

The Research Group on  
Democracy in Local Government  
Project director: Jörgen Westerståhl  
Department of Political Science  
University of Göteborg, Sweden

CITIZEN QUESTIONNAIRE 1979

Year of birth

Sex

Commune

Lives in centre or periphery of commune

- 
1. When did You move to .....(name of commune)?  
*have always lived here*  
*19...(appr.)*

- 
2. From where did You move?  
.....(name of commune)  
*other country*

- 
3. During Your time in this commune have You always lived in the  
commune-centre/ outside the commune-centre?  
*have always lived in the commune-centre*  
*live in commune-centre now, but lived previously in other part*  
*of the commune*  
*always lived outside the commune-centre*  
*live outside the commune-centre now, but lived previously in it*

- 
4. Which of the following alternatives describes best Your present  
marital status?  
*married or cohabiting*  
*unmarried or divorced*  
*widow/widower*  
*other response*
-

5A. Below we have listed a number of tasks for the local government. Could You tell us for each of these items, if You think the local government in Your commune should do more than they presently do, or if You think things are pretty good as they are, or if You think the local government involvement should decrease, or if You have no opinion

|           |         |         |         |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|
| URGENT TO | GOOD AS | CAN BE  | NO      |
| DO MORE   | IT IS   | REDUCED | OPINION |

- A Housing (availability of)
- B Land purchase and planning
- C Possibilities of finding jobs
- D Collective transport
- E Roads, streets and traffic
- F Water supply and sewage
- G Environmental protection
- H Schools
- I Child care
- J Looking after the old-aged and the handicapped
- K Social aid (individual)
- L Support for sports and outdoor activities
- M Support for other leisuretime activities
- N Libraries and other cultural activities

---

5B. Which of the above mentioned tasks do You find it most urgent to be dealt with?

.....answer

no opinion/do not know

---

6. We have talked about the commune's activities in various service-areas. What is Your general view of the local government service in Your commune? Indicate which of the response alternatives is closest to Your own opinion.

*I am totally satisfied with the local government service  
on the whole I am satisfied with the local government service*

*I am fairly satisfied with the local government service, but  
think that certain parts of it could be improved*

*I am predominantely dissatisfied with the local government service  
but think that certain parts of it are good*

*I am totally dissatisfied with the local government service  
no opinion/do not know*

- 
- 7A. Do You have any children under the age of 16 living at home?

*yes*

*no*

- 
- 7B. If yes, do You have children attending school

*yes*

*no*

- 
- 7C. Did Your child (children) at any time during the pre-school period hold a place in a local government day-care centre or in a family-day-care, provided by the local government?

*yes*

*no*

- 
- 7D. Do You have children who are not yet of school age?

*yes*

*no*

---

7E. How have You arranged with day-care for the child (children)? Which of the following alternatives describes best Your own situation?

*parent at home*

*local government day-care centre*

*local government provided family day-care*

*local government day-care for one or more children, but not all other form of day-care*

---

7F. Would You like to have a place (additional place) in a local government day-care centre or family day-care

*yes*

*yes, if it was possible to get a job*

*no*

*other answer*

---

8. Childcare can be arranged in various ways. Which of these alternatives do You find best, second best or worst?

BEST      SECOND  
BEST      WORST

- A *The parents should themselves be responsible for the care of the children without any particular local government activity*
- B *Society ought to make it possible economically for a parent to stay at home with the children*
- C *The local government ought to take more responsibility for the children by providing more family day-care places*
- D *The local government ought to take more responsibility for the children by providing more places in day-care centres*
- E *No opinion*
-

9. Have You during recent years been in contact with any local government agency or local government employee in Your commune concerning

YES NO DO NOT KNOW/NO OPINION

Your housing situation/building permit or related matters?

Your childrens schooling (other than regular parent-teacher contact)?

the placing of Your children in day-care centres or family day-care?

getting a place at an old-age home or home-keeping assistance for anyone in Your family?

other matters concerning You or someone in Your family? (specify)

If Yes, do You consider Yourself unfairly or wrongly treated by the local authorities?

yes

no

do not know /no opinion

If yes, on what matter?

answer .....

