

2022/23

CONFIDENCE AND POLITICS IN FOCUS

VA Barometer 2022/23 – VA Report 2022:6

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More information about the survey can be found at www.v-a.se

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These are some of the results of this year's VA Barometer:

- Record-high confidence in research
- High confidence in scientific and technological developments
- One in five Swedes have been involved in research
- Many would like to see more research and scientific facts used in politics.

The VA Barometer 2022/2023 is based on 1,009 telephone interviews with a representative sample of the Swedish population aged 16–74. It is the 21st Barometer survey since VA (Public & Science) was founded in 2002.

Read more about the survey on page 30.

LAST YEAR THROUGH SWEDISH EYES

Desmond Tutu, former archbishop of South Africa, dies aged 90.


Breakthrough in **xenotransplantation** when a patient receives a heart from a genetically modified pig for the first time. The patient dies after two months.

The UN's climate panel IPCC publishes a report on how consequences of climate change are starting to be felt, and it is increasingly urgent that societies adapt to the situation.

The constitutional **right to abortion** abolished in the United States when the Supreme Court overturns a court ruling from 1973.

The **James Webb Space Telescope** takes a picture at the farthest distance and time humanity has ever seen.

Sabotage of **Nord Stream gas pipelines 1 and 2**, which run between Russia and Germany.

Covid-19 is no longer classified as a disease of danger to society. 

First case of **monkeypox** in Sweden.

Psychiatric coordinator Ing-Marie Wieselgren is murdered in the street during Almedalen Week in Visby.

Swedish economy under pressure due to **high inflation and rising interest rates**.

Oct Nov Dec 2022 Jan Feb March April May June July Aug Sept

Magdalena Andersson (S) is elected Prime Minister. Shortly after, the opposition's budget is voted through, whereupon Andersson resigns. She is re-elected five days later.


Russia invades neighbouring Ukraine after recognising Donetsk and Luhansk as independent states. This leads to the biggest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II.


Elon Musk buys the social media platform Twitter.

The Swedish government decides to apply for **membership of NATO**.

Extreme temperatures across large parts of Europe, with hundreds of deaths and extensive land and forest fires as a result.

This year's **VA Barometer interviews** are carried out.

WHO receives a report from South Africa about a new coronavirus variant that is later named **omicron**. 

Too few and too late. These are two of the conclusions of the **Corona Commission's** final report on Sweden's infection control measures during the pandemic. 

Riots break out in several places in Sweden following Rasmus Paludan's burning of the Koran.

The surgeon **Paolo Macchiarini**, who was charged with aggravated assault after artificial trachea operations on patients in 2011–2012, is sentenced for causing bodily harm.



Pandemic-related events

RECORD CONFIDENCE IN RESEARCH ...

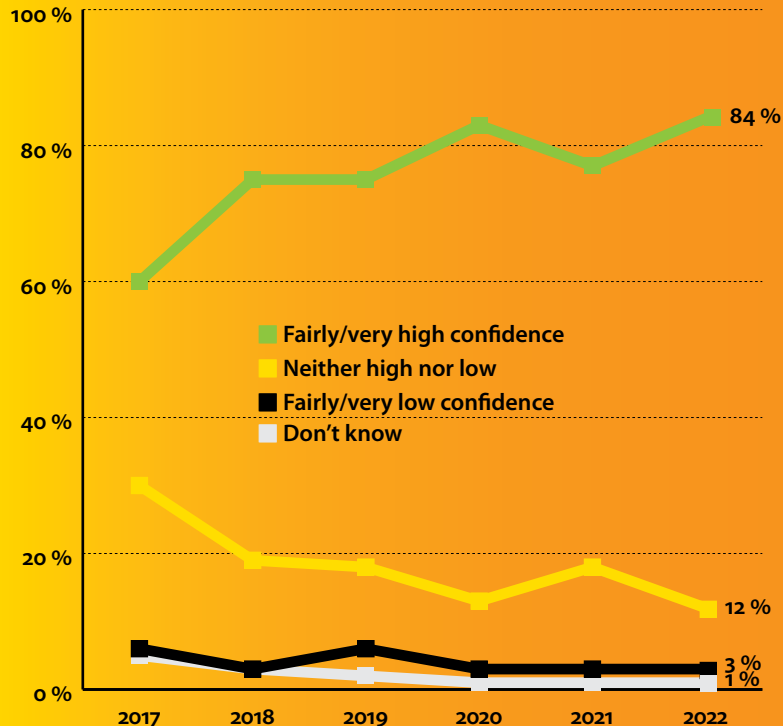
More than eight out of ten Swedes (84 percent) have *fairly* or *very high* confidence in research. This is the highest percentage since the question was first asked in 2017 and an increase of seven percentage points compared to last year.

