Complex Patterns of Interaction and Influence Among Political and Administrative Leaders

by

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Content

Summary[1]

In this paper we describe the influence of Norwegian executive political and administrative leaders on salient policy issues, based on a structural, a cultural-institutional and an exposure perspective. The data used are taken from a broad survey of elites conducted in 2000, focusing on undersecretaries of state, secretary generals and director generals in the ministries. The analysis reveals that political and administrative leaders are regarded as the most influential actors on salient policy issues. They are engaged in extensive and intensive inter- and intra-organizational contact networks. Their influence varies according to political-administrative contact pattern, internal administrative culture and external media exposure.

Sammendrag

I dette notatet undersøker vi hvilken innflytelse norske politiske og administrative ledere har i større viktige saker, basert på et strukturelt, et kulturelt-institusjonelt og et eksponeringsperspektiv. Datagrunnlaget er en bred elitesurvey som ble gjennomført i 2000 hvor vi i dette notatet fokuserer på statssekretærer, departementsråder og ekspedisjonssjefer i departementene. Analysen avdekker at politiske og administrative ledere blir oppfattet som de mest innflytelsesrike aktører i viktige saker. De er aktive i omfattende kontaktnettverk både internt i det politisk-administrative apparatet og overfor eksterne aktører. Deres innflytelse varierer med hvor omfattende og intensive deres politisk-administrative kontaktnettverk er, med intern forvaltningskultur og med ekstern medieeksponering.

Preface

This paper is part of the research project «Administrative reforms and institutional change – effects and implication» financed by the research program «Public Sector in Change» under the Norwegian Research Council. It is written in connection with the research group «Administration and governance» at the Rokkan Centre. The data basis is placed at our disposal by the research project «Power and Democracy» and is based on an broad survey of elites conducted in 2000.

Introduction

In modern democracies the Weberian ideal model of political-administrative systems seems to be modified in various ways, regarding external contacts, the division between politics and administration, the hierarchical subordination of civil servants and the use of rules. Political and administrative leaders all over the world increasingly find themselves in more complex decision-making environments, resulting in difficulties of understanding, capacity and authority for political and administrative leaderships (Olsen 1983). This is partly a reflection of a gradually more pluralistic and complex society, which in turn produces a more elaborate and multi-structured public apparatus and more complex public policies and issues (Christensen and Lægreid 2001a).

Some features of modern reforms also point in the direction of greater complexity. One is the growing globalization that is influencing political-administrative systems in the form of a worldwide public management revolution (Kettl 2000). This globalization can be seen as the spreading of reform ideas by international organizations (Sahlin-Andersson 2001), ideas that are often «translated» as they travel and are therefore only partly converted into national practice (Czarniawska and Joerges 1996, Spybey 1996). But it is also characterized by a more concrete and practical national adaptation to new regimes of international rules, such as adaptation to the EU. While the general tendency of global reforms is towards standardization and simplicity (Brunsson and Jacobsson 2000), expressed, for example, in a striving for efficiency and for the establishment of codes of public conduct (Olson et al. 1998), the result in practice is often considerable national variation in public behavior and action. What is more, the intricate combination of talk and action that accompanies global reforms ultimately (and perhaps rather paradoxically) creates a more complex environment for public leaders (Christensen and Lægreid 2001b). The spread of reform ideas also challenges traditional cultural norms in the public apparatus, producing hybrid political and administrative cultures (Brunsson and Olsen 1993, Hannerz 1996).

Another development that potentially increases complexity is the principle of disaggregating the traditional public system and creating semi-autonomous entities, like the Next Steps agencies in the UK and the «single purpose organization» in New Zealand (Barzley 2001, Boston et al. 1996). Through greater autonomy, devolution and the separation of roles and tasks, the civil service in many countries has become much more diverse, fragmented and loosely coupled than before. It is argued that non-overlapping roles and tasks create greater efficiency and make the fulfillment of public goals easier; but they surely also require greater co-ordination and therefore produce more complex interaction patterns. Structural devolution is advocated on the grounds that it produces greater commercial freedom, marketization, competitiveness and contract arrangements, but it also results in new and more elaborate monitoring,

control and incentives systems that are primarily the responsibility of political and above all administrative leaders (Christensen and Lægreid 2001c).

A third modernization feature is increasing consumer orientation (Fountain 2001), which is adding a new dimension to traditional corporatist arrangements, characterized by more individualism, fragmentation and unpredictability (Christensen and Lægreid 2002a). This orientation also makes political and administrative leaders more vulnerable to changing public opinion, while increased insight into the workings of the political-administrative apparatus results in the more frequent exposure of problems and increased scrutiny by the media. Added to this is the impact of increased parliamentary control and scrutiny of the executive in many countries and the growing significance of performance auditing (Christensen, Lægreid and Roness 2002, Pollitt et al. 1999)

The purpose of this paper is first to describe the influence of executive political and administrative leaders on salient policy issues, and second to explain the variety of ways in which that influence is exerted. A structural way of explaining this variety is by looking at contact patterns, i.e., the frequency, complexity and symmetry of contact. A cultural perspective, on the other hand, would emphasize the informal norms influencing the role enactment of leaders, i.e., whether and how they are affected by decision-making signals, changing norms of control and tensions in role relationships with regard to important issues. A third perspective stresses the exposure of particular issues and sees influence as determined by how much and in what terms salient issues are treated in the media.

Theoretical perspectives

A *structural perspective* argues that public decision-making processes are primarily influenced by the formal structure of the public apparatus (Gulick 1937, Simon 1957). According to this perspective, interaction concerning public decisions and influence on their outcome are based on one of three things: hierarchy, which assigns responsibility for important decisions to the political and administrative leadership; «pure» specialization, whereby the decision-making structure is broken down into sub-structures that are mutually exclusive; or collegial principles, where the decision-making structure is more open and the participants more equal, with both leaders and specialists as important actors (Lægreid and Roness 1989, March and Olsen 1976). Even if leaders do not participate themselves, which they may not for reasons of capacity and attention, they are supposed to organize and control other decision-makers (Olsen 1988). Moreover, leaders are supposed to dominate the definition of problems and solutions, i.e., carry these decision-making elements to the choice stage or control them in other ways.

