

One committee – two institutions?
The Committee of European Affairs in Sweden and Denmark

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ABSTRACT

In order to have some say and to scrutinise the government all member states of the EU today has established an institution within their national parliaments, the Committee of European Affairs. This institution, however, has very different rights and regulations depending on the country it is established in. This study uses two rather similar countries, Sweden and Denmark, and investigates what differences and similarities the two committees show.

By constructing a comparative case study of four units of analysis, the governments and committees of European Affairs in Sweden and Denmark, the formal and informal power relationship between government and committee in each country were studied in order to determine similarities and differences and whether the committee had an impact on the governments' EU policies. Further they were compared, assessing whether the Danish Committee of European Affairs was more powerful than its Swedish counterpart because of its legal basis in an EU document.

The theoretical framework was built on empirical institutionalism and Lukes' first and second dimension of power. The similarities and differences were accounted for and compared. In conclusion, the Danish Committee of European Affairs has more formal power than its Swedish counterpart but regarding informal power the Swedish Committee of European Affairs has a slight advantage. Both committees have an impact on the way their government handle negotiations with the EU.

Keywords: formal power, informal power, the Committee of European Affairs, Sweden, Denmark

GLOSSARY

Term/ Acronym	Translation/ Full name	Country
Alliansen	Alliansen för Sverige	Sweden
Centerpartiet	The Centre party	Sweden
COSAC	Conférence des Organes Spécialisés dans les Affaires Communuataires	
Det Konservative Folkeparti	The Conservative Party	Denmark
EU	European Union	
EU-nämnden	The Committee of European Affairs	Sweden
Europaudvalget	The Committee of European Affairs	Denmark
Folketinget	The Parliament	Denmark
Folkpartiet	The Liberal Party	Sweden
Justitiekommittén	The Committee on Justice	Sweden
Konstitutionsutskottet	The Committee on the Constitution	Sweden
Kristdemokraterna	The Christian Democrats	Sweden
Moderaterna	The Moderate Party	Sweden
Miljöpartiet	The Green Party	Sweden
Regeringen	The Government	Sweden/ Denmark
Riksdagen	The Parliament	Sweden
Utrikesutskottet	The Committee on Foreign Affairs	Sweden
Venstre	Denmark's Liberal Party	Denmark
Vänsterpartiet	The Left Party	Sweden

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this first chapter the aim is to introduce the subject for this study. A short background of the committee of European Affairs as an institution is offered, why this study is of relevance, the aim of the study, my questions and demarcation as well as a disposition.

The European Union¹ is the largest and most in depth form of regional integration in modern times. As such it also bears the brunt of criticism and recurring points of criticism is that the EU is very politically elitist, that more and more power is transferred away from the member states to Brussels and that the national governments act without consideration to their citizens.

In many of the member states multiparty systems are the norm and as such governments usually are either minority governments or coalitions. One way of making sure that the state implements a consistent EU politic has been to create an institution, a Committee of European Affairs, within the national parliaments to give opposition parties an insight to governmental decisions regarding EU politics. This is not an EU institution, but a purely national one and is usually separated from the EU departments linked to the government or other parliamentary committees that exist in order to adapt national laws and policies in view of new EU policies.

The Committee of European Affairs is not a very publicly known institution, at least in Sweden. Although the members of the committee are publicly elected, by way of being members of the parliament, the actual insight into the committees work is limited which might cause concerns about the responsibility of elected members of parliament in a representative democracy. As such I am of the opinion that it is of importance to examine this institution more closely, what it is allowed to do, what it actually does and how much influence it has over government decisions regarding EU policies.

Although the institution exists in all of the EU member states today its functions differ widely in the different states. I aim to examine this more closely by looking at the Swedish and Danish committees of European Affairs, *EU-nämnden* and *Europaudvalget*² respectively. There is some research on both of them separately or as part of bigger studies together with all

¹ Hereafter referred to as the EU

² The Danish name prior to 1994 was *Markedsudvalget*, but I have chosen to use the English "Committee of European Affairs" consistently regarding the committees in both Sweden and Denmark

the other committees of European Affairs but only one article that compare the two. This, however, is the first attempt to do a more in depth analysis of the institutions, if its functions differ between the two countries and why that may be.³ The reason for choosing Sweden and Denmark is that the countries are so similar to each other in many respects.

1.1 Background

The first Committee of European Affairs was created in the German *Bundesrat* in 1957 on the grounds that they felt a need to inspect the German government's activities regarding the European Economic Community (the EU:s predecessor) and other member states soon followed suit.⁴

Every single national parliament that is a member of the EU today has a Committee of European Affairs and even countries that are going through the application process has this institution.⁵ What, then, constitutes a Committee of European Affairs? The answer is not as simple as it seems - the Committee of European Affairs is a national institution and as such its rules of operating, rights and restraints differ widely within the EU. This is contributed to the fact that they exist in varying constitutional settings, parliamentary settings and also differences in the political relationship towards the government. One such factor is member states that are federal and have active state chambers.⁶

Generally one can divide the parliaments' strategies into three different strands, first, those that concentrate on the ability to examine their governments' implementation of EU legislation. Second are those that take a more active approach and submit more or less binding instructions to their governments and lastly there are a few parliaments with the ambition to get structurally involved in the actual lawmaking process.⁷

Why the need to get involved with the governments relationship with the EU then? Most likely it has to do with the balance of power that is disrupted as a state enters the EU, prior to that the distribution of power between executive (government) and legislative (parliament)

³ Esaiasson 2007:31

⁴ Travers 2002:10

⁵ Travers 2002:7

⁶ Bergman 1997:45

⁷ Travers 2002:8-9

tends to have a political equilibrium. This is then disturbed as legislative power is transferred to the EU upon joining and thus changing the balance. To what extent this is done is of course dependant on the before mentioned constitutional settings, parliamentary settings and traditions.⁸

It is important to distinguish the Committee of European Affairs from other committees in the parliaments. Other committees act as advisors to the *Riksdag* and the *Folketing* respectively, whereas the Committee of European Affairs is an advisor to its government in its capacity as a representative of the parliament.⁹

In 1989 a conference to coordinate the committees of European Affairs was created, Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union, otherwise known as COSAC.¹⁰ The main aim was to strengthen the role of the national parliaments, especially in light of the introduction of direct elections to the European Parliament. COSAC meets biannually and has been formally recognized by the EU since its inclusion in a protocol to the Amsterdam treaty in 1999.¹¹

1.2 Relevance

There are several reasons as to why this study has great relevance today, the main two being the need for an in depth comparison and a closer examination of the parliaments' insight and impact on governments EU policies.

