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The Life for Small States After Brexit, the case of Sweden

A study of Sweden in the wake of Brexit

Master's thesis in European Studies

Supervisor: Pieter de Wilde

May 2019

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List of abbreviations

EI (Senior Official at the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, 2019)

F (Senior Official at the Ministry of Finance, 2019)

PM (Senior Official at Prime Minister's Office, 2019)

HS (Senior Official at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 2019)

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The Life for small states after Brexit, the case of Sweden.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Denmark's Foreign minister Kristian Jensen is recorded saying "There are two kinds of European nations. There are small nations and there are countries that have yet to realize that they are small nations."(Politico, 2017)

On the 23 of June 2016, the British people were going to the polls to vote in the Brexit referendum. The turnout was 72,2 percent which is the highest turnout since the general election in 1992(Clarke, Goodwin, Goodwin, & Whiteley, 2017). This was an important decision for Britain, but it also a decision that had ramifications for the entirety of Europe. The British people voted leave which in turn will affect the power dynamic in the EU (Kirsch, 2017). Kirsch describes a reality where Brexit will lead the bigger countries like France, Germany, and Poland to gain more power in relative terms at the expense of the smaller ones.

This will have a profound impact in the council of ministers where decisions not necessarily need to be taken with unanimity. This will create a new reality for small states in the European Union (EU) that have relied on the United Kingdom (UK) as an ally in the council of ministers. They will have to reorient themselves and, in some cases, change their behaviour to ensure their influence. According to (Huhe, Naurin, & Thomson, 2017a) Sweden, Denmark, Ireland and the Netherlands will face the biggest challenges to defend their influence in the council. Whilst members like France, Germany, and Poland are likely to gain influence. States like Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, and the Netherlands will be looking to take steps to prepare for a post-Brexit landscape in the council of ministers and this might require a change in behaviour since it's a major power that is leaving the EU.

Sweden faces challenges to ensure its influence in the EU. This is something the Swedish government admits to being a major challenge since the UK have pushed the EU in a beneficial direction for Sweden (Government Offices, 2017). Research shows that small countries will lose power in the council of ministers whilst bigger countries will gain power in relative terms (Kirsch, 2017). Sweden is one of the small countries that will lose power in relative terms. However, Sweden have relatively high coalition potential (Janning, 2018). Something that make them highly interesting to study. There has been some research on what small states can do in the wake of Brexit to ensure their influence but not so much on what small states actually have done and are doing. This study will try to change that by showing how Sweden have changed some of their behaviour to ensure their influence as a result of Brexit.

Research question

It is clear that small states may differ in their strategies regarding their work in the EU depending on their interest (Wivel & Thorhallsson, 2018). Now how these strategies will

be affected at this point is still unknown, but it is clear that Sweden belongs to a cluster of countries that stand to lose most influence after Brexit (Kirsch, 2017). Assuming that small states use different strategies to ensure their influence, this thesis aims to explain how these strategies are affected by Brexit. This will be done by asking the following research question:

How and to what extent do small EU member states adjust to Brexit to maintain or expand their influence in the Council of Ministers?

From the discourse about small states, this thesis aims to explain what Sweden is doing to prepare for Brexit and how this behaviour can be explained. This will be done by answering three sub-questions:

- 1) Which strategies could small states use to assert their influence?
- 2) Which of these strategies is Sweden relying on?
- 3) To what extent does Brexit cause a change in Sweden's use of these strategies?

Question one will focus on what different types of strategies small states can use to assert influence in the council of ministers. Under this question, the study will look at small state literature to find and define different strategies that small states use to assert influence.

Question two will show which of these strategies Sweden are relying on.

Question three will try to measure if there has been any change in the use of these strategies that Sweden is using.

Questions two and three will be answered by looking at the data collected during the interviews undertaken in this study. This data will map which type of strategies Sweden use to assert influence and if there are any changes in the use of these strategies.

Chapter 2: Small states and strategies

2.1 What is a small state, and what do we know about their behaviour in the EU?

What makes the state small? This is a question that has been debated in the small state literature. However, the only thing that everyone seems to agree on is that there is not a universal agreed upon definition of small states. Small states have historically been seen as fragile creatures but have a better position in today's world with international organisations/systems that are more governed by the rule of law (Goetschel, 2013).

Small states have structural disadvantages compared to bigger states. This is because smaller states don't have the same voting power as bigger states and at the same time they have a disadvantage when it comes to resources. "Accordingly, small states tend to be proactive in EU negotiations where they do have important economic and political interests at stake" (Thorhallsson & Wivel, 2006). Small states are prioritizing the areas that are most important to them. On the other hand, bigger states are able to engage in all areas. These structural disadvantages are shown in "The Small States in the European Union Structural Disadvantages in EU Policy-Making and Counter-strategies" (Panke, 2010). This article shows that small states suffer structural disadvantages. Panke shows that there are several counterbalancing strategies that can be applied by small states to counter the structural disadvantages they face. The structural disadvantage comes from the fact that big states have more voting power and they have more resources. This gives the big states the possibility to focus on all policies and they have more resources both financially and manpower. These facts force small states to specialize (choosing what areas that are important) in the policy areas that are important for them. Something big states don't necessarily have to do as they have enough resources to engage in all areas. Small states do this to be able to compete with the big states in policy areas. However, there is not a clear path to gain influence. A good example of that can be seen under the cold war. In the cold war, one could see that countries like Sweden, Denmark and Ireland all choosing different strategies. Sweden chose neutrality economically and militarily, Ireland choose economic integration but military neutrality, Denmark on the other hand didn't choose neutrality at all instead choosing both economic integration and NATO membership. This goes to show that small states can choose different strategies based on their interests.

In the small state's literature, there are many different ways of defining a small state. This can be everything from military power, economic power, gross domestic product (GDP), population, administrative capability or the lack of capabilities. We can see (Thorhallsson, 2006) arguing that at least six categories are needed to define a small state, on the other hand (Archer & Nugent, 2002) talk about needing less. Suggesting that maybe just two categories are enough. Then comes the question small, compared to what. A country might be small compared to another country and at the same time be big compared to others. Archer and Nugent argue that one might need to be more specific introducing medium and micro, but it is not in the scope of this project to tackle the debate of what makes a small state. Nevertheless, in this specific case where the power/influence of Sweden in the council of ministers is the issue, it is relevant to look at population size. The population size decides how many votes you get in the council of ministers and thereby decides how much direct power a state has. Indirectly it also decides how much one country needs to

rely on others. The case can be made that Sweden are a medium-size country in the EU compared with countries like Malta and Luxemburg. However, when one looks at the population size of countries in the EU it is clear that 20 countries(including Sweden) each represent less than 3% of the total population of the EU and will continue to do so after Brexit(Kirsch, 2017). All these countries are small compared to countries like Germany, France, Italy, the UK and Spain. Previous research done about small states also puts Sweden in the category of small states (Goetschel, 2013; Jones, 2008; Steinmetz & Wivel, 2016). Considering all the literature that has been done regarding small states it's clear that countries like Sweden, Denmark, and Ireland who are dwarfed by countries like the UK, Germany, France and Italy should be considered small states. They have less voting power and fewer resources compared to the bigger states as mentioned. This means that they fit in the description of small states.

2.2.1 Different strategies that small states can use to assert influence

In the negotiations in the council of minister's small states have fewer votes than bigger states, but that is not the only disadvantage small states suffer from compared to bigger states. They also have fewer financial resources, smaller economies, and undersized staff. This affects the day to day negotiations and leads smaller states to engage in counterbalancing strategies to offset these structural disadvantages (Panke, 2010). There are a lot of different strategies in the literature in how small states may act to get influence, some of these can be conflict prevention, framing, agenda setting, diplomatic tactics, taking advantage of the chair, normative power (power of ideas and norms), focusing on specific policy areas, bargaining-based shaping of policies. Are just some of the tactics/strategies that are used to counter a structural disadvantage (Björkdahl, 2008; Goetschel, 2013; Panke, 2010; Steinmetz & Wivel, 2016). Smaller states do this to assert influence and, in some cases, "punch above their weight" in EU negotiations that are important to them. There are many different types of strategies that describe different types of behaviour from smaller states and states in general, as some of these strategies may also be used by bigger states. In the literature, these types of behaviour are often called strategies. In this study, the behaviour that small states do to achieve or assert influence is defined as strategies.

One of these tactics is using the power of the chair. This means that a country takes advantage of the fact that they are in control of informational and procedural resources including "co-operation, expertise, and support of the Council Secretariat and the Commission" (Björkdahl, 2008). But this thesis will not focus on the power of the chair. This is because this thesis aims to see if there are any changes in the general behaviour of Sweden in day to day behaviour in general, and in a long-term perspective when it comes to alliances/partnerships, and structural organization, etc. Having the ability to use the power of the chair is something that only comes up once every thirteen years after Brexit. And only lasts for six months. This causes problems for tracking general behaviour in the use of different tactics in general.

This study will separate between informal and formal strategies. Formal strategies will refer to a state acting alone with its own resources to gain influence by changing internal factors.

Informal strategies will refer to indirect work, such as alliance building where the aim is to enhance influence by cooperation with others or by influencing institutions.

2.2.2 Diplomatic strategies: informal

Diplomatic strategies refer to the work small states do in their work of creating relationships/partnerships/alliances with other countries. So, a diplomatic tactic can be many things. It can be used to connect with like-minded states to create informal contacts (Björkdahl, 2008). "Limited bargaining capacities can potentially be counterbalanced with two strategies: institutionalized co-ordination on a regional basis and strategic partnerships with bigger states" (Panke, 2010). Diplomatic tactics can basically be a couple of different things. I can refer to informal contacts between states, this can be useful to make sure that your potential allies are on the same page before pushing a specific norm or policy. Institutionalized co-ordination on a regional basis refers to a partnership or alliance between small countries on a regional basis. This can be a cluster of countries such as the

Nordic countries, the Baltic countries and so on. This type of cooperation is based on the fact that the countries in question are close to each other (in relative terms) and therefore share some common interests. The last one is a strategic partnership with bigger states. This strategy suggests that a small country seek cooperation with a bigger state. By doing so the smaller country will benefit from the influence and the resources the bigger country is in the possession of. If this is done in the EU, the small country will be able to rely on the resources of the big county. This will/can make it possible for a small country to gain more bargaining power as a result of having more resources available. That can create a better foundation for the work that is done.

: diplomatic tactics refer to the activity of searching for support among like-minded states, creating cooperation on a regional basis or allying to bigger states.

Contacts with EU institutions

“Disadvantages in argumentative power might be compensated through contacts to the European Commission and prioritization”(Panke, 2010). Having contacts in EU institutions can be helpful in gaining information about different cases to offset any lack of expertise. This is done by the possibility of being notified early on in work/potential legislation that the commission is doing and getting access to the information that the commission might have. The commission can also be persuaded to argue in the favour with a specific country. If the commission is persuaded to do so it might give the arguments to the specific country in question more credibility. Contact with EU institutions is an informal strategy, but it’s used to strengthen formal strategies like high quality arguments.

2.2.3Argumentative power:

In this study argumentative power refers to a collection of strategies that small states can use to assert influence. These strategies include high-quality arguments, framing, continuity, power of reputation, normative advocacy and to use EU as a specific arena where specific issues belong. Argumentative power in short terms is therefore about creating good arguments, being a believable actor that can go through with threats if necessary.

High-quality arguments

In argumentative power high-quality arguments are important. It is shown that high-quality arguments can be used by small states to convince others. The problem is that small states don’t have the resources to be able to do this type of high-quality argument on a broad field of issues. (Panke, 2010). This means that small states need to decide what types of issues and policies are important for them. By focusing on fewer areas, it allows small states to build up competence in these areas and compete with the bigger states on the quality of the argument that is presented. This means however that small needs to choose which areas are important for them. This way of working is referred to as “selective engagement” “Selective engagement allows small states to concentrate their limited financial and personnel capacities on the preparation of good instructions on salient issues backed up by sound arguments while spending less time on less important files”(Panke, 2010). By choosing selective areas to focus on, small states can use the limited resources they have in the areas that are important for them, for more effect. This allows them to create argumentative positions that are backed with the necessary scientific evidence.

"policy-makers also need to be convinced that the EU is the proper venue for dealing with the issue"(Princen, 2011). This is important because there might be other organizations that are more suited to deal with a specific issue. Therefore, the issue needs to be one that the EU is suited to deal with. "In terms of framing, it implies the construction of a convincing argument about why the issue is European in scope and, hence, is legitimately dealt with at the EU-level"(Princen, 2011). This shows that arguments need to be constructed in a way that can convince other countries that the EU is the right institution or arena to deal with the case in question.

