffused to other parts of the organisation. If not, there is a risk of resistance, or that the sustainability practices are limited to certain levels or segments of the organisation. Lastly, the *operationalisation* of new discourses unfolds as material outcomes at large (Fairclough, 2010), when new ways of "doing" and "being" have been established. Fairclough's (2010) four-step framework of change allows for a multiscalar analysis, as the process unfolds at different levels of society, and must transform from discourse to practice and diffuse between actors in the same social structure. Change does not happen overnight: it is a continuous process that must diffuse over space and time. I refer to the sum of this process as *anchoring*, as will be further discussed in the next section.

3.6.2 Anchoring policies

As social change must occur at all levels of society for it to be effective (Loseke, 2007), anchoring within organisations becomes crucial. I use *anchoring* to refer to when strong links between more or less bounded groups and sectors of society have been established. When discussing discursive and material change, there is a need for a link between the two to proceed from policies and ambitions to changes in practice. Hence, the development from discursive to material change requires a connection between the being and doing of individuals and groups. Anchoring in an organisation is the coordination between various levels of the trade union, and coordination across workplaces, local unions, and sectors. This conceptualisation correlates with the last two steps of Fairclough's (2010) model: recontextualisation and operationalisation. Anchoring at the individual level—when a trade union member perceives their responsibility for environmental agency and action through a personal narrative—can only be effective in a sustainability transition if it diffuses between and across the organisation, and is acted upon through material changes. Similarly, developing discourses at the organisational and institutional level is only effective when

reproduced in practice through individual and collective agency, as emphasised in Souto-Manning's (2014a) CNA.

Lundström et al. (2015) conceptualise the weak internal links of trade unions as *disconnected spaces*. The objective of studying internal (dis)connections is to "shed light on the relationship between individual and organisational trajectories within specific societal (political and economic) conjunctures" (Lundström et al., 2015, p. 167). Conducting CNA, I explore the degree of connection between discourses (re)produced by trade unions and the narratives of their members and shop stewards. The established arenas for dialogue and learning within the Norwegian labour model can provide a space for anchoring policies between and across levels of the trade union, as part of a larger sustainability transition. However, Lundström et al. (2015) find that the highly institutionalised, compromise-based and party-politically intertwined Swedish labour model—which largely overlaps with the Norwegian system—emerges as a hierarchical structure, with a lack of coordination between head offices and members. The weak link between organisational levels limits initiators of change, e.g., organic intellectuals, to initiate environmental action, both from below and above. Therefore, the Nordic/Norwegian model can be perceived as containing constraining factors for engaging in transformational processes. Nonetheless, as the three cases I study have formally decided to work with environmental concerns, the relations between personal and organisational identities should not be expected to be the same as when change is initiated by one or a few individuals, as independent of their position in the organisation.

Goods (2017) suggests that labour actors, with trade unions as one of them, broadly adopt two approaches to entering, what I define as, the "operationalisation stage" of discursive and material change. On the one hand, an *embedded institutional* strategy is formally integrated through the central level of the organisation. Subsequently, demands are raised in established arenas, such as through collective bargaining in tripartite cooperation. In developing "green clauses", legally binding agreements can be found. However, Goods' (2017) review of such strategies suggests that it is not given that these clauses are implemented and acted upon in practice. On the other hand, *voluntary multilateral* strategies emerge locally through environmental initiatives at the workplace level, where employers and workers—individually or through the trade union—engage in local measures. In going from policy to practice, Goods' (2017) UK cases of labour environmentalism find the voluntary multilateral strategies to be more successful than the institutionally embedded ones. However, measures are often limited to narrow transitions, where financial interests are combined with environmental concerns to frame transition as a rational "win-win" situation (Goods, 2017).

Furthermore, bottom-up organising from the workplace level must not be uncritically favoured, compared to top-down processes. Studying community-led initiatives for sustainability transitions, Fischer et al. (2017) find that bottom-up organising produces "places of struggle", as tensions between individual perceptions of issues are influential in developing practices.

One proposed measure from initiatives of labour environmentalism is to elect *green representatives* (referred to as *green reps*), in order to ensure better anchoring of environmental strategies. The UK labour movement has been progressive in developing a system for green reps. However, the green reps in the UK do not have the same legal rights as ordinary shop stewards, but participat in dialogue with the employer to include environmental issues in collective agreements (Rolfer, 2020; TUC, 2021). Hagen (2021) claims that workplace democracy is a prerequisite for ensuring a sustainability transition in the world of work, in which shop stewards have a key role, due to their close ties to employees and the employer. Hampton's (2018) study of climate politics in British trade unions finds that green reps at the workplace level can instigate climate awareness—which equals the emergence of new discourses—and can engage in transformational change, in practice. Further, "union environment representatives often carried out activities inconsistent with government and their employers' objective on climate-related issues" (Hampton, 2018, p. 482), representing examples of progressive environmental (labour) agency. Nonetheless, electing green reps does not automatically lead to either more radical policies, or a more effective anchoring of policies at the workplace level. Like any other union representative, green reps can restrict practices to the reformist character of formal trade unionism. In addition, a connection between different levels of the organisation cannot be ensured through implementing green representatives, if they do not engage in dialogue with other trade unionists on equal terms as shop stewards. Rather, particular initiators of change—or organic intellectuals, following Lundström (2018)—risk creating an expert discourse that does not comply with the broader members' interests. For the system of green reps to be effective, a link between the representative and other levels of the organisation must be established.

3.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented various concepts and theoretical framings that will guide the forthcoming analysis. To study the emerging change processes of HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne in implementing climate and environmental concerns in their activities as trade unions, my entry point is in the critical realist tradition and in the discipline of labour geography. My premise is that workers are active agents, that influence the social and economic landscape they are part of. Therefore, they must be understood as potential agents of change in their trade union's engagement with environmental sustainability. Notably, "workers" are not a single, unified group but a concept that represents the myriad of identities, roles, and interests the trade union must consider, in order to engage in change processes that can effectively diffuse to different levels and parts of the organisation. Social actors' discourses and actions are always produced by, and are at the same time reproducing, the larger contexts they are part of. In this thesis, I study "agents of change" who act within the frames of capitalist production, and in the interplay between social and financial interests of the Norwegian labour model for social partnership and dialogue. Although the frames of the labour model and the traditions of the trade unions, may act as constraining factors for environmental action, the trade unions should also be perceived as "agents of change", as they—as representative organisations—actively aim to transform the broader context they are a part of.

Further, I have stressed that institutionalising ecological interests in the trade union's agenda is not a linear development, but a transformation that must be anchored internally and reproduced through time and space. To succeed in the material implementation of climate and environmental measures in Norwegian working life, it is necessary to establish internal routines and strategies for coordinating emerging strategies. Electing representatives within the trade union with explicit responsibility for climate and environmental concerns provides an interesting opportunity for HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne to accelerate their environmental agency and actions.

4. Research methods

In this chapter, I will present my research process, from selecting cases to data collection and analysis methods, and routines to ensure ethically sound and valid research. My study objects are an illustrative selection of Norwegian trade unions and their members, and the larger context they are a part of, which acts as cases of Norwegian labour environmentalism. A *case study* is an in-depth investigation of real-world examples, that can be abstracted into theoretical concepts to say something about the phenomenon of the study. Furthermore, a case study is exclusionary in how it privileges some segments of reality, drawing borders in fluid spaces. I recognise that my study cannot illustrate all the necessary mechanisms which transform society at large. However, a case study is an approach rather than a method. A method is a specific practice to discover the study object (Baxter, 2021). My method in this thesis consists of reviewing documents and conducting interviews, analysed from a critical tradition.

As a social scientist, you study people who form stories from their experiences of the social world, which can be analysed through and integrated with social science concepts (Danermark et al., 2002). Qualitative geographical research is relational, exploring the interlinkages and interdependencies between structures and agents. Geographical approaches, thus, examine not only people but places. One essential aspect to consider when doing so from a critical realist approach is that while the world is represented in various ways through stories and strategies, they depend on the conditions and constraints of the places itself, including the power relations and properties of that aspect of the world (Fairclough, 2010; Cope & Hay, 2021).

4.1 Choosing cases to study

I study trade unions' environmental strategies, developed from institutional discourses and personal narratives. At the same time, the strategies are the results of broader social processes. Choosing what examples to study never occurs in a vacuum (Stratford & Bradshaw, 2021, p. 98). Qualitative studies seek information-rich cases, that can be studied in-depth to teach us about the issue of concern (Patton, 2015, 264). In this thesis, the cases can inform my research on how trade unions work with climate and the environment, and the anchoring of those policies locally.

The choice of cases began with an overview of the Norwegian trade union landscape, where I looked for trade unions that had formally engaged with environmental sustainability issues. I wanted to study organisations that could bring different perspectives into the research and outlined four relevant trade unions: Naturviterne, Utdanningsforbundet, HK, and Parat. All four have developed policy documents on climate and environmental issues, but differ in size, affiliation, organisational profile, and if they are general workers' organisations or professional associations. Due to a lack of interest from Parat, I decided to move forward with three trade unions. I do not necessarily perceive this as a case weakness, as it allowed for a more detailed and nuanced analysis of the three other trade unions.

I outlined two relevant groups of participants in order to examine how trade unions operate internally to engage with climate and environmental change as a political issue, and to explore the (dis)connection between various levels of the organisations. Group one, referred to as the *staff group*, consists of three trade union employees—i.e., employed, not elected—working on issues related to climate and the environment, one from each organisation. Additionally, the trade union leader of Naturviterne participated in a complementary interview (Table 1). I recognise that the perspectives of trade union staff working with climate concerns may not represent the general opinions of their fellow head office staff. Trade unions work with a broad range of issues, and those working with environmental sustainability can be perceived as working on something "outside" the core of what trade unions traditionally do. Group two, referred to as the *member group*, includes five ordinary union members, two shop stewards, and one regional union representative at the county level (Table 2). As I was open to talking to people with different backgrounds and interests, participants in the member group did not have to be actively engaged in, or informed of, the trade union's environmental policies. Four types of personal data were obtained from the member group: trade union affiliation, membership type (ordinary member or representative), age, and gender identity. Due to the small number of participants, I cannot conclude if, or how, age and gender impacted their narratives. Thus, age is not included in the analytical scope of the thesis. Gender identity is included for practical reasons, making it easier to tell who said what when quoting and paraphrasing interviews.

Table 1. Staff group.

Participant	Description	Organisation	Type of interview	Date
Nv 1.1	Political advisor	Naturviterne	Individual	August 2022
Nv 1.2	Trade union leader*	Naturviterne	Individual*	August 2022
Udf 1.1	Senior advisor	Utdanningsforbundet	Individual	September 2022
HK 1.1	Head office employee working with sustainability issues**	Handel og Kontor	Individual	September 2022

* This interview was not planned and is only complementary to the interview with Nv 1.1, who was present during the interview with Nv 1.2 but did not intervene in the conversation.

** Professional title not included as requested by the participant.

Table 2. Member group.

Participant	Description	Organisation	Type of interview	Date
Nv 2.1	Woman, member	Naturviterne	Individual	September 2022
Nv 2.2	Woman, shop steward	Naturviterne	Individual	October 2022
Nv 2.3	Man, member	Naturviterne	Individual	October 2022
Udf 2.1	Woman, representative at the county level	Utdanningsforbundet	Individual (digital)	October 2022
Udf 2.2	Man, member	Utdanningsforbundet	Individual	October 2022
Udf 2.3	Woman, member	Utdanningsforbundet	Individual	November 2022
HK 2.1	Man, shop steward	Handel og Kontor	Individual	November 2022
HK 2.2	Woman, member	Handel og Kontor	Individual	December 2022

4.2 Recruitment process

My supervisor provided me with contact information for the participants in the staff group, as he has been doing similar research and knew who worked with the topic of interest in the chosen trade unions. The staff group were contacted individually by e-mail and were

requested to participate in interviews, to which they said yes. The staff group informants additionally acted—to various degrees—as gatekeepers for further recruitment of members. Through these gatekeepers, I contacted all of the member group informants from Naturviterne and the union representative from Utdanningsforbundet by e-mail. I completed the recruitment through seeking out personal networks and local trade union branches, which put me in contact with potential participants via phone or e-mail. I attempted to recruit through relevant Facebook groups and through the snowball method—where already recruited informants help establish contacts between the researcher and other potential participants— but without success.

All of the participants in the staff group, and four in the member group, were interviewed during their working hours. For the rest of the sample, participation exclusively depended on their willingness to set aside spare time. One reflection on the willingness of people to participate in "sustainability research" was given by one of the staff group informants, which may explain why I failed in recruiting people through Facebook or the snowball method; they said that employers and union members receive loads of newsletters and requests related to climate change, potentially leading to a state of "climate fatigue". Newton & Elliot (2016) uses the term "stakeholder fatigue" when the same stakeholders are consulted multiple times, often by different actors. Although I did not experience such responses directly in this project, reflecting upon this when approaching potential participants in future research is crucial.

Initially, I planned to conduct focus groups with the member group—one for each trade union—but revised the strategy to one-on-one interviews after having experienced difficulties with recruitment. Those contacted through the gatekeeper in Naturviterne were first approached as potential focus group participants. The initial recruitment process was time-consuming and difficult, as the logistics of a focus group required all participants to be available at the same time and location. It might have been easier to conduct focus groups if I had only included union representatives in my selection of informants, who could have gotten salary compensations for their time spent participating in the interviews. However, I perceived getting interviews from the member level as more important than conducting focus groups. Flexibility is a keyword for qualitative studies, since it is a process full of changes and reformulations rather than a linear process (Kvale, 1997, p. 81), something which I experienced in revising the data collection method from focus groups to interviews. On the one hand, focus groups could have brought other perspectives, as participants can respond directly to others' contributions during a focus group (Barbour, 2007). On the other hand,

individual interviews allowed me to investigate each person's experiences and perceptions of their trade union's environmental policies in depth. It also made the logistic of the project easier.

4.3 Document analysis: mapping policies

I sampled various documents from the trade unions to explore the environmental strategies of HK, Utdanningsforbundet and Naturviterne. The document analysis provides insight into the proposed climate and environmental measures of the organisations, the framing of the problem, and how the policies relate to other levels of societal organisation, as crucial to CNA and the multi-level character of my analysis. The documents have also been a useful entry point in the interviews, as I have used quote elicitation as a technique for participants to engage with the policies of their trade union, which is further elaborated on below.

The sample consists of pamphlets, guides, reports, position papers, website material, surveys, and press releases published by the union itself, either directly or in cooperation with the union confederations, employers' associations, or other networks. A total of 12 documents from HK, 15 from Utdanningsforbundet, and 13 from Naturviterne have been included in the project. However, not all of the documents are incorporated into the final analysis, due to the limited scope of the thesis. For example, the Basic Agreement of Oslo municipality was analysed because it covers workers in Utdanningsforbundet and Naturviterne. However, the agreement does not mention climate and the environment, so it is not further discussed. My argument for not including this "absent" material is that the thesis mainly focuses on the environmental policies that are already there, and not on what is missing.

Documents are never neutral. Like any other use of text, they are part of an action, simultaneously representing both aspects of the world and identifying social actors (Fairclough, 2010) and the institutional discourse (Souto-Manning, 2014a). However, the documents cannot capture the diversity of attitudes and perceptions of the social actors included and excluded from the policymaking process. Although the interviews with the staff group members cannot claim to better represent the diversity behind the documents either, they have ultimately complemented the textual data material by giving new insights into the processes behind policymaking. For example, though the political platforms from Naturviterne described that the platforms were approved in the National Assembly (Naturviterne 2021a; 2021b), the interview with the political advisor from Naturviterne allowed me to understand the routines behind this better: members send in suggestions before

the National Assembly, which are then compiled by the secretariat in preparation for the National Assembly.

I chose documents based on accessibility, relevance, and "importance" to the institution. *Accessibility* refers to whether the document is publicly available. If a document was accessible to me, it would also be the case for all the members of the union. Theoretically, participants could have read or engaged with those documents before the interview. *Relevance* refers to the document's contents. A document was considered relevant if it included references to the climate and/or environment, either explicitly, as e.g., Utdanningsforbundet's guide on how shop stewards can engage in sustainable development (Utdanningsforbundet, 2022b), or as part of a larger document, for example, in the basic agreements. However, a few agreements that do not include the topic were also analysed, to emphasise that the environmental discourse has yet to diffuse into all policy documents, for example, in the NHO-Naturviterne basic agreement (NHO, n.d.a). Lastly, the *"importance"* of a document refers to the core documents and the formally passed policies of trade unions, i.e., the basic agreements, collective agreements on the national or local level, action plans and political platforms. The documents of high importance to the organisations are crucial to the analysis, as they set the frame for what the organisation will work with. Additionally, the organisation has formally anchored those policies, as union representatives have approved them. However, for example, a paragraph in a collective agreement on the need to incorporate climate and environment into the tripartite model does not necessarily provide more insights into the institutional discourse than a pamphlet on how and why members can get engaged at the local level. Therefore, I use both types of "important" documents—those for the organisation at large, and those for the topic of interest and relevant to my analytical strategy.

4.4 Interviews

I conducted 12 interviews between August and December 2022, four with the staff group and eight with the member group. An interview aims to examine another person's perspective (Patton, 2015), which correlates with my goal of explaining how members relate to policies passed in the trade unions. Through the interviews, I gained insight into what people said about their union's climate policies and how they said it. Qualitative interview analyses cover what is explicitly said and the implicit meaning of language (Kvale, 1997), examining how people perceive themselves and their context (Thagaard, 2018). This method is a central part of the CNA approach.

4.4.1 Interview format

The planned interviews lasted 30 to 40 minutes, excluding the project introduction, presentation of the consent form, and the non-recorded talk before and after the interview. In addition, I conducted one interview that lasted for five minutes. This interview complemented the interview with the political advisor from Naturviterne, who was new to their role and suggested including the union leader to provide further answers to a few of my questions. However, the complementary interview was conducted using the same procedure as for all the interviews: the participant signed a consent form, and the interview was audio recorded.

I met with all the participants in person, except for one who was interviewed digitally on Zoom. Digital interviewing has one clear advantage in how it helps to overcome spatial barriers (Dunn, 2021). However, I experienced the video-call format as less natural and comfortable than the face-to-face interactions, potentially due to the lack of small talk before and after the recorded interview, creating a distance between the interviewer and the interviewee. In the cases of face-to-face interviewing, you often share a cup of coffee during the interview and engage in some casual conversation outside the recorded talk. However, I do not consider the disadvantages of the digital interview format as impactful for the data quality, as the participant interviewed over Zoom was the Utdanningsforbundet union representative, who was used to engaging in the topic from her professional role and did not struggle to understand the interview questions. Suppose it would have been another member with no experience discussing the topic—in that case, it may have been more difficult for me to know when the participant needed more guidance in understanding the questions, as digital interviewing can make it more challenging to recognise visual social cues.

The interviews were semi-structured, following a funnel structure starting broadly and progressing to the particularities of an informant's experiences, as Dunn (2021) suggests. The staff group were asked questions about the first empirical research question: *What strategies do trade unions adopt to engage with environmental concerns, as part of their political agenda and everyday activities?* The interviews with the member group revolved around the second research question: *How do organised workers perceive and experience their trade union's engagement with climate and environmental change as a political issue?* The member interviews began with questions on why the person was organised in a trade union, and how they generally related to climate and environmental change. Later, more concrete questions on the perceptions of policies, interests, roles, and resource distribution were discussed.

An interview guide was used as a tool in the interviews, as it "provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject" (Patton, 2015, p. 439). For me, a novice researcher, the questions provided guidance and comfort. The guide was revised between interviews to fit the purpose and context of each interview. I started coding data and writing the thesis while still doing interviews, since the recruitment process took longer than anticipated. In retrospect, the parallel work brought essential insights to my thesis. I brought experiences at the top of my mind into writing, while also bringing new insights from the literature review and initial data analysis when talking to participants in the later stages of data collection.