As of today there is really only one article that compares the Swedish and Danish Committee of European Affairs and it dates back to 1995.¹² I believe it is high time to examine the two committees closer especially since the Swedish committee was only in its infancy the last time. The reason for comparing the two committees is to see whether an institution that exist in all EU member states differs widely in two otherwise rather similar countries, in what way and why that may be.

⁸ Travers 2002:10

⁹ Hegeland & Mattson 1995:435

¹⁰ Acronym of the French name Conférence des organes spécialisés dans les affaires communuataires, COSAC

¹¹ COSAC

¹² This is further discussed under *Prior Research* on page 10

Since the creation of the EU the integration process has slowly but surely moved towards not only economic cooperation but also political integration. This, in turn, has led member states to transfer some or all of their power in certain areas to the EU. The most powerful institution nationally that negotiates with the EU is the government, as well it should be. However, in representative democracies one might then ask what role the parliaments play. As the EU is very different from any other regional cooperation and goes deeper and wider than most international organisations shouldn't the parliaments also have some say in member states decisions regarding EU policies? This is a long term project with far and wide consequences so is it really fair to allow ever changing governments to make all decisions unhindered? No, of course not and this is why the Committee of European Affairs was created. The time has come to examine the Committee of European Affairs closer and what rights and limitations it works within.

1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to examine one institution, the Committee of European Affairs, in two separate countries and to find out if their functions vary and why that may be by comparing them.

1.4 Questions

The first step is to examine what kind of an institution the Committee of European Affairs is, the basis for its establishment and its formal right of power, thereby making the question strictly descriptive. The next step is to compare the two institutions in order to see what differences there are between them and look further into why that may be, which in turn demands an explicatory question.¹³

- 1. Which formal/ informal powers does the Committee of European Affairs have in Sweden and in Denmark?*
- 2. How do the committees differ and what can explain those differences?*

¹³ Esaiasson 2007:225-226

1.5 Demarcation

The units of analysis in this study are the Swedish and Danish governments and the Swedish and Danish Committee of European Affairs. All of these institutions will be treated as one actor each, no consideration is taken for disparities within those units, it is only mentioned in passing when needed. The EU is only seen as a third part and is of less significance here as one of the aims is to investigate the impact the Committee of European Affairs has on the government and as such I see no reason to introduce it more fully.

1.6 Disposition

Chapter 2 is devoted to the theory used in this study, with a focus on prior research, new and empirical institutionalism, the concept of power according to Lukes' first and second dimension and my theoretical model for analysis. *Chapter 3* then introduces the method used, comparative case study, which cases and units of analysis were selected and why and the material chosen. The final chapter, *Chapter 4*, is where the results are presented, the two committees compared, the questions are answered and anchored to the theory and conclusions are given.

2. THEORY

This chapter is devoted to the theory used. First off prior research is presented followed by an overview of new institutionalism and a deeper look into empirical institution. After this there is an introduction to the concept of power and Lukes' first and second dimension of power. This is all tied together into my theoretical model for analysis explaining the way I aim to examine my material.

2.1 Prior research

For this study I have decided to rely on prior research and official documents from the Swedish and Danish Committees of European Affairs and the national governments. There is some research regarding the Committee of European Affairs in both Sweden and Denmark and the power it holds but power is then usually reserved to mean what I have chosen to define as formal power.

In order to get a short overview of the Swedish Committee of European Affairs I have found a few chapters in scientific anthologies, as well as a more in depth study on the Swedish parliament versus the EU by an official in the Swedish parliament, Hans Hegeland. Hegeland was a civil servant working in different committees in the Swedish parliament during 1994-2006.¹⁴ The study is his dissertation and part of it reoccurs in one of the anthologies used here as well. He is one of the few researchers to examine the Swedish Committee of European Affairs in depth the last decade.

Regarding Denmark the main source of information is a book about the Danish Committee of European Affairs by Henrik Jensen from a state sanctioned series of books regarding basis of power in Denmark. Jensen has a Ph. D. in Political Science and is currently an associate professor at Copenhagen University. He has several publications, most of which concern parliaments, political theory and the Danish parliament.¹⁵ Prior to this Jensen was working in the *Folketing*.

I will also examine a Swedish article in *Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift*¹⁶ where a comparison between the two committees was done in 1995. Authors are Hans Hegeland and Ingvar Mattson, the latter a Ph. D. in political science and employee of the *Riksdag*. Unfortunately, while they present the two committees well, the comparison is made hard by the fact that the Swedish Committee of European Affairs is newly formed at the article's publishing and as such has not yet established itself nor a developed working order and practice.

2.2 New institutionalism

“Political institutions are collections of interrelated rules and routines that define appropriate action in terms of relations between roles and situations”¹⁷ according to James G. Marsh and Johan P. Olsen. Furthermore they note that institutions are “defined by their durability and their capacity to influence behaviour of individuals for generations”.¹⁸

For a long time the main focus of political science was on governing institutions, how they worked, what functions they should or should not have and how they could improve the

¹⁴ Santérus förlag

¹⁵ Copenhagen University

¹⁶ Periodical that publish political science articles, essays and reviews four times per year

¹⁷ Peters 1999:28

¹⁸ Peters 1999:29

citizens' behaviour within a set frame – the so called institutionalism. In the late 19th century, when political science became a more distinct academic discipline, less focus was on the morals and history of institutions and instead focus shifted towards comparisons between different electoral systems and their consequences.¹⁹ During the 1950s and 1960s the rational choice and behaviouralist schools gained ground, maintaining that focus should be on individuals and their choices and behaviour since they are the founders of the institutions. The institutions they create and work within is thought to be of less importance. Institutional research was also criticised for being mainly descriptive and seldom theory developing.²⁰

It was not until the mid 1980's that a counter revolution from the institutionalists came about. March and Olsen were affected by the critique from rational choice and behaviouralist proponents and revised institutionalism, thereby creating new institutionalism. The main changes from old institutionalism were a slight shift in focus from the state to a more societal view and an acknowledgment of their mutual co-dependence, an assertion that not everything could be broken down into individual behaviour, that the decision-making process cannot be said to always be maximising individuals self-interest and that new institutionalism recognises that the political process often is a bumpy ride and do not always move towards a societal equilibrium in the way that the rational choice and behaviouralist researchers often try to point out.²¹ Instead of only focusing on either the institution or the actor they are in new institutionalism put together and the symbiosis between them is further examined.²²

Whereas traditional institutionalism focus heavily on the formal functions of an institution the new institutionalism has a wider perspective and often look at institutions within a social context.²³ There are several strands of new institutionalism, usually the following six are named; normative institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism, empirical institutionalism, international institutionalism and societal institutionalism. The one most appropriate for this study is empirical institutionalism as I intend to examine the relationship between the Committees of European Affairs and the government, what restraints are in place in that relationship and if they differ between Sweden and Denmark.

