



2018/19

INVOLVEMENT AND CONFIDENCE IN FOCUS

VA Barometer 2018/19 – VA report 2018:6

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

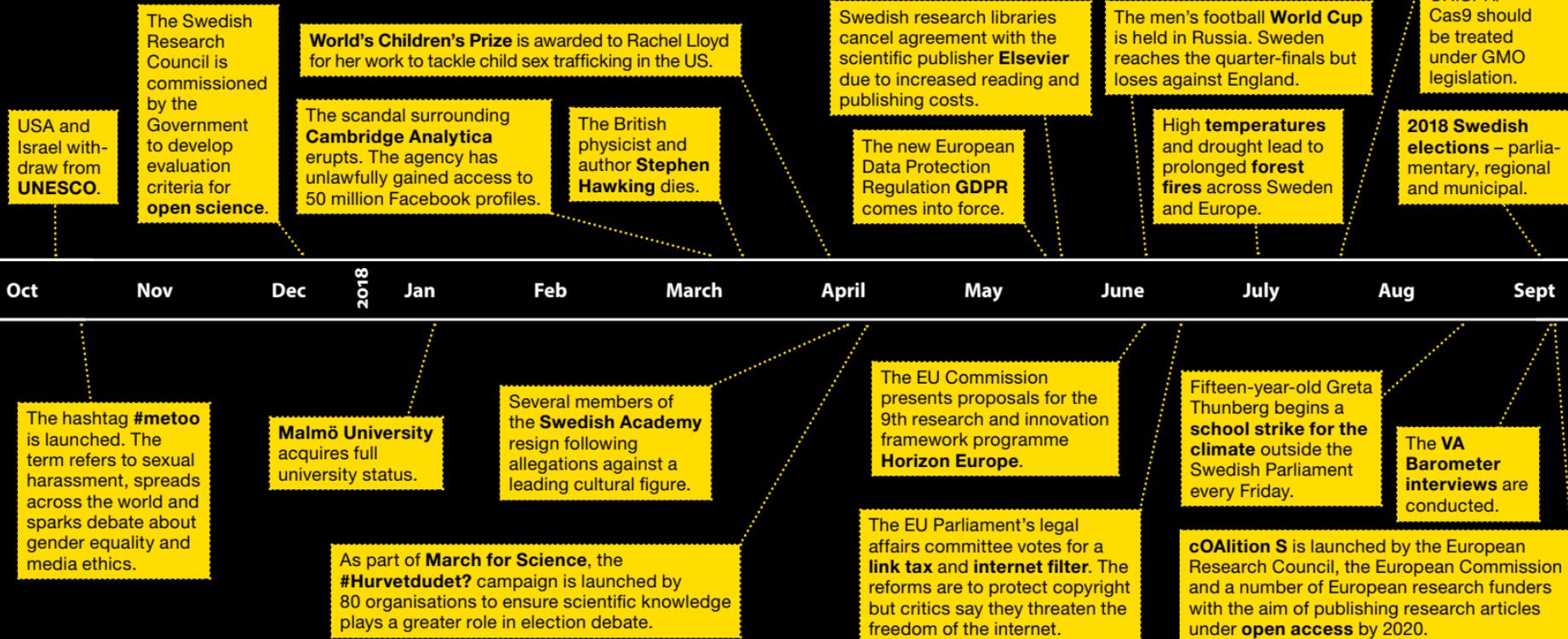
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These are some of the results of this year's VA Barometer:

- Confidence in researchers at universities remains high.
- Technological developments not viewed as positively as previously.
- Confidence in research is rising.
- Research issues didn't influence which party Swedes voted for in the general election.
- Strong support for involving the public in research.

The VA barometer is based on around 1,000 telephone interviews with a representative sample of the Swedish population aged 16–74. It is the 17th Barometer survey since VA was founded in 2002. Read more about the survey on page 30.

