Explaining Bureaucratic Power in Intergovernmental Relations

A network approach

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Abstract

The core assumption of the bureaucratic politics model and a large part of public administration scholarship is that bureaucrats influence politicians and political decisions via their crucial role in preparing, coordinating and formulating policy. While this influence has been analysed in a vertical direction, i.e. how much do bureaucrats influence politicians, the horizontal perspective has been mostly neglected: which bureaucrats are most powerful and influential during the process of bureaucratic coordination and decision-making? Deducing hypotheses from bargaining theory and testing them with a novel network dataset on German Intergovernmental Relations (IGR), this contribution finds that bureaucrats indeed possess varying degrees of power. Jurisdictional and organizational power resources, such as voting, financial and institutional power but also party politics can best explain these variances in bureaucratic power. Personal characteristics, such as experience and education, however, are not used as power resources.

Keywords: Bureaucratic politics, intergovernmental relations, bargaining power, social network analysis, Germany.

1   Introduction

The preparation of policy decisions is one of the core tasks of ministerial bureaucracies. Bureaucrats are in charge of choosing, formulating and coordinating public policy as well as negotiating with actors within and outside the politico-administrative system. They prepare policy for the head of department and government or take decisions (e.g. Peters & Pierre, 2016). By doing so, bureaucrats carry out political tasks and can potentially influence political decisions. This influence can be exerted indirectly due to the role, organization and responsibilities of public officials as administrative working units in government (Mayntz & Scharpf, 1975). In many instances, bureaucrats also take decisions without the involvement of politicians, which is the most direct form of influence on the political process (Page, 2012). The strength of the bureaucratic influence thereby varies according to the stage of the policy process and the institutional structure of government (Schnapp, 2004). Furthermore, the influence and power of bureaucrats can vary with the structural and procedural role a certain public administration takes on during the process of policy-making (Hartlapp, Metz, & Rauh, 2013). Thus, some bureaucratic organization or even individual bureaucrats can be more influential and powerful than others. Yet, little is known about which bureaucrats are more powerful in influencing the political process.

Building on these key insights into bureaucratic influence and power, this contribution aims at developing a framework to explain differences in influence and power between ministerial bureaucrats. Based on the propositions of the bureaucratic politics model, it is argued that bureaucrats from different bureaucratic organizations pursue varying preferences. To pursue these preferences, they have varying power resources at their disposal. Based on the bargaining power framework (Bailer, 2010), these power resources will be explored.

Measuring power and determining power resources is difficult. Most approaches compare initial positions with final decisions to estimate how much of the actors' interests prevailed.

Such an approach is problematic for several reasons, for example strategic signalling (Coddington, 1968; Snyder & Diesing, 1977), but it is especially problematic when studying the power of bureaucrats. While politicians' initial positions often are public, bureaucrats' are not, because they usually are not public figures. To circumvent these problems, this contribution proposes a new way of measuring bureaucratic power by using social network analysis. Bureaucrats and their coordination and negotiation relations can be conceptualized as networks. Those actors who are most central in the coordination and negotiation process are then assumed to be more powerful during the decision-making process. This conceptualization enables to estimate which factors impact on the power and centrality of bureaucrats.

The question of power and influence of bureaucrats is most pronounced in situations which require intensive coordination and negotiation and in which a high number of bureaucrats are involved. IGR, meaning processes of joint decision making among a number of government executives in multilevel states, represent such an occasion. For this reason, the power of bureaucratic actors in IGR will be analysed in this contribution. Establishing a framework of analysis and testing it with the most-likely case of Germany is an important step towards a broader and comparative analysis of the power of various bureaucrats in decision-making processes.

2   Bureaucratic politics in horizontal intergovernmental coordination

The bureaucratic politics model (Allison & Halperin, 1972; Allison & Zelikow, 1999) argues that government decisions can only be properly understood if they are conceptualized as a result of the aggregate of individual decisions and actions by several actors within this government. A core assumption of the model is that bureaucrats develop different preferences, objectives and goals, which stem from 'various conceptions of national […], organizational, domestic and personal interest' (Allison & Halperin, 1972, p. 43). At the very

heart, these various conceptions originate from the high levels of delegation and specialization which are typical for modern governments (Bouckaert, Peters, & Verhoest, 2010). These bureaucrats with their varying preferences try to influence politicians in their decision-making. The model clearly focuses the attention on the preferences of bureaucrats and the mechanisms through which these are aggregated into a government decision (Hartlapp et al., 2013, p. 427). While there are certainly further actors, such as parties and interests groups, which try to influence political decisions, this analysis concentrates on the process of bureaucratic decision-making. The power of the bureaucratic actors is analysed in relation to each other and not to other sources of influence.

The present contribution focuses not primarily on the interests of bureaucrats per se, but on their power to influence the decision-making processes. The fact that they possess varying interests thereby makes it necessary for them to use their power to influence the decision-making process. Power as a concept is defined in the bureaucratic politics model as „effective influence on government decisions and actions" (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, p. 300). Power thus is the ability of an actor to direct the decision-making process into the desired direction using the available means to achieve the actor's preferred outcome (Schneider & Bailer, 2002, p. 52). These means are in the following called power resources. Bureaucrats possess unevenly distributed power resources which they can use to influence the government decision (Allison & Halperin, 1972). These can be resources in the strictest sense, such as financial means, implicit resources such as veto threats, but also personal characteristics such as experience. Yet, only little systematic knowledge exists about what these resources are and how they are distributed among bureaucrats. To advance knowledge on this topic, the present contribution develops propositions about power resources which bureaucrats can make use of when trying to influence decision-making processes.