¹⁹ Peters 1999:3

²⁰ Peters 1999:10-14

²¹ Peters 1999:15-17

²² Jensen 2003:25

²³ Marsh & Stoker 2002:90-95

2.2.1 Empirical institutionalism

Empirical institutionalism is used when investigating whether an institution has made an impact and in what way.²⁴ That in itself is a rather wide description open to interpretation. Considering the aim here, to investigate the Committees of European Affairs in Sweden and Denmark and its power relationship to the national governments, it is clear why it is suitably applied to this study. Only after the power structures have been examined can it be ascertained if the committees have had an impact on the states policy in regards to the EU.

Empirical institutionalism is most often used to compare different systems, such as presidential versus parliamentary systems, different voting systems or different ways of separating power in democratic systems. It is not uncommon, however, to step down a level and compare individual institutions as well. Closest at hand in this case is Arend Lijpharts' research regarding consensual versus majoritarian regimes in parliamentary systems²⁵.

The institutions themselves are rarely in need of conceptual explanation as it is often easy to define their parameters and the framework they work within. There is no question that the units of analysis that I have chosen, the governments and committees of European Affairs are all political institutions. The use of empirical institutionalism in this case is to examine the impact of the Committee of European Affairs on the performance of the government as an institution. Of more importance than conceptual explanation is the design of the institutions, this will be examined closer by investigating the power relationship between the government and the Committee of European Affairs in Sweden and Denmark.²⁶

The main critique against empirical institution is that theory plays such a small role. I have chosen to remedy this by bringing in the concept of power into my theoretical framework. There is also much discussion between different strands of new institutionalism regarding the structuring of interaction, whether it is based on norms or values or rules. Empirical institutionalism upholds that the important thing is the structures themselves and whether they create an impact rather than what kind of structure is more or less important.

²⁴ Marsh & Stoker 2002:96

²⁵ Peters 1999:84

²⁶ Peters 1999:89-92

The functions I aim to research in regards to the Committee of European Affairs are the ones regarding their formal basis of power, by that I mean in which documents these rights may be found and how extensive they are, and the formal and informal ways in which this manifests itself i.e. to what extent the committees of European Affairs in reality exceeds those powers or are restrained, and if that is the case, by whom they are restrained.

My hypothesis is that the Danish Committee of European Affairs has greater power, both formal and informal, because their power is laid out in EU documents rather than national ones and as such the national government recognize and value the committee's legal basis higher than the Swedish government does its counterpart, which in turn changes the informal dynamics between the Committee of European Affairs and the national government.

The hypothesis would hold true only if both the formal and informal powers are greater in Denmark than in Sweden as they, in this study, are inexplicably linked.

2.3 Power

Power is undeniably one of the more contested concepts in political science. There is a drawn out debate going on between some of the more prominent political science researchers and it shows no immediate signs of letting up soon. Why might that be though? Is it because we all experience power differently? Or because of the areas we research concerning power differ widely? Or is it just the human trait to try to categorize everything at its best, where we need a *proper* meaning for a certain concept and it needs to be *just right*? Obtuse concepts have little place in political science. Arguably, power is also one of the more important concepts, at least traditionally, if we were to rank concepts hieratically. I am of the opinion that a concept is useful as long as its meaning is clear and fully accounted for in the context for which it is used. That power is a contested concept is therefore of less importance than providing a thorough explanation as to why a certain standpoint is preferred and adapted in this study.

The reason for adding power to my theoretical framework is because I feel that it is the most suitable way of determining the impact the committees of European Affairs has on the governments' performance. By examining the power relationship between the two institutions, both formal and informal power, I believe I will have a solid basis for the

conclusions I make on the type of impact that the Committee of European Affairs have on the government and also whether the two committees differ.

I have chosen to rely on Steven Lukes' research regarding power, mainly because of the fact that his view on power is very fitting for the analysis I am constructing and also because he is one of the few and more renowned scientists in that area of the discipline today. He argues that power can be divided into three dimensions or three faces, the first two dimensions are based on prior debates regarding power to which he adds a third dimension. In short the first dimension concerns the ability to influence the decision-making process, the second dimension regards the power to shape the political agenda and the third dimension concerns the power to control people's thoughts and perceptions and a more subtle way.²⁷ I am only interested in the first and second dimension of power for this study and will explain them more thoroughly below.

2.3.1 The first dimension of power

Lukes' first dimension of power is based in large on the pluralist view that focuses on studying concrete, observable behaviour. As such, the decision-making process is a central part of determining power and observing power relationships.²⁸

The concept of power in this debate was in large determined by Robert Dahl when he wrote that "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do."²⁹ This shows that the pluralist view is more concerned about *power over* rather than *power to*. It is assumed that there is a conflict of interest and that one actor have power over another and the same actor has a greater power than the other. This first dimension of power is largely behaviouralist – focus is on who has the power over whom and how that power is used.

²⁷ Heywood 2004:122-123

²⁸ Lukes 2005:17

²⁹ Lukes 2005:16

2.3.2. The second dimension of power

The second dimension of power is based on the critique by Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz against the pluralists' simplistic view of power. They add a second dimension to the concept of power, the power to set the agenda by what they call the mobilization of bias. The mobilization of bias is "a set of predominant values, beliefs, rituals, and institutional procedures ('rules of the game') that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain persons and groups at the expense of others."³⁰ Bachrach and Baratz believe that the power to set the agenda is imperative. By having this power one can decide which issues should be brought up for discussion, where in the discussion they rank and which issues should be pushed aside or even repressed.³¹

Thus, not only do they focus on *power over* but they also take into consideration the *power to* of which nondecision-making is a part. By nondecision-making Bacharach and Baratz recalls the situation where even the basis of decisions are killed, or otherwise thwarted because they oppose the interests of the more powerful decision-makers. Bachrach and Baratz are of the opinion that the pluralists focus too much on actors' opportunity to initiate, decide and veto proposals and take too little consideration to institutional rules and regulations that limit this.³²

In this study what all this means is that the first dimension focuses on which of the two actors in each country have the power over the decision-making process – who has the power to see decisions through to their preferred outcome and the second dimension is more focused on the institutional rules that regulate the relationship between the actors.

