



## Audiences: Who Do Unions Target?

**Abstract** This chapter investigates what groups are typically addressed by unions' YouTube videos and analyses how well the three Swedish trade union confederations apply the revitalization strategy of targeting more diverse groups. Based on a rough analysis of video titles and descriptions (large N sample), as well as a qualitative analysis of a smaller set of videos (small N sample), we demonstrate that unions only rarely address traditionally unorganized groups such as young people or people with a foreign background, although upper-middle-class unions do so more frequently than the working-class and white-collar workers' unions. We also show that most of the unions' videos target their own members. Thus, in their use of YouTube, unions tend to address internal issues by uploading videos that help to increase the internal democracy of the organization, which may be helpful in keeping existing members and perhaps also bringing back members that have been lost over the years.

**Keywords** Young people · Precarious workers · Internal democracy

It is reasonable to assume that when the Municipal Workers' Union posted the video titled 'How to get a raise in 47 seconds', they had several different audiences in mind. The act of transforming their chairperson, Annelie Nordström, into a man in order to 'solve' the problem of women's lower life earnings activates different social identities and speaks to a variety of groups: employers, politicians, the media, union

members, other social movements fighting for equal pay and the general public. But above all, the video speaks to anyone concerned about gender inequality and encourages these people to mobilize. This video illustrates not only the multiple identities of contemporary trade unions (see further discussion in Chapter 4), but also the necessity of addressing various societal groups while mobilizing.

Targeting the right groups is crucial for the successful outreach of a message—but what is the right audience for trade unions on YouTube? It has been widely argued that trade unions interested in revitalization should catch the attention of a broader range of people than the traditionally organized groups. Unions need to not only regain former members, but also organize groups that have been historically underrepresented in trade unions, such as part-time employees, employees with atypical employment contracts (i.e. precarious workers), women, young people, ethnic minorities and migrant workers. Of course, unions can also use social media to communicate with their members. In this chapter, we examine how unions deal with these issues in practice.

## 2.1 TARGETING MEMBERS AND POTENTIAL MEMBERS OF SWEDISH TRADE UNIONS

There is little doubt that trade unions want to reach out to their *members* in order to strengthen the bonds between an organization and its members, promote activism and improve internal democracy. Thus, targeting existing members via social media not only has an important identity-building function, but also helps unions improve their internal democracy—a problem that has been on the agenda for more than a 100 years (Michels 2001 [1915]). In their work on information and communication technology (ICT) and trade union internal democracy, Greene et al. (2003) note that two obstacles to internal democracy (as described by Michels in his classic study of the German labour movement) are information dispersion within the organization and control over the means of communication. These two problems can be addressed via social media (Greene et al. 2003). It has been claimed that the Internet facilitates ‘distributed discourse’ (Clegg 2002; Geelan and Hodder 2017; Upchurch and Grassman 2016). In the past, union leaders have controlled communication within the movement, but with the emergence of ICT, this control has been distributed within the movement

(Greene et al. 2003); leaders no longer have the monopoly on the distribution of information and the creation of discourses. ICT offers higher levels of transparency and greater possibilities for more extensive interaction between the organization and its members (Zivkovic and Hogan 2005). Members can easily subscribe to various communication channels of the union (i.e. e-mail lists, Facebook groups or YouTube channels) and thereby receive relevant information as soon it is posted. Members can also easily use the Internet and social media for spreading information themselves. Thus, these new communication channels can facilitate greater ‘equality of knowledge’ within the movement (Carter et al. 2003). Moreover, anyone can participate in online discussions related to these posts; in fact, social media offers good opportunities to establish direct contact between an organization and its individual members, something that has been difficult to accomplish in the past. Approaching the union through social media initiates conversations in public settings, thus, creating pressure on the organization to respond to members’ questions. It has also been argued that ICT has the potential to increase the participation of union members who would otherwise be inactive, because participation through the Internet has no time or space limits (Greene and Kirton 2003; Thornthwaite et al. 2018). Thus, in comparison with ‘old’ paper-based newsletters, ICT and social media, such as YouTube, hold great potential for advancing information dispersion and transparency within an organization, and YouTube is an especially good medium for publicizing congresses and conferences, which can be streamed live online.

This thoroughly positive view of what the Internet can offer has been criticized. Of course, extensive reliance on ICT may reproduce the hierarchies that already exist within labour movements and society (Lucio et al. 2009). It has been claimed that unions choose to use ICT techniques in which they can control the information flow, such as webpages (Fitzgerald et al. 2012), instead of using the more democratic, interactive mediums. Research also indicates that ICT does not activate member groups that are inactive offline (Kerr and Waddington 2014). Online technological solutions can also be misused, for instance, through surveillance of employees (Upchurch and Grassman 2016). Thus, research on internal democracy and social media has so far come to ambiguous conclusions, and it is therefore particularly interesting to analyse whether and how Swedish unions target their own members using YouTube videos.