10. A number of statements about local government officers and local administration are given on this card. I will read these statements to You one at a time and ask You to chose the response alternative that is closest to Your own opinion.

|                |                    |                       |                  |                        |
|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| AGREE TO-TALLY | AGREE ON THE WHOLE | DISAGREE ON THE WHOLE | DISAGREE TOTALLY | DO NOT KNOW/NO OPINION |
|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------|

A All citizens are treated equally by the local authorities

B The local government could handle its present tasks with a smaller number of employees

C One usually gets straight answers if one contacts the local administration

D It is almost impossible to change a local government decision, even if the decision is wrong

E Local government officers are helpful and listen to what one has to say

F Official letters and other commu-

nications from the local administration are often hard to understand
 

|                       |                       |                             |                     |                            |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| AGREE<br>TO-<br>TALLY | AGREE ON<br>THE WHOLE | DISAGREE<br>ON THE<br>WHOLE | DISAGREE<br>TOTALLY | DO NOT KNOW/<br>NO OPINION |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|

G Local government officers usually work quickly and effectively

H It is hard to find the right person when one contacts a local government office

11. a) Are You a member of the following types of organizations?  
 b) Have You during the last twelve months been to a meeting with any of the organizations that You are a member of?  
 c) Have You spoken on these occasions?

|        |                           |        |
|--------|---------------------------|--------|
| MEMBER | BEEN TO MEETING           | SPOKEN |
| no yes | no yes do not<br>remember | no yes |

- A Sports club or outdoor act. club
- B Trade union
- C Consumers co-operative org.
- D Farmers org. business-holders org. or similar
- E Political party (including youth and women clubs)
- F Tenants association, home-owners ass.
- G Parent-teacher association
- H Local interest group, action group etc.
- I Old-age pensioners org.
- J Other organization, church, or similar
- J .....
- J .....
- J .....

12. Have You during the last year contacted any individual local politician on matters that concern only Yourself or members of Your family?

*yes*

*no*

*do not remember*

If Yes, what was it about?

.....  
.....  
.....

13A. Have You ever- possibly with others- tried to influence local government decisionmaking or planning?

*yes*

*no/do not remember*

If Yes, what was it about?

.....  
.....  
.....

13B. In what way did You try to influence the local government on that matter?

*contacted a local government officer or office*

*contacted a local politician*

*worked actively in local party organization*

*worked actively in an actiongroup or neighborhoodorganization*

*worked actively in other organizations*

*wrote letters to or articles in newspapers*

*signed petitions or took part in demonstrations*

*other answer .....*

14. Are You presently or have You previously been a member or substitute member of the local Council or of any of the other local government boards?

- yes, I am a member/substitute member*
- yes, I have been a member/substitute member*
- no*
- other answer .....*

15. Do You personally know any local politician in this commune?

- yes*
- no*
- other answer .....*

16. If a party with which You sympathize offers You to become a member of the local Council or any other local government board, would You consider accepting?

- yes*
- doubtful/do not know*
- no*
- other answer .....*

17. If No on 16  
What is the reason that You do not want to accept (are hesitant to) such posts? I have here a list of possible reasons to refuse. Is any of them applicable to Your situation?

- I do not want to be tied up to one particular party*
- I am not interested enough in local politics*
- such posts are not very rewarding, one only gets criticism*
- such posts are not meaningful, they do not give any real influence*
- I can not for family-reasons*
- I am too old*
- I can not because of my job*
- I can not for economic reasons*
- I can not because of commitments in voluntary organizations*
- I am not knowledgable enough*
- other answer .....*



18. when the local party organizations compose the lists of candidates for the Council, they usually consider experience and knowledge, sex-distribution, age-distribution, social class distribution and that various parts of the commune should be represented?

Indicate which of these You find most important, second most important and least important

MOST IMPORTANT SECOND MOST IMPORTANT LEAST IMPORTANT

- A experience and knowledge
B sex-distribution
C social class-distribution
D age distribution
E representation of the various parts of the commune
F do not know

19. If, in the handling of important issues of principle in the local Council, a conflict occurs between the Council members own opinion and that of his party or the electorate's opinion, how do You think a council member ought to vote?

- vote according to the party's opinion
vote according to the opinion in the electorate
vote according to his/her own conviction
no opinion
other answer .....