While classical accounts of bureaucratic politics focus on the political-administrative dichotomy asking how bureaucrats can influence politicians (e.g. Hood & Lodge, 2006; Peters, Erkkilä, & Maravić, 2016), a similar reasoning holds in a horizontal perspective, namely among different bureaucrats who find themselves in joint decision-making situations. Government decisions are formulated and taken in a certain way because a certain department has more power and influence during the decision-making process than another department. Hence, the question arises why are some bureaucrats or departments more powerful than others and can better influence decisions? Which power resources make bureaucrats more influential?

Governments usually consist of a rather small number of departments which are jointly responsible for the executive functions of government, amongst them policy formulation and executive decision-making. Studying bureaucratic power resources within such as setting is associated with some problems of small-N analysis. In contrast, a situation in which a higher number of departments and bureaucrats are involved in coordination processes would allow quantitative statistical analysis of power and power resources. IGR in multilevel states represent such a setting. Governments in multilevel states are interdependent in many instances of policy-making and engage in IGR to deal with joint problems, create joint solutions or simply exchange best practices (Poirier & Saunders, 2015, p. 1). For this reason, executives often exchange information, coordinate joint policy, but also try to protect their autonomy from encroachment by others and try to influence each other (Behnke & Mueller, 2017). Thus, IGR occur whenever two or more governments in federal states must or want to engage in joint actions and take joint decisions. This is, for example, the case in processes of reforming the federal state where a joint decision needs to be taken, when sub-states in federal states want or need to cooperate in implementing federal or European law, or when they install or finance joint organizations. IGR are omnipresent coordination relations between executives in multilevel states.

In most scholarly analysis, IGR among politicians are considered, but these are usually supported by relations among public administrations (e.g. Hegele, 2018; Johns, O'Reilly, & Inwood, 2007; Parry, 2012). Public officials prepare the political IGR meetings, and just as in any other political process, exchange information, prepare and even negotiate decision or take decisions on their own. Thus, due to the high number of government organizations involved in IGR (core executives and departments from each government involved), this offers an ideal setting to study the power resources of public administrations.

The horizontal process of decision preparation and decision making among departments and government actors is often analysed under the topic of coordination. While coordination, defined as an output or 'an end-state in which the policies and programmes of government are characterized by minimal redundancy, incoherence and lacunae' (Peters, 1998, p. 296), might be achieved to a varying degree by governments and their departments, coordination defined as a process is one of the key actions in which governments and their departments regularly engage. Coordination as a process emphasizes the 'strategies and instruments governments use to coordinate organizations or programs within the public sector' (Bouckaert et al., 2010, p. 16). This involves analysing 'the development of ideas about joint and holistic working, joint information systems, dialogue between agencies, processes of planning, and making decisions' (Six, 2004, p. 106). Coordination is thus conceptualized as the 'intervening stage of debate and deliberation [during which] persuasion, reconsideration, conceivably even coercion takes place' (Shepsle & Boncheck, 1997, p. 44) before a joint decision is taken. Simplifying Metcalfe's (1994) nine-step coordination scale, the process of coordination is conceptualized as the exchange of information, the search for allies, and the negotiation of compromise or decisions. First, actors exchange information and viewpoints in order to reduce uncertainty about the interests and goals of other actors. Second, they negotiate by trying to form alliances with actors with similar interests and goals or find a compromise with actors which have different interests or goals. The power of bureaucrats and their power

resources are likely to differ between these two processes. Some actors might be more powerful in the information exchange network, others when it comes to negotiations. Based on these insights, two coordination networks among bureaucrats will be conceptualized in this contribution, one network of information exchange and one network of negotiation.

3   Bureaucratic power resources

What are the power resources of bureaucrats which they can use to exert influence on the decision-making process? Bargaining literature in political science has brought forth a number of theoretical arguments for resources, which make some actors more powerful. The most prominent and established power resources of actors are voting power, economic power, institutional power and domestic constraints. Furthermore, initial evidence is found for party politics and personal experience as power resources. While these theoretical arguments usually have been tested on the political level, they possess a broader scope of validity. Similar power resources are available to bureaucrats when preparing and negotiating political decisions. Bureaucrats in joint decision situations can make use of jurisdictional or organizational as well as individual power resources. In IGR, one bureaucrat usually represents one department. Thus, each bureaucrat represents and speaks for this department and at the same time can make use of the department's power resources. Due to the structural similarity between the EU's Council of Ministers negotiation and IGR (Poirier, Saunders, & Kincaid, 2015; Scharpf, 1985), this article applies the theoretical assumptions by Bailer (2010) and Tallberg (2008) for the EU Council of Ministers to IGR in multilevel states in general and bureaucratic decision-making processes in particular. The present contribution will thus be the first to test all these possible power resources under one combined framework and with a coherent empirical dataset.

Voting power as a power resource assumes that the more votes an actor has in a joint decision situation, the more powerful this actor is because his or her voting choices carry

more weight than those of actors with fewer votes (Bailer, 2010, p. 745; Tallberg, 2008, p. 694). This argument of course only holds for majority voting situations with weighted votes. Bureaucrats can similarly use voting power as a power resource because in bureaucratic decision-making processes, the bureaucrats represent their jurisdiction and thus the number of votes associated.