Reaching *potential members* is more difficult, although social media—and YouTube—could be particularly useful for such purposes. YouTube is so popular worldwide that any video has an opportunity to be watched. The audiences that trade unions need to reach are the groups that have been historically underrepresented in trade unions: part-time employees, precarious workers, women, young people, ethnic minorities and migrant workers (Frege et al. 2014; Frege and Kelly 2003, 2004; Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman 2014, pp. 81–101; Mrozowicki and Trawińska 2013; Mustchin 2012). YouTube is a useful way to address this task, for several reasons.

First, precarious workers have always been hard to organize because they work in sectors with non-standard hours, making it difficult for unions to contact these groups (Bailey et al. 2010). Moreover, precarious employment is often temporary, and research shows that unions have found it difficult to reach out to these workers in time through the regular organizing model, before the workers have already moved on. Research indicates that temporary workers tend to join unions if unions are available (Sánchez 2007). Thus, the problem is often one of practically reaching these groups. Considering that communication via YouTube videos is not limited by time or space, unions should perceive it as a good means of reaching this large and growing group of employees.

Two groups that are often in precarious employment contracts are young people (Pedersini 2010, p. 13; Vandaele 2013) and people with foreign backgrounds (Alberti et al. 2013). It is well known that young people use the Internet, including YouTube, more than other groups. Thus, it makes sense for organizations that want to reach young people to maintain a presence on online forums where young people spend a great deal of their time. The average YouTube user stays on the site for 40 min, and this time is steadily increasing (Omnicores 2018, September 18). Furthermore, young people are ‘inadvertent news consumers’ through social media (Bowyer et al. 2017); thus, they tend to receive and adopt information that they did not originally intend to look for. All of this suggests that YouTube is a place where unions can reach young people. In fact, one of the few prior studies about trade unions and the use of YouTube has demonstrated that young people became aware of trade unions’ campaigns through YouTube videos (Geelan 2015, pp. 81–83).

Finally, in order to revitalize the movement and enlarge and differentiate the membership base, unions should also attract migrant workers.

There is a wide scope of research analysing unions' strategies to organize migrant workers (e.g. Alberti et al. 2013; Connolly et al. 2014; Marino 2012; Mustchin 2012). Like youth, this group is often temporarily employed, has irregular working hours and commonly has precarious working conditions (Alberti et al. 2013). Unlike youth recruitment, however, the recruitment of migrant workers often implies language barriers. Using videos to transmit visual messages can overcome these barriers and transmit information to people who lack the necessary language skills and/or are unable to read complex texts about union membership. Women are another group that research has claimed that unions need to target. In the case studied here, however, the situation is different; the gender bias that exists in other countries (although there has been a global increase in women's participation in unions) is not visible in Sweden. On the contrary, women are more unionized than men in Sweden (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman 2014, pp. 53–54). In sum, the second main task of this chapter is to examine whether and how unions target precarious workers, young people and people with a foreign background. First, however, we will explain why we expect Swedish unions to vary in terms of reaching out to members and potential members.

## 2.2 SWEDISH TRADE UNIONS AND AUDIENCES

Based on the existing literature on trade union revitalization, we expect Swedish unions to address both members and potential members through their YouTube videos. However, we also expect different unions to choose different 'targeting strategies'. It is likely that all unions, regardless of class position or experience with the union crisis, will use social media to improve their communication with their members. Nevertheless, we expect differences in terms of reaching out to potential members through social media. Unions affiliated with the three different confederations—the LO, the TCO and Saco—have had different experiences with membership decline and the union crisis. Structural changes in the economy have shrunk the industrial sector significantly, while simultaneously increasing the service sector (Pashev et al. 2015). This shift has impacted the 'supply' of potential members: the working class has decreased and the number of white-collar workers and the number of upper-middle-class workers have increased. More importantly, the shift from the industrial sector to the service sector, which has

occurred within the working-class occupations, has had an impact on union density. Whereas union density has increased among white-collar workers and the upper middle class, it has decreased among the working class.

These changes call for different reactions from the unions, depending on the class composition of the union. The current union density among young Swedish workers (16–24 years of age) who do not simultaneously study has declined from 70% in 1995 to only 40% in 2015 (Larsson 2018). Furthermore, white-collar and upper-middle-class jobs often require education; thus, very young employees usually work in working-class jobs, which make young people more likely to become members of the LO unions than of the TCO and Saco unions. This means that working-class unions have a particular need to reach young people. Therefore, it is probable that the LO is engaged in targeting youth.

The same reasoning applies to precarious workers and people with foreign backgrounds. The ‘supply’ of migrant workers has significantly increased since the enlargement of the EU in 2004, with the increase mainly occurring in working-class occupations such as construction, transport and basic services. This shift has led to a number of active mobilizations of working-class unions on behalf of migrant workers, including berry pickers from Thailand and construction workers from Latvia (Marino et al. 2017). Nevertheless, the overall union density among this group is still low. Precarious employment has increased over time in Sweden, largely due to globalization and the 2008 economic crisis. Although temporary contracts are also increasing in white-collar and upper-middle-class jobs, they are still more prevalent within the working class.

