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Swedish Trends 1986–2015

The SOM Institute

The SOM Institute at the University of Gothenburg, founded in 1986, conducts interdisciplinary survey research and organizes seminars on the topics of Society, Opinion and Media (hence the name SOM). The Institute is jointly managed by the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication and the Department of Political Science at the University of Gothenburg.

The Institute is headed by Professor Henrik Ekengren Oscarsson. Members of the steering committee are Professor Bengt Johansson, The Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, University of Gothenburg, Professor André Jansson, The Department of Media and Communication Science, University of Karlstad, Associate Professor Maria Oskarson, The Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg and Professor Karin M Ekström, The Department of Business Administration and Textile Management, University of Borås.

The National SOM Surveys

From 1986, the core of the SOM Institute has been an annual nationwide survey, National SOM, carried out every autumn in the form of a mail questionnaire addressed to randomly selected persons between the ages of 15 and 85 living in Sweden. Since 2008 the sample is limited to ages 16–85. The survey consist of several sub-surveys, which since 2014 each comprise a sample of 3 400 respondents. 2015 there were four such sub-surveys, resulting in a total sample size of 17 000 persons.

Research

The central questions addressed in National SOM are attitudes toward mass media, politics and public services. A report summarizing the main results of each year’s survey is published annually and available from the SOM Institute web page (www.som.gu.se). The data files from the surveys are deposited at the Swedish National Data Service (www.snd.gu.se) in Gothenburg and may be ordered from them for the purpose of scientific research. The results on the following pages are based on data from National SOM.

Infrastructure

The SOM Institute is part of the Swedish national research infrastructure. Researchers and research projects are invited to co-operate with the surveys, and thereby access high quality data, mainly within the area of social sciences. The SOM staff plan the surveys, design questionnaires and work with quality control and refinement of the gathered data. The questionnaires are constructed in close collaboration with participating research projects.

It is of great importance to the SOM Institute to be transparent in all parts of our work. Questionnaires and reports are made available on the web page and each survey is well documented in methods sections of our publications.

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SOCIAL TRENDS
ASSESSING SWEDISH ECONOMY
Swedish economy compared to twelve months ago

Comment: All respondents are included in the calculations.


Question: "According to your view, during the last twelve months, has the Swedish economy gotten better, remained the same, or gotten worse?"
ASSESSING PERSONAL FINANCIAL SITUATION
Personal financial situation compared to twelve months ago

Comment: All respondents are included in the calculations.


Question: “According to your view, during the last twelve months, has your personal financial situation gotten better, remained the same, or gotten worse?”

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Comment: The lines show the percentage of respondents indicating very or fairly much confidence minus the percentage indicating fairly or very little confidence (opinion balance). The percentages are based on the respondents answering each individual item. Five response alternatives to the question asked: "Very much; Fairly much; Neither much nor little; Fairly little; Very little".

Question: "How much confidence do you have in the way the following institutions/groups do their job?"

CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS
Royal Family, Swedish Church & Defence

Comment: The lines show the percentage of respondents indicating very or fairly much confidence minus the percentage indicating fairly or very little confidence (opinion balance). The percentages are based on the respondents answering each individual item. Five response alternatives to the question asked: "Very much; Fairly much; Neither much nor little; Fairly little; Very little".

Question: "How much confidence do you have in the way the following institutions/groups do their job?"

CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS
Bank of Sweden, Banks, Big business & Trade unions

Comment: The lines show the percentage of respondents indicating very or fairly much confidence minus the percentage indicating fairly or very little confidence (opinion balance). The percentages are based on the respondents answering each individual item. Five response alternatives to the question asked: "Very much; Fairly much; Neither much nor little; Fairly little; Very little".

Question: "How much confidence do you have in the way the following institutions/groups do their job?"

Comment: The lines show the percentage of respondents indicating very or fairly much confidence minus the percentage indicating fairly or very little confidence (opinion balance). The percentages are based on the respondents answering each individual item. Five response alternatives to the question asked: "Very much; Fairly much; Neither much nor little; Fairly little; Very little".

Question: "How much confidence do you have in the way the following institutions/groups do their job?"

**CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS**

United Nations, EU Commission & EU Parliament

**Comment:** The lines show the percentage of respondents indicating very or fairly much confidence minus the percentage indicating fairly or very little confidence (opinion balance). The percentages are based on the respondents answering each individual item. Five response alternatives to the question asked: "Very much; Fairly much; Neither much nor little; Fairly little; Very little".

**Question:** "How much confidence do you have in the way the following institutions/groups do their job?"

**Source:** The National SOM survey 1998-2015
CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS
Daily press & Radio/Television

Comment: The lines show the percentage of respondents indicating very or fairly much confidence minus the percentage indicating fairly or very little confidence (opinion balance). The percentages are based on the respondents answering each individual item. Five response alternatives to the question asked: "Very much; Fairly much; Neither much nor little; Fairly little; Very little".

Question: "How much confidence do you have in the way the following institutions/groups do their job?"

CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS
Health Care, Universities & Elementary Schools

Comment: The lines show the percentage of respondents indicating very or fairly much confidence minus the percentage indicating fairly or very little confidence (opinion balance). The percentages are based on the respondents answering each individual item. Five response alternatives to the question asked: "Very much; Fairly much; Neither much nor little; Fairly little; Very little".

Question: "How much confidence do you have in the way the following institutions/groups do their job?"


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CONFIDENCE IN SOME PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

Comment: Six response alternatives to the question asked: "Very much; Fairly much; Neither much, nor little; Fairly little; Very little, No opinion". The results are percent indicating very or fairly much confidence. The percentages are based on the respondents answering each individual item, including those who marked "No opinion".

Question: "How much confidence do you have in the way the following professional groups do their job?"

Source: The National SOM survey 2002-2015
CONFIDENCE IN RESEARCH IN DIFFERENT RESEARCH AREAS

Comment: Six response alternatives to the question asked: "Very much; Fairly much; Neither much, nor little; Fairly little; Very little; No opinion". The results show percent answering "Very" or "Fairly much" confidence.

Question: "How much confidence do you have in the following research areas?"

Source: The National SOM survey 2002-2015
SATISFACTION WITH SOCIAL INSURANCE SYSTEMS

Comment: Four response alternatives to the question asked: "Very satisfied; fairly satisfied; Not very satisfied; Not at all satisfied". The results show percentages responding "Very" or "Fairly satisfied" among people answering the questions.

Question: "How satisfied are you in how the following social insurance systems work?"

Comment: The cinema and theatre figures indicate attendance/activity at least once every six months, while restaurant figures indicate attendance at least once a month. The percentages include all respondents in the survey.

Question: "How often have you engaged in the following activities during the past twelve months?"

Comment: The figures indicate attendance/activity at least once a week. The percentages include all respondents in the survey.

Question: "How often have you engaged in the following activities during the past twelve months?"


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LEISURE ACTIVITIES
Attended church service or religious meeting & Prayed to God

Comment: Attended church service figures indicate attendance at least once a month, while 'prayed to God' figures indicate activity at least once a month. The percentages include all respondents in the

Question: "How often have you engaged in the following activities during the past twelve months?"


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DRINKING LIQUOR/WINE/STRONG BEER REGULARLY

**Comment:** The figures indicate activity at least once a week. Percentages are based on respondents answering at least one item of a multi-item question on lifestyle and leisure activities.

**Question:** "How often have you engaged in the following activities during the past twelve months?"

**Source:** The National SOM survey 1992-2015
Comment: The scale runs between 0 and 10 with 0 labeled "It is not possible to trust people in general" and 10 labeled "It is possible to trust people in general". Percentages are based on all respondents in the survey including non-opinion (varies between 2 and 6 percent).

Question: "According to your view, to what extent is it possible to trust people in general? Please answer using this scale."

### Rokeach Terminal Values (Percent)

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**Comment:** Five response alternatives to the question asked: “Very important; Fairly important; Neither important, nor unimportant; Not very important; Not at all important”. The results show percent respondents answering “Very important”. Percentages are based on those answering at least one item.

