



The QoG Swedish Government Bills Database

CODEBOOK

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

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Quality of Government Institute

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

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

1.2 The QoG Swedish Government Bills Database

The QoG Swedish Government Bills Database provides a comprehensive overview of all Swedish government bills from 1971 to 2022, along with their parliamentary outcomes from 1971 to 1989 and citations of commission reports from 1975 to 2022. The data were collected within the framework of the project *Setting the Agenda in the Swedish Riksdag: Partisan Politics and Commissions of Inquiry, 1971–2021*, funded by the Swedish Research Council (grant no. 2020-01781). The project also covers a database focused on Swedish government commissions, which is published separately by the Quality of Government Institute in 2026.

The Swedish Government Bills Database comprises three datasets: one focusing on the bills themselves (Section 1), one on the bills' parliamentary outcomes (Section 2), and one on the bills' citations of commission reports (Section 3). Each dataset has its own unit of analysis. In the bills dataset, one observation corresponds to a unique government bill, with variables capturing attributes such as the bill's title, delivery date, and responsible department. In the parliamentary outcomes dataset, one observation corresponds to a unique parliamentary decision on a government bill, with variables capturing attributes such as the bill's written proposals, the responsible standing committee, and the chamber's final passage vote. In the citations dataset, one observation corresponds to a unique report citation in a government bill, with variables capturing attributes such as the bill and report serial numbers. In total, the database covers about 8,500 bills, 29,000 parliamentary decisions, and 25,000 report citations.

The datasets are linked through the bills' official serial numbers, ensuring that each parliamentary decision and report citation can be associated with a unique bill. In principle, these serial numbers also allow for linking individual parliamentary decisions to specific commission reports. However, as bills can often cite multiple commission reports and be split across several parliamentary decisions, such linkages will often be many-to-many rather than one-to-one. Any other closely related public documents such as standing committee reports, public consultations, or voting protocols should be similarly connectable through the bills' official serial numbers.

The database draws on several sources. The bills dataset has been constructed from the Swedish riksdag's open data archive using a mix of database coding and text scraping procedures. Most of the basic identifying information like serial numbers and titles are readily available from the riksdag's own data files, while details like responsible departments and signing ministers have been scraped directly from the bills themselves. The parliamentary outcomes dataset, by contrast, has been hand-coded from the riksdag's annual issue registry, which is the analogue precursor to the more modern open data archive. In principle, it is also possible to merge our outcomes dataset with comparable information from the riksdag's open data archive. However, because the analogue registry does not follow exactly the same format as the digital one, we decided to publish the analogue registry as a separate data file rather than try to merge them. Finally, the citations dataset has been constructed by scraping all government bills for references to all commission reports.

While the project period starts with the enactment of the unicameral riksdag in 1971, the Swedish constitution has also been reformed several times over since then. We recommend anyone interested in using the database to familiarize themselves with the Swedish policymaking process in general and parliamentary system in particular (e.g., Bergman 2003; Holmgren and Dahlström 2024; Lindvall et al 2019).

1.3 References

- Bergman, Torbjörn. 2003. “Sweden: From Separation of Powers to Parliamentary Supremacy—and Back Again?” In *Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies*, ed. Kaare Strøm, Wolfgang Müller and Torbjörn Bergman. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Holmgren, Mikael and Carl Dahlström. 2024. “Parliamentary Control of Ministerial Policymaking”. QoG Working Papers Series 2024:8. Göteborg: The Quality of Government Institute.
- Lindvall, Johannes, Hanna Bäck, Carl Dahlström, Elin Naurin and Jan Teorell. 2020. “Sweden’s Parliamentary Democracy at 100.” *Parliamentary Affairs* 73(3):477-502.

2 Government Bills

The Government Bills dataset covers all Swedish government bills presented to parliament between 1971 and 2022. Each row can be read as a unique bill and with the variables denoting various metadata at the bill level. The dataset covers about 8,500 bills and features 9 variables. **All missing values are left as blanks.**

2.1 `govbill_bill_id`: A Bill's Document Identifier

a bill's document identifier in the riksdags open data archive. The identifier consists of three values that track a given document's parliamentary session, type, and designation. For example, "fz031" implies the document was presented during the riksdag's 1975/76 session ("fz"), that the document is a bill ("03"), and that the document is designated as number one in its specific series ("1"). In natural language, the corresponding bill would be written as "Prop. 1975/76:1".

2.2 `govbill_bill_session`: A Bill's Parliamentary Session

A bill's parliamentary session. For example, "1975/76" implies the bill was presented during the Riksdag's 1975/76 session.

2.3 `govbill_bill_number`: A Bill's Designation Number

A bill's designation number. For example, "1" indicates that the bill was the first presented in the given session.