Due to these differences, we expect the examined trade unions to target somewhat different groups with their YouTube videos, depending on which class the unions represent. Although all unions are expected to address their own members to a similar degree, *working-class unions affiliated with the LO are expected to target all three unorganized groups more than the other two confederations*. We test this hypothesis empirically using two datasets: first, by performing a simple content analysis of the metadata (titles, descriptions, numbers of views and likes) of 4535 videos (the large N sample) and second, by watching and carefully coding 624 randomly selected videos (the small N sample).

## 2.3 TARGETS IN THE LARGE N DATASET: METHOD AND FINDINGS

In the first step of our analysis to identify the groups targeted by trade unions in YouTube videos, we conducted a simple content analysis based on the title and description of the videos. As noted in the introductory chapter, this investigation was not based on a survey asking the unions what groups they want to target or who their intended audience is. Furthermore, we did not identify the groups targeted by unions by profiling those who commented on the videos or subscribed to the channels, as these were very few and thus insufficient to use to draw conclusions. Instead, we identified the targeted groups from the perspective of YouTube consumers. Most people find YouTube videos by using Google or the integral YouTube search engine; therefore, unions must produce videos that can easily be found and that can be understood by particular consumers. One key element in increasing visibility is the careful use of video tags, keywords and descriptions. These items are metadata defined by the producer of the video and are used by the YouTube search engine and by other search engines. Thus, video titles and descriptions are crucial for visibility. By analysing this information, we can obtain information on the audiences that are most likely to find the videos. Therefore, we looked for targeted audiences *by searching for specific keywords* that the groups of interest (i.e. members and potential members, the latter of which include employees with precarious employment, youth and people with a foreign background) might search for. We also looked for direct references to these groups. This last point is important, because a union targeting young people might tag a video with keywords such as ‘young workers’.

Of course, in addition to targeting specific groups in order to recruit new members to the trade union movement, unions can produce videos with general recruitment material and thus target *potential members in general* rather than specific groups. Such videos are best found using keywords such as ‘recruitment’. Table 2.1 presents the coding scheme that was applied to the titles and descriptions of the 4535 videos.

In order to identify videos that directly address union members, we searched for videos with information on current actions of trade union leaders, congresses, updates on collective bargaining processes and interviews with unions’ chairmen that explain ongoing union work. These types of information dispersion can improve the transparency of organizational activities in a union and thereby help to strengthen the union’s

**Table 2.1** Targets and keywords

<i>Targets</i>	<i>Keywords in English</i>
Union members	<i>Collective agreement, congress, annual meeting, trustee, chairman, board</i>
People with precarious employment	<i>Part-time, seasonal work, temporary work, summer job, insecure employment</i>
Young people	<i>Youth, young people, student, student member, summer job, apprentice, internship, gymnasium, scholarship, and all videos uploaded to the unions' youth channels</i>
People with foreign backgrounds	Videos in languages other than Swedish and the keywords <i>foreign, immigrant, migrant, asylum, refugee, undocumented migrant</i>
Potential members in general (no specific group)	<i>Member, membership, recruit, admission, benefits, income insurance<sup>a</sup></i>

<sup>a</sup>This insurance is specific for trade union members and differs from general unemployment insurance

internal democracy. Of course, potential members might also watch these videos; however, it is likely that the majority of the audience of these videos are union members.

We identified videos targeting people with precarious employment by searching using a combination of keywords that capture employment-related issues that are likely to be interesting to this group, such as *part-time, seasonal work, temporary jobs* and *working conditions*. This category partially overlaps with young people and people with a foreign background because these groups often have precarious employment.

To identify videos that might interest young people and signal the unions' interest in organizing youth, we searched using keywords such as *young, student, apprentice, internship* and *summer job*. As some unions have their own youth and student channels, we coded the videos in these channels as targeting youth, since these channels are exclusively devoted to informing young people about union issues (all detailed codes in Swedish are presented in the Appendix). We assumed that young people looking for information on trade unions or employment issues would search for words such as *summer job* and *apprentice*, since these occupations are mainly populated by young people. In order to minimize the number of false positives, we excluded words such as *pupil* and *school*, as such terms are more likely to be mentioned by teachers' unions, and as union membership is not open for pupils in lower grades. However,

pupils learning a specific occupation in high school can join a union, often with a reduced or non-existent membership fee.

Videos targeting people with a foreign background such as migrant labour and first-generation immigrants (SCB 2002:3) were harder to identify through a content analysis of the video titles and descriptions. People who have been in Sweden for a relatively short time, or who plan to come to work in Sweden, may not be fluent in Swedish. We manually checked how many of the videos were in languages other than Swedish and found 91 non-Swedish videos, all of which were in English. In our analysis, we assumed that when unions discussed issues such as immigration, refugees and migrant labour in their YouTube videos, such discussions signalled the union's openness towards these groups. Theoretically, however, unions could also post videos that are critical or negative towards immigration. It is known, for example, that many LO members support the populist radical right party, the Sweden Democrats; however, none of the Swedish trade unions have displayed any anti-immigrant rhetoric in public. In fact, Swedish trade unions—and especially working-class unions—have raised the issue of ensuring that migrant workers are covered by collective agreements (see e.g. the infamous Laval case in Woolfson et al. 2010). We examined all the videos in this category more closely and noted that none of them had a negative framing of migrants or of migrant labour. Thus, all videos including the terms *immigration*, *migration* and *asylum seekers* were coded as attempts to reach out to people with a foreign background.