Confidence in research is higher among Swedes who are highly educated (with 90 percent having fairly or very high confidence) compared to those without a university education (80 percent).

Those who live in large towns and cities generally have higher confidence in research than people who live in smaller towns and in rural areas.

*The graph shows responses to the question: **Generally speaking, how much confidence do you have in research?***

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 1,021 (2017) 1,052 (2018) 1,021 (2019) 1,018 (2020) 1,016 (2021) 1,009 (2022)



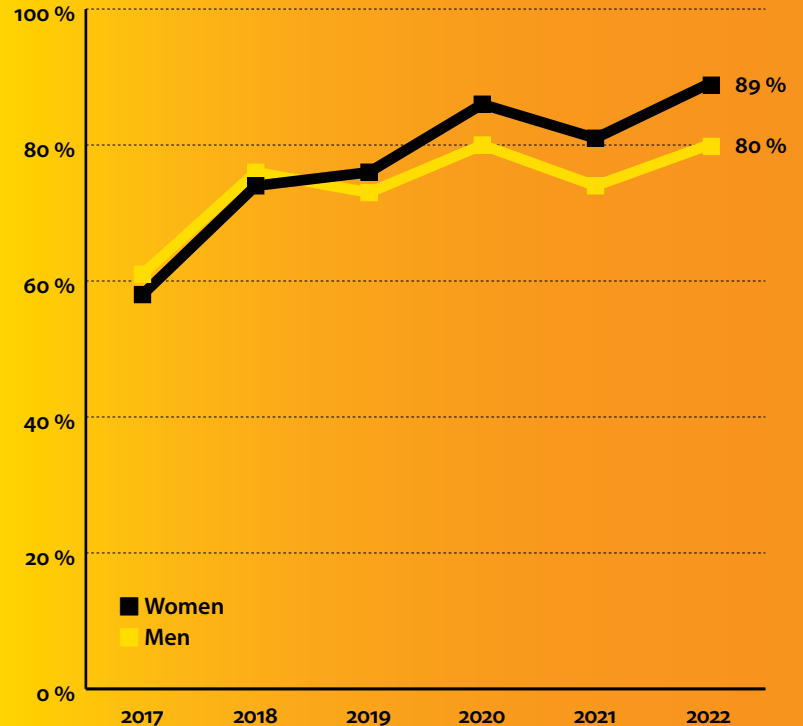
... ESPECIALLY AMONG WOMEN

Women have higher confidence in research than men: 89 percent of women, compared to 80 percent of men, have *fairly* or *very high* confidence in research. There are also more men than women who have *fairly* or *very low* confidence in research (4 and 1 percent, respectively).

Women have had higher confidence in research than men since 2020. Prior to that, no difference was seen between the sexes.

*The graph shows the percentage of women and men respectively who respond fairly high or very high to the question: **Generally speaking, how much confidence do you have in research?***

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS IN 2022: 476 (WOMEN) 533 (MEN)