Using an instrumental approach of this kind, and taking the parliamentary system as a point of reference, salient policy issues will be decided in close interaction between the political and administrative leadership in the executive and the

parliament, the Storting (Hernes and Nergaard 1990). While less important questions are generally more likely to be resolved on a lower level in the civil service, we must also expect some variation in the handling of salient issues. In other words, while some issues are resolved structurally within one ministry or parliamentary committee, others will formally involve several ministries and committees. There may also be some formal variation regarding contact with external actors, i.e., public and private actors who are not formally defined as the most important actors but who are still relevant. Some salient policy issues may, for example, involve interest groups, usually in cases when these are directly affected, have important expertise to contribute, or where the government is particularly dependent on them (Olsen 1983). In other cases they will be more decoupled.

What, then, does the structural perspective lead us to predict about variation in the influence of political and administrative leaders in the executive? One general expectation might be that their influence will be greater on salient issues where the pattern of contact is comparatively simple. The argument here could be that leaders have capacity and attention problems and that a complex contact pattern makes it more difficult to exert hierarchical influence. Another general expectation is that symmetry in interaction will be important. If external actors initiate contact much more frequently than the political and administrative leadership, this will potentially weaken the latter's influence. The same reasoning could apply to the relationship between the political and administrative leadership within the executive.

A *cultural-institutional perspective* mainly stresses the gradual and path-dependent development of cultural traditions in political-administrative systems (Krasner 1988, Selznick 1957). Interaction between actors will primarily have informal norms as a basis. These norms will not develop independently of formal norms, but may to varying extents take these as a point of departure and either support or undermine them (Christensen and Røvik 1999). This means that political-administrative systems may vary both according to the relative importance of formal and informal norms of interaction and according to the content of informal norms. In Scandinavia, for example, there is a strong tradition of peaceful coexistence and trust between the legislative and executive powers, leading to informal norms of passive control by the Storting over the executive, a considerable degree of discretion for administrative leaders in their relationship with political leaders in the executive and a lack of insistence on formal rules of control (Christensen 1995; Christensen, Lægreid and Roness 2002; Olsen, Roness and Sætren 1982).

According to a cultural perspective, the relationship between political and administrative leaders in the executive is based less on formal control and decisions and more on informal interaction (Selznick 1957). This accords greater relevance to issues of trust and tensions among leaders concerning their relative influence on decision-making processes. And it also raises questions about how general levels of trust and tension translate into specific levels of trust and tension when important issues are at stake, a paradigm comparable with Easton's (1965) distinction between

diffuse and specific support. When formal instruments of control and steering are partly replaced by more informal interaction, political leaders have to use other means of influencing administrative leaders and other actors. These may take the form of consulting and sounding-out mechanisms (Olsen 1972) or else various kinds of decision-making signals. These mechanisms will give administrative leaders varying amounts of discretion and autonomy.

In what ways can we expect cultural factors to have a bearing on variations in the influence of executive leaders? One expectation would be that the influence of leaders in the executive will be greatest when the Storting focuses relatively little attention on norms of control, in other words, when the prevailing tradition is one of relative autonomy and lack of formal control. Another expectation concerns trust between political and administrative leaders in the executive. The less interaction between leaders over salient issues is marked by tensions and conflicts, the more influential they are likely to be. This applies particularly to administrative leaders, for whom tensions mean less autonomy and more hierarchical control. Concerning decision-making signals given by the political leadership, we would expect the influence of administrative leaders to be highest when these signals are of a general character, because this gives administrative leaders a greater degree of discretion.

An *exposure perspective* proceeds from the assumption that increased complexity in public decision-making processes is related to attention and capacity problems of leaders and unpredictability (March 1981). Time, energy and attention are scarce resources for political and administrative leaders. Therefore, rather than assuming that political leaders function in accordance with a planning ideal or that they are constrained by an internal culture and traditions, it makes more sense to discuss how they perform their leadership functions in situations when time and attention are scarce (Lægreid and Roness 1999). Political and administrative leaders will always have capacity problems and must, therefore, decide how much attention to give to what. Some of these attention problems can be solved or mitigated by the way public decision-making processes are organized, normally using problem-oriented, simple and biased search processes (Cyert and March 1963). At the same time, while exposure processes may sometimes be constrained by routines, they can also be open and unpredictable (Bratbak and Olsen 1980). External actors will have their own operating logic and their own agendas, which may well run counter to the strategies of the political and administrative leadership and create garbage-can-like decision-making processes (March and Olsen 1976). Moreover, a more educated public and greater openness and insight into public affairs may also worsen capacity problems.

The most unpredictable factor for public leaders is often the media. Media reaction may often result, for example, in changes in how problems are defined and solutions sought; different sets of actors, and changes in the organization and timing of decision-making processes may undermine the control of the leadership and lead to more reactive than proactive behavior. Media exposure is, of course, not only a negative factor for public leaders but can also be used deliberately to achieve certain

goals. Nevertheless, many leaders see media exposure as adding to the burden of an already heavy workload and creating problems of policy decision-making and implementation. This attitude became evident in a recent broad analysis of the Norwegian political and administrative leadership, based on in-depth interviews (Christensen and Lægreid 2002b).

How would we expect media exposure to affect the influence of executive political and administrative leaders? One general expectation might be that the greater the media exposure, the smaller the influence of leaders will be over salient issues. Reversing this equation, however, we could also predict that the more actively the political leadership seeks media exposure, the more influence it will exert; or else, the more actively the media seek information and exposure of certain salient issues, the smaller the influence of the political leadership. A side effect of this situation might be a gain in influence for the administrative leadership, which is generally not the primary target of media scrutiny.

Data and method

The data used in this paper are taken from a broad survey of elites in all societal areas, ranging from political and administrative leaders through cultural and media elites to military and Church leaders. The survey was conducted in Norway in 2000 under the auspices of the Power and Democracy Study, half a year after a Labor minority government had replaced a minority coalition government of the Christian People's Party, the Center Party and the Liberals, which had been in power since 1997.

A total of 1,710 people were interviewed. In 87 percent of the cases the interviewer met the respondents personally, normally in their offices, and asked questions from a standardized questionnaire. The remaining interviews were conducted by telephone. Each interview lasted for about one hour. Respondents were asked questions about their social background and career, about their attitudes to a large number of domestic and international political issues, and more specific questions about gender policy, the media and decision-making on salient issues. The survey thus covered a broad range of elites and topics. Here, however, we concentrate on the responses of political and administrative leaders in the executive and their influence on salient issues.[2]

The groups selected for analysis were all 28 undersecretaries of state and all 112 secretary generals and director generals – the administrative leaders in the ministries.[3] The overall response rate was 87 percent. For the subgroups Civil Service and Politics it was 92 percent and 87 percent, respectively. Thus the response rates indicate a high

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[2] The question was: «What was the most important issue that you worked on in 1999 or this year»?