LAST YEAR THROUGH SWEDISH EYES



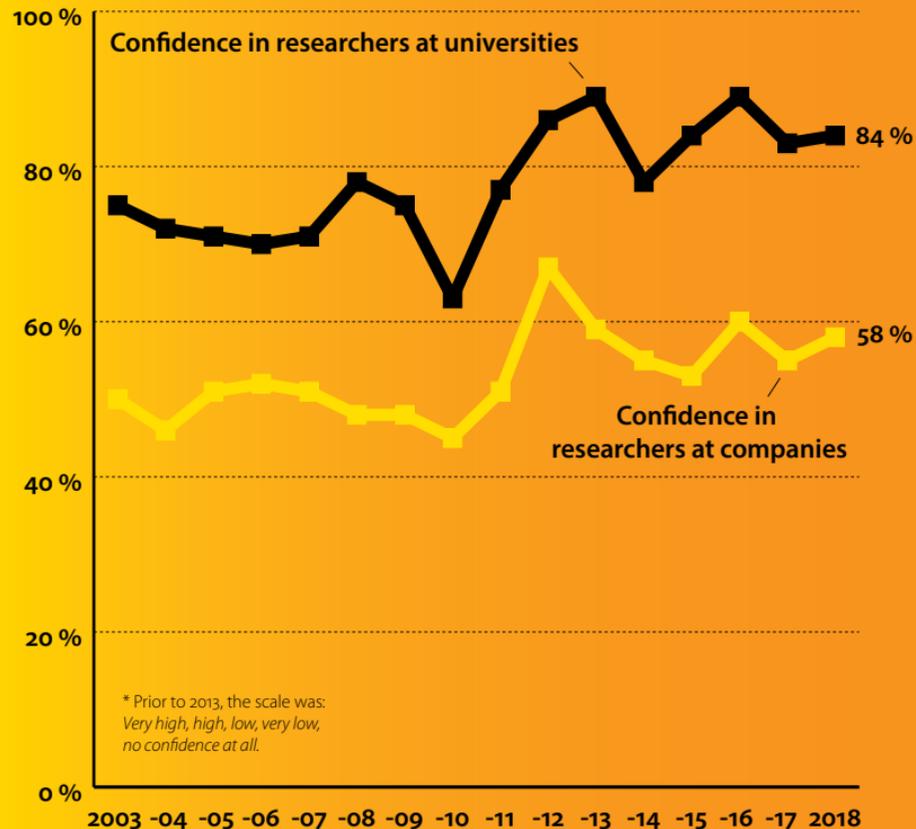
HIGH CONFIDENCE IN RESEARCHERS

The proportion of Swedes with *very high* or *fairly high* confidence in researchers at universities is 84 percent this year. For researchers in companies, the corresponding proportion is 58 percent. The difference compared to last year is small but not statistically significant.

In our 2017 survey, women's confidence in researchers at universities was 13 percentage points lower than men's. This year, women's and men's confidence is comparable. The reason behind the differences between genders last year is unknown.

*The graph shows the percentages that have **very high** or **fairly high** confidence in researchers. (Four-point scale: *Very high, fairly high, fairly low, very low.**)*

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS 2018: 522



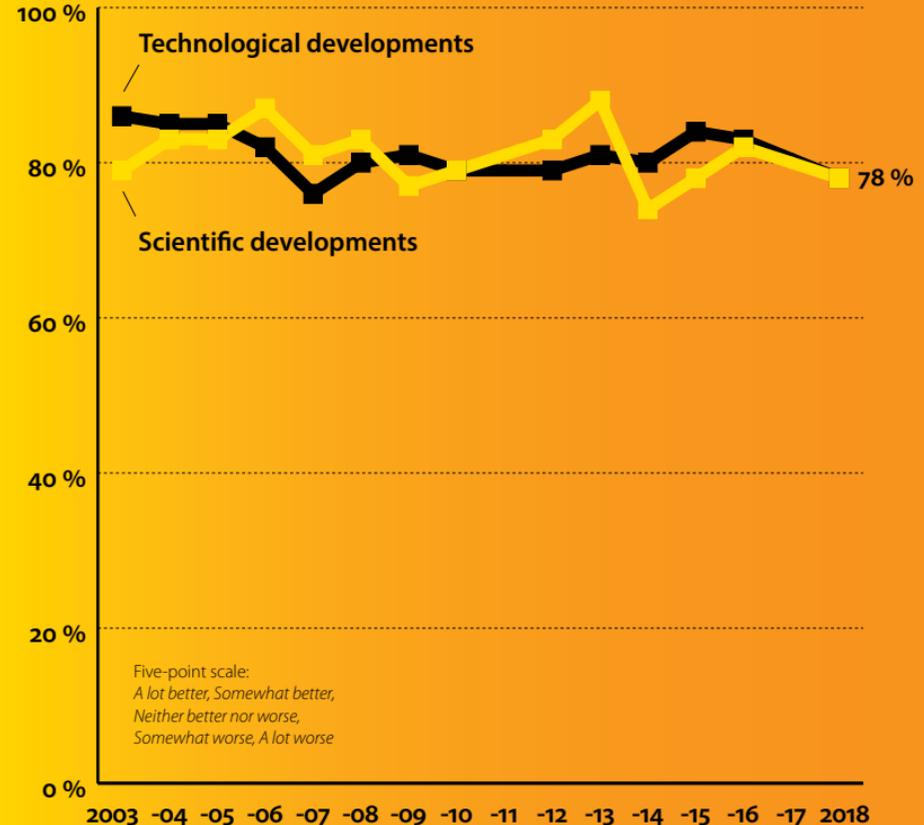
SCIENCE MAKES LIFE BETTER

A large majority of Swedes (78 percent) think that scientific and technological developments have made life *a lot* or *somewhat* better for ordinary people.

Views on scientific and technological developments are strongly linked to level of education, with the highly educated increasingly thinking that developments have made life better. Regarding technological developments, there is also a significant difference between men and women, with 83 percent of men, but only 73 percent of women, thinking that developments have made life *a lot* or *somewhat* better.

