

# Trade Unions on YouTube

Jenny Jansson · Katrin Uba

# Trade Unions on YouTube

Online Revitalization in Sweden

palgrave  
macmillan

Jenny Jansson  
Department of Government  
Uppsala University  
Uppsala, Sweden

Katrin Uba  
Department of Government  
Uppsala University  
Uppsala, Sweden



ISBN 978-3-030-24913-7      ISBN 978-3-030-24914-4 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-24914-4>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2019. This book is an open access publication.

**Open Access** This book is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this book are included in the book's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the book's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use. The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover illustration: © Harvey Loake

This Palgrave Pivot imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG  
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book was written thanks to the generous support of the Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences (Riksbankens jubileumsfond, IN14-0698:1). We would also like to thank Jens Andersson for great assistance with the coding of our data, Jaanus Karo for aiding us with all the programming and data-related questions, as well as helping us to set up the DigiFacket Archive, and Peter Knutar for restoring the crashed server. We have received many helpful comments on different versions and parts of the manuscript from colleagues and participants of the European Sociological Association conferences in Prague 2015 and Athens 2017, the European Consortium for Political Research General Conference in Oslo 2017, and the International Sociology Association Research Committee 10's midterm conference, titled Democracy and Participation in the twenty-first century, in Lisbon 2017. In particular, we would like to thank Cassandra Engeman, Bia Carneiro, Raquel Rego and Kerstin Hamann.

We would also like to thank our colleagues at the Department of Government at Uppsala University and at the Institute for Social Movements at Ruhr-Universität Bochum.

Of course, our work would not have been possible if the Swedish trade unions had not uploaded so many wonderful YouTube videos.

We are also grateful to all the union representatives who answered our questions about their use of social media and helped us to collect data for the DigiFacket Archive.

January 2019

Jenny Jansson  
Katrin Uba

# CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	<i>Why Focus on Trade Union Revitalization via Social Media?</i>	5
1.2	<i>Why Focus on YouTube?</i>	7
1.3	<i>Why Focus on Trade Unions in Sweden?</i>	10
1.4	<i>The Argument—Audiences, Messages and Self-Image Across Unions</i>	16
1.5	<i>Data Collection, Coding and Analysis Methods</i>	18
1.6	<i>Outline of the Book</i>	23
	<i>References</i>	25
<b>2</b>	<b>Audiences: Who Do Unions Target?</b>	<b>31</b>
2.1	<i>Targeting Members and Potential Members of Swedish Trade Unions</i>	32
2.2	<i>Swedish Trade Unions and Audiences</i>	35
2.3	<i>Targets in the Large N Dataset: Method and Findings</i>	37
2.4	<i>Findings in the Large N Dataset</i>	39
2.5	<i>Targets in the Small N Dataset</i>	46
2.6	<i>Conclusion</i>	49
	<i>References</i>	50

<b>3</b>	<b>Messages: Political Action—Agenda-Setting, Elections and Protests</b>	55
3.1	<i>Unions' Political Activism and Expected Variations in Sweden</i>	57
3.2	<i>Political Messages in the Large N Sample: Method and Findings</i>	60
3.3	<i>Comparing Unions in the Large N Sample</i>	63
3.4	<i>Political Activism in the Small N Sample: Method and Findings</i>	69
3.5	<i>Trade Unions' Political Engagement on YouTube</i>	73
	<i>References</i>	74
<b>4</b>	<b>Self-Images on YouTube</b>	79
4.1	<i>Self-Images: A Theoretical Framework</i>	81
4.2	<i>Revitalization Dimensions of Self-Images</i>	83
4.3	<i>Selection of Cases</i>	86
4.4	<i>Exclusive Collectivism: The LO Unions</i>	89
4.5	<i>Inclusive Individualism: The TCO Unions</i>	92
4.6	<i>Professions Above All? The Saco Unions</i>	96
4.7	<i>Conclusions</i>	99
	<i>References</i>	100
<b>5</b>	<b>Trade Unions on YouTube: Conclusions</b>	107
5.1	<i>Examining YouTube: What Can Be Inferred from Metadata?</i>	111
5.2	<i>For the Future</i>	113
	<i>References</i>	114
	<b>Appendix</b>	117
	<b>Index</b>	157

# LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1.1	Swedish trade union membership across three confederations and their affiliated unions over time ( <i>Source</i> Medlingsinstitutet 2016; Kjellberg 2017)	11
Fig. 1.2	Proportional change in union membership over time, using 1990 as a base ( <i>Source</i> Kjellberg 2017)	12
Fig. 1.3	Average number of views per YouTube video per country and for the EU, 2007–2016 ( <i>Source</i> Authors’ data)	16
Fig. 1.4	Average duration (min) of uploaded videos across confederations by year	21
Fig. 2.1	Average number of views and likes for trade union YouTube videos targeting ‘youth’	42
Fig. 2.2	Average number of views and likes for trade union YouTube videos targeting people with precarious employment	43
Fig. 2.3	Average number of views and likes for trade union YouTube videos targeting ‘potential members’	45
Fig. 2.4	Average number of views and likes for trade union YouTube videos targeting ‘members’	45
Fig. 3.1	The most commonly used words in titles and descriptions	61
Fig. 3.2	Words related to unions’ political activism on YouTube: (a) unions affiliated with the LO and the LO, (b) unions affiliated with the TCO and the TCO and (c) unions affiliated with Saco and Saco	63
Fig. 3.3	The average number of views and likes of political videos across confederations	66
Fig. 3.4	Number of videos per year by confederation and their affiliated unions	67



Fig. 3.5	Monthly distribution of videos on election years by confederation and their affiliated unions	68
Fig. 4.1	Analytical framework of types of self-image	85
Fig. 4.2	Proportion of change in membership as of 2017, in comparison with 1990 ( <i>Source</i> Kjellberg [2017], authors' calculations of changed membership)	87

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1	Trade union confederations in the EU, Switzerland and Norway, and their representation on YouTube	15
Table 1.2	Number of videos per trade union confederation (total population—large N set)	20
Table 1.3	Number of videos per trade union confederation in the small N (624) set	22
Table 2.1	Targets and keywords	38
Table 2.2	Proportion (%) of videos addressing the different targets ( $N=4535$ )	40
Table 2.3	Proportion (%) of videos by categorized audience for each confederation ( $N=624$ )	47
Table 3.1	Messages in the small N sample (percentage and number of cases)	70
Table 4.1	Unions selected for the self-image analysis	86
Table A1	Audience categories used in Chapter 2 and keywords used for coding (in Swedish)	121
Table A2	List of substitutions	123
Table A3	Selected unions	125
Table A4	Operationalization of unions' self-images	126
Table A5	Features of the unions' self-image	127
Table A6	Names and YouTube channels of the trade union confederations in the EU, Switzerland and Norway	128
Table A7	List of Swedish trade unions and the names of their YouTube channels	133
Table A8	Word frequency in the titles and descriptions of all videos	140

Table A9	Word frequency in the titles and descriptions of all LO videos	141
Table A10	Word frequency in the titles and descriptions of all TCO videos	142
Table A11	Word frequency in the titles and descriptions of all Saco videos	143
Table A12	Codebook for small-N dataset	144
Table A13	All videos used in the qualitative study	150