**Question:** “How important do you consider the following things to be to yourself?”

**Source:** The National SOM survey 1988-2011
SATISFACTION IN LIFE

Comment: Four response alternatives to the question: "Very satisfied; Fairly satisfied; Not very satisfied; Not at all satisfied". Percentages are calculated among respondents who have answered the question. The two negative response alternatives are combined into "Not satisfied" in the figure.

Question: "On the whole, how satisfied are you with the life you lead?"


Percent Year

64 1996
30 1997
6 1998
55 1999
37 2000
8 2001
100 2002
90 2003
80 2004
70 2005
60 2006
50 2007
40 2008
30 2009
20 2010
10 2011
0 2012


Fairly satisfied
Very satisfied
Not satisfied
WHAT SWEDES WORRY ABOUT
Unemployment & Economic Crises

Comment: Four response alternatives to the question asked: "Very worrying; Somewhat worrying; Not particularly worrying; Not at all worrying". The results show percent answering "Very worrying" among persons who answered at least part of the question.

Question: "Looking at today's situation, what worries you most?"


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WHAT SWEDES WORRY ABOUT
Changes in global climate & Environmental deterioration

Comment: Four response alternatives to the question asked: "Very worrying; Somewhat worrying; Not particularly worrying; Not at all worrying". The results show percent answering "Very worrying" among persons who answered at least part of the question.

Question: "Looking at today’s situation, what worries you most?"


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WHAT SWEDES WORRY ABOUT
Terrorism, organized crime & the situation in Russia

Comment: Four response alternatives to the question asked: "Very worrying; Somewhat worrying; Not particularly worrying; Not at all worrying". The results show percent answering "Very worrying" among persons who answered at least part of the question.

Question: "Looking at today's situation, what worries you most?"

WHAT SWEDES WORRY ABOUT

Increased racism/xenophobia, increased number of refugees & increased social inequality

Comment: Four response alternatives to the question asked: "Very worrying; Somewhat worrying; Not particularly worrying; Not at all worrying". The results show percent answering "Very worrying" among persons who answered at

Question: "Looking at today's situation, what worries you most?"

**Comment**: Four response alternatives to the question asked: "Very interested; Fairly interested; Not especially interested; Not at all interested". The results show percent "Very much" or "Fairly interested" in politics and percent party members among all respondents. 'Discussed politics' show the percentage who discuss politics at least once a week.

**Question**: "In general, how interested are you in politics?", "Are you a member of a political party?"

**Source**: The National SOM survey 1986-2015
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**Comment:** The results are unweighted and calculated among eligible voters (18 years or older and Swedish citizens).

**Question:** "Which party do you like best at the present time?"

**Source:** The National SOM survey 1986-2013
STRENGTH OF PARTY CONVICTION THROUGH ELECTORAL CYCLES

Comment: The question is given to respondents stating a party preference. Response alternatives to the question asked: "Yes, very convinced", "Yes, somewhat convinced", "No". The results show percent very convinced or somewhat convinced party supporters among all respondents.

Question: "Do you consider yourself a convinced supporter of your party?"

VOTER ASSESSMENTS OF THE PARTY LEADERS
The leader of the Left Party (V)

Comment: The results are based on answers on a dislike-like scale running between -5 ("Dislike") and +5 ("Like"). The numbers have been multiplied by ten to avoid decimals. Consequently, the scale runs between -50 ("Dislike") and +50 ("Like").

Question: "Generally speaking, how much do you like or dislike the party leaders? Using this scale, where would you like to place the different party leaders?"

VOTER ASSESSMENTS OF THE PARTY LEADERS
The leader of the Social Democratic Party (S)

Comment: The results are based on answers on a dislike-like scale running between -5 ("Dislike") and +5 ("Like"). The numbers have been multiplied by ten to avoid decimals. Consequently, the scale runs between -50 ("Dislike") and +50 ("Like").

Question: “Generally speaking, how much do you like or dislike the party leaders? Using this scale, where would you like to place the different party leaders?”


www.som.gu.se info@som.gu.se
VOTER ASSESSMENTS OF THE PARTY LEADERS
The leader of the Center Party (C)

Comment: The results are based on answers on a dislike-like scale running between -5 ("Dislike") and +5 ("Like"). The numbers have been multiplied by ten to avoid decimals. Consequently, the scale runs between -50 ("Dislike") and +50 ("Like").