[3] For most of the questions we asked, about 25-28 undersecretaries of state and 94-102 administrative leaders responded.

level of representativity (Holt and Prangerød 2001).[4] Our data on influence are restricted to the leaders' own subjective assessment and may therefore produce some bias. When assessing the responses of the undersecretaries of state, we should also take into account that, on average, they had been in their positions for only half a year when they were interviewed.

The main dependent variable we use is based on a question about how much influence political and administrative leaders had on the most salient policy issue the respondents singled out.[5] This is a variable with four values (two lowest is merged in the tables), ranging from «very strong influence» to «no influence».

The independent variables encompass three sets of variables for the political and administrative leaders, corresponding with the three theoretical perspectives outlined. The first set of variables shows the structure of the pattern of contacts on salient issues.[6] This is divided into the following variables: a) contact between the political and administrative leadership in own ministry, b) contact with the political leadership in other ministries, c) contact with the administrative leadership in other ministries, d) contact with party groups in the Storting, both ruling and opposition parties, e) contact with the relevant select committee in the Storting, f) contact with other actors outside the executive and the Storting.

The second set of variables are cultural ones: a) the importance of the increased control and scrutiny of the Storting towards the executive regarding decision-making on the most salient issue identified, b) whether the political leadership gave general or more specific political signals on the most salient issue, and whether these were written or oral, and c) whether the most salient issue created tensions in the trust between the political and administrative leadership in the executive.

The third set of variables concerns exposure and public debate on the most salient issue. These include a) contact initiated by the media, b) discussion of the issue by the minister in the press, c) interviews about the issue in the mass media, d) general media attention to the issue.

We present the data using descriptive statistics and univariate and bivariate analyses for the two sub-groups of political and administrative leaders. For the administrative leaders we also conduct a regression analysis to reveal the relative effect of the different independent variables on the variation in influence. Owing to a low N value, this could not be done for the political leaders.

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[4] The ministers were also interviewed, but they were asked different questions and another, more open format was used (see Christensen and Lægreid 2002b).

[5] The executive political and administrative leaders were the only respondents asked this question.

[6] Some of the variables show contacts initiated both by the political and administrative leaders and by other actors, while others focus only on contact initiated by other actors. Some variables are rather biased in the sense that nearly all respondents say certain actors initiate contact. In these cases we have to use the number of contacts initiated. Some variables have a more even allocation of contacts initiated externally, but in many cases data are missing on the number of such contacts.

Dependent variables: Political and administrative influence on salient issues

Even though we will concentrate on the influence of political and administrative leaders in the executive, we would first like to paint a broader picture of the pattern of influence. This encompasses many actors and seeks to compare influence pattern with types of policy issue – administrative policy (internal) and public policy (external). Administrative policy includes issues relating to reorganizing the public apparatus, such as recruitment processes, internal administrative matters, personnel questions and procedures and other issues related to changing the internal apparatus. These may be classified as indirect policy issues, in the sense that changing the apparatus influences other policy processes (Egeberg 1994). Public policy encompasses issues that are primarily and more directly aimed at influencing society at large, such as lawmaking, drawing up regulations and rules, budgetary issues, and decisions on specific cases determined by these formal constraints. This category also includes more broad issues of using various public instruments to reach societal and political goals.

Influence and type of policy

We start out with a broad descriptive picture of how undersecretaries of state and administrative leaders evaluate and perceive the pattern of influence on the salient policy issues.

Table 1 shows a lot of agreement among political and administrative leaders concerning who are the most influential actors on particular important policy issues. Political leaders in the ministries are held to be by far the most important actors, followed by administrative leaders in the ministries. Other actors deemed to be influential are the relevant select committee in the Storting and political and administrative leaders in other ministries. In assessing the relatively low score given to the select committees, we should remember that this reflects the viewpoint only of the leadership in the ministries and might have been seen differently by the parliament.[7] The relatively high score achieved by political and administrative leaders in other ministries shows that salient issues are handled in complex inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral processes, where a lot of information gathering, coordination and negotiation goes on. It is also worth mentioning that public actors, such as subordinate agencies and local and regional institutions, overall score higher concerning influence than most societal actors, and that among actors in the latter group public employees' organizations score highest on influence. Somewhat surprisingly, other countries and international organizations, including the EU, seem to score rather low regarding influence on salient matters.

Table 1. Pattern of influence on salient policy issues, as seen by executive political and administrative leaders (in percent)

Type of Actor	Political leaders			Administrative leaders		
	Very strong influence	Strong Influence	Not strong influence	Very strong influence	Strong influence	Not strong influence
Political leaders in own ministry	93	7	0	76	19	5
Administrative leaders in own ministry	26	67	7	49	44	7
Select committee in the Storting	26	22	52	29	34	37
Political leaders in other ministries	22	44	36	22	38	40
Administrative leaders in other ministries	15	22	63	13	40	47
Subordinate agencies	0	30	70	10	20	70
Private companies, financial institutions	0	15	85	1	8	91
Public employees' organizations	4	33	63	5	19	76
Employers and commercial orgs.	4	26	70	4	18	78
Professional lobbyists	0	4	96	1	3	96
Local and regional public institutions	0	26	74	1	10	89
Voluntary and idealist organizations	0	22	78	2	11	87
Other countries, EU, other inter-national orgs.	4	19	77	5	18	77
N=	(27)			(96)		

The responses of the political and administrative leadership deviate most concerning their evaluation of their own influence on salient policy issues, something that we will focus on further later on. The political respondents see their own influence on important issues as much greater that that of administrative leaders, while the administrative respondents see their own influence as quite strong, but still as considerably weaker than that of the political leadership. This difference may, of

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[7] As mentioned above, these respondents were not asked the same question. Instead they were asked about issues they had formal responsibility for in the select commitee.

14

course, have something to do with a difference in perception by the two groups of what the most important policy issues are, and it is this question we now turn to.[8]

Of the undersecretaries of state, 87 percent mentioned external public policy questions as the most important issues they had worked with and only 13 percent chose administrative policy questions, while the percentages were 72 percent and 28 percent, respectively, for the administrative leaders. As expected, the latter have a somewhat different profile. The public policy category consists of issues such as budgetary questions, typical sectoral issues, law-making processes, international issues, etc., while the bulk of the administrative issues are related to reorganization matters, often connected with modernization processes.

Table 2 shows the perceived influence of political and administrative leaders in the respondents' own ministries on salient policy issues, divided into two types of policy – external public policy and internal administrative policy.

Table 2. The influence of executive political and administrative leaders on the most salientissues in different policy areas, as seen by executive political and administrative leaders (in percent)

	Political leaders		Administrative leaders	
	Public policy issues	Administrative policy issues	Public policy issues	Administrative policy issues
Very strong perceived influence of political leaders in own ministry	90	(100)	75	83
Very strong perceived influence of administrative leaders in own ministry	30	(33)	50	44
N=	(20)	(3)	(58)	(23)

Since external policy issues are generally the most important for political leaders, the most interesting category of responses is that of the administrative leaders. Our expectation here was that administrative leaders would have relatively more influence on administrative policy issues, but the results in fact indicate a slight trend in the opposite direction. Overall, though, the differences between perceived influences on different types of important policy issues are relatively minor, and the general pattern of perceived influence shown in Table 1 therefore remains valid, regardless of the type of policy issue. It would, therefore, not make much sense to follow up on the different types of issues.

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[8] The political and administrative leaders mention just a few of the same salient policy issues.

Independent variables: pattern of contact, cultural context and exposure

In this section we will describe the complex pattern of interaction involved in decision-making on salient issues by focusing on the structure of the pattern of contact, the cultural context and media exposure.

Pattern of contact for the political and administrative leadership

Responses to the first question posed about mutual contact between the political and administrative leadership with their own ministry on particularly salient policy issues do not vary very much. Ninety-six percent of the administrative leaders and 93 percent of the political leadership said that they had very intensive contact, revealing the function of the ministry as a secretariat for political leadership.[9] This also indicates that political and administrative leaders allocate a lot of attention to policy issues they think are very important. A follow-up question, which only the administrative leaders were asked, showed that 43 percent of these respondents had contact with the political leadership on the most salient policy issue once a week or more frequently, while 57 percent had less frequent but still rather intensive contact. If we look at the balance or symmetry in the contact pattern, each of the two executive groups report that contact was initiated by their own group. The divergence in how the two groups perceive the initiation of contact may primarily be connected to the fact that the issues they selected as important and warranting a lot of resources were different. In other words, this is not a disagreement over the initiation of contact on the same issue.

The next set of contact variables concerns contact with the political and administrative leadership in other ministries. Table 3 shows contacts initiated and contacts received. The table shows two main findings concerning the contact pattern with executive leaders in other ministries. One is that inter-ministerial contacts on salient policy issues primarily take place within the two groups of executive political and administrative leaders. Politicians are in frequent contact with political leaders in other ministries, while administrative leaders are in frequent contact with their top administrative colleagues. This is not surprising, given that certain matters need to be handled within the political and administrative spheres respectively. It is, however, somewhat unexpected that the demarcation is so sharp, since it is often claimed that there is now more overlap between the two roles than before. This result may also simply reflect the different status of salient policy questions, some of which have to be dealt with at the top political level while others are more the preserve of the administrative leaders.

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[9] This means that administrative leaders should attend to the needs of political leaders by organizing the planning and policy development function and organizing urgent administrative support for the political leadership when required, for example in relation to the Storting.

The second main finding yielded by the table on inter-ministerial contact is that there are a lot of contacts on salient policy issues between the ministries, even though many of these issues seem to be rather sector-oriented. There is obviously a need for a lot of inter-ministerial contact and coordination anyhow. In the Norwegian system, which has strong sectoral ministries but weak formal inter-sectoral bodies for horizontal coordination (Lægreid and Pedersen 1999), there is obviously a strong need for comprehensive informal contacts on salient issues. One explanation could be that these salient issues are particularly complex and have cross-sectoral relevance. This is plausible if we compare these findings with more general studies of contacts between ministries, which show less frequent contact (Christensen and Egeberg 1997).

Table 3. The pattern of contact between the executive leadership, the Storting and the political parties (in percent)

Contact with:	Political leaders				Administrative leaders			
	Initiated contact	Initiated and received contact	Received contact	No contact	Initiated contact	Initiated and received contact	Received contact	No contact
Political leaders in other ministries	7	85	4	4	2	9	15	74
Admin. leadership in other ministries	4	11	4	81	3	91	3	3
Parliamentary gov. party	4	74	15	7	0	3	31	66
Parliamentary non-gov. party	4	19	22	55	0	2	27	71
Select committee	4	33	22	41	1	9	38	52
Non-parliamentary gov. party	4	59	22	15	0	1	9	90
Non-parliamentary non-gov. party	0	7	11	82	0	2	6	92
N=	(27)				(96)			

In a system of minority governments, such as Norway has experienced over the last 30 years, the relative importance of the parliament increases (Rommetvedt 1994, 1998). We must therefore also investigate the contacts between the executive leadership and the Storting. There are two important units that either initiate or receive contacts. These are the relevant select committee and the party caucuses. We also asked about contacts with party organizations outside parliament, because these very often operate by contacting their party groups in parliament or political executive leaders.

Table 3 shows that contact between the political leadership in the executive and the Storting and the parties are broad and varied. It is interesting to note that contact is

particularly broad with party caucuses and organizations belonging to respondents' «own» parties, while a relatively small number of these leaders engage in direct contact with the select committee. This has obviously to do with the fact that these party bodies have to clarify and coordinate the activities in the Storting and towards the select committees, a role which deflects some of the direct contact with the select committees. It is also obvious that the opposition parties in the Storting are more relevant for the political leadership than those parties' external organizations. The fact that about a quarter initiate contact with, and 4 out of 10 receive contact from, these groups shows, however, that a minority government has to exchange information and negotiate with the opposition.

Contact between the top administrative leaders and the Storting and political parties is much more narrow and infrequent, reflecting the norm that these contacts are generally filtered through the political leadership. This norm is also reflected in the asymmetry of the contacts, i.e. the select committee and the party groups contact administrative leaders much more frequently than vice versa. For the administration it is more appropriate to receive contacts than to initiate them, and administrative leaders are careful to inform the political leadership if these contacts have political relevance beyond their informative function (Christensen and Lægreid 2002b). The fact that the relevant select committee in the Storting has contacted almost 50 percent of the administrative leaders and about one-third of them have been contacted by parliamentary party groups reveals, however, that it is hard for MPs to live up to the norm of ministerial responsibility meaning that «the Storting knows only the minister».

Table 3 also shows that the typical pattern of contacts between the executive political leaders and the Storting and party groups is a symmetrical one, although in some cases the executive receives more contacts than it initiates. This is understandable given its function as a central coordinator that is supposed to balance many different considerations and interests.

When asked about the form of contact with the Storting, 48 percent of the political leaders and 25 percent of the administrative leaders said it took place in the select committee; 37 percent of the political leaders said contact occurred at meetings in the ministries, while 9 percent of the administrative leaders said the same; and 88 percent of politicians said that contact took place in a written form or by telephone, compared with 51 percent of the administrative leaders. These findings show that salient issues are discussed through a variety of channels, that political leaders have much more direct contact with representatives of the Storting than other groups, and that administrative leaders, in keeping with the norm, have a contact pattern that is predominantly more passive.

The last pattern of contacts we will describe is that with actors outside the executive, political parties or the Storting, both public and private. Eighty-five percent of the political leaders and 79 percent of the administrative leaders said they received such contact.

18

Table 4.   The contact initiated towards executive leaders by various societal actors concerning the most salient policy issue (in percent)

Contact initiated by:	Political leaders	Administrative leaders
County administration in one or more counties	43	28
Local administration in one or more communes	43	17
State corporations and financial institutions	22	24
Universities, colleges and research institutions	39	42
The State Church	9	3
Police and judiciary bodies	4	11
Military agencies	4	8
Private firms and financial institutions	52	26
Employees and professional organizations	70	54
Employers and commercial organizations	83	51
Voluntary and idealist/charity organizations	61	50
Organizations and institutions in the cultural sector	39	13
N=	(23)	(76)

Table 4 shows the main patterns of contact with various societal actors. It shows that the political leaders have a much broader set of societal contacts over particularly salient policy issues than the administrative leaders. More political leaders than administrative leaders have societal contacts with 8 of the 11 contact groups, the exception being contacts with universities, police and judicial bodies, and military organizations. Overall, the contact pattern shows a lot of variety between types of actors. Both political and administrative leaders have most contact with employees' and employers' organizations, reflecting a long corporatist tradition. The largest difference in scores between the leaders concerns contacts initiated by local public administrations, also reflecting a long tradition, and with private firms and employers' organizations.

Table 5.   The number of public and private institutions and groups that contacted the political and administrative leaders over the most salient policy issue (in percent)

No of received contacts:	Political leaders	Administrative leaders
More than 10	32	18
6–10	50	29
1–5	14	44
0	4	9
N=	(28)	(102)

One way to sum up the contact variables is to look first at the scope of contact. Table 5 shows how many of all the 20 public and private institutions and groups contacted the political and administrative leadership over the most salient policy issues. It seems

evident from the table that the political leaders have a much broader network of contacts than the administrative leaders.

If we narrow the network to contacts among the central political and administrative actors, nine groups of actors altogether,[10] we can compare the structure of the network of received and initiated contacts. This both indicate how broad the inner circle of contacts is and also provides insight into the symmetry or balance in the contacts.

Table 6. The number of contacts received and initiated among the central political and administrative actors over the most salient policy issues (in percent).

	Number of contacts received				Number of contacts initiated				N=
	6 and more	3–5	1–2	0	6 and more	3–5	1–2	0	
Political leaders	39	54	4	3	19	61	14	6	(28)
Administrative leaders	16	39	37	8	1	20	71	8	(102)

Table 6 shows that both political and administrative executive leaders receive more contacts than they seek over the most salient policy issues. The political leaders are both contacted by and themselves contact more actors in this narrow circle of central political and administrative actors than the administrative leaders. This is not surprising, given that seven out of the nine groups included are actors from political parties or the parliament. The administrative leaders obviously act in accordance with a rather narrow norm of what is appropriate regarding contact with political actors, for only one-fifth of them contacted three or more actors.

Cultural context

In Norway the Storting has traditionally used its control and scrutiny function towards the executive in a rather passive and informal way, reflecting a high level of trust between the powers and a lack of belief in rule-oriented control (Christensen and Peters 1999). The Storting delegates authority to the executive and expects it to exercise good judgment and self-control and to inform the Storting in a proper way about its activities, using the principle of ministerial responsibility as a safeguard. During the last ten years, however, partly because Norway has had minority governments, the Storting has developed a more proactive and rule-oriented attitude towards its control function. This is reflected in the establishment of a new and more powerful select committee of control and scrutiny, a system of public hearings and a spontaneous oral

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[10] These include political and administrative leaders in the executive, political and administrative leaders in other ministries, party groups in the Storting and party organizations outside the Storting, both from the ruling parties and the opposition, and also the select committee in the Storting.

question time as well as greater use of parliamentary commissions and more intense collaboration with the Office of the Auditor General and an increased focus on performance auditing (Christensen, Lægreid and Roness 2002).

This more proactive role is not without its problems. For one thing, the Storting now has to find an appropriate means of responding to executive political leaders, particularly when they are no longer in power. In addition, it creates more tension and conflicts with the executive. Interviews with cabinet members show that they have mixed feelings about the more proactive control role of the Storting (Christensen and Lægreid 2002b). On the one hand, they accept and support this as a component of parliamentary democracy, but on the other hand, they also believe it leads to «personal crusades» by parliamentary representatives towards specific ministers, raises issues of responsibility and involves maintaining a delicate balance between neutrality and political debate. In the same interviews administrative leaders were generally very critical of the new control role, saying it created a lot of tension and extra work in the ministries.

We posed the question about the relevance of the scrutiny function of the Storting with a view to measuring cultural shifts and possible tension between the old and new norms of control. Those who argue that such a function is important for salient policy issues will stress that once more formal control has been introduced it will have a spill-over effect for decision-making on other important policy issues, making the executive more hesitant and careful. They will point out that salient policy issues are often complicated and involve the Storting in a variety of ways. A third argument is that the new type of control function is more oriented towards performance auditing, which means more interference during the decision-making process than afterwards. However, given that the control function is traditionally ex post, it could also be argued that it is inappropriate to apply it during the decision-making process. Our results show that 16 percent of the political leaders and 23 percent of the administrative leaders believe the increased control function has had an impact on the decision-making process on the most salient policy issues. In other words, it does have some relevance.

The second set of cultural variables concerns decision-making signals given by the political leadership. The relationship between the political and administrative leadership is not only affected by formal decisions and the formal definition of their roles, but also by their expectations of one another and by their daily more or less informal dealings, which are constrained by formal norms (Christensen and Røvik 1999). Administrative leaders will give their expert advice to the political leadership, both on the content of policy issues and on the organization of decision-making processes, but in so doing they will also take party programs, cabinet or ministerial decisions and other relevant factors into consideration. This is not a one-way process, for political leaders also learn from and adjust to the advice given them by administrative leaders. Giving political decision-making signals is thus a more subtle, culturally-based mode of interaction between political and administrative leaders.