Finally, we looked for videos describing membership recruitment and the general benefits of joining the union, as these topics would be of interest to any potential member. Of course, this category also contains vital information for existing members, such as information on how income insurance works, union services offered to members and so forth. Therefore, it was difficult to distinguish between videos targeting 'members' and those targeting 'potential members'. However, after watching many of the videos (and performing the more detailed analysis presented in Chapter 4), it seemed to us that most of these videos were actually intended to inform potential members about the benefits of joining the union.

## 2.4 FINDINGS IN THE LARGE N DATASET

All of the videos were coded using the categories of members, precarious employment, youth, people with a foreign background and potential members in general. Since these categories are not mutually exclusive, a

**Table 2.2** Proportion (%) of videos addressing the different targets ( $N=4535$ )

<i>Unions affiliated to</i>	<i>Members</i>	<i>People with precarious employment</i>	<i>Young people</i>	<i>People with a foreign background</i>	<i>Potential members in general</i>	<i>General public</i>	<i>Total no. of videos</i>
LO	38.9	2.5*	6	1.8	9.5	50.9	1809
TCO	36.4	0.6	7.8	2.1	10.9	51.4	1347
Saco	21.3*	0.6	21.7*	6.4*	6.7	51.5	1379
Total	32.7 (1487)	1.2 (53)	11.3 (513)	3.3 (149)	9 (410)	51.2 (2323)	100 (4535)

\*The difference between confederations is significant at the 95% level; all but the 'general public' categories are not mutually exclusive; and the total percentage in all rows can exceed 100

single video could fall into multiple categories. Videos that did not seem to target any of the groups of interest (i.e. videos that did not include any of our keywords) were coded as targeting the general public.

As shown in Table 2.2, slightly more than half of the videos (2323) were categorized as addressing the general public. Even though some of these videos could easily be found and watched by union members or potential members, these videos did not directly target any of the groups of interest. For example, most of the videos in this category provided general information on unions, on a specific career opportunity or occupation or on political campaigns mobilized by the union. These videos can be viewed as increasing public awareness of trade unions among the general public and thus *indirectly* recruiting people to trade unions.

In terms of targeting potential members, the first obvious result from the analysis was that Saco-affiliated unions representing the upper-middle-class professions uploaded almost three times more videos targeting 'youth' than the white-collar TCO-affiliated and working-class LO-affiliated unions. Saco stands out in this regard, which is not surprising, given that Saco-affiliated unions are based on specific professions (e.g. engineers, teachers, architects, doctors, dentists, etc.) that require a university education. Thus, Saco-affiliated trade unions can easily identify potential members while they are still students and begin to organize them during their student time (many of the unions offer special membership for students). Saco has a strong presence at universities; in fact, the confederation has its own YouTube channel for student fairs

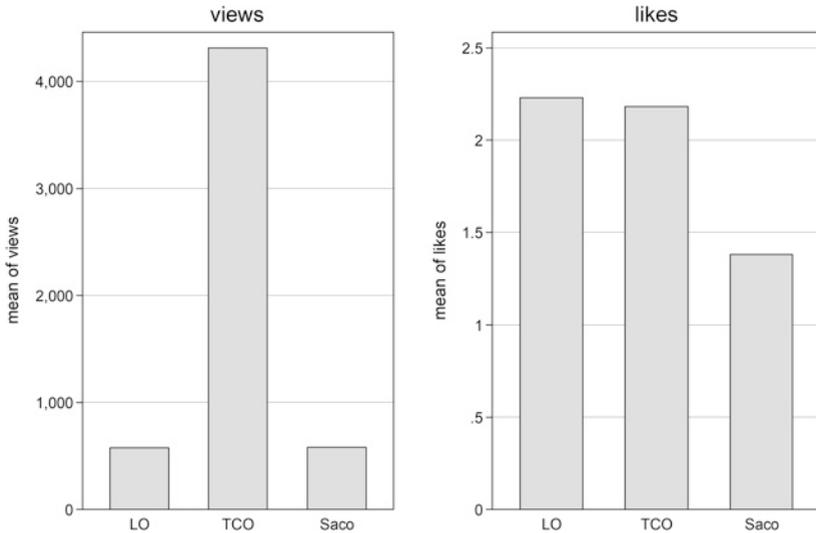
(Saco Studentmässor). Thus, the high visibility of youth-related issues in the Saco videos relates to the character of these particular unions.

Although most TCO-affiliated unions also organize employees with a university education, there were relatively few youth-targeting videos by TCO-affiliated unions—despite the fact that the TCO-affiliated Unionen has its own channel for students (Unionen Student). One possible reason for this finding is that unlike Saco-affiliated unions, some of the major TCO-affiliated unions (e.g. Unionen, Fackförbundet ST and Vision) organize multiple occupations and professions. Thus, these unions may find it more difficult to identify and customize videos to specific groups.