2.2.4 Continuity, power of reputation, contact with civil society

Continuity is not a standalone concept in the small state literature, it comprises of several other tactics. This can include an institutionalized contact with civil society because it's a process which in some way or another demands continuity to be transparent and predictable for the resources that the state is trying to take advantage of. Contacts with civil society can increase the number of resources that a state has available, thereby giving the state in question a better foundation to work from. States like Sweden, Denmark and Finland often have good institutionalized contact with civil society which can help with domestic coordination. (Panke, 2010). Continuity can also be important on the political arena "Luxembourg's foreign policy can rely on existing EU structures to do much of the diplomacy it would otherwise have to do itself. Together with the career-official structure of the public administration, it is the longevity of political leaders that brings continuity to the decision-making process and facilitates the development of relations of confidence which are so crucial in diplomacy"(Reiter & Gärtner, 2001, p. 138). Having continuity in political processes combined with continuity in the administration can help to provide a stable platform from where it is possible to develop good relations. Thereby having predictable and trustworthy prose can make it easier to develop good relations with your partners. They know where you stand politically, what type of process that leads up to the decisions that are taken domestically. Therefore, making a more reliable partner, because the state shows its behaviour is predictable. Good continuity also helps with the "power of reputations". Having a good reputation makes it possible for states to influence the negotiation process by mediating and being trustworthy (Panke, 2010). Panke talks about the power of reputation and bargaining. "If the reputation of a speaker is that the speaker is fair, impartial or acting for the common good, this will help the speaker to be more convincing to others. Bargaining is more effective if the state is likely to carry out threats or live up to a promise" (Panke, 2010). This means that if a state is perceived as fair or acting on the common good, other states are more likely to listen to or be convinced by them. At the same time, other states are also more likely to see a threat as real if the state in question is likely to carry it out. It is therefore important for states to be perceived as credible.

Argumentative power refers to the

- The ability a state has to prioritize specific important policy areas
- The ability a state has to do the necessary research to convince other member states in a particular matter.
- Use other means such as contact with civil society to gain more resources
- The ability to live up to a promise or be able to carry out a threat and be credible.

"Framing refers to a process of defining reality" (Björkdahl, 2008). Framing is also important to create enough interest in a particular strategy (Princen, 2011).

Princen also categories two main challenges for agenda setters in the EU, these are "mobilizing supporters" and "arousing interest". In mobilizing supporters it's important to choose the right venues or to modify them if that's possible. This can be done by creating a specific dialog to make institutions receptive to the specific policy area in question. In arousing interest there are two ways to do it, that is with big words or small steps. Big words work when "This strategy works best for issues which have a significant moral component and/or which carry important symbolic meanings" (Princen, 2011). An example of this is the European arrest warrant that got on the agenda after the 9/11 attacks in New York. When it got pushed up on the agenda as a part of the fight against terrorism. But the tactic of "big words" won't always be possible. Other options might be to have several small steps instead of big ones. By publishing studies it's possible to create a groundwork that makes it possible to take further steps. Other options include the state holding the Presidency organizing an informal meeting or other types of conferences to highlight issues or policy's that they find important. Another tactic is to focus on specific areas in a specific policy. It might be difficult to get the EU to fight alcohol in general due to the different cultures in the member states, instead, interest groups have focused on things such as excessive drinking by young people and drink-driving.

- Framing is about defining reality or the terms of the debate, this can be done by using norms to persuade people or using research to define the frames in which we understand reality.

Normative power (power of ideas and norms), is something that has been related to states with limited military power/capabilities. "The concept normative power rests on the power of ideas and norms, and it is related to the concept of 'civilian power', 'soft power', as well as the notion of 'ideational power'." (Björkdahl, 2008). Björkdahl goes on to define normative power as "norm-generating and norm-spreading capability exercised in order to change normative convictions and to set normative standards through processes of norm advocacy". As shown here the spreading of norms doesn't rely on the same parameters as the traditional powers of a state. It doesn't rely on measurements such as military power. Norm advocacy comes from the power of values, norms, and ideas. "A norm advocate is an actor strongly committed to a particular norm, and ready to invest energy in promoting the norm in order to shape the behaviour of others"(Björkdahl, 2008). This can be used in scenarios such as value labelled debates about human rights, gender equality, minority rights, and the environment. Here one might have a goal of convincing through morality in norms to make it resonate with a specific audience. (Björkdahl, 2008). Björkdahl perceives norm advocacy as "non-coercive, persuasive argumentation that may be used in order to raise moral consciousness about what constitutes 'the right thing to do'".

The EU has been seen by many as a peace project since its creation and has over time become an arena for norm-generating. Norms are important and can in some cases be very powerful. If a norm becomes widespread it can in some instances end up as law. So being a part that sets norms is important and may have powerful behaviour effects (Björkdahl, 2008; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 916). Small states can take advantage of this and if they are effective in exporting norms to the EU level and it ends up being institutionalized it will then ideally be adopted by the other member states. Thereby asserting influence through norms.

2.3 What implication does Brexit bring for small states

We do know that the UK has acted as a sort of a counterweight to France and Germany. Working for increased trade liberalization in the EU and at the same time sheltering smaller states in the EU from unwanted integration. It is also worrying for small states that Germany and France have reconfirmed their ties after article 50 was triggered (Wivel & Thorhallsson, 2018). "The small states also face the danger that the large states will increasingly negotiate the big issues outside the formal institutional procedures"(Thorhallsson & Wivel, 2006). This refers to the fear that Germany and France will negotiate between themselves before bringing it in front of the EU as a done deal. "Brexit is likely to change the EU's balance of power in the long-term. In addition to strengthening the Franco-German axis into what might in effect be a Franco-German hegemony with Germany as the main leader, small states are likely to be part of losing or winning clusters of this rebalancing depending on their economic and political affiliations with the United Kingdom(Patel and Reh 2016)"(Wivel & Thorhallsson, 2018). The rebalancing of power does not seem to be in favour of the smaller states in the EU.

Wivel and Thorhallsson also conclude that it is a cluster of small states that are most likely to be affected negatively by the UK leaving. The cluster of states that are most likely to be hit especially hard by Brexit is Sweden, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Latvia, Ireland, Estonia, Denmark, and Cyprus. At the same time, the "southern protectionist" (including the small states Greece, Portugal and Cyprus, France, Italy, and Spain) cluster will be strengthened. This shows that the small states in the EU will be affected differently by Brexit and they might, therefore, follow different strategies to deal with Brexit.

FIGURE 2 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE POSITIONS OF THE UK AND EACH OF THE OTHER ACTORS

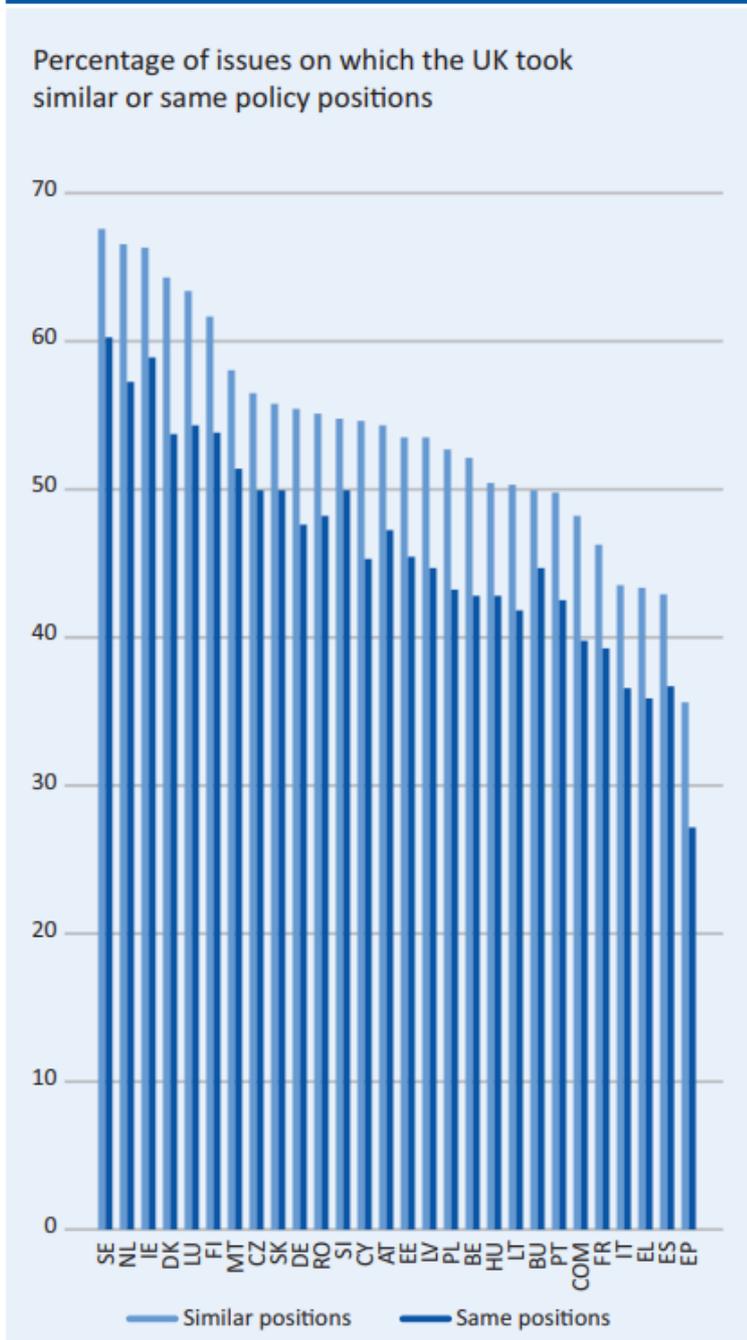


Figure 1 Policy Positions (Huhe et al., 2017a)

As shown in the figures above. The countries that have the most similar policy position as the UK is Sweden, the Netherlands, Ireland, Denmark, Luxemburg and Finland. With Sweden being the country that have the most similar positions (Huhe, Naurin, & Thomson, 2017b). Wivel and Thorhallsson identified a group of countries (Sweden, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Latvia, Ireland, Estonia, Denmark, and Cyprus) that will be the hardest hit by Brexit. When comparing these countries with the top six countries with the most similar position with the UK. We can see that its only Luxemburg and Finland that is not a part of this group that Wivel and Thorhallsson have described as the hardest hit. However, the top

four countries with the most similar position with the UK are in this group. These four countries (Sweden, the Netherlands, Ireland, Denmark) can be described as the most exposed as a result of Brexit.

Smaller states without the Euro might be especially at risk "As a counter-weight, Commissioners from smaller, non-Eurozone countries have tended to form tacit alliances with British Commissioners in the past." (Leigh, 2017). So, the impact of Brexit may be extra hard on small states that do not use the Euro, these countries have relied on the UK as the only big state in the EU to ensure that their interests have been taken care of. Out of the top four countries with the most similar position with the UK we can see that Denmark and Sweden are outside the Euro.

This brings in another point that Brexit will cause, it will also impact the commission and in the report for SIEPS "Brexit and the European Commission" by Michael Leigh, we can see that Leigh argues that Brexit will cause up to 2000 commission employees to lose their job. "Until recently, British officials played a major role as heads of the cabinet of Commissioners of various nationalities, directors-general, and their assistants." (Leigh, 2017). This might lead to a fall of competence in the commission, it will be harder to connect member states using and not using the Euro, it could lead to more centralization of power in the commission "with the president and the president's chief of staff, gaining further influence at the expense of the secretary-general and line departments"(Leigh, 2017). It might also impact the commission's work on free trade and extending the single market. The report also states that it may change the commission's commitments to an open, accountable and transparent culture at risk.

The article "Brexit and the Distribution of Power" (Kirsch, 2017) shows that the power of big countries will increase, and the power of small countries will decrease in the Council of the EU in relative terms as a result of Brexit. This means that bigger countries will get a bigger proportion of the votes when the votes are redistributed after Brexit. This is the only direct measurement of power. For some small countries the biggest problem isn't the fact that they lose power in relative terms but the fact that the UK is leaving. This will have an impact on small states in the EU. The government in Sweden recognizes the potential effect that Brexit may have. "The main conclusion of the report from the Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies is that the UK has had an impact on the development of the EU, not least in areas that are important for Sweden in EU cooperation." (Government Offices, 2017). The Swedish government goes on to describe Brexit as a major challenge. Which will create a need to adapt their day to day work in the EU to be able to ensure their future influence. The Swedish government have acknowledged that they need to adapt as a result of Brexit and this shows that the importance the UK has had on a small state like Sweden.