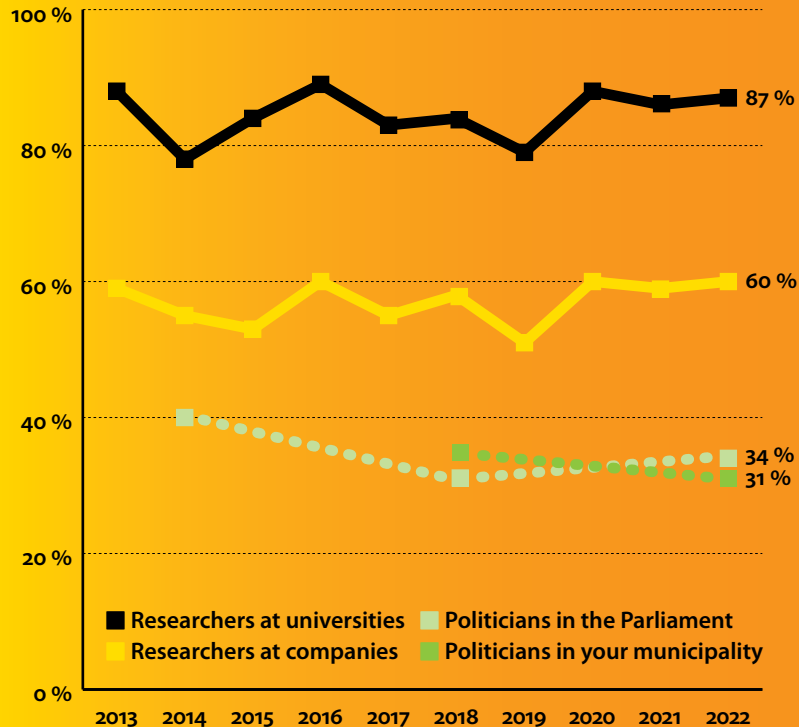
HIGH CONFIDENCE IN RESEARCHERS

Almost nine out of ten Swedes (87 percent) have *fairly* or *very high* confidence in researchers at universities. Six out of ten (60 percent) have a similar level of confidence in researchers at companies.

Three out of ten have fairly or very high confidence in politicians in the Swedish Parliament (34 percent) and at the municipal level (31 percent). People with a university education have higher confidence in both researchers and politicians, compared to people without a university education.

*The graph shows the proportion of Swedes with **fairly** or **very high confidence** in researchers at universities, researchers at companies, municipal politicians and politicians in the Swedish Parliament. (Four-point scale: Very high, Fairly high, Fairly low, Very low).*

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS 2022: 1,009



SCIENCE MAKES LIFE BETTER ...

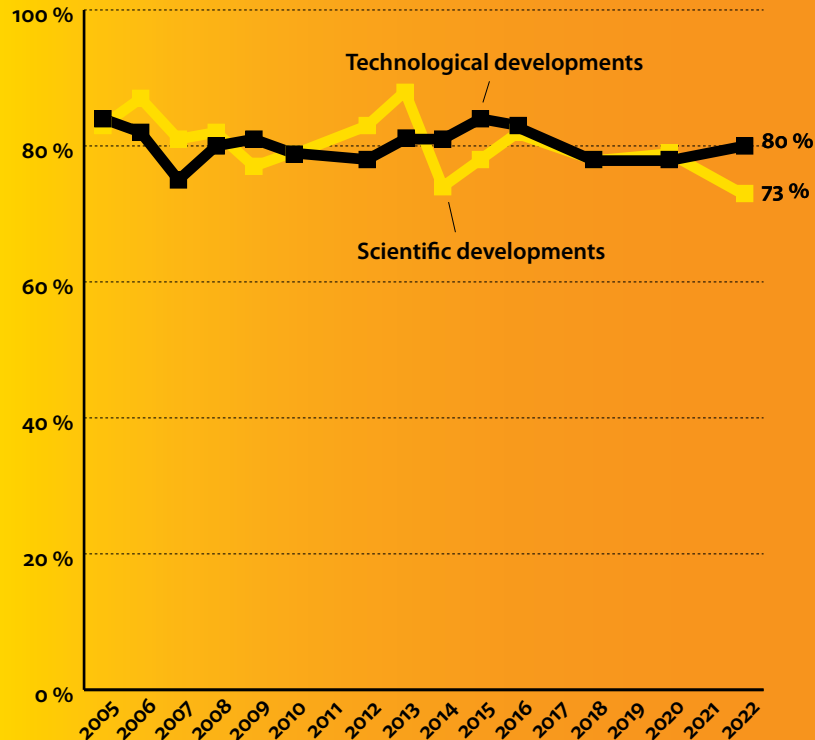
A majority believes that scientific (73 percent) and technological developments (80 percent), respectively, have made life *somewhat* or *a lot better* in the last 10–20 years.