In contrast to our expectation that working-class unions would be particularly interested in approaching youth, the LO-affiliated unions did not mention youth or youth-related words particularly often in their videos. There are two youth channels among the LO-affiliated unions—the Municipal Workers' Union Youth (KommunalUng) and the Young Electricians (Unga Elektriker). Videos from these channels made up half of the LO's videos in the category 'youth'. Since 2017, LO-affiliated unions have opened more youth-focused channels, so a stronger focus on addressing young people may be expected in future.

When additional metadata of the videos—that is, the average number of views and likes—was included in the analysis, an interesting twist was observed for the videos in the category 'youth' (Fig. 2.1).<sup>1</sup> The videos uploaded by the TCO unions were watched four times more often than those uploaded by Saco and the LO unions, whereas the videos of the LO and the TCO unions gained far more 'likes' than Saco's youth-related videos. Although the number of likes of LO- and TCO-affiliated union videos in Fig. 2.1 appears to be similar, in fact since the LO posted far fewer videos, these few videos received far more 'likes'. However, the average values were caused by a few very popular videos, so no statistically significant difference was found between the confederations. Many of the youth-related videos had very few views and likes. Nevertheless, the results still suggest that in this particular category, the videos uploaded by LO- and TCO-affiliated unions are more popular than the larger number of videos uploaded by the Saco-affiliated unions.

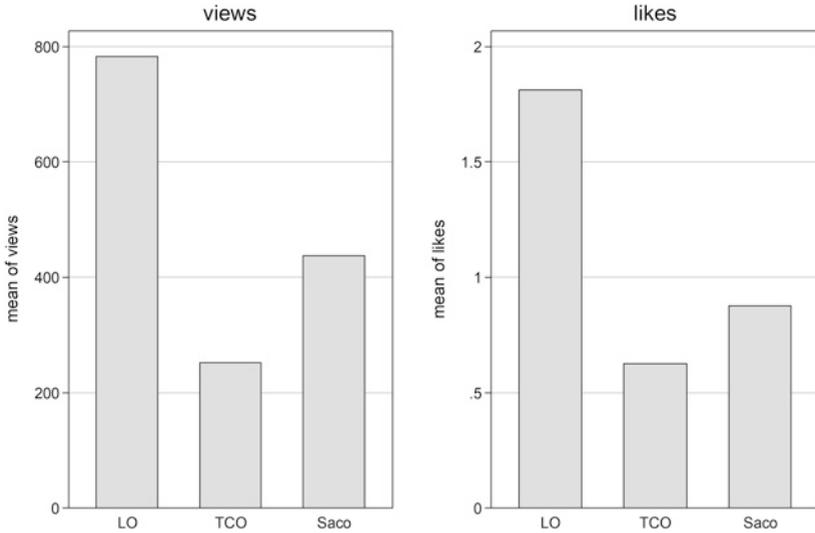
Although membership diversification should be of interest to all Swedish unions, the unions do not appear to be attempting to diversify by means of YouTube videos. Only a tiny proportion of the videos uploaded by the unions address people with precarious employment (1%) or people with a foreign background (3%). Of course, many precarious



**Fig. 2.1** Average number of views and likes for trade union YouTube videos targeting ‘youth’

and migrant workers are young and therefore are also likely to be targeted by the youth-related videos described above.

Although the video categories targeting precarious and migrant workers constituted a very small proportion of the total number of videos, they can still be used to compare the three trade union confederations. Precarious employment was addressed by LO-affiliated unions three times more often than by TCO- or Saco-affiliated unions. This finding can partly be explained by the fact that such employment conditions are comparably rare within Saco and less common within the TCO than the LO. The videos targeting this particular group tended to address various problems related to insecure working conditions or atypical employment contracts (Handels 2014, May 2; HRF-avd02 2014, July 7; Kommunal 2010, January 12), or to call for a change in related policies (Handels 2015, March 27). The videos in this category were watched and liked fewer times than those targeting youth (compare Figs. 2.1 and 2.2). In this case, the difference between the average number of views and likes of the videos uploaded by the LO-affiliated unions and those of the videos uploaded by TCO and Saco unions was statistically significant.