Brexit will also have an impact on networks in the EU "In conclusion, our analysis of three key network statistics at a country level reveal that the impacts of Brexit on the collaborative networks in the EU Council are complex" (Huhe et al., 2017). This will create challenges for small states "Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, and the Netherlands – confront the toughest challenges with respect to defending their influence in the Council" (Huhe et al., 2017). On the other hand, it is predicted by the report that the network positions of large member states like France Poland and Germany are likely to be enhanced by Brexit. When it comes to network the smaller states seems to be on the losing side here to.

A good example of a group that will be affected by Brexit is the Noordwijk group. There is not a lot of literature describing the Noordwijk group. But it's a group that are working on

budget related matters and are described as a group of net contributing countries where the UK is the major player that wishes to cut the budget. Countries like Germany and France are described to act in a way that they “may opt to vote with the core members of the Noordwijk group. (Benedetto, 2017). There are also not a lot of sources describing the Noordwijk group but according to informant F, it consists of Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, France, and the UK. this could indicate that there is a difference between the “core” of the Noordwijk group and the group in general. However, now when the UK leaves what is described as the core of the Noordwijk group will lose a major member. This loss of a core major contributor makes it is difficult to know which countries are part of the “core”, but the F informant described the Netherlands, the UK and Sweden as really close.

2.4 The alternatives

It is clear that some small states are losing influence and an important partner when the UK leaves the EU. It is also clear however that small states like Sweden recognize this and are ready to adapt to ensure their influence.

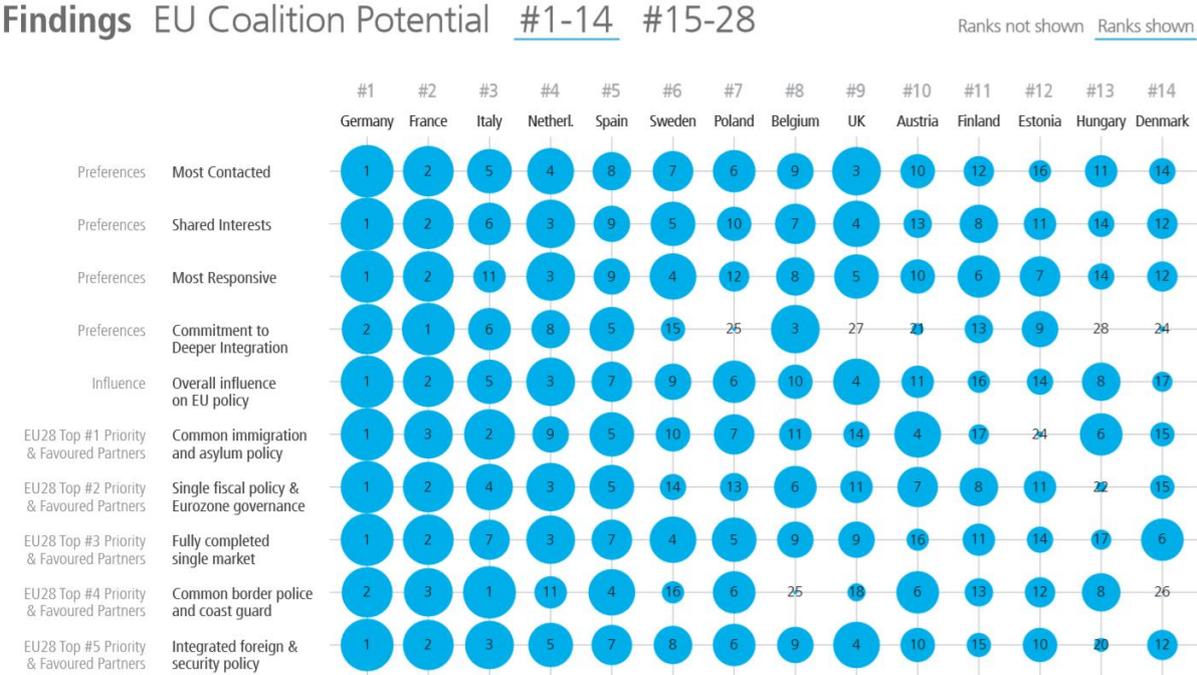


Figure 2 EU Coalition Potential(Janning, 2018)

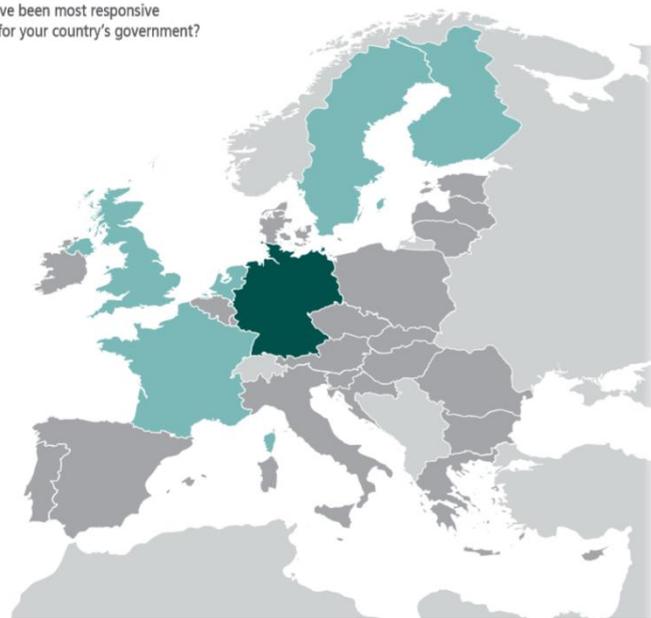
Most Responsive Votes total EU Primary ties Secondary ties Brexit

Q3

"Which EU member states have been most responsive and are easiest to work with for your country's government? (select up to five)"

EU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Affluent Seven	<input type="checkbox"/>
Big Six	<input type="checkbox"/>	Southern Seven	<input type="checkbox"/>
Founding Six	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visegrád Four	<input type="checkbox"/>
Austria	<input type="checkbox"/>	Italy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Belgium	<input type="checkbox"/>	Latvia	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bulgaria	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lithuania	<input type="checkbox"/>
Croatia	<input type="checkbox"/>	Luxembourg	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cyprus	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malta	<input type="checkbox"/>
Czech R.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Netherlands	<input type="checkbox"/>
Denmark	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poland	<input type="checkbox"/>
Estonia	<input type="checkbox"/>	Portugal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Romania	<input type="checkbox"/>
France	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slovakia	<input type="checkbox"/>
Germany	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slovenia	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greece	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spain	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hungary	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sweden	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ireland	<input type="checkbox"/>	UK	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Preferences Overview
- Most Contacted
- Shared Interests
- Most Responsive**
- Most Disappointing
- Commitment to Deeper Integration



Of 2742 votes by 774 respondents, Germany received the most: 390

39.5%	Founding 6	Share of votes for group
38.1%	Big 6	
31.6%	Affluent 7	
20.3%	Southern 7	
11.8%	Visegrád 4	
<hr/>		
14.2%	Germany	Share of votes for country
7.7%	France	
7.4%	Netherlands	
6.1%	Sweden	
5.8%	UK	
4.5%	Finland	
4.3%	Estonia	
4.2%	Belgium	
3.6%	Austria	
3.6%	Spain	
3.4%	Italy	
3.3%	Denmark	
3.3%	Hungary	
3.3%	Poland	
2.8%	Ireland	
2.7%	Luxembourg	
2.7%	Slovakia	
2.6%	Portugal	
2.5%	Czech Rep.	
2.2%	Latvia	
2.1%	Lithuania	
2.0%	Romania	
1.9%	Greece	
1.1%	Croatia	
1.1%	Slovenia	
0.7%	Bulgaria	
0.7%	Cyprus	
0.5%	Malta	

Figure 3 Most Responsive and are easiest to work with(Janning, 2018)

Small states are facing some challenges when it comes to Brexit. According to the EU Coalition Explorer, we can see that Sweden's coalition potential is quite high. The findings in the report show that Sweden has the 6th highest coalition potential which is higher than countries like the UK, Poland, and Belgium. At the same time, it is clear that Sweden is in the top four when it comes to being responsive and easy to work with (Janning, 2018). This shows that Sweden is popular to work with and that they have the potential to work with other states. It is interesting to see that Germany have the highest score both when it comes to coalition potential and most responsive. This shows the important role that Germany holds within the EU.

In the face of the shifting power in European institutions smaller states might seek closer cooperation's or alliances with other nations. This is something that is highlighted in the articles "The Nordic-Baltic Region in the EU: A Loose Club of Friends" by (Kuusik & Raik, 2018b) and "There Is Life for the EU After Brexit"(Gruyter, 2018). In the report by (Kuusik & Raik, 2018a) "The Nordic-Baltic Region in the EU 27 Time for New Strategic Cooperation" it has laid out a framework for cooperation where possible among the Nordic countries and the Baltic countries but it specifies that this is more of an open network rather than a bloc. In a similar report by (Kuusik & Raik, 2018b) for the Swedish Institution for European Policy Studies that includes the Netherlands and Ireland. The report refers to a new Hanseatic League 2.0, but it is also mentioning the same message, just an open network and not a bloc. This can, however, create a better contact between the different states as they have a forum/place where they can talk to each other and can therefore be said to be a regional cooperation. However, if it's only meant to be a network it can probably not replace the UK for the small states that will be negatively affected by Brexit.

The frugal four is another grouping that has been mentioned in some articles and contains the member states of the Netherlands, Denmark, Austria, and Sweden. These nations have a common interest in keeping the budget low (Financial Times, 2018). The frugal four are "losing both a fellow net contributor and a traditional ally in the fight against EU largesse"

(Financial Times, 2018). These are all nations that are net contributors to the EU budget and are of the view that the next MFF (Multiannual Financial Framework)¹ should stay at the current level. These common interests can be the groundwork for a new alliance among small states in the EU.

Even though Brexit overall is likely to be a loss for some small states and the EU it's not the end of the EU. Something that is shown in the article "There Is Life for the EU After Brexit" by Caroline de Gruyter we can see an article that presents some of the "positive" consequences of Brexit. De Gruyter is describing a shifting landscape where the dynamics between smaller states aren't getting enough attention. "First and foremost, there is a clear realignment going on across the continent. Many EU member states—particularly smaller ones who often sided with the UK in the past—realize that they will have to rely more on coalition building, with a broader roster of partners, post-Brexit"(De Gruyter, 2018). As the article describes the UK have been a large, liberal, Nordic country that has in a way been sheltering some of the smaller countries.

The loss of the UK will change the balance of power in the EU. When countries like Denmark or the Netherlands need support for some of the liberal issues that are important for them, they have only needed the UK and a couple more to reach the necessary threshold. This is not the case anymore and has led smaller countries to start talking to each other. Countries that have never done anything more than greeting each other. This is helping to get an understanding of each other's policy standpoints. However, there are concerns about the Franco-German relationship getting too strong and there are concerns about a multi-speed Europe and thereby creating second class member states. The article highlights the fact that smaller countries need to try new things to make their voices heard. Here the Hanseatic League has pointed out a potential solution. This new reality where the smaller states need to cooperate in a new way has according to de Gruyter had some interesting effects. For example, Denmark, if they need new allies to be effective in Brussel it will affect Denmark's stand on their political issues and will mean that Denmark will no longer will be able to publicly oppose these positions. This means that Denmark will have to soften their stands on some issues. "One Danish diplomat was recently overheard saying, "It was easy for us to be Eurosceptic as long as the British were around: we always got away with it since they were much more extreme anyway." (De Gruyter, 2018). The new reality might be creating a change in the behaviour of some states. "It is fair to say, however, that Brexit has prompted a great deal of political movement. The direction of this movement is yet unknown"(De Gruyter, 2018).

¹ "The multiannual financial framework (MFF) is the EU's long-term budget. It sets the limits for EU spending - as a whole and also for different areas of activity - over a period of at least five years. Recent MFFs usually covered seven years."(Council of the European Union, 2019)

3. Methodological approach

This project is a qualitative study so it is important to keep in mind that “qualitative studies reliability and credibility are based on the empirical evidence that is presented, that is data based on actual conditions, and that this data does not build on the researcher’s subjectivity or random circumstances during the research process, but are collected in a systematic way that is in line with up to date standards in the selected research design.”(Grønmo, 2004, p. 229). This study will comprise of two main source materials. The first main sources material was collected through interviews with senior civil servants in different ministries in the Swedish government. To complete the data collection a qualitative content analysis of government documents, books, articles, and news articles was done.

3.1 Why Sweden

Sweden will be in a special position after Brexit. Like many other small nations, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Ireland they have had a lot of similar positions with the UK on different policy areas. However, Sweden is the country that has taken the same or a similar position as the UK the most times. The Swedish government also acknowledges the fact that the UK have pushed the EU in a direction that is beneficial for Sweden.

