



The QoG Swedish Government Commissions Database

CODEBOOK

Scholars who wish to use this dataset in their research are kindly requested to use the following citation:

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Quality of Government Institute

The QoG Institute was founded in 2004 by Professor Bo Rothstein and Professor Sören Holmberg. It is an independent research institute within the Department of Political Science at the University of Gothenburg. The institute conducts research on the causes, consequences and nature of Good Governance and the Quality of Government (QoG) - that is, trustworthy, reliable, impartial, uncorrupted, and competent government institutions.

The main objective of the research is to address the theoretical and empirical problems of how political institutions of high quality can be created and maintained. A second objective is to study the effects of Quality of Government on a number of policy areas, such as health, environment, social policy, and poverty. While Quality of Government is the common intellectual focal point of the research institute, a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives are applied.

1.2 The QoG Swedish Government Commissions Database

The QoG Swedish Government Commissions Database provides a comprehensive overview of all Swedish government commissions, their members, and their reports from 1971 to 2022. The data were collected within the framework of the project *Setting the Agenda in the Swedish Riksdag: Partisan Politics and Commissions of Inquiry, 1971–2021*, funded by the Swedish Research Council (grant no. 2020-01781). The project also covers a database focused on Swedish government bills, which will be published separately by the Quality of Government Institute in 2026.

The commission database comprises three datasets: one focusing on the commissions themselves (Section 1), one on the commissions' members (Section 2), and one on the commissions' reports (Section 3). Each dataset has its own unit of analysis. In the commission dataset, one observation corresponds to a unique commission, with variables capturing characteristics such as the commission's title and date of enactment. In the members dataset, one observation corresponds to an individual commission member, with variables capturing attributes such as name, role, and occupational title. In the report dataset, one observation corresponds to a unique commission report, with variables capturing attributes such as the report's title, publication number, and responsible department. In total, the database covers about 5,500 commissions, 85,000 commission members, and 5,500 commission reports.

The datasets are linked through the commissions' official serial numbers, ensuring that each member and report can be associated with a unique commission. In principle, these serial numbers also allow for linking individual members to specific reports. However, as commissions may produce multiple reports and experience substantial turnover in membership over time, such linkages must be carefully verified using the relevant appointment and publication dates to ensure that a given member was active at the time a report was issued. Other closely related public documents—such as government bills, directives, or consultation responses—can likewise be linked using the commissions' official serial numbers.

The database draws on several sources. The commissions and members have been identified using an annual government memorandum called *Kommittéberättelse*, while the reports data have been coded directly from the individual reports. From the early 1990s until today, most of the data stems from the Swedish Riksdag's open data archive, which provides a digital catalogue of government documentation. Because the Riksdag's open data archive has limited coverage before the 1990s, however, the older periods have instead been hand-coded using corresponding documentation procured from the Gothenburg University Library and the National Library of Sweden. Most of the data is coded verbatim from the source material and thus appears as text strings in the datasets.

The commissions system's formal foundation has been codified through a series of executive orders, with *Kommittéförordning* (SFS 1998:1474) providing the most current regulatory framework. We recommend anyone interested in using the database to familiarize themselves with the Swedish policymaking process in general and commissions system in particular (e.g., Dahlström and Holmgren 2024; Dahlström, Lundberg and Pronin 2021; Petersson 2016).

1.3 References

- Dahlström, Carl and Mikael Holmgren. 2023. “Executive Appointments under Legislative Oversight”. QoG Working Papers Series 2023:4. Göteborg: The Quality of Government Institute.
- Dahlström, Carl, Erik Lundberg and Kira Pronin. 2021. “No More Political Compromise? Swedish Commissions of Inquiry, 1990-2016.” *Scandinavian Political Studies* 44(4):416–440.
- Kommitteförordning SFS 1998:1474.
- Petersson, Olof. 2016. Rational Politics: Commissions of Inquiry and the Referral System. In *The Oxford Handbook of Swedish Politics*, ed. Jon Pierre. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

2 Commission

The commission dataset covers all government commissions in operation between 1971 and 2022. Each row represents a unique commission, while the columns denote various metadata at the commission level. The dataset covers about 5,500 observations and features six variables. **All missing values are left as blanks.**

2.1 `commissions_cid`: Commission ID

a commission’s official serial number. Generically, a commission in this context can be understood as an executive task force ordained to supply the government with policy advice. The serial numbers are constituted by a commission’s enacting department, enactment year, and a running numeric count. For example, Ju 1973:22 implies the twenty-second commission enacted by the Department of Justice in 1973. Note that the serial numbers can be used to link the commission, member, and report datasets.

2.2 `commissions_title`: Commission Title

a commission’s official title. Listed in Swedish. For example, “Energipolitiska delegationen”. Note that, because the government allows the commissions to choose their own titles, they can sometimes be inconsistently reported across different sources.

2.3 `commissions_enactment`: Commission Enactment Date

a commission’s enactment date. Listed in year-month-date format. For example, “1974-12-14” implies the commission was enacted on December 14th in 1974.

2.4 `commissions_department`: Commission Enactment Department

a commission’s enacting department. Listed in Swedish. For example, “Justitiedepartementet” implies the commission was enacted by the Department of Justice. Note that the government can sometimes reassign commissions to new departments post-enactment. Therefore, the “enacting department” need not necessarily correspond to the “current department”.

2.5 `commissions_minister`: Commission Enacting Minister

a commission’s enacting minister. Listed in surname-first name format. For example, “Geijer Lennart” implies Lennart Geijer served as the head of the enacting department at time of the commission’s enactment. Note that the government can both reassign commissions to new departments and change the responsible minister post-enactment. Therefore, the “enacting minister” need not necessarily correspond to the “current minister”.