**Fig. 2.2** Average number of views and likes for trade union YouTube videos targeting people with precarious employment

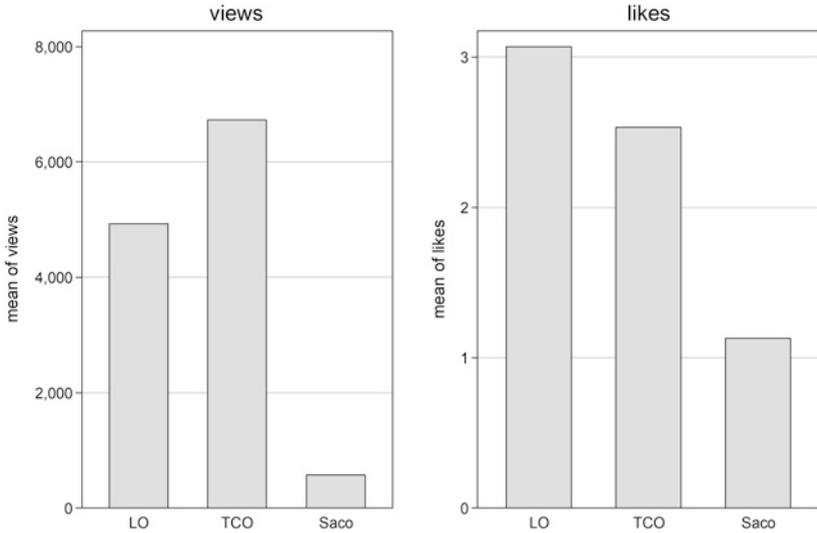
The proportion of videos in English (only videos in Swedish or English were found) and videos with any information relevant to people with a foreign background was very low (3% of all videos). Thus, we can conclude that Swedish trade unions are not using YouTube to target people with foreign backgrounds—or at least, not by producing videos in other languages. Among the few videos posted in English were two very popular TCO videos: ‘Like a Swede (a way of living)’ and ‘Business like a Swede’ (the latter with 790,314 views and 2104 likes). However, these videos are humorous professional commercials that present the Swedish welfare state and the labour market model; the videos say hardly anything about membership recruitment and do not appear to be targeting people with a foreign background. A few videos in English demonstrate solidarity with trade unions outside of Sweden (GS-Facket 2016, May 21; Transport 2012, August 27); these videos are not about people with a foreign background in unions either. Saco-affiliated unions posted more videos in English and thus have a higher proportion of videos in this category than the other two confederations. This can be explained by the fact that Saco and its affiliated unions have uploaded many videos

with seminars, conferences and other union events in English. Such events are often purely academic, with researchers talking about findings; thus, these videos do not really contribute to the mobilization of new members.

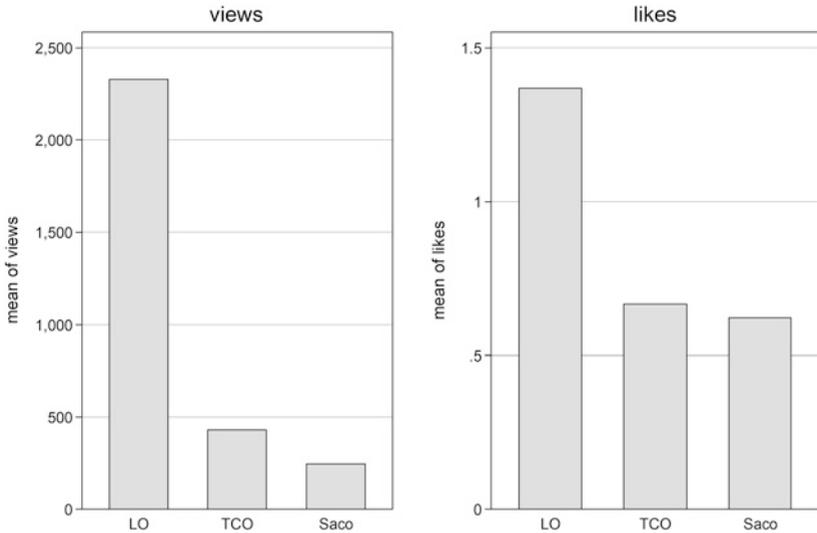
Finally, videos that directly address potential members without targeting a specific group constituted 9% of all the videos. Although the differences between the confederations in this case were small, white-collar unions affiliated with the TCO posted slightly more videos with direct recruitment information (e.g. information on the benefits of membership) than working-class (LO) unions and significantly more than upper-middle-class (Saco) unions. Since both the LO- and TCO-affiliated unions have suffered more membership losses than the Saco-affiliated unions, it is not surprising for the LO and TCO to be more motivated to address the issue of membership recruitment. Still, as Fig. 2.3 indicates, the videos that address potential members in general are the most viewed videos among the studied categories. Thus, it appears that producing YouTube videos on recruitment in general may be a better strategy for capturing viewers' attention than producing videos that focus on specific groups.

Thus far, it is possible to conclude that few videos contain information that would attract specific groups or that contain information about specific groups; young people, people with a foreign background and precarious workers are clearly not the main target of the videos, according to our findings.

So, who is the target? An examination of the final category of targets—the members—reveals the answer. Almost 40% of the videos uploaded by LO-affiliated unions, 36% of the videos uploaded by TCO-affiliated unions and 21% of the videos uploaded by Saco-affiliated unions are directed towards members (Table 2.2). These videos contain reports on internal meetings and congresses, information about collective agreements and accounts of general decisions made by the union. Swedish trade unions are clearly using YouTube to improve information dispersion within the organizations, as predicted by Greene et al. (2003). Even though these videos are not very popular in terms of average views and likes (Fig. 2.4), they are important from the perspective of revitalization. For example, giving members the opportunity to follow the elections of representatives and debates during annual meetings can enhance their trust in the organization and improve internal democracy, which will eventually strengthen the trade union movement.