Swedes with a university education believe that *scientific* developments have made life better to a greater extent than those without a university education (79 and 68 percent, respectively).

Eighty-eight percent of those that are highly educated believe that *technological* developments have made life better compared to 74 percent of those without a university education.

The graph shows the proportion that responded somewhat better or a lot better to the question of whether scientific and technical developments in the last 10–20 years have made life better or worse for ordinary people. (Five-point scale: A lot better, Somewhat better, Neither better or worse, Somewhat worse, A lot worse).

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS 2022: 505 (SCIENTIFIC) 504 (TECHNOLOGICAL)



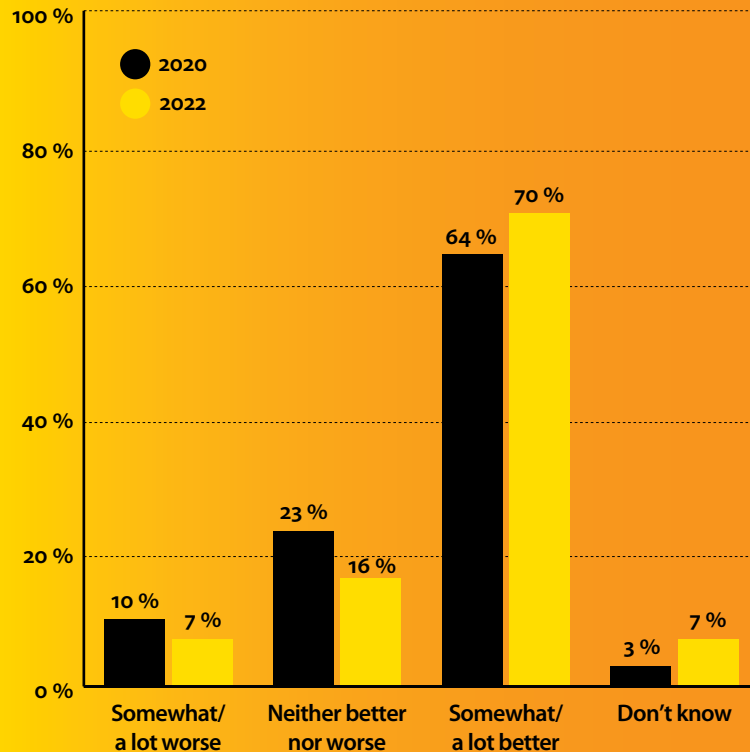
... ALSO IN THE FUTURE

A majority believes that technological developments (70 percent) will make our lives *somewhat* or *a lot better* in the next 10–20 years.

Compared to in 2020, more Swedes believe that technological developments will make life better (70 percent in 2022 compared to 64 percent in 2020). The increase is mainly seen among the highly educated, where 77 percent believe that technological developments will make our lives better. The corresponding proportion in 2020 was 57 percent.

The graph shows responses to the question: Do you believe that technological developments in the next 10–20 years will make life better or worse for ordinary people?

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 506 (2020) 504 (2022)