20A. Now I would like to ask You a couple of questions about your experiences of the amalgamation reform. Do You think the service provided by the commune is proportioned in a reasonable way to different parts of the commune?

- yes
no
do not know/do not want to answer

20B Can You name any particular part of the commune that has been unfairly treated?

- yes, .....
no
do not know/do not want to answer



|                  |                       |                             |                     |                   |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| AGREE<br>TOTALLY | AGREE ON<br>THE WHOLE | DISAGREE<br>ON THE<br>WHOLE | DISAGREE<br>TOTALLY | DO<br>NOT<br>KNOW |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|

- E people in the various parts of the commune ought to have the right to decide on matters concerning them
- F people in general do not have enough knowledge to be able to take part in decisionmaking in the local government
- G it is more urgent to reduce the local income tax than to extend local government services.

23. A) Which newspaper(s) do You usually read at least one day a week?  
 B) Do You or Your household subscribe to any newspaper?  
 C) Do You read Your newspaper three days a week or more?

24. Here I have a list of some topics that One can read about in the newspapers. Choose the alternatives that are most applicable to You? How much of what You read is about

|                         |                |                     |                                 |  |
|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| ALL OR<br>ALMOST<br>ALL | FAIRLY<br>MUCH | NOT<br>VERY<br>MUCH | NOTHING OR<br>ALMOST<br>NOTHING | DO NOT<br>KNOW/DO<br>NOT WANT<br>TO ANSWER |
|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|--|

- A local government questions, decisions by the council and local government boards in this commune
- B national politics, decisions taken by the parliament, the government and the central administration
- C local news about voluntary associations, org., churches in the commune etc.
- D political events abroad

25. Here I have list of some news programmes in radio and on TV.  
How often do You listen to:

|  |                                   |                            |                           |  |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| EVERY<br>DAY/ AL-<br>MOST<br>EVERY DAY | APPROX.<br>EVERY<br>SECOND<br>DAY | ONCE OR<br>TWICE<br>A WEEK | NEVER/<br>ALMOST<br>NEVER | DO NOT KNOW/<br>DO NOT WANT<br>TO ANSWER |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--|

- A *Rapport or Aktuellet*  
(daily news programmes,  
national TV)
- B *Regional TV-news programmes*
- C *National radio-news programme*
- D *Local radio programmes*

26. To those respondents that listen to local radio broadcasts at least once or twice a week:

Have You ever noticed if the local radio programme has had any item on the local election in Your commune?

*no never*

*many times*

*occasionally*

*do not know/do not want to answer*

27. Some communes try to reach the citizens with information through folders, posters, exhibitions, advertisements etc. Have You noticed if Your commune has used any of the following means of communication for their information activities during the last year? Choose for every item the response alternative that You find most appropriate?

NO SEVERAL TIMES OCCASIONALLY

- A *Periodical newsmagazine/newsletter issued  
be the local government*
- B *Folders*
- C *Advertisements in local newspapers*
- D *Exhibitions/information conferences*

28. To those answering occasionally or several times for exhibitions and information conferences.

Have You ever visited a local government exhibition or news conference?

*no*

*many times*

*occasionally*

*do not know/do not remember*

29. Concerning local government information in this commune, do You think it is urgent that the commune does more than it presently does, that things are pretty good as they are, that the local government could do less, or do You not have an opinion on this matter?

*urgent to do more*

*pretty good as it is*

*could do less*

*no opinion*

30. Information on local government questions could be had in various ways. I have here a list of some of these and I would like You to pick the ones that are most important, second most important and third most important when it comes to giving You information about local government affairs

|  | MOST<br>IMPORTANT | SECOND MOST<br>IMPORTANT | THIRD MOST<br>IMPORTANT |
|--|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
|--|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|

- |   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| A | Local politicians                                  |  |  |
| B | Local radio  |  |  |
| C | Newsletter/magazine issued by commune              |  |  |
| D | Articles in the newspapers                         |  |  |
| E | Work-mates   |  |  |
| F | Newsletters from the party organizations           |  |  |
| G | Regional TV  |  |  |
| H | Local government offices and officers              |  |  |
| I | Family, friends                                    |  |  |
| J | Local government advertisements in the local press |  |  |
| K | Newsletters/folders from organizations             |  |  |
| L | Do not know  |  |  |

31. Have the political parties in Your commune in the election campaign raised any questions that concern this commune

- yes
- no
- do not know/do not want to answer

if Yes, what questions?

which parties raised the questions?

