

# On the Foodpanda delivery workers' struggle in Hong Kong

## Input by Siutong

### Three strikes in 2020, 2021 and 2022

- **2020 Deliveroo strike**
  - Largely 'decentralised' (无大台) self-organisation, mobilising process unclear
  - Forced company to negotiate but with little concrete result
  - No 'outsiders' (strike leader refused the help from HKCTU)
- **2021 Foodpanda strike**
  - Self-organisation based on informal networks in different zones, online decentralised mobilisation in chat groups
  - 'Leadership' formed by zone leaders, union (HKCTU) staff and NGO (HKCIC) staff
  - Huge interest from the media and the general public
  - Negotiation, with concrete results
  - Cf. <https://www.lac.org.hk/en/node/351>, <https://www.lac.org.hk/en/node/352>
- **2022 Foodpanda strike**
  - 'Riders' Network' facilitated by HKCIC (see later) played a main role
  - Similar mobilising methods, with probably stronger in-zone organisation and cross-zone coordination, but with less support from the more atomised type of workers and less online mobilisation
  - More tricks from the company to buy time and divide the workers
  - Less interest from the media and the general public
  - No negotiation, no result (some zones report a more reasonable pay, but not sure how wide and why)

### Developments

- **The increasing role of outsiders (HKCIC)**
  - Assistance in resources: mobilising/education materials, media contact, etc.
  - Beware of the risk: Who leads the movement? Do the *workers' power* get strengthened? (Why am I speaking here instead of a real rider?)
- **Organising in 'networks'**
  - Compared to unions: less structured, less hierarchical, less accountability
  - In-zone: Informal mutual-help groups
  - Cross-zone: A 'HK Riders' network' was formed in August 2022, but what it should look like is still unknown

- Small-scale actions or campaigns to sustain the momentum and strengthen the network, e.g., parking issue
- Why no one registers a union?
  - Low institutional power entitled by law
  - High administrative cost and political risk
  - Turnover and the sense of instability among workers

Challenges, or the ultimate question: How to build workers' associational power?

- **Not everyone can be organised in networks: Part-time, often ethnic Chinese workers seldom get involved**
  - Is a problem for strike, long-term organisation, and legislation efforts
  - No material interest, or even with conflicting interest from full-timers
  - Very low level of connection or even acquaintance with others due to their mode of work
  - Possibility of polarisation (seen in the latest strike)?
    - The *most organised* riders are unable to influence these part-timers
- **What should the 'Riders' Network' look like?**
  - Workers' willingness faded since the failed strike
  - Structure: Should it attract more members or should it only function as 'vanguards'?
  - Goal and activity: What should it do on an everyday basis to build its capacity and influence more riders?
  - Try to be a union or not?