Colleagues or adversaries: Ministerial coordination across party lines

Klüser, K Jonathan ; Schmuck, David ; Sieberer, Ulrich

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12784

Originally published at:
Klüser, K Jonathan; Schmuck, David; Sieberer, Ulrich (2024). Colleagues or adversaries: Ministerial coordination across party lines. Governance, 37(2):517-536.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12784

Received: 29 September 2022 | Revised: 3 February 2023 | Accepted: 3 April 2023

DOI: 10.1111/gove.12784

Governance WILEY

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Colleagues or adversaries: Ministerial coordination across party lines

K. Jonathan Klüser[1] | David Schmuck[2] | Ulrich Sieberer[2]

[1]Department of Political Science, University of Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland

[2]Department of Political Science, University of Bamberg, Bamberg, Germany

Correspondence
K. Jonathan Klüser, Department of Political Science, University of Zürich, Affolternstrasse 56, Zürich 8050, Switzerland.
Email: klueser@ipz.uzh.ch

Funding information
Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Grant/Award Number: SI 1470/6-1

Abstract

In multiparty governments, policymaking is a collaborative effort among the different incumbent parties. Often hidden by public debates about broader government policy, the necessary coordination routinely happens at the ministerial level, where ministries of different parties jointly devise viable and equitable policy solutions. However, since coordination involves substantial transaction costs, governments must carefully gauge the potential benefits. We study the political rationales that motivate governments to make this investment. We argue that coordination during the process of ministerial policy design hinges on both a conducive ministerial structure and sufficient authority. Once these conditions are met, cross-party coordination is more likely in policy areas where the implementation of government policy cannot be taken for granted. We investigate these claims, drawing on two new datasets. The first contains information about ministerial collaborations on all legislative projects sponsored by German governments, while the second maps the distribution of policy responsibilities among German ministries from 1976 until 2013, based on data about the policy briefs of all individual working units within the top-level federal executive. Given that ministries imprint their own perspective on legislation, our results are beyond administrative pedantries, but have substantial implications for the type and content of policies coalition governments formulate.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Lawmaking is a collaborative effort. Taking German governments as an example, more than 50% of legislation was drafted and signed by at least two different ministers. Yet, the conventional vantage point of coalition governance is that, a priori, ministers enjoy the unfettered and exclusive purview over any piece of legislation that addresses their jurisdiction (Laver & Shepsle, 1996). In this paper, we set out to reconcile theoretical expectations with empirical reality and present an argument explaining why coalition governments intentionally mandate inter-ministerial collaboration[1] on legislative projects across party lines.

Our argument builds on the burgeoning coalition governance literature. Realizing that accountability among individual ministers and the government as such is rather weak in coalition governments (Andeweg, 2000), scholarship has unraveled a toolbox of control devices multi-party governments use to rein in ministerial autonomy and prevent ministers from shirking on the coalition compromise (Strøm et al., 2010). These control mechanisms are conventionally classified as parliamentary (e.g., Carroll & Cox, 2012; Fortunato et al., 2017; Höhmann & Sieberer, 2020; Martin & Vanberg, 2005, 2011), extra-parliamentary (e.g., Klüver & Bäck, 2019; Miller & Müller, 2010; Moury, 2011; Müller & Strøm, 2008; Timmermans, 2003, 2006), and executive (e.g., Dewan & Hortala-Vallve, 2011; Thies, 2001), speaking to the political arena in which they operate. Regarding the executive arena, governments have been found to frequently create ministerial portfolios whose jurisdictions cannot be clearly delineated (Klüser & Breunig, 2022). This very much appears to be an intentional design choice. Often, coalition governments assign ministries with topically similar portfolios to different incumbent parties, which better distributes expertize and, thus, oversight capacity among all coalition partners (Fernandes et al., 2016). In a similar vein, coalitions capitalize on the malleability of ministerial portfolios (Sieberer, Meyer, et al., 2021) to create ministries whose jurisdictions overlap in critical policy areas (Klüser, 2022b).

We argue that a similar coalition governance logic drives a substantial part of inter-ministerial collaborations. Coalition governments mandate inter-ministerial collaboration across incumbent parties because it requires substantial coordination[2] among the involved actors. This coordination ensures that the preferences of all parties are being heard and considered while bills are being drafted within the ministerial bureaucracy (Mayntz & Scharpf, 1975; Scharpf & Mohr, 1994). Coalition governments rely on two different instruments to stimulate cross-party coordination on policy drafts. First, the institutional structure, that is, the extent to which ministries of different parties hold jurisdiction with regard to individual policy issues, provides the opportunity for fruitful coordination. Second, we argue that coalition governments rely on their authority vis-à-vis individual ministers to enforce coordination with colleagues from different parties. Importantly, neither structure nor authority alone can fully explain the actions of strategic actors. In line with the general notion of rational choice institutionalism, we expect that the coalition's behavior is a joint product of opportunities presented by institutions and the incentives to act on these. Hence, for each legislative project, the coalition assesses the risk that an individual minister in charge of drafting a bill dishonors the coalition compromise. