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Bureaucracy-Interest Group Interactions
Unravelled

8.1 Building bridges, dependent on support, or just a habit?

The bureaucrats in New York City and Rotterdam chose to cooperate for similar reasons with immigrant organisations, as we saw in the introduction. A capacity to intermediate between the local government and diverse citizen groups turned out to be a vital resource, both in maintaining contact over time and getting in touch quickly in times of contingencies. This capacity to intermediate appeared to travel the oceans well. In two entirely different interest representation systems, a similar resource proved to be vital for solid policy making as well as effective crisis management. The differences in the political-administrative systems of each city were apparently not the most important explanatory factor determining these civil servants’ similar needs and reactions. Other contextual factors apparently matter for bureaucrats’ interactions with interest groups.

A case study into such relations (Poppelaars 2007) highlighted this similarity and pointed to a more general question about this political-administrative phenomenon. Why is it that bureaucrats interact with certain interest groups but not, or to a lesser extent, with others? And why do we see variation in the extent of their interaction, as well as in their motives? Some of these motives could be remarkably similar across different political-administrative dimensions, but others would perhaps vary to a considerable degree along the very same dimensions. In a nutshell, and at a relatively abstract level, the answer to these questions is that bureaucrats’ motives to interact with interest groups are grounded in a mix of strategic, anticipatory, and habitual rationality. This mixture of choices varies under different political-administrative circumstances and explains why interactions between bureaucrats and interest groups can vary. In what follows, I will discuss the overall conclusion in more detail. I first briefly summarise the explanatory model developed in this study and the empirical findings generated by testing the model. I then briefly reflect on the research project and the explanatory potential of the model. Finally, I address how the model relates to other strands of literature and sketch possible avenues for further research.
8.2 The explanatory value of the resource dependence model

The added value of the resource dependence model to explain bureaucracy-interest group interactions is that it integrates several existing explanations for this phenomenon. And, by doing so, it allows systematic comparison of these interactions across cases and over time. The underlying logic of the model is to focus on a central underlying commonality found in the different sets of literature explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions. That is, in all three sets of literature examined here, we see different types of resource exchanges. The literature on bureaucratic politics reveals that, for bureaucrats to establish autonomy or to push through their policy plans, they need political support. They are able to obtain this political support from networks of interest groups. According to the interest group literature, interest groups try to exert influence by offering certain expertise and information to ensure their access to the decision-making process. In some cases, interest groups may have to offer resources that bureaucrats fully rely on, rendering them very influential. According to policy network studies, bureaucracy-interest group interactions serve a mutual benefit. That is, in such interactions, ‘give’ and ‘take’ are perfectly in balance. Requiring political support, providing expertise, and a mutual benefit: these three explanations all suggest an exchange. This is why classic resource dependence theory, in which resource exchanges are the key explanatory variable for interactions between organisations, is ideally suited as a starting point to develop an explanatory model of bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

Classic resource dependence theory, developed by Pfeffer and Salancik (2003[1978]), assumes that organisations are not self-sufficient. As a result, they must interact with other organisations to obtain the resources they need to survive. The nature of such resource exchanges is, first, determined by the necessity of these resources for survival (the relative importance of resources), and, second, by the availability of these resources (the concentration of resources in the environment). Resource dependence theory additionally assumes that organisations try to minimise their dependence on other organisations by strategically picking and choosing the organisations with which to interact, based on what they perceive to be important resources. This option of strategic decision making distinguishes resource dependence theory from its fellow contextual approaches, such as neo-institutionalism and evolutionary organisational population theory, which are more deterministic in nature. Resource dependence theory emphasises strategic choice rather than adaptation to environment in an almost mechanical way (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978]; Scott 2001).

Applying the basic assumptions of classic resource dependence theory to bureaucracy-interest group interactions generated my explanatory model. Under resource dependence theory, bureaucrats need to interact with interest groups to obtain the resources they need. Bureaucracy-interest group interactions are then determined by the elements that govern resource exchange relationships. That is, bureaucracy-interest group interactions can be explained by the importance of the resources to either the bureaucracy or interest groups (the relative importance of
the resources) and by the extent to which these resources are available in the environment (resource concentration). By measuring both elements – resource importance and resource concentration – it should be possible to determine the nature of bureaucracy-interest group interactions (see chapter 3 for a detailed discussion and the full model). That is, when the resulting degree of dependence is more severe for bureaucrats, the traditional interpretation of the interest group literature is likely to hold. Vice versa, when the degree of dependence is less severe for bureaucrats, the interpretation of bureaucratic politics is likely to hold.

I further hypothesised that the individual elements that constitute the degree of dependence, resource importance and resource concentration, are likely to vary across different political-administrative dimensions. National interest representation regimes characterising a country; differences in political-administrative relations; functional and cultural differences among public agencies; the salience, complexity and political sensitivity of different policy areas; the influence of framing; and finally, Europeanisation, were hypothesised to either influence resource concentration or resource importance, or both (see also chapter 3). Incorporating these contextual dimensions in the model allowed for cross-sectional comparisons to determine under which circumstances the degree of dependence would be more severe for either bureaucrats or interest groups.

This comparative model, however, did not incorporate a rival explanation to the assumption of strategic choice. Classic resource dependence theory argues that organisations strategically pick and choose to minimise their dependence. It assumes, implicitly, the possibility of ending interactions at any given time. Such an exit option, however, may not always be evident, which implies that resource exchanges may not solely be determined by strategic rationality. The possibilities for strategic decision making will be most likely absent or severely limited when the degree of dependence is severe. The organisation in question is forced to interact, as it were, but may still be doing so based on a conscious choice. In other words, an organisation may anticipate benefits of future interactions or disadvantages from future non-interactions and, therefore, continues to interact today. This is a situation characterised by, what I term, anticipatory rationality. A third option, however, arises when these interactions do not result from a conscious rational choice. That is, a given resource exchange could be a purely routine activity, which was originally based on a rational choice but has unconsciously continued over time. Such a situation reflects what Simon has called habitual rationality (1997[1947]) or, put differently, institutional reproduction. This routine behaviour could reflect an optimal or a suboptimal situation.

In short, the resource dependence model states that bureaucracy-interest group interactions can be conceptualised as a resource exchange characterised by a degree of dependence. The degree of dependence is determined by the importance of a resource to the organisation in question and the extent to which this particular resource is available in the environment (resource concentration). As both elements will vary under different political-administrative circumstances, so will the degree of dependence that is constituted by these two elements. Such resource exchanges are, however, not only a result of strategic rationality, as is implicit in classic resource dependence theory, but they are also likely to result from anticipatory and habitual rationality.
So, by measuring both resource importance and resource concentration, we can measure bureaucracy-interest group interactions over time and across cases. A reconceptualisation of bureaucracy-interest group interactions at a more abstract level allows for systematic comparison of these interactions. And, in addition, it allows us to incorporate the different types choices that are apparent in the three strands of literature explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions discussed here. As such, the resource dependence model is an attempt to integrate various theoretical explanations of bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

8.3 Variations in bureaucracy-interest group interactions

The findings on bureaucracy-interest group interactions generated by this study can be summarised by three subheadings. First, bureaucracy-interest groups can be explained by a resource dependence conceptualisation and have been shown to vary systematically across different circumstances (chapter 5). Second, interest group population dynamics, such as cooperation and competition, appear to influence bureaucracy-interest group interactions and need to be incorporated in a full model of resource dependence (chapter 6). Third, apart from the strategic choices implicit in a resource dependence reconceptualisation, bureaucracy-interest group interactions can sometimes be explained by anticipatory and habitual rationality as well (chapter 7). In this sense, the three empirical chapters provide complementary findings on bureaucracy-interest group interactions, which will be discussed below.

8.3.1 Why bureaucrats interact with interest groups

The first part of the empirical analysis (chapter 5) was primarily aimed at testing the explanatory model. With an overall $R^2$ of roughly 0.48, the model offers a satisfying explanation for observed variations in bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Bureaucracy-interest group interactions can thus be unpacked by measuring resource importance and resource concentration and by taking into account the influence of contextual dimensions on each of these elements. This finding justifies further development of the explanatory model.

In general, the contextual variables have a larger impact on the importance of the individual resources than that they have on the concentration of resources. Apparently, context influences the value civil servants attach to resources more than it influences the extent to which resources are available in their environment. Of these contextual variables, interest representation regime is an important explanatory variable. In corporatist regimes, the number of other types of organisations with which civil servants interact is somewhat smaller and the number of familiar interest groups is somewhat higher. Civil servants in pluralist interest representation regimes, like the UK, consider expertise, implementation capacity, and intermediation capacity to be more important than their colleagues in corporatist regimes. Although the importance of legitimacy significantly differs between the two types of interest representation regimes, the analyses could not reveal a direction in which the variance occurs.

A second contextual variable, political-strategic insight, is particularly significant in explaining the importance of different resources. When political-strategic insight
becomes more important, civil servants will consider implementation capacity, expertise, and intermediation capacity to be more important. Variation in agency type also influences the importance civil servants attribute to the different resources interest groups have to offer. Civil servants working at advisory agencies consider expertise to be less important than their colleagues in executive agencies. Civil servants working at these two different types of agencies also differ in the importance they attach to legitimacy. Yet, it is hard to tell from the analyses whether the UK or the Dutch civil servants consider it to be more important. The capacity to intermediate is less important for those working at advisory as opposed to those working for executive agencies.

The number of other types of organisations that civil servants cooperate with, as well as the number of interest groups that civil servants are familiar with, varies according to policy area. Variation in policy area is also related to the perceived importance of implementation capacity and legitimacy. Civil servants responsible for different policy areas value the importance of particular resources in different ways. They work together with varying numbers of other types of organisations such as advisory councils or research institutes and are familiar with varying numbers of interest groups. Variation in policy area is thus related to both resource concentration and resource importance.

Finally, EU involvement does not seem to be related to either the importance or the concentration of resources in the environment. Only in the case of legitimacy and intermediation capacity does EU involvement seem to be related to the value civil servants attach to this resource, but only to a very small extent.

An analysis of the interaction effects between the resource elements and contextual variables confirms the small yet significant impact of context in explaining variation in degree of dependence. What we can conclude is that the degree of dependence varies across these political dimensions and that some of the political-administrative dimensions matter more in determining this variation than others. What these analyses have shown is that bureaucracy-interest group interactions can be conceptualised as resource exchanges and that, via a systematic variation of contextual variables, the different nature - the degree of dependence - of bureaucracy-interest group interactions can be explained.

8.3.2 Interest group population dynamics matter

The empirical findings described above show that resource concentration is less influenced by the contextual dimensions specified in the analyses of chapter 5 than resource importance. It could very well be the case that resource concentration is influenced by contextual dimensions other than those included in the model. To provide insights into such potential effects, chapter 6 examined population dynamics that could influence bureaucracy-interest group interactions. This chapter examined several kinds of interaction patterns among interest groups, the resources they consider to be important, and how they value bureaucratic access as a means for exerting influence. In summary, the findings show that cooperation between interest groups involves either a relatively small or a relatively large set of interest groups. Interest groups in the UK tend to interact with a larger number of fellow interest groups than their Dutch colleagues. Interest groups also tend to
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interact with a small number of other types of organisations, such as advisory councils, research institutes, or consultancy firms. In addition, interest groups experience relatively low levels of competition from each other. Such a perception of competition seems to vary according to the kinds of interest groups involved. Overall, however, perceptions of competition are not influenced by the independent variables included in the model, such as interest representation regime, receiving government grants, and variation in kinds of interest groups.

Interest groups argue that expertise and information are important resources they can bring to the negotiation table. Implementation capacity, on the other hand, is considered to be a less important resource. This is an interesting finding, given that civil servants tend to consider implementation capacity a relatively important reason to cooperate with interest groups. Interest groups naturally seek to obtain something in return for the resources they bring. What is particularly important to them, first of all, is to get access to public policy making. When we compare the number of various political officials with which interest groups interacted, we find relatively small differences. UK interest groups seem to interact with more senior civil servants and (under-)Ministers than their Dutch counterparts. The latter tend to interact with more middle-level civil servants. In terms of frequency and perception, interest groups tend to find civil servants more important and interact more often with them in trying to exert influence. The frequency of interactions with civil servants also varies across the different kinds of interest groups. And, on the whole, interest groups in the Netherlands consider civil servants to be more important in exerting influence and interact more often with them than their UK colleagues do. Generally, interest groups consider civil servants to be important in assuring access to public policy making and, thereby, in being able to actually provide input for policy proposals. In addition, bureaucratic access is important to gain a sense that their input is actually used to adapt policy proposals. Exerting influence is a two-stage process of getting access and actually delivering input for policy proposals that is taken seriously. And, civil servants are apparently more important to interest groups in this process than politicians are.

Finally, a major change in the environment of interest groups in the Netherlands and the UK, namely Europeanisation, does not seem to have had a big impact on national bureaucracy-interest group interactions to date. Civil servants report that they only to a limited extent include interest groups in their EU-related activities. Interest groups correspondingly indicate that they only to a limited extent experience either advantages or disadvantages from European regulations. Strategically using European regulations and directives at the national level is still a rare activity. Apparently, interest groups are not entirely aware of the strategic potential or impact of European regulations, directives and best practices. More generally, they seem to have difficulties adapting to the EU environment.

How do these findings relate to the resource dependence model developed in this study? The cooperation and competition patterns among interest groups are assumed to influence bureaucracy-interest group interactions by influencing resource concentration. This will eventually influence the degree of dependence that characterises bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Cooperation patterns reveal that civil servants may have alternative sources to reach out to when they seek resources, and they thus imply that resource concentration may be less severe
when interest groups cooperate. Competition, on the other hand, may result in fewer organisations having access to civil servants, and thus fewer organisations may be known by civil servants. This results in higher resource concentration.

A different interpretation of the importance of individual resources may also have consequences for the eventual degree of dependence. When interest groups are unaware of the importance of a particular resource, this may result in a higher degree of dependence, as the resource in question is not readily available to civil servants. It could thus enhance the bargaining position of interest groups when they are aware of the value of the resources they have to offer to civil servants. They could, as it were, try to ‘sell their resources at a higher price,’ and thereby heighten the degree of dependence. The apparent importance of bureaucratic access as a resource for interest groups, however, may mitigate the degree of dependence for civil servants. When civil servants are considered to be important, their bargaining position is stronger vis-à-vis interest groups. These findings thus reveal important contextual dimensions that are related to bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Particularly, this analysis draws attention to several population dynamics within the interest group environment that are important to consider in a full model of resource dependence explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

8.3.3 Multiple rationalities at work

The foregoing findings are based on the assumption that interactions between civil servants and interest groups are based on strategic rationality to interact with an interest group capable of providing the resources the civil servant in question needs. Implicitly, this assumes an exit option. When an interest group cannot offer the resources a civil servant needs, why then continue to interact? Contemplating resource dependence over time, however, reveals that ending such relationships is not always a realistic option. The final set of analyses (chapter 7) therefore examined the possibility that resource dependence could be the result of anticipatory and habitual rationality. Anticipatory rationality indicates that civil servants, or interest groups, may not really want to interact. But, given the relevance of a particular organisation in the foreseeable future, or the willingness to reduce uncertainty, they are more or less ‘forced’ to interact. This is a strategic choice to interact despite a current unwillingness to do so. Second, bureaucracy-interest group interactions could also be a result of a choice made in the past that has turned into a routine, indicating habitual rationality. These interactions could still meet a previous, rationally decided-upon purpose, yet could also reflect a situation that is suboptimal.

The following findings indicate the existence of a mixture of different types of rationalities. First, civil servants tend to interact with a relatively familiar set of organisations. And, when asked why they interact, the reasons of ‘we usually have interactions, so today as well’ and ‘consultation procedures’ are important, in addition to the resources highlighted in the main resource dependence model. Contextual variables seem to affect these reasons as well. Consultation procedures prove to be more important in corporatist regimes than in more pluralist regimes, whereas ‘usual interactions with interest groups’ are more important to senior civil
servants in more pluralist regimes. In addition, civil servants involved in different policy areas value these reasons differently.

These reasons to interact, and the interaction patterns with familiar organisations, point in the direction of habitual rationality. Civil servants, however, also indicate that, should they want to circumvent certain interest groups, they would face difficulties in doing so. Interest groups may hold an important position in the nation’s economy or may be too important as a spokesperson to ignore; there may be (in)formal requirements to interact, or there may always have been close cooperation. These reasons suggest a mixture of both habitual and anticipatory rationality. The (in)formal requirements and the existence of close cooperation suggest habitual rationality, whereas an interest group’s role as spokesperson and in a nation’s economy suggest anticipatory rationality. By conducting a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) with interview data, we observe that several indicators of habitual and anticipatory rationality are necessary conditions for durable interactions. Further analysis reveals that, for interest groups, some of these are jointly necessary, such as consultation procedures and the importance of civil servants as an entrance point to policy-making processes. In the case of civil servants, there is reason to suggest that consultation procedures, the need for legitimacy, and the influential position of interest groups may jointly explain their interactions with interest groups. In addition, an in-depth analysis illustrates the underlying mechanisms of the different types of rationality in concrete instances.

These three sets of analyses (testing the model, exploring interest group population dynamics and examining different types of rationalities) suggest that the combination of strategic, anticipatory, and habitual rationality determines the dependence relation between civil servants and interest groups. It is likely, then, that bureaucracy-interest group interactions result from a mixture of choices rather than a single type of rationality.

8.4 Going forward by looking back

The model developed in this study unravels how variation in the determining elements of an exchange relation – resource importance and resource concentration – explains variation in the degree of dependence that characterises bureaucracy-interest group interactions. The model and its analyses thus follow Mill’s method of concomitant variation (Mill 1970[1843], see also chapter 4). The empirical analyses, however, do not yet enable us to predict the degree of dependence in a given situation, because they do not fully capture the impact of context and the interaction between the resource elements. In addition, the precise causal direction of the resource variables and the contextual variables needs to be developed further. And, we also require a more detailed analysis of the different types of rationality as it is yet unclear whether strategic, anticipatory, and habitual rationality are mutually exclusive or mutually reinforcing mechanisms to explain resource dependence.

So, the empirical analyses in this study offer promising findings but also suggest several ways to go forward, both in theoretical and methodological terms. A twofold theoretical issue that stands out after the analyses is how we could refine
the individual resource elements to better capture their meaning. And second, we need to better theorise and analyse the impact of context and interaction effects, both between context and resources and between the individual contextual variables. In methodological terms, the research design needs a better match with the model’s explanatory potential. Below, I will briefly discuss these two issues.

8.4.1 Refining the model

What becomes clear when casting resource dependence theory in a rudimentary formula is that there are several gaps and missing links to properly develop a dependence model of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Consider the formula that summarised the argument in chapter 3 once again:

\[ D = \sum_{r=1}^{N} (I_r + C_{ir} + Cor) \]

where,

- \( D \) = degree of dependence of a given bureaucracy-interest group resource exchange relation
- \( I \) = the importance of a particular resource (the value attributed to a particular resource)
- \( C_{ir} \) = inside concentration of a particular resource (the number of interest groups that control a particular resource)
- \( Cor \) = outside concentration of a particular resource (the number of other organisations that control a particular resource)

A first obvious refinement is explicitly incorporating a ranking of the importance of resources \( (I_r) \) in the model. What is now included in the model is a dichotomous concept of importance \( (0 = \text{unimportant}; 1 = \text{important}) \), which incorporates a ranking at a more aggregate level. Usually, reference is made to the critical dependency of resources by ranking them in order of importance (Jacobs 1974; Bouwen 2004). What is thus necessary to capture the importance of resources better is either adding weights to the individual resources or measuring them by using a scale or index. In addition, we need to incorporate the variation of importance as a consequence of the impact of particular contextual factors.

Second, measuring the number of organisations, be they interest groups or other types of organisations, is not enough to capture the idea of concentration of resources. Concentration of, in this case, resources implies a relative measurement. That is, we cannot properly determine concentration when we do not know the boundaries of a total population. What should be included in the model is a ratio measurement rather than an absolute number of organisations. This means that the number of interest groups that are familiar to civil servants and capable of providing a particular resource should be divided by the total number of interest groups. This also applies to the number of other organisations with which civil servants may interact.

A possible complicating factor of incorporating such ratio terms is that usually there is no satisfying census of the interest group population. Furthermore, by simply adding up inside and outside concentration, we cannot properly isolate the concentration of resources within the interest group environment from the concentration in the total environment including other types of organisations. To
do this, a ratio of the concentration of resources within the interest group environment as opposed to the total environment (other organisations and interest groups) should be included in the model as well.

How these different ratio measurements (inside resource concentration as the proportion of familiar interest groups of the total population, and the proportion of the interest groups of the total environment) precisely relate to each other to constitute an overall measurement of resource concentration remains a subject for further study. In addition, the number of familiar interest groups will be influenced by the contextual factors specified in the model. But, as we have seen, they will also be influenced by competition and cooperation among interest groups. So, refining resource concentration by ratio terms is only a first step.

Third, according to the original resource dependence theory, a given dependence relation is characterised by resource importance and resource concentration. The theory, however, does not properly specify the linking term of ‘and’ between the individual resource elements. In the model developed in chapter 3, this linking term has been interpreted by an additive term. So, importance plus concentration are said to determine degree of dependence. Arguably, however, addition does not fully capture how the two elements relate to each other. An important aspect that is missing by interpreting the missing link in additive terms is a proper recognition of the interdependence, or interaction effects, between resource importance and resource concentration. To illustrate, when the importance of a resource is high, but concentration is low, the degree of dependence will be mitigated. Vice versa, when importance is low, yet concentration is high, the degree of dependence will be more severe. Or, when importance is low, concentration may not matter that much any more. A straightforward way of capturing this effect in the model is to include with the additive term a multiplicative term. A multiplicative term better reflects the interaction effects just mentioned and offers a starting point to capture the interaction effects between resource importance and resource concentration.

Finally, and I only touched upon this briefly so far, the interaction effects between context and the resource elements need to be included in the core dependence model. The interaction model in chapter 5 and the individual analyses of how importance and concentration vary under different circumstances suggest the importance of contextual factors to explain bureaucracy-interest group dependence relations. Further work needs to be done, however, to precisely unravel under what specific values of the contextual variables importance and concentration of resources vary and in which direction. The empirical analyses, in addition, suggest the importance of both macro- and meso-level contextual variables. The theoretical challenge here is to better distil the systemic effects of the contextual variables on the individual resource elements, the interaction among contextual variables, and their joint effect on the resource elements.

8.4.2 Matching analysis techniques with the model’s needs

Essentially, a large part of the model is about explaining motives and how they vary across different circumstances. Using questionnaires and interviews is an appropriate way of revealing the individual considerations and reasons behind
bureaucracy-interest group interactions. The contextual variables, however, were measured by questionnaire items as well. For instance, functional differences between agency types were measured by asking respondents what type of agency they work for. Their answers were coded based on the classification derived from the literature. This way of measuring agency type draws heavily upon the perception of respondents, rather than being a careful coding based on the classification used in the literature of the agency types that were included in the sample. For the purpose and within the time frame set for this study, measurements like these can be justified. But they may be not as detailed as one would wish. The same applies to the most of the contextual variables. In general, we could conclude that context was measured in a somewhat simplified manner. An improvement would include measures based on careful classifications of institutional variables and content analysis to capture the impact of variation across policy areas better. Measuring the political salience of a policy area would require, for instance, extensive coding based on a wide array of documents (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Breeman et al 2008).

Although interaction effects have been included in the model, a more precise analysis of how contextual variables relate to each other and to the resource elements would be an improvement. Multi-level modelling or nested analysis, for instance, could be potentially useful in doing so. For example, civil servants all work within a ministry, executive agency or other type of organisation that is in turn nested within a particular interest representation regime. Such techniques would allow us to better capture the effects of the contextual variables on the degree of dependence.

In sum, empirical analysis of the contextual variables could thus be improved by other types of data collection and measurement techniques. In addition, resource concentration would also require supplementary analysis techniques as what is measured in this study is a perception of resource concentration rather than actual resource concentration. Network analyses should be helpful in doing this.

Second, unravelling a set of different types of choices underlying bureaucracy-interest group interactions requires a research design that measures such interactions over time. The mix of survey analysis, counterfactual analysis, and QCA was designed to capture the different types of behavioural logics that underpin bureaucracy-interest group interactions. But this mix of analysis techniques serves only as an approximation of a long-term pattern of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. An important issue to note is that these analyses, particularly QCA, are likely to reveal only a subset of the entire set of mechanisms underlying bureaucracy-interest group behaviour. For a full analysis of such mechanisms, the selection of cases should also include those that reveal no or only a few interactions. Without such ‘negative’ cases, analysis of sufficiency is not possible, and thus cannot provide a complete analysis of the different types of choices underlying bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

Although the QCA indeed points to the existence of different types of choices and the possibility that they jointly determine bureaucracy-interest group interactions, for a true measurement of such behavioural logics, a long-term research design is needed. When relying on QCA, one way to incorporate the element of time is to include in the analysis a potential sequence of indicators as
separate variables (Caren and Panofsky 2005). For instance, and purely hypothetically, one could assume that consultation procedures result in trust. According to Caren and Panofsky (2005), this option should be included as a separate condition in the analysis: if there are consultation procedures, trust will follow. Interestingly, this sounds similar to incorporating interaction terms in multiple regression language, provided that the interaction term only includes one-way effects. But rather than including the effect of time by assuming certain sequences in events, it is better to adopt a true longitudinal design, measuring these interactions over a certain period in time. The crucial challenge, then, is how to capture the differences between the mechanisms underlying the triad of strategic, anticipatory, and habitual rationality. Whereas fluctuation in degree of dependence at face value indicates strategic rationality, stability could conceal all three types of rationality. Further in-depth investigation of how resource concentration and resource importance evolve over time would reveal which of the individual rationalities, or a combination of, is involved in the resource exchange.

Finally, the use of counterfactual analysis points to the usefulness of a quasi-experimental design. Bureaucracy-interest group interactions based on anticipatory rationality (or capture) are difficult to measure due to their politically sensitive nature. Capture basically implies that certain interest groups have a disproportional amount of influence over civil servants. What is more, this disproportional amount of influence is usually undemocratically obtained; neither set of actors, i.e. bureaucrats and interest groups, is democratically elected. So, respondents are most likely to be somewhat reluctant to provide information on the occurrence of such a phenomenon. In this research, questions posed according to the logic of counterfactuals have been used to probe the existence of anticipatory rationality. Such counterfactual analysis points in the direction of quasi-experimental designs. These designs use scenarios or hypothetical examples to ask respondents what they usually would do when they encounter such situations. The interactive mode of many online surveys, as well as the possibility to control the order of the questions, allows more easy use of survey experiments. While such designs have their own problems (Gaines and Kuklinski 2006; Sniderman et al. 1996), they can be, with careful attention those problems, used to better distinguish the different types of choices underlying bureaucracy-interest group interactions and to generate reliable findings on sensitive issues such a capture.

Although surveys and interviews are well suited to explore and examine individual motives and considerations to interact, they are less well suited to measure contextual variables. When used in comparative perspective, the model requires additional data collection and analysis techniques so as to provide a better explanation of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. In addition, to better measure how the resource elements vary along different political-administrative dimensions, techniques should be used that specifically address the interaction between variables measured at different levels of analysis and that can include multiple dependent variables. Finally, research designs focused on the individual types of choices underlying bureaucracy-interest group interactions, in particular longitudinal designs and quasi-experimental designs, will be a valuable supplement to those that were applied in this study.
8.4.3 The model and its theoretical roots

The conceptual model based on resource dependence used here to explain bureaucracy-interest group interactions, as well as the empirical findings, results in interesting observations for the classic resource dependence model as well as for the literatures on interest group politics, bureaucratic politics, and longitudinal perspectives on decision-making.

The dependence model and classic resource dependence theory

The reconceptualisation of bureaucracy-interest group interactions in terms of resource exchange draws attention to several types of choices potentially underlying these interactions. They can individually explain the resource exchanges upon which bureaucracy-interest group interactions are based, or they could operate jointly. One interesting observation from this application of resource dependence theory is that it draws more attention to the deterministic element of context than the original version does. Pfeffer and Salancik (2003[1978]) emphasise the possibility of strategic choice and argue that this feature distinguishes their theory from fellow contextual theories. Recent applications of resource exchange to explain access of interest groups to government institutions, in particular those related to EU interest representation, also emphasise this strategic decision-making aspect. By identifying what civil servants need most, the access of the interest groups capable of delivering these resources is explained. In other words, “the organisations involved in the exchange [of resources, CP] make an implicit or explicit cost-benefit analysis on the basis of which they decide with whom to interact” (Bouwen 2002, 368). But too much attention to strategic choice denies the impact of context, the other determinant of resource exchange relations. Beyers and Kerremans (2007) show, for instance, that dependence on resources in their immediate environment creates difficulties for interest groups when they try to lobby EU institutions.

While the focus is still on resources, context seems to be a decisive element in explaining the available options of how to strategically exploit such resources. The resource dependence model developed in this study points precisely to the importance of context. This is true not only in determining strategic rationality, but also for the two rival types of behavioural logics: anticipatory and habitual rationality. Context may set the boundaries for strategic choice as well as induce habitual or anticipatory rational choices. The scope to strategically choose to interact with interest groups or civil servants (depending on the perspective taken) seems to be very much determined by the context in which these interactions occur. Demarcating and understanding context is thus required to understand the extent to which these actors may strategically decide upon their interactions. In the end, resource dependence theory may be more deterministic than it is argued to be by its founders (Aldrich and Pfeffer 1976; Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978]).

So, resource dependence theory could be defined as the inter-organisational version of Herbert Simon’s (1997[1947]) intra-organisational concept of bounded rationality. Just as an organisation enhances or restricts an individual’s rationality, so may the political-administrative environment restrict or alter the strategic choices of bureaucrats or interest groups to obtain the resources they need.
Chapter 8

The dependence model and bureaucratic politics

Designed to integrate various explanations to systematically compare bureaucracy-interest group interactions, the model also raises interesting questions about each of its theoretical foundations. Consider the literature on bureaucratic politics. An important implication of these analyses is that bureaucracy-interest group interactions are a key aspect of bureaucratic politics. Often, bureaucratic politics has studied political-administrative relations or inter-agency strife. They have studied how individual motives of bureaucrats relate to growing budgets or growing agencies (Downs 1967; Mueller 2003, 359-384; Niskanen 1971; Tullock 1995), or incorporated inter-agency strife as a factor to explain decision making (Allison and Zelikow 1999; Huntington 1961). Only very few studies (Aberbach, Putnam, and Rockman 1981; Carpenter 2001; Suleiman 1974, for instance) have included relations between interest groups and bureaucrats in models of bureaucratic behaviour. These relations, which I have termed the external part of bureaucratic politics, are important in understanding the internal part and vice versa. Interactions with interest groups could serve agency autonomy and are thus important in understanding inter-agency competition. In addition, such interactions could very well enhance a bureaucracy’s position towards a political superior (Carpenter 2001). On the other hand, the kind of political leadership which civil servants experience, and the resulting political-administrative relationship, is likely to influence bureaucracy-interest group interactions as well, since they determine, among other things, a civil servant’s room to manoeuvre. But not many studies explicitly incorporate interactions with interest groups in understanding the phenomenon of bureaucratic politics. The findings generated by this study suggest the relevance of various political-administrative dimensions in explaining variation in bureaucracy-interest group interactions. And, these contextual factors are equally important in explaining the larger phenomenon of bureaucratic politics. The resource dependence model thus draws attention to the importance of interactions with interest groups in studies of bureaucratic politics, as well as the necessity for systematic comparative analyses of bureaucratic politics as a broader research area.

The dependence model and interest group politics

The analyses of the interest group environment have important implications for the literature on interest group politics. First, interest representation in Europe is not only an issue of lobbying Brussels. It is also an issue of how national interest groups are coping with Brussels back home. In other words, we need to better understand what the consequences are for interest group behaviour at the national level arising from the multi-level governance system of the EU. Currently, most attention in the literature on interest representation in the EU is concerned with the EU governance level (see, for instance, Broscheid and Coen 2007; Bouwen and McCown 2007; Eising 2007). Europe, at least in an objective sense, is becoming more important; therefore, it is not surprising that most attention is paid to EU interest representation. However, national member states will remain important in the EU in the near future, if not indefinitely. The national governance level thus remains important for exerting influence, and the focus of interest groups will accordingly remain to a great extent on the national level. From that perspective, we
need to better understand how national interest groups and national bureaucracy-interest group interactions are influenced by the process of Europeanisation. Are interest groups really too tied to their immediate environment to turn their gaze to Brussels (Beyers and Kerremans 2007). Or, more generally, what difficulties do interest groups face when incorporating the additional level of governance into their strategies in the national capitals? In other words, why do interest groups cope with the multi-level governance systems as they do today? For a true understanding of interest representation in a multi-level context, the influence of the EU on national interest representation is a vital additional element in studying EU interest representation.

This brings me to another implication of the analyses on interest group population dynamics. These analyses reveal a gap in the literature on interest representation regimes in corporatist countries. The literature on corporatism mostly concerns the bargaining mechanisms which should result in effective macro- and social-economic policy making (Molina and Rhodes 2002; Siaroff 1999; Schmitter 1989; Visser and Hemerijck 1997) rather than a systematic analysis of interest representation in a broader sense (but see, for instance, the social movement literature). Yet, very often, issues relevant to social-economic policy or macro-economic policy touch on more than only classic labour and public-finance issues. Corporate responsibility, environmental issues, ethnically diverse societies, to name a few, also very much relate to the economic life of a national economy. The major parties currently involved in social-economic policy making are not always fully equipped to address such issues, as they lack the knowledge about and access to specific issues or groups within society. Understanding why such systems remain relatively closed to other types of interest groups, or why the role of such interest groups is different from the traditional social partners, requires a broader focus than decision making in the institutions of tripartite bargaining. Studying influence in decision making or evaluating policy outcomes to explain interest group involvement in corporatist regimes is not enough to understand all aspects of interest representation.

Studying interest representation from a group perspective may help to provide additional insights about who gets access and who does not (Baumgartner and Leech 1998; Lowery and Gray 2004; Aldrich et al 1994). Government-induced restrictions for access may not only determine which interest groups gather around the negotiation table, but will have consequences for interest group communities and mobilisation as well (Lowery, Poppelaars, and Berkhout 2008). In addition, such a broader view on interest representation may help to explain from whom traditional interest groups experience competition, and, if so, in what way. Studies on decision making in corporatist regimes would clearly benefit from such a broader perspective to explain the involvement of interest groups. In other words, changing one’s perspective in explaining a similar phenomenon may reveal additional insights about how interest representation in corporatist regimes works.

**The dependence model and decision making over time**
The conclusion from the final analyses in chapter 7 – resource exchanges determining bureaucracy-interest group interactions are based on multiple rationalities - reveals an interesting finding related to the literature on longitudinal
perspectives on decision making. Resource exchanges based on anticipatory rationality could result from anticipated consequences in the near future. Resource exchanges based on habitual choices may be a consequence of decisions in the past. Both past choices and anticipated (dis)advantages, however, result in similar interactions today. That is, both the heritage of the past and the shadow of the future have similar locked-in effects on contemporary interactions. This observation points to the difficulty in defining the theoretical heritage of the underlying mechanisms of locked-in effects. The main problem in doing so seems to lie in the focus of each strand of literature. Whereas historical institutionalism tends to focus much more on how context and past choices may restrict or stimulate institutional development in a certain direction, evolutionary rational choice perspectives focus on individual motives. So, we need a better understanding of how motives and context relate to each other to unravel the multiple rationalities determining individual’s motives. What the model and the empirical findings of this study suggest is the need for better incorporating the delicate balance between motives and context in studying decision making.

8.5 A joint venture of motives and context

In order to truly understand bureaucracy-interest group interactions, the resource dependence model highlights the importance of both individual motives and context to explain individual’s motives. In particular, the delicate balance between the two, or put differently, their interaction, is crucially important. Such interaction effects are not only relevant for a better understanding of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. The dual importance of motives and context also results in several avenues for further research, which are related to the implications for the broader strands of literature discussed in the previous section. When one argues, however, that the interaction between individual motives and context is important, the question that immediately comes to mind is why actor-centred institutionalism is not a sufficient theoretical framework to advance research in these areas, compared to the model developed in this study. I will address the relationship between actor-centred institutionalism and the resource dependence model in more detail, and then I will elaborate on future research questions in the fields of interest groups politics, bureaucratic politics and institutionalism.

Actor-centred institutionalism (Mayntz and Scharpf 1995) proceeds from the assumption that interactions between purposeful actors are shaped by the institutional settings in which they occur. Such an interaction-oriented focus helps to explain past policy choices and contributes to formulating recommendations to design institutions so as to develop effective and efficient policies in the future (Scharpf 1997, 36-43). Or, in Scharpf’s words, actor-centred institutionalism is “about the capacity of different types of institutional structures to deal effectively with different types of policy problems” (Scharpf 1997, 49). Thus, in actor-centred institutionalism, the focus is on explaining institutions’ existence and effect by reference to the initial strategic choices of actors. For instance, corporatist arrangements in newly-created policy areas might be the result of conscious choice. Politicians could create these corporatist patterns, for instance, to protect their
newly-created policy programs from radical changes that their successors may make once in office (Blom-Hansen 2001). Here, a corporatist arrangement results from conscious choice rather than from an embedded organising principle, reflecting a functionalist perspective (Pierson 2000; Thelen 2003). In this sense, actor-centred institutionalism parallels the discussion on a long-term perspective of resource exchange. All exchanges are assumed to be the result of a deliberate cost-benefit analysis of which resources to obtain. This may even be the case in routines that started their life as a rational choice of the individuals who developed them.

The resource dependence model developed in this study resembles actor-centred institutionalism in its point of departure. The underlying assumption of the model is that interactions between bureaucrats and interest groups will vary under different circumstances. Thus, context determines the importance of resources as well as the concentration of resources, which together determine the degree of dependence. In this respect, the resource dependence model shares the assumption with actor-centred institutionalism that interactions between purposive actors are shaped by the context in which they take place (see also Scott 2001, 176). A major difference between the two, however, is their focus. Whereas actor-centred institutionalism focuses on explaining past policy choices so as to design better institutions, the resource dependence model focuses on how interactions between actors vary under different circumstances. Implicitly, the assumption is that by understanding context, we can adapt our behaviour. The focus is not on institutions, as it is in actor-centred institutionalism, but is rather on the interactions between organisations, which may be either ad hoc or long-term.1

8.5.1 Multiple avenues for future research

The main purpose of the resource dependence model is to explain individual or repetitive interactions between bureaucracies and interest groups systematically but not yet to link them to policy outcomes. In addition, it reveals how individual’s choices are either restricted or enhanced by contextual dimensions. In that sense, although not explicitly relying on game-theoretic principles, we could define bureaucracy-interest group interactions in terms of a specific game, as the interests of the purposive actors are determined by the resources he/she needs and to what extent they are available in the environment. Yet, context may not solely influence these interactions; actors may strategically adapt to the context as well. In other words, the dependence model steers a middle course between (historical) institutionalism and actor-centred institutionalism. It does not explain the effectiveness of certain institutional arrangements by reference to either individual choices or restrictions resulting from the past. It explains how individual motives will be influenced by the context in which they occur, by either restricting options or providing opportunities for strategic decision making. It is precisely this delicate balance between context and motives that generates interesting new research questions. I will briefly discuss several of them below.

1 One could argue, however, about whether or not such interactions should be interpreted as institutions. I do not define them as institutions, as these interactions reflect individual decision making. But in the case of formalised interactions, such as consultation procedures, I concur that defining these interactions as institutions could be appropriate.
Chapter 8

Capture: an imbalance between resources

Let me first consider the phenomenon of capture lying on the fine line between bureaucratic politics and interest group politics. So far, scholars have argued that there is indeed reason to conclude that some interest groups are so powerful that bureaucrats may become too dependent on them in formulating regulations and monitoring behaviour. Interestingly, as we have already seen, scholars also point to the difficulty in distinguishing capture from routine behaviour (Carpenter 2001; Yackee 2005). As Wilson (2000[1989]) pointed out, a large proportion of approvals for pricing in the shipping industry could simply constitute a routine designed by bureaucrats to cope with enormous workload, rather than being a true case of capture. What may seem to be regulation solely in favour of a particular industry may turn out to be an effective routine to cope with the daily overload of work or a learning strategy. Regulations or decisions that mostly reflect the position of the monopolist or semi-monopolists in the industry may thus also represent a strategic choice that is limited by future consequences (anticipatory rationality), when seen from a bureaucratic perspective. Or, as we have seen in chapter 7, civil servants may quite deliberately allow organisations a certain extent of influence so as to better design future regulations.

The main difficulty lies both in distinguishing and theorising the differences in motives. As Wilson suggested, capture may result from a situation in which bureaucrats at regulatory agencies do not have enough resources at their disposal to effectively resist the influence of certain interest groups (Wilson 2000[1989]). One could also describe this situation as a severe degree of dependence. Carefully studying the resources and their availability in the agency’s environment and subsequently determining the nature of the interaction may help to address the interplay between context and motives. Adopting such an approach should result in a more precise assessment of interactions between regulatory agencies and interest groups and how the political context may influence these interactions across cases and over time. Once we understand the nature of these interactions more precisely, we can address a potential asymmetry in dependence better as well.

Interest group populations in corporatist regimes

The model also suggests that meso-level contextual factors in both the bureaucrats’ and interest groups’ environments are important in explaining variance of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. For the interest group environment, this means that population level variables are important. This study has explored the impact of patterns of cooperation and competition on the nature of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. More generally, patterns of competition and characteristics of interest group communities have been shown not only to affect the sheer existence or survival chances of organisations but also how they try to exert influence (Hojnacki 1998, Gray and Lowery 1996). Not much research has been done into such population dynamics in the Netherlands (but see van Waarden 1992; Wilts 2001). Yet, such mechanisms may help to explain limited access or the characteristics of the interest group population, alongside the traditional focus on institutional arrangements and on interest group strategies. Such an approach to studying interest representation in the Netherlands requires, however, a dataset which at minimum provides a satisfactory overview of the interest group
population. There are several databases that include interest groups (such as the Pietersen Almanak or the Chamber of Commerce database used in this study), but they do not provide a valid overview of the population as a whole. They tend to be incomplete and outdated. And, as they are not designed to serve research on interest groups, they do not include relevant information other than contact details. Such a comprehensive database is necessary to conduct population-related research and to be able to compare different national interest group populations. To genuinely compare, we indeed need databases of interest group populations that are equivalent. And this deficit is the major obstacle to comparative research in interest group politics in most European countries. A first attempt has been made to construct such a database in this study, yet much more work needs to be done to construct a sustainable database that is accessible for scientists, policy makers and the public. Such databases would allow for studying interest representation in corporatist countries from a different and novel perspective. For instance, by studying the process of ‘influence production’, we could be able to determine which contextual factors are important and how, for instance, community dynamics may influence the exercise of influence (Lowery and Gray 2004), or how policy outcomes or policy plans influence interest groups’ strategies (Baumgartner and Leech 1998; Leech et al. 2001). In addition, such a perspective may enable comparative research, as equivalent mechanisms in the individual stages of interest representation can be better compared (Lowery, Poppelaars and Berkhout 2008).

In sum, the model developed here points to the relevance of the development of databases of interest group populations in corporatist regimes, which allow better comparative research. This, in turn, would enable the study of context and population dynamics to supplement the decision-making studies that prevail in the corporatist literature on interest representation.

Past choices versus anticipated consequences

The set of different types of choices that the model reveals, and in particular, anticipatory and habitual rationality, poses challenging research questions both in theoretical and methodological terms. To be precise, the challenge concerns the extent to which we can, both theoretically and methodologically, really distinguish between these different types of choices. It goes beyond the scope of this study to elaborately discuss these issues. Yet, a first exploration will suffice to point in the direction of new research questions. Habitual behaviour, strictly speaking, reflects an unconscious set of actions designed to meet a rationally decided-upon goal (Simon 1997[1947]). But it may reflect a suboptimal situation as well. Path dependency usually refers to a suboptimal situation where current constellations of institutional arrangements are too costly to change. So, there will be no incentives for either of the actors involved to change, as this will negatively influence their interests (Pierson 2004). This reasoning results from an efficiency perspective. Yet, there are more situations in which such high costs create locked-in effects. That is, when the parties involved in an institutional arrangement are too useful, too powerful or too legitimate, there are also no incentives to change (Mahoney 2000). Seen in retrospect, we can indeed argue that a particular institutional arrangement reflects a suboptimal situation in which the interests of a few stakeholders are decisive in maintaining the status quo, rather than a broader set of stakeholders, as
economic equilibria usually suggest. But what happens when we examine such an arrangement only at a single point in time? How can we distinguish an optimal situation from a suboptimal one? The literature on historical institutionalism suggests that such suboptimal situations are rather irreversible and only open to change by major outside forces (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Pierson 2004; Kuipers 2004). But a suboptimal situation may be open to change by a series of smaller incremental changes. Capture, for instance, may be a suboptimal situation for bureaucrats, but does not necessarily have to be heavily institutionalised. It could well reflect a pattern of cooperative behaviour in which a consciously calculated asymmetry is allowed by those who are most dependent. The calculated risk involves a situation that may not be entirely efficient, fair or democratic, but given the circumstances is still the most strategic option. This does not mean, however, that such a suboptimal pattern of cooperation cannot be changed without major external pressure. In the example mentioned in this study, when regulatory agencies lack certain resources to face large corporations before court, hiring one or two top quality lawyers would make a difference. Thus, suboptimality may not be as resistant as the path dependence literature suggests.

This example reveals the difficulty in precisely assessing the nature of a given institutional arrangement. A suboptimal equilibrium could result from a variety of equilibria at a given point in time in the past. Contingency is thus an important factor in explaining how and why a suboptimal equilibrium may arise. Once set, similar negative feedback mechanisms, as in the case of optimal equilibria, result in inertia. One option in distinguishing the difference between optimal and suboptimal equilibria could be to determine the nature of the behavioural logics underlying the institutional arrangement. A suboptimal equilibrium is likely to meet the interests of a relatively small set of influential stakeholders, whereas an optimal equilibrium meets the interests of a broader set of stakeholders. Depending on the constellation of stakeholders, a suboptimal situation may be sensitive to small changes or only respond to major external disturbances.

The focus thus should be on the set of stakeholders and the nature of their interactions to explain the nature of a given institutional arrangement. Understanding the nature of such situations, in this case bureaucracy-interest group interactions, may help in explaining the possibility of change. That is, an understanding of whether strategic, anticipatory, habitual rationality, or a combination of these three types of choices, is operating could help in determining the nature of such interactions. Negative feedback to retain a current situation may result from sunk costs, stimuli generated by the activity or the institution itself, or too high costs in changing routines (Simon 1997[1947], Pierson 2004). But they also may be grounded in anticipated costs as well. This involves asking, what kind of behaviour will my decision invoke from the organisations with which I interact today and need in the foreseeable future? That is, when a civil servant anticipates that he/she needs a particular organisation in the near future, he/she is likely to decide to cooperate today, although he/she would not have done so had there only been a one-off interaction. So, anticipated choices may result in suboptimal situations today, which may be the result of a perfectly rational decision rather than an institutionalised choice from the past, as historical institutionalism would argue. Although anticipated costs and consequences from the past may result in similar
locked-in effects, understanding their different natures is important to understand how to bring about changes and improvements to a given situation. The balance of context (the domain of historical institutionalism) and motives (the domain of (evolutionary) rational choice) could help in determining the differences between strategic, anticipatory, and habitual rationality underlying bureaucracy-interest group interactions, or institutions more generally. Such an assessment could help to understand how a legacy of the past interacts with the shadow of the future to explain the nature of today’s interactions and the potential for institutional change.

8.6 Steering a course between friends and foes

This research systematically unravelled the motives of bureaucrats and interests groups to interact with each other and showed that these motives are grounded in multiple rationalities by examining resource exchanges between these two sets of actors. These resource exchanges have been shown to vary systematically along different political-administrative dimensions. This study has brought a new model and empirical findings to bear on a phenomenon that has often been part of broader areas of research, but has been rarely systematically studied on its own. Understanding why bureaucrats interact with certain types of interest groups and, eventually, how these interactions contribute to policy outcomes, is important. This is the case not only in fully developed western democracies, but even more so in regimes that are shifting towards democracy. Systematic knowledge of this phenomenon thus adds transparency to interactions between two unelected yet influential sets of actors in public policy making and public governance.

So, in the end, why do bureaucrats interact with certain interest groups, but do not or only do so to a lesser extent with others? Their choices to interact are determined by what they need from particular interest groups to fulfil their role in public policy or, to paint a bleaker picture, to meet their own interests. The importance of these needs and the availability of resources in the interest groups’ environment will determine the set of interest groups with which civil servants interact and the nature of their interactions. Steering a course between friends and foes is thus a matter of deliberately picking and choosing what one needs, strategically anticipating what future consequences of interactions will entail, or (un)consciously following a path carved out by past experiences and choices. All of this may be either restricted or enhanced by the political-administrative dimensions along which the course will be or has been set.