Question: "Generally speaking, how much do you like or dislike the party leaders? Using this scale, where would you like to place the different party leaders?"

Comment: The results are based on answers on a dislike-like scale running between -5 (“Dislike”) and +5 (“Like”). The numbers have been multiplied by ten to avoid decimals. Consequently, the scale runs between -50 (“Dislike”) and +50 (“Like”).

Question: “Generally speaking, how much do you like or dislike the party leaders? Using this scale, where would you like to place the different party leaders?”

Comment: The results are based on answers on a dislike-like scale running between -5 ("Dislike") and +5 ("Like"). The numbers have been multiplied by ten to avoid decimals. Consequently, the scale runs between -50 ("Dislike") and +50 ("Like").

Question: "Generally speaking, how much do you like or dislike the party leaders? Using this scale, where would you like to place the different party leaders?"

VOTER ASSESSMENTS OF THE PARTY LEADERS

The leader of the Conservatives (M)

Comment: The results are based on answers on a dislike-like scale running between -5 ("Dislike") and +5 ("Like"). The numbers have been multiplied by ten to avoid decimals. Consequently, the scale runs between -50 ("Dislike") and +50 ("Like").

Question: "Generally speaking, how much do you like or dislike the party leaders? Using this scale, where would you like to place the different party leaders?"


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36
Comment: The results are based on answers on a dislike-like scale running between -5 ("Dislike") and +5 ("Like"). The numbers have been multiplied by ten to avoid decimals. Consequently, the scale runs between -50 ("Dislike") and +50 ("Like").

Question: "Generally speaking, how much do you like or dislike the party leaders? Using this scale, where would you like to place the different party leaders?"

VOTER ASSESSMENTS OF THE PARTY LEADERS
The leader of the Sweden Democratic Party (SD)

Comment: The results are based on answers on a dislike-like scale running between -5 ("Dislike") and +5 ("Like"). The numbers have been multiplied by ten to avoid decimals. Consequently, the scale runs between -50 ("Dislike") and +50 ("Like").

Question: "Generally speaking, how much do you like or dislike the party leaders? Using this scale, where would you like to place the different party leaders?"


Source: www.som.gu.se
Email: info@som.gu.se
**Comment:** Five response alternatives to the question asked: "Clearly to the left; Somewhat to the left; Neither to the left, nor to the right; Somewhat to the right; Somewhat to the left". No-answers (3-5 percent on average every year) are excluded from the analysis.

**Question:** "It is sometimes said that political opinions can be placed on a scale from left to right. Where would you place yourself on such a left-right scale?"

**Source:** The National SOM survey 1986-2015
ASSESSING THE GOVERNMENT’S JOB PERFORMANCE

Comment: Five response alternatives to the question asked: "Very well; Fairly well; Neither well, nor badly; Fairly badly; Very badly". The results show percent respondents answering "Very or "Fairly well/bad".

Question: "How well do you think the Government is doing its job?"


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SATISFACTION WITH THE WAY DEMOCRACY WORKS

Comment: Four response alternatives to the question asked: "Very satisfied; fairly satisfied; Not very satisfied; Not at all satisfied". The results show percentages responding "Very" or "Fairly satisfied" among people answering the questions.

Question: "On the whole, are you satisfied with the way democracy works?"


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61 Sweden
65 Local Government
57 Regional Government
42 European Union
GENERAL TRUST IN SWEDISH POLITICIANS

Comment: Four response alternatives to the question asked: "Very much; Fairly much; Fairly little; Very little". The results show percent answering "Very much" or "Fairly much" among all respondents. Non-answers vary between 1 to 4 percent, and are included in the percentage base.

Question: "In general, how much do you trust Swedish politicians?"

POLITICAL ISSUES
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**Comment:** The percentages are based on all respondents. The respondents were asked to provide a maximum of three issues/societal problems in an open-ended question.

**Question:** "Which issue(s) or societal problem(s) do you think is/are the most important in Sweden today?"

**Source:** The National SOM survey 1987-2013
Comment: All respondents are included in the percent calculations. Five response alternatives to the question asked: "Abolish nuclear power quickly; Abolish nuclear power, but not until our present reactors have done their job; Use nuclear power and renew the reactors when they are worn out; Use nuclear power and build additional reactors in the future; No definite opinion".