**Fig. 2.3** Average number of views and likes for trade union YouTube videos targeting ‘potential members’



**Fig. 2.4** Average number of views and likes for trade union YouTube videos targeting ‘members’

In sum, the results of the analysis of the large N sample reveal that while some Swedish trade unions do target specific groups with their videos, it is still much more common to address union members or the general public. Not as many videos addressing young people directly were created as might be expected, especially given that the LO has prioritized the recruitment of young people in their congress of 2010. Rather, the upper-middle-class unions are the ones that targeted a younger audience by focusing on university students.

However, this rough content analysis is insufficient to provide a complete picture of the possible targets of unions' videos. Therefore, we also performed a more detailed analysis of 624 randomly selected videos.

## 2.5 TARGETS IN THE SMALL N DATASET

To deepen our understanding of the intended audiences of trade unions' YouTube videos, we complemented our analysis of titles, descriptions, views and likes with an analysis of a small N dataset. We watched and analysed 624 randomly selected videos from the large N sample. Rather than identifying potential audiences via video titles and descriptions, we used the well-known method of political claims analysis (Koopmans and Statham 1999) for this more detailed investigation. That is, we assumed that every video makes some kind of claim, and that the actor making the claim (i.e. the trade union) is the producer of the video. Moreover, we assumed that every video has a specific addressee, who is the actor the claim (i.e. video) is directed to. By watching the videos, we were able to detect a larger variety of addressees. We used a codebook in which we listed twelve possible addressees of the unions' messages: other unions, union members, potential members, politicians, employers, youth, women, people with a foreign background, precarious workers, an international audience, people with a specific occupation (e.g. plumber or teacher) and the general public. However, detecting the addressees of the videos was not always easy, as many of the videos appeared to target multiple audiences. When this was the case, we coded two addressees and ranked them as the 'main' and 'secondary' identifiable addressed actors. (See the Appendix for the codebook for all relevant categories in the small N analysis.)

Table 2.3 shows the results, which clearly demonstrate that the main audiences for unions are their own members and the general public. Considering the results from the large N sample, this is not a surprising

**Table 2.3** Proportion (%) of videos by categorized audience for each confederation ( $N=624$ )

<i>Category</i>	<i>LO</i>	<i>TCO</i>	<i>Saco</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Members of the union<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>43.6 (146)</b>	<b>50.3 (93)</b>	<b>30.8 (32)</b>	<b>43.4 (271)</b>
<b>General public</b>	<b>43.9 (147)</b>	<b>24.9 (46)</b>	<b>26.9 (28)</b>	<b>35.4 (221)</b>
Specific occupation/ profession	1.8 (6)	9.2 (17)	13.5 (14)	5.9 (37)
<b>Youth</b>	<b>1.8 (6)</b>	<b>3.4 (7)</b>	<b>20.2 (21)</b>	<b>5.4 (34)</b>
Politicians	2.1 (7)	8.7 (16)	3.9 (4)	4.3 (27)
<b>People with precarious employment</b>	<b>6.3 (21)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3.8 (21)</b>
<b>Potential members</b>	<b>2.1 (7)</b>	<b>2.2 (4)</b>	<b>2.9 (3)</b>	<b>2.2 (14)</b>
Employers	0.3 (1)	0.5 (1)	1 (1)	0.5 (3)
<b>People with a foreign background</b>	<b>0.6 (2)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1 (1)</b>	<b>0.5 (3)</b>
International audience	0.3 (1)	0.5 (1)	0	0.3 (2)
Women	0.3 (1)	0	0	0.2 (1)
Other unions	0	0	0	0
Total	100% (335)	100% (185)	100% (104)	100% (624)

<sup>a</sup>These videos also include those that fall into the category of internal democracy

result. All the other targets were rarely addressed in the videos. No video primarily targeted other unions. Since our main interest in this book is trade union revitalization, we once again focus on specific groups (shown in bold font in Table 2.3): members, people with precarious employment, youth, people with a foreign background and potential members in general.<sup>2</sup>

Similar to the analysis of the large N sample, our investigation of the small N sample demonstrates that unions address ‘members’ in at least half of their videos, and that the majority of these videos contain information about trade union congresses—either videos with highlights from a congress, such as opening speeches (see e.g. Vårdförbundet 2011, May 10), or videos depicting an entire general congress of a confederation (e.g. the LO’s 2014 congress). There were also a considerable number of videos containing information about collective bargaining rounds, with representatives from the unions explaining what was happening in the bargaining process (see e.g. IF Metall 2011, December 7; Sveriges ingenjörer 2017, August 7). Our carefully coded data indicates that the number of videos targeting members is in fact greater than what was

revealed by the large N analysis; that is, the analysis of the large N dataset underestimated the proportion of videos targeting members.