> *H1: The higher the number of votes a bureaucrat represents in a majority-voting situation with weighted votes, the more powerful the actor is.*

Economic or financial power can be a power resource because joint decisions often have financial consequences, which need to be distributed among the participating actors. Hence, the support by actors with more financial resources is necessary in order to make the decision meaningful and their implementation realistic. Similarly to voting power, the bureaucrats represent their jurisdiction in decision situations and thus also the economic or financial power of the jurisdiction.

> *H2a: Bureaucrats representing richer jurisdictions are more powerful than those from poorer jurisdictions.*

On an organizational level, the ministries of finance can be assumed to be more powerful than the other departments within the jurisdiction because they play an important role in allocating resources among ministries and need to agree on any additional investments and long-term expenditures (Heller, 2015). Thus, it can be assumed that bureaucrats representing the finance ministries also represent this kind of financial power in joint decision situations.

> *H2b: Bureaucrats representing the departments of finance are more powerful than bureaucrats from other departments.*

Institutional power is 'the ability to exit, veto and set intuitional agendas' (Bailer, 2010, p. 746). Veto and exit rights bring the threat of leaving the decision processes and thus have a higher probability of creating concessions from the other actors. These resources are however

distributed equally among the actors and only used rarely (for EU council negotiations see Tallberg, 2008, p. 694). Agenda setting, on the other hand, is likely to be a relevant power resource. Agenda setters usually have an information advantage and control the procedures through their 'responsibility to manage the agenda, broker agreements and represent the decision body vis-à-vis third parties' (Tallberg, 2008, p. 696). This is assumed to be an important power resource for bureaucrats because as experts with detailed knowledge on the subject, they can act as agenda setters and thus draw on this power resource.

> *H3a: Bureaucrats representing the agenda setting department or jurisdiction are more powerful than bureaucrats from the other departments or jurisdictions.*

Additionally, on the organizational level, the core executives have agenda setting power within their jurisdiction and thus can be expected to be more powerful (Dahlström, Peters, & Pierre, 2011; Peters, Rhodes, & Wright, 2003). Thus, bureaucrats representing the core executives in joint decision situations can use their formal position as power resource.

> *H3b: Bureaucrats representing the head of government are more powerful than bureaucrats from the functional departments.*

Reflecting on agenda setting and veto power in IGR, the role of the federal government comes to mind. In most federal states, the federal government has a prominent position. It can put issues on the IGR or public agenda and very often its agreement or support is needed for a decision to be ratified or implemented successfully. Bureaucrats representing the federal level could use this as a power resource.

> *H3c: Bureaucrats representing the federal government are more powerful than bureaucrats from the sub-state governments.*

Domestic constraint is a power resource that is typical for two-level games, which IGR are as well. If actors are constrained in their leeway of action at the second (in this case intergovernmental) level by actors at the first (in this case government) level, this makes them

more powerful because the other intergovernmental actors need to make bigger concessions to get their support or agreement (Bailer, 2010, p. 747; Putnam, 1988). In bureaucratic IGR, the win-set of an actor can be limited by the other bureaucrats within its jurisdiction or, in cases of coalition governments, by the coalition partner.

Several departments of each jurisdiction are involved in coordinating and negotiating IGR decisions. These departments can choose either to pursue their interests individually or to coordinate amongst each other. If they choose to coordinate internally, it is very likely that the result will be an interdepartmental or jurisdictional position. According to the domestic constraint argument, this strategy gives them more power in IGR because they can credibly argue that a deviation from this position is not possible and their negotiation partner would need to make concessions in order to find an agreement or compromise.

> *H4a: The bureaucrats representing a jurisdiction where the departments are closely coordinated are more powerful than bureaucrats from less coordinated jurisdictions.*

In coalition governments, the coalition partners could mutually decrease each other's leeway of action on the intergovernmental level. Assuming that IGR decisions in the end need the agreement of both coalition partners, this mutual decrease of leeway is the more likely, the higher the ideological distance between the coalition partners. Coalition partners with a high ideological distance have a lower overlap of win-sets and thus a less flexible common position, which they can use to gain concessions from the other IGR actors.

> *H4b: Bureaucrats representing a jurisdiction where the coalition partners have a high ideological distance are more powerful than bureaucrats from less ideologically distant coalition governments.*

IGR in federal states are the ideal unit of analysis to study **party politics** on an equal footing with other power resources. In federal states, clearly defined party families and at least some state-wide parties exists and are involved in IGR (Bolleyer, Swenden, & McEwen, 2014)

while in the study of EU and international relations, party families are more vague and parties and elections are still based on the national state level (Bailer, 2010). The affiliation of the political head of the government to a party family affects the bureaucratic actors in IGR insofar as the bureaucrat represents the department and its political head in IGR. Thus, through various forms of politicization, most importantly functional politicization (Schwanke & Ebinger, 2006), party political considerations play a role in bureaucratic decision-making processes as well. Assuming that actors whose political superiors are affiliated to the same party family share some ideological viewpoint, the number of party peers involved in the negotiation process could be used as a power resource.

> *H5a: Bureaucrats representing coalition partners with higher numbers of political party peers are more powerful than bureaucrats with lower numbers of peers.*

Furthermore, congruence of government composition is important in IGR (Bolleyer et al., 2014; León, 2017). Due to the prominent role of the federal government in many IGR processes, party congruence with the federal level could be a power resource.