*The graph shows the proportion that responded **a lot better** or **somewhat better** to the question of **whether scientific and technological developments in the last 10-20 years have made life better or worse for ordinary people.***

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS 2018: 522 (SCIENTIFIC) 530 (TECHNOLOGICAL)



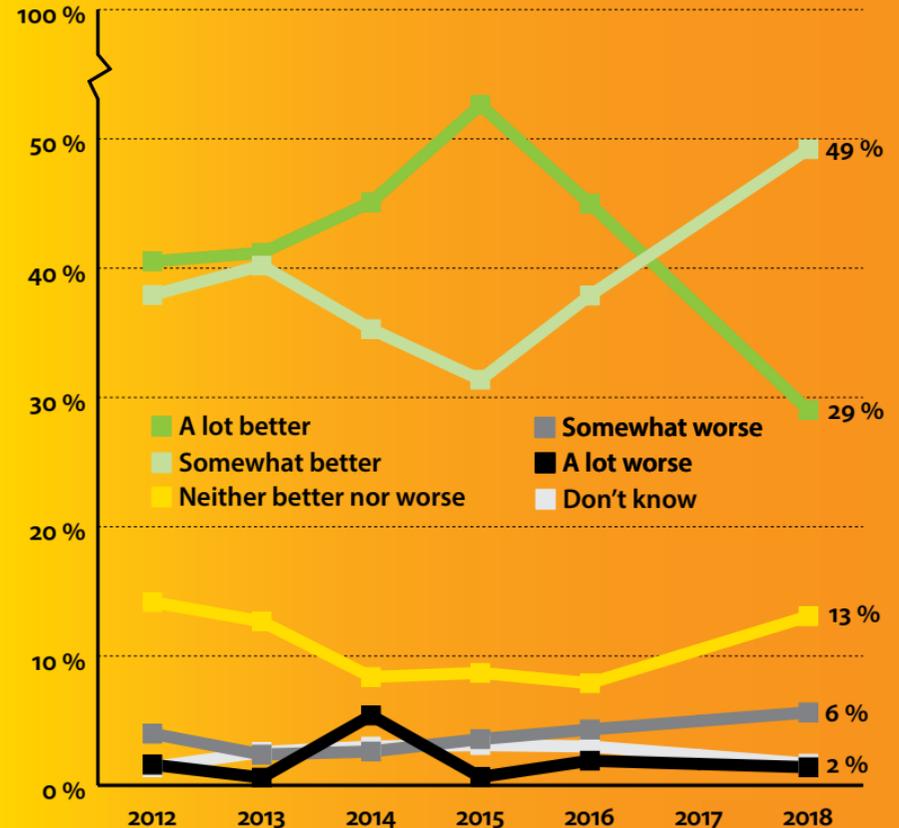
MIXED ATTITUDES TO TECHNOLOGY

Although the proportion of Swedes who think that technological developments have made life better remains high, the picture isn't exactly the same as previously. This year, there are fewer who think that technological developments make life *a lot better* for ordinary people, compared to 2016. At the same time, there are more who believe that technological developments have made life *somewhat better*. The biggest change is seen in people aged between 60 and 74, where fewer think it is better and more believe it is *neither better nor worse*.

No similar decreases in confidence in scientific developments can be seen.

The graph shows responses to the question of whether technological developments in the past 10–20 years have made life better or worse for ordinary people.

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS 2018: 530



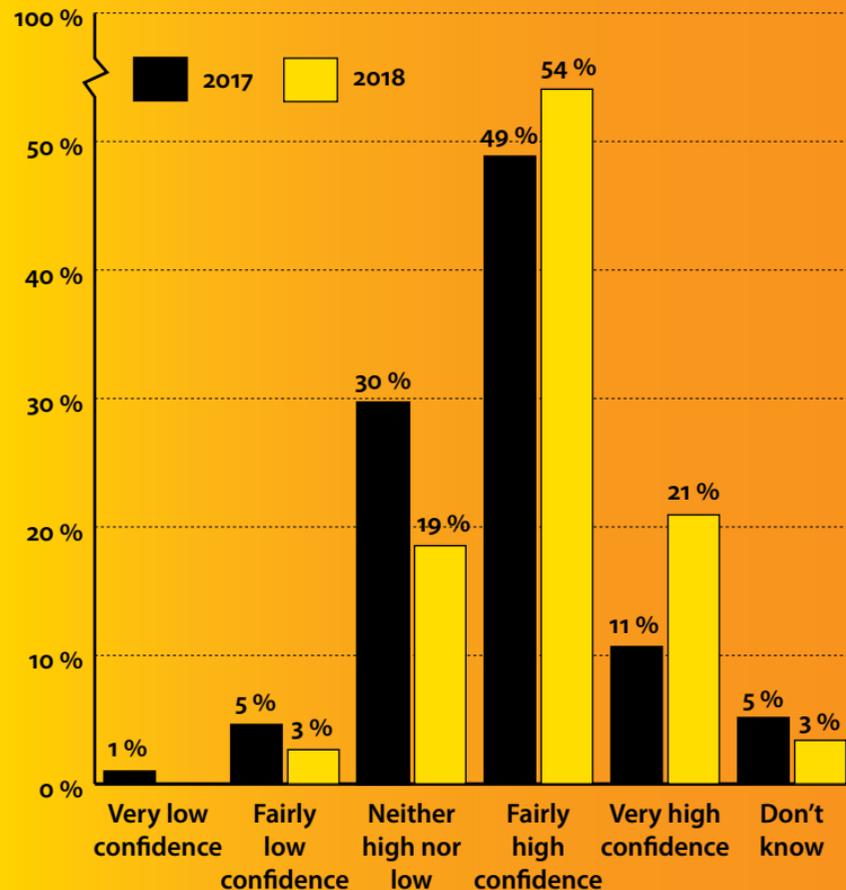
GREATER CONFIDENCE IN RESEARCH

For 17 years, the VA barometer has investigated Swedes' confidence in researchers. For the last two years, we have also asked about their confidence in research in general.