.....

.....

.....

32. Can You name any of the candidates for the various parties in this years council election in this commune?

- Conservative Party .....
- Centre Party .....
- Liberal Party .....
- Social Democrats.....
- Communist Party.....
- Other Party .....

33. Now I would like to know how good You on the whole judge Your own knowledge about what is going on in local politics here in this commune

- good knowledge
- fairly good knowledge
- not very good knowledge
- bad knowledge
- do not know/do not want to answer

34. On this card are given a number of statements about local independence. I read the statements to You one at a time and ask You to choose the response alternative closest to Your own opinion.

|                       |                       |                             |                     |  |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|--|
| AGREE<br>TO-<br>TALLY | AGREE ON<br>THE WHOLE | DISAGREE<br>ON THE<br>WHOLE | DISAGREE<br>TOTALLY | DO NOT KNOW/<br>DO NOT WANT<br>TO ANSWER |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|--|

- A The state should make all communes provide the same service
- B There is always some organization that will look after my interests in local politics
- C Local government services are well established and the needs of all groups in society are met
- D Occupations and actions of that sort are needed at times to make the local politicians see reason
- E By voting in the local elections one can really take part in the forming of local government policies
- F I does not mean a thing what local politicians decide, the future of the commune is decided elsewhere
- G The service output can best be adjusted to local needs through a process of local government self-determination
- H Local politics is not affected by which the ruling parties are
- I Local income-tax ought to be the same in all communes
- J The decisions taken by the local council could as well be taken by the local government officers

35. Local government contributes today quite a bit to the financing of the local political party activities. Earlier this was largely paid for by the party members, trade unions and companies. How do You think local political party activities should primarily be financed?

*primarily by the parties themselves through membership fees, individual contributions, lotteries etc.*

*primarily by contribution from the local government*

*primarily through contributions from other sources e.g. trade unions and companies*

*other answer.....*

*no opinion.*

36. Do You remember how much one has to pay in local income tax in this commune?

*yes .....S.Kr.*

*do not know*

*other answer.....*

37. How often does it happen that You talk to people in Your surrounding about local government questions that are specific for this commune?

Does it happen often, only occasionally or not at all?

*often*

*occasionally*

*never*

38. How interested are You in general in politics? Indicate the response alternative You find most appropriate?

*very interested*

*fairly interested*

*not very interested*

*not at all interested*

*other answer .....*



39. Then I would like to ask a general question about political parties. A lot of people consider themselves supporters of one specific party. But there are of course also many who do not have any particular feelings about the parties. Do You usually consider Yourself a conservative, a liberal, a social democrat, a communist etc.? Or do You not identify with any party?

*I consider myself a supporter of a certain party*

*do not know/doubtful*

*no, do not consider myself a supporter of any party*

*do not want to answer*

40. Some support their parties with a strong conviction, others are not all that convinced. Do You belong to the group of strongly convinced party supporters?

*yes, strongly convinced*

*no, not that strongly convinced*

*other answer .....*

41. At times one speaks about the bourgeois or non-socialist parties and mean by that the Conservative Party, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party. In some communes there are other local parties that are considered part of the non-socialist group. Could You tell us which group has at present the majority of elected representative in this commune, the non-socialist group or the Social Democrats possibly in combination with the Communists?

*the non-socialist parties are in majority*

*the Social Democrats are in majority (with the communists)*

*the two groups are the same size*

*do not know*

*other answer .....*

42. I would like to ask a few questions in connection with the local elections, (only to respondents born on sept 19 1958 or earlier) Looking back at earlier elections are You among those that have voted in all the elections since You were franchised or have You refrained from voting in any election

*voted in every election*

*refrained from voting at one or more elections*

*do not know*

*refuse to answer*

43. Do You intend to vote/ did You vote in this years election?

*yes*

*may be / do not know for sure*

*no*

*refuse to answer*

---

44. Which party do You intend to vote for/ did You vote for in this years local election?

*Communist Paty*

*Social Democrats*

*Centre Party*

*Liberal Party*

*Conservative Party*

*Christian Democrats*

*Other Party*

*have not decided*

*do not want to answer*

---

45A. For those respondents that do not give party in 44

If You were to vote would You chose a socialist or non-socialist party (only in pre-election interviews) in this years local elections?