> *H5b: Bureaucrats representing a government which is congruent with the federal government are more powerful than bureaucrats from incongruent governments.*

Moving now to the power resources of the individual actors, **experience** can be expected to matter (Bailer, 2010, p. 746; Tallberg, 2008, p. 698f.). The longer an actor is involved in IGR, the more experience (s)he has. Experienced actors can be an important source of information because they were involved in prior processes and might know more about the subject than is written down in any document. Furthermore, they also know the other actors and possibly their negotiation behaviour. Additionally, with growing experience, actors might have developed negotiation strategies which prove more successful. Experience as a power resource might even be more important for bureaucrats than for politicians because they usually stay longer in their position and thus can acquire more experience over the years.

H6a: The more years of experience bureaucrats have, the more powerful they are.

Related to this, the **educational background and training** could have an effect on how bureaucrats behave and which strategies they choose in decision-making processes (Bailer, 2010, p. 746; Tallberg, 2008, p. 701). Public administration research has shown that among the demographic variables, educational background has the strongest impact on a bureaucrat's attitudes and behaviour. According to Christensen and Lægreid (2009), a legal education leads individuals to be more rule driven and paying attention to legal requirements while a bureaucrats with a political or social science education are more sensitive to politics and political signals and are more working on coordination tasks. Having power on the decision by directing the decision-making process in a favourable direction needs political sensitivity and skill. Thus, it can be assumed that bureaucrats with a political or social science education are more powerful than those with a legal education.

H6b: Bureaucrats with a political or social science education are more powerful than bureaucrats with a legal education.

4 Research design, data and operationalization

The research question of which actors are more powerful than others when conducting IGR will be answered using a y-centred, quantitative research design, testing the different power resources within a multiple regression model.

4.1 Case selection and description

In order to test new theories or new applications of a theory, most-likely cases are the appropriate choice because the theoretically expected phenomenon is most likely to be present there. If it is not, the theory is unlikely to apply to other, less likely cases (Rohlfing, 2012). The German case is a most-likely case for the analysis of power and power resources in bureaucratic IGR because the German ministerial bureaucracy is regarded as one of the most

powerful in comparative perspective (Schnapp, 2004) and it has one of the most elaborate and stable systems of bureaucratic IGR.

The German ministerial bureaucracy plays a crucial role in policy formulation and decision-making. Ministerial bureaucrats develop and formulate policy initiatives and coordinate and negotiate proposals with other actors inside the bureaucracy with the aim of including all relevant aspects and interests at an early stage in order to avoid conflict within government at a later stage (Mayntz & Scharpf, 1975, pp. 67-76; Page, 2012). When it comes to IGR, the ministerial bureaucracy plays a similar role in developing, formulating and coordinating policy with their counterparts from the other sub-states and the federal state. In this respect, Wagener (1979) described the 'brotherhood of experts' (*Fachbruderschaften*), a vast network of IGR among bureaucrats from the federal state and the sub-states working within one sector.

The German system of IGR is one of the most institutionalized and stable systems consisting of the *Bundesrat* and 18 ministerial conferences (Auel, 2014; Hegele & Behnke, 2017; Lhotta & Blumenthal, 2015). The ministerial conferences are voluntary meetings of the sub-state governments with the aim of exchanging information and coordinating amongst each other and with the federal government. The *Bundesrat* is a constitutional organ, the second chamber through which the sub-states' governments directly participate in federal legislation and represent the interests of their sub-state in federal decision-making. The *Bundesrat* is more institutionalized and meets more regularly than the ministerial conferences. Furthermore, in the *Bundesrat*, all actors are engaged in inter-sectoral coordination, while the ministerial conferences are organized sectorally. Thus, the *Bundesrat* is chosen as the case for analysis here.

The *Bundesrat* as a whole holds important veto rights in federal legislation. When the administrative power of the German sub-states (*Länder*) and their finances are affected as well as for constitutional changes, the consent of the (qualified) majority of the votes is even

mandatory for ratification (Art. 52, 77 Basic Law). The *Bundesrat* holds an absolute veto in these cases, which constitute up to 40 percent of federal legislation. In all other cases, it can call a mediation committee and has at least a suspensive veto that can severely delay the process but be overruled with a *Bundestag* majority (Art. 77 Basic Law). Additionally, the *Bundesrat* itself can initiate federal law (Art. 76 (1) Basic Law). The *Länder* in the *Bundesrat* have three to six votes, depending on their population. Each *Land* casts its votes uniformly; separation of votes is not allowed, and abstentions are equal to "no" votes (Art. 51 Basic Law).

In order to prepare the *Bundesrat* sessions and decisions, a vast bureaucratic apparatus has been set up. Within each department of the federal state and each sub-state, a section or staff unit is responsible for the preparation of *Bundesrat* matters when the department is involved. Additionally, there exists a section in each government chancellery at both levels of government (*Bundeskanzleramt, Staats- und Senatskanzleien*). This section is responsible for the coordination of the department sections in order to come to a joint *Land* position. To coordinate *Bundesrat* matters with the other *Länder* and the federal state, a special division of the government chancellery called *Land* representation (*Landesvertretung*) is stationed directly in the capital Berlin (Schrenk, 2010). All these ministerial bureaucrats usually not politicians or political appointees but career civil servants staying in this coordination position even when the party composition of the government changes. These bureaucrats meet repeatedly in a recurring three-week sequence in order to prepare *Bundesrat* decisions (Schrenk 2010).