People with precarious employment conditions appear to be a main concern of working-class unions. Here, the small N sample revealed that such videos are more common than we were able to capture with the simple content analysis of the large N sample. Only the LO-affiliated unions uploaded videos that directly addressed atypical employments and precarious jobs. The majority (71%) of these 21 videos were uploaded by the LO-affiliated Swedish Commercial Employees' Union (Handelsanställdas förbund). The videos mainly provide information on problems and possible solutions for people with temporary or short-term working contracts (Handels 2014, May 2; Handels 2016, March 1), which are common within the retail sector. These videos not only provide useful information regarding the negative economic consequences of insecure employment contracts; they also signal that the union is mobilizing against this situation. One of the videos ends with the statement: 'Handels [Commercial Employees' Union] wants to have secure jobs!' (Handels 2015, March 27). Even though this video does not call anyone to join the union, the video clearly shows that the union is engaged in improving this particular employment situation.

The analysis of the small N sample added some interesting perspectives to the unions' targeting of the group categorized as 'youth'. These results support the findings from the large N analysis, in that the proportional difference between Saco and the other two confederations remains. Saco has ten times more youth-targeting videos than the LO-affiliated unions in this sample. However, unlike the observations on 'members' and 'people with precarious employment', careful examination and coding of the videos revealed that the large N analysis *overestimated* the number of videos belonging to the 'youth' category (compare Tables 2.2 and 2.3). In the large N sample, 11.3% of the videos targeted youth, while in the small N sample, this figure was only 5.4%. One reason for this difference may be that manual coding makes it possible to better distinguish between precarious employment conditions and youth, given that these are overlapping groups. Another reason may be that many Saco's videos which targeted youth were longer than 15 minutes and thereby not included into the small N sample.

Videos addressing 'people with a foreign background' in the small N sample were as rare as in the large N sample. The few existing videos were, however, significant. The LO-affiliated Building Workers' Union's

video titled ‘Interpreter organize members’ demonstrates how the union has made a strategic decision to use a translator to recruit members among (Polish) migrant workers (Byggnads 2012, February 10). A video by another LO-affiliated union, IF Metall, titled ‘What if there were no trade unions’ (IF Metall 2014, December 5), gives a clear indication of recruiting workers who not speak Swedish; considering its relatively large number of views (4835) and likes (26), this strategy is popular among the audience, in comparison with other videos uploaded by the unions.

Videos addressing ‘potential members’ directly made up a relatively small category in our small N sample, at only 2.2% of all videos, with no differences between the confederations. The corresponding number in the large N sample was 9%. Thus, creating videos aimed at member recruitment in general is not particularly common.

Finally, the category ‘general public’ formed a very large part of the examined videos. This category contains many different themes—politics (40%), education (13.5%), justice (8%), occupation-specific information (8%) and general information about the work of trade unions (5%). Chapter 3 further analyses the large share of videos that address the general public and that contain political issues; however, it is worth noting here that targeting the general public indicates a wish to impact the political debate. Most of the videos that target the general public depict the unions’ logo or name during the video and thereby increase public awareness of the organization. The question of whether this indirect recruitment might lead to increased membership is, however, beyond the scope of this book.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

Making videos to appeal to specific groups may appear to be a good revitalization strategy for trade unions. YouTube is the third most visited webpage and thus constitutes a forum where unions might encounter new audiences and new members. Our analysis of Swedish trade unions’ YouTube videos primarily demonstrates that unions use this social media channel to disperse information about trade unions and to target both the general public and their own members. While it is not surprising that unions address their own members, we found a significant proportion of videos reporting on union activities such as congresses and collective bargaining. Such reporting is important in strengthening internal democracy by making the organization more transparent to its members.

Although these videos may not be very popular, they are likely to be important for members who are interested in related questions. Future research could examine whether this union strategy does in fact lead to an increased perception of the union's transparency among its members.

However, another suggested revitalization strategy—that of addressing specific groups that are difficult to organize in unions—has not been widely adopted in the YouTube videos of Swedish unions. In comparison with other audience categories, such as union members or the general public, only a very small proportion of union videos address youth, people with a foreign background or precarious workers. Saco-affiliated unions can be seen as an exception, since these unions do use YouTube to target young people more frequently than other unions. Thus, these upper-middle-class unions are certainly better in terms of reaching out to underrepresented potential members. Our analyses lend some support to the hypothesis that working-class unions (those affiliated with the LO) address people with precarious working conditions more frequently than the other unions. On the other hand, such videos are few. The following chapter will demonstrate whether and how the unions have adopted another suggested strategy for renewal in their use of YouTube—namely political engagement.

## NOTES

1. In all tables and figures in this chapter, 'the LO' refers to the LO and its affiliated unions, 'the TCO' refers to the TCO and its affiliated unions and 'Saco' refers to Saco and its affiliated unions.
2. A careful reader might notice that Table 2.3 shows only 4.3% of videos directly addressing politicians, while in the following chapter where we discuss political videos, the proportion of political videos in the sample is much larger. This difference appears because here we only examine targets or direct addressees, whereas many political videos can address the general public and simultaneously carry political messages (e.g. electoral campaign videos).

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