

Swedish MPs in favor of a ban on pre-election polls



Four out of ten members of the Swedish parliament support the idea of a legal ban to publish election polls during the last week of the campaign. But the members of the SNS Democratic Audit team remain skeptical, as a ban would not only conflict with democratic rights and freedom but would also be very difficult to implement.

Interviews with Swedish MPs show that 39 percent support a proposal of a ban to publish pre-election polls during the week before the election. An equally large number declare themselves against such a legal restriction. The strongest support in favor of a ban is found in the Left Party and the Green Party. There is also widespread support for a ban among Social Democratic MPs.

Professor Sören Holmberg, one of the principal investigators behind the parliamentary survey, was surprised to find that so many members of parliament would go as far as to enact a legal restriction on election polls. He interprets the widespread support for a ban as a sign of respect and fear in relation to opinion polls.

These results are reported in the 2008 report from the Democratic Audit of Sweden. The authors conclude that opinion polls have become an important ingredient of the political process. The mass media use opinion polls to voice popular concerns. Many polls, however, have serious measurement problems and there is reason for concern when it comes to the role of opinions polls in the democratic process.

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The 2008 report from the Democratic Audit of Sweden is published in Swedish.
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