2.6 `commissions_source`: Source of Commission Data

lists the source. If the data has been hand-coded, the variable will list the relevant *Kommittéberättelse* (e.g., “Skr. 1975/76:103”). If the data has been procured from the Riksdag’s open data archive, the variable will list “Riksdagens öppna data”.

3 Members

The member dataset covers all commission members active between 1971 and 2022. Each row represents a unique commission member, while the columns denote various metadata at the member level. The dataset covers about 85,000 observations and features eleven variables. **All missing values are left as blanks.**

3.1 `members_cid`: Commission ID

a commission’s official serial number. Generically, a “commission” in this context can be understood as an executive task force ordained to supply the government with policy advice. The serial numbers are constituted by a commission’s enacting department, enactment year, and a running numeric count. For example, “Ju 1973:22” implies the twenty-second commission enacted by the Department of Justice in 1973. Note that the serial numbers can be used to link the commission, member, and report datasets.

3.2 `members_position`: Member Position

a member’s position on the commission. Listed in Swedish. For example, “Ordförande” implies the member served as chair. Note that the same individual can sometimes hold different positions on the same commission over time.

3.3 `members_surname`: Member Surname

a member’s surname. For example, “Ahrland”.

3.4 `members_firstname`: Member First Name

a member’s first name. For example, “Karin”.

3.5 `members_sex`: Member Sex

Sex of the commission member. The variable is coded as:

- F = Female
- M = Male

3.6 `members_appointment`: Member Appointment Date

a member’s appointment date. Listed in year-month-date format. For example, “1985-05-28” implies the member was appointed on May 28th in 1985. Note that in the earlier periods the government typically only reported the appointment date for members who joined the commission post-enactment (e.g., they may have replaced an old member or joined later for some other reason).

3.7 `members_exit`: Member Exit Date

a member’s exit date. Listed in year-month-date format. For example, “1985-05-28” implies the member left the commission on May 28th in 1985. Note that in the earlier periods the government typically only reported the exit date for members who left the commission pre-termination (e.g., they may have been replaced by a new member or left prematurely for some other reason).

3.8 `members_title`: Member Job Title

a member’s job title(s). Listed in Swedish. For example, “generaldirektör” implies the member ordinarily works as director-general of a government agency. Note that the variable can sometimes include several job titles in a single string.

3.9 `members_party`: Member Party Affiliation

a member's party affiliation. The variable is coded as:

- S = Socialdemokraterna (Swedish Social Democratic Party)
- M = Moderaterna (Moderate Party)
- C = Centerpartiet (Centre Party)
- L = Liberalerna (Liberals)
- V = Vänsterpartiet (Left Party)
- KD = Kristdemokraterna (Christian Democrats)
- MP = Miljöpartiet de Gröna (Green Party)
- SD = Sverigedemokraterna (Sweden Democrats)
- NYD = Ny Demokrati (New Democracy)

Only applicable for current or former members of parliament.

3.10 `members_wiki_id`: Wiki ID

An identifier for linking the member dataset with the Swerik members of parliament database. Only applicable for current or former members of parliament.

3.11 `members_source`: Source of Member Data

the original source. If the data has been hand-coded, the variable will list the relevant *Kommittéberättelse* (e.g., “Skr. 1975/76:103”). If the data has been procured from the Riksdag's open data archive, the variable will list “Riksdagens öppna data”.

4 Reports

The report dataset covers all commission reports published between 1971 and 2022. Each row represents a unique commission report, while the columns denote various metadata at the report level. The dataset covers 5,500 observations and features nine variables. **All missing values are left as blanks.**

4.1 reports_cid: Commission ID

a commission's official serial number. Generically, a "commission" in this context can be understood as an executive task force ordained to supply the government with policy advice. The serial numbers are constituted by a commission's enacting department, enactment year, and a running numeric count. For example, "Ju 1973:22" implies the twenty-second commission enacted by the Department of Justice in 1973. Note that the serial numbers can be used to link the commission, member, and report datasets.

4.2 reports_rid: Report ID

a report's serial number. The serial numbers are constituted by a report's type, enactment year, and a running numeric count. For example, "SOU 1973:22" implies the twenty-second commission report published in the Swedish Government Official Reports series in 1973. Note that some commissions may present several reports while others present none.

4.3 reports_year: Report Publication Year

a report's publication year. For example, "1973" implies the report was published in 1973.

4.4 reports_nr: Report Publication Number

a report's publication number. For example "22" implies the report was the second consecutive commission report published in a given year.

4.5 reports_title: Report Title

a report's title. Listed in Swedish. For example, "Massmediautredningen".

4.6 reports_month: Report Signature Month

the month when a report was signed for completion. Coded from the report's foreword, which typically concludes with a dated signature by the highest-ranking commission member.

4.7 reports_date: Report Signature Date

the date when a report was signed for completion. Coded from the report's foreword, which typically concludes with a dated signature by the highest-ranking commission member. Note that most reports only list a signature month, not the full date.

4.8 reports_department: Report Department

a report's responsible department. Coded from the report's foreword, which typically addresses the department in the section header. For example, "Justitiedepartementet" implies the report's foreword addresses the Department of Justice.

4.9 reports_minister: Responsible Minister

a report's responsible minister. Coded from the report's foreword, which sometimes addresses the minister in the section header. For example, "Kristen Wickman" implies the foreword addresses Kristen Wickman. Note that most reports only address a department, not a specific minister.