Not surprisingly, all the political leaders and 97 percent of the administrative leaders said they were given political signals on the most salient policy issues they worked on. The response to the question of whether political signals were general or more specific was more varied. While 89 percent of the political leaders said political signals were specific to the salient policy issue at hand, only 11 percent said they were general in nature. Among the administrative leaders, 51 percent said the signals were general, while 49 percent said they were more specific. One plausible explanation for this difference is that very salient policy issues attract almost the full attention and control of political leaders, meaning that they try to minimize the discretion accorded to administrative leaders. Conversely, for administrative leaders a greater share of important issues will be accorded less political significance and therefore less political attention, thereby giving more leeway to administrative leaders. For reasons of capacity and time political leaders have to prioritize, meaning that they are generally less knowledgeable about and less attentive to a large number of policy issues, even if some of them are important for administrative leaders.

The cultural tradition of informality in the Norwegian system is shown by the fact that only 4 percent of the political leaders and 2 percent of the administrative leaders said that political signals on the most important issues were communicated only in a written and formalized form. 26 percent and 35 percent, respectively, said the signals were primarily oral, while 70 percent of the political leaders and 58 percent of the administrative leaders said they were both written and oral. The latter result shows quite clearly the dynamic relationship between structural and cultural aspects of leadership roles.

A further question is whether more specific political signals tend to be written rather than oral. Table 7 shows that administrative leaders report a higher percentage of policy issues involving specific political signals are accompanied by both written and oral signals, about the same score as for with specific signals reported by the political leadership. This seems to show that political leaders see more need to give fewer oral and more written signals when the policy issue is accompanied by specific signals than when it is accompanied by general signals. In other words, the more important the political issue, the greater the attempt to impose formal political control. This picture can, however, be elaborated in two ways. Even for policy issues that need specific political signals, there is a striking lack of written political signals, demonstrating the extent of the non-formalized and trust-based culture. For the administrative leaders a slight majority of salient policy issues are accompanied by general political signals, mainly in oral form.

Table 7. The pattern of political signals on the most salient policy issue (in percent)

	Political leaders		Administrative leaders	
	General political signals	Specific political signals	General political signals	Specific political signals
Written signals	(0)	4	0	4
Oral signals	(67)	21	55	16
Both oral and written signals	(33)	75	45	80
N=	(3)	(23)	(47)	(45)

The trust in the system is further documented by a question, which only the administrative leaders were asked, about whether the most salient policy issues produced tension in the trust-based relationship between political and administrative leaders. Only 22 percent of the administrative leaders confirmed this, while 78 percent definitely said that they did not.

Exposure and attention

In the Norwegian executive, the political leadership is traditionally more exposed to public and media scrutiny than the administrative leaders, who live a much more sheltered life. It has been accepted practice for political leaders to take the blame for failures but also to reap the rewards for successes, regardless of the extent to which administrative leaders were involved. While administrative leaders are expected to be loyal to the political leadership, this loyalty is tempered by the fact that they serve successive governments and that they have an interest in furthering their professional norms and knowledge (Jacobsen 1960). This situation has evidently changed somewhat. Interviews with the ministers show an increase in media pressure, partly as a result of a long period of minority governments, and also more aggressive and personally directed media attention (Christensen and Lægreid 2002b). Administrative leaders seem also to be less protected than before, receiving more exposure in the Storting when it enacts its control function, for example in public hearings, but also because the media are more intent on locating personal responsibility in the civil service. In addition, increased scrutiny from the Storting and the media seems to have created a somewhat more strained relationship among leaders in the executive and a culture of officials becoming more careful in documenting their formal handling of cases (Christensen and Lægreid 2002b).

We asked the leaders about various aspects of their exposure to the media over salient policy issues. Table 8 shows our main findings.

Table 8. Media exposure over the most salient policy issues (in percent)

	Political leaders	Administrative leaders
Inquiries received from media	61	68
Wrote articles in the media on behalf of the minister	56	29
Interviewed in the media	81	52
The policy issue received very strong media attention	48	52
N=	(27)	(96)

Their higher scores show the increased exposure of the administrative leaders on two of the four exposure variables. While it is perhaps not surprising that they score higher on receiving media inquiries, since they will probably be the main targets of media requests for more detailed information, one would have expected salient policy issues to focus more media attention on the political leaders. It is, therefore, surprising that the issues pinpointed as important by the administrative leaders attract slightly more media attention than those selected by the political leadership. While one would expect far more political than administrative leaders to be interviewed in and write in the media, it is still surprising that half of the administrative leaders reported being interviewed in the media, while one-third said they had written articles for newspapers on behalf of the political leadership. This may indicate a blurring of distinctions in the roles of the two types of leaders, with political leaders trying to get administrative leaders more involved in policy and other advice, and administrative leaders adopting a more active profile towards the political leadership (Christensen and Lægreid 2002b). An alternative interpretation would be that the actions of the administrative leaders are more clearly role-related; that they are defensive in their media exposure and that it is natural that they act as they do because of expertise.

Analysis

We look first at the bivariate correlations between the independent variables and the influence variables. *The political leaders' assessment* of their own influence on salient issues varies first of all in terms of structural factors. Political leaders who have frequent contact with the opposition parties and with the select committee in the parliament have less influence on the salient issue than political leaders who do not have contact with these actors (see Table 9). And if they have contact with six or more political or administrative institutions, their influence tends to decrease. External exposure also plays a role here, with political leaders who have written articles in the newspapers on the salient policy issue exerting more influence over the matter than those who have not.

The political leaders' assessment of the influence of their own administrative leaders varies according to structural and exposure factors but not to cultural factors. Political leaders who perceive contact over salient issues as being initiated by

24

administrative leaders tend to assess the administrative leaders' influence on issues as greater than if they have themselves initiated contact. And if the political leaders have initiated contact with administrative leaders in other ministries, they tend to assess their own administrative leaders' influence as less than if they do not initiate such contacts. Political leaders who have been interviewed in the mass media about a salient issue see their own administrative leaders as having less influence than those who have not been interviewed.

The variation in the *administrative leaders' assessments* of political and administrative leaders' influence on the most salient issues shows a quite different pattern to the one that emerges for the political leaders (Table 9). First, cultural factors seem to be much more important. Their assessment of their own political leaders' influence varies both in terms of how precise the political signals are and in terms of the level of tension in the trust relationship. Issues that produce high levels of tension in the trust relationship between political and administrative leaders tend to be perceived as being less influenced by political leaders than issues that do not produce tensions. At the same time, general signals from political leaders on salient issues give them less influence than precise signals. In contrast, the influence of administrative leaders tends to be perceived as greater when the political signals are general than when they are precise.

Table 9. The relationship between structural, cultural and exposure variables and influence on the most salient issue, as seen by executive political and administrative leaders[11]. Bivariate correlations. Pearson r.

	Political leaders' assessments (N=28)		Administrative leaders' assessments (N=102)	
	Influence of political leaders in own ministry	Influence of administrative leaders in own ministry	Influence of political leaders in own ministry	Influence of administrative leaders in own ministry
Structural factors: Contact initiated by political or administrative leaders in own ministry		-.41**		-.26**
Contact with administrative leaders in other ministries		-.33*		
Contact with opposition party in parliament	-.53***			
Contact with parliamentary committee	-.37**			
Number of contacts received from political and administrative actors	-.35*		-.19*	
Cultural factors: General or specific signals from political leaders			-.17*	.18*
Tension in trust-based relation-ship between political and administrative leaders			-.24**	
Exposure factors: Contacted by media				.30***
The issue attracted strong media attention			.20**	
Interviewed in media		-.36*		
Articles written in newspaper on behalf of the minister	.32*			. 22**

*: significant on .10 level; **: significant on .05-level; ***: significant on .01-level. Correlation coefficients not significant at .10 level are not included in the table.

Second, political leaders seem to exert greater influence over issues that receive a lot of media attention than those that receive little attention, according to the assessment of the administrative leaders. Third, the perceived influence of administrative leaders

[11] See appendix for values on the variables.

increases if the administrative leaders themselves initiate contact with political leaders. Fourth, their influence seems to be greater regarding issues over which the media contacts them or when they have written articles in the newspapers on behalf of the political leaders, than for other issues. The administrative leaders agree with the political leaders that receiving a large number of political-administrative contacts rather than initiating them has a negative impact on the political leaders' influence.

The regression analyses of the administrative leaders' assessments of their own and the political leaders' influence on salient issues reveal that it is a cultural factor that produces the greatest variation in *political leaders' perceived influence,* namely, the tension that the salient issue produces in the trust-based relationship between political and administrative leaders (Table 10).[12] A high level of tension tends to weaken the political leaders' influence. One structural factor – the number of contacts received from other political and administrative actors – also seems to have a significant effect. Administrative leaders who are exposed to many political and administrative actors tend to report a lower degree of influence for political leaders. The effects of external exposure from the media are, however, not significant if we control for structural and cultural factors.

Table 10.   Summary of regression equations by structural, cultural and exposure factors affecting influence of *political* leaders in own ministry on the most salient issue, as seen by administrative leaders. Standardized Beta coefficients. Linear regression, N=102

Number of contacts received from political and administrative actors	-.22**
General or specific signals from political leaders	-.16
Tensions in the trust-based relationship between political and administrative leaders	-.30***
The issue attracted strong media attention	.16
Multiple R	.419
R²	.176
Adjusted R	.138
F statistics	4,6335
Significance of F	.002

: significant on .05-level; *: significant on .01-level.

The administrative leaders' assessment of their own influence varies significantly according to one structural and one exposure factor (Table 11). If they contact the political leaders on their own initiative and are contacted by the media, the

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[12] Since the N for political respondents is so low, we only use the regression analysis for the dministrative respondents.

administrative leaders' influence seems to increase. The effect of exposure is strengthened by the fact that there is a smaller but still significant effect of having written about the salient issue in the newspaper on behalf of the minister. How precise or general the political signals are does not seem to have any significant effect on either the political or the administrative leaders' level of influence on the salient issue.

Table 11. Summary of regression equations by structural, cultural and exposure factors affecting influence of *administrative* leaders in own ministry on the most salient issue. Administrative leaders. Standardized Beta coefficients. Linear regression, N=102.

Contact initiated by administrative or political leader in own ministry	-.28***
General or specific signals from political leaders	.07
Contacted by media	.28***
Articles written in newspaper on behalf of the minister	.18*
Multiple R	.467
R²	.218
Adjusted R	.179
F statistics	5,588
Significance of F	.001

*: significant on .10 level; **: significant on .05-level; ***: significant on .01-level.

Discussion

Our first main finding is that the political and administrative leaders in the ministries regard political leaders as the most influential actors on salient issues. Nine out of ten of the undersecretaries of state and 75 percent of the secretary-generals and director-generals report that the political leadership in their own ministry has a very strong influence on the most salient issues. The administrative leadership is ranked as the second most influential group of actors, assessed by 9 out of 10 respondents in both groups as having very strong or strong influence on salient issues.

Second, we have shown that, regarding the most salient policy issues, the political and administrative leaders engage in an extensive and intensive intra- and inter-organizational contact pattern, initiated to varying degrees by the executive leaders themselves or by external groups, agencies and bodies.

Third, the influence of executive leaders on salient issues varies according to contact pattern, cultural and exposure factors. We will now discuss how the observed correlations can be interpreted from the perspectives and assumptions that we outlined in the introduction to this paper.

The assumptions from the *structural perspective* were that the influence of the executive political and administrative leaders would be higher on salient issues having a rather simple pattern of contact than those with a highly complex pattern of interaction. The argument was that executive leaders have capacity and attention problems and that complex contact patterns make it more difficult to exert hierarchical authority. This assumption seems to be supported as far as the political leaders are concerned, but not for the administrative leaders. This might indicate that the attention problem is greater for the political leadership than for the administrative leaders. This would concur with findings of the study of ministers mentioned (Christensen and Lægreid 2002b).

The other general expectation was that symmetry in the interaction pattern would be important. Our argument was that if contacts initiated by other actors were more frequent than contacts initiated by the leaders themselves, this would weaken their influence. This assumption is partly supported by our findings. The administrative leaders agree that their own influence, compared to the influence of political leaders, increases in cases where the administrative leaders initiate the contact. The political leaders support this assessment. The administrative leaders' assessment of the influence of the executive leaders is, however, not affected in any significant manner by symmetry in the contact pattern with external agencies, bodies and political parties. Indeed, for the political leaders there seems to be a negative symmetry effect, indicating that if they initiate contact with opposition parties and the select committee in the Storting, their own influence seems to decrease. This can be seen as an effect of an active Storting in a situation of weak minority governments. When the government has to contact the Storting and the parties, it tends to reduce its own influence on the issue at hand, meaning that it has to negotiate over salient issues.

From a *cultural perspective* we assumed that a political-administrative culture with strong use of specific decision-making signals by the political leadership would enhance the influence of political leaders compared to situations where the political leaders gave more general signals. Likewise, administrative leaders who receive general signals from the political leadership will have greater influence than those who receive specific decision-making signals. This was also confirmed. General steering signals from the political leadership give more discretionary power to the administrative leaders, while specific signals enhance the influence of political leaders on salient issues. The signifiance of this effect is, however, reduced when controlling for other factors.