*socialist*

*non-socialist*

*other party*

*have not decided*

*do not want to vote for any party*

*do not want to answer*

---

45B. (Postelection interviews). Would You, without naming the party, tell us if You voted for a socialist or a non-socialist party in this years local government election?

*socialist*

*non-socialist*

*other party*

*do not want to answer*

---

46. Do You intend to vote for/did You vote for the same party in the local election as in the national election?

*yes*

*no*

*do not know*

*refuse to answer*

47. If No in 46, why is it that You intend to vote/voted for different parties in the local and national elections?

answer .....

48. When You grew up, did You live in the country, in a rural village or in a town?

*in the country*

*village*

*town*

If town, was it any of the following

*Stockholm*

*Göteborg*

*Malmö*

49. When You grew up, was anyone in Your family or in Your near surrounding engaged in politics or a member of the local Council or other local board?

*yes*

*no*

*do not know/do not remember*

50. What is Your education?

*only primary school*

*in addition to primary school theoretical schooling for no more than two years full-time studies or practical training*

*in addition to primary school theoretical schooling of more than two years*

51. Respondents housing situation, to be completed by interviewer:

- detached one-family house, farmhouse*
  - detached or semidetached one-family house in housing estate*
  - flat in multi-family house, low-rise buildings and not very densely populated area*
  - flat in multi-family house, urban area*
- 

52. Do You own or rent Your flat/house?

- own flat/house (including co-operative ownership)*
  - rent flat/house*
  - other answer .....*
- 

53. Do You personally know many of Your neighbors or do You have very little contact with them?

- do personally know many*
  - very little contact*
  - other answer .....*
- 

54. Do You (or someone else in the household) have the use of a car?

- yes, the household owns or has a car to its disposal*
  - yes, the household owns or has more than one car to its disposal*
  - no*
- 

55. If Yes and if other persons in the family are old enough to drive a car.

Do You Yourself have the possibility of using a car when You need it?

- can use a car when there is a need*
  - can not use a car*
  - other answer .....*
-

56. Do You work outside home?

*yes*

*no*

*if No, are You*

*homemaker*

*student*

*pensioner*

*unemployed, on sick-leave, doing national service*

*other answer .....*

---

57. Have You been working previously?

*yes*

*no*

---

58. Are You/were You self-employed?

*employed by other*

*self-employed*

---

59. Are You working/did You work for a private employer, for the state or for local government?

*private employer*

*the state*

*local government*

---

60. Are You working full-time or part-time?

*full-time*

*part-time*

*other answer .....*

---

61. What is Your occupation / what was Your occupation?

*.....*

62. Most of the people working in Your field, are they organized in LO, TCO or SACO/SR?

LO (fed. of Blue-collar workers)

TCO (fed. of white-collar workers)

SACO/SR (fed. of University Graduates)

other answer .....

---

63. How many persons are there working at the same place as You do?

1 person

-9 persons

10-49 "

50-99 "

100-499 "

500 or more

other answer .....

---

64. (To the selfemployed). Is it a one-man firm or do You have others employed?

one-man firm

others employed

If others employed, how many .....

---

65A. How far is it from Your home to Your work-place?

.....

---

65B. How long does it take You to get to work?

.....

---

66A. How many kilometers away from the commune-centre do You live?

.....

---

66B. How long does it take You (by Your regular way of transport) to get to the commune-centre?

.....

---

67. Is Your wife/husband/cohabitant working outside home?

*yes*

*no*

*other answer .....*

*if Yes*

*full-time or*

*part-time*

*for a privat company, the state or local government*

*private company*

*the state or local government*

The questionnaire was sent to a sample of 3 300 citizens in 50 communes. Respondents in 5 of the communes were given 5 addition questions. Four of these questions were commune-specific. They dealt with current local issues. The respondents were asked if they knew about the various issues and if so what their opinions were on the matters. The fifth question asked in the five communes dealt with the provision and usage of public and commercial service in the various parts of the commune.