³⁰ Lukes 2005:21

³¹ Lukes 2005:20

³² Lukes 2005:22

2.4 Theoretical model for analysis

In order to make sense of the material I have chosen to work with and to make sure that I actually investigate what I need to in order to get the answers I want I have constructed a theoretical model of analysis. The model is used during the sorting of material to see what is of importance for the analysis and also where in the analysis the material belongs.

Fig. 1

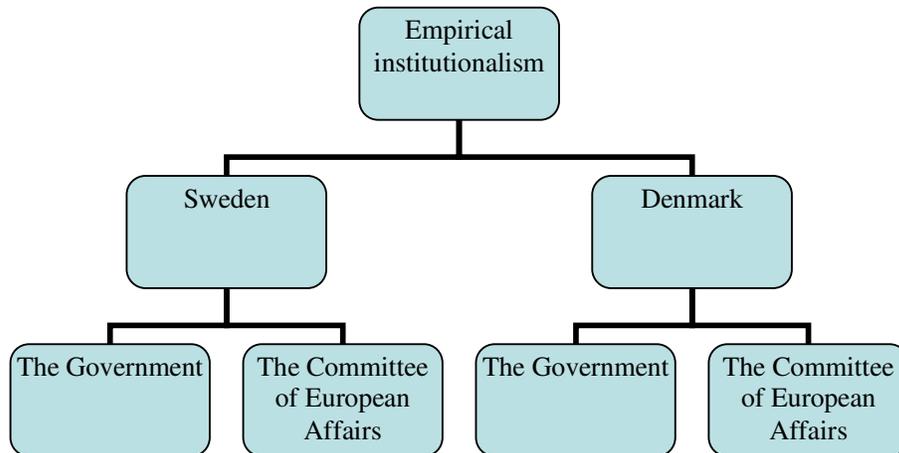


Figure 1 is used to ascertain the connection between empirical institutionalism and the units of analysis. It justifies the chosen units, the Swedish and Danish governments and committees of European Affairs. To investigate whether the committees of European Affairs have an impact on the governments and their EU policies I need to research the power relationship between the two actors and that is done in the way that figure 2 demonstrates.

Fig. 2

	The Government	The Committee of European Affairs
Formal Power (2 nd dimension)	A	B
Informal power (1 st dimension)	C	D

Figure 3 can be seen as a continuation of figure 2. The aim of the study is to examine and compare the Swedish and Danish committees of European Affairs and in order to make sense of which committee is the stronger of the two we turn to figure 3.

Fig. 3

	Sweden	Denmark
Formal Power (2 nd dimension)	A	B
Informal power (1 st dimension)	C	D

In this basic figure it is apparent that my intention is to research the formal and informal powers of both the Government and the Committee of European Affairs. This is done separately on each country before I compare Sweden and Denmark's Committee of European Affairs to see whether they differ significantly.

By formal power I mean the power relationship that is governed by rules and regulations, which institution is allowed to do what, if there are instances of voting in the decision-making process and how it should be conducted. By informal power I am focusing on the decision-making process as it is - which actor is the stronger when it comes down to it in regards as to who gets their preferred outcome most often and the perception one actor has of the other.

3. METHOD

Below this headline a presentation is given of the method used for this study, comparative case study, its weaknesses and strength, why it is appropriate and which cases are selected. There is also a short discussion on units of analysis and the material used.

This is a comparative case study. The reason for choosing a case study design is because of the depth and width of the questions. Case study is also the preferred method when one is interested in a specific phenomenon or development.³³ One of the weaknesses in case study research is the large number of independent variables which might make it harder to pin point the exact variable or variables that have an effect on the dependent variable. However, the number of variables is also its strength. By examining something from all angles with an open mind at the starting point insures that valuable variables that might have been missed when

³³ Yin 2007:17

doing a stricter study with fixed variables will at least be considered. In this case study the dependent variable is the Committee of European Affairs and the independent variable is the formal basis of power. The intervening variable, through which the dependent variable might be influenced by the independent variable, is the informal basis of power.³⁴

Another possible method would have been to do qualitative interviews or quantitative surveys with members of the two committees of European Affairs and in that way get more information on the informal powers, however I feel that I do not have enough time on my hands to research that aspect well enough and therefore choose to focus on previous research and literature.

In order to explain the causal mechanism as to why the two committees might differ I will turn to process tracing, which suits the case study design well. There are two kinds of process tracing, namely process verification and process induction, and for this study process verification is most suitable. In short the difference between the two is that process verification test previously stated theories against observed processes amongst a number of variables. Process induction, on the other hand, investigates apparent casual mechanisms closer and uses them as a basis for potential hypotheses that might be tested later.³⁵

3.1 Cases

The reason for choosing Sweden and Denmark is somewhat based on John Stuart Mills Method of difference, in which all variables bar one is kept constant, in this case the exception is the Committee of European Affairs. Mills, however, was opposed to this method being used in political science because of the fact that one cannot reasonably expect two societies to be the same in all aspects except one.³⁶ By bringing in process tracing I alleviate some of the limits set upon the method of difference.³⁷

I am inclined to agree that two societies differ, however, when it concerns cross-national comparisons, Sweden and Denmark definitely have several of the most important variables in common (in this case – strong and stable democracy of approximately the same age,

³⁴ Hague & Harrop 2001:73-75

³⁵ Bennet & George 1997:2-7

³⁶ Lijphart 1971:688

³⁷ Bennet & George 1997:13

parliamentary system, multiparty or minority governments are the norm, constitutional monarchy and proportional elections) as well as geographical closeness and strong cultural and historical ties.

A case could be made of the fact that the two committees were created years apart, the Danish one in 1973 and the Swedish one in 1995. However, in my opinion, it is unlikely that their formal powers have changed dramatically since their founding and if that is the case it will be rather obvious. Concerning the informal powers of the Committee of European Affairs they might have changed over time as institutional practice has become routine but even here I am certain that major changes would have been noted. As previously mentioned, Hegeland and Mattson found it difficult to compare the two committees in 1995 but as over 10 years has passed since I do not foresee any such difficulties.

3.2 Units of analysis

A unit of analysis is simply put the primary focus of your case, it could be anything from an individual, a group, a town, a policy or an industry.³⁸ As this is a comparative case study I have two different cases, Sweden and Denmark, and within those I have two units of analysis each, the Government and the Committee of European Affairs.

Starting from the top my chosen theory is empirical institutionalism which denotes that it is an institution that interests me. I have further defined institution to mean a political institution and specified that it is the Committee of European Affairs that is the main focus. As empirical institutionalism signifies that it should be determined whether the institution under investigation makes an impact or not I have also decided to bring in the governments. This is for two reasons. First, the Government is the institution that the Committee of European Affairs has the closest working relationship with and second, if any national institution has the ability to restrain the Committee of European Affairs it is the government.