It is therefore natural that Sweden are described by the literature to be in the cluster of countries that will lose the most influence in the council of ministers as a result of Brexit “Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, and the Netherlands” (Huhe et al., 2017b). Out of this group of countries there are some similarities and differences. One example of that is the Euro.

Sweden has decided to stay outside the Euro something Denmark has also chosen to do. This contrasts with other nations such as Ireland, Finland and the Netherlands who are small states but have decided to join the Euro. This means that these two groups have some different challenges because of Brexit. As the literature shows, countries outside the Euro will be hit harder than countries with the Euro. Denmark and Sweden can be said to be in a similarly placed position as both are outside the Euro.

Another difference between the countries that has been reviled is their coalition potential. Here we can see that the coalition potential for the Netherlands and Sweden are quite high. These countries rank fourth (Netherlands) and sixth (Sweden) whilst a country like Denmark is down at fourteenth. It could therefore be argued that countries like Sweden and the Netherlands have a higher potential to form coalitions than countries like Denmark in the wake of Brexit.

The Netherlands with its high coalition potential also has the second highest number of similar positions with the UK. Sweden is in a similar position with the Netherlands when it comes casting similar or same votes as the UK and they both have very high coalition potential. So, Sweden is in a way both comparable with the Netherlands and Denmark.

We have not seen what effect it will have on countries inside the EU when one of the members leave. When the UK decided to leave the EU, it must have generated reactions from countries that have been relying on the UK as their “big brother”. Sweden might be one of the countries that have the most to lose from the UK leaving. However, they have at the same time had the greatest potential to reach out to other countries to compensate for this loss. This is what makes Sweden a good country to study.

3.2 Interviews

The interview data collection in this study was done using semi-structured in-depth interviews. This study is examining what Sweden is doing to prepare for Brexit and how these preparations can be explained. This requires new data collection as such data doesn't exist. Therefore, it is necessary to do the interviews in a way that is flexible and at the same time allows for comprehensive data collection. "The interview should be carried out in a flexible way. How each interview develops depends on the what type of information the interviewee contributes, and how the communication between the researcher and the interviewee develops."(Grønmo, 2015, p. 159) "The use of semi-structured interviews, with their open format, provides a valuable means to allow researchers to explore how far their own theoretical priors are reflected in the behaviour and perceptions of significant actors in the arena of accounting changes, and to enable new 'grounded' theorizing to be formulated."(Horton, Macve, & Struyven, 2004). This will allow each informant to contribute with as much information as possible and at the same time give them the opportunity to talk outside the interview guide. At the same time, semi-structured interviews allow the interview to be done in a flexible way that can adapt for different circumstances. The interviews were conducted with the help of an interview guide. This allowed the informants to speak freely and at the same time give structure to the interview when needed. The interview guided is added in the appendix. This method of interviewing was chosen because it allows the participants viewpoint without limiting the research topic beforehand.

To uncover what type of strategies Sweden take advantage of, we need to look at the second chapter where the different strategies have been explained. This gives ground to ask question on how Sweden utilises these strategies (if they do at all) and if there have been done any changes. Regarding informal strategies it will be necessary to map how important the UK have been and how this have affected the work Sweden are doing building alliances.

All the interviews have been conducted anonymously. This has been done for a couple of reasons. Anonymity has been chosen as it is easier to get it approved through the NSD (Norsk senter for forskningsdata) in the timeframe that is available. However, it also has the advantage of the interviewees feeling that they can speak more openly as the interview is anonymized. They might feel freer to discuss and elaborate about tactics, partner/allies and the work that they do which may not be public knowledge at the current moment.

During the interviews, it happened that some of the statements were not to be quoted. These requests have been recognized and all the informants have received the transcriptions from the interviews with the possibility for them to change, clarify or even withdraw their statements from the entire research project. The informants have also had to sign an information letter containing a brief summary of the research project, their rights and the approval that allowed for the recording of the interviews. The information letter can be found in the appendix.

3.2.2 Preferred candidates/choice of candidates

Since this project aims to look at things such as structural changes down at a ministry level. It will be necessary to get interviewees from different ministries. On the question of who to interview the possibilities are between politicians and civil servants. For this study civil servants were selected. This choice was done on the basis that the knowledge required for this study is past, present and possibly future if there have been made planes for that.

Politicians only serve periods and there has recently been a new election on Sweden which caused changes in the political landscape. Where Sweden changed out some of their ministers. This project is trying to collect data. So, it makes more sense to talk to civil servants which can be regarded as "experts", than to talk to politicians which may be coloured more by politics. Interviewing civil servants also provide some benefits. If they are senior civil servants it is a good chance that they have extensive knowledge and experience about work inside the ministries and towards the EU. Experience amongst the interviewees will also be necessary to have knowledge about how Sweden apply and uses different strategies to assert influence.

It would be ideal to interview one civil servant per department to document what is going on in every single ministry. However, the most important department to gain interviews with will be the finance ministry (because the UK leaving will be extra hard on non-Euro members, and there are upcoming negotiations regarding the EU long term budget). The Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation (as this is the biggest department in Sweden and will feel the impact if the EU turns in a more protectionist direction). The Prime Minister's office (because it's the office that is responsible for the Swedish positions in the council of ministers, and will, therefore, be important to see if there are any changes in how they work on EU matters. The Environmental Ministry is also important as Sweden prioritizes its environmental policy's a lot. How can environmental policies be affected by Brexit? The Ministry of Employment is another department that would be interesting to get an interview from as they are responsible for the labour market and regulation regarding these issues. It would be interesting to hear what type of challenges they are experiencing as a result of Brexit and what they are doing to prepare. They might face some of the same challenges that the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation have regarding the workforce, so interviewing one or the other would suffice. Due to the upcoming negotiations regarding the long-term EU budget, the most important departments to get interviews from will be the Ministry of Finance and the Prime Ministers' office. These two departments should offer the best insights into how they view the upcoming negotiations around the MFF and if the work around this upcoming negotiation has changed as a result of Brexit.

Preferably all interviewees will be high ranking civil servants that work in some sort of EU group inside the ministries. This allows them to have knowledge about how Brexit is affecting their work in the council and if this has made any changes in how their ministries are being run.

Interviewing the people that are actually stationed in Brussels may be been helpful in mapping what Sweden is doing in regard to alliance/partner building. Considering the fact that alliances and partners in the council of ministers can change on a case to case basis. Interviewing officials that work in the Swedish Ministries on EU relating matters gives an insight into what are the preferred partners for that specific Ministry and if the department itself has made any structural changes. So due to the time limitations of this project, it is more efficient to interview senior officials in the different departments themselves rather than going to the Swedish officials that are stationed in Brussels.

3.2.3 The actual candidates

Unfortunately, it was not possible to interview high ranking civil servants from all of the different Swedish departments. Reasons for this may include that they don't have time or are unwilling to contribute to this project. A lot of potential interview objects didn't answer the request at all. This means that there will only be interviews conducted with civil servants from four different ministries. The four informants that were willing to speak were:

A senior official at the Ministry of Finance

A senior official at the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

A senior official from the Prime Minister's Office

A senior official from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

The participants were recruited mainly through a process where emails were exchanged with the different departments leading to an email exchange directly with the participants. One of the interviewees was recruited with the help of SIEPS. Furthermore, the interview process was design in a way that could allow for the snowball effect to occur. But the potential informants that were suggested by some of the informants was unreachable.

I secured interviews with all departments that were targeted except the Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Employment. It was to be expected that I would not secure all of the preferred interviews, as this is a process that not everyone necessarily wants be a part of. Considering the fact that the four interviews with senior officials from different departments' covers only 40% of all the departments in Sweden, it would have been desirable to have had a couple more. Although not ideal, two of the interviewees are from what is considered the most important departments; the Prime Minister's office and the Ministry of Finance. This should mean that there is sufficient information to uncover if there are any changes in behaviour or any type of structural changes in the different departments in general as a result of the Brexit process.

The other two departments the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation are two departments that cover different types of sectors. This will help in mapping the differences between the departments in relation to how they deal with Brexit and/or if anything has changed after the Brexit proses started.

3.2.4 Challenges with the interviews and informants

It is important to keep in mind that the interview was conducted in a time period from the 7 of march to the 15th. So, it's important to keep in mind that the informants only have knowledge about the time period up to these dates, so thing may have changed after the interviews were done.

All the informants are from Sweden and work for the government. This means that they could potentially have an agenda with every answer they give regarding Sweden's relations. This is something that must be considered.

There might also be restrictions to what the informants are allowed to discuss regarding the tactics they use. What type of cooperation they have with other countries in the council of ministers. There may be information they can't talk about for different reasons. It might, therefore, be information that the informants can't talk about.

There is also the risk of miscommunication during the interview "the communication between the researcher and the interviewee might function poorly.... A researcher might affect the answers.... The interviewee might have recollection errors" (Grønmo, 2015, p. 85). However, precautions were taken to minimize such risk. Whenever there was a misunderstanding during the interview time was given to clarify and there wasn't put any pressure on the informant to hurry things up. It was also made clear to the informants that the interview could be done in Swedish/Norwegian or English (all of the informants decided

to speak in Swedish). It was also made clear that if there was something they couldn't understand it was possible to say certain words or sentences in English.

3.2.5 Recruitment

The recruitment focused on recruiting senior civil servants from different ministries. Political opinions are not the goal of this study. That is why senior civil servants were targeted as the goal is to get "expert" opinions that are relevant for this study.

The recruitment was done by contacting ministries through email. A request was sent out to all ministries in Sweden. Then there was some correspondence back and forth which led to three interviews. The fourth interview came about as a result of help from SIEPS to get in contact with a specific person in a ministry.

3.2.6 Translation

During the interviews, the informants were speaking their native language which is Swedish, and the interviewer was speaking Norwegian. There is, of course, the potential problem of language barriers. There is, therefore, a possibility of misunderstandings occurring, however, the interviewees have been given a transcript of the interviews and had the opportunity to correct any misunderstanding if they were present. In one instance where there was a doubt about what had been said, the informant was specifically contacted and clarified what had been said. The advantage of letting the interviewee talk in their native language allows for them to express themselves easier and eliminates the risk of a wrong translation from their side. The potential problem is when quotes have been translated into English. When that has been done, it has been done with the aim of keeping as much as is possible of the original meaning "It was important to maintain the conceptual equivalence of what the informants answered, in other words to keep a technically and conceptually accurate translation of a concept" (Squires, 2009).

3.3 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are often viewed as the same in qualitative research. These terms can be conceptualized as trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003). Other researchers have defined reliability "in simple terms, it can be said that reliability is about internal logic throughout the entire research project" (Grønmo, 2015, p. 231). In this project, there has been a combination of the methods used. This can be described as a triangulation strategy. In this specific project, semi-structured interviews have been combined with a quality content analysis. The data collected from the informants give a picture of what Sweden is doing to prepare for Brexit combined with the use of sources ranging from a news article, journals and books, can help explain why Sweden is doing what they are doing. Therefore, creating a credible interpretation.

"One of the most important criteria's to the presentation of research is connected to transparency. How the research is done, what choices are made at different times, how the participants were recruited, what kind of problems did arise.... Are just some of the questions that have to be presented and discussed" (Grønmo, 2015, p. 248).

The fact that three of the informants were contacted through official channels makes the project more open for outside scrutiny as this is something that “anyone” can do. One contact was gained through contact with SIEPS.

3.4 Qualitative content analysis and challenges

In this study, qualitative content analysis will be used to complement the data collected from the interviews. “Qualitative content analysis is based on a systematic review of documents aimed at categorizing content and recording data relevant to the issue in the current study” (Grønmo, 2004, s. 187). Qualitative content analysis is a method for data collection by reviewing different types of documents. This project will use books, articles, journals, reports, government documents, and news articles. These sources are easily accessible, something that makes it possible to review them many times and collect data accordingly. However, it is important to keep in mind that all types of documents can contain biases and it is, therefore, important to review all documents critically.

Due to the size of the project, it has been necessary to include a wide range of sources as mentioned above. To establish what type of behaviours a small state might show/do to ensure and protect their influence. It has been necessary to analyse a wide range of articles and books to be able to establish different tactics that small states use to gain influence in the council of ministers. Then it will be possible to compare if these tactics change in any way for Sweden as a result of the UK leaving the EU.

It will also be important to review official government documents where available. To see what types of challenges the Swedish government has identified as potential issues with Brexit. Do they identify any potential issues publicly that can be linked with the work in the council of ministers? Then the thesis will analysis reports that are already done by organizations like SIEPS, CEPS (a think tank for debate on EU affairs), and the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR). These reports can contribute to understanding if there are any potential solutions to Sweden’s “problem”. How does the situation look, what is the potential for cooperation?