4.2   The network dataset

To capture the bureaucratic coordination process surrounding the *Bundesrat*, a network dataset was collected by the author in a standardized online survey among the *Länder* government actors in Germany from August to November 2015. The survey was sent out to

bureaucrats responsible for multilevel or *Bundesrat* coordination in all 171 ministerial

bureaucracies (i.e. government chancelleries, *Land* representations and sectoral departments)

of all the *Länder*. Showing to the respondents a list of possible contact partners by position,

they were asked 'Please indicate, with whom of the following actors you have contact during

the preparation of the *Bundesrat.*' Thus, they were asked about their individual contacts and

coordination behaviour. In a second step they were presented with a table of the chosen actors

and asked: 'You have indicated that you have contact to the following actors. With whom of

these actors do you pre-negotiate final decisions?'. Thus, data for two networks was collected:

a network of information exchange and a network of negotiation. The relations reported can

be interpreted as a mean value of typical information exchange and negotiation contacts over

the last year. If respondents have not indicated a contact with another actor, this either means

that no contact takes place or that it is not relevant to the actor. All sixteen German sub-states

participated in the survey with a response rate of 65% (112 out of 171), without any

systematic missings occurring (for descriptive statistics of the networks see TABLE 1).

TABLE 1: Descriptive statistics of the Networks

Network	No. actors	No. relations	Edgewise reciprocity	Min. indegree centrality	Max. indegree centrality	Mean indegree centrality
Information Exchange Network	186	2414	37%	1	28	13
Negotiation Network	183[4]	1329	26%	1	18	7

4.3 Measuring power in social networks

The dependent variable, power in bureaucratic IGR, is operationalized using the centrality

concept of social network analysis. Social network analysis is an appropriate tool to research

power because power as such is relational (McClurg & Young, 2011, p. 39). Power defined as

the ability of an actor to direct the decision-making process into the desired direction can be achieved by communicating with other actors during the process. Network data of communication relations is genuine process data which is able to overcome some of the well-known problems of the analysis of negotiations and power, namely the 'difficulties of conducting research on a […] body that convenes behind closed doors, whose proceedings are undocumented and whose participants are unusually hard to gain access to' (Tallberg, 2008, p. 686). In empirical studies, these problems are usually addressed by approximating the power of actors by comparing initial positions of actors and final outcomes of negotiations. This approach however has attracted considerable criticism for various reasons (see Bailer, 2010). Using network data on the bureaucratic decision-making process can help overcome these problems by providing information on the actual conduct of decision-making processes.

Centrality is repeatedly used as operationalization and measurement for concepts such as 'power', '(structural) importance', 'strategic significance' and 'importance of prominence' (Hanneman & Riddle, 2005; Henning, 2009; Scott, 2013, p. 83; Wasserman & Faust, 2009, p. 169). Centrality in the network theoretically indicates that actors have a pronounced position in the network. Among the several options which exist to measure centrality in networks (Freeman, 1978) indegree centrality is chosen in this analysis. It measures centrality based on the incoming communication relations of an actor. With the data used here, an actor has an incoming relation, if another actor named him as communication partner.

This measure is chosen due to theoretical considerations as well as consideration of the data generating process. Theoretically, a high number of incoming communication ties indicates that the other actors perceive the contact to the actor of interest as relevant in the decision-making process, at least relevant enough to report it. If many actors report that they are in contact with the actor, it can be reasonably assumed that this actor is powerful. In the network of information exchange, a high indegree centrality means that this actor is powerful because

(s)he is in possession of more information from different sources and can also control the information flow by providing or retaining this or that piece of information. In the negotiation network, high indegree centrality indicates power because actors with a high number of negotiation relations can influence several processes of finding agreement and compromise. Additionally, they usually have various options for compromise among which they can choose the one most profitable for them.

Furthermore, from the viewpoint of the data generating process, indegree centrality is less prone to manipulation by the actors. First, while the reporting of outdegree centrality can be manipulated by an actor in the attempt to make oneself look more powerful, this is not possible for indegree centrality because it relies on the information provided by others. Second, the response rate of the survey is 65% meaning that 35% of the actors have an outdegree value of zero because they did not report any contacts but could be named by the other actors as contacts. Other measures such as betweenness centrality, which measures the potential to control the relations between other actors, or closeness centrality, which measures the distance of one actor to all other actors, capture theoretically distinct concepts (Feeman 1987). Further, their reliance on incoming as well as outgoing ties would lead to a biased measurement due to non-respondents with zero values, which indegree does not.

4.4   Operationalizing power resources

The independent variables need to be specified for the application in the context of German bureaucratic IGR (see Table 2; Table 3 provides the descriptive statistics for the variables). Voting power as a power resource might be relevant in the German *Bundesrat* because decisions are taken by majority-vote weighted according to the number of inhabitants. In terms of financial power, the German federal fiscal equalization scheme is oriented towards solidarity (Behnke, 2013) and thus levels differences in the financial endowment by redistributing resources among sub-states. This system, however, creates a group of net-

contributors with higher financial resources and net-beneficiaries with lower financial resources, the former being potentially more powerful.