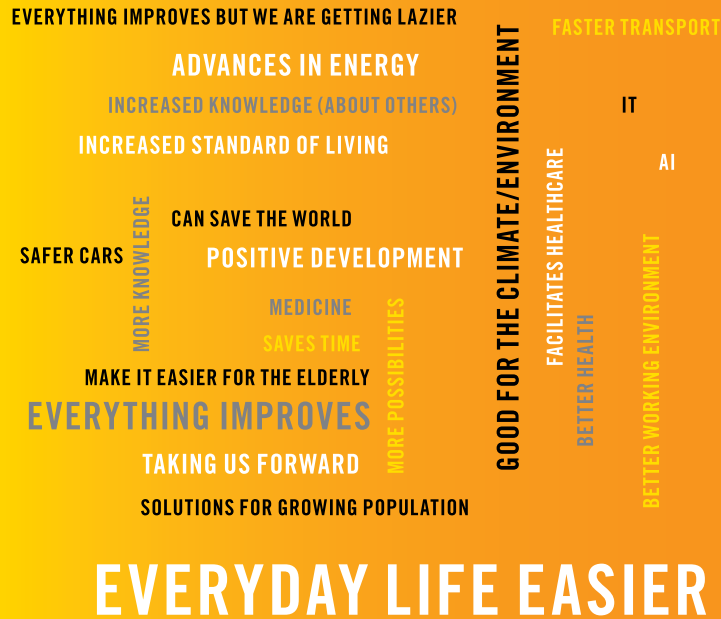
TECHNOLOGY MAKES LIFE EASIER

Those who believe that technological developments will make life a lot better in next 10–20 years often explain this by saying that it will make *everyday life easier* and that *technology is progressing*. Others refer to *advances in energy* or respond that technological developments are *good for the climate*, *make it easier for the elderly* and *create better working environments*, for example, in healthcare.

*The word cloud shows responses to the follow-up question: **Why did you choose that particular option?** The question was asked to those who responded "A lot better" when asked whether technological developments in the next 10–20 years will make life better or worse for ordinary people. Responses have been slightly reworded and grouped together to create the word cloud.*

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 141

TECHNOLOGY IS PROGRESSING

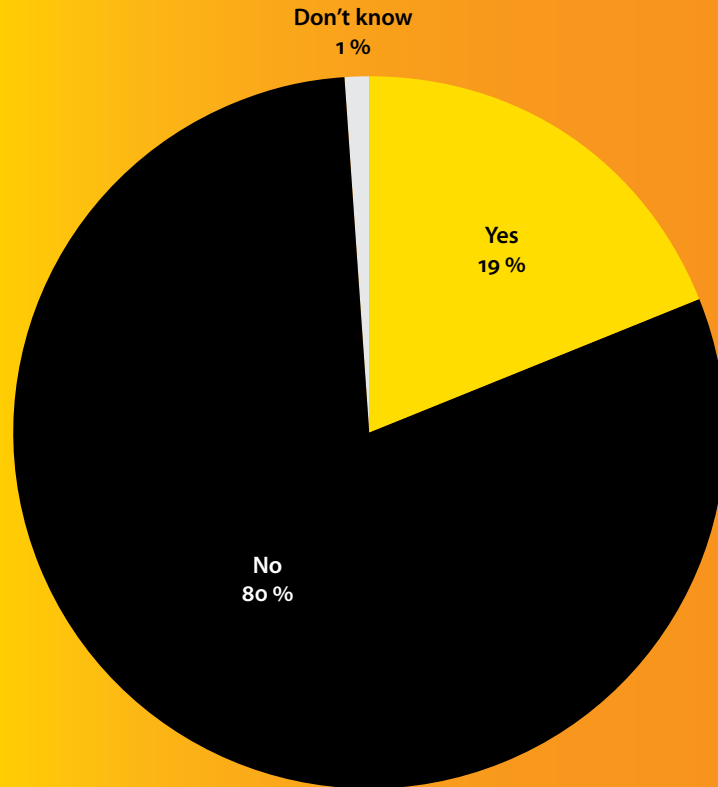


ONE IN FIVE INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

One in five Swedes (19 percent) have been involved at some point in a research project. People with a university education have been involved to a greater extent than people who do not have a higher education (31 and 10 percent respectively). People who have family member, relative or close friend who work in research have participated in research to a greater extent (30 percent) than people who don't have a researcher close by (14 percent).

*The graph shows the answers to the question: **The public can participate in research in many different ways, for example by making observations or interpreting data in anything from animals and nature to history. Have you yourself ever been involved in a research project?***