Compared to last year's results, confidence in research has strengthened. This year, 75 percent of Swedes have *very high* or *fairly high* confidence in research, compared to 60 percent in last year's survey. Essentially, it is the proportion with *neither high nor low* confidence that has fallen, while both the proportion of those with *fairly high* and *very high* confidence has risen. There is no specific societal group that is responsible for the increase; these views are fairly evenly distributed throughout the population.

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

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS 2017: 1,021 – NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS 2018: 1,052



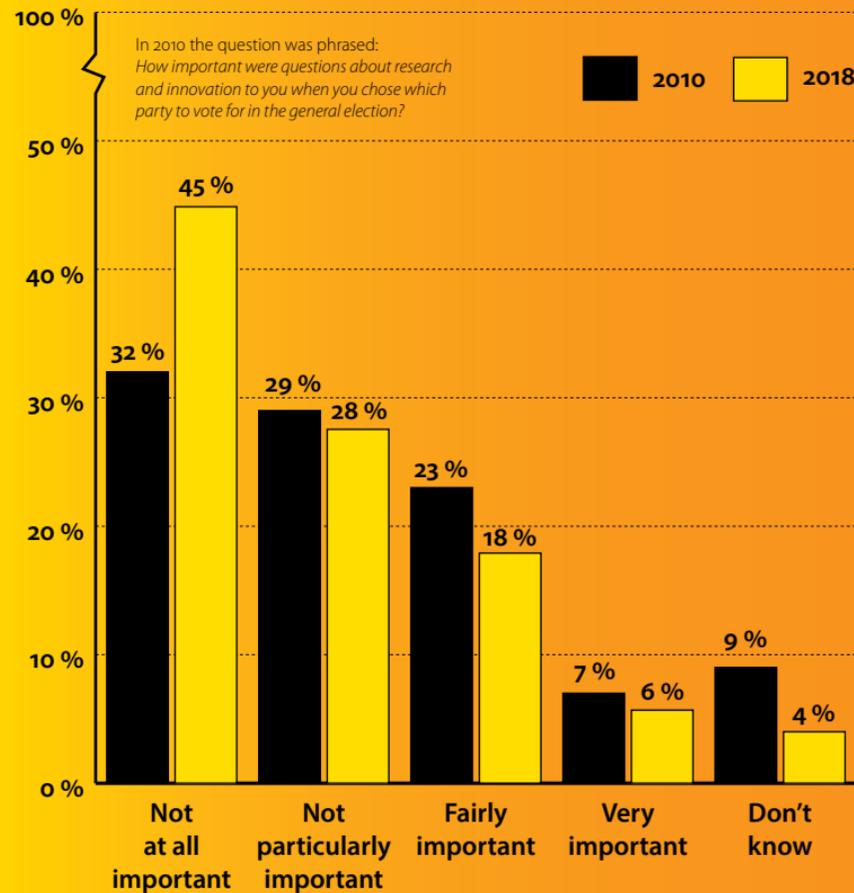
RESEARCH – A LOW ELECTION PRIORITY

This year's survey was carried out shortly after the Swedish elections in September. We therefore asked about the importance of research issues in their choice of party. Almost half (45 percent) say they were *not important at all*, whereas only six percent say they were *very important*.

Compared to when the same question was asked in the year of the 2010 election, research issues seem to have decreased in importance. Men consider research issues to be more important in their choice of party than women (27 percent of men and 20 percent of women say they were *fairly* or *very important*). Highly educated people more than those with only compulsory or upper secondary education say that research issues influenced their choice of party.

*The graph shows responses to the question **How important were research issues to you when you chose which party to vote for in the election?***

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS 2010: 1,000 – NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS 2018: 1,052