A cultural perspective also assumes that issues producing a high level of tension in the trust-based relationship between political and administrative leaders will tend to increase the influence of political leaders and decrease the influence of administrative leaders. While we can observe an effect of tension, it is not in the direction we expected. The administrative leaders tend to report that issues producing high levels of tension reduce the power of political leaders but have no significant effect on the influence of administrative leaders. This might imply that high levels of tension

between the political and administrative leadership do not necessarily lead to a strengthening of hierarchical authority. They are just as likely to weaken the real authority and actual power of political leaders, indicating that they are not well integrated in the political-administrative culture of the ministry. There is, however, no effect of the attention of the Storting towards norms of control, indicating that administrative leaders' influence will be highest when the control focus is low. This might be explained by auditing, which focuses on ex ante control and as much on political responsibility as on administrative accountability (Christensen, Lægreid and Roness 2002).

From an *exposure* perspective we assumed that the more actively the media seeks information on and exposure of salient issues, the less the influence of the political leadership. This does not seem to be the case, however. The administrative leaders report that political leaders tend to have greater influence over issues receiving a high level of media attention than those receiving low levels of attention.[13] This may imply that the handling of salient policy issues needs media attention. The corresponding expectation that the more active the political leadership is in seeking media exposure, the more influence it will have is, however, supported. Political leaders who have written articles in newspapers on a salient issue are more influential, and political leaders who have been interviewed in the mass media report that the administrative leaders' influence is weaker than those who have not been interviewed.

We also assumed that the more active the media is in seeking information on and exposing certain salient issues, the more influence the administrative leaders will have. This assumption is supported by the observation that administrative leaders who are the targets of extensive media-initiated contact report a higher level of influence on salient issues than those who are the targets of fewer contacts from the media. One explanation for this could be that the main target of scrutiny from the media is normally the political leaders, not the administrative leaders. But media contact can also give administrative leaders opportunities to influence the definition of policy issues in the media. Media attention also often results in administrative leaders' writing articles in the newspapers on behalf of political leaders, an activity that also tends to increase the power and influence of administrative leaders on salient issues.

Conclusion

The main findings of the bivariate analysis of the responses of the political leaders concerning influence could not be controlled in a regression analysis, but they are nevertheless of interest. The assumption that political leaders' initiating contact towards other actors could strengthen their influence must be modified. First, political leaders receive more contacts than they initiate in salient policy issues, indicating potential attention and capacity problems. And second, many received contacts, contacts with opposition parties and contacts with select committees correlates with

decreasing influence. This may indicate that when political leaders initiate or receive contacts with certain external actors, they are prompted by the need to negotiate with those actors over salient issues, something that can socialize and increase conflicts and make it more difficult to exert hierarchical authority. According to this view political leaders are in a defensive and reactive position, but still very important actors (Christensen and Lægreid 2002b). These results do not exclude the possibility that some political leaders in certain salient policy issues, depending on the content of the contacts, may succeed in increasing their relative influence towards other actors through proactive behavior.

Exposure seems generally not to weaken the influence of political leaders, and one factor, namely, writing articles in the newspapers, seems to be positively correlated with having rather strong influence, perhaps showing that this is a way for political leaders to control the definition of a salient issue.

The political leaders see their administrative leaders as more influential when the administrative leaders initiate contact, a reasonable assumption, given that administrative leaders probably use such contacts as opportunities to get the attention of the political leaders and to lobby their support for certain decision-making premises. If the political leaders initiate contact with administrative leaders in other ministries, they see their own leaders as less influential, probably meaning that the broader the range of actors contributing to a set of decision-making premises, the smaller the influence of any one group.

Summing up the main findings from the administrative leaders' responses, based on the regression analysis, we may conclude that the variation in political leaders' influence on salient issues can mainly be explained by variables from the cultural and structural perspectives. More precisely, administrative leaders who experience high levels of tension in the trust-based relationship between political and administrative leaders and who receive many contacts from political and administrative bodies tend to report less influence for political leaders. The variation in the administrative leaders' own influence on salient issues can best be explained by variables from the structural and exposure perspectives. Administrative leaders who initiate contact with political leaders and who are contacted by the media over salient issues report a greater level of influence than those who are more passive towards the political leadership and receive less attention from the media. This means that the structural perspective is relevant for explaining the variation in the influence of both the political and the administrative leadership. In addition, we need to pay attention to the cultural perspective to understand the influence of the political leadership and to the exposure perspective to understand variations in the influence of the administrative leadership.

A main lesson from this study is that we should not try to explain the influence of political and administrative leaders and the complex interaction pattern that determines it in terms of a single variable. In a pluralistic and fragmented political-administrative system, we have to take structural constraints, informal cultural norms

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[13] This effect is, however, not significant when controlling for other factors (see Table 10).

and rules and responses to external media attention into account. We are faced with a complex interdependence between political-administrative contact networks, internal administrative culture and external exposure.

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Appendix

Variables and values used in bivariate correlations (Table 9) and regression analysis (Table10, Table 11).

Variables	Values
Dependent variables: Political leaders assessment of the influence of political leaders in own ministry	1: Not very strong influence; 2: Very strong influence
Political leaders assessment of the influence of administrative leaders in own ministry	1: Not strong influence; 2 Strong influence; 3: Very strong influence
Administrative leaders assessment of the influence of political leaders in own ministry	1: Not strong influence; 2 Strong influence; 3: Very strong influence
Administrative leaders assessment of the influence of administrative leaders in own ministry	1: No influence, 2: Some influence; 3: Strong influence; 4: Very strong influence
Independent variables: Contact initiated by political or administrative leaders in own ministry	0: Initiative by administrative leaders 1: Initiative by political leaders
Contact with administrative leaders in other ministries	0: Received contact/no contact 1: Initiated contact/received contact
Contact with opposition party in the parliament	0: Received contact/no contact 1: Initiated contact/received contact
Contact with parliamentary committee	0: Received contact/no contact 1: Initiated contact/received contact
Number of political-administrative contacts	1 through 8
General or specific signals from political leaders	0: Specific; 1: General
Tension in trust-based relationships between political and administrative leaders	0: No 1: Yes
Contacted by media	0: No; 1: Yes
The issue attracted strong media attention	0: No; 1: Yes
Interviewed in media	0: No; 1: Yes
Articles written in media on behalf of the minister	0: No; 1: Yes

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