TABLE 2: Independent variables and their operationalization

Coordination resource	Conceptualization	Operationalization	Data source
Voting power	Number of votes in the *Bundesrat*	Number of votes as Numerical variable	*Bundesrat* homepage
Financial power	Net-contributor	Dummy, 1 for net-contributor	German federal ministry of finance, financial equalization data from 2015
	Finance ministries	Dummy, 1 for finance ministry	as indicated in survey
Institutional power	*Bundesrat* presidency	Dummy, 1 for presidency	Printed matter of the *Bundesrat* 452/14.
	Government chancellery	Dummy, 1 for government chancellery	as indicated in survey
	Federal level	Dummy, 1 for federal level	as indicated in survey
Experience	Experience in multi-level coordination (in years)	Numerical variable	as indicated in survey
	Education	Dummies: law, politics or public administration, others (baseline)	as indicated in survey
Domestic constraint	Density of intra-governmental network	Numerical, standardized density of the intra-governmental network	Calculated based on survey data
	Ideological distance of parties in government	Numerical variable, distance between parties	Bräuninger and Debus (2011), Appendix B, left-right scores, absolute difference
Party politics	Party congruence with federal level	Dummy, 1 for full congruence	Homepages *Bundesrat*, federal and sub-state governments
	No. of party peers	Numerical	
	Party of the Minister	Dummies: SPD, Greens, Left, CDU/ CSU (beaseline),	

Regarding institutional power resources, due to the majority-voting rule, no single actor possess the right to veto individually *Bundesrat* decisions. Similarly, there are no exit-options because the German *Länder* governments are automatically members of the *Bundesrat*, abstentions are counted as "no" vote. The ability to set the agenda, however, might be important in *Bundesrat* negotiations. The presidency of the *Bundesrat* rotates among the *Länder,* on a yearly basis, from the most to the least populated *Land*. The *Land* that holds the presidency is responsible for organizing and preparing the plenary sessions, dealing with the

committees, and contact with the federal government (Reuter, 2007, p. 320). Additionally, each *Bundesrat* committee is also presided by one of the *Länder* (Printed matter of the *Bundesrat* 452/14). Further, the bureaucrat representing the head of government of each *Land* can be assumed to have agenda setting power within the *Länder* based on the prime ministers' competence for determining the general policy guidelines (*Richtlinienkompetenz*). Furthermore, the federal government might be more powerful in IGR in the *Bundesrat* even though it does not have any formal voting rights. During the legislative process, the German *Bundestag* in many instances does not need the consent of the *Bundesrat* for ratification and even if it does, in some cases it can overrule a rejection (Article 77 Basic Law).

Domestic constraint as power resource will be operationalized in two ways. First, the density of the intragovernmental network in information exchange is used to measure the amount of exchange and coordination between the departments of one jurisdiction. A high density indicates a higher amount of internal coordination. Due to the bias in the density measure resulting from varying non-response rates among the *Länder*, density values are standardized by the percentage of participating actors, assuming that the non-respondents would have, in the mean, reported the same amount of contacts than the respondents in each *Land*. Second, the distance between the coalition partners is measured based on the dataset on parties' policy positions compiled by Bräuninger and Debus (2011) using the absolute left-right difference among the sub-state parties in government in autumn 2015. Since the distance is quite stable during the period investigated by the authors, it seems legitimate to use the late-2000's data to approximate the distance in 2015.

In the German *Bundesrat,* party politics matter (Hegele, 2018; Lehmbruch, 2000; Leunig & Träger, 2014). Congruence with the federal level as power resource exists if the exact same parties constitute the sub-state government as the federal government. Furthermore, the number of bureaucrats whose ministers are affiliated with the same party family will be

included. Due to a lack of research on party politics as power resource, the theoretical status of party politics is unclear; therefore the individual parties are included in the model as a control variable. It might be that some political parties are more powerful than others for reasons yet to determine.

The experience and educational background of the actors was surveyed in the online questionnaire. In Germany, bureaucrats usually have an education in law (Derlien, 2002). Some bureaucrats have a background in political science or public administration. Hence, also for the German case, it will be expected that an education in law decreases while an education in politics or public administration increases the power of an actor.

TABLE 3: Descriptive Statistics of Independent Variables

Variable	min	max	median	mean	sd
No votes in *Bundesrat*	3	6	4	4.36	1.13
Net-contributor	0	1	0	0.27	0.44
Finance ministries	0	1	0	0.09	0.29
Bundesrat presidency	0	1	0	0.10	0.30
Government chancellery	0	1	0	0.09	0.29
Federal level	0	1	0	0.08	0.27
Density of intra-governmental network (in percent)	47	99	71	70.65	13.73
Ideological distance of parties in government	2	325	159	128.22	102.65
Party congruence with federal level	0	1	0	0.36	0.48
No. of party peers	8	98	98	71.05	30.26
Party of the Minister - CDU	0	1	0	0.29	0.45
Party of the Minister – SPD	0	1	1	0.52	0.50
Party of the Minister – Green	0	1	0	0.15	0.35
Party of the Minister – Left	0	1	0	0.04	0.20
Experience in multi-level coordination (in years)	1	43	6	8.72	7.65
Education – law	0	1	1	0.52	0.50
Education – politics & administration	0	1	0	0.27	0.44

5   Empirical results

To test the hypotheses, a multiple regression analysis is performed. One set of models is calculated using centrality in the information exchange network and one using the negotiation network as dependent variable. Several different model specifications are calculated for each network (see TABLE 4and TABLE 5). The 'full models' include all independent variables,

models (a) and (b) are calculated due to the high correlation of the party political variables. In the 'jurisdictional & organization models' the variables measuring experience are excluded because these are only available for those actors who participated in the survey. The 'federal models' only contains those variables, which are also available and meaningful for the federal level. The control variable participation in survey is included in the models to control for differences between those actors who participated in the survey and those who did not. The results show that no significant differences exist between these two groups of actors. In the information exchange network (TABLE 4) and the negotiation network (TABLE 5), institutional power resources, domestic constraints and party politics have a clear impact on power. Bureaucrats from the government chancellery are more central than the other bureaucrats, confirming hypothesis 3b. This institutional power resource has the strongest, significant and positive, effect on power which is also stable across model specifications and corresponds to the expectations. The effects of the other two institutional power resources are less clear. *Bundesrat* presidency (H3a) has a positive effect as expected, yet it is not significant. Being from the federal level (H3c) does not have a clear effect on power in the information exchange network. In the negotiation network, however, bureaucrats from the federal level are clearly and significantly less powerful, which contradicts the initial expectation. Bureaucrats from the federal government are apparently included as actors among others when it comes to information exchange in the *Bundesrat* process, but are excluded when it comes to negotiating final positions, which takes place primarily among the sub-state actors.