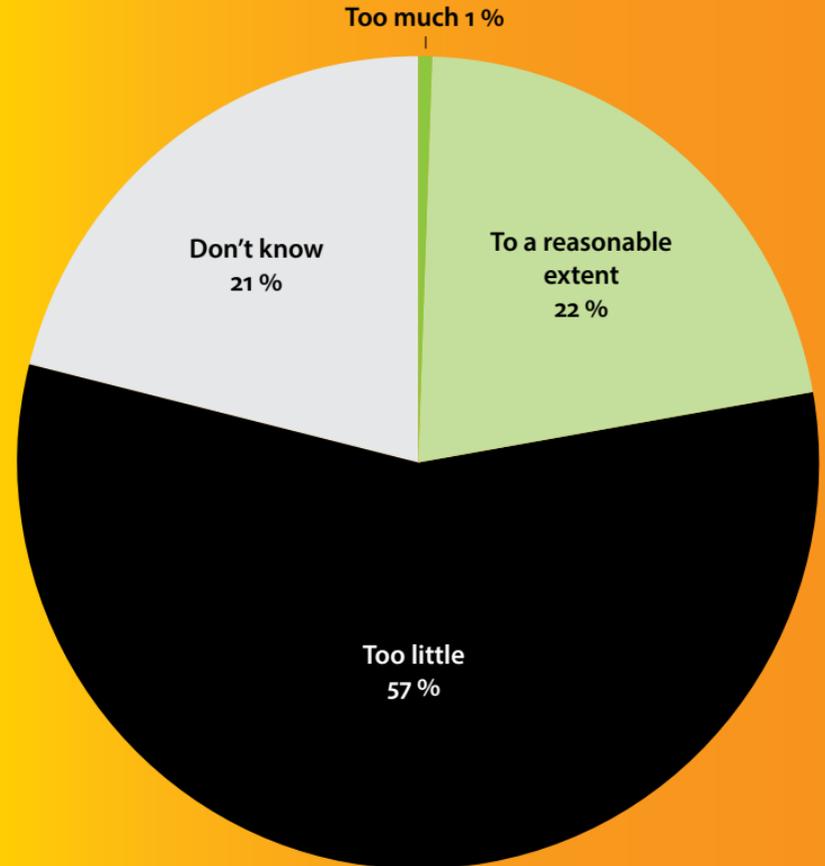
POLITICIANS USE TOO FEW FACTS

The **#Hurvetdudet?** (How do you know that?) campaign sought to ensure research-based knowledge played a greater role in election debate. Swedes believe that more science is needed in public debate – six out of ten (57 percent) think politicians used scientific facts *too little* during their 2018 election campaigns.

In particular, older people (60–74 year olds) and the highly educated believe that not enough attention was paid to scientific facts.

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

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 1,052



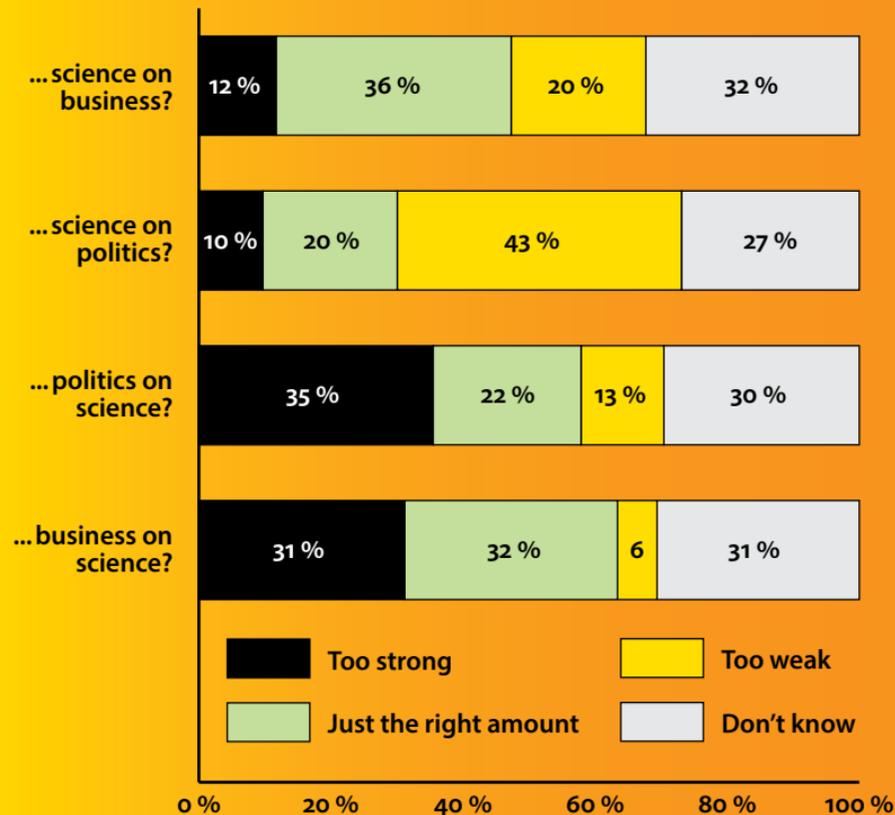
MORE INFLUENCE FOR SCIENCE?

Many believe that science has *too weak* influence on politics (43 percent), plus that both business and politics have *too strong* influence on science (31 and 35 percent, respectively). All of these views are more prominent among highly educated people. Three out of ten Swedes have difficulty evaluating how the areas influence each other (i.e. say *don't know*).

*The graph shows responses to the questions **In your opinion, how strong is the influence of** a) **Science on business?** b) **Science on politics?** c) **Politics on science?** d) **Business on science?** (Five-point scale: *Much too strong, Slightly too strong, Just the right amount, Slightly too weak, Much too weak*). The graph shows combined results).*

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 1,052

IN YOUR OPINION, HOW STRONG IS THE INFLUENCE OF ...