³⁸ Yin 2007:41

3.3 Material

A number of internet pages have been of great significance to this study, in particular the official websites of the Swedish government, *Regeringen*, the Swedish parliament, *Riksdagen*, and the Danish Ministry of Defence, as this is where several of the documents needed to complete this study were published. For instance, both the Swedish fundamental laws and the Danish constitution are to be found here as well as publications from the two committees of European Affairs and short hand of their meetings.

Regarding more general information on the Committee of European Affairs as an institution I rely on the home page of COSAC.³⁹ Of use has also been a book from the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation with an overview of all committees of European Affairs in the EU up until 2002.

The results regarding the formal power of the two committees were in large from legal documents where the legal basis of the committees was established. In the case of the Swedish committee of European Affairs the documents of importance were the Instrument of Government and The *Riksdag* Act. Regarding Denmark the documents referred to is the Accession Act, signed in 1972 and valid as of the Danish accession at the turn of the year, and the first report of the Committee of European Affairs, called the *Beretning fra markedsudvalget* from March 29th 1973. The constitution of Denmark and the Swedish fundamental law the Instrument of Government were used to find the rights of the two governments’.

As previously mentioned, prior research was the main basis for information regarding the committees informal power as well as some of its formal power. As this has been discussed previously I will not rehash it here.

An evaluation of the sources reveal that they are all genuine, the dissertation from Hegeland, as well as the chapter in the anthology by him, the article he wrote with Mattson and the study by Jensen are secondary sources and are based in part on interviews, surveys and observation but largely on documents and short hand of the meetings. As Hegeland and Jensen have both worked in their respective parliaments and has had a lot of first hand experience with the

³⁹ COSAC

committees' one might think that they would be influenced by that. However, as they were not publicly elected politicians but were there in the capacity of civil servants I estimate this influence to be of little consequence for their studies. The documents used, the constitutions, Accession Act and report, are primary sources.

4. RESULTS

The results are presented as follows; first there is a short introduction to the two governments after which the formal power of the Committee of European Affairs is examined and compared and then the same is done with its informal power, secondly the questions previously posed are accounted for and answered and anchored in the theory and lastly the conclusions are given.

4.1 The governments

”The government governs the Realm. It is accountable to the *Riksdag*.”⁴⁰ This article is to be found in the first chapter of the Instrument of Government, one of the four fundamental laws that make up the Swedish constitution.

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy with a unicameral parliament and proportionate electoral system as distinctive features. The parliament, the *Riksdag*, is elected for 4 years at a time. The Speaker of the parliament recommends, with the help of consultants from all party groups in the *Riksdag*, a Prime Minister, usually the chairperson of the party with the most votes. This proposal is then put up for vote and is adopted unless more than half of the members of parliament vote against it.⁴¹ The Prime Minister is then free to appoint ministers to form the Government.

As of the latest election, in 2006, Sweden is governed by a coalition government consisting of four parties, commonly referred to as *Alliansen*.⁴² *Alliansen* was formed with the aim of getting out of opposition and earning enough votes to form a government on liberal and

⁴⁰ Sveriges Rikes Lag 2004:Chapter 1, § 6 of the Instrument of the Government

⁴¹ Sveriges Rikes Lag 2004:Chapter 6, §§ 2-4 of the Instrument of the Government

⁴² Its full name - Allians för Sverige (*translated - Alliance for Sweden*)

conservative ideas. The coalition consists of *Moderaterna*, *Centerpartiet*, *Folkpartiet* and *Kristdemokraterna* with *Moderaterna* being the biggest and its chairperson, Fredrik Reinfeldt, is the Prime Minister of Sweden.

“Subject to the limitations laid down in this Constitutional Act, the King shall have supreme authority in all the affairs of the Realm, and shall exercise such supreme authority through the Ministers.”⁴³ The Danish constitution clearly addresses the fact that Denmark is a constitutional monarchy but the King, or more accurately today - the Queen, is formally no more than a figurehead. The Prime Minister and ministers are chosen with the composition of the parliament in mind as the government cannot have more than half the members of *Folketinget* opposed to it.⁴⁴

The Queen has the power to appoint and dismiss the Prime Minister and the other ministers and decides the number of ministers as well as their duties.⁴⁵ The Government conducts its work independently of the monarch and is quite individualistic compared to the Swedish government where the ministers are collectively responsible. Denmark has a unicameral parliament, *Folketinget*, which is elected for 4 year terms, and a proportionate electoral system.⁴⁶

Denmark had a re-election in November 2007 that somewhat altered the composition of the parliament but had less impact on the sitting government. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the chairperson of *Venstre*, is Prime Minister and the Government is a coalition of the two parties *Venstre* and *Det Konservative Folkeparti*, as it has been since the election in 2001.⁴⁷ As in Sweden, the government today rests on the liberal and conservative ideologies.

⁴³ The Constitutional Act of Denmark 1953: Part III, § 12

⁴⁴ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (a)

⁴⁵ The Constitutional Act of Denmark 1953:Part III, § 14

⁴⁶ Nationalencyklopedin

⁴⁷ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (b)

4.2 Formal power of the Committee of European Affairs

4.2.1 Sweden

“The Government shall keep the *Riksdag* continuously informed and confer with bodies appointed by the *Riksdag* concerning developments within the framework of European Union of cooperation.”⁴⁸ While the relationship between the government and the parliament regarding the EU is hereby founded in one of the fundamental laws the specified details regarding the Committee of European Affairs are found outside the constitution, in The *Riksdag* Act, chapter 10, articles 4-9. The Government originally proposed that the Committee of European Affairs should have its legal basis in Sweden’s Accession Act, but was denied by the Committee on the Constitution.⁴⁹

Article 4 states that a Committee of European Affairs should be formed during each electoral term by appointing an uneven number of no less than 15 members of the *Riksdag* to this body. Article 5 concerns the obligations of the Government, the main two being for it to consult with the Committee of European Affairs on its stance in negotiations in the Council of Ministers where it deems it important and also to inform the committee of matters before the Council. The Committee of European Affairs is able to enforce such a consultation if more than five members of the committee call for it, the rest of the committee approves it and if there is deemed time enough for such a consultation. Article 6 gives the Committee of European Affairs the right to request information from state authorities and articles 7-9 deals with regulations on meetings and confidentiality.