There is, of course, some risk in using qualitative analysis, such as the bias and subjectivity of the researcher. It is therefore important to treat all sources critically and process the data in a systematic way to minimize the bias of the researcher.

3.5 Analysis

All the interviews were transcribed within one week of being conducted. Then they were analysed with the help of the program NVivo. NVivo is an analytical program that is used in qualitative research that helps to remove the division between data and interpretation. NVivo help is useful to code qualitative data like interviews. This is done by putting the data into different categories which in this case was “tactics”. To achieve this, qualitative document analysis was used to create and categorize the different tactics that explain small state behaviour. Based on these different tactics, questions were created for the interview guide. The data that was collected during the interviews were matched up with the different tactics that small states are using in NVivo. This allows for a predictable data gathering that makes it possible to document what Sweden is doing and have done to prepare for Brexit and at the same time measure if there have been any changes in the tactics that Sweden is using.

Chapter 4: findings

4.1 How important has the UK been for Sweden?

“Sweden has had a lot of cooperation with the UK ever since Sweden joined the EU, for different reasons. We have had the same opinions in different questions like trade, economic policy, budget, etc. then it’s the question of language which has made it easy to have a natural contact with the UK in these years. The UK has talented officials who are skilled in analysing questions and have good contacts with EU institutions. They have many officials to put it in a way. That we and many other member states also have drawn on those resources and knowledge that has come from the UK government.” PM)

There is no doubt in the literature that the UK has been an important partner for Sweden regarding the work that is done in the council of ministers. The UK is also one of the most powerful players in the council just regarding its size. If one combines this with the fact that the UK is the country that has the most common position and, votes in the most similar way as Sweden in the council of ministers. It is reasonable to believe it will have an impact on Sweden. To get a sense of what this cooperation has meant for Sweden and to get a feeling about what type of impact the UK leaving the EU may have on Sweden. These are some of the remarks that were made by the informants.

“It is clear that the UK has been an enormously important partner. We are a small export-dependent country that is dependent on a level playing field. When the UK now leaves, we are going to lose an important ally and there is no secret that France and Germany have different opinions about government subsidies. In the EU specifically, cooperation is built on like-mindedness. Now when the UK which is a big country is gone, the amount of like-minded states is reduced drastically. It is the countries Finland, Denmark, and Holland which are like-minded in our way. So, its fewer of them” (EI) As some of the literature suggests it's clear that Sweden looks at the UK as an important partner for a liberalized market with little state subsidies, or as referred to here “a level playing field”. In this sense, the UK as a resource in this area will be a loss for Sweden. It is natural for the Minister of Enterprise and Innovation to have this. Their job, after all, is to create a good environment for businesses in Sweden to exist and this might be put under pressure when the UK leaves.

“trade is a classic area where the UK has been liberal in trade and we have had a very similar policy with the UK. There we will be losing a significant force, so we need to become even more clear about our positions and the Swedish liberal trade policy. So, we can act as a counterforce against countries that want to pull the EU in a more protectionist direction. Against France with more countries”(PM). It’s clear that several ministries are worried about the consequences of Brexit, and the aspect of trade seems to be very worrying. “The UK has in general been an important ally for Sweden in the EU not just in the social area. That is in the budget, environment, financial, and trade, so the UK has in a way been Sweden’s closest ally in the work in the EU. It’s a country that’s not part of the

Euro and so on. So, it's clear that it will have big consequences, including in the social department, but I wouldn't say that we are the department that is the most affected by it. I believe that the Finance Ministry and Trade are a lot more affected" (HS). This is reaffirmed from the informant from the Health and Social Ministry. That it's the general view in the ministries that trade is an area where the UK has been important. "on the social area there is not a lot of legislation, its more general discussions and the debate within the EU in going (regrettably)in a more conservative direction, more old-fashioned. Where countries are promoting questions about family values and that doesn't feel so modern. There are countries that have opinions that are quite different from Sweden's, and there is where the UK has shared our vision about those valued questions. When the UK leaves, we have one less ally in that area. It applies for the view on equality, family politics, LGBT rights (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) where some countries suppress these important values and there the UK have had the same view as us." Value questions are an arena where the UK has had the same values as Sweden and there is a worry that the EU might shift in a more "conservative" direction, and that doesn't fit very well with Sweden's "modern view" on these issues. In the Finance Ministry, on the other hand, one of the biggest issues will be to defend the rebates that Sweden currently has "it is a really big challenge now. The UK leaves, and it will be really difficult for us to defend our rebates, then we need to rely on Germany" (F). Based on the informants view its clear to see that the UK has been and still are important for Sweden in the EU, but they also emphasized that this is not the end for Sweden. Because even though things are in motion and changing we can see that "everything changes when the UK leaves, but it feels like we haven't lost that much, I feel we are still quite strong" (F) and "one should not over-dramatize this, we have looked into this question, something we would have done no matter of Brexit or not. But it might have become more acute because of Brexit and then we have tried to see how we can widen our cooperation, in an eastern direction and southern direction. Because there might be interesting cooperation areas there to." (PM). The reliance that Sweden has had on the UK seems to be something that Sweden has been aware of and have taken steps to prevent over the last couple of years. So, we can clearly see here that even though the UK has been an important ally, they have been working to cooperate with other states too.

How important is the UK for Sweden? Well, they have a lot of the same positions on things such as values, budget, economics, and trade. This has made the UK a natural partner/ally for Sweden and even though a couple of the informants don't want to over-dramatize the loss of the UK. It is clear that they have been a very important partner for Sweden. They also more or less say that life in the EU after Brexit will be a lot harder and affect Sweden in many different ways. Not just the finance, budget and trade but it also includes worries from the Social and Health Ministry they are concerned about "One question where the UK has been an important partner in the EU cooperation. That is in the work against antibiotic resistance. Sweden and the UK are pushing that case and we will continue to push this case internationally, but we are losing an ally in the EU" (HS). Sweden and the UK have a lot of common interest and it is reasonable to believe that Sweden will be affected by the UK departure from the EU. They are losing an important ally in the UK. The informant in the Enterprise and Innovation Ministry was very clear that this will makes things harder for Sweden, in the other hand the informants for both the Finance Ministry and the informant from the PM's office are careful to conclude that Brexit will affect Sweden's ability to ensure their influence in the council of ministers. The UK has been a very important partner for Sweden but that doesn't necessarily mean that Sweden needs to

change their behaviour or tactics to accommodate the changes that there will eventually be when the UK leaves.

4.2 Continuity strategy

4.2.1 Continuity from the PM informant

Continuity is important all the way from contacts with civil society to political negotiations. The informants also acknowledge the importance of continuity "it's absolutely important, one cannot be too fixed it must be possible to re-evaluate decisions" (PM). The PM informant was clear on the fact that continuity yields a higher degree of credibility if one has well-developed positions already from the start and throughout the negotiations. This is important to get support for specific views. The informant goes on to describe that most other countries know what Sweden's view is on different questions. This is related to the fact that Sweden has had a clear line when it comes to different policy areas including trade, budget, and the environment. But the PM informant also brings forward the saying "flexible as a Swede", which refers to the reputation that Sweden got relatively early in the EU. This was because of several no votes in the council of ministers where Sweden was seen as too consistent and unwilling to compromise. This is a reputation that Sweden is trying to get away from over more recent years by becoming more "playable". They want to become more playable because Sweden doesn't gain anything in voting no if the motion is going through anyway. So, Sweden is actively working to get away from unchangeable positions that are so fixed that the position is unnegotiable and thereby becoming more playable. This is done because by part of the negotiation process it's possible to "do this and we are onboard" (PM). The PM informant also makes it clear that there might be reasons to cast a no vote in certain important value questions.

"there is a big consensus in Sweden's Riksdag on EU related questions and that supports the work the of the government when working on questions in the EU. That gives assurances and creates preconditions for breakthroughs" (PM).

4.2.2 Continuity form the F informant

The finance informant also thinks that it's good to have a cohesive line regarding continuity and that Sweden is trying to be consistent. The finance informant also agrees that Sweden is too consistent and making too much noise in the EU by casting too many no votes. However, the finance informant highlights the fact more difficult countries like Italy exist. Italy changes their government often and sometimes dare to "kidnap" questions by not taking part in anything. This cannot be seen as continuity and that is upsetting for everyone else. However, this doesn't seem to damage the reputation "Italy is Italy, and one will always want to have them on board" (F). The informant continues with the fact that Italy is a big country with many votes, so the fact that they have been difficult in the past doesn't matter. The negotiation environment is realpolitik. There are new negotiations all the time and it's easy to forget. It's not like anyone goes around waiting for the right moment to avenge a previous negotiation. "I believe one should dare to be quite selfish and tough, I believe that's how one gets respect in the EU-cooperation."(F). It can come across that the PM informant and the finance informant have different views on these issues. However, the finance informant fully agrees on the fact that there is no point to voting no unless, it's a blocking minority. "Be playable, constructive and join in on the

discussions. That is the most effective” “Because when you say yes and are playable on most things when you then say no. Then they will take it seriously.” (F).

4.2.3 Summary continuity

It's clear that both informants see continuity as an important tool regarding the work towards the council of ministers. Flexible as a Swede is a reputation regarding Sweden's continuity in the EU. This is something that Sweden have recognized and have been working for a while on improving. However, this doesn't seem to change or be affected in any way by Brexit. It might be too early to conclude that Brexit won't have a lasting effect on this work, because the UK is still in the EU and therefore are still a part of the daily negotiations and the results that come from that. An interesting finding is that F informant pointed out that there is two sides to continuity and that some countries like Italy that definitely don't have continuity from time to time, still have other countries want to work with them.

4.3 Contacts with civil society strategy

4.3.1 The EI informant

Contacts with civil society can be used to offset some of the disadvantages that small states face regarding influence. According to the literature, a country like Sweden are likely to have this competence already institutionalized. That is something that seems to be supported by the finds that were collected during the interviews. The informant from EI made it clear that they have institutionalized meetings with the industry and affirms the importance of these contacts “Contact with the industry is absolutely decisive, after all, it's them we are working for” (EI). This shows how important the contact/consultation is in the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation.

4.3.2 The HS informant

The HS informant makes it clear that they have rules concerning meetings with labour marked parties regarding EU questions. It is important to have a dialog with civil society and labour parties, but they experience that all parties have a common view on different issues that is relevant for the health and social ministry. It is also made clear that the social and health ministry have the necessary expertise in the house.

4.3.3 Summary continuity

Contacts with civil society are something that clearly is institutionalized and important for Sweden. It seems to have different levels of importance in the different departments, but it is described as important. There are no plans at the current time to change the process with the institutionalized contact that Sweden has with the civil society. This is also something that makes sense. If this is a process that is working in a satisfactory way.

4.4 Research for high-quality arguments strategy

4.4.1 The HS informant

Research and in general high-quality arguments can be used as a part of the process in negotiations. This is to generate facts about the world that the negotiations revolve around and is another tool that small states can use to gain influence. The informant from HS made it clear, that to have good arguments, research is something that's important for

Sweden generally. However, the informant doesn't think it will become more important for Sweden and justifies this with the fact that different surveys say that Sweden is one of the most popular countries to cooperate with.

4.4.2 The EI informant

The informant from EI also said something very similar to the HS informant. That what exists now is good enough and that Sweden wants to keep things as they are. The EI informant is clear on the fact that there is no need for them to research something new. They are happy with the current system and want to keep it as it is.

4.4.3 The F informant

The F informant goes even further by saying "I think our budget models are better than theirs (UK).... I think the Dutch models are better too." (F). So, the informant is sure that Sweden will win the budget area. However, according to informant F, the UK is in possession of a big legal department. Sweden will, therefore, lose out when it comes to legal concerns regarding the budget and legal matters in the general budget. In this legal "part" of the budget negotiations, the UK has been "useful" is useful to have. The F informant is clear about the fact that Sweden will lose strength in this area, but this doesn't have to be decisive in any way. It was clear that they have enough research/knowledge and the informant pointed out it doesn't necessarily have to be better to be in possession of more resources in the form of having more civil servants. They might be able to work on a specific issue very hard and very deep. This can, however, make the issue in question very technical and complicated. After all, it is still politics and one needs the flexibility to be able to cooperate politically. It is, therefore, possible to overwork on an issue.

4.4.4 Summary research

All the informants were clear about the importance of good research and the good argument that it might lead to. There doesn't seem to be a plan to extend this work in any way. It seems like the different ministries are satisfied with the current level of knowledge and expertise.