The density of the intragovernmental network has a positive and stable effect on centrality in both networks, confirming hypothesis 4a. The closer the bureaucrats within one government coordinate, the more powerful these actors are in IGR. Hence, communicating with the other departments within the own jurisdiction makes the bureaucrats more powerful. The distance between the coalition partners (H4b) on the other hand has rather a negative effect on power.

This contradicts the initial hypotheses as it indicates that governments with a lower distance between the coalition partners are more powerful. This could be explained by another mechanism, namely that bureaucrats from governments where the coalition partners are ideologically closer to each other are better able to speak with one voice in IGR and thus can jointly pursue their interests.

Party politics indeed also are a power resource in IGR processes, albeit in a different form than expected. Interestingly, the models show that in the information exchange and the negotiation network, especially the Lefts and Greens and to a lower extent the Social Democrats are more powerful compared to the Christian Democrats. The Lefts and the Greens are both not part of the federal government and in the *Länder* are usually the smaller coalition partners of the Social or Christian Democrats. This indicates that during IGR in the *Bundesrat*, the smaller parties are more powerful because their agreement is needed in order to find an intragovernmental decision and avoid abstention. This makes them strongly involved in the information exchange network and gives them power when it comes to negotiations. On the other hand, neither the number of party political peers nor the congruence with the federal level impact on the power of bureaucratic actors, as postulated in hypotheses 5a and 5b.

Voting power and financial power as power resources have an effect in the negotiation network but not the information exchange network, thus partly confirming hypotheses 1 and 2a. This indicates that when it comes to decision-making, these two hard power resources are more important. In the negotiation network, voting power has a strong positive and significant effect as expected. Bureaucrats representing *Länder* with a higher number of votes are more central and powerful when it comes to negotiations. Similarly, bureaucrats representing the net-contributors in the federal financial equalization scheme are more powerful actors in

negotiations confirming the expectation. The finance ministries also seem to have a positive, yet not always significant, effect on power (H2b).

TABLE 4: Determinants of Centrality in the Information Exchange Network

	Full Model (a)	Full Model (b)	Jurisdictional & Organization Model (a)	Jurisdictional & Organization Model (b)	Federal Model (a)	Federal Model (b)
Voting Power						
No. BR votes	0.451	**0.510**[*]	0.319	0.223		
	(0.320)	(0.196)	(0.422)	(0.299)		
Financial Power						
Net Contributor	-0.262	-0.174	1.029	0.646		
	(1.046)	(0.805)	(1.005)	(0.813)		
Finance Ministry	1.327	1.445	2.179	2.131	**2.238**[*]	2.313
	(1.530)	(1.598)	(1.261)	(1.376)	(1.048)	(1.199)
Institutional Power						
BR Presidency	0.875	1.181	1.964	**2.096**[*]		
	(0.741)	(0.704)	(0.953)	(0.853)		
Government Chancellery	**4.251**[***]	**4.441**[***]	**5.253**[***]	**5.357**[***]	**5.831**[***]	**6.124**[***]
	(0.960)	(1.005)	(0.852)	(0.876)	(0.866)	(0.915)
Federal Level					-1.097	0.148
					(0.524)	(0.504)
Domestic Constraint						
Density intragovernmental network	**0.083**[**]	**0.064**[*]	**0.098**[**]	**0.0798**[*]		
	(0.0246)	(0.028)	(0.0271)	(0.0305)		
Distance coalition parties	-0.210	0.001	-0.572	-0.158		
	(0.451)	(0.439)	(0.337)	(0.338)		
Party Politics						
Party Congruence (fed.)	-1.5530		-0.232			
	(0.909)		(1.132)			
No. Party peers	-0.0012		-0.0103		-0.0042	
	(0.0158)		(0.0116)		(0.0154)	
SPD		**2.794**[**]		1.784		**2.560**[*]
		(0.883)		(0.852)		(0.876)
Greens		**3.550**[*]		2.671		**3.773**[**]
		(1.411)		(1.286)		(1.072)
Left		**5.329**[***]		**4.496**[***]		**5.898**[***]
		(0.963)		(0.772)		(1.050)
Experience						
Years in IGR	-0.0507	-0.0401				
	(0.0436)	(0.0416)				
Education Law	-0.629	-0.635				
	(1.329)	(1.323)				
Education Politics or Administration	0.123	0.370				
	(1.420)	(1.258)				
Participation in survey			1.184	1.227		
			(0.652)	(0.676)		
N	103	103	160	160	186	186
adj. R^2	0.182	0.251	0.287	0.324	0.206	0.299