When voting in the Committee of European Affairs votes are given in accordance with the present members of parties in the committee and have no connection to the number of seats each party represent in the *Riksdag*. This, in essence, means that a minority government with fewer seats in the committee than the opposition might have a difficult time obtaining support for the Government’s negotiation plan.⁵⁰

Such support is not required by law, however, the informal institutional rules have changed since Sweden’s accession to the EU. It is somewhat of a grey area but an overview is more

⁴⁸ Sveriges Rikes Lag 2004:Chapter 10, § 6 of the Instrument of Government

⁴⁹ Hegeland & Mattson 1995:439

⁵⁰ Hegeland 2006:190-191

fitting here than below the headline of “Informal powers of the Committee of European Affairs” as the support for a negotiation plan is expected nowadays before the Government proceeds. In 2001 it was established that the practice of securing a majority in the Committee of European Affairs had become so entrenched that it was no longer enough that the Government did not act in opposition to the committee, it was now informally obliged to act in accordance with the wants of the committee. It was decided that this change was not detrimental and should be adhered.⁵¹

The Committee of European Affairs is not a legislature in so that it has no power to instigate or adapt laws. It was instituted mainly as a forum through which the Government consults with the *Riksdag* prior to attending negotiations with the EU and is accountable to the Committee of European Affairs. The Government is required to take the consultations in consideration but they are not legally binding.⁵²

The Swedish Committee of European Affairs has since 1996 had the right to demand public questioning in order to obtain information and this has been used mainly to extract such information from three different committees, namely *Justitieutskottet*, *Konstitutionsutskottet* and *Utrikesutskottet*.⁵³

4.2.2 Denmark

The Danish Committee of European Affairs is similarly divided, the legal basis for it and its competence are laid out in two separate documents. The first is found in the Danish Accession Act of 1972 and the latter is based on reports between the Government and the Committee of European Affairs.⁵⁴ According to the Accession Act, article 6, the Government has a duty to inform the *Folketing* of developments regarding the EU. In its subsection it is stated that the *Folketing* is to create a committee where the Government informs of legislation proposals that are directly applicable in Denmark and to meet the need of involving the *Folketing* in certain areas.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Hegeland 2006:177

⁵² Hegeland 2006:179-180

⁵³ Hegeland 2006:90

⁵⁴ EU-Oplysningen

⁵⁵ Lov om Danmarks tiltrædelse af De europæiske Fællesskaber, 1972:§ 6

The committee's authority and methods of working were laid down in the first report from the Committee of European Affairs to the Government in 1973. The first item confirm the rights as written in the Accession Act and continues to specify that the Government is obliged to supply information to the *Folketing* every fortnight regarding the issues before the Council of Ministers from the Commission⁵⁶. The next item ensures the right to hear other committees on subjects related to the Committee of European Affairs and the third item establish the institutional regulation between the Government and the Committee of European Affairs. In essence it confirms that the Government should consult the committee in questions relating to EU policy of great importance whilst ensuring both influence over the Government by the committee as well as respecting the Governments need for leeway regarding negotiations with the EU, obliging the Government to obtain an oral mandate from the committee (passed if a majority is not against it) prior to negotiating issues of a wider scope in the Council of Ministers and this process is to be repeated if negotiations in the Council cannot be resolved unless the stance in negotiations is changed radically. The last item of the report concerns the confidentiality of the Committee of European Affairs.⁵⁷ By enabling the committee to draw up its own rules and regulations regarding competence and influence it is clear that the Committee of European Affairs enjoyed great institutional autonomy even from the start.⁵⁸

An important aspect of the Committee of European Affairs is the voting procedure. In other Danish committees votes are counted according to the number of seats in that particular committee. In the Committee of European Affairs, however, votes are counted in accordance with how many seats the party has in the *Folketing*, this insures the importance of parties with only one seat in the committee as they represent all their seats in parliament and is thus able to tip the scales in a much more proficient way. Absent members of the committee are assumed to support the Government's negotiation plan.⁵⁹ The voting itself has two parts, first the chair person asks which parties are against the Governments negotiation plan and then concludes by seeing if there is a majority against it, if not, the committee has given its approval. The reason for asking which parties that do not support the negotiation plan is to make note of it in order for them to be accountable to the public.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ The Council of Ministers is in fact a compilation of different councils with national ministers depending on which policy area is discussed and is the main legislative power regarding EU policies, The Commission is comprised of 27 commissioners and has the power to instigate EU policy

⁵⁷ Beretning fra markedsudvalget 1973

⁵⁸ Jensen 2003:48

⁵⁹ Jensen 2003:47

⁶⁰ Jensen 2003:153

The mandate itself usually contains three different elements, the first one being the political stance Denmark should take, the second concerns the possibility of an alliance with other member states of the same stance and lastly there is a recommendation as to how far and wide the mandate may be stretched.⁶¹

The Committee of European Affairs in itself has little to do regarding legislature compared to other committees but this is hardly surprising as its main aim is to scrutinise the Government and provide it with guidance before negotiating with the EU. Rather than preparing legislation to be passed in the *Folketing*, the Committee of European Affairs is deeply entrenched with getting information on issues regarding the EU in order to decide the stance the Government should take in negotiations.⁶²

4.2.3 Comparison

There are several similarities between the Swedish and Danish Committee of European Affairs, not the least that its main objective is to obtain information from the governments prior to negotiations with the Council of Ministers and to provide consultation. It is also usually up to the Government to decide when such a consultation is deemed necessary, however, in Sweden the committee can enforce it if at least five members of the Committee of European Affairs requires it. Both committees have the right to obtain information from other institutions if they so desire and is thus not restricted to the information supplied by the Government. Neither committee is deemed a legislature, they do not have the right to instigate or adopt legislation. They are both protected with a low level confidentiality regarding delicate issues but most of their sessions are open to the public.

While both committees have their legal basis in two separate documents they differ in the kind of documents where these rights are found. The Swedish Committee of European Affairs is based in one of the fundamental laws as well as the *Riksdag* Act. The Danish committee has its legal basis in the country's Accession Act to the EU and its competence is found in the first report to the Government by the Committee of European Affairs.

⁶¹ Hegelund & Mattson 1995:443

⁶² Jensen 2003:53

The voting procedure differs between the countries and this might have an affect on the influence that smaller parties have on the Government's stance towards the EU. The major difference is that in Sweden only the seats in the committee itself are counted whereas in Denmark the seats of the *Folketing* are counted instead. In essence, this means that a small party with only one seat in the committee but with 6 seats in the parliament has a larger chance to block a majority in Denmark than in Sweden. In Denmark it is practice that a silent or absent member is in favour of the Government's negotiation plan, there is no such equivalent in Sweden.

And of course, one of the greater differences is found in the power to bind the Government to a certain stance. In Denmark the Government is required to obtain an oral mandate that does not have the majority of the Committee of European Affairs against it. In Sweden this is not required officially, but informally the Government is expected to act in accordance with the majority vote of the Committee of European Affairs.