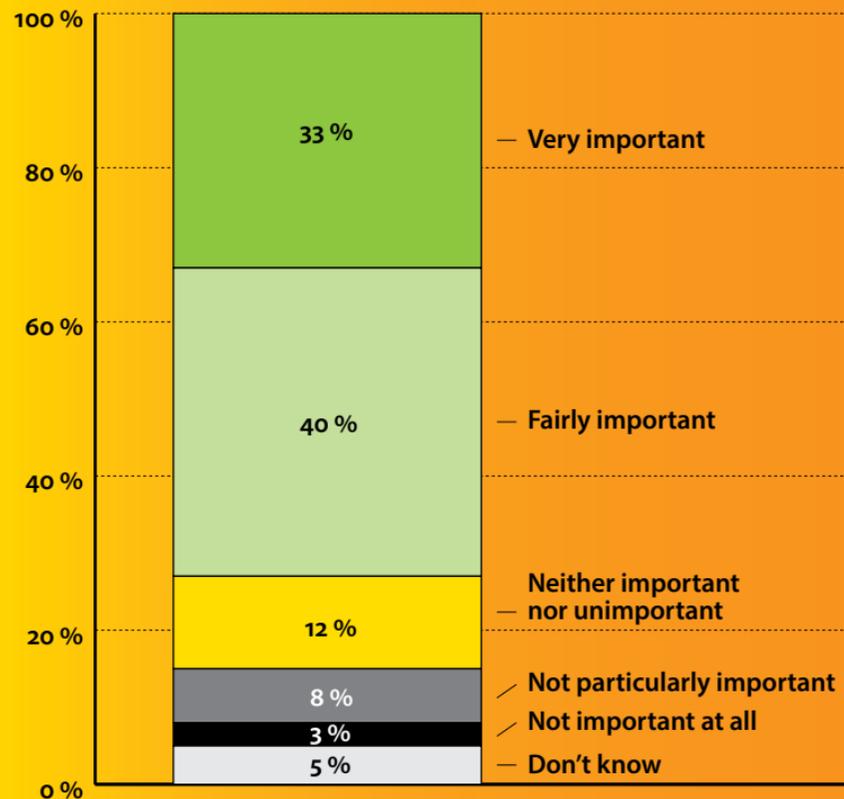
INVOLVE THE PUBLIC IN RESEARCH!

It is becoming increasingly common for the public and other groups in society to participate in the research process in different ways. For example, they may be involved in discussing research questions, helping to collect data or analysing results.

There is a strong support for the public to be involved in research. Nearly three quarters think it's *fairly* or *very important*. There are no large differences between different subgroups such as gender, age or educational level.

*The graph shows responses to the question **In your opinion, how important is it for the public to be involved in research?***

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 1,052



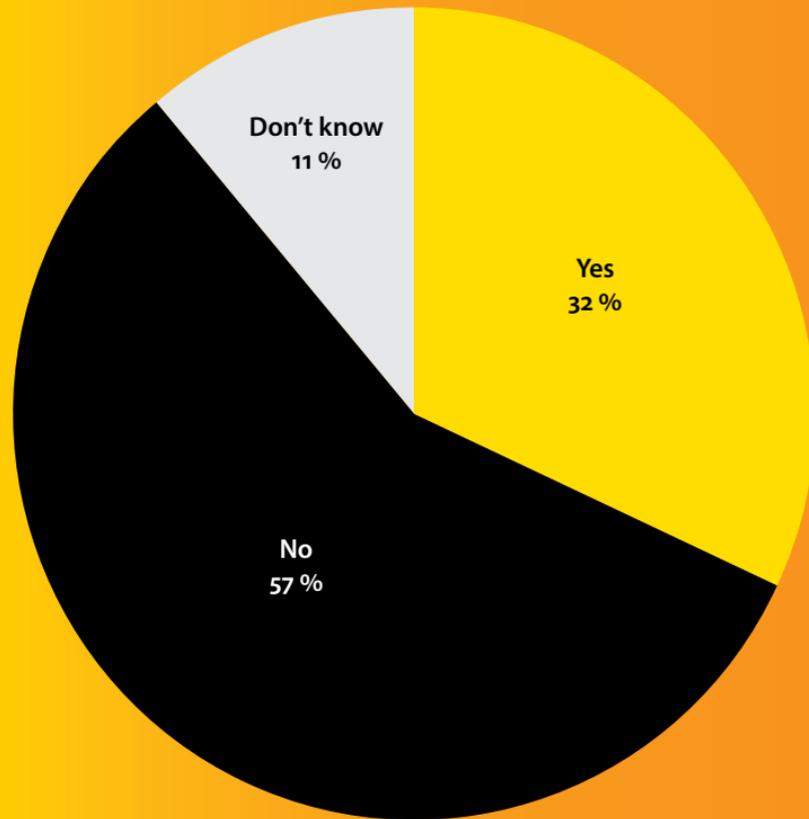
PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT?

Nearly one third (32 percent) of the respondents would consider participating in research themselves.

