The Nordic countries have no tradition of judicial review by courts and have generally been hesitant to make use of the preliminary ruling procedure in the European Union. New data indicate that Nordic courts prefer to solve as many EU-related judicial disputes as possible without involving a supranational organ such as the ECJ. Building on two comprehensive surveys of Danish and Swedish courts and judges, this study challenges the theory of judicial empowerment when explaining judicial integration in the EU. The article argues that in order to explain when and why Member State courts make use of the preliminary ruling procedure, a much deeper understanding of the prevalent legal/political culture and concept of democracy in each Member State is required. In particular, the distinction between majoritarian versus constitutional democracies may help us understand why majoritarian democracies express greater scepticism towards supranational judicial review.

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