4.3 Informal power of the Committee of European Affairs

The decision-making progress in the Committee of European Affairs is comprised of several steps where the two actors meet and have formed certain routines. This is where a lot of the informal power can be seen, in how the actors relate to each other and also in the way the consultations are organized.

4.3.1 Sweden

The Committee of European Affairs meets every Friday during the parliamentary year in order to consult with the Government prior to every Council of Ministers meeting and is as such one of the most active committees in the *Riksdag*. The most work intense period for the committee is in June and December since it is so tied into the schedule of the Council of Ministers and this is when the Presidency of the EU changes.⁶³

Information regarding the issues before the Council of Ministers is supplied to the Committee of European Affairs by the Government, but the committee itself oftentimes supplements this by obtaining information from other sources. One of the more important documents is the

⁶³ Hegeland & Mattson 1995:440

agenda for the upcoming Council of Ministers that should be given to the committee by the Government complete with notes and comments regarding prioritised issues as well as an overview of the stances taken by the European Parliament and the Commission. The Committee of European Affairs has during its existence come to gradually demand more specified and complete documents in order to take a stand on issues.⁶⁴

The activity of most importance to the Committee of European Affairs is the meetings, as this is where the information gathered is discussed and it is also where ministers from the Government are heard and questioned. Ordinarily they commence when the chair person has declared the meeting open and invite a minister to enter with his assistants. The minister is then expected to recount the last Council of Ministers and answer any questions that may arise before bringing forth the issues that needs to be discussed prior to the next meeting. It is common for the ministers to bring assistants to answer more detailed questions and members of the Committee of European Affairs are encouraged to ask questions and give their viewpoint on every issue discussed. The minister's visit is concluded when the chair person has summarized the stance of the committee on every issue brought forth, including issues that were only treated in writing and a majority for the Government's stance has been obtained. Prior to 1996 a majority was secured by not having a majority against the stance but has since made the small change of being secured when a majority supports it. The Committee of European Affairs is usually seen as a collective, only rarely has objections from the minority in the committee been written down and accounted for.⁶⁵

It is rare that the Government does not obtain the majority of the support from the Committee of European Affairs. According to Hegeland, much of this can be attributed to the fact that the Government has the opinion of the committee in mind when processing the information they have and coming up with a negotiation plan. It is also seen as a loss of prestige for a minister not to obtain the support of the Committee of European Affairs, something that the minister obviously wants to avoid if possible.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Hegeland 2006:71-72

⁶⁵ Hegeland 2006:181-184

⁶⁶ Hegeland 2006:186

As a collective, the Committee of European Affairs appears to work rather well together. There is a high level of consensus for decisions made and positions taken.⁶⁷ This is instrumental when dealing with other institutions, to be able to show a united front. Whenever that is not the case it is usually one of three common partitions. The first division is between the two parties *Vänsterpartiet* and *Miljöpartiet*, which are critical to the EU cooperation, and the rest of the committee. The second one is between the two major parties in the *Riksdag*, namely *Socialdemokraterna* and *Moderaterna* and the third division is a more ideological one – between the political left and right.⁶⁸ These partitions, however, are not too deep, there is a much higher level of consensus in the Committee of European Affairs than in the *Riksdag* but that is mainly because there is a greater need for cooperation there.⁶⁹

Another reason that is attributed to the strength of the Committee of European Affairs is its members, most of which are members of other prestigious committees and many of which have been members of parliament for more than one elected term.⁷⁰

4.3.2 Denmark

The standard meeting time for the Committee of European Affairs is Fridays. By having a weekly meeting and following the schedule of the EU rather than the rest of the *Folketing* the committee is once again distinguished compared to other Danish committees. It is during these meetings that the Government, through its ministers, seeks consultations. One meeting can thus include several consultations in which a minister is obliged to obtain an oral mandate for the negotiation plan. In most cases it is the minister himself that requests a consultation but members of the opposition within the Committee of European Affairs has been known to do it as well.⁷¹

The members of the committee has been supplied with information from the Government, and other institutions and organisations if they so choose, during the week and an agenda has been set.⁷² After the meeting has been opened by the chair person of the Committee of European Affairs the visiting minister, or ministers, brief the committee on the priorities of the

⁶⁷ Hegeland 2006:251

⁶⁸ Hegeland 2006:254

⁶⁹ Hegeland 2002:103

⁷⁰ Hegeland 2006:133

⁷¹ Jensen 2003:43-45

⁷² Jensen 2003:93

Government and the negotiation plan they have come up with. This is followed by an open questioning of the minister and the consultation is later concluded when the chair person has given his conclusion by asking if there are any parties against the negotiation plan, specifying those parties and establishing that the negotiation plan does not have a majority against it.⁷³

Ministers are usually a bit wary of the Committee of European Affairs, something that Jensen attributes to several things. Firstly, the sheer size of the committee with members, civil servants and a secretariat insures a larger audience that might evaluate the minister's performance as well as giving the meeting an air or formality. Secondly, everything is written down, including the minister's proposal for a negotiation plan and answers to the questions posed by members of the committee. Another important factor is that only the chair person rise to greet the minister, none of the other members of the committee does, something that implies that they are on more equal footing with the minister than other committees. Something that might tip the favour in the committee members' position regarding informal power is that they have a wide understanding of the decision-making process of the EU and a great knowledge of other similar issues that has been before the Council of Ministers. Lastly, the minister is expected to answer any questions himself and not rely too much on the civil servants accompanying him. This all insures a strong institutional patriotism.⁷⁴

Regarding the voting procedure the strongest opposition to the negotiating plan is usually from the smaller parties on the side lines and only sometimes is it the political opposition. It is never the members of the parties in the Government and only rarely the members of parties that work closely with it on certain issues.⁷⁵ As previously mentioned, since it is the seats in parliament that is counted when voting, the side line parties have a stronger position, they can support or overturn the negotiation plan even though they only have one seat in the Committee of European Affairs.⁷⁶

The members of the Committee of European Affairs are usually part of the political elite and have seats in other eminent committees of the *Folketing*.⁷⁷

⁷³ Jensen 2003:13

⁷⁴ Jensen 2003:49

⁷⁵ Jensen 2003:165

⁷⁶ Jensen 2003:97-98

⁷⁷ Hegeland & Mattson 1995:443

4.3.3 Comparison

It is obvious that The Committee of European Affairs is tied to the EU and its schedule from the way the work in the committees is planned. Both committees have Friday meetings in order to discuss the upcoming Council of Ministers meeting and the meetings in the two committees are carried out in much the same way.