Unlike the answers to the previous question, several differences can be seen between different subgroups. Forty-six percent of those with a university education would consider being involved compared to 15 percent of those with only compulsory-level education. Forty-six percent of those living in or near large cities answered *yes*, compared to 17 percent of residents of smaller towns or rural areas. The age group most interested in being involved is 30–44-year-olds, of whom 44 percent answered *yes*.

*The graph shows responses to the question **Would you personally consider being involved in research?***

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 1,052

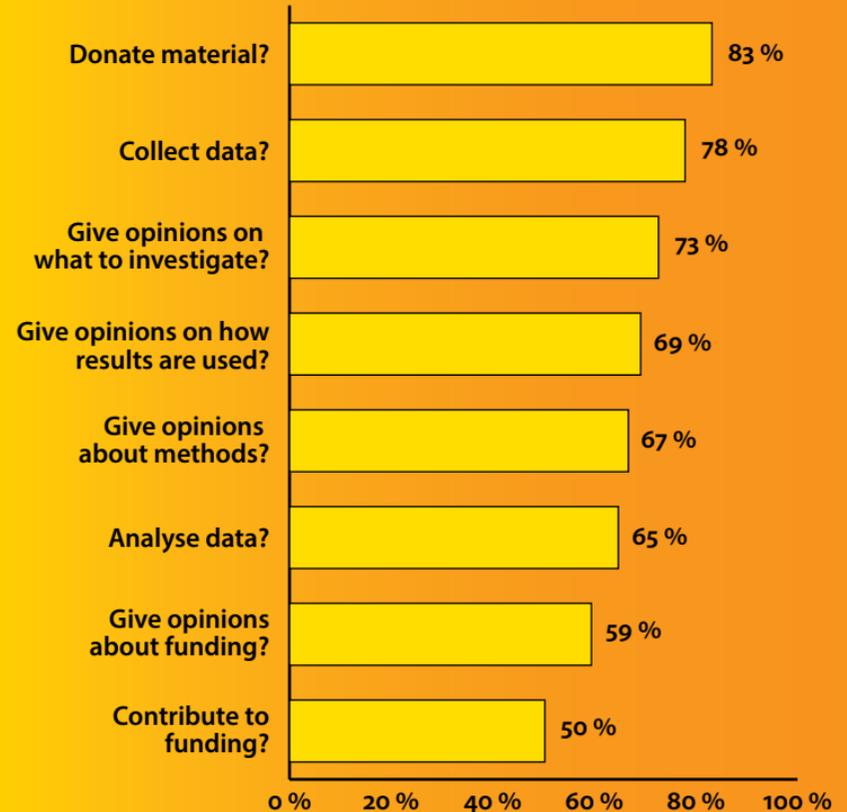


KEEN TO DONATE AND COLLECT DATA

Those who answered *yes* to the question about personal involvement were asked a follow-up question about how they would like to be involved. The results show that Swedes would consider participating in several parts of the research process. The most popular options were to *donate material* needed for research (83 percent), to help with *data collection* (78 percent) and to give their opinion on *what should be investigated* in a research study (73 percent). The least attractive option was to *contribute to the funding of research* (50 percent). However, among young people aged 16–29, two thirds (65 percent) answered *yes*, compared to about 45 percent among other age groups.

*The graph shows the proportion of people who responded yes to different forms of involvement. The question was phrased: **In which of the following ways would you consider being involved?** (Yes/No)*

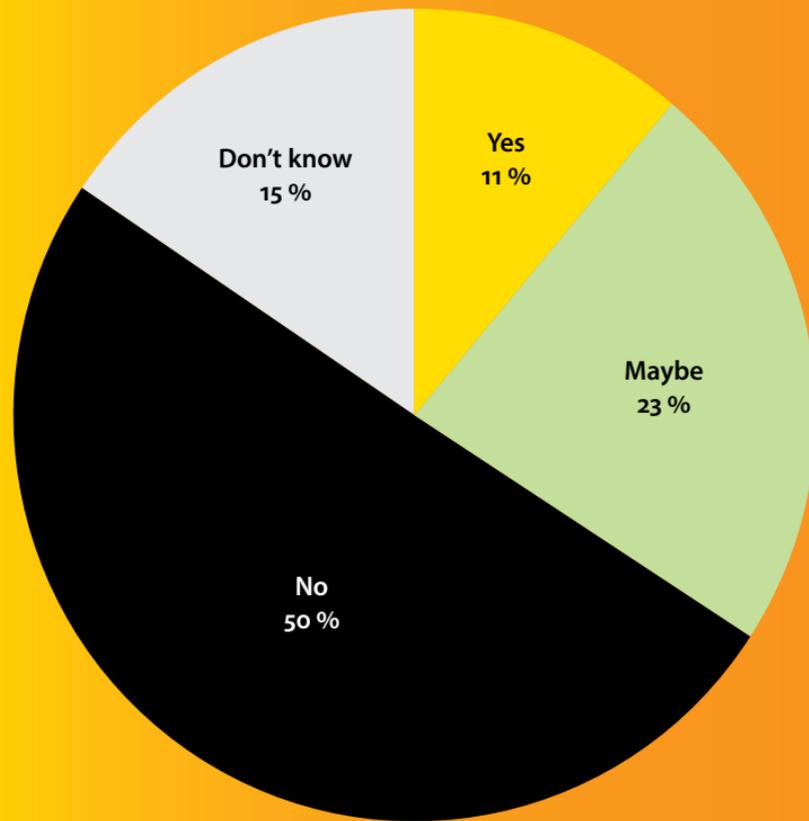
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 389 (THE OPTIONS HAVE BEEN SLIGHTLY ABBREVIATED IN THE GRAPH)



A CAREER AS A RESEARCHER?