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 1,009

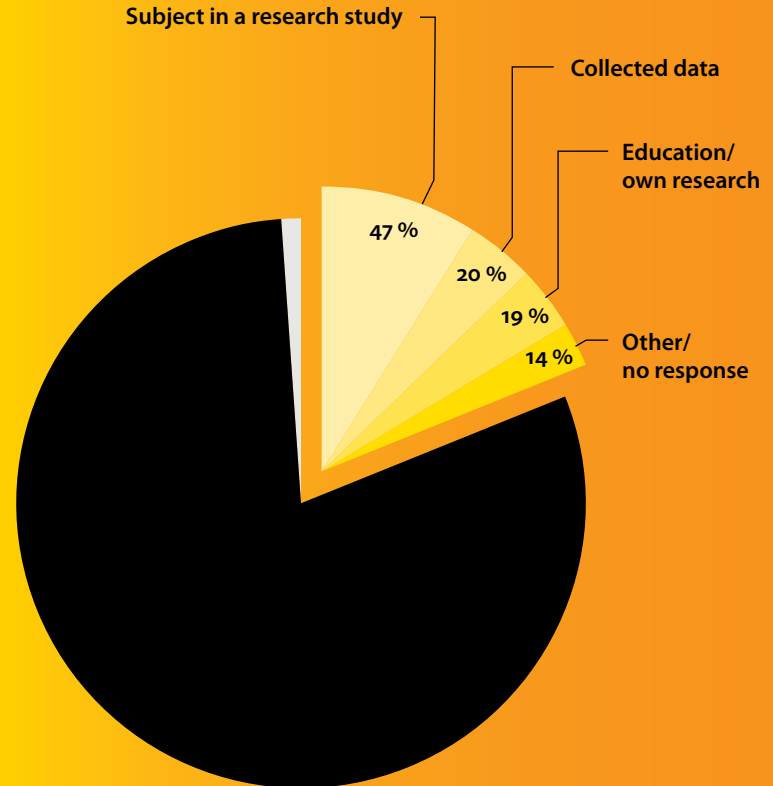


... OFTEN AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT

Almost half (47 percent) of those who have been involved in research say that they have been a *subject in a research study*. One in five say that they have *collected data* (20 percent) or that they were involved in research within the framework of their *education* (for example, dissertations or papers) or *their own research* (19 percent).

*The graph shows responses to the question: **In what way were you involved in a research project?** Responses have been slightly reworded and grouped together.*

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 230

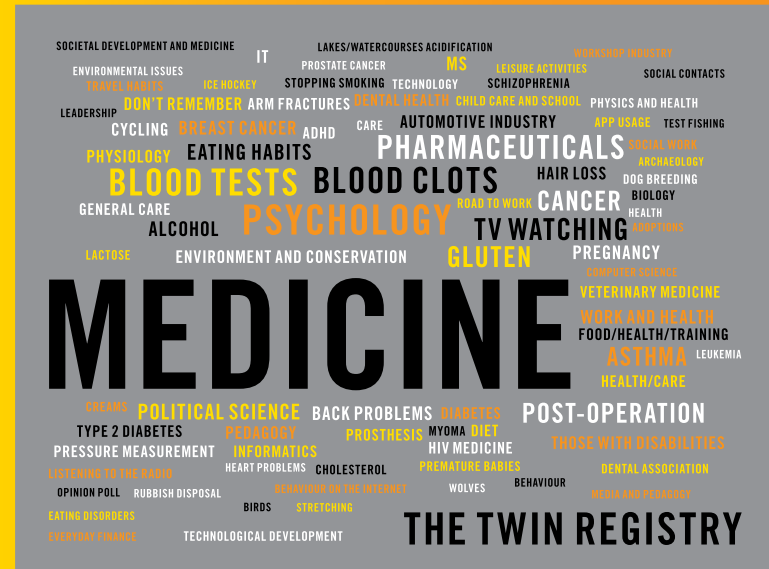


... IN A MEDICAL STUDY

Many of those who have participated in research also described what it involved. Most had participated in medical research. Some specifically mentioned that the research was on, for example, *diabetes*, *blood clots* or *medicines*. Others were involved in studies outside of the medical field, for example, in *psychology*, *social work*, *political science* or *education*.

The word cloud shows what the research was about that the participants were involved in. Responses have been slightly reworded and grouped together to create the word cloud.