Both committees are distinguished by a high level of consensus and it is rare that the Government does not obtain a majority vote. This is attributed in part to the fact that the governments writes up the negotiation plan with the committees in mind and what issues they might object to. In Sweden it is seen as a loss of prestige for a minister not to obtain majority in the Committee of European Affairs.

Noteworthy is also that the majority of the members of both the Swedish and Danish Committee of European Affairs are top level politicians with great experience and apart from keeping up with party lines there is no need for great political manoeuvres.

The main difference between the two countries is regarding the actual consultations. The minister is expected to bring experts and civil servants the consultation in both countries but in Denmark he is required to answer any questions directed by the members of the committee himself. Even though it is supposed to be an open dialogue it is very apparent that he is on his own versus the group and the audience of experts, civil servants and clerks. It is probably somewhat intimidating but keeps in line with the more individualistic approach in Denmark regarding ministers. The Swedish minister on the other hand is actually expected to bring experts and allow them to answer more detailed questions making the consultation less officious. This makes the meetings less officious and the consultations appears more as a forum where the Government and the committee meet on rather equal terms for discussion.

Whereas the Committee of European Affairs in Denmark is in the habit of writing down the parties that object to a negotiation plan in order to make them accountable to the public it is rarely done in Sweden. The Danish government has the approval of the committee when there is not a majority against its proposal, in Sweden the Government need to secure a majority in favour of the proposal in order for it to be approved, something the Committee of European Affairs changed informally in 1996.

4.4 Theoretical anchoring

The answers to the questions posed have been thoroughly presented above so I will just give a quick recap with the answers in short before giving them a firm basis within the theoretical framework.

1. *Which formal/ informal powers does the Committee of European Affairs have in Sweden and in Denmark?*

The formal power of the Swedish Committee of European Affairs is to be informed of issues before the Council of Ministers and act as consultant to the Government. It has the right to obtain information from other institutions, is not a legislature and has a low level of confidentiality. This is also true for Denmark. In Sweden these rights are found in the Instrument of Government and the *Riksdag* Act, whereas the Danish rights are established in the Accession Act and the first report from the Committee of European Affairs. When voting in the Swedish Committee of European Affairs votes are counted according to the number of seats a party has in the committee, in Denmark they are counted according to the number of seats in the *Folketing*. In Denmark the minister is required to obtain an oral mandate from the Committee of European Affairs and whilst not formally acknowledged in Sweden, the minister is expected to abide the majority of the Committee of European Affairs.

Regarding informal power there is a high level of consensus in both the Swedish and Danish Committee of European Affairs and it is rare for a minister not to acquire the support he needs for the Government's negotiation plan. The main difference is found in the way that the Swedish Committee of European Affairs has managed to seize power in so that a majority is nowadays secured when the committee asserts a majority for a proposal rather than a majority not being opposed to it and that the Government is unofficially bound to follow it.

Another difference is found during the consultation in the relationship between the committee and the minister. In Denmark the minister is expected to answer any and all questions from the entire committee itself and the negotiation plan is approved when a majority of the Committee of European Affairs is not against it. In Sweden the consultation is more of an open forum where the minister is not only encouraged to bring experts and civil servants, he is also expected to field questions to them regarding details he is not well versed in.

2. *How do the committees differ and what can explain those differences?*

It is quite clear that the Committee of European Affairs in Denmark has greater formal power than its Swedish counterpart. Not because its legal basis is in the Accession Act but rather because the Accession Act is rather vague and the committee itself was instrumental in bringing forth its competence and way of working by writing up a report to the Government. Both committees share several similarities but it is still the case that whilst the Danish Government has to get an oral mandate through a minister in a consultation with the Committee of European Affairs and is bound to respect it the regulations regarding the Swedish Government is not as explicit.

In regards to informal power the lines are not as distinctive. The voting system in Denmark is more of an asset to parties themselves rather than the committee as a whole versus the Government. Whereas one might say that the officious tendency during consultations in Denmark can be taken to imply that either the committee is the stronger actor (as they seem to demand a lot of the minister) or that the government is the stronger actor as they may secure a majority simply because members of the committee are silent or absent. I, however, would point to the Swedish committee of European Affairs as being slightly stronger than the Danish one concerning informal power. This is in main because of its success in securing unofficial power that has become practice and thus slowly nearing the formal power of the Danish committee of European Affairs. The main two examples concerns the way the Swedish Committee of European Affairs has managed to unofficially tie the Government to the majority vote of the committee and also that the voting has changed from being a negative to a positive majority.

In order to get a better overview I will bring in figure 3 from chapter 2 and mark the letters in bold where the Committee of European Affairs is stronger than its counterpart in the other country.

Fig. 3

	Sweden	Denmark
Formal Power (2 nd dimension)	A	B
Informal power (1 st dimension)	C	D

As seen above, the Danish committee of European Affairs is stronger than the Swedish one regarding formal power (box B) but regarding informal power the Swedish committee of European Affairs is more powerful than its Danish counterpart (box C).

The hypothesis I had earlier, that the Danish committee of European Affairs was stronger because its legal basis was to be found in an EU document is hereby disproved as it should have proved to be more powerful than the Swedish committee of European Affairs in regards to both formal and informal power. It is also quite clear that its power is not derived from the fact that it was founded in the Accession Act but rather because of the fact that the wording in the Accession Act was vague and the committee itself was allowed to lay down its competence in a report to the Government.

In accordance with empirical institutionalism is it also quite clear that the Committee of European Affairs has an impact on the Government regarding EU policies in both countries. It was earlier stated that the actual question of impact was greater than what kind of impact an institution had. Noteworthy then is that if one had used old institutionalism or any other theory that only examined the committees and what I refer to as formal power, the results might have been slightly different. In such a case one might instead focus on the degree of impact and found that the Danish Committee of European Affairs was stronger than the Swedish one hands down thus overlooking the nuances of power that I hope to have somewhat clarified.

4.5 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine the Committee of European Affairs in Sweden and Denmark, to closer examine its impact on the governments regarding EU policies by way of studying the power relationship regarding both formal and informal power in relation to its government. What I found was that even though the committees are similar in several aspects they also have great differences. The main one regarding formal power being that the Danish Committee of European Affairs has the power to legally bind its government to a negotiation plan by supplying an oral mandate. In terms of informal power the lines are a bit more blurry, but I interpret the Swedish Committee of European Affairs to be somewhat stronger than the Danish one in the way it has been able to secure informal power through practice. By seeing to both formal and informal power it is obvious that the committees have a clear impact on the governments' stance regarding EU policies.

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