All interviews except for one were conducted in Norwegian. One of the participants spoke Swedish, and since I am from Sweden it was natural to speak in our shared language. The quotes were provided in Norwegian in all interviews, so there was no difference regarding the formulations in the quotes presented between the interviews. Furthermore, all of the data was directly coded in English, so the mixed use of language during interviews has not affected the data analysis in later parts of the study.

4.4.2 Stimulus material to engage with trade union policies

As people with different interests and backgrounds were invited to participate in the member group, I chose to present quotes—referred to as *stimulus material*—from their respective trade union's environmental policies in the interviews. Selected quotes from the documents were placed on the table or shared on the screen to steer the conversation towards relevant topics. All participants in the member group were presented with eight examples of how their trade unions either work with climate and the environment in practice, or how they frame the issue (see Appendix 1). Stimulus materials are used to break the ice (Barbour, 2007, p. 84), and it comforted me to have those interview tools as someone new to qualitative interviewing. The method further allowed me to talk to members without previous experiences and knowledge of their trade union's climate and environmental policies. I asked the member participants to take a few minutes to read through the material before asking them to share spontaneous thoughts on what they had read. A few informants expressed that they were unsure how much they could contribute to the study beforehand, due to their lack of knowledge in the field. After reading the quotes and asking clarifying questions, most participants could engage in the conversation and stay on topic, as further discussed in

Chapter 6. Some informants chose to go through the quotes one by one, while others picked one or a few they found interesting to discuss.

The interview format allowed the trade union members to reflect on their role in the sustainability trajectory proposed by their trade unions. One informant explicitly expressed how using the quotes helped her gain more insights into her trade union's policies. It also made her realise that the role of a shop steward can stretch beyond financial interests, which she struggled to feel a sense of ownership of when representing members in bargaining processes. Another participant perceived the interview format as inspiring, and said they would bring forward the topic to those responsible on a "higher level". Furthermore, one person said they would look into the organisation's environmental policies after the interview, and potentially engage in these issues in talks with their shop steward.

From informant feedback and personal reflections, the interview format was beneficial for the analysis, as it allowed me to talk to people both with and without experiences of the topic. It can also be a stepping stone for participants to engage further in the topic. Hence, I perceive the interview setting as a micro-transformative space. A "transformative space" refers to the potential for the participant to see their contribution to the broader setting, where current practices are linked to transformative changes (Pereira et al., 2020, p. 173). "Inside-out" transformations may occur by providing spaces for participants to reformulate their roles and connections to the systems and themselves (Charli-Joseph et al., 2018). The potential for such transformation is also rewarding for me as a researcher, since critical research also aims to influence the reality it is a part of (Danermark et al., 2002). This goal is an explicit component of CNA, where participants are identified as actors of change once they have developed a critical consciousness of how narratives and discourses impact their lives (Dillard, 2020, p. 48). Souto-Manning (2014b) emphasises how stories can help individuals make sense of their reality, question issues identified, "and start problem solving" (p. 206). However, barriers to action may be higher than the vision of engaging in sustainability transformations. Fairclough (2015) pinpoints potential barriers by arguing that while critical studies aim to contribute to transformative action, this can never be guaranteed.

The participants were informed that the material presented was only a selection of their trade union's environmentally related policies. I recognise that the choice of sampled materials reflects what I as a researcher find interesting. Researchers are never neutral in our work, and we do not just make or hold knowledge objectively. Instead, researchers also transform the contexts they operate in, while changing their own roles and identities (Pereira et al., 2020, p. 173). In retrospect, more concrete measures of what trade unions do to engage

with environmental concerns could have been provided in the presented materials, since this was an often-occurring question from the participants. However, the lack of knowledge among members also provides fruitful data for analysis, as it puts a question mark on the practical anchoring of policies at both representative and member levels, which directly correlates with my main research question.

4.5 Translating data

Language use is essential to this thesis, as I study how people frame and relate to social and material practices and changes. Not only is language—as in the use of words and concepts and *how* things are said—essential to CNA, but it is also a question of translating data from oral to written, and from one language to another. I translated the interview data into English, so all direct citations are my translations. Most documents in the analysis are also in Norwegian and were, in that case, translated by me.

Translation involves three dimensions: (1) translating from one language to another, (2) translating from oral data into written text, and (3) analysing the data's meaning. Following the critical tradition, I recognise the political nature of all translation, as I "translate values and concepts, which have meanings and associations that are contextual" (Gergan & Smith, 2021, p. 42). The cultural and political nature of language became evident during the interviews. Although some participants shared the same frames of reference with me, others had little to no experience discussing climate and the environment as political issues. As mentioned, the "lack of knowledge" concerned a few participants. Treating the study as cross-cultural, my knowledge, positions, and communication skills also affected the interview context and, thus, the data collection process. Here again, I found the interview format of using quotes rewarding, as it let the participant read the policies of their trade union in the language used by their own organisation. This allowed the participants to directly interpret and relate to their trade union's discourse(s).

The linguistic and cultural dimensions of the translation process are also relevant when transcribing data, which allows for a familiarisation with the material (Dunn, 2021). At the same time, transcription is also a way of choosing how to write down what (Kvale, 1997, p. 149). To analyse what discourses and narratives participants (re)produce when discussing climate and environmental change as a political issue, I transcribed the interviews in the participants' exact words, including longer pauses. After participants validated the direct quotations, smaller changes in the formulations were made in two cases, as further discussed

below. Each interview was transcribed as soon as possible, typically within a few days. In parallel with the theory review, the ongoing process of transcribing interviews provided me with initial concepts and ideas for what to include in the analysis. Thus, I could develop an initial understanding of the data collected and revise the interview guide to consider new and/or unexpected topics.

4.6 Coding data

The next step of the data analysis was coding interview transcripts and documents. The documents were categorised in tables in Word, by type of document and content. The following account refers to the coding of interview data in NVivo.

Coding qualitative data is a way of ordering and making sense of the world. Codes help process the data by developing patterns and asserting propositions for further analysis (Saldaña, 2009, p. 3). I developed a few codes to look for in the material, to directly relate the data material to the objectives of the project, as a sort of deductive coding (Hay & Cope, 2021). The initial codes were analytic and theoretically informed, including, for example, the types of measures the trade unions adopt to account for environmental concerns, how members react to such measures, and theoretical concepts like "representation", "resource distribution", and "interests". Using theoretical concepts in the initial coding process avoids shallow coding (Danermark et al., 2002). The initial codes were also descriptive, (re-)presenting what I expected from what questions were included in the interview guide. Descriptive codes included, for example, "reasons for being a trade union member" and "personal engagement with climate/environment". I also conducted inductive coding, in creating codes while reviewing the data (Saldaña, 2021). Barbour (2007) emphasises that keeping categories open and flexible in what themes to include in the data processing and analysis is crucial. While the theoretical and categorical codes provided abstractions of reality, inductive codes provided insights into individual experiences and the use of words and concepts, as essential to the CNA approach of interlinking "higher-level" discourses and personal narratives.

Coding empirical data is, thus, a cyclical act where you repeatedly go through the material to look for new patterns, generate concepts, and grasp meaning (Saldaña, 2021, p. 12). After the first coding round, I used the same wording for similar codes, and applied theoretical terms to unite different codes. Thus, I got a feasible number of codes without overlooking important content in the data material (Fryer, 2022). Analysing narratives and

discourses also requires a cyclical process, moving back and forth between what is explicitly expressed and its situated meaning. Cyclical processes combine deduction (starting with the general) and induction (starting with the particular), through retroduction. Retroduction is a thought operation where you move from the concrete to the abstract, and back to the concrete. It allows researchers to go from an empirical observation of an event to conceptualising the conditions behind it (Danermark et al., 2002). The method of retroduction identifies central themes in the data, and opens the door for new or unexpected themes, as was crucial to my study, since I did not know what to expect regarding members' perceptions and experiences.

4.7 My positionalities

Data analysis and research reports are more than objective (re-)presentations of participants' narratives. It is a social construction of the researcher's interpretations and choice of language (Kvale, 1997). My identities, roles, and preferences have affected the choices made, and the data reported, as researchers interpret the experiences of others through their frames of reality (Saldaña, 2021). When analysing data through the lens of language use and discourses, you bring different parts of (oral or written) text together, while at the same time connecting it to other parts of the world. Such processes do not emerge automatically but are made by the interpreter (Fairclough, 2015). I am a master's student, environmental activist, and a trade union member. I have not been a member of HK, Utdanningsforbundet, or Naturviterne, but in other unions affiliated with LO. Just as it is hard to separate participants' interrelated roles and identities, my various subjectivities are in interplay with each other. My interests have affected the methodological and theoretical choices made throughout the research process, and has laid the groundwork for why I chose to engage in geographical research in the nexus between labour and environment. During my years as a human geography student, I have engaged in the topic of labour environmentalism and have wanted to contribute to the field of ELS through my master's thesis.

The core of this project is to identify how trade unions operate with climate and environmental concerns today and explore alternatives. The objective of societal change is also central to Souto-Manning's (2014a; 2014b) CNA, as applied in this thesis. I acknowledge that my political views have impacted my research topic and the questions asked, in perceiving individually oriented solutions to the climate and environmental crises as insufficient, and instead advocating for collective mobilisation and political regulations for more significant societal transformations. I recognise that my interpretations are unique from

my subject positions and will vary from any other interpretation. This does not make the result less valid, but provides a lack of general transferability to other cases and analyse, as further discussed in Chapter 4.9.

Furthermore, the project is part of INCLUDE, a research centre for socially inclusive energy transitions. I have also been affiliated with the Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research during the latter part of the project. However, my connections to both institutions were established after choosing the study topic, and all choices throughout the process have been my own.

4.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations must always guide social scientific research. In the early stages of my work, I read a statement that first made me doubt my project: "Climate action yes, but keep your distance from how we unions operate internally" (Lipsig-Mummé, 2015, p. xii). Although I have never intended to "expose" trade unions and their response to climate and environmental concerns, or their everyday practices, it struck me that my work could be seen as a critique, or at least a critical investigation, of Norwegian trade unions. Nevertheless, I see it as part of my academic freedom and responsibility to engage in the field. Open discussions in research are prerequisites for scientific and societal progress (NOU 2022:2, p. 9).

Thagaard (2018) and Catungal & Dowling (2021) stress three dimensions regarding ethical accountability in research: confidentiality, informed consent, and the consequences of the research process. Concerning *confidentiality*, a research permit from the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (SIKT) was applied for and accepted. The permit regulates what personal data can be stored, where, and for how long. Following the routines of SIKT and the University of Oslo (UiO), information on trade union membership is classified as sensitive personal data. (SIKT, n.d.; University of Oslo, 2022a). Although there are few risks of being engaged in trade union activity in Norway relative to other countries, such data provides information that could be linked to an individual and their political views. From the personal data included (trade union affiliation, type of membership, and gender), the chances of identifying participants are evaluated as small.

Technical procedures were adopted to ensure that the study followed GDPR routines. The UiO app Nettskjema-diktafon was used, providing encrypted interview recordings. All personal data has been stored in the UiO Storage Hotel, following the data management routines of the institution (University of Oslo, 2022b). Furthermore, voluntary participation

and *informed consent* was maintained through a written consent form that all participants signed, stating that participation is voluntary and that consent can be withdrawn at any point.

To account for the *consequences of the research process*, I follow Gergan & Smith's (2021) reflection: "Will the things you write be meaningful to the people you are writing about?" (p. 55). Research projects risk not benefiting the participants due to their academic character, and as one participant in Grossman's (2011) research states: "No worker will actually sit down and read the book. Because it's a highly intellectual language. We will read it because we were part of the research. But for an ordinary worker – she doesn't understand" (p. 126). Souto-Manning (2014a; 2014b) emphasises the objective of CNA as providing space for participants to engage in transformative activities. As discussed earlier, several participants in my study expressed their wish to engage further in the topic of interest after our meeting. However, while such action cannot be guaranteed, this project will be summarised in popular language and shared with all the participants by e-mail, making it more broadly accessible than in the thesis format. It can therefore potentially work as a source of inspiration for those interested. Furthermore, as the routines for confidentiality were followed, I do not recognise any risk of negative consequences for the individual participants in participating in my interviews.

4.9 Rigorous research

All research requires self-evaluation and insight for others to evaluate the study's rigour. I have made an extensive account of my research processes, attached the stimulus materials used in the interviews with trade union members (see Appendix 1), and reflected upon my philosophical entry points and positionalities to account for openness and transparency in my study.

Furthermore, participants were offered the opportunity to approve the direct quotations from their respective interviews, in order to ensure that my interpretation correlates with their intentions, as making sense of written and oral data is part of a translation process for the researcher. While no one in the member group wished to approve their citations, all the interviewees in the staff group did. The political advisor from, and the union leader of, Naturviterne approved the quotations without comments. The senior advisor from Utdanningsforbundet approved all of the data material with smaller editorial changes, to ensure clear language that matches the intentions of the statements.

The interview material from the HK employee, HK 1.1, was approved by a person who did not participate in the interview. The participant said that the other person could better represent the official standpoint of the organisation, as they no longer worked in the organisation by April 2023. This line of reasoning is essential to the core of this thesis; exploring what it means to express yourself in different roles and how to represent "someone or something else". The HK employee said that the participation in the staff group was not representing their personal views, but HK's official policies. I perceive this as a wish to ensure that what was said in the interview is anchored within the head office of HK. The person who checked the interview materials from the HK employee interview made some editorial changes to ensure clear language use, of which I approved. Further, they asked to add additional material to the direct quotations. For example, adding a sentence on the need for new competence in sustainability transitions to a quote that did not originally mention anything about continuous education. I have not included any new content in the original interview materials, to uphold the transparency of the data material and my trustworthiness as a researcher. Instead, the added material is incorporated through paraphrasing, where it was perceived as relevant information.

Furthermore, I do not add a set of criteria and rigid standards for evaluating my research. Kvale (1997) says that reliability, validity, and generalisability are the holy trinity of positivist science. Kvale (1997) adapts the standards to evaluating qualitative research, which I adopt in the next section to evaluate my process. *Reliability* in research is the overall trustworthiness of a project. By being reflexive of my strengths and weaknesses, and open to what changes have been made to ensure the consent of participants, I allow the reader to evaluate the results *and* follow the research process from A to Z. *Generalisability* refers to the transferability of experiences. I cannot expect my study to accurately illustrate how organised workers in Norway relate to climate and environmental change solely from the insights from the member group. Neither can I expect that all staff members in the trade unions' head offices will give the same answers to how they work, and should work, with the topics of climate and the environment—as the staff group in my case did—as it largely depends on individual experiences and knowledge. In my data, only one of the participants in the member group expressed indifference and a slight aversion to the topic, as examined in Chapter 5. For comparison, a survey finds that 58% of Norwegian workers think shop stewards should primarily focus on direct pay and working conditions. Only 19% agree or partly agree that climate concerns should be incorporated into collective bargaining (Dahl & Hagen, 2023, p. 110). From experiences from the interviews, some participants in the member group were

questioning what the environmental sustainability agenda of the trade union is, or could be, as they had not considered the thought of engaging in issues related to climate and the environment through their trade union beforehand. Still, most participants in the member group were positive once they were presented with the idea of opportunities within trade unionism to act upon climate issues. I do not consider the lack of generalisability of my study as a weakness, since the objective is to study the internal change processes of organisations which are unique to the spatial and temporal context of my cases. Additionally, for qualitative research to be *valid*, it should be studied through methods that allow for a connection between the objective and results (Kvale, 1997). As mentioned, both my research questions and data collection methods have been continuously revised to ensure a feasible and appropriate research design. Furthermore, I stress that my findings are only valid for this particular study. At the same time, my findings can help bring insights into how to accelerate the process of going from policy to practice in trade unions on a more general level.

5. Climate and environmental strategies in trade unions

In this chapter, I engage with the data from the document analysis and the interviews with the staff group. It is the first of three parts of the analysis, which together examine the internal anchoring of trade unions' environmental policies. This chapter addresses the first empirically driven research question: *What strategies do trade unions adopt to engage with environmental concerns, as part of their political agenda and everyday activities?* To answer the question, I map the climate and environmentally related policies of HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne. Doing so, I stress the organisations' interconnections to society at large, as well as their aims to represent their members, which I find are reflected in their environmental concerns.

5.1. Handel og Kontor: environmental concerns from a social democratic tradition

HK organises members in a broad range of service occupations in the private sector. They are affiliated with LO Norway. The heterogeneity of the organisation from the various professions they represent can have implications for developing an approach to climate and environmental change. As organised labour is not a single entity (Barca, 2019), there is a risk of rivalling interests within HK and LO. HK aims to ensure a just and sustainable society and working life, where people and the environment are prioritised nationally and internationally (HK Norge, 2021, p. 4). This correlates with the LO tradition of demanding social rights and economic redistribution, emphasised by the HK head office employee:

> The aim [of HK] is to ensure the members' pay and working conditions … Therefore, we are first and foremost concerned with the interests of members. As we are also part of an international solidarity movement, we have an international engagement. Workers have the right to organise in unions, and an important task for the LO unions is to support the organised workers in their right to collective agreements … In that sense, we are just as much of a solidarity movement as a trade union. (HK 1.1)

The role of LO has been central to the Norwegian labour model, and HK and LO's solidarity argument illustrates a tradition of stretching beyond financial concerns, in recognising broader social justice struggles. Creating a narrative of HK as more than a trade union, the HK employee positions the organisation as a societal actor that does not exclusively focus on what is happening within workplaces. This social justice agenda is related to LO's formal

cooperation with the Norwegian Labour Party. The Labour Party has driven Norwegian social democracy from a reformist tradition, in which the current tripartite cooperation is grounded. The pillar of social democracy is to regulate the economy to "alter the distribution of income and wealth in the name of social justice" (Miller, 1998, n.p.). LO's political affiliation does not necessarily make HK more political than other organisations, as all problem definitions and policymaking are, following Rochefort & Cobb (1994), inherently value-laden practices, representing certain beliefs and values.

In the frames of the "social redistribution" tradition, Christopher Beckham, the leader of HK, states that the goal of the labour movement is to ensure equitable distributions of economic growth. Still, it must be done in a way that does not overexploit the Earth's resources (HK Norge, 2022). Creating a narrative where environmental sustainability must be an integrated part of the social and financial interests of HK, Beckham frames the trade union's political agenda as having an explicit focus on how economic growth must be social and "green", as is commonly portrayed in many just transition strategies. Perceiving economic growth as having the potential to be environmentally sustainable, Beckham's statement represents a "green capitalism" discourse, that limits social change transitions, following Schmid & Smith's (2021) definition of transitions as narrow restructuring through sectoral or technological shifts. Thus, HK develops a discourse where social and ecological interests beyond the workplace are recognised as in social unionism, but from a social democratic, non-revolutionary tradition, following Hyman's (2001) definition of social-democratic unionism. As further discussed in the next chapter, one HK member clearly expresses that she did not become a member to engage in environmental concerns, but to gain personal benefits regarding their working conditions and private insurance (HK 2.2). Stepping beyond the role of a workers' organisation which restricts their work to social and economic sustainability may cause grounds for conflict within the organisation, if members no longer feel that the union represent their interests. Conflict and resistance can also take place outside the trade union, as HK has been relatively progressive in incorporating environmental concerns compared to other LO unions:

There have been a lot of disagreements. Classic conflicts between the oil industry and the public sector, as the public sector can be ambitious in their climate policies without fearing for their jobs … We operate in the private sector, and I think it is cool that we go as far as we do in our climate and environmental policies. I think the transition entry point is worse for our members than … it is for [workers in] the oil sector. People working in oil and gas in Norway are generally highly skilled and can … work with anything. (HK 1.1)

This formulation evokes the non-linear path of sustainability transitions, where diverging interests constantly interact, resulting e.g., in the compromises made within LO at the latest LO Congress in 2022, regarding the future of petroleum activity in Norway (Spence, 2022). Studying the conflicting interests for environmental sustainability within LO, Houeland et al. (2021) identify an "intra-labour tension between constructions of sectoral and regional dependencies" (p. 420). Although the conflicts between trade unions are not considered extensively in the scope of this thesis, there is a need to proceed from the so-called "job versus environment" dilemma and engage in more nuanced debates on the future of work. Nonetheless, the HK employee resonates that while some people rightfully fear the threat of job losses, it is crucial to accelerate the politics of climate and the environment. As Beckham's (HK Norge, 2022) perspective illustrates, HK develops a discourse that is tied to their contextual conditions, including their organisational identity and coalitions (Kalt, 2022), the history of the union (Räthzel & Uzzell, 2011), and what interests their members have as workers (Alberti et al., 2013).