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 230



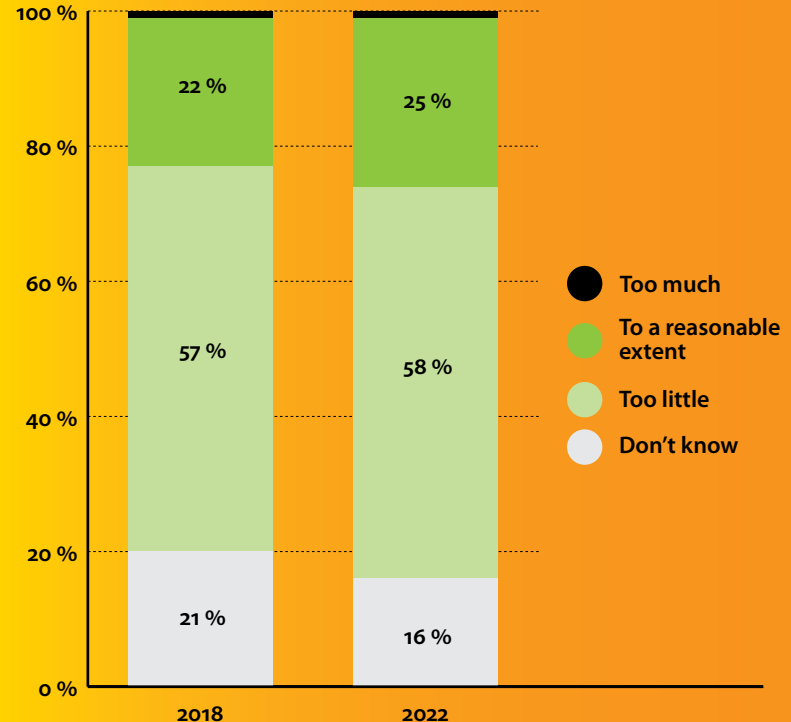
NOT ENOUGH FACTS DURING ELECTION

Politicians used *too few* scientific facts during the 2022 Swedish election campaign. A majority (58 percent) of Swedes are of this opinion. One out of four (25 percent) think that politicians have used scientific facts *to a reasonable extent*, while only one percent believes *too many* facts have been used. The responses are largely the same in 2022 as when the question was asked during the 2018 election year.

A greater number of Swedes with a university education (64 percent) think that politicians have used too few facts during the election campaign, compared to people without a university education (53 percent). It is also a view more commonly held among women (64 percent) compared to men (52 percent).

*The graph shows responses to the question: **To what extent do you think politicians used scientific facts during the election campaign?***

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 1,009



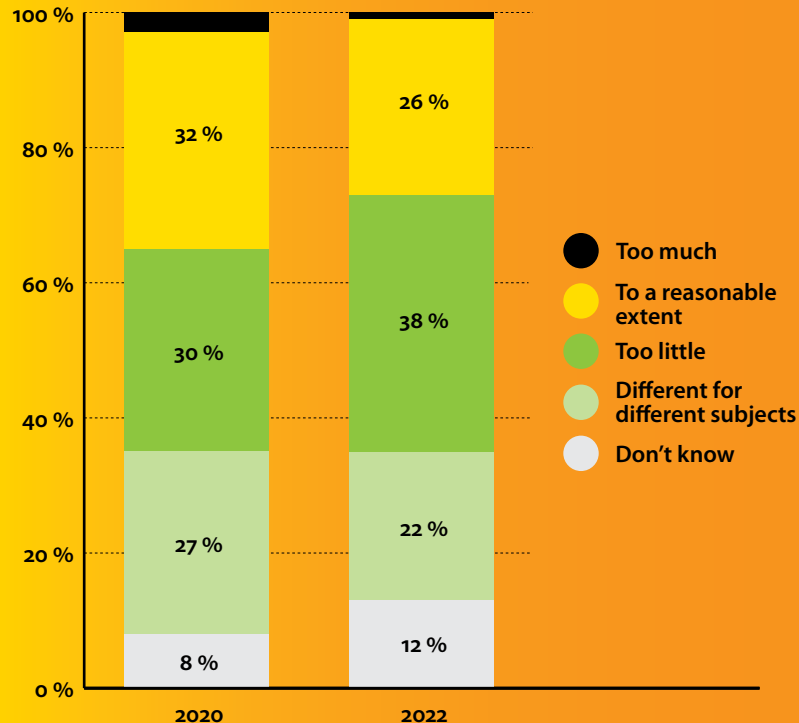
MORE RESEARCH IN POLITICS!