4.5 arena for the EU and pushing specific policy's

One of the tactics that small states can use on the council of ministers is to focus resources on specific cases or policy areas that are important for them. Here it is important to keep in mind that what this study is trying to see, if there is any change in whom or what type of policy's Sweden are prioritizing. This section will, therefore, try to map if there are any policy areas that will be more important, or if there are any specific cases/issues that will be pushed extra hard by Sweden as a result of Brexit.

4.5.1 The PM informant

In the earlier chapter "how important have the UK been" it is clear that all the informants agree on the fact that the UK has been very important for liberal free trade. This type of liberal free trade which is pushed by countries like Sweden and the UK is something that might come under pressure when the UK leaves. The PM informant stated that Sweden needs to "become even more clear" to be able to get their view through and act as a counterweight to countries like France.

4.5.2 The F informant

The F informant highlighted both defence- and financial politics as the most important areas after Brexit. Under the finance section, it's clear that the budget is one of the most challenging. The F informant makes it clear that they use different tactics and are trying to be well read and informant and do a lot of calculations. Informant F made it clear that they are stressed by the fact that the UK will be gone, and they are therefore forced to act a lot harder. "I believe that if the UK had stayed, then we would have been more laid back" (F).

4.5.3 The HS informant

The informant from HS makes it clear that there is not a lot of legislation on their area. They are losing an important ally in this area since the UK has shared Sweden views on equality and LGBT rights and it is a concern about the growing support for conservative values in some European countries. The HS informant doesn't explicitly say that they need to push equality and LGBT rights any more than they do just that it's an area that might be affected by Brexit.

4.5.4 Summary

Based on information gained from the informants we can see that finance and trade are the most obvious areas where Sweden will be affected and need to act in a different way.

The PM informant elaborated about the need to be clearer about important issues like trade and protectionism to get their views through. At the same time, the F informant makes the point that they are forced to act firmer as a result of Brexit. Sweden is being "clearer" and when it comes to the finance ministry they are acting stronger to preserve their interest.

4.6 resources allocation and structural changes

4.6.1 The PM informant

When it comes to the question of resources if there is any change in the amount of money the different ministries receive or how they use their resources we know that all ministries have had to put some people to work on dealing with the different questions around Brexit. That is a result of the acute negotiation proses around Brexit and means that the different ministries must relocate some resources to handle Brexit. (PM). Informant PM also stated that ministries have needed to put aside resources for the negotiations, and that's how the different ministries are affected structurally.

4.6.2 The HS informant

The HS informant was very clear that they hadn't changed anything when it came to structure or the amount of money spent as a result of Brexit.

4.6.3 The EI informant

If one looks at the ministry level for the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, it was also clear that there hadn't been any structural changes or extra resources allocated. Nevertheless, the EI informant was also clear about the fact that relevant authorities will take over regulatory jobs that are done by the UK. They will receive extra money so they are capable to do these new tasks if necessary. It was especially important for Volvo as they get their approval from the UK.

4.6.4 The F informant

The informant from the Finance Ministry was also clear that it hasn't seen any structural changes or extra resource allocation for them.

4.6.5 Summary

When it comes to structural changes all the informants are clear about the fact that there is no structural change in the different ministries except the personnel that is assigned to coordinate Brexit. This is such a minor structural change that all the informants except the PM informant said "no" or "not organizational" on the question if there had been any structural changes made. It is also clear that any extra resources that the Swedish government have put into the Brexit process are for practical things like making sure that Volvo can get their cars approved.

4.7 Informal work

Alliances or partners in the council of ministers can change depending on the case. That is something we know from the literature, so mapping a change in countries that Sweden will rely on may vary from informant to informant. It is not to be expected that the outcome of the UK leaving will be the same for every ministry. Since partners in the council can change on a case by case basis. It is important to keep in mind that the countries that our informants list as the most important ones don't necessarily need to match with what the other informants list as the most important.

4.7.1 Changes in behaviour from other countries?

After it was clear that the UK was leaving the European Union there have been some changes from other countries in the EU that potentially can affect Sweden. This is something that informant EI and F pointed out. The two countries Germany and France were early to announce "industrial manifest" (EI) and the announcement of a potential eurozone budget. These are seen as acts to make it possible for higher-level state subsidies, a higher level of protectionism and the potential of an EU that has different types of members (different levels of integration).

4.7.2 What has been done in the different departments regarding post Brexit work?

"No, we have not expressed a clear strategy for alliance work after Brexit. However, we have in different contexts, in different levels, and in different levels in the government discussed this a lot and highlighted the importance that we all try to find new alliances" (PM). There doesn't seem to be any overlaying strategy for finding new alliances after Brexit, but it seems to be clear that it is important to find new potential allies. According to the PM informant, they are responsible for building alliances and how Sweden will act in a post-Brexit landscape. Since the EU cooperation is based in many cases on a case by case basis it creates a situation where each department needs to work out who to cooperate with. The Health and Social Ministry is not the department that is the hardest hit by Brexit.

In the Health and Social Ministry they have for most of the time been working with questions regarding a no deal scenario. They haven't had a lot of focus on what happens when the UK actually leaves. This doesn't mean that they haven't thought about it at all, but it's not a large project around the question on what happens after the UK have left (HS). It is clear that there have been talks inside the ministry about finding new partners

after the UK leaves, but the main focus seems to be on the practical problems around Brexit.

When it comes to financing it's becomes more interesting as they must think more about these issues. As a result of the upcoming MFF negotiations. The F informant confirms that the frugal four as a concept exists.

4.8 contact with EU institutions

4.8.1 The PM informant

Contact with EU institutions is a tactic that can be used to gain influence in the EU. This is a practice that Sweden is doing in several different ways. Sweden is at the moment encouraging more Swedes to apply for work in EU institutions. This is because they have identified that over the next five-ten years there will be a drop in the number of Swedes in EU institutions (PM). According to the PM informant, it's important for Sweden to have Swedes in EU institutions because it gives them an indirect way to influence the shaping of EU policy. Through the legislation that is put forward and more. It also gives Sweden a better opportunity for communication with the institutions and at the same time makes it easier to get information back to Stockholm, something that is important and valuable for Sweden. It is important for Sweden to have contacts in the institutions in a way that makes it easy to maintain this contact. It is easier for Sweden too. This is work that has been going on for some time for Sweden and is not a direct result of Brexit (PM).

4.8.2 The F informant

Another more indirect tactic that is used to influence the commission that was highlighted during the interviews came from the F informant. Before budget negotiations, Sweden sits down with a number of countries that are referred to as the Noordwijk group, and then they agree on what type of tactic they are going to use against other countries but also the commission and the European Parliament. In this Noordwijk group informant F, describes the UK as the hardest and the toughest member. The new reality in this group when the UK eventually leaves is described as difficult.

When a group of countries comes together to decide on the same tactics it allows for the countries to divide different task based on what the different countries have the best precondition to handle. In theory that makes it possible for everyone to share their resources to get the best possible result. This allows the different states in the Noordwijk to focus on influencing the different parts of institutions they have the best preconditions to do. This is just an example that could be possible. If Sweden has a really good relationship with the European Parliament and the UK had the same but with the commission. it would make sense that Sweden would deal with the parliament and the UK with the Commission. The F informant also confirmed the fact that the concept of the frugal four exists and that these are the countries they can rely on. However, informant F didn't say anything specific about how this group is influencing institutions.

4.8.3 Summary

Sweden is working to get more Swedes to apply for work in the EU institutions. This is however not a result of Brexit and there doesn't seem to be any change in this work.

Sweden is also working with other countries to influence EU institutions.

Sweden's working with other countries to have common positions and strategies that potentially can create a bloc in trying to achieve the same thing. This has changed in the way that the UK have left the Noordwijk group and the creating of the frugal four.

4.9 Diplomatic tactics

4.9.1 Potential new partners

In the literature we can see that some of the tactics small states can use to gain influence is to create regional cooperation ally with a big state. Because Sweden is the country that voted most similarly with the UK, one might say that the relationship between the UK and Sweden has allowed Sweden to have this one big ally. We do know that in the council of minister's things are often decided on a case by case basis. In this section data regarding diplomatic strategies will be conducted by talking about them in separate section based on which strategy it is and which ministry they belong to. The reason that I will not split up big allies and regional cooperation is to preserve the meaning behind statements that were said.

As the PM's office is responsible for Sweden's position in the council of ministers, and therefore holds information that will be more general, they will be the last one. Then there will be a summary.

4.9.2 An informant from the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Informant EI didn't have insight into the potential diplomatic work that is going on as a result of Brexit.

4.9.3 An informant from Health and Social Ministry

Informant HS is clear about the fact that alliance building is something they do with or without Brexit but losing such an important cooperation partner as the UK means that cooperation with other countries becomes even more important. The HS informant describes that Sweden has close cooperation with Germany, France, and the Nordic countries above all. At the moment France is a very important country for Sweden because the French government is working a lot with social questions. The French are changing a lot of social reforms and that's one of the reasons for the very close cooperation. The informant also states that the alliances doesn't change a lot from ministry to ministry, but it can change a bit. These are after all likeminded states and then especially Germany.

When asked about "if the cooperation with some countries can be more important after Brexit" the HS informant didn't want to mention one specific country but said that Germany and France with more countries will be more important post Brexit.

4.9.4 Summary

Here we can see that cooperation with like-minded states seems to be prioritized. When looking at cooperation for the Health and Social Ministry. They are trying to strengthen the relationship they already have with like-minded states. Germany and France are specifically mentioned.

4.9.5 An informant from the Finance Ministry

The Finance Ministry is probably one of the ministries that will feel the impact of Brexit the most. This is stated both in the literature and by the other informants. The upcoming

negotiation for MFF will be though for Sweden and it is described as the toughest negotiation for Sweden since they joined the EU. Since the Finance Ministry is responsible for these upcoming negotiations around the MFF, it is reasonable to believe that the Finance Ministry has achieved more work regarding diplomatic tactics. There is a lot talk about the rebates that Sweden have and a big focus on defending these rebates. Sweden is a net contributor to the EU budget. It's therefore natural to think that they want to keep these rebates at the same time as keeping the budget low.

Sweden's position on the next MFF according to the F informant is that Sweden wishes to keep the budget at 1 GNI and Sweden wants to keep their rebates. On the other hand, the proposition from commission is to bring the budget up to 1.14% of GNI and remove the rebates. When it comes to budget negotiations Sweden has been part of the Noordwijk group. "When it comes to budget matters Sweden has since the end of the 1990 been part of the Noordwijk group, which consist of Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, France, and the UK. In this group, the UK are the strongest and hardest. Sweden is always walking right behind the UK in a way and this is especially clear on the rebates. Which started in the 1980 when Thatcher said "I want my money back" which lead to a rebate. Sweden have rebates on that rebate as a result of this." (F). When it comes to the Noordwijk group it is difficult to find literature that covers this group. However, it is described as a group composed by net contributing countries. Where the UK wishes to cut the budget. Germany and France are not described to be a part of the Noordwijk group, but as two countries that are sort of in the middle that can end up voting for a moderate increase in the budget or they may opt to vote with the Noordwijk group (Benedetto, 2017). The F informant and Benedetto come with information that is contradictory saying that the Noordwijk group are described as a group of net contributing countries, there is also no reason to believe that the information that comes from the F informant is incorrect. France and Germany may be a part of the negotiations that the Noordwijk group does prior to the budget negotiations but may opt to take a different position than the core of the Noordwijk group. Germany and France are after all net contributors to the EU budget and are therefore motivated to keep the EU budget low. No matter how the constellation of the Noordwijk group works, the fact that the UK is leaving is going to mean that a big country that fights to keep the EU budget low is leaving.

The F Informant makes a point about the fact that France has become a net contributor to the agriculture policies of the EU so, in theory, they would profit if the agriculture policies were nationalized. At the same, the F informant makes a point about Spain and Italy. They are also a net contributors to the EU budget, but they act as if they were net recipients. This is something they are looking into in Sweden, but it might be a result from the fact that different interest groups in countries like France believe that it has a bigger chance for them to get funds over the EU budget rather than the national budget.

The F informant lays out a "playing" field, where countries like Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic are all countries that get a lot of support/agriculture support from the EU and for some of these countries, it's a big part of their economies. These countries are working to increase the EU budget. On the other side, there are richer countries like Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and partially Germany. Informant F also mentioned that Sweden is the toughest of these countries and want to pay less in fees.

Describes likeminded cooperation in the Noordwijk group.

It's a clear divide between south and north or east and north.