Question: "What is your view on the long term use of nuclear power as an energy source in Sweden?"

INVEST IN DIFFERENT ENERGY SOURCES

Comment: Five response alternatives to the question asked: "More than today; About the same as today; Less than today; Abolish/Give up the energy source completely; No opinion". All respondents who answered each question are included in the percentage base.

Question: "During the next 5-10 years, how much should we in Sweden invest in the following energy sources?"

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Comment: All respondents who answered any item in the battery of questions are included in the percent calculations. Six response alternatives to the question asked: "Very good proposal; Fairly good proposal; Neither good, nor bad proposal; Fairly bad proposal; Very bad proposal".

Question: "Reduce the size of the public sector?"

ATTITUDES TOWARDS PROPOSALS FOR PRIVATIZATION IN SWEDEN

Comment: In all four cases response alternatives were: "Very good proposal; Fairly good proposal; Neither good, nor bad proposal; Fairly bad proposal; Very bad proposal". The results are percent in favour of

Question: "Convert public utilities like Swedish Telecom into private enterprises; Increase the proportion of health care operated by private interests; Let private enterprises handle care for the elderly; Give more resources to independent schools."

ATTITUDES TOWARDS INTRODUCING SIX-HOUR WORK DAY

Comment: Five response alternatives to the question asked: "Very good idea; fairly good idea; Neither good, nor bad idea; Fairly bad idea; Very bad idea". The results show percent respondents answering "Very good" or "Fairly good" among women and men. The percentages are based on the number of respondents answering the question.

Question: "Introduce six-hour work day for all gainfully employed"


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**ACCEPTING FEWER REFUGEES**

**Comment:** Five response alternatives to the question asked: "Very good proposal; Fairly good proposal; Neither good, nor bad proposal; Fairly bad proposal; Very bad proposal". The results show percent answering "Very good/bad" or "Fairly good/bad" among respondents who answered the question.

**Question:** "Accept fewer refugees into Sweden"

**Source:** The National SOM survey 1990-2015

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SUPPORT FOR NEW AND OLD VALUE ISSUES

Comment: Six response alternatives to the question asked: "Very good proposal; Fairly good proposal; Neither good, nor bad proposal; Fairly bad proposal; Very bad proposal; No opinion". The results show percent answering "Very good" or "fairly good" proposal among persons who answered each item.

Question: "Here are a number of proposals. What is your view on them?"

Source: The National SOM survey 2001-2014

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Comment: Six response alternatives to the question asked: "Very good proposal; Fairly good proposal; Neither good, nor bad proposal; Fairly bad proposal; Very bad proposal; No opinion". The results show percent answering "Very good" or "fairly good" proposal among persons who answered each item.

Question: "Here are a number of proposals. What is your view on them?"

Source: The National SOM survey 2001-2015
MEDIA TRENDS
Comment: The results show percent of all respondents reading a morning paper in print or online at least five days a week, reading an evening tabloid in print or online at least three days a week, and watching the specified television and radio news programs at least five days a week.

Question: "How often do you usually watch or listen to the following programmes on radio or television? If you read a morning paper regularly - about how many times a week do you usually read? How often do you read an evening tabloid in print or online?"

Source: The National SOM survey 1990-2015
MORNING PAPERS: READERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTION

Comment: The results show percent of all respondents subscribing to a morning paper in print; reading at least one morning paper (in print) at least five days a week.

Source: The National SOM survey 1990-2015

Question: "Do you read or look in a morning paper regularly? If yes, write down the name of the paper or papers and state how many days you usually read or look into it"; "Do you or anybody else in your household subscribe to a newspaper?"
LISTENING TO PUBLIC SERVICE VS. COMMERCIAL RADIO

Comment: Six response alternatives to the question asked: "Daily; 5-6 days a week; 3-4 days a week; 1-2 days a week; More seldom; Never".

Question: "How often do you listen to the following radio channels?"