Standard errors in parentheses

[*] $p < 0.05$, [**] $p < 0.01$, [***] $p < 0.001$

TABLE 5: Determinants of Centrality in the Negotiation Network

	Full Model (a)	Full Model (b)	Jurisdictional & Organization Model (a)	Jurisdictional & Organization Model (b)	Federal Model (a)	Federal Model (b)
Voting Power						
No. BR votes	**0.704**[*]	**0.540**[*]	**0.682**[**]	**0.526**[**]		
	(0.288)	(0.216)	(0.174)	(0.145)		
Financial Power						
Net Contributor	**2.629**[*]	1.945	**2.317**[**]	**1.682**[**]		
	(1.188)	(0.933)	(0.644)	(0.538)		
Finance Ministry	1.846	1.899	1.863	1.852	**1.743**[*]	**1.831**[*]
	(1.224)	(1.215)	(0.888)	(0.930)	(0.732)	(0.817)
Institutional Power						
BR Presidency	1.129	1.201	1.133	1.181	1.129	1.201
	(0.898)	(0.936)	(0.745)	(0.701)	(0.898)	(0.936)
Government Chancellery	**4.555**[***]	**4.673**[***]	**4.921**[***]	**5.000**[***]	**5.090**[***]	**5.327**[***]
	(0.705)	(0.643)	(0.652)	(0.626)	(0.589)	(0.574)
Federal Level					**-2.756**[***]	**-2.131**[***]
					(0.330)	(0.306)
Domestic Constraint						
Density intragovernmental network	**0.074**[*]	**0.0545**[*]	**0.0658**[***]	**0.0525**[**]		
	(0.0265)	(0.0209)	(0.0140)	(0.0136)		
Distance coalition parties	-0.729	-0.273	**-0.694**[**]	-0.286		
	(0.409)	(0.285)	(0.227)	(0.210)		
Party Politics						
Party Congruence (fed.)	0.174		0.488			
	(0.899)		(0.598)			
No. Party peers	-0.003		-0.0079		-0.008	
	(0.010)		(0.0064)		(0.006)	
SPD		1.474		0.826		**1.029**[*]
		(0.688)		(0.695)		(0.480)
Greens		2.110		1.570		**2.469**[**]
		(1.290)		(1.152)		(0.737)
Left		**2.290**[**]		**1.881**[*]		**2.167**[*]
		(0.631)		(0.635)		(0.833)
Experience						
Years in IGR	-0.015	-0.014				
	(0.038)	(0.036)				
Education Law	-0.264	-0.480				
	(0.814)	(0.748)				
Education Politics or Administration	0.001	0.080				
	(0.984)	(0.918)				
Participation in survey			0.857	0.876		
			(0.441)	(0.441)		
N	103	103	160	160	183	183
adj. R^2	0.309	0.339	0.428	0.440	0.387	0.433

Standard errors in parentheses

[*] $p < 0.05$, [**] $p < 0.01$, [***] $p < 0.001$

Contrary to the expectations, experience does not have an effect on power (H6a). Years of experience in IGR if anything seems to have a negative effect, which however is not significant. Having an education in law has a negative and education in politics and public administration a positive but also not significant effect on power, a tendency which corresponds to the initial expectations (H6b).

6 Conclusion

This study has provided a new approach to research the power and influence of bureaucratic actors in relation to each other. When involved in joint decision-making processes, bureaucrats are to different degrees central and powerful during the process and thus have different potentials to influence the final decision. This complements the predominantly vertical study of bureaucratic influence on politicians, by adding a horizontal perspective. It demonstrates that not all bureaucrats involved in a decision-making and coordination process are equally powerful and that varying distributions of power resources affect their power and influence.

Organizational and jurisdictional power resources, in contrast to personal power resources, thereby seem to matter most in bureaucratic coordination processes, even when politicians are not involved. The departments' bureaucrats often contact bureaucrats representing the government chancellery (institutional power). This indicates that the departments, at least in this context, indeed include them in the coordination process and share information, questioning a dominant departmental orientation (Fleischer, 2011, p. 60). Bureaucrats, whose ministers are affiliated to certain political parties, surprisingly the smaller and federal opposition parties, play an important and central role in bureaucratic coordination. Thus, party politics and functional politicization can make even bureaucratic actors more powerful. In the context of German IGR, bureaucratic coordination represents a mechanism to include minority and federal opposition parties and thus seems to be oriented on inclusion and

consensus. Party politics, hence, should be systematically included in the study of bureaucratic politics (see also Brummer, 2017). Furthermore, close coordination with the other bureaucrats from the own jurisdiction is also an important power resource. This might indicated that in bureaucratic IGR in federal states, in contrast to international relations, the two level logic works with a different mechanism. Actors do not become more powerful through sectoral constraints by the other departments or political constraints by their coalition partners, but rather closeness and coordination among these actors make them more powerful because they can jointly pursue their interests. Furthermore, the power resources that actors use differ between processes of information exchange and negotiations. The hard power resources, voting and financial power, which seem important in international relations, are only relevant for bureaucratic intergovernmental coordination, when it comes to negotiations. The process of coordination is, thus, more precisely captured by distinguishing these phases.

An analytical framework for the investigation of power resources of bureaucrats in a horizontal perspective is proposed here, which is applicable to IGR in any multilevel state. While IGR in multilevel states significantly differ from each other, the hypotheses developed are sufficiently broad and can be adapted to varying national and international contexts. Thus, they offer a framework to investigate this aspect of bureaucratic IGR in a comparative perspective. Furthermore, these findings might also be transferred to the study of inter-departmental decision-making processes within one government and thus advance public administration research in general.

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