The Germans and the French are described to have the same views as Sweden, in the way that they have a rational budget policy. They don't want to burn a lot of money. The Germans are described to always take their responsibility. At the same time, they hold back when it comes to the EMU (European Monetary Union) and further integration in the EMU. The reason that Germany is holding back in the EMU is because they are worried about the risk sharing what comes with it.

4.9.5.1 Rebate

When it comes to the question of keeping the rebates, Sweden faces a really big challenge. The fact that the UK is leaving makes it really hard for Sweden to defend their rebates. "we could always rely on them(the UK)" "then we need to trust more in Germany" (F). According to informant F, it is Germany that decides things in the end. However, Germany is seen as a country that is very budget restrictive and according to informant F, Olav Schulz has said that a maximum 1% of GNI at least at COREPER level. But they don't say these things in public because the Germans want to be able to negotiate all the way until the end. The F informant describes that there is a distance between the Finance Ministry and the PM's Office in Germany and France. This means that there could be a good understanding and contact between the Finance Ministry's in these countries and get along with them on a different question. At the same time, it is not certain that this influence their final position. As stated here it is clear Germany wants to have the possibility to negotiate all the way until the end and that there is some distance between the ministries which might mean that the position of one specific ministry doesn't need to reflect the final position. It is a political wiggle room which can make countries like Germany and France unpredictable.

However, even though Germany and France haven't taken a clear position yet, there have created some special constellations. For Sweden, this has ended with the frugal four. These are Sweden, Denmark, Austria, and the Netherlands. From the Noordwijk operation, there are a lot of countries that are not part of these frugal four. According to the F informant the Finns are regarded as unreliable. This is because Finland has a lot of sparsely populated areas and some agriculture. They are described as good Europeans that don't make too much noise. But they have also tried some with Ireland, but they want agriculture money and at the same time pay little. That doesn't work. Sweden is therefore left with the frugal four as the countries that are very clear, and the countries Sweden can trust in.

4.9.5.2 A new reality

The F informant still feels that Sweden is reasonably strong. They will also get to "practice with more countries". Sweden is acting harder but according to informant F so are countries like Denmark, Austria, and the Netherlands. F is also talking about a change of the point of gravity. If one looks at the results in the council of ministers and think that on one side, you have Britain as the most extreme. Then Germany and France would be closer to the middle. When the UK now leaves it is natural to think that the outcome would tip moreover against the other side. However, the F informant states that it would seem like Germany and France have moved closer to Sweden's position. This is natural if these countries want to have the same end result as before. Previously Germany and France could also rely on Britain to stop certain proposals. Now they must do it themselves if they want the same result.

4.9.5.3 Summary

The UK leaving the EU has created some changes in the diplomatic work for Sweden. This is especially relevant for the different groupings around the rebate and questions regarding the MFF. Here we can see that Sweden has tried to include Ireland as a part of their alliance but that hasn't worked out because of different interests. Sweden will have to rely on a bigger degree in Germany now when the UK leaves, but it seems like this is a relationship that is not set in stone, like the Sweden UK relationship was. This doesn't seem to be because of disagreement between Sweden and Germany about how big the EU budget should be. It seems to be this way as a result of Germany's need to have enough room to manoeuvre politically. It is clear however that Germany will become an even more important country for Sweden.

The F informant couldn't comment on if they have been working to institutionalize the relationship between the frugal four but said that it exists as a concept. Since these countries are described as the one who are clear about their position and the ones that Sweden can trust.

4.9.6 Informant Prime Minister's office

Sweden has had a lot of cooperation with the UK since Sweden joined the EU the PM informant is clear about that. However, the informant doesn't want to overdramatize the situation "one should not exaggerate Brexit on the Swedish opportunity to gain influence or create alliances with other countries. We have already through the last couple of years I would say, worked a lot with widening our contacts and network with other countries and have a well-developed cooperation with." And he is clear that there are several like-minded countries "There are a lot of countries that think the same as Sweden and the Nordic region, the Netherlands, Germany, and others." At the same time, there are cases where the UK have been more like-minded than others "When it comes to foreign- and defence policy where the UK might lean more towards transatlantic cooperation, intergovernmentalism with more, where we might be more coherent with the UK position than other member states." (PM).

What's interesting with the PM informant is that they are looking into the possibility of widening cooperation in multiple directions. They are looking to the east and south to see if there are areas they can cooperate around. When it comes to cooperation and alliance building it is decided on a case by case basis "it's about what you think on different issues. That is really what's most important" (PM). Then it is also possible to cooperate if you are from the same region or the same political colour. This is the thing that makes cooperation easier according to informant PM.

It is also important for Sweden to get a bigger net benefit with countries that they have not traditionally had. The PM pulls forward the Visegrád Group consisting of Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Hungary as an example of countries for a potential of bigger cooperation. The PM informant makes it clear that they are worried about the direction these countries are going regarding democracy and the rule of law. The development of these principles has deteriorated considerably in these countries, but it is important for Sweden to understand these countries as long as one is clear about what one thinks in different questions. At the same time, Sweden wants to create a connection between the budget and the rule of law, with the view that one needs to participate in the entire membership, not just the advantages.

When it comes to the negotiations around the upcoming MFF the PM informant is clear about the fact that Sweden is in a difficult position. In the proposal for the new MFF, the commission has removed all the rebates, and this is a position that is difficult to accept for Sweden. Sweden wants to reduce the budget whilst other countries want more money injected into the budget. Many countries including Sweden will risk an increased fee/tax. In this negotiation, Sweden has traditionally had close cooperation with the UK, and they won't be there anymore, however, the PM informant uses Germany, Denmark, Finland, Austria and more countries similarly based as examples of countries that think in the same way as Sweden and that creates good preconditions for cooperation.

On a more general approach, Sweden is looking to widen the cooperation with countries they haven't worked towards previously. Here they are aiming to work with countries that are thinking similarly and are on the same "level" as Sweden. The PM informant made a point that countries on the same development level as Sweden are easier to talk to. Ireland is one of these countries which is in a special situation and have tried to do a reach out to multiple countries since they have been very close to the UK. The Benelux countries and Austria are all countries the same size as Sweden. These are all countries Sweden are trying to increase their net benefit with.

When asked about who the most important partners will be for Sweden in the council of ministers. The PM informant answered, "It's going to be important for us to work with Germany above all, it is central for us and we do have a good cooperation with Germany." (PM). Then the informant listed the Nordic border countries Denmark and Finland as important and the Netherlands as very important for Sweden. These countries are described as the core of Sweden's alliance building. However, the PM informant is clear about the fact that Sweden needs to be open to widen cooperation against other countries based on the case in question. Then there are some countries that are more natural to cooperate with than others. These are Ireland, Austria, Belgium, and France.

4.9.6.1 Summary

We can see from the PM informant that the PMs Office has been affected by Brexit. When it comes to diplomatic tactics one can see that these have been affected by Brexit. The UK has previously been the most important ally for Sweden. It seems now to have swung to Germany. The PM informant is clear that Germany will be the most important country to cooperate with. However, Sweden is clearly determined not to be reliant on just one country like they have been reliant on the UK. They are actively working to widen their cooperation with other countries. They seem to have a strategy about which countries they can target in this process and they are working to get a better understanding of other countries so that they can get better benefits from these relationships. So, besides Germany and France in some specific cases, it seems like Sweden have target two different types of countries for potential cooperation.

One group is the Visegrád Group in a more easterly direction. Here Sweden is working to understand them better. Sweden hopes that they can get a better result by reaching out to these countries. Still, we can see that these countries aren't mentioned as allies. This can be a result of incompatibility regarding like-mindedness. There are some things that are very concerning for Sweden regarding these countries, like the question of rule of law. The fact that Sweden wants to understand and get more out of cooperation with these countries will probably only be on a case by case basis.

The other group is more like-minded countries like Austria, Ireland, and the Benelux countries. These are countries that are described as at the same level of development as Sweden. These countries are therefore easier to talk to. Sweden doesn't have the same issues with these countries regarding the rule of law. It is easier to talk to these countries, so it's important for Sweden to be open to cooperation with these countries based on the specific case.

The core of Sweden's alliance building is according to the PM informant Germany, Denmark, Finland, and the Netherlands. These countries will be the most important in the council of ministers. These are countries that are close regionally and the Netherlands which have had close cooperation with Sweden and the UK.

Chapter 5: Change in Sweden's strategies.

Discussion of the findings

The aim of this study has been to look at small state behaviour and see if this has been affected by Brexit. This has been done by analysing small state literature to identify different small state strategies that can be used to assert influence. Then the study has mapped strategies that Sweden use and show how these strategies have been affected by Brexit. The study shows that there is a change in some of these strategies. These strategies have to be divided into main groups, informal and formal strategies. Under formal strategies there are fewer changes than in informal strategies. This can be attributed to the fact that Sweden are likely to already have the formal strategies institutionalized. The informal consequences of Brexit effect Sweden more directly. They have lost one of their most important allies and need to compensate for that. Thereby giving an answer to the question "How and to what extent do small EU member states adjust to Brexit to maintain or expand their influence in the Council of Ministers?" in the case of Sweden.

This study looks at how small states adjust to Brexit by asking the research question "How and to what extent do small EU member states adjust to Brexit to maintain or expand their influence in the Council of Ministers?" and answering the sub questions

- 1) Which strategies could small states use to assert their influence?
- 2) Which of these strategies is Sweden relying on?
- 3) To what extent does Brexit cause a change in Sweden's use of these strategies?

We can see from the study that Sweden are relying in one way or another on all of the strategies mentioned in this study. However, in regards to the change in these strategies Brexit is more complex. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the formal strategies and the informal strategies separately.

5.1 Formal strategies

The changes in formal strategies are limited based on the data collected in this study. This is probably a result of Sweden being a well-developed country with a fair amount of resources. As the literature suggested these types of countries are more likely to have institutionalized most of the work that they do. Like contact with a civil society. This study shows that contact with civil society is a strategy that is important for Sweden but already seems to be institutionalized. This is a resource that Sweden already has and doesn't see the need to expand as a result of Brexit. It's more of the same when it comes to research to gain high quality arguments. Sweden seems to feel confident with the current level of knowledge and expertise that they have. The process that Sweden acquire knowledge through seems to be institutionalized and working as intended, as none of the informants saw the need to change anything about it in the wake of Brexit. It could also be attributed to the fact that Sweden has a relatively high coalition potential, by leveraging this potential they can in some degree rely on resources from other states. However, regarding the informant's view, that the current level of knowledge and research are good enough. This points to the conclusion that the current institutionalized way of gathering knowledge and creating good arguments are good enough through the current processes.

Under the strategy continuity the informants are clear that Sweden are trying to be consistent. The other countries know what Sweden's position is. Potential issues also have

the backing of the Swedish Riksdag which gives assurances and makes Sweden predictable. Sweden have however gotten a reputation of being "Flexible as a swede". This is something they are trying to do something with and are therefore working to become more "playable". This is a process that was started before Brexit and this work is not a result of Brexit. However, it might be a positive for Sweden if they are more playable in the wake of Brexit. A comment from informant F also gives the strategy continuity in two sides, the fact that the negotiation environment is realpolitik, and that people forget quickly.

When it comes to pushing specific policies, Sweden does seem to be focusing on existing policies. The informants were clear that the focus should be on already existing issues. However, it has also been stated that Sweden needs to be clearer and defend their position even harder. Especially when it comes to Sweden's view of trade, budget, and subsidies. The informants didn't identify any issues or policies that will need to be pushed harder as a result of Brexit but responded with the need to be clearer, acting harder or defending existing positions. This is however a change in the way Sweden pushes or negotiates around these policies and it's a direct result of Brexit. If one regards Sweden as one of the more extreme countries on certain positions, one might say that they have become even more extreme.

Structural changes are a mixed story in this study. All ministries have had to put aside resources to deal with Brexit related issues and to certain negotiation or task that might fall on that specific ministry as a result of Brexit. It has therefore been done through structural changes in the different ministries as a result of Brexit. However, as far as this study can document this has been done for practical reasons and not to make structural changes that might help gain influence in the council of ministers. So, there has been structural changes but not with the aim of increasing influence in the council of ministers.

5.2 Informal strategies

When it comes to diplomatic tactics there have been more concrete measures. The importance of finding new alliances after Brexit has been pushed to every ministry as a result of Brexit. The work that Sweden has done to widen their cooperation with other states has become more acute as a result of Brexit. They are looking to get a bigger net benefit from many countries that include the Visegrád Group, Benelux countries, Ireland, Austria, Germany, and France.