In a cooperation project of Norwegian actors within trade and commerce, where HK has played a key role (HK Norge, 2020), it is stated that the industry must engage in a sustainability transition through cooperation, broad participation and workplace dialogue to "notice that environmental measures are lucrative both for competitiveness, for the internal working environment, and financially" (LO & Virke, 2016, p. 5, my translation). HK's action plan further reads that engaging in ecological sustainability is crucial to ensure safe jobs and workplace participation (HK Norge, 2021, p. 43). For HK, according to the head office employee, taking an active role in the transition is better than letting others steer the inevitable changes required (HK 1.1). To actively engage as a trade union in environmental sustainability issues is a characteristic of just transition strategies (Lipsig-Mummé, 2015), in order to make an effort to ensure that ecological and financial interests do not overrun the social sustainability dimension. HK clearly states that more traditional welfare concerns, such as wage levels, sick pay, pensions and working conditions, will continue to be their main

consideration in collective bargaining (HK Norge, 2021, p. 43). The HK's head office informant confirms this prioritisation: climate and the environment are topics to engage in at times of peace, referring to periods with no labour-capital conflicts (HK 1.1). Hence, HK develops a discourse of bridging economic growth with ecological interests, strictly within the existing frames of the Norwegian labour model, as a reproduction of the social justice agenda of LO's social democratic tradition.

Despite the framing of ecological interests as subordinate to traditional labour interests, HK frames itself as a "green trade union" where members can contribute to the greening of their workplace through "small measures like organic lunches, replacing paper towels with washable hand towels, or larger things like investments in green funds or green tariffs" (HK Norge, n.d., n.p., my translation). The HK employee also recognises the responsibility of being an actor in trade and commerce (HK Norge, 2020), as a significant share of emissions is produced in workplaces, and that with that comes a responsibility. HK's formal role perception relates to Hagen's (2021) claim that workers must engage in sustainability transitions because all labour impacts the climate and environment in both the production and consumption processes. Following these findings, an institutional discourse—as used in CNA—or an organisational narrative, as conceptualised by Loseke (2007)—of climate and environmental change as a concern for HK is formally established. Furthermore, HK has engaged in climate and environmentally related action in multiple arenas; it is mentioned in the collective agreements with the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO) (NHO, n.d.b) and Virke (Virke, n.d.a; n.d.b), and when LO represents HK in agreements with Virke (Virke, n.d.c) and NHO (NHO, n.d.c).

Incorporating climate and environmental concerns in collective bargaining corresponds to Goods' (2017) definition of an embedded institutional strategy, where green clauses are identified as a tool for change. By stating in agreements that this is a relevant topic for the social partners, the rights and obligations of the agreements also apply to environmental sustainability, developing an expectation for environmental labour agency and action. However, the breadth and scope of the agreements vary. LO-NHO (NHO, n.d.c) adopt the international guidelines from OECD and the UN on sustainable development, and labour actors' responsibility to realise the sustainability agenda. At the same time, HK's agreements with NHO and Virke emphasise the importance of including climate and environmental concerns in the Norwegian tripartite cooperation of social dialogue, and participation at the workplace level. In the case of Virke (n.d.a; n.d.b), the stakeholders are clear on the obligation of all actors to get involved: they "must" develop guidelines and tools to ensure the

right conditions for enterprises and organisations to transition to more sustainable practices (Virke, n.d.a, p. 64; n.d.b, p. 72). Furthermore, it is negotiated that the actors "should" engage in dialogue to set collective and concrete goals for sustainable development (Virke, n.d.a, p. 64; n.d.b, p. 72).

From policy to practice, it is stated that electing representatives responsible for following up measures "should be considered" in the Virke agreement (Virke, n.d.a, p. 64; n.d.b, p. 72), whereas the HK-NHO agreement says that the labour actors "should" elect representatives (NHO, n.d.b, p. 17), and not just consider it. As collective agreements are legislative acts, formulations and language in written documents determine who is committed to doing what. However, the formulations of the agreements analysed are recommendations in most cases, as the wordings "should" and "consider" do not hold actors directly responsible. Still, using "must" in the Virke (n.d.a; n.d.b) agreements implies that the partners cannot choose whether to engage.

Related to the institutional embedded strategy, the book "Green Collective Agreements" (Norwegian: "Grønne tariffavtaler") (Bjergene & Hagen, 2020) was published in 2020. The book was intended to act as a tool to accelerate HK's work on green tariffs, and to incorporate the topic into collective bargaining, as one of the editors and one co-author worked with these issues in HK at the time of publishing. When COVID-19 hit, the 2020 negotiations were postponed, and temporary layoffs and lockdowns reduced the priority of the organisation's environmental commitment (HK 1.1). Hence, the HK employee develops an explanation—or at least a narrative—as to why there is a disconnection between the ambitions and practices of the organisation. This finding illustrates a lack of diffusion of emerging discourses. Discussing the barriers to implement sustainability policies in practice, this framing illustrates how unexpected events, in this case, the COVID-19 pandemic, can interrupt organisational strategies. Galgóczi (2021) resonates around the complexity of incorporating climate policies into the world of work, arguing that "just transition politics do not happen in a vacuum, but in the real-life circumstances of concrete societal and working relations" (p. 557).

To ensure material outcomes, HK will develop internal training activities to increase the knowledge of ethical trade, and the climate footprint of goods and services (HK Norge, 2021, p. 31), as well as elect green reps (HK 1.1). However, by September 2022, HK had yet to do so, illustrating a weak link between the ambitions of the emerging discourse and the practical unfolding of the same. Providing a positive example of environmental concerns followed by material outcomes, HK and Virke have collaborated on a pilot project to imagine

alternative, more sustainable practices at the local level with employers and workers. Evaluating the networks established in the project, The HK employee concludes that most informants had learned something new, had raised sustainable development as an important topic within the enterprise, and/or suggested concrete measures to get engaged (HK 1.1). Still—related to the analysis in Chapter 7— "you can never say that you can ensure that workers in trade and commerce will adopt it in practice" (HK 1.1). Despite the moderately optimistic framing of the HK employee, the informant perceives the pilot project as a golden opportunity for employers to anchor their sustainability strategy among workers and avoid accusations of greenwashing.

5.2 Utdanningsforbundet: environmental responsibility as teachers

Utdanningsforbundet's members are teaching professionals, and the organisation is affiliated with Unio, which only organises workers with higher education. Most members work in the public sector, primarily in municipalities. Representing workers in the educational sector, they create a professional identity explicitly framed in the organisation's politics. The organisational identity formation of trade unions creates insiders and outsiders, which in the case of Utdanningsforbundet is bounded to a profession. The senior advisor from Utdanningsforbundet states that the organisation should maintain and represent members' interests in terms of pay and working conditions, but to do so relating to their professional role of ensuring that the teachers can do the best job possible for the pupils and students. Utdanningsforbundet's framing of the role of teachers concerning sustainable development is explicitly stated in their climate and environmentally related policy documents. They write that the attitudes and actions of teachers affects the people they work for and with (Utdanningsforbundet, 2022a) and that:

> The teaching profession plays a key role in the transition to a sustainable society, and one part of our civic mandate is to give children and young people the skills they need to be able to live in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way. (Utdanningsforbundet, 2021a, p. 3)

Sustainable development is one of three interdisciplinary topics in the Norwegian national curriculum (Utdanningsdirektoratet, n.d.), so the civic mandate Utdanningsforbundet formulates is formally regulated. Utdanningsforbundet has developed three main themes for environmental strategies on the organisational level: (1) reducing the organisational footprint

of the trade union, (2) education for sustainable development, and (3) including climate and environmental issues through negotiations and social dialogue (Utdanningsforbundet, 2021a). Hence, Utdanningsforbundet's implementation of strategies concerning the topic is partly focused on supporting professionals to engage with the new learning goals, i.e., by ensuring that teachers are provided training and continuous education to teach sustainable development (Utdanningsforbundet, 2021a, p. 5). The senior advisor from Utdanningsforbundet says that teachers should not solely teach others how to live more sustainably but should lead by example by actively getting engaged in material changes at the workplace level, as "the pupils, the children, the students, need concrete experiences in their everyday life on how to act sustainably" (Udf 1.1). Following Fairclough (2010; 2015), this exemplifies an attempt to go from discursive to material change, proceeding from a stage of emergent discourse to establishing hegemonic ways to act, through a recontextualisation of national policies to the local level.

The intergenerational responsibility of teachers for environmental sustainable development is further identified, as Utdanningsforbundet (2022a) argues that "we"—referring to the organisation and its members—cannot sit around and wait for the next generation to take action, instead "we have a large responsibility to act here and now! We can all contribute, as citizens, as employees, and as unionised workers" (Utdanningsforbundet, 2022a, p. 3, my translation). Recognising the critical role of individual (unionised) workers in sustainability transitions, this challenges Jordhus-Lier's (2021) argument that citizens are not offered spaces for environmental agency at work, but solely as voters and consumers. Hence, Utdanningsforbundet's concretisation of how, and in which roles, their members should act upon sustainability issues responds to what Jordhus-Lier (2021) and Hagen (2021) further requests: to broaden the perception of who is responsible for, and can act upon, climate and environmental change as a political issue. By framing the role of the individual as part of something bigger, Utdanningsforbundet discursively connects personal identity to the cultural level: the individual teacher is important to the future of society at large. Still, the institutional discourse of teachers as crucial for sustainable societies is only effective if reproduced in individual narratives and transformed into practices, a central dimension in Souto-Manning's (2014a) CNA and further discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. In addition, the personal identity narrative in the role of a professional may or may not respond to role perceptions in the private sphere. Teachers might adopt strategies for environmental agency and action at work but not outside, or vice versa.

Focusing on the role of the individual's contribution, Utdanningsforbundet provides resources for how shop stewards can get engaged at the local level, including measures of, and guidelines for, purchasing goods and services to the workplace, waste and recycling, energy reduction and efficiency, transportation, and environmental certifications (Utdanningsforbundet, 2022b). Raising demands for a just transition is the guiding principle for the strategies of Utdanningsforbundet, in order to ensure that changes at the workplace level are equitable (Utdanningsforbundet, 2022, p. 3), as also emphasised by Utdanningsforbundet's senior advisor:

> As a trade union, we are represented at all levels of society. We are in dialogue with employers and state authorities in workplaces, municipalities, and state agencies. Our role is to contribute to broader societal transformations in Norway, as we have committed to participating. At the same time, we must do it in a just way ... Utdanningsforbundet is represented in the education sector, so we think about what we can do in our sector—as a trade union. (Udf 1.1)

The commitment of the trade union refers to what has been negotiated through the partite cooperation with the employers. The action plan for sustainable development says that Utdanningsforbundet will "use the bi- and tripartite cooperation to work for a sustainable transition of society with just distribution of benefits and burdens" (Utdanningsforbundet, 2021a, p. 7). The senior advisor refers to the social partnership model and negotiations as tools to get engaged, as identified in the data material of HK, and conceptualised as an embedded institutional strategy by Goods (2017). Hence, the basic agreements of Unio/Utdanningsforbundet in the state, municipal, and private sectors have incorporated ecological sustainability as a relevant topic for the labour market actors. As Naturviterne also organises municipal, state, and Church sector workers, the collective agreements apply both to some members in Utdanningsforbundet and Naturviterne.

The municipal sector's basic agreement with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) states in its objective that climate and environmental measures and responses are part of the tripartite cooperation, through its incorporation in the basic agreement (KS, n.d.). The largest basic agreement for Utdanningsforbundet in the private sector, for private pre-schools, gives the same objective as KS (PBL, 2022). In the municipal sector, "local actors will discuss climate and environmental measures in the municipality/county/enterprise" (KS, n.d., p. 48, my translation). Going from policy to

practice while ensuring anchoring and locally adapted measures, it is suggested to develop measures concerning, for instance, energy, transportation, waste and recycling, and purchases in municipal workplaces (KS, 2023). Similarly, in the state sector, the basic agreement recognises the role of the social partners: "Local actors must find solutions that enhance the work on sustainability and reduce the environmental footprint in all organisations" (Regjeringen, 2022, p. 30, my translation). Considering language use and its critical implications for what action is expected, the collective agreements of Norwegian municipal and state sectors make actors responsible for implementing policies in practice, by framing it as a "must". Incorporating environmental concerns in collective bargaining therefore provides an important space for legal action (Goods, 2017).

In the basic agreement with the Norwegian Association for Church Employers (KA), the employer's responsibility is further strengthened, as the employer is "obliged" to discuss environmental sustainability issues with shop stewards (KA, n.d., p. 18). Although the KA agreement only covers a few hundred members of Utdanningsforbundet and Naturviterne, it is included in the analysis for its recognition of intergenerational responsibility, which is central to the internal policies of Utdanningsforbundet. In Utdanningsforbundet's internal policy documents, the intergenerational responsibility is framed from the teachers' role in educating the youth. The KA agreement, in contrast, adopts a religious approach to stewarding "God's creation" for the next generations (KA, n.d., p. 5). Identifying the same issues and suggesting the same solutions from different entry points illustrates the political and ideological nature of language and language use, as stressed in CDA (Fairclough, 2010) and CNA (Souto-Manning, 2014b).

Attempts to further institutionalise climate and environmental concerns are identified in Utdanningsforbundet, through strategies of incorporating the work on sustainable development into the ordinary activities of the trade union and workplaces, as it "must always be one of the perspectives in every issue addressed" (Utdanningsforbundet, 2021a, p. 3). The discourse at the central level is a case of naturalisation, developing new ways of acting and being to be spatially and temporally reproduced in other contexts:

> It is a perspective we want people to bring into their everyday work … It should not be brought up as a new topic on the agenda, or as something outside the current work … If you develop a new travel policy for your regional chapter, we must consider the cheapest alternative and its consequences for climate and sustainability. (Udf 1.1)

The senior advisor connects "ordinary" tasks to the emerging organisational narrative, by framing sustainable development as an integrated part of the trade union. Whereas financial interests ("the cheapest alternative") are already naturalised in the work of the union, ecological interest ("its consequences for climate and sustainability") might not yet have been fully institutionalised. To ensure the integration of the topic, all counties of the organisation have developed a local action plan, adapted to their local context and circumstances (Udf 1.1; Utdanningsforbundet, 2021a). Concerning the role of individuals to anchor policies internally, all counties also have networks of "climate contacts", according to the Union Leader Steffen Handal (2023). In the climate contact group, ordinary members and union representatives interested in climate and environmental change issues can get involved in implementing local measures (Utdanningsforbundet, 2021b). Further integrating environmental sustainability at the local level, the senior advisor says that they are working on training their ordinary shop stewards, in a slow but steady process (Udf 1.1).

The "slow but steady" argument is congruous with how theories of organisational change frame such transformations: it never happens overnight and are instead framed as a gradual process. Utdanningsforbundets has had climate and environmentally related policies since 2009, with an accelerating focus since the National Assembly in 2019 (Utdanningsforbundet, 2022a). Handal (2023) expresses—in his own words—his "bad conscience" for the lack of progress in the organisations' climate and environmental responses. Similar to HK's claim that other interests were prioritised within the union due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation is framed as, "Two completely necessary strikes, one after the other, have raised concerns for several things important to our members. However, the strikes have led to how other things we work with have been given lower priority" (Handal, 2023, n.p., my translation). By being honest about the failure of the organisation to prioritise and progress HK's climate agenda, the union leader creates a "humble" top-down narrative. At the same time, it illustrates that other interests are continuously privileged over environmental sustainability, as expected in the reformist tradition of Norwegian tripartism. While Handal (2023) is sorry about the lack of concrete action for ecological sustainability, he frames the organisation's prioritisation as a strategy that correlates with what is generally perceived as the core business of trade unions, representing members' pay and working conditions. The struggle to implement material change on the local level is further connected to the main research question of how the trade unions anchor their strategies within the organisation. My findings so far indicate that both HK and Utdanningsforbundet struggle with the internal coordination of their policies, which I will return to in Chapter 7.

5.3 Naturviterne: a win-win situation

Naturviterne is, like Utdanningsforbundet, a workers' organisation and a professional association. They are affiliated with Akademikerne and organises workers with graduate-level education in the natural sciences. The political advisor from Naturviterne from the staff group informants says that being affiliated with Akademikerne provides freedom in policymaking (Nv 1.1). Naturviterne states that the specific competence gained through education in the natural sciences is crucial for engaging in sustainable development and must be included in decision-making processes and the practical implementations of solutions (Naturviterne, 2021a). They present themselves as the trade union for people with a passion for sustainability (Naturviterne, n.d.a), as they combine issues related to direct pay and working conditions with broader political issues. When asked about the organisation's approach to climate and environment, the political advisor says:

> We believe there is a connection between this area of work and what is happening in the world ... which may be different if you are working ... as a teacher, for instance ... We have many members working in, for example, [nature and land] management. So, they are dealing directly with this. (Nv 1.1)

By developing an institutional discourse where the trade union's climate and environmental engagement is perceived as a win-win situation for the trade union and its members, they recognise the need to consider ecological interests within trade unions. Framing the interest of Naturviterne's members, as developed out of their shared professional identity, analysing member heterogeneity becomes crucial, as not all natural scientists are expected to have the same opinion of, and conditions and ambitions for, acting upon environmental concerns. I will return to these concerns when analysing member perceptions in Chapter 6.

Furthermore, recognising ecological interests does not automatically result in a climate or environmental justice agenda where social interests of equality and resource distribution are strengthened. By connecting ecological interests to the professional interests of members, Naturviterne does what Kalt (2022) argues: Trade unions make environmentally related choices from their sectoral interests and organisational identity. The organisational identity developed by the central level of Naturviterne is, thus, consistent with Ackers' (2015) framing of professional associations in the labour movement. As Naturviterne are affiliated with Akademikerne, they are traditionally more directed toward the business unionism tradition from an individualistic, rather than collectivistic, agenda. This can be compared to

the social democratic tradition of LO, following Hyman's (2001) categorisation. Another inter-organisational difference is that the professional identity of Naturviterne is not developed from the same conditions as the occupational responsibilities of Utdanningsforbundet's members. Teachers do not directly benefit financially from integrating environmental sustainability into the organisational, institutional, or cultural identity. On the other hand, Naturviterne's members can gain employment opportunities from political decision-making to accelerate social transformations. Self-interests can be equally present in both cases: either in Utdanningsforbundet's case, to develop an identity of having a key role in the future, or to gain financial benefits, as could be the case for Naturviterne's members. Self-interests can be promoted through collective labour agency (Zhang & Lillie, 2015), as broadly organising in a trade union increases the organisation's power and stability; thus, workers' material interests can be effectively represented. Hence, collectivism works as a tool for claiming individual financial interests.