When we ask young Swedes, aged 16–29, if they would like to work as a researcher in the future, only one in ten say *yes*. A quarter (23 percent) *might* want to work as a researcher, while half say *no*.

In last year's survey we saw a clear difference between men and women, with men being more positive about becoming researchers. No such difference is visible in this year's results.



*The graph shows responses to the question **Would you like to work as a researcher in the future?** asked to people aged between 16 and 29.*

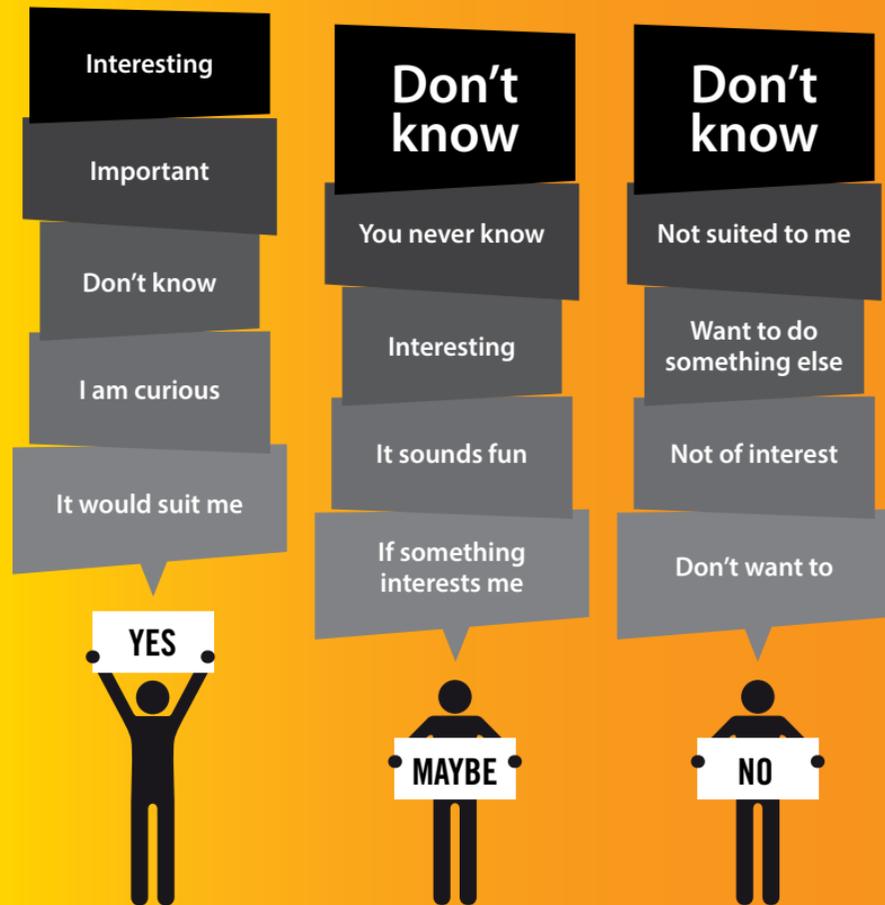
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 269

WHY (NOT) BE A RESEARCHER?

In order to better understand the responses whether they would like to work as a researcher in the future, we asked the respondents to explain the reason behind their answer in an open question. Common reasons for answering **yes** are that it seems *interesting* or they consider it to be *important*. Almost half of those who answer **no** or **maybe** reply *I don't know* when asked why. This suggests that a research career is not something that they have thought about previously. Other reasons among those who don't want to be researchers are that it's *not suited to them* or they *want to do something else*.

The graph shows the most common reasons why respondents answered yes, no or maybe to the question of whether they would like to work as a researcher in the future. The question was asked to people aged between 16 and 29.

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 227



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 1,052), aged between 16 to 74 years old. The response rate in this year's survey was 53 percent. Respondents are representative in terms of gender, age and place of residence. The results have been weighted retrospectively to ensure representativeness in terms of level of education. Only statistically significant comparisons between the response groups are presented.

Interviews are conducted annually over two weeks during September/October and are completed before the yearly announcement of the Nobel Prize Laureates due to media attention surrounding the Nobel Prize. For this year's survey, the field period ran from 10 to 30 September 2018. Exquiro Market Research has carried out the interviews since 2012. A reference group with expertise in survey methodology helps to formulate the battery of questions. The interview questions can be downloaded at www.v-a.se.

VA (Public & Science) promotes dialogue and openness between researchers and the public, especially young people. 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 some 90 organisations, authorities, companies and associations. In addition, it has a number of individual members.



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Read more at www.v-a.se