We can see that all the informants mention Germany as the most important country or one of the most important. This can be explained by the fact that Sweden is losing a major ally. One of the tactics a small state can use to gain influence is to ally with a big country. At the same time, Germany is also described as a like-minded country. This can explain why Sweden seems to have targeted Germany as the most important country. Even though Germany agrees with Sweden on important things such as having a budget of only 1% of GNI, they are also more open to negotiations. They need political freedom to be able to do this. Which in turn means that Germany can't replace the UK one for one. This can also explain why Sweden is trying to enhance cooperation with other countries. However, Sweden has been working to widen their cooperation with other countries over a longer period of time and it's, therefore, something Sweden has already identified as a weakness. Being reliant on one country is something they have been addressing. However, this is a process that has been accelerated as a result of Brexit.

So why are Sweden cooperating with other small countries? According to the literature, small states can seek to ally themselves with a major/big state or create a regional alliance of smaller states. In theory, it should be possible to seek cooperation with other small states in the EU, not just those who are close geographically. The PM informant also said that cooperation can be easier with states that are close regionally, and the same political colour. However, the most important thing is what one thinks on a specific question. The PM informant pointed out Germany, Finland, Denmark, and the Netherlands as the core of Sweden's alliance building. Three of these core countries are small states (Finland, Denmark, and the Netherlands). Denmark and Finland are states that are close and can be described as a regional cooperation. The Netherlands can't really be described to be in the same region. However, they have had cooperation with Sweden before and the F informant described the UK, Sweden and the Netherlands as the group that was very close inside the Noordwijk group. It is important to remember that cooperation in the council of ministers are often decided on a case by case basis. However, it is interesting to see that Finland which is one of the core countries in Sweden's alliance building, is a country that is described by the F informant as not one of the countries they can rely on. In the work regarding negotiations of the next MFF, the countries that Sweden can trust there are the Netherlands, Denmark, and Austria. These countries or the frugal four as they have been described as, having taken a stand that they want to keep the budget low. The UK has been the strongest and the hardest in the Noordwijk group. Now Sweden has defined Germany as the most important single country. However, the fact that Germany needs to have enough room to negotiate has probably forced the smaller and more budget restrictive countries in the Noordwijk group to band together. There is not a big major country that has stood up and said clearly in public that the EU budget will stay at 1 % of GNI. That might have pushed these countries Sweden, Denmark, Austria and the Netherlands to create what is now known as the frugal four, to consolidate their position. The frugal four can, therefore, be seen as a partnership that has been created out of the necessity of this specific case.

Since the environment will be tougher for Sweden in the Noordwijk group it could also be possible for them to focus more on cooperation between the frugal four. If this group can be very coherent in their view it might be easier to influence the institutions if they act like a solid block.

Sweden has looked into the possibility of widening their cooperation with other countries over a period of time. We can see from the HS informant that they are worried about the direction some eastern countries are going when it comes to promoting conservative values. At the same time, the PM informant is clear about the fact that they are looking to the same countries to find areas they can cooperate on. This shows the importance of the specific case in question and that the cooperation depends more on a case by case basis rather than alliances or fighting over other issues.

5.3 Methodological decisions and reflections

As shown in this study there might be differences in the use of strategies and how these are affected by Brexit depending on the ministry in question. This also means that this study could have had a different conclusion if other informants from other ministries had been interviewed instead of the ones who were. It could have been possible to do this study without doing interviews, and instead relying on policy papers and existing research. However, this would probably have been a more speculative project. Doing the interviews have made it possible to see how Sweden looks at potential allies by for example confirming

that there is such a concept as the frugal four. and doing interviews has also made it possible to map how Sweden are targeting as potential allies.

It is difficult to define specific strategies that are used by countries since many of these strategies affect each other. A good example here is framing and research.

5.3.1 Restrictions

The amount of time available and the budget for this study did limit the possibilities surrounding it. With a higher budget and more time, it would be possible to interview more people and possibly to also go to Brussel and talk to Sweden's representation there. Interviewing more people from more ministries would have given broader information about similarities and differences to what types of strategies that are used and how these are affected by Brexit. Going to Brussels could possibly have given greater insight into the informal work Sweden does in Brussels and thereby give a greater understanding of the work that is done towards other countries. That could possibly have given a result that might have been more representable for Sweden in general.

The yearly "winter vacation" came at a really bad time and made it difficult to arrange the right interviews in advance, this did create challenges arranging all the interviews within the time period that were spent in Stockholm. This may have limited the number of participants. If the process of recruiting informants had started earlier, it could have been possible to interview more people, but this is unknown as there were no more respondents from the different ministries that answered my requests.

5.3.2 The informants

There is no reason to believe that the informants answered any question incorrectly. However, since it's still early in the Brexit process there is reason to believe that the different ministries have information about alliance work that they don't want to share with the public at this point. They may therefore be inclined to withhold it.

5.3.3 the way forward

this study has started the work of mapping how small states react to Brexit. But the study is not big enough to be able to generate generalization about small states. There would need to be done further research including more countries for that to be a possibility.

This study has been able to map and name the countries that Sweden is looking to widen cooperation and get a bigger benefit from these relations. If it could be possible to follow the process (Brexit) all the way to conclusion it would be possible to map the work Sweden has and will do to give any result beyond what this study has established. Such a study could determine to what degree Sweden have succeeded in widening their cooperation.

5.4 Conclusion

The aim of this study has been to answer the question “What can explain the change in how small states assert influence in the council of ministers as a result of Brexit?” The different tactics that small states can use to assert influence and how these tactics can change as a result of Brexit has been elaborated throughout this study. All the informants are senior civil servants with insight in each respective ministry. Which have made it possible to study potential changes to the tactics Sweden uses to gain influence.

There is no doubt that Sweden is forced to look at the impact Brexit have on the strategies they use to assert influence in the council of ministers. It is however clear from the study that Brexit will have a greater impact on the informal work Sweden do rather than the formal. It is hard to pinpoint exact reasons for this, but Sweden is a developed rich country that is more likely to have the formal work they do institutionalized. This study also indicates that that seems to be the case. It is however still early in the Brexit process that might drag on for a long time. The social and health, and enterprise and innovation ministry seems to have put most of their resources into practical consequences of Brexit. All the informant is also clear that they are happy about how things are now and don't see the need to change it.

When it comes to informal work, on the other hand, it is clear that this already has had an effect on Sweden to a varying degree depending on the ministry in question. Sweden has over a longer period of time been working to widen their cooperation with other states they haven't had cooperation with traditionally. This work has become more acute as a result of Brexit. Sweden has become a more active player, at least in the areas that are important for them such as the upcoming MFF. The work around the MFF has already created the frugal four as a concept and this cooperation might bring more frugal fruits in the future.

The literature is quite clear about the fact that small states can either ally with one big state or create regional cooperation. Sweden seems to be doing both, which suggests that the literature might be outdated or not precise enough. It doesn't seem to be one or the other, Sweden is aiming to do both. This shows the complexity of the work that goes on inside the EU. At the same time, it shows that Sweden wants to get a bigger net benefit more from many more countries that can't even be described as like-minded. This shows as the PM informant said, “the most important thing is what one thinks on different questions”, it is case dependent. It can also be a general change in the behaviour of small states like Sweden. Sweden have after all been working for some time to widen their cooperation with other countries. If Sweden succeeds with this project of widening their cooperation, they might be able to free themselves from the traditional boundaries (regional cooperation or allying with a big state) of cooperation that is described in the literature. As this study set out to do it showed that Sweden have changed their use of some strategies as a result of Brexit. It is still early in the Brexit process and strategies may change throughout the entire process.

I would like to end this study with a quote from one of my informants.

“It is like when Zlatan retired from the national team. The national team got better, he takes the role [he takes all the attention] and when he is not there the rest can't relax as much. So, they go in and take responsibility”.

For those how don't take the football reference. The UK has been Sweden's and other small states most important player. Now when the UK is gone all the other players need to take more responsibility, be clearer and that might end up doing the team better since everyone

needs to take responsibility and chip in. Even though we can see a change in how Sweden assert influence in the council of ministers, it is clear that this isn't the end.

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Appendix 1: interview guide

Part 1.

- Unformal talk

Part 2.

- Explain the topic of the thesis.
- Explain to the interviewee what the interview will be used for.
- Explain and make sure that the interviewee understands that everything will be anonymised and kept under confidentiality until the end of the project and then deleted.
- Make sure that the interviewee understand that he/she can get a transcription of the interview and make corrections or withdraw the interview.
- Are there any questions from the interviewee and other things that might not be clear.
- Inform about written consent and if the interviewee is ok with a recording of the interview.
- Start recording if its ok for the interviewee.

Part 3.

Starting questions

- What type of position do you hold?
- What type of experience do you have with Sweden's work in the council of ministers?
- Are you experiencing any challenges in the Brexit process? What are the challenges for your ministry?)

Follow-up questions

Questions

- How important have Britan been as a allied
- What kind of measures have Sweden done to prepare for a post brexit landscape?
- Can you tell me about any policy areas that might be strengthened/work in Sweden favour after brexit?
- What will be the biggest change in the council after Brexit for Sweden?
- Do you think the behaviour of the remaining big countries in the EU will change?(in what way? And what will be the impact of this?)
- Will there be new opportunities without the UK?
- Can you tell me about which big countries in the EU you see as most likely as a potential partner and why?
- Who will be important partners for Sweden? (is there any new partners)
- Who will be Sweden's most important partners/ allies in the council after brexit? (Will Sweden try to seek a new "big" ally in the council?)
- Are there specific conditions that can make cooperation easier? (Geography etc.) (which type of countries do you look to as potential allies?)
- On a reginal basis, how will be Sweden's most important partners?

- Have Sweden done any structural changes or are planning to do structural changes to staff in (this department) as a response to brexit? (hiring more people, more resources etc.) (Resource allocation change in the department)
- Will there be a bigger focus on research to be able to strengthen high quality arguments??(big words, small steps)
- Are there any particular issues/policies that have become more important for Sweden (this department) after brexit? (some cases that you now devote more resources to?)
- How have negotiations/talks with other countries been in this brexit period so far??
- Is continuity important for you, how are you experiencing continuity from other states??
- How much would you say that information or knowledge from the civil sector is for your work in the council.
- How do Sweden work towards EU institutions?
- How does the negotiations around the next MFF look for Sweden? (how can be potential partners etc.) (how does Sweden view these negotiations?)(rebates?)
- Is there any policy areas that that will become more important for Sweden? (is there any specific areas or policies that Sweden push in a different way)

Part 4

- Summarize findings to make sure that I have understood the information correctly.
- Is there something that the interviewee might want to add
- Thank interviewee for the participation.

Appendix 2. information letter

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

Post-brexit landskap i EU`s ministerrådet

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å se på hvordan Sverige takler et post brexit landskap. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Dette er et forskningsprosjekt som er en del av en masteroppgave. Denne oppgaven har som formål å finne ut hva Sverige har gjort og hva de gjør for å forberede seg på den nye dynamikken som vil oppstå i ministerrådet i EU etter Brexit.

Opplysningene vil bare bli brukt i dette prosjektet og så slettet ved prosjektslutt 15 mai.

Det er NTNU (Norges Tekniske-Naturvitenskapelige Universitet) som er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Utvalget er valgt basert på personer som holder relevante stillinger i offentlige stillinger og som har mulighet til å kunne bidra med kunnskap om forskningsprosjektet. Derfor vil utvalget basere seg på hvordan personer som har eller har hatt relevante stillinger. Snøballmetoden er valgt for at personer med kunnskap skal kunne hjelpe til med å finne andre relevante intervjuobjekter.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

- Dersom du velger å delta innebærer dette et semistrukturert intervju der dine meninger som ekspert vil bli notert/eller tatt opp(taleopptak) for å kunne belyse ulike sider av forskningsprosjektet. Alle data som for eksempel lydopptak vil bli slette ved prosjektslutt

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykke tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle opplysninger om deg vil da bli anonymisert

og slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

- det er bare veileder og student som er ansvarlig for oppgaven som vil ha tilgang til opplysninger.
- Data vil bli lagret på kryptert minnepenn og navn vil være erstattet med kode og adskilt fra øvrige data.

Data vil bare bli behandlet av meg selv (masterstudent) Ørjan Sivertsen og veileder førsteamenuensis Pieter de Wilde.

Alt vil bli anonymisert.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 15.05.2019 etter denne datoen vil alle data bli slettet.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Norges Teknisk-Naturvitenskapelige Universitet har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Norges Teknisk-Naturvitenskapelige Universitet ved Pieter de Wilde
pieterdewilde@ntnu.no.
- Vårt personvernombud: Thomas Helgesen
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

Prosjektansvarlig
(Forsker/veileder)

Eventuelt student

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet «Post-brexite landskap i EU's ministerrådet», og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju og at data lagres til prosjektslutt

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, ca. 15.05.2019

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