2.4 `govbill_bill_date`: A Bill's Publication Date

A bill's publication date. Listed in year-month-date format. For example, "1975-06-18" implies the bill was published on June 18th in 1975. Note that, from 1971 to 2000/01, the publication date is scraped directly from the bill and corresponds to the date when the government decided the bill. From 2001/02 and onwards, the publication date is taken from the Riksdag's open data archive and corresponds to the date when the bill was presented to parliament.

2.5 `govbill_bill_department`: A Bill's Responsible Department

A bill's responsible department. Listed in Swedish. For example, "Bostadsdepartementet" implies the bill was prepared by the Ministry of Housing.

2.6 `govbill_bill_first_signature`: A Bill's First Ministerial Signature

A bill's first ministerial signature. Before 1975, the first signature should be the king's or someone acting on his behalf. After 1975, the first signature should be the prime minister or someone acting on behalf of the prime minister. For example, "Olof Palme" implies the bill was signed by Prime Minister Palme.

2.7 `govbill_bill_second_signature`: A Bill's Second Ministerial Signature

A bill's second ministerial signature. Should always be the department minister or someone acting on their behalf. For example, "Ingvar Carlsson" implies the bill was signed by Minister Carlsson.

2.8 `govbill_bill_title`: A Bill's Title

A bill's title. Listed in Swedish. For example, "Regeringens proposition med redovisning av programskedet i den fysiska riksplaneringen".

2.9 `govbill_bill_url`: A Bill's URL

A weblink to the bill's HTML version in the Riksdag's open data archive.

3 Parliamentary Outcomes

The Parliamentary outcomes dataset covers all standing committee reviews and chamber decisions on all government bills presented to parliament between 1971 and 1989. Each row can be read as a unique set of parliamentary decisions on a given bill and with the variables denoting various metadata at the decision level. Note that the information is coded verbatim from the riksdag’s issue registry and mostly consists of raw text strings. The dataset covers about 29,000 observations and features 19 variables: **All missing values are left as blanks.**

3.1 `parout_registry_session`: The Source Registry’s Parliamentary Session

Lists the source registry. For example, “1983/84” implies the information was coded from the registry covering the parliament’s 1983/84 session.

3.2 `parout_bill_session`: A Bill’s Parliamentary Session

A bill’s parliamentary session. For example, “1975/76” implies the bill was presented during the Riksdag’s 1975/76 session. Note that, because the Riksdag can sometimes defer a bill to the next parliamentary session, the `registry_session` and `bill_session` variables need not necessarily be identical. In fact, most parliamentary sessions will start with a handful of leftover bills from the previous session, occasionally creating a one-year discrepancy between when a bill was presented and when the parliament rendered its decision.

3.3 `parout_bill_number`: A Bill’s Designation Number

A bill’s designation number. For example, “1” indicates that the bill was the first presented in the given session.

3.4 `parout_bill_subnumber`: A Bill’s Sub-serial Number

A bill’s sub-serial number, when applicable. The sub-serials are mostly used to divide the annual budget bill into smaller components but may also occasionally be used for other larger bills.

3.5 `parout_bill_date`: A Bill’s Registration Date in Parliament

A bill’s registration date in parliament. Listed in year-month-date format. For example, “1971-01-04” implies the bill was presented to parliament on January 4th in 1971.

3.6 `parout_bill_title`: A Bill’s Title

A bill’s title. Listed in Swedish. For example, “Statsverkets tillstånd och behov under budgetåret 1971/72”.

3.7 `parout_bill_proposal`: A Bill’s Legislative Proposal

A bill’s legislative proposals. Listed in Swedish. For example, “att godkänna förslaget till riksstat för budgetåret 1971/72 och uppta statsverkets inkomster och utgifter i enlighet med detta”. Note that the proposal can sometimes consist of a relatively large set of text and include several distinct items.

3.8 `parout_bill_proposal_item`: A Bill’s Proposal Item

The specific proposal item(s) under consideration, when applicable. In many cases, parliament will simply render its decision on the entire bill proposal in one go. However, the reviewing standing committee may sometimes sort out specific items and suggest different responses to different parts of the bill. For example, “1” implies the row tracks the parliamentary outcome of the first item in the bill proposal. Note that the registry occasionally collects several proposal items in a single row.

3.9 parout_committee_name: the Standing Committee Responsible for Reviewing the Bill

The standing committee responsible for reviewing the bill. For example, “FiU” implies the bill was reviewed by the Riksdag’s finance committee. Note that a single bill can sometimes be reviewed by multiple committees.

3.10 parout_committee_report: the Committee’s Report

The committee’s report. For example, “34” implies the bill was reviewed in the committee’s 34th annual report. Note that a single committee can sometimes write multiple reports.

3.11 parout_committee_report_item: the Committee Report’s Item

The committee report’s item, when applicable. For example, “19” implies the committee’s proposed decision is enunciated in item 19 of the committee’s report. Note that the registry occasionally collects several report items in a single row.