The win-win discourse does not mean that employees and members of Naturviterne cannot be interested in issues of climate and environment in ways that stretch beyond financial self-interests, but that Naturviterne at the organisational level can more easily bridge all three sustainability dimensions, including social, economic, and environmental sustainability, compared to HK and Utdanningsforbundet. The political advisor from Naturviterne further discusses the connection between professional and ecological interests:

> If you are representing an organisation where many members are engineers, you are likely positive to technological innovation and carbon capture and that sort of thing, which is natural because it is related to what they are doing. While Naturviterne thinks that is well and good, we also have to focus on natural solutions ... And it should not be a conflict between the two. However, if you are asking about priorities ... it is rather about how much we should advocate investing more money into nature restoration versus technological investments. (Nv 1.1)

Naturviterne's climate and environmentally related policies explicitly reflect this statement, proposing measures to ensure biodiversity, energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, and the bioeconomy (Naturviterne, 2021a). Furthermore, Naturviterne argues not to prioritise climate over the environment or the other way around, as they have mutually reinforcing effects (Naturviterne, 2022). Naturviterne's "expert" role unfolds from their specific competence, which correlates to the natural science paradigm of climate and environmental change that dominates the cultural narrative today, as identified in claims of a "hothouse

Earth" (Steffen et al., 2018) and the risk of ecosystem collapses (Lenton, 2020). Nevertheless, Naturviterne explicitly recognises the political character of physical changes: large-scale changes must be legitimate and must balance economic factors, social acceptance, and biology. The linear growth paradigm is challenged by demanding a national circular economy, away from a throwaway mentality to reuse and recycling (Naturviterne, 2021a). While they do not question the pillars of contemporary capitalism, Naturviterne still challenges ecological modernisation theories in which technological innovation and green growth are privileged. In this case, they create a narrative of reworking strategies that stretch beyond Schmid & Smith's (2021) definition of narrow restructuring in transitions, to broader and deeper societal transformations in which established structures of production and consumption must be reworked into more circular practices. However, recognising ecological interests does not mean social interests are automatically strengthened, as demands for environmental action can ignore social justice. In the case of Naturviterne, by acting as a trade union the social aspect is present, but the degree of it—especially in demands of policies that stretch beyond the organisational and institutional levels—depends on the concrete measures raised.

Naturviterne uses several arenas to implement its sustainability policies. Locally, they engage in municipal planning processes, as many of its members work with nature and land management (Nv 1.1). Also corresponding to Goods' (2017) definition of voluntary multilateral climate strategies of employment actors, Naturviterne had a campaign in 2021 where members were elected as "climate ambassadors" at the county level, as further elaborated on in Chapter 7. With the entry point in my theoretical chapter, Naturviterne thus provided a space for workers to transform their private and professional climate and environmental engagement to action in the role of a trade union member and worker, as aligned with Utdanningsforbundet's "naturalisation strategy" and Jordhus-Lier's (2021) and Hagen's (2021) claims for workers to get involved in sustainability transitions *as* workers.

Recognising social interests, Naturviterne stresses the importance of using the tripartite model for further incorporating environmental sustainability into the work of the labour movement, as also seen in HK and Utdanningsforbundet. A strong and mutually binding tripartite cooperation is crucial to consider climate and the environment (Naturviterne, 2021a). As mentioned, in the basic agreements of the state, municipal, and church sectors, some of Naturviterne's members are represented in the same agreements as those in Utdanningsforbundet. In the private sector, the collective agreement between Virke and Naturviterne (Virke, n.d.d), including the basic agreement with Virke (Virke, n.d.e), do

not mention climate or environment. Similarly, the NHO-Naturviterne basic agreement (NHO, n.d.a) does not mention climate and environment. However, the protocol from the 2022 renegotiations of the Virke basic agreement says that measures ensuring the SDGs "must" be incorporated into the tripartite model (Virke, 2022, p. 9). The private sector basic agreement between Spekter and Akademikerne—who represents Naturviterne—also recontextualises the emerging discourse on climate and the environment as relevant issues to employment actors from the national level, and the need for action locally. The Spekter basic agreement states that the enterprise management "will" discuss local climate and environmental measures with shop stewards (Spekter, 2022a, §30). Considering the semiotic dimension of the study, formulations like "will" and "must" technically implies more of a commitment than "should", as used in several of HK's agreements (NHO, n.d.b; Virke, 2022). Given a background to the legislative context of Naturviterne's environmental action, the transformation to material outcomes is discussed in the later parts of the analysis.

5.4 Institutional discourses of environmental action

This chapter has studied HK's, Utdanningsforbundet's, and Naturviterne's strategies to engage with environmental concerns, as part of their political agenda and everyday activities. In the following section, I will summarise my empirical findings from the larger context they take place in. The mapping of strategies illustrates that the labour movement's environmental engagement depicts diverse ways of understanding and framing the problem of climate change and related concerns. Climate does not mean the same to all people, in all places, at all times (Hulme, 2008), and the measures proposed to handle the physical and social consequences of that will, thus, vary between and within trade unions.

5.4.1 Incorporating environmental sustainability into collective bargaining

HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne are represented in collective bargaining at the national level. Environmental sustainability has been incorporated into several collective agreements, with minor differences in scope and language use. Not all workers in the three unions work in sectors where climate and the environment are mentioned in collective agreements, so the legal space for action is restricted to specific sectors. Moreover, discursive change through policy development does not guarantee action. The cases of embedded institutional strategies show what Dahl & Hagen (2023) claim: if climate measures are

considered equal to other societal transitions relevant to the labour movement, they must be regulated in the tripartite cooperation. Similarly, Holland (2021) finds that Norwegian municipal trade unions largely adopt institutionally embedded strategies for environmental agency. The basic agreements set the scene for how local actors can cooperate to identify practical solutions adapted to the conditions and needs of the individual workplace (Spekter, 2022b), which can be further elaborated in local collective agreements and special agreements. However, the basic agreements' lack of concrete measures and the absence of sanctions might slow the process of material changes. The shift to material changes correlates with the process of recontextualising organisationally hegemonic discourses, as identified in Fairclough's (2010) model to institutionalise a specific way of "doing" and "being". In conversation with trade union members and shop stewards, several informants explicitly request more regulated and concrete action to get engaged, as I will elaborate on in Chapters 6 and 7.

Incorporating climate and environmental concerns into bargaining illustrates that the Norwegian model can—at least formally—incorporate new topics that reflect broader societal trends (Alsos et al., 2019; Dølvik & Steen, 2018; Skjønberg & Hansteen, 2020). The climate engagement of HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne has not developed from a vacuum, but as a response to a broader societal discourse and cultural identity where political action for mitigating the climate crisis is widely recognised, both in Norway and globally. The agency of trade unions could therefore be understood as taking on responsibility and contributing to the societal sustainability transition, doing so through measures that are assumed to represent the interests of members better than what international and national guidelines adopted top-down might do. The representativeness of members' interests is formally met by incorporating elected union representatives into the strategies, both at the workplace level through social dialogues with the employer, at the organisational level through participation in democratic arenas, and at the national level in collective bargaining. However, a crucial point for my later analysis is that a lack of internal coordination and anchoring may weaken the representativeness of trade unions. This is a crucial factor for all representative organisations, as those affected by policies are not always directly or accurately represented in decision-making arenas (Loseke, 2007).

5.4.2 Strategies emerging from organisational identities

In developing extensive efforts to engage with environmental sustainability, the trade unions do so *as* trade unions. The political advisor from Naturviterne says they are "still a trade union" (Nv 1.1), and the senior advisor from Utdanningsforbundet states:

> We have another purpose compared to a full-blown environmental organisation. They can do a lot of other things. And [it is] very good that they do, but we incorporate our perspective into this and believe we can contribute a lot as a trade union. (Udf 1.1)

Incorporating ecological concerns into the established discourse of universal social rights, economic distribution and wage growth, all three trade unions include the three dimensions of the sustainable development agenda in their "being", as in their organisational identity and roles as trade unions. A similar framing is given by HK when they say they will continue to prioritise traditional welfare concerns in collective bargaining (HK Norge, 2021, p. 43). Stressing that the organisation acts as a trade union, they develop reformist discourses when politically responding to climate and environmental change. Nevertheless, the compromising character of Norwegian tripartism prevents radical action, and is not expected from any of the cases studied. This approach overlaps with Barth & Littig's (2021) definition of active trade union engagement when considering the climate and environmental crises, as to: "not questioning the fundamental need for a shift towards sustainability, but rather emphasising the inherent link between social and ecological issues and controlling democratically what is produced and how it is produced from the point of view of their members" (pp. 786–787). However, HK states that an economic system dependent on increasing consumption is unsustainable (HK Norge, 2021), and Naturviterne requests a national strategy for a circular economy (Naturviterne, 2021a). Still, these demands do not correspond to Schmid & Smith's (2021) definition of a revolutionary strategy, as they represent gradual changes rather than holistic, temporally confined actions.

However, considering the diverging interests of labour and the political nature of language, the measures proposed can be perceived as "revolutionary" or "radical" by members, if their material interests are insufficiently represented when their trade union develops discourses that—somewhat limited—challenge the linear growth paradigm. For HK to explicitly point out the unsustainable character of increasing commercial consumption, as established in science and other societal climate discourse, can challenge the support of their

members working in, for example, a clothing store, as they can fear for the future of their jobs.

While broadly corresponding to the "what?" and "how?" of environmental agency and action, the organisations establish diverging institutional discourses to reason for why they engage in climate politics. The trade unions are affiliated with different national confederations, which impacts the framing of the organisations. Whereas LO is more bounded to the social democratic tradition of representing social interests from a solidaristic position beyond the individual worker, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne can frame their social interests in whatever way their members desire. Climate solidarity, where you act to consider others, is a widely recognised argument for getting involved with the issue, i.e., in the Climate Solidarity Pact proposed by the UN (UN, 2023), and in academic and political calls for climate justice. Utdanningsforbundet also explicitly adopts a solidarity argument, but from a temporal dimension, through framing an intergenerational responsibility as teachers educating the future generation. In the case of Naturviterne, their action is instead framed as a responsibility and opportunity for utilising their members' competence and skills.

Acknowledging broader social justice claims as in global environmental concerns, all three trade unions progress towards social unionism. In the case of HK, the interests of their members are combined with a framing of being part of an international solidarity movement, corroborating with Ross' (2007) definition of social unionism. In parallel, Naturviterne—affiliated with Akademikerne—and to a certain degree also Utdanningsforbundet and Unio, have a tradition of focusing on individual services, and local negotiations, which is common in business unionism, following Hyman's (2001) definition. Considering environmental concerns, I argue that all three trade unions incorporate characteristics of social unionism, but largely restricted to a bridging of ecological interests with different degrees of social and financial interests, not challenging the largely institutionalised labour model or promoting broader community mobilising or grassroots mobilisation.

Furthermore, Naturviterne and Utdanningsforbundet are explicitly professional associations *and* trade unions. By developing discourses, understood as representing specific aspects of reality in particular ways (Fairclough, 2003), the professional associations connect members' sectoral interests to climate and the environment, as conceptualised by Ackers (2005) and Kalt (2022). HK also recognises the professional responsibility of being an actor in trade and commerce, as a significant share of emissions is indirectly produced and consumed through these workplaces, and with that comes a responsibility for climate action. In cooperation with other actors in the trade sector, they state: "If the sector of trade and

commerce decides to sell and buy more environmentally friendly products, it will have large effects. This is a role that few others can take" (LO & Virke, 2016, p. 4, my translation). HK's formal role perception relates to Hagen's (2021) claim that workers must engage in sustainability transitions, because all labour have (direct or indirect) climate and environmental impacts in both production and consumption processes.

Nevertheless, for the institutional discourses to be effective, individuals must recycle them in their ways of being and acting (Souto-Manning, 2014a). To explore if this is the case with the trade unions' environmental strategies, I will proceed to the second part of the analysis, where I engage with data from interviews with ordinary members and union representatives.

6. Member perceptions of strategies

In this chapter, I engage with the perspectives of five ordinary union members, two shop stewards and one union representative from HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne, to answer the second research question: *How do organised workers perceive and experience their trade union's engagement with climate and environmental change as a political issue?* In doing so, I discuss what members and representatives believe is the role of trade unions in a sustainability transition. I further explore how the informants perceive their own role and agency in their trade union's engagement with these issues. I focus on workers' narratives and individual experiences concerning the organisational and institutional strategies of their unions, exploring the impact of broader cultural discourses when framing what they think of the policies presented.

6.1 The role of the labour movement in sustainability transitions

As trade unions develop strategies for engaging in sustainability transitions, they frame climate and environmental change as relevant political issues for them to work with. During interviews with the member group, the informants were presented with eight quotes to reflect on their trade union's engagement with climate and the environment.

The three informants from Naturviterne had heard about their trade union's climate and environmentally related policies before the interviews, through their current (Nv 2.2) or former (Nv 2.1) role as shop stewards, or from being involved in the development of the organisation's sustainability policies (Nv 2.3). The Naturviterne member informants are all extensively concerned with issues of nature and environment in their roles outside of work, which can be tied to their career choice. Further, it is crucial to recognise that the informants from Naturviterne were sampled through the gatekeeper in Naturviterne. The same goes for the union representative from Utdanningsforbundet (Udf 2.1); she also knew about the policies and was recruited through the gatekeeper, although with a smaller interest in the topic outside of work. Those recruited through other channels were less informed of their trade unions' policies. Two informants had not heard about their trade unions' environmental engagement (HK 2.2; Udf 2.3), while two had heard about it, but had no extensive knowledge or experience of the topic (HK 2.1; Udf, 2.2). These cases suggest that the members' relation to the central union level might have a say in who knows what about their organisation; those

with a direct connection to their trade union's head office are more updated on the political priorities of their organisation, at least so in the cases I study.

When asked about what role the Norwegian labour movement plays in broader sustainability transitions, one member of Naturviterne says, "[the labour movement] must think further ahead, do more, take larger responsibility" (Nv 2.1) while stressing that the need for action includes all social actors, as the crises stretches beyond the world of work. Another member agrees that it is a no-brainer that the trade unions take a clear standpoint, because "if no one takes action, the Earth will come to an end, and my children will not have a future" (Udf 2.3). This argumentation corresponds to Wills' (1998) claim that the traditions of trade unions are changing due to conditional changes, as also emphasised in Fairclough's (2010) concept of "naturalisation". As wider society is changing, so must the labour movement. In the specific case of Udf 2.3, she directly correlates the intergenerational responsibility discourse, from which the concept of sustainable development emerged, to Utdanningsforbundet's institutional discourse. Connecting actions to responsibility, the shop steward in HK also frames the labour movement's role as a responsibility, but directly tied to the role of his trade union in production and consumption processes (HK 2.1). A different approach to who should act and why is taken by one member of Utdanningsforbundet, who perceives the involvement of the labour movement as an opportunity to hold employers responsible:

> I think [the labour movement] should use a lot more resources to fight this cause … I mean, that's what the trade union, what the labour movement, what we fight against, that the rich people get to decide everything. Who benefits from CO2? From emissions? Who benefits from all of this? Well, it's the rich people. (Udf 2.2)

In creating a narrative that the climate and environmental crises are labour-capital conflicts, the member's framing illustrates Hampton's (2015) claim that capitalism uses the same mechanisms to exploit labour and the environment. To Udf 2.2, the emerging climate discourse is an opportunity to challenge the uneven development of contemporary capitalism, which is uncritically interwoven in the institutional discourse of the Norwegian labour movement. This framing differs from the reformist discourses that the trade unions develop, where the power relation between labour and capital is further accepted in demands for a just transition, or environmental measures through tripartism. While no other informants explicitly frame the emerging institutionalist discourse of the labour movement as a relevant factor in

deep sustainability transformations from a class conflict perspective, several informants emphasise the collective and institutional power of the labour movement. One member says, "It's a wide range of people. Many people stand behind it" (Nv 2.3), referring to the breadth and reach of the Norwegian labour movement. As part of a professional association himself, the member from Naturviterne recognises the heterogeneity of trade unions, representing people with different interests and intersectionalities, emerging from various class and sectoral-specific identities. Still, he stresses that the labour movement has a common cause, and that the system in place gives "some weight" to the demands (Nv 2.3). This framing implies that the institutional level impacts the wider societal setting. A similar framing emerges from the shop steward of HK, who does not perceive the internal conflict of LO—as discussed in Chapter 5.1—as a weakness since he claims that all workers must eventually get engaged in the sustainability agenda:

> I believe that we face a task so complex that we must stick together and find a solution also for the workers … But we must engage in a conversation. We must disagree to get ourselves together and tell others why it's so much better or worse not to extract more oil and gas ... And we must also think about why we do this together. To not think of it as two camps. You're allowed to have an opinion, but how do we reach the goal? Because the goal is not just for Norway, it's a global commitment. (HK 2.1)

Recognising the global dimension of the climate crisis, the informant's framing overlaps with LO's argument for international solidarity. Perceiving the trade union's environmental engagement as a response to global commitments represents an alternative to the narrow economistic position of trade unions, focusing on more expansive social justice claims. Furthermore, by giving space for constructive and deliberative dialogue in the labour movement, the shop steward crystalises an agency that involves that a labour-environmental politics that "[has] a real potential to promote a politics of dissensus, as they comprise a set of practices that operationalise an alternative, possible and necessary, society-nature relationship" (Azzi, 2021, p. 227). One member of Naturviterne agrees that the risk for internal conflict is a natural—although challenging—response to the diverging interests of labour, promoting a "long-term strategy of job creation that people in the [oil] industry can transfer into … on good and safe terms" (Nv 2.3). These framings provide understandings of the interrelation of individual and collective interests, and the larger socio-political context they emerge in and from.

The union representative from Utdanningsforbundet highlights that what trade unions promote at the organisational level has an impact on personal identities and broader cultural narratives, with a potential to transform into action. To her, the labour movement's initiatives are a way to initiate transformations in other segments of society, which she describes as "so much fun and very engaging" (Udf 2.1). Similarly, one member of Utdanningsforbundet emphasises the influential power of the institutional level on the personal sphere, as: "I think that [the labour movement] has a huge potential to influence their members to sort of set a standard … because it has a large effect on us members" (Udf 2.3). Both perspectives recognise the interrelations of the various levels of societal organisation, as crucial to the theories of Souto-Manning (2014a; 2014b) and Loseke (2007), and at the same time highlighting the role of tripartite cooperation as a strength, as suggested in Goods' (2017) definition of embedded institutional strategies, and widely identified in other analyses of trade unions' environmental engagement.

However, one HK member struggled to see the connection between the labour movement and climate and environmental change, saying, "I think this is hard to answer. Simple as that. I don't know what we can do" (HK 2.2). To understand the divergencies in climate and environmental perceptions among members, there is a need to examine why they relate to these questions on such different terms. The HK member who struggles to answer what the role of the labour movement should be in a transition, says that she does not have an extensive personal engagement for climate and the environment, and generally does not engage in political issues or debates:

> [I] think that the world keeps turning, and I go under the radar. Haha. So, I don't have to care too much, but I'm happy someone else does … I have not really looked into it because I'm not very interested. I have enough with myself. (HK 2.2)

Furthermore, the HK member states that she is positive about drilling for more oil and gas, and that her opinion probably stems from the fact that she has two children working in the Norwegian petroleum industry, and not because she knows too much about the pros and cons of climate measures. Through analysing this storytelling, where she expresses a worldview restricted to her and her family's everyday experiences and financial interests, it becomes evident that "people have very different ideas of justice, freedom, and need" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 7), even though they operate within the same, or very similar, contexts. Building on this, as discussed in the following section, other informants in the member group state that

they are—to various extents—interested in politics at the organisational level, in society at large, and/or have a professional, and/or private interest in climate and the environment.

6.2 Connecting levels of identities: worker's interrelated roles

In the member group, I categorise five of the informants as having an extensive interest in climate and environmental issues. Two informants say the topic is important, but are not actively engaged in the cause, while one informant—as discussed above—has a minimal interest. However, all the informants in the member group provide examples of things they do to care for the climate and environment: from individually oriented measures like recycling or driving an electric vehicle—which is identified as the most common climate measures in Norway (Ipsos, 2021)—to being professionally engaged with the topic in their everyday life, or politically active in order to induce changes at large.

I, therefore, identify three identities that informants adopt when framing their personal engagement: private, professional, and political. Although all identity narratives are identified at Loseke's (2007) level of personal identity, they have different implications for how the informants relate to the topic. Additionally, the narratives are always related to factors beyond the individual. As all processes of problem definition are political, following Rochefort & Cobb (1994), I do not disregard the political dimension of the informants' "private" personal narratives.