Four out of ten Swedes (38 percent) think that *too little* consideration is given to research in political decisions. At the same time, 26 percent believe that it is taken into account *to a reasonable extent*, and 22 percent that it is *different for different subjects*. Only one percent believes that research is taken *too much* into account. The proportion who believe that too little account is to paid to research is higher in 2022 than in 2020 (when the corresponding proportion was 30 percent).

Women, to a greater extent than men, believe that too little research is taken into account in political decision-making (41 and 35 percent, respectively).

The graph shows responses to the question: To what extent do you think research is taken into account when political decisions are made in Sweden?

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 1,009



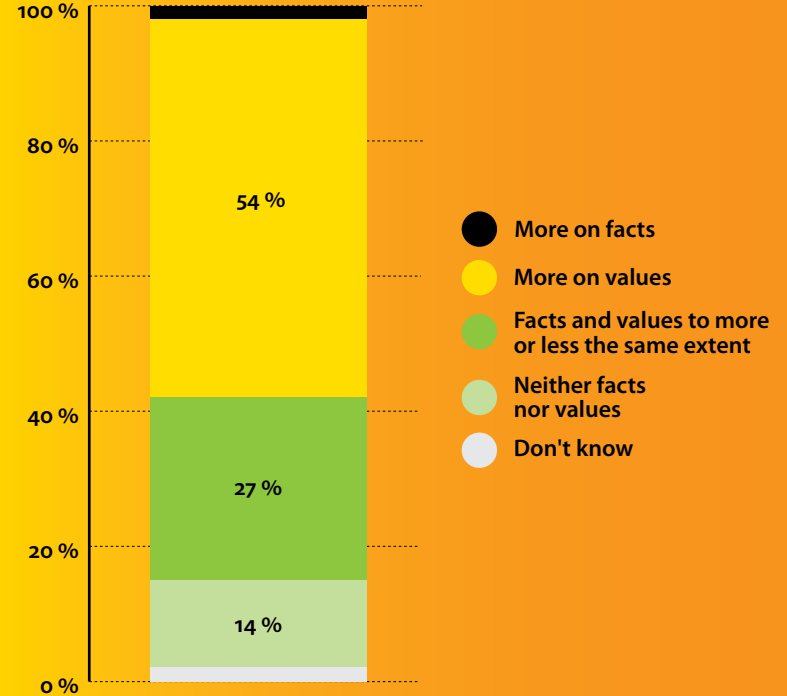
VALUES GOVERN POLITICS

Only two percent of Swedes feel that Swedish politicians base their opinions and positions predominantly on *facts*. Over half (54 percent) instead believe that opinions are primarily based on *values*, while 27 percent think that facts and values guide politicians' positions to *more or less the same extent*. One in seven (14 percent) believes that politicians base their opinions on *neither facts nor values*.

The perception that politicians predominantly base their positions on values is more common among younger people and among the highly educated. Older people and those who don't have a university education more often say that neither facts nor values form the basis of politicians' opinions.

*The graph shows responses to the question: **Generally speaking, do you feel that Swedish politicians base their opinions and positions on facts or values?***

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 1,009



ABOUT THE SURVEY

The VA Barometer has been conducted annually since 2002. The survey is conducted via telephone interviews with a stratified random sample of the Swedish population, around 1,000 people (this year 1,009), aged between 16 to 74 years old. The response rate in this year's survey was 42 percent.

Respondents are representative in terms of gender, age and place of residence. The results have been weighted retrospectively since 2014 (2013 for confidence in researchers too) to ensure representativeness in terms of level of education. Only statistically significant comparisons between the response groups are published.

Interviews are conducted between August and October and completed before the yearly announcement of the Nobel Prize winners due to media attention surrounding the Nobel Prize. For this year's survey, the field period ran from 15 August to 2 October 2022.

Exquiro Market Research has carried out the interviews since 2012. A reference group with expertise in survey methodology helps to formulate the questions. The interview questions can be downloaded at www.v-a.se.

VA (Public & Science) promotes dialogue and openness between researchers and the public. The organisation works to create new and engaging forms of dialogue about research.

VA is also developing new knowledge on the relationship between research and society through surveys and studies. Its members consist of over 100 organisations, including including authorities, companies and associations. In addition, it has a number of individual members.



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Read more at www.v-a.se/english