3.12 parout_committee_proposal: the Committee’s Proposed Decision

The committee’s proposed decision. From 1971 to 1979/80, the registry uses a quite verbatim coding procedure. Straight approvals and rejections are generally denoted as “Prop.” and “Avslag”, respectively. For more complex decisions (e.g., amendments, communications, deferrals), the registry will include an explicit text string explaining the committee’s decision. From 1980/81 to 1985/86, the registry introduced a more simplified coding procedure and generally used “Bifall” for approvals, “Avslag” for rejections, and “Se betänkande” for more complex decisions. From 1986/87 onward, the registry finally replaced the “Se betänkande” coding with “Delvis bifall” to indicate that the proposal was partly approved. Note that the committee can sometimes propose multiple decisions on a single item.

3.13 parout_committee_date: the Publication Date of the Committee Report

The committee report’s publication date. For example, “1971-05-28” implies the committee delivered the report to the chamber on May 28th in 1971.

3.14 parout_chamber_protocol: the Chamber’s Decision Protocol

The chamber’s decision protocol. For example, “RD 105s106” implies the chamber recorded its decision in protocol 105 on page 106.

3.15 parout_chamber_decision: the Chamber’s Decision on the Committee Proposal

The chamber’s decision on the committee proposal. If the chamber agrees with the committee, the registry will either list the committee name or simply state “Utskottet”. If the chamber disagrees with the committee, the registry will include a text string that explains the chamber’s counteraction. For example, the chamber may send the proposal back to the committee for further processing or support a reservation against the committee’s proposal.

3.16 parout_chamber_date: the Date of the Chamber’s Decision

The chamber’s decision date. Listed in year-month-date format. For example, “1971-06-03” implies the chamber rendered its decision on June 3rd, 1971.

3.17 parout_chamber_communication: the Chamber’s Communication

Lists the chamber communication. A chamber communication (*riksdagsskrivelse*) is a written message from the Riksdag, usually sent to the government. For example, “Rskr 60” implies the decision was announced in the 60th chamber communication of the associated session.

3.18 parout_chamber_motions: the Chamber's Follow-up Motions

Lists the associated follow-up motions, when applicable. For example, “Mot. 1573-1574” implies motion numbers 1573 and 1574 were submitted in response to the bill.

3.19 parout_chamber_reference: References to Other Bills

Lists references to other bills. For example, “se prop. 115”. References mostly link temporary grant decisions to more detailed proposals; for example, the government may propose assigning a specific amount of funds to a given project pending a more detailed assessment at a future date. The reference can then provide the specific bill number associated with that future assessment.

4 Commission Citations

The Commission citations dataset covers all citations to commission reports in all government bills presented to parliament between 1975 and 2022. Each row can be read as a unique report citation and includes information about the report’s serial number and various bill metadata. The dataset follows a many-to-many logic and can be used to determine both which bills cite a given report and which reports are cited in a given bill. If a given report is cited in several bills, there will be several observations on that report. Conversely, if a bill cites several reports, there will be several observations on that bill. The dataset covers about 26,000 observations with 9 variables. **All missing values are left as blanks.**

4.1 `comcit_bill_id`: A Bill’s Document Identifier

A bill’s document identifier in the Riksdag’s open data archive. The identifier consists of three values that track a given document’s parliamentary session, type, and designation. For example, “fz031” implies the document was presented during the Riksdag’s 1975/76 session (“fz”), that it is a bill (“03”), and that it is designated as number one in its specific series (“1”). In natural language, the corresponding bill would be written as “Prop. 1975/76:1”.

4.2 `comcit_bill_session`: A Bill’s Parliamentary Session

A bill’s parliamentary session. For example, “1975/76” implies the bill was presented to parliament during the Riksdag’s 1975/76 session.

4.3 `comcit_bill_number`: A Bill’s Designation Number

A bill’s designation number. For example, “1” implies the bill was the first bill presented in the given session. Note that the `comcit_bill_session` and `comcit_bill_number` variables can be combined to recover the bill’s official serial number (e.g., “1975/76:1”).

4.4 `comcit_bill_sub_document`: A Bill’s Sub-publication Number

A bill’s sub-publication number, where applicable.

4.5 `comcit_report_id`: A Report’s Complete Serial Number

A report’s complete serial number. For example, “SOU 1972:50” implies the cited report is part of the SOU series, that it was published in 1972, and that it was the 50th such report published in that year.

4.6 `comcit_report_year`: A Report’s Publication Year

A report’s publication year. For example, “1972” implies the cited report was published in 1972.

4.7 `comcit_report_number`: A Report’s Publication Number

A report’s publication number. For example, “50” implies the cited report was the 50th report published in that year.