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LISTENING TO PUBLIC SERVICE RADIO CHANNELS

Comment: Six response alternatives to the question asked: "Daily; 5-6 days a week; 3-4 days a week; 1-2 days a week; More seldom; Never". The results show percent of all respondents listening at least five days a week.

Question: "How often do you listen to the following radio channels?"

Comment: Results show the percentage watching at least 5 days a week.

Question: "How often do you watch:"

Comment: The results show the percent among all respondents indicating access to the specified equipment in the household. Minor changes in the age composition of the sample over the years affect the level of penetration of media with a few percentage points.

Question: "Among the following, what kinds of equipment do you have access to in your household?"

INTERNET USAGE

Comment: Seven response alternatives to the question asked: "Never; About once/twelve months; About once/six months; About once every month; About once every week; Several times a week". The results show percent among all respondents, using the Internet several times a week.

Question: "During the last twelve months, how often have you used the Internet?"

AREAS OF USE ON THE INTERNET

Comment: Seven response alternatives to the question asked: "Never; About once/twelve months; About once/six months; About once a month; About once a week; Several times a week; Daily". The results show percent among all respondents, active in each area at least once a week.

Question: "During the last twelve months, how often have you done the following?"

DAILY USE OF MOBILE PHONE

Comment: Seven response alternatives to the question asked: "Never; About once/twelve months; About once/six months; About once a month; About once a week; Several times a week; Daily". The results show percent among all respondents, active in each area at least once a day.

Question: "During the last twelve months, how often have you used a mobile phone to do the following?"


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**Comment:** Six response alternatives to the question asked: "Never; About once/twelve months; About once/six months; About once a month; About once a week; Several times a week". The percent reading a book on at least a weekly basis among men and women who answered at least parts of a multi-item question on leisure activities.

**Question:** "How often have you engaged in the following activities during the past twelve months?"

**Source:** The National SOM survey 1988-2015
SWEDEN AND THE WORLD
Comment: Five response alternatives to the question asked: "Very good proposal; Fairly good proposal; Neither good, nor bad proposal; Fairly bad proposal; Very bad proposal". The results show percent answering "Very/fairly good" or "Very/fairly bad" among respondents who answered the question.

Question: "Reduce foreign aid?"

Comment: Five response alternatives to the question asked: "Very good proposal; Fairly good proposal; Neither good, nor bad proposal; Fairly bad proposal; Very bad proposal". The results show percent answering "Very/fairly good" or "Very/fairly bad" among respondents who answered the question.

Question: "Reduce defence spending?"

SWEDISH MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Comment: Three response alternatives to the question asked: "On the whole in favour; On the whole against; No definite opinion". All respondents answering the question are included in the percentage base.

Question: "What is your opinion on the Swedish membership in the European Union?"

Comment: Five response alternatives to the question asked: "Very good proposal; Fairly good proposal; Neither good, nor bad proposal; Fairly bad proposal; Very bad proposal". The results show percent answering "Very/fairly good" or "Very/fairly bad" among respondents who answered the question.

Question: "Sweden should introduce the Euro as currency"


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**Comment:** Five response alternatives to the question asked: "Very good proposal; Fairly good proposal; Neither good, nor bad proposal; Fairly bad proposal; Very bad proposal". The results show percent answering "Very/fairly good" or "Very/fairly bad" among respondents who answered the question.

**Question:** "Sweden should apply for membership in NATO"

**Source:** The National SOM survey 1994-2015
BACKGROUND
SUBJECTIVE FAMILY CLASS

Comment: Percentages are based on respondents answering the question.

Question: If you describe your home during your childhood, which of the categories below is most appropriate?


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Comment: Based on self-classification. Unemployment includes people in relief work or training programs. The percent calculations are based upon respondents who have answered the questions.

Question: “Which of the following groups do you belong to?”

Membership in sports or outdoor organisations: 35%
Union membership: 42%
Membership in cultural organisations: 14%
Membership in senior citizens' associations: 14%
Membership in environmental organisations: 6%

Comment: All respondents are included in the percent calculations.


Question: "List which associations you are a member of, and how active you are in those associations."
SOM-institutet vid Göteborgs universitet genomför årligen nationella och lokala frågeundersökningar och anordnar seminarier på temat Samhälle, Opinion och Medier.

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