A private engagement in climate and environmentally related issues refers to those who suggest changes in their everyday life, as one member from Utdanningsforbundet does, saying: "I'm very engaged at the individual level, and I haven't taken any larger actions" (Udf 2.3). Providing examples, she says that she takes the train instead of flying and does not like people who throw chewing gum on the street. Answering the question of what the engagement of labour in a sustainability transition should look like, she further states that in changes in the world of work, one should start at the individual level, as "that's where we can make a difference" (Udf 2.3). Another member from Utdanningsforbundet—representing the category of political identity—says quite the contrary: "By being active in a political party that is one of the climate-friendly parties, I probably do … more than I do … in my everyday decisions, which I think don't really matter" (Udf 2.2). He further proposes that the labour movement engages in more significant transitions, for example, through green investments. Focusing on measures that stretch beyond the workplace and organisation, he represents an opinion on how the labour movement should not only act for changes that are tied directly to

the workplace. On the professional side of the identity spectrum, one member of Naturviterne speaks almost exclusively about the topic from his professional role rather than from his private concerns, or his role as a trade union member. In telling a story from his professional identity and role, although invited to the interview based on his role as a union member independent of his professional title, illustrates the intersection of roles. We often do not separate the roles we speak in, as they together develop personal identities. The intersection of roles and interests are also identified when the shop steward from Naturviterne reflects on her climate and environmental engagement, saying: "I need a value-based job that can contribute to something. I cannot do something that actively destroys. And I need to feel that I am contributing to a solution in one way or another" (Nv 2.2). These narratives bring two important findings. First, the area of work you are in is, in many cases, bound to your private interests and concerns Second, roles and interests are interrelated, and together form the unique "being" of an individual, which in turn will affect their actions taken—i.e., their "doing".

6.3 Breadth and scopes of measures

When the member group relates to their trade union's concrete policies, they do so from different standpoints and conditions. Discussing what type of climate and environmentally related measures the organisation should prioritise, the opinions diverge from largely adopting the institutional discourse of their unions to criticising the character of the proposed climate and environmentally related strategies.

One member of Naturviterne (Nv 2.3), who had been involved in developing his trade union's sustainability strategies, is in naturally in favour of the examples of Naturviterne's strategies presented in the interview. By being part of developing an emerging institutional discourse, his narrative strongly correlates with the organisational level. Still, he notes that getting more guidance on what can be done at the workplace level would be helpful. The union representative from Utdanningsforbundet also utilises the organisation's formal strategies when talking about environmental issues on the local level (Udf 2.1). While not having previously heard about the green agenda of Utdanningsforbundet, one member also stands by the measures proposed by their trade union:

> I mean, this is great. This is what we sort of wish for, haha. To have a clear climate policy and both that it should be discussed at the local level … and that [*reading from Utdanningsforbundet quote 4*] 'The shop stewards of Utdanningsforbundet [should] contribute with their skills to make sure that the measures are as good and just as possible', it's very nice. (Udf 2.3)

Although they are one of the informants that had not thought about the potential to act upon climate and environmental concerns through the arenas of the trade union, the member straightforwardly adopts Utdanningsforbundet's formal framing of the issue and solutions. At the same time, she expresses that she is unsure of how to go from policy to practice. This reflection on how to engage in action with material outcomes correlates with Fairclough's (2010) argument that while discursive change may be induced in how people talk and frame issues, it can never guarantee changes in habits and actions. In parallel, the HK shop steward had not been working on these issues, but supports his organisation's efforts, as long as he is provided tools—as in concrete measures in collective agreements—to act for environmental sustainability. In a similar reasoning, one Naturviterne member asks what Naturviterne's (2022) claim about green collective agreements for sustainable value creation really means, and that "maybe one must concretise what a green measure in the workplace could be. What can make the workplace more sustainable? I am open to getting some ideas myself" (Nv 2.3). His perspective is also identified in what the shop steward from Naturviterne says, as she has tried identifying appropriate measures at the local level, but "it is not always so easy, even if you are enthusiastic about it" (Nv 2.2). To the Naturviterne shop steward, climate is an issue that academics talk about in academic language, notwithstanding that she has a master's degree in nature management and could easily be identified as an "expert" by the man on the street. Hence, my data correlates with what Halvorsen & Tiltnes (2021) conclude in their interviews with trade unionists in Unio organisations: "green collective agreement" is a relatively unknown concept in workplaces. An important dimension for analysing the main research question on the anchoring of policies, thus, crystalises: that members need more guidance to transform their adoption of the institutional discourse into action and material outcomes.

Despite cheering the labour movement for getting engaged in environmental sustainability issues, the shop steward from Naturviterne does not perceive her trade union's strategies as sufficient for a transformation (Nv 2.2). Naturviterne argues, as mentioned in the former example, that green collective agreements can provide "sustainable value creation"

(Naturviterne, 2022, n.p., my translation). The shop steward is critical to using concepts traditionally linked to economic growth, such as "value creation". Responding to the quote, "Nature has given us work and income since the dawn of time. A green shift can ensure the welfare and quality of life – also in the future" (Naturviterne, 2022, n.p., my translation), she is unsure what measures can be developed that ensures welfare and quality of life without referencing financial interests, while at the same time avoiding measures being at the expense of the economic focus of the trade union. She does not adopt the narrative of bridging financial and ecological interests which can be identified in the policies of Naturviterne:

> As a trade union, you cannot ignore that we must do something with the whole system … One should not stop working for green collective agreements and behavioural changes within the organisations or enterprises. But one must also raise the need for large-scale changes and admit that the whole economic system is a challenge ... Do we want [economic] growth? What can replace growth? (Nv 2.2)

Speaking as "we", she raises changes that must stretch beyond her as an individual, in order to have an impact at large. Rather, her interests overlap more with the other claims of Naturviterne to implement more circular practices (Naturviterne, 2021a). Further, the shop steward stresses the role of the tripartite model as she believes that social dialogue is better than "standing on the barricades" (Nv 2.2). Hagen (2021) similarly argues that radical transformations are needed, but they must unfold democratically through negotiation. Loseke (2007) stresses that for social change to be effective, it must involve all levels. In this case, a recontextualisation of the emerging hegemonic discourse of Naturviterne—adopted from Fairclough's (2010) four-step model for organisational change, where financial and ecological interests are bridged, might meet resistance from members who are either sceptical about trade unions adopting an environmental role, or who perceive that the existing suggested measures are too moderate. One member of Utdanningsforbundet also adopts a more radical narrative in his thinking of the labour movement's role, as mentioned in his scepticism of the exploitative character of the labour-nature-capital relationship (Udf 2.2).

However, both Nv 2.2 and Udf 2.2 acknowledge that they are in a privileged position: they are highly educated and do not worry about their private economy. One member of Naturviterne also recognises that some measures may be easier to support than others, depending on the individual worker's position in society (Nv 2.3). In HK, the employee from the head office says that the measures they know their members will support are closely

connected to their socioeconomic background: HK members are generally low-paid and prefer measures that are good for the environment and their private economy, such as free monthly tickets to commute with public transportation (HK 1.1). As the trade unions and their members frame class interests as crucial, it is vital to not do what Ackers (2015) argues—to perceive class interests as illegitimate in contemporary trade unionism—but instead recognise class as an entry point to other analytical categories, as suggested by Alberti et al. (2013).

Problematising the role of the trade union, the HK member reflects on whether trade unions should even engage in broad environmental sustainability issues (HK 2.2). HK quote 4 in the stimulus material presented reads, "By being a member of HK, you can make your workplace greener" (HK Norge, n.d., n.p., my translation). The member explicitly states that she did not become a member to make her job "greener", and that she can instead make positive contributions outside the role of a worker or union member, which she says she has done through recycling at home and driving an electric car. However, she does not actively resist the idea of contributing to making the workplace greener but will do so only if given concrete guidelines and measures on what can be done. Nonetheless, she returns to a more negative outlook on the established discourse in Norwegian society that everyone must contribute to climate mitigation: "Can little Norway save the entire world? … Does it matter what little Norway does? Does it matter for the climate? … I have no clue" (HK 2.2). Creating a narrative of Norway as a small country with no more considerable responsibility than any other country downplays more expansive social justice claims, for example, related to climate and environmental justice. If everyone globally used as many resources as the average Norwegian resident, it would require 3.4 Earths (FN-sambandet, 2021b). For Norwegian workers to engage in sustainability trajectories is one opportunity to mitigate emissions. I argue that if trade unions are able to demonstrate that climate and environmental action can be taken in the sphere of work and that the measures contribute to a larger transition, they can act as an opinion-maker more broadly in society and can induce agency and action in other arenas.

6.4 Professional roles and responsibilities

The first part of the analysis finds that HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne adopt climate and environmentally related strategies related to their area of work. The emerging discourse of occupational responsibilities refers directly to the "being" and the "doing" of the individual worker. Utdanningsforbundet states that the teaching profession plays a key role in

the sustainability transition and that it is part of their members' civic mandate to provide pupils and students with the skills to live environmentally sustainable lives (Utdanningsforbundet, 2021d), to which one member says:

> I think that Utdanningsforbundet simply makes our responsibility more concrete, as that responsibility is already stated in the National Curriculum … I do not perceive the responsibility as a burden. We already have a lot of responsibility, haha. So, this is just 'the tip of the iceberg' … I actually think that it is great that we are reminded of it because we should educate the youth to be democratic citizens and being a citizen also means having the skills to live environmentally friendly and sustainable. (Udf 2.3)

The member adopts the role and responsibility Utdanningsforbundet formally give teachers, as also emphasised by the county-level union representative, who even more so develops a narrative that only teachers have the right competence to educate the next generation. The union representative believes that "you must be a teacher to be able to educate children on these issues" (Udf 2.1). The framing of formally educated teachers as the only profession competent to teach the next generation is also identified in the institutional discourse of the trade union, in that "only teachers are teachers" (Hoel, 2021; Utdanningsforbundet, n.d.a). Promoting the occupational responsibility as a positive social responsibility is a way to represent members' interests as teaching professionals with higher education credentials in education studies. By being a teacher, one is framed as having a unique and important social position tied to the occupation.

Another member of Utdanningsforbundet is, initially, less supportive of mainly focusing on educating the next generation to live more sustainably, claiming that he thinks that what is most important is to act here and now. However, his perception of what is needed to ensure a more sustainable societal trajectory changes throughout the interview:

> When I think about it, [educating the next generation] might be our biggest contribution because it's the same as with racism and homophobia and those kinds of things, that we just have to wait for the old racists to die. Haha … I sort of made a 180 during this conversation, from saying that we must take the responsibility [to act] to saying that, after all, our biggest contribution is [to educate] … My parents' generation will continue to go abroad on holiday, and you can't change them because they're used to it. The same goes for my generation. But the children can get used to another way of living. (Udf 2.2)

Reflecting on how someone else frames ones role, the member changes his perception of the topic and what his contribution to the cause could be. The transformation of role perceptions is central to Gleiss' (2014) argument of discursive representation: how someone else frames you can impact your own identity formation. Just as one member of Utdanningsforbundet expresses mixed feelings about the policies of his trade union throughout the interview, one member of Naturviterne is ambivalent about her trade union's emerging organisational narrative that the specific competence and skills of Naturviterne's members are crucial for a green shift (Naturviterne, n.d.b; 2021a; 2022).

On the one hand, she understands Naturviterne's formal strategy to frame the skills of their members as important as she believes it can put Naturviterne in a good light as an organisation that cares about "the nature and environment and the animals and so on" (Nv 2.1). Thus, Naturviterne is understood to correlate with the cultural identity of perceiving non-human nature as highly valued, as well as the interests of their members who are already interested in nature in one way or another, assuming that their career paths emerge from the personal identity level. On the other hand, the member of Naturviterne says that natural scientific competence "does not guarantee that measures are taken on the premises of nature, it is the individual employee's attitude that determines it … That competence can also be misused" (Nv 2.1). Questioning the emerging environmental discourse in the policies of Naturviterne, she problematises the assumption that a given profession is always performed to benefit society at large. This narrative is backed up by the Naturviterne shop steward, who agrees that while it is natural for Naturviterne to emphasise the opportunities that natural scientific skills and competencies can provide, she is unsure about what the discourse implies in practice, asking: "Is it the competence as the market value of it? Or is it the competence as the opportunity for change?" (Nv 2.2). She concludes that there must be room for both framings due to the diversity of who is a member of Naturviterne. The internal diversity is exemplified by another member from Naturviterne, who reacts positively, saying that the opportunity to promote the role of natural scientists in sustainability transitions is "an ace up their sleeve" (Nv 2.3).

Still, it is crucial to remember that not all unionised workers wish to take on an occupational responsibility to ensure a green shift, as illustrated by the HK member, claiming: "I did not become a member of HK to become 'greener', as I can manage that somewhere else, in another arena" (HK 2.2). Importantly she works in the "office" section of HK and does not as easily see the environmental impact of HK's sectors as someone working more closely with the consumption of goods may. On the contrary, the HK shop steward informant

works in commerce, and recognises the occupational responsibility of his workplace to reduce their organisational footprint—not primarily through reducing consumption, but by implementing local measures such as recycling, energy-saving measures, and renewable energy sources. These findings can be compared to what the political advisor from Naturviterne explicitly says, that it is natural to relate climate and environmental measures to your own area of work (Nv 1.1). On the one hand, the HK member may struggle to recognise the negative impacts of her area of work directly, and it can be harder for her—and people in her sector—to identify appropriate measures. On the other hand, the shop steward works in a sector where the norms and actions of consumer society are visible in his everyday work activities.

6.5 Opportunities and hindrances for action

This thesis' entry point is that labour can act to change their landscape under certain conditions. The environmental strategies of HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne frame their members—in cooperation with the employer—as agents of change. However, there is no guarantee that workers will take action just because the formal circumstances are right. Only two informants say they have explicitly been involved in their respective trade unions' climate and environmental engagements in practice. The first, the member from Naturviterne, has contributed to his trade union's policymaking process (Nv 2.3). The second, the union representative from Utdanningsforbundet, works on these issues at the county level, as part of a "climate contact" network group, as elaborated on in the next chapter. From her experiences, "there are only a few [union branches] that have included [climate and the environment] in discussion meetings as a regular topic, from my knowledge" (Udf 2.1).

The lack of agency and action directly concerned with the climate and environmentally related policies from the organisations does not, however, mean that the informant has not made efforts to make their workplace greener, they have only done so without direct ties to the union's work. Hence, workers can be environmental actors in the workplace, but may not necessarily perceive it as in their role as members of a trade union, e.g., one member of Utdanningsforbundet says that she has been at a recycling course at work, but not as a trade union activity. She further says that while she is very optimistic about the policies presented in the stimulus material, she did not even know they existed and that "it is probably also my fault because I have not actively been looking for it" (Udf 2.3).

Identifying that there are members at different levels of the organisations who are interested in the topic, but who have not yet been involved in sustainability related material changes, suggests that there is a disconnection between the ambitions and reality of the trade union, as well as a lack of anchoring between various levels of the organisation. Utdanningsforbundet's pamphlet of local climate measures states that all their shop stewards should "discuss suggestions for climate and environmental measures at union branch meetings to offer the members to share their opinions and get involved in decision-making" (Utdanningsforbundet, 2022b, p. 5, my translation). As not all shop stewards of Utdanningsforbundet do this, it suggests that the emerging discourse has not yet been fully recontextualised and operationalised. Similarly, HK will establish training and learning activities for shop stewards to engage in sustainable development but has not yet implemented this in practice.

The HK shop steward states it is part of his responsibility to keep himself updated on the organisation's politics. He also appreciates his participation in the interview as it had made him more aware of his organisation's policies. He says that since he largely agrees with the material presented, he believes he can positively contribute to the cause (HK 1.1). Furthermore, a few informants in the member group perceived the interview situation as a space for reflection. One member of Utdanningsforbundet made a "180 turn" in the interview (Udf 2.2), as mentioned above. Hence, I perceive the interview as a transformative space, allowing informants to reflect on the circumstances that enable or constrain individual or collective action, imagining alternative ways of doing and being and providing an understanding that change is possible both in the space of reflection and in other arenas (Pereira et al., 2020). The shop steward from Naturviterne was critical of the lack of transformational action, but reading the stimulus material allowed her to perceive her role as a representative to stretch beyond the negotiations of wages (Nv 2.2). Early in the interview, she said that it was challenging to negotiate on behalf of someone, as she must set aside her personal convictions and was therefore unsure how much longer she wants to be a shop steward. As trade unions are representative organisations developed to represent workers as a collective (Cella, 2012), the demands may not always overlap with the union members' and shop stewards' personal interests. However, after engaging with the framing of climate and the environment as relevant concerns for trade unions, the framing shifts:

I have the opportunity to [contribute] as a shop steward. I just have to see that side of the role … I think this is very eye-opening, which is part of why I wanted to participate [in the interview]. Because how am I supposed to contribute? It is good to extract it concretely, as has been done here. (Nv 2.2)

The shop steward illustrates an opportunity for a transformative space. At the same time, her narrative mirrors Sayer's (1992) claim that agency is often habitual. The shop steward did not challenge the habitual ways of her "being" and "doing" in the trade union. A lack of knowledge of the spaces for action is therefore perceived as a hindrance to action. The knowledge deficit problem refers to the lack of action stemming from not knowing how to act upon climate and environmental change as a political issue in the role of a trade union member. The HK member who said she does not know anything about the topic, but is willing to implement local climate measures if they are given to her (HK 2.2), illustrates that a lack of knowledge can act as a hindrance to taking action and that once people are given concrete examples of what they can do to contribute they can shift the focus from perceiving the topic as abstract and ideological, to practical and part of everyday life. The union representative effectively summarises this narrative, expressing that people think it is complicated to get engaged, but "there are many small things that can be done to have an impact" (Udf 2.1).

Returning to my argument on the diverging perspectives on the role of workers to act towards sustainability in their respective professional roles, I emphasise that the "small things that can be done" are not as easily identified among all trade union members. If you lack knowledge and ideas on how to get engaged, the barrier to activating the role as an environmental agent can be perceived as "too high". The demand for adequate resource allocation from actors at the organisational and institutional levels, including political actors at the national level, is crucial for further analysis, as discussed in Chapter 7.

On the contrary, one member of Naturviterne had extensive knowledge of the union's environmental politics before the interview and thought acting upon the issues are important (Nv 2.1). However, she does not perceive it as her responsibility, as she approaches retirement age. The personal motivation for contributing to the sustainability transition, or lack thereof, provides either an opportunity or a hindrance to action. The Naturviterne member further says that people privilege other interests over environmental concerns:

We have talked about issues of nature and the environment for many years. I believe many people are tired [of it] … I often hear people saying, 'Oh, I don't want to think about it', 'I don't understand any of this', 'Oh no, this is way too complicated'. People do not engage in it. They distance themselves from it [and say], 'I'm gonna go home and scratch my belly and drink beer or go for a weekend trip to Berlin', you know? (Nv 2.1)

The "we" refers to society and the established cultural discourse in Norway. As the introductory chapter mentions, Norway has ratified national and international goals for mitigating climate and environmental change. Furthermore, a survey shows that 72% of the Norwegian population believes climate change is caused by human activity (Aasen et al., 2021, p. 8). Although a clear majority of the population supports the discourse that climate change is real, and can be mitigated by how we do things, the one member from Naturviterne says that people do not prioritise it (Nv 2.1). Similarly, "[issues of climate and the environment] are not prioritised when people are going on vacation, and it is not prioritised when people plan their family meals, and it is not prioritised when discussion working conditions" (Udf 2.2). Perceiving the subordination of ecological interests as a hindrance to climate and environmental change mitigation, Nv 2.1 and Udf 2.2 indirectly challenge the institutional discourse of their respective trade union that the main task of the trade union's environmental concern is to act as a trade union. From the document analysis and interviews with the staff group, it does not seem like the organisation's central levels lack knowledge about the character of the challenges ahead or how to act upon the climate and environmental crises. Instead, they limit the breadth and scope of the policies to secure their roles as representative organisations, that act within the frames of Norwegian tripartism to ensure that members legitimate their policies.

As identified in the interviews, a third hindrance to taking on the role of an initiator of change is resistance, which is often related to a lack of motivation and the privileging of other interests. Resistance can be active, in promoting counter interests, or passive in the form of disinterest or inaction. The HK member says that she could contribute to sustainable action if given concrete solutions. However, when discussing what that agency could imply, she notes that her co-workers complained when she ordered unbleached recycled paper towels for the workplace. To this experience, she says, "It's not so cool to be in the middle of it, being 'green' when you order [products] and what you get back is, 'no, we want that sort of soap, and we want that type of paper'" (HK 2.2). Similarly, one member from Utdanningsforbundet says that when he questioned his trade union's privileging of wage growth at a union branch

meeting, he was "almost booed out" by his coworkers (Udf 2.2). The union representative of Utdanningsforbundet also shares experiences of resistance from other trade union members, as she knows another teacher who met strong resistance from parents when he incorporated perspectives of ecological sustainability into his teaching, even though it is regulated in the Norwegian national curriculum (Utdanningsdirektoratet, n.d.). The Utdanningsforbundet representative also says that there are employers who might not think of it as natural to discuss climate and environmental concerns with union representatives (Udf 2.1), although it is stated so in the KS municipal basic agreement (KS, n.d.). Furthermore, the shop steward from HK also mentions resistance from the employer as a hindrance to action. He perceives his employer as having a one-sided focus on financial interests and that the climate measures he has proposed—while being unaware of the regulations in the collective agreements— are turned down because of the short-term costs they imply for the employer:

> I'm alone in meetings with the Working Environment Committee, when I'm meeting the management, when I'm a shop steward or when I'm [first name] … It is hard to do something, to change something. I'm just one person, and I don't have all the money [of the company], but I can present the costs of it and where we can save money and see what gets the employer's attention. (HK 2.1)

The collective agreement that the HK shop steward works within states that employers and shop stewards should cooperate to identify and implement appropriate sustainability measures (NHO, n.d.b). However, if local actors are not aware of the rights and obligations that the collective agreements provide concerning climate and environmental agency, there is a risk that efforts of labour environmentalism will be resisted and rejected. The shop steward of Naturviterne refers to her employer as conservative and says it has been hard to cooperate with them to implement local climate measures (Nv 2.2). According to her, the employer has only stretched so far as to consider buying an electric vehicle when upgrading the company cars in the future. From perspective of HK and Naturviterne's shop stewards, donning the initiator role can be challenging if others do not support you. Whereas individual agency has the potential to spark collective agency, collective actions are the ones decisive for trade unions (Räthzel et al., 2018). Being an organic intellectual in the trade union without connections to collective demands can act as a hindrance for the individual action taken. Just as the institutional discourse is only effective when individuals reproduce them daily (Souto-

Manning, 2014a), so must the personal narrative be transformed into other identities to induce social change.

The diverging narratives of hindrances for agency are equally true, as they are contextual and stem from individual perceptions. Equally, the reasons for inaction can reflect two sides of the same coin, as a lack of interest and motivation can cause ignorance and reduce knowledge-seeking of the situation, and a lack of knowledge can prevent one from getting further motivated and interested in getting engaged in material changes. Therefore, I support Hulme's (2008) argument that there is no universal answer when considering if policy frames knowledge or vice versa.

6.6 Narratives at the member level

This chapter has explored how trade union members and representatives perceive and experience their trade union's engagement with climate and environmental change as a political issue. The analytical strategy, adopting Souto-Manning's (2014a) CNA, has allowed me to explore the narratives people develop within the context of institutional discourses.

The informants in the member group in his thesis are part of trade unions that has incorporated issues of climate and the environment into their political agenda, and they are therefore formally provided the role of environmental actors in their role as union members. Thus, the role of a worker, and a unionised one, has been recognised as important for a broader sustainability transition, as has been identified as crucial by researchers in the field. In seeing how people go in and out of interlinked roles when they relate to their trade union's policies, it becomes evident that roles are fluid and interchangeable rather than fixed. The intersections of roles affect how and why we act the way we do (Coe, 2012; Alberti et al., 2013). The case of the HK member who says she became critical of HK's environmental agenda when she heard that they suggested restricting Norwegian petroleum activity, because she has two children working in the oil and gas industry (HK 2.2), provides an example of the interrelated roles of workers. At the same time, it suggests that the traditional perception of trade unions as organisations that represent workers as workers (Cella, 2012) is a difficult task, as the identities of workers are not one unified thing (Saward, 2006; Coe & Jordhus-Lier, 2011).

People's identity formation as trade union members does not take place in a vacuum. They are responses to the organisational, institutional, and cultural context they are part of, and reflects their interests to reproduce themselves socially and biologically in that context, as

suggested by Herod (2012). I argue that, just as the trade unions' formal strategies reflect organisational identities, so do the members' personal climate and environmental engagement reflect their narratives of their trade union's policies. I find that the informants create narratives of the institutional policies closely related to their different individual and collective identities and roles. They therefore do so as union members, workers, parents, political actors, and the man on the street. Hence, the CR entry point of this thesis has allowed for a critical perspective that shows that people draw upon certain discourses from the spatial and temporal context they are a part of, requested as crucial factors for analysis by Wiles et al. (2005) and the broader tradition of critical geography.

As the participation in my study was the first time many informants discussed their trade union's environmental strategies, it was also the first interrelation between the personal identity (or rather identities, from intersecting roles) and the institutional discourse. Hence, the perception of a few participants shifted throughout the conversation, as the relations between levels of identities and narratives are not fixed or pre-given, but rather part of a process where the individual relates to the structure. Consequently, my data implies what Bezuidenhout & Buhlungu (2011) argue: labour agency is not one thing but plays out in a myriad of ways. Informants who are generally favourable to small-scale behavioural changes in their private life also support those types of measures in trade unions. From my data, I suggest that informants with a broader interest in politics and social issues are more likely to express that more effort should be put into work at the trade union level, and that privileging financial interest might delay necessary transformations. This finding corroborates Loseke's (2007) argument that levels of narrative identities impact each other. Further, I find that not all workers can be expected to agree that the labour movement should broaden their political agenda to environmental concerns, as implied in Dahl & Hagen's (2023) survey with Norwegian workers.

Furthermore, I identify three main reasons trade union members and representatives may not address their organisation's environmental concerns. First, a lack of knowledge of the topic or the policies and ideas on how to get engaged in practice. Second, a lack of motivation, or interest to get involved with the topic or to privilege it over other interests. Third, resistance or inaction from other social actors, which constrains individual agency and action. The hindrances to action can be transformed into opportunities for action if local actors are provided sufficient resources to engage, as will be explored in the next chapter. I conclude, following Fairchlough (2010), that internal change processes must ensure that union politics is diffused and operationalised throughout Norwegian working life, as the

organisational identity formation is only successful when reproduced through time and space in individuals' stories and actions (Souto-Manning, 2014a).

As the data material is limited, the findings do not aim to represent cases beyond the empirical findings. Still, I conclude that not all members of the trade unions know about the organisations' efforts to incorporate climate and the environment into their agendas, implying an incomplete anchoring process internally.

7. Anchoring policies within the union

In this chapter, I answer the main research question: *How are the environmental sustainability policies of the trade unions anchored within their organisations?* I do so by analysing the interrelation between various levels of the organisations, comparing the policy documents and ambitions from the trade unions' central level to the experiences of those ambitions at the union member and representative levels. First, I discuss the struggle for trade unions in going from formally passed policies to action, which I find to be an issue in transforming the emerging climate discourse into material outcomes. Second, I discuss how efficient resource allocation and clear role distributions can be a way to strengthen the anchoring of the trade unions' environmental strategies. In doing so, I identify that all three trade unions have either established, or have decided to develop, a system of green reps to implement local climate measures.

7.1 From policy to practice

HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne have formally anchored their environmental sustainability policies through decision-making processes in representative and democratic arenas. HK and Naturviterne approved their current political platforms—including environmental concerns—at their respective National Assemblies in 2021 (HK Norge, 2021; Naturviterne, 2021a). Similarly, the National Assembly of Utdanningsforbundet approved their accelerated climate and environmentally related commitment in 2019 (Utdanningsforbundet, 2022a), and the current Climate action plan was approved by the central board in 2021 (Utdanningsforbundet, 2021a; 2021d). Notably, all informants in the staff member group said that it is crucial to ensure that members and representatives at the local level are included in developing and implementing strategies for environmental sustainability. The informant from HK's head office explicitly states two important factors for ensuring an effective strategy for working on sustainability: anchoring at the top level—i.e., among leaders—and across all other levels and segments of the organisation (HK 1.1). While I primarily study the anchoring across and within levels of the trade unions, the HK approach overlaps with my premise of the necessity of internal coordination for successful social change.

The Norwegian labour model, as a national-scale structure for social partnership which constrains and facilitates actions, does not, however, directly impose climate and

environmental measures top-down; rather, the basic agreements depend on local actors to demand that environmental regulations be discussed and negotiated (Bjergene & Hagen, 2020), and local actors are further responsible for identifying and initiating concrete measures. Several of the informants perceive the "weak" language of agreements and internal policy documents as constraining for action. For example, one member from Utdanningsforbundet reflects on his organisation's statement that local actors and shop stewards "should" be included in the transition (Utdanningsforbundet, 2022b, p. 5):

> '[The] introduction of climate and environmental *should* be a discussion topic, measures will *often* influence', you know? *Can* contribute with their skills. We *can* contribute, or you *could* contribute. It's not like 'We believe that if we do not do anything, this will all go to hell', colloquially speaking. (Udf 2.2)

As the internal policy documents are not legally binding, a "stronger" language use in Utdanningsforbundet (2022a) would not automatically result in action. Nonetheless, as language is discursive and represents certain ways of doing and being (Gee, 2014), discursive changes have the potential to transform into material changes (Fairclough, 2015). However, agreements are legally binding and can impose sanctions if not followed. The HK shop steward reflects on the language in agreements, emphasising that it must be clear, consistent and legally binding (HK 2.1). If not, the managerial prerogative provides the employer the discretion to manage the business outside the framework of collective bargaining, which risks to halt the efforts of union representatives and members. Here, the interplay of structure and agency becomes crucial as institutions both facilitate and constrain agency, providing spaces for action whilst also restricting it by preventing action outside the given frame (Fairclough, 2010). In this case, I perceive the Norwegian labour model as a structure, with its compromise-based character, which regulates the spaces for agency of local labour actors. At the same time, I recognise that the Norwegian labour model is socially produced and reproduced and can therefore be transformed by the very same social actors. However, in the case of environmental action, the transformation would require an update of internal policy documents and a renegotiation of the collective agreements. If the language used in agreements, and to a certain degree internal policy documents, impose climate and environmentally related measures, the "policy to practice" transformation might be more extensive on both accounts.

A further disconnection between policy and practice is identified in the storytelling of Utdanningsforbundet's union representative, as only a few local union branches she has talked to have implemented measures to ensure environmental sustainability. She says that people lack competence and knowledge on the topic, so "there is a long way to go. I believe both for Utdanningsforbundet and in the world of work and trade unions" (Udf 2.1). Similarly, the political advisor from Naturviterne says that "We know that we must cut emissions .... but it gets more difficult when it comes down to practical measures and action (Nv 1.1). Stating that "*we* have a long way to go" [my emphasis] and that "we know that *we* must cut emissions" [my emphasis], both informants acknowledge their responsibility for being part of the transition, although the process of getting there is framed as a struggle. Earlier research finds that environmental knowledge and engagement has been limited in Norwegian world of work, both at the member and representative level, and among employers (Bergsli, 2019; Halvorsen & Tiltnes, 2021; Dahl & Hagen, 2023). This correlates with the results of a Utdanningsforbundet member survey, in which around half of the members say that they have a job that has implemented climate and environmental measures at the workplace in the last two years (Utdanningsforbundet, 2021c, p. 10).

Concerning workplace measures, one Utdanningsforbundet member and the HK shop steward say that they have been part of implementing recycling routines at their workplace, but not directly connected to their respective trade union's environmental policies (Udf 2.3; HK 2.1). Nevertheless, I suggest that it is hard to distinguish where and why local measures develop, as the process is not often straightforward and linear. Rather, social action and practices emerge from interrelated societal levels and segments. When employers or workers implement local measures, it might just as much result from the broader cultural discourse, national policies, how the trade union talks about the issue, through social dialogue with shop stewards, or workers' initiatives. Such a perspective corroborates with my definition of scale, as "what goes on at one scale significantly shapes what goes on at another" (Herod, 2011, p. 252). The same is true for different levels of organisations.

7.1.1 Formal versus material anchoring

As the three unions have incorporated social, economic, and environmental sustainability into their agenda, my findings imply that they face the challenge of going from what has been formally decided upon, to transforming their environmental concerns into material change. Therefore, I suggest that just as organisational change processes have a discursive and

material side to them, so do organisational anchoring processes have a formal and a practical dimension.

Discussing the practical anchoring of climate and environmentally related policies, the senior advisor from Utdanningsforbundet believes that "the challenge we face is that this is decided at a higher level, so whether the individual member knows about this is hard to know" (Udf 1.1). The "hard to know" framing is also identified in how difficult it can be for those at the central level of the organisation to pick up on the perceptions and opinions of members. Those affected by policies are not always included in decision-making processes (Loseke, 2007), and as trade unions are representative organisations, the union delegates make decisions on behalf of their members. The union representatives, therefore, play a decisive role in the Norwegian labour model, as both employee representatives and negotiating partners to the employer (Alsos et al, 2019). Crucially, however, there are no guarantees that members will feel accurately represented, as no groups have a single undisputed identity (Saward, 2006). The senior advisor says there are members in Utdanningsforbundet who still put a question mark on the climate and environmental engagement of the trade union, but that an organisation with over 190 000 members always must expect diverging opinions (Udf 1.1). Nonetheless, by framing the sustainability policies of Utdanningsforbundet as sectoral interests, the organisation does not step outside of its role as a professional association. Instead, they incorporate the issues into the existing agenda, making sustainable development a core issue for the teaching profession at large, and therefore not necessarily representing the members' roles and interests in their private life.

When discussing the degree to which there is consensus within HK, the head office employee says that at least 70% of respondents in an internal survey with union representatives claimed that negotiating green agreements was a good idea. To ensure the legitimacy of the decision, HK made efforts to incorporate shop stewards better into their climate-related work, to which the head office employee says, "From my experiences, no one is questioning that this is something we should get engaged in now" (HK 1.1). Although they do not actively resist that HK should work with climate and the outer environment, the interview with one of HK's members (HK 2.2) illustrates that although the aforementioned survey results implies that there are grounds for establishing a climate-oriented mandate, there are diverging opinions within trade unions. Furthermore, despite being a shop steward in HK, one informant says he was not aware of HK's environmental strategies before the interview:

I am sure that there are many people in this organisation that have the knowledge, belief, and ambitions to do this. But something is wrong, since I do not feel like I have gotten any of this info [from HK], and I am in a relatively large union branch. It would have been very important for me to get all of this, that it was pushed in my direction, so I could get this further out [to my members] … but it stops somewhere along the way, unfortunately. (HK 2.1)

The "it stops somewhere along the way" framing explicitly illuminates, following Lundström et al. (2015), the disconnected spaces of the organisations. The disconnection can imply an insufficient coordination between various levels and segments of the organisation's policies, as HK formally states that its representatives are key actors in local climate measures (HK Norge, 2021), while the HK shop steward, on the contrary, does not know about it. At the same time, I recognise the individual responsibility of members and shop stewards to be updated on the politics of their union, as the HK shop steward himself also stresses (HK 2.1). Furthermore, organisational changes do not unfold in practice overnight and cannot be expected to be recontextualised and operationalised in a linear process.

In the case of Naturviterne, the political advisor says that in a member survey, climate and the environment scored the highest on what their members found important for the trade union, with members' benefits in second place (Nv 1.1), which implies that the formal anchoring process of Naturviterne does not have to be conflictual, due to the connecting interests at the individual and organisational levels. Naturviterne's formal problem formulation on climate policies frames the discursive anchoring as easy, considering the win-win situation that comes from overlapping financial and ecological interests, based on their members' professional identities and self-interests. Discussing the formal anchoring of policies within Naturviterne, the union leader says that the central level of the organisation interacts with the local levels to ensure that members' interests are maintained and reflected in their policies (Nv 1.2). However, the informants in the Naturviterne member group all expressed that they do not have the right conditions in place to engage at the workplace level, for reasons connected to a lack of knowledge, interest, or concrete enough policies to act upon (Nv 2.1; 2.2; 2.3). The perception that there is a lack of resources is crucial for analysis, when exploring the disconnection between ambitions and reality.

7.1.2 Resource allocation for ecological interests

Organisational resource scarcity is a common cause for the absence of practical outcomes (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2019). Concerning resources, the HK head office employee states that the organisation's environmental sustainability work mainly unfolds "in times of peace" (HK 1.1), and that they have a set number of hours to use for their climate and environmental policies, which requires prioritisation of what to do and how. Furthermore, HK's action plan directly frames the union's main consideration as being related to direct pay and working conditions (HK Norge, 2021, p. 43). Related to this, the senior advisor from Utdanningsforbundet says that their shop stewards lack resources—first and foremost in terms of time—to engage with issues beyond direct working conditions (Udf 1.1). This perception is confirmed by the union representative from Utdanningsforbundet, who has heard from shop stewards that they lack time to engage in new issues (Udf 2.1). A survey among LO union representatives finds the same: the more time you have allocated as a union representative, the more likely you are to engage in climate and environmental issues at the workplace (Jesnes & Steen, 2016). Further, one Utdanningsforbundet member says: "We have so little time as teachers. We have so many tasks to fulfil during the school year, or even throughout the day, haha. Time slips away" (Udf 2.3). The disconnection between what I perceive as ambitions for change—the emerging environmentally related institutional discourse—and reality—as the operationalisation of said discourse—is also reflected by Naturviterne's political advisor:

> When it comes to if you are paid to do something, versus if you are a member or a shop steward, it differs quite a lot between how much time you have available. So, it is also a question of your resources and how much you can contribute. (Nv 1.1)

One Utdanningsforbundet member believes that the problem may not stem from a lack of resources per se, but an unwillingness to subordinate financial interests to combine existing resources for environmental action. The member perceives the struggle to engage in material change as not restricted to the trade union, or the labour movement and the labour model, but rather to society at large, and the broader cultural identity in which the interests of capital are superior, as "it's like in society in general, you are concerned with it, and that's about it" (Udf 2.2). Identifying links between actions—or the lack thereof—strengthens the argument of CNA and my conceptualisation of scale: various levels of social organisation are constantly interacting. Resisting the institutional discourse of continuous prioritisation of financial interests, another member of Utdanningsforbundet believes that "If you only mention [climate

and the environment] in passing in collective bargaining, and always prioritise other things, as if it is not important, it will never become a top priority" (Udf 2.3). However, a survey shows that only one-fifth of Norwegian workers agree, or partly agree, that climate concerns should be incorporated into collective bargaining (Dahl & Hagen, 2023, p. 110), which correlates with Houeland & Jordhus-Lier's (2022) finding that shop stewards in the Norwegian petroleum industry do not consider the "green" transition as part of their mandate *as* shop stewards. Although the (de)limitations of this study makes it unable to transfer my results to the broader population of Norwegian workers, the diverging results from my studies suggest that there are conflictual perspectives on the resource allocation of trade unions. Concerning the diversity of interests within trade unions, that might detain the process of going from formal to practical anchoring of environmental strategies, one informant says:

> Wage policies are always important, maybe even the most important thing, for trade unions. The members evaluate the trade union based on the outcome of wage negotiations. And the members might not really be that interested in sustainability … which can slow down the process, so it does not get the attention it deserves. (Nv 2.3)

As my study has illustrated that a lack of ecological interest within the trade union can be transformed into an engagement if only members are aware of what they can do locally, as in the case of HK 2.2, both insufficient interest and insufficient knowledge for action are resource deficit problems. Concerning knowledge, a member survey of Utdanningsforbundet finds that only 3% of preschool teachers and 7% of primary and secondary school teachers had been offered continuous education—either as credit or non-credit courses—to teach sustainable development in their role as professionals (Utdanningsforbundet, 2021c). While reporting that the survey's low response rate makes for uncertainty in the form of larger margins of error and a greater risk of bias, it seems like those willing to engage in environmental issues are not given the right resources from their employer and/or the public sector. Likewise, several of the informants in the member group share narratives of how a lack of concrete policies prevents further actions, whether it is connected to their role as professionals, employees, or as trade union members. As Utdanningsforbundet (2021a) has developed resource materials to act to reduce the organisational footprint of the trade union, to teach sustainable development, and to include climate and environmental issues in the labour model and collective bargaining, a lack of resources to execute and do so locally is identified by both the senior advisor (Udf 1.1), the union representative (Udf 2.1), and one

ordinary member (Udf 2.3). My findings suggest that labour actors fail to utilise unused resources, in the form of members who have yet to take on their environmental labour agency, of which the role and resource distribution of the trade union can provide a partial solution to the issue.

For Utdanningsforbundet to cope with the resource issue, they have formally established a naturalisation discourse, in which the work on climate and environmental change must be incorporated into the everyday work of the trade union and their members (Udf 1.1). Still, they are clear that this work requires support from employers and political actors. Utdanningsforbundet's Leader Handal (2023) argues that working with climate-related issues in concrete ways requires resources, and the need for municipalities, counties, and national authorities to provide resources to ensure that the members of Utdanningsforbundet can contribute to sustainability transitions. Recognising the interrelation of Utdanningsforbundet's organisational identity to the broader cultural discourse on the need to act upon climate change, Handal (2023) makes other social actors responsible for ensuring that the civic mandate of teachers—to educate the next generation according to the sustainable development agenda—is realised. As such, the professional identity and responsibility of Utdanningsforbundet is alluded to as a role that stretches beyond the organisation and its members, making it a key concern for society at large.

A similar framing of resources emerges in the central level of HK, as the HK employee interviewed argues that the transformation ahead of us is so expansive that it calls for more support from the government to trade unionists, who are the ones to get practically involved in the issue. The HK employee calls it a "politics of competence", from which Norwegian society at large can benefit (HK 1.1). HK, as born out of the social democratic tradition of LO, has close ties to the Norwegian Labour Party, which the HK shop steward frames as an opportunity. To him, having the Labour Party in government until 2025 allows for the labour movement to accelerate their environmental sustainability concerns (HK 2.1). On the contrary, one member of Naturviterne says, "The environmentally hostile policies of the Centre Party, in combination with the labour movements' grip on the Labour Party, creates extremely bad conditions for nature and environmental protection" (Nv 2.1). These opposing perceptions illustrate the non-linear process of trade unions in accelerating environmental concerns. To ensure progress in sustainability transitions, Levin et al. (2014) argue that trade unions "must operate in a way that reflects the members' interests while at the same time taking chances to exceed traditional cultural barriers … Both the management and the trade union must engage in processes as they unfold" (p. 214, my translation). Hence, I

conclude that the potential conflicts developing in, and from, the political character of the labour movement, and the diverging interests represented, must be dealt with to ensure that the formally anchored policies are recontextualised and operationalised through actions.

7.2 Developing environmental action at the local level

Allocating resources to ensure practical anchoring and the material outcomes of union policies must also include processes for assigning responsibilities for who should take on what role in a sustainability transition. As the trade unions in this study adopt reformist strategies within the given frames of the Norwegian labour model, the social partners of the bi- and tripartite cooperation are identified as central to taking environmental action. The informants in the staff group acknowledge that the efforts to engage with environmental sustainability must come from a well-functional cooperation between, and across, levels of the organisation, and suggests doing so from what Goods (2017) defines as embedded institutional strategies—through the central level of the organisation in collective bargaining––and through voluntary multilateral processes, where employers and workers—not necessarily *as* trade union members, but at the local level—engage in dialogue to implement climate and environmentally related measures.

The emergence of the climate and environmental institutional discourse in Utdanningsforbundet is framed as follows:

> [Demands for sustainability] have not emerged 'from below' ... which we are well aware of at the central level. We must figure out how to incorporate this work into local practice. Where people live, in municipalities and in workplaces. (Udf 1.1)

The interaction between different levels, and who does what to engage in the environmental sustainability agenda, is further illustrated by Naturviterne's political advisor, who says the question is "whether the good ideas are brought from shop stewards and we bring them forward, or if we propose good ideas to shop stewards" (Nv 1.1). I suggest that the active incorporation of relevant labour actors on different levels is crucial for a successful operationalisation of climate and environmentally related policies, in whatever way those policies are floating. Although informants in the member group requested concrete measures from the central level, I return to the conclusion from Chapter 6: Top-down processes risk proposing solutions that are ill-suited to the local context. Hence, the risk of resistance and

conflict increases. Utdanningsforbundet (2022a) states that, as climate and environmental measures have different outcomes at the local level resulting from the conditions in place, locally adapted measures should be considered over a general approach. Acknowledging the diverging contexts of labour is crucial when implementing new policies, as resources differ through time and space (Coe, 2012). Still, bottom-up processes are never free of struggle, but represent one of many potential ways to demand interest representation (Fischer et al., 2017). Additionally, top-down processes require resources from the central level.

However, Dahl & Hagen (2023) find that a large share of Norwegian workers does not know if they have union representatives at different levels of their organisation. Hence, they lack a direct connection to someone who is supposed to represent their interests, whether they be social, financial, or ecological. I connect Dahl & Hagen's (2023) finding to what is presented in Utdanningsforbundet's (2021c) member survey: Involvement in climate and sustainability work is more common on the municipal level than in the workplace level. These findings imply that the presence of local actors is not, in itself, effective for material change and the practical anchoring of policies if no action is taken; there can still be a disconnection between ambitions (discourse, a "being") and reality (material outcomes, the "doing"). Hence, the emerging discourse must be acted upon from a shared responsibility between the employer, and the workers and their union representative(s).

The HK employee believes there is a growing recognition of "green cooperation" on the employer side, saying that an increasing number of employers realise that the labour model, as a structure for the social partners, is a golden opportunity for them to anchor their sustainability strategies (HK 1.1). HK is a private-sector organisation, whereas Naturviterne and Utdanningsforbundet also organise workers in the state and municipal sectors. Similar to the intersecting roles of workers, municipalities and state agencies act in different roles, in relation to other social actors and contexts. Municipalities are often perceived as important societal actors as institutions and service providers to their inhabitants, but they are also, in addition, large employers in the Norwegian labour market (Amundsen & Westskog, 2018, p. 118). Discussing the role of municipalities as actors for sustainable development, the senior advisor from Utdanningsforbundet states:

> [The municipalities] forget to include us in their climate and sustainability work ... Many municipalities do a lot. Still, we might not have been included in the process, and we believe the decisions would have been better if the skills and competence of people in our organisation had been considered. (Udf 1.1)

The interrelating roles of public sector actors might further complicate the relations between public sector workers and their employers. Just as public sector workers are also citizens that relate to the different roles of their employer (Jordhus-Lier, 2012), so do public sector actors also relate to public sector workers in their other role as citizens. If public sector employers primarily perceive their role as a democratically elected authority, and not a social partner at the workplace level, the potential space for local climate and environmentally related work within the labour model may remain unutilised. Hence, there is a missed opportunity to provide workers with environmental agency in their role as workers—a role stressed as important by, e.g., Hagen (2021) and Jordhus-Lier (2021). At the same time, the senior advisor from Utdanningsforbundet emphasises that it is not only the employer's responsibility to invite worker representatives to identify and implement climate and environmental measures; it also requires the labour side to raise their hand and claim their right to participate in decision-making arenas (Udf 1.1). However, from the experiences that the shop stewards from HK and Naturviterne shared, as discussed in Chapter 6, their respective employers have not been proponents of cooperating with their workers for climate and environmentally related measures (HK 2.1; Nv 2.2). The hindrances for action among employers might be produced from the same causes as for member inaction: the lack of knowledge, interests, or motivation. The employer's inaction is either in the form of active resistance, to keep business-as-usual, or passive from habitual agency, where ecological interests are not usually considered.

Recognising the responsibility of shop stewards to ensure that practical measures are implemented, the political advisor from Naturviterne balance the responsibility not only between the employer and the worker, but also between the trade union and the individual worker, as well as between individually oriented solutions and systemic solutions:

> Shop stewards ... can work individually with their members. They can make good and sustainable decisions, as seen in the increasing focus on the role of individuals, which many environmental organisations propose ... When it is incorporated into the collective agreements, it's at a higher level, you know? This means that the results get bigger when many individuals do the same thing individually. (Nv 1.1)

As individual agency has the possibility to initiate change processes– whether small- or large-scale, narrow or deep—it must be supported by others to diffuse through time and space. Perceiving the labour movement as a "collective force" in society is brought up by several of

the informants in the member group, and one member explicitly states that for her to contribute to material changes at the workplace level, she must be backed up by her co-workers and her shop steward (Udf 2.3). Theoretically, as illustrated through the agreements in Chapter 5, a high share of the shop stewards in HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne should already be included in social dialogue regarding climate and the outer environment at the workplace level. The same is stated in several of the internal policy documents of the organisations studied (HK Norge, 2021; Utdanningsforbundet, 2022a; Naturviterne, 2021b). Evaluating the combined effects of local environmental engagement from my data materials, the tendency of weak language use and a lack of concrete solutions, results in an emerging environmental discourse that, with the absence of concrete sanctions, expects local actors to engage in material changes without providing the right resources to do so. My argument resonates with Bjergene & Hagen (2020), who demand the establishment of legally binding climate agreements for the labour actors. Additionally, labour actors must find alternative ways of organising their work in order to diffuse climate and environmentally targeted efforts internally, related to what one shop steward says:

> I believe that the people at the top, who have written these policies or think a lot about these issues, would want the shop stewards to feel like they are part of it. But it stops somewhere along the way ... Why doesn't it trickle down to all workers? To all members? (HK 2.1)

As this narrative implies that decisions lack local anchoring, they risk being more symbolic than instrumental. The union representative from Utdanningsforbundet says that much of the climate and environmentally related work in the county she works in depends on a few passionate enthusiasts (Norwegian: ildsjeler) (Udf 2.1). The HK employee also develops this narrative further: "The sustainability work is mostly not internally anchored in the first stage. Instead, it depends on one or a few enthusiasts. And after a while, more people, both employees and leaders, might agree upon it" (HK 1.1). The necessity of enthusiasts driving social changes correlates with Lundström et al.'s (2015) use of organic intellectuals. The context of the organic intellectual in the Norwegian world of work is comparable to Lundström's (2018) reflections on a Swedish organic intellectual, who perceives the hierarchical structure of the labour model as constraining the acceleration of broadly organising and mobilising for environmental sustainability. The institutionalised structure of the Norwegian labour model can therefore result in a disconnection between organisational levels and can restrict initiators of change, both top-down and bottom-up.

However, it is crucial to recognise that the hierarchically ordered levels of labour actors are also interacting with each other. The interaction varies depending on the size and affiliation of the trade union, as well as the organisational traditions of specific actors. Naturviterne, with around 7000 members, might easier pick up on the interest and actions of its members at the central level than HK and Utdanningsforbundet. For example, Utdanningsforbundet has more shop stewards than Naturviterne has members. At the same time, the union leader of Naturviterne stresses that being a small organisation means that they have a small secretariat, and, thus, must prioritise where they invest their organisational resources. Therefore, I identify different theoretical pros and cons based on an organisation's size; for small trade unions, like Naturviterne, the internal communication and coordination between different levels and segments of the organisation might be easier, while at the same time resources are scarce. For larger organisations, like HK and Utdanningsforbundet, the connection between organisational actors might be more difficult to establish, while at the same time the organisations hold more resources to develop, for example, materials, training, and learning activities related to environmental sustainability.

7.3 Green reps as organic intellectuals

HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne have all identified the possibility of assigning environmental responsibility to elected members through different strategies. Electing green union representatives can be perceived as a solution to the issues of resource allocation and role distribution, as has been implemented through green reps in, for example, the UK (Rolfer, 2020; TUC, 2021). The HK action plan reads that they will develop training programmes for members to enhance their knowledge on ethical trade and the carbon footprint of products and services (HK Norge, 2021, p. 31). When asked about this in September 2022, the HK employee said they had yet to start working on this, and that it was a relevant topic to incorporate into courses for shop stewards. Further, the HK employee believes that advocating for green reps is the next step for the organisation:

> It is likely for it to be one of the shop stewards, but it could also be a representative among the workers with this specific responsibility. What is most important is that it is someone who is really enthusiastic about sustainability work, and wants to make a difference. Someone who has the time and connection to the organisation's core and wants to raise the competence on this topic. (HK 1.1)

Framed as what Goods (2017) refers to as a voluntary multilateral strategy, in which HK itself takes the initiative to accelerate the work on environmental sustainability, it is done so on similar terms to the established systems of bi- and tripartite cooperation. Thus, it is also an embedded institutional strategy, within the established arenas and traditions of the Norwegian world of work, which incorporates ecological interests into the social and financial agenda.

The proposal of incorporating climate and environmentally related concerns into shop steward training activities is drawn upon by the shop steward from Naturviterne, who suggests it as a concrete measure (Nv 2.2). Naturviterne had a green representative project in 2021, referred to as a "climate ambassador's programme", consisting of county-level groups with ordinary members and shop stewards. In August 2022, the secretariat had not decided whether to restart the programme in a second round. The union leader of Naturviterne frames the programme as "some sort of internal grassroots movement" (Nv 1.2), as the organisation usually does not include ordinary members in such projects. The use of "grassroots movement" can be understood as a symbol of the hierarchical structure of the Norwegian labour movement, as the project was not induced from the bottom-up. The methods used, however, allowed for low-threshold participation through internal Facebook groups, and political advocacy work that stretched beyond the traditional arenas of trade unionism. Still, Naturviterne broadly creates an environmental discourse in the frames of neoliberal discourses, tied to bridging financial and ecological interests from a tradition of business unionism. However, the project methods correlate with social unionism, as it developed new arenas for wider justice struggles, as defined by Ross (2007).

Confirming the diversity of interests within the organisation, even within a small group of "climate ambassadors", the union leader reflects on how some people in the programme were more engaged than others: "If there was a group with one or two enthusiasts, they might have done more than other groups" (Nv 1.2). Considering the language use, the word "enthusiast", as mentioned above, implies that although the organisations have developed a discourse at the central level that ecological interests are a win-win situation for their members, the material outcomes still largely depend on those most willing to induce transformation. Hence, not exclusively professional interests, but interests tied to the (unionised) workers' private and political identities that are necessary for practical anchoring. Similarly, the HK shop steward says: "It's all about your interests. It really is. Regarding what fights you are ready to take. What is it that you want to do for your co-workers and the enterprise?" (HK 2.1). Identifying initiators of change, as "organic intellectuals" (Lundström, 2018) or "agents of transition" (Kalt, 2022), who are willing to take on the role of a green rep

for their trade union can, thus, be an effective solution to the issue of "disconnected spaces" (Lundström et al., 2015), and of weak internal links between ambitions and reality across various levels of the situation.

Utdanningsforbundet, which found that only a fourth of their shop stewards are willing to discuss climate and environmental concerns at union branch meetings (Utdanningsforbundet, 2021c, p. 48), has established networks of "climate contacts" in all the Norwegian counties (Handal, 2023). Climate contacts are members who are either actively involved in sustainable development at their workplace, or who find the topic important. The networks have a mandate from the county board to work with the trade union's environmental strategies, for which they are financially compensated by the trade union (Utdanningsforbundet, 2021b). The climate contacts meet regularly to stay updated on the organisation's environmental policies and to gain competence that is further shared internally (Udf 1.1). The union representative from Utdanningsforbundet is in one of the climate contact groups, and believes the system allows for those interested in the topic to reach out to the workplace level, participate in local union branch meetings, and to engage others in the sustainability transition, as "it is urgent to do so" (Udf 2.1). The temporal aspect of the climate and environmental action is therefore crucial. Utdanningsforbundet's senior advisor frames the internal anchoring work as slow, but steady (Udf 1.1). The internal disconnection between the urgency of environmental sustainability concerns and the gradual character of organisational change and institutionalisation processes requires solutions of shared responsibility and long-term resource allocation. As the senior advisor from Utdanningsforbundet says, many thousands of union representatives must be trained in this reasoning, which must result in a continuous process as representatives are elected and replaced (Udf 1.1).

In conclusion, all three organisations suggest—through various formulations and degrees—a green reps system to strengthen the local anchoring and operationalisation of environmental sustainability. The green reps do not acquire the same rights and obligations in the social partnership model as other union representatives and can therefore potentially be regarded as illegitimate by the employer's managerial prerogative. Furthermore, representatives responsible for environmental sustainability issues must effectively represent the interests of workers and ensure coordination with other parts of the organisation. Otherwise, there is a risk for a continuous disconnection between different levels of the organisations, and thus, a lack of recontextualisation of the emerging discourse.

7.4 Connecting disconnected spaces

In this chapter, I have illustrated that the development of union strategies for establishing climate and the environment as relevant political issues for the trade union represents a formal anchoring process, which does not automatically transform into practical anchoring and material changes. At the organisational level, an emerging "being"—arising from identities and role perceptions in institutional discourses—recognises the ecological interests of the trade unions, their members, and society at large. However, these beings, varying within and between the organisations, are yet to unfold into a normalised "doing"—as in action—for the organisations. Hence, I argue that the trade unions face a challenge in making the emerging discourse more tangible, to ensure that the commitment to the internal policies and collective agreements are implemented in practice.

My analysis contributes with a perspective that the internal coordination of organisations is a non-linear process, that unfolds in diverse ways through time and space. The integration of the topic in one area of the organisation depends on a myriad of physical and social factors, from organisation size and affiliation to the intersections of interests and identities at the cultural, institutional, organisational, and personal levels. The critical realist approach in general, and critical human geography in particular, emphasises that the specific circumstances in a context condition the effects of policymaking. I perceive local engagement, sufficient resource allocation, and a clear role distribution as crucial mechanisms to produce practical anchoring and material change processes that can contribute to mitigating—and adapting to—climate and environmental change. Although resources must be allocated from "above", from the employer, employers' associations, trade unions, union confederations, and the national and local non-labour actors, the measures must be adapted to the unique conditions in place, as "mechanisms are not deterministic and do not always produce the same expected outcomes in different contexts" (Yeung, 2019, p. 235).

Studying the agency of labour, I also wish to stress the responsibility of the employer's side. If employers engage in similar emerging climate and environmentally related discourses as the trade unions, and allocate resources for local environmental action, "green networks" and green reps can be a part of the solution. Doing so provides an opportunity to connect the disconnected spaces of the organisations, as well as an operationalisation from formal to practical anchoring. Still, it is crucial to emphasise that the solutions proposed will emerge within the existing, compromise-based, frames of the social partnership model, and will therefore be restricted to narrow transitions.

8. Conclusion

In this chapter, I will first present my main findings by answering each of my three research questions, before I conclude by letting the respective findings inform each other in a summary analysis. Second, I state the broader relevance and policy implications of this thesis. Third, I suggest topics for future research to accelerate socially inclusive sustainability transitions in the world of work.

In this thesis, I have studied how three Norwegian trade unions—HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne—operate internally to engage with climate and environmental change as a political issue. The trade unions have formally decided to work with the environmental dimension of sustainability. When setting the scene for the trade unions' contexts, I showed that the trade unions operate in a landscape where social and financial interests have traditionally been privileged. To explore the broadening of trade union agendas to include environmental concerns in various social arenas—including the world of work, in trade unions and within the Nordic labour model—I have adopted a critical realist approach that, through CNA, allows for an exploration of the interrelations between the broader societal context, the discourses that emerge in the central levels of the organisations, and the perceptions of unionised workers on the environmental sustainability agendas of their trade unions. The questions have been answered through an analysis of documents and interview data. I have adopted a critical perspective to, on the one hand, explore what impacts identities at different levels have on agency and role perceptions. On the other hand, I have conceptualised how organisational changes occur, and what is needed to coordinate climate and environmental engagement in order to have material outcomes.

8.1 Main findings

In this thesis' first empirical research question—analysed in Chapter 5—I answer *what strategies trade unions adopt to engage with environmental concerns, as part of their political agenda and everyday activities*. I find that, on the one side, HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne have developed internal policy documents on environmental concerns that frame both the formal standpoints of the organisations, as well as—to different degrees—offering their union representatives and members resources and examples of measures to become involved in the issue. On the other side, the three trade unions have incorporated climate and environmentally related concerns into the established arenas for social dialogue at the national

level, including through collective bargaining. These strategies overlap with Goods' (2017) conceptualisation of voluntary multilateral and embedded institutional strategies.

Proceeding to Chapter 6, and the second research question, I have explored *how organised workers perceive and experience their trade union's engagement with climate and environmental change as a political issue*. I suggest that perceptions and experiences of the trade unions' climate and environmentally related strategies vary at the member level, as workers are not a homogeneous group, but represents a variety of identities and interests from their relations to other social actors and structures, which acts as mechanisms that form agency and actions at the member level. The informants in the member group are generally positive towards their trade union's environmental engagement but perceive that there exist hindrances to get engaged with the topic, as elaborated on below.

The main research question, *how the environmental sustainability policies of the trade unions are anchored within their organisations*, provides a synthesis of the two empirical research questions. I conclude that, from my data, the trade unions policies are insufficiently anchored internally, across and within levels of organisation. I suggest that there is a disconnection between the formal ambitions and the practical reality of environmental sustainability concerns, as the trade unions struggle to transform discursive change into action, to successfully go from policy to practice in their climate and environmental concerns. Therefore, the disconnection—as a weak link and insufficient practical anchoring—hinders a broad operationalisation of the trade unions' environmental policies, following Fairclough's (2010) theorisation of how emerging discourses must be operationalised into material outcomes for social transformation to be effective.

Recognising the restricted transferability of my findings to other cases and Norwegian labour environmentalism at large, I conclude with what Dahl & Hagen (2023, p. 9) find: The central levels of trade unions are paying attention to environmental sustainability issues, though this is not generally the case in the local levels of trade union work. I show that although climate and environmental change is a topic that is widely recognised as urgent to act upon in political and public discourses, and is now also increasingly recognised by labour actors, the process of going from policy to practice is perceived as a struggle. Therefore, my conclusion correlates with what is argued at different scales by both social and natural scientists: The actions taken today are insufficient to tackle climate change (IPCC, 2023).

8.1.1 Identities and interests at different levels influence policies and action

The mapping of the three trade unions' environmental strategies illustrates that the trade unions develop climate and environmental change discourses that can be transferred into their organisational identity and their members' sectoral interests, as Kalt (2022) suggests. Incorporating environmental concerns into their political agenda, all three unions do so in the frame of the Norwegian labour model: Through reformist strategies within the established arenas for social dialogue between the social partners, both nationally and locally.

Utdanningsforbundet and Naturviterne are professional associations that represent workers with a relatively bounded professional identity, as teachers and natural scientists, respectively. For Utdanningsforbundet, the professional role is linked to an intergenerational responsibility and civic mandate to ensure a sustainable future for the next generations. In Naturviterne, the environmental discourse is closely connected to its members' professional and financial interests, framing the skills and competence of its members as crucial for achieving successful sustainability transitions in society at large. HK represents a broader group of workers, where the professional interests can vary substantially from workplace to workplace. However, HK has developed an environmental discourse that is closely connected to the solidarity agenda and the social democratic tradition of LO. Furthermore, HK recognises their role as a trade union in trade and commerce, from which its members are integrated into unsustainable consumption patterns in their daily work. By emphasising that HK must engage in a sustainability transition, although their workers do not have the best working conditions—relatively speaking, on a national scale—due to how many of their members work in occupations with low income and little to no higher education, they recognise the need for everyone to take their share in the global sustainable development agenda.

Relating environmental concerns, and the potential to act upon those concerns, to existing identities and role perceptions is also something that was identified in the interviews with members and union representatives. Focusing on how identities unfold in different roles illuminates the interconnections between social practice's intimate and public spheres—as Souto-Manning's (2010) CNA proposes—the members and shop stewards who were interested in, and knowledgeable about, climate and environmental change found it easier to relate to their organisation's policies than those who were not. The interests and knowledge are, in turn, connected to profession, class, and the level and field of education. I recognise that class is a relevant factor for who ends up taking on the role of an environmental actor in

the public, private, and professional spheres. Still, the intersection of other identities and interests—e.g., from gender, age, personal relations, and political beliefs—must be included in any analysis of workers' and union members' manifestation of roles.

8.1.2 Making ecological interests a practical prioritisation

This thesis suggests that the constrained operationalisations of the three trade unions' formally decided environmental strategies—stated in internal policy documents and collective agreements—largely stems from a lack of knowledge about the organisations' environmental concerns, or a lack of interest in getting engaged in material changes among workers and/or employers. Concerning the hindrances to taking environmental action locally, my data illustrates that the "knowing of" trade unions' policies has not diffused to all levels of the organisations. The knowledge deficit includes that trade union members do not know that the policies exist, or that they lack the knowledge and tools to go from policy to practice regarding the union's environmental concerns. The knowledge problem is often related to interests; those in the trade unions who know about the issue have an interest in the issue, and vice versa. Hence, I find a disconnection between the formally stated ambitions and strategies of trade unions and their material outcomes.

The resource scarcity of trade unions is also perceived as an obstacle for labour actors to engage further in climate and environmental issues. I, therefore, argue that the continuous prioritisation of social and financial interests is a mechanism that hinders the process of going from discursive to material change. The three trade unions' central levels explicitly state that their environmental concerns play out in their role *as* trade unions, privileging their members' social and financial interests. However, by incorporating environmental concerns into their existing work—and making it the hegemonic way of "doing" and "being" as a labour actor—the current obstacles can be perceived as less constraining for environmental action. At the same time, as labour has intersecting and diverging interests (Herod, 2001; Coe, 2012), not everyone can be expected to reproduce the dominant institutional discourse, regardless if it frames climate and environmental change as a relevant issue to act upon or not.

Thus, I recognise that the connection between institutional discourses and personal narratives varies between and within trade unions. Workers can oppose hegemonic discourses and policy implementations through active resistance, inaction, or by proposing alternative ways of understanding profit motives and tackling climate and environmental issues. At the

same time, unionised workers can reproduce the formal environmental discourses of their trade unions across time and space.

8.1.3 (Re)distributing resources and responsibilities for environmental sustainability

In this thesis, I find that both trade union employees and members believe that resources from labour actors and other political actors, e.g., time, money, and knowledge, are necessary to accelerate the sustainability transition in the world of work. A central argument to this thesis is that labour agency—whether it be solely discursive or transformed into practice—is contextual and largely conditioned by the available resources through time and space (Coe, 2012; Coe & Jordhus-Lier, 2011). I identify a recurring argument in my interview data: Resources must include time and financial compensation for shop stewards to coordinate their work as environmental actors. At the same time, I suggest that the resource allocation within HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne today is insufficient, representing an unfunded mandate for environmental action. As the trade unions privilege social and financial interests––in a spectrum between business unionism and social unionism—union members are not provided tools for, and spaces of, environmental action.

The lack of resources allocated for climate and environmental concerns results in a disconnection between, and within, levels of the organisations, hindering local actors from getting involved. This is what I, following Lundström et al. (2015), refer to as a disconnected space. However, as some, but not all, members and union representatives have been active in developing or implementing climate and environmentally related measures, there seems to be a spatially uneven anchoring of environmental agency and actions and coordination processes within the trade unions.

Hence, I conclude that increasing resources must include knowledge of environmental sustainability, through training and learning activities and continuous education. Furthermore, members must be provided concrete and easily implemented local climate measures to get engaged in practical action in their workplace. Establishing a system for green reps is suggested as a possible solution in the policies of HK, Utdanningsforbundet, and Naturviterne—both in internal policy documents and in negotiations and cooperation with the employers' side. I find green reps to be an interesting and fruitful opportunity for labour actors to develop further, as discussed in the next section.

8.2 Relevance and policy implications

In this thesis, I have contributed new insights into Environmental Labour Studies (Räthzel & Uzzell, 2013; Räthzel et al., 2021), and the suggested emergent field of Environmental Labour Geography (Kleinheisterkamp-González, 2023). The contribution of this thesis is that it is cross-sectoral and multi-level, as I have explored three trade unions in different segments of the economy and their emerging discourses and narratives from the shop floor level to the central level of the trade unions, as well as their connections to the broader socio-political and cultural setting. I broaden the analytical scope from whether or not trade unions should act upon climate and environmental change to the *how* of it.

By including labour actors at different levels in my analysis—from the trade unions' head offices to union representatives and ordinary members—I stress that the formal and discursive development of environmental policies does not automatically unfold in material outcomes, as necessary to tackle climate and environmental change. Building onto the concept of disconnected spaces by Lundström et al. (2015), I broaden the scope of labour actors for environmental action, from the shop steward level to the member level. Analytically, I find the separation of discursive change and material change, as adopted from Fairclough (2015), as a useful conceptualisation when studying the (dis)connection between policy and practice. I also suggest anchoring as a relevant analytical concept when exploring how to transform environmental concerns into action. Nonetheless, I stress that just as organisational change processes have a discursive and material side to them, so do organisational anchoring processes have a formal and a practical dimension.

My analysis further complements existing studies in the Norwegian context, i.e., how municipal and oil labour actors engage with the environment (Ellingvåg, 2021; Holland, 2021; Holland & Jordhus-Lier, 2022), how workers relate to the SDGs (Halvorsen & Tiltnes, 2021), and how the internal solidarity of LO is challenged through incorporating ecological interests into their political agenda (Houeland et al., 2021). Furthermore, whereas Houeland & Jordhus-Lier (2022) find that shop stewards in the Norwegian petroleum industry do not perceive climate change as part of their shop steward role, this thesis illustrates that there are other Norwegian union representatives and members—who, in this case, are not in the petroleum industry—that are either active environmental actors in their union representative role, or are open to taking on that role.

When proceeding from policy to practice in the environmental work of the three trade unions, I perceive it as necessary that the resource deficit problems within the organisations

are dealt with, both nationally—at the central level of the organisations—and locally, in individual workplaces. Though the three trade unions I study have traditionally prioritised social and financial interests in their sustainability work, they have also established environmentally related political agendas, which expands on traditional labour interests, so new ways of allocating existing resources are required. I argue that the responsibility of resource allocation is not exclusively in the hands of the trade unions, but also of employers and political decision-makers at different levels. Furthermore, developing systems for green reps must be coordinated with the broader agenda of the trade union, and must create links to the workplace level, which resonates with Lundström's (2018) analyses of green organic intellectuals. If not, there is a risk of environmental sustainability work not emerging as the norm—the hegemonic discourse—of the organisations, but as a response to cultural and personal identity narratives parallel to the ordinary labour agenda. Green reps must further be provided resources to ensure the naturalisation of climate and environmental change as critical political issues for labour to engage with. With an entry point in the Norwegian labour model, as one centred on building a compromise of the labour-capital conflict, a more radical environmental labour agency is difficult to unfold in practice. An alternative for trade union members who perceive their trade union's environmental concerns as too narrow is, therefore, to become a union representative, or to practice their environmental action in arenas outside of the labour movement.

Considering the materialisation of roles as environmental actors for other labour and non-labour actors, I suggest the following: Politicians must ensure that the democratic and representative structure of the Norwegian labour model is upheld and remains socially inclusive, as well as provide a well-regulated (labour) market that benefits employers who work practically to ensure social, economic, *and* environmental sustainability. The employers' side must, therefore, ensure their obligations as labour actors and provide resources for local climate measures. Additionally, public sector employers must recognise their role *as* employers by inviting the workers' side into social dialogue when climate and environmental issues relevant to workers are discussed and implemented. On the workers' side, the trade unions must actively start local-level conversations, where all members are offered a space to discuss environmental concerns. In doing so, there is a potential for trade union members to detect that they can include ecological interest into their roles as workers– as employees, professionals, and union members—and experience the "180 turn" one of the informants underwent during the interview. Additionally, "climate specialists" in the trade unions must contribute to develop training and learning activities for all shop stewards—

adapted to the interests and skills of their members—and provide resource materials to lower the threshold for members and shop stewards to get engaged in environmental action at the local level. Locally, shop stewards and other union representatives must ensure that the interests of their members are represented, and that they keep themselves updated on their organisations' policies. Union representatives are responsible for participating in social dialogue with the employer to develop a socially inclusive sustainability trajectory. For those specifically interested in climate and the environment, the opportunity to become a green representative must be provided by the central levels of their organisation. Green reps can share experiences across levels of the organisations and can work as a resource for local labour actors who need help and guidance on how to become engaged with their trade union's environmental strategies.

This thesis' identification of what relevant social actors can do in their different roles to accelerate the sustainability transition in the world of work, in combination with the illustration of the unutilised potential for environmental agency and action among trade union members and representatives, illuminates the potential for labour actors to induce discursive *and* material change for a more holistic sustainable development.

8.3 Further research

Research of the labour-nature relation has the potential to bring new empirical and theoretical insights to accelerate sustainability transitions and transformations. This thesis is limited to a specific point in time and space, exploring a fast-evolving topic in which policies are continuously revised, renegotiated, and updated. As initiatives for environmental sustainability among labour actors emerge, further research is needed. Future studies must also explore initiatives of labour environmentalism across national borders, providing an expansion of the international links and learning that occurs across various initiatives and structural conditions. As I identify a resource deficit problem in the Norwegian labour movement, in which unions have more resources than most unions in other national contexts, alternative solutions to those I have proposed might be necessary in those cases. Additionally, other initiatives of social unionism in the Global North and South can provide insights into community organising and grassroots movements, which can inspire alternatives to, and challenge the current ways of, the "being" and "doing" in the Norwegian labour movement.

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Appendix 1: Stimulus material

	Handel og Kontor	Utdanningsforbundet	Naturviterne
1	"Klimatiltak på arbeidsplassen kan være mange ting. Små ting som økologisk lunsj, håndklær istedenfor tørkepapir, eller store ting som investering i grønne fond eller grønne tariffavtaler" (HK Norge, n.d., n.p.).	"Utdanningsforbundet skal, som en sentral samfunns- og utdanningspolitisk aktør, være en pådriver for å fremme utdanning for bærekraftig utvikling og jobbe for en rettferdig omstilling av samfunnet" (Utdanningsforbundet, n.d.b, n.p.).	"Velkommen til fagforeningen for naturvitere med hjerte for bærekraft" (Naturviterne, n.d.c, n.p.)
2	"Å samarbeide om å tenke på miljø gagner både klimaet, men også deg, meg og bedriften" (HK Norge, n.d., n.p.).	"Vi kan alle bidra som samfunnsborgere, og som ansatte og fagorganiserte" (Utdanningsforbundet, 2022a, p. 3).	"En grønn tariffavtale skal bidra til bærekraftig verdiskaping, det betyr at den må lønne seg både for samfunnet, arbeidsgiver, ansatte, naturen og klima" (Naturviterne, 2022, n.p.).
3	"Miljøet er et felles ansvar og krever at vi tenker nytt – arbeidslivet kan ikke lenger fritas fra klimakrisen" (HK Norge, n.d., n.p.).	"Innføring av klima og miljøtiltak bør være drøftingstema mellom lokale parter på nivået beslutninger fattes" (Utdanningsforbundet, 2022b, p. 5).	"Øke etterspørselen etter naturvitenskapelig kompetanse i forvaltning og næringsliv for å sikre at det grønne skiftet gjennomføres på naturens premisser" (Naturviterne, 2022, n.p.).
4	"Vil du bli medlem? Med et medlemskap i HK kan du være med å gjøre arbeidsplassen grønnere" (HK Norge, n.d., n.p.).	"Ofte vil tiltak kunne påvirke både tjenesteyting og de ansattes ansettelsesforhold. Som representanter for lærerprofesjonene kan Utdanningsforbundets tillitsvalgte bidra med sin kompetanse for å gjøre tiltakene så gode og rettferdige som mulig" (Utdanningsforbundet, 2022b, p. 9).	"Naturen har gitt oss arbeid og inntekter siden tidenes morgen. Et grønt taktskifte trygger velferd og livskvalitet – også for framtida" (Naturviterne, 2022, n.p.).
5	"Våre tillitsvalgte, verneombud og medlemmer må være pådrivere for at drift,	"Lærerprofesjonen har en sentral rolle i omstillingen til et bærekraftig samfunn, og	"Arbeidslivet er en viktig arena for gjennomføring av bærekraftige løsninger. Naturviterne

	produksjon og handelsproduktene som omsettes på arbeidsplassene, er så rettferdige og miljøvennlige som mulig" (HK Norge, 2021, p. 31).	det inngår som en del av vårt samfunnsmandat å gi barn og unge kompetanse for å kunne leve på en bærekraftig og miljøvennlig måte" (Utdanningsforbundet, 2021d, p. 3).	vil bringe inn vår kompetanse og politikk på alle nivåerne for samarbeid mellom arbeidsgiver og arbeidstakere" (Naturviterne, 2021a, n.p.).
6	"Fagbevegelsens arbeid for å redusere økonomiske forskjeller lever side om side med HKs fokus på bærekraft. Lavlønnspolitikken, sykelønn, rettferdig pensjon og gode arbeidsvilkår er fortsatt HKs kampsaker i tariffoppgjørene" (HK Norge, 2021, p. 43).	"Utdanningsforbundet skal ivareta interessene til medlemmene både når det gjelder lønns- og arbeidsvilkår og profesjonsfaglige spørsmål i forbindelse med omstillingen til et bærekraftig samfunn, og vil derfor bidra til at klima og bærekraftspørsmål blir en del av partssamarbeidet og medbestemmelse" (Utdanningsforbundet, 2021d, p. 3).	"Klimaendringene fordrer et tett og gjensidig forpliktende partssamarbeid mellom myndighetene og fagbevegelsen. Natur- og klimahensyn må få en sentral plass i trepartssamarbeidet" (Naturviterne, 2021a, n.p.).
7	"HK vil arbeide for gode samfunn uten stadig økende miljøskadelig forbruk, og økonomien bør ikke være avhengig av stadig økende fossile utslipp» (HK Norge, 2021, p. 31).	"Partene understreker viktigheten av at det i partssamarbeidet fremmes forståelse for og innsikt i virksomhetens påvirkning på ytre miljø og klima" (Virke, 2022, p. 9).	"Tillitsvalgte skal ha medbestemmelse når det gjelder bærekraftig utvikling av virksomheten" (Naturviterne, 2021b, n.p.).
8	"HK vil arbeide for å lage forpliktende miljøavtaler som ikke tillater å handle varer av bedrifter som skader regnskog og artsmangfold under produksjon og/eller eksport" (HK Norge, 2021, p. 31).	"Gjennom å involvere klubben vil du kunne bidra til at klima- og miljøavtrykk får styrke og legitimitet blant de ansatte. Tillitsvalgte bør drøfte forslag om klima og miljø på klubbmøter slik at medlemmene får anledning til å framføre sine synspunkter og involveres i avgjørelser" (Utdanningsforbundet, 2022b, p. 5).	"Som fagforening engasjerer Naturviterne seg i samfunnsdebatten for å synliggjøre naturviterkompetansen som viktig for bærekraftig utvikling" (Naturviterne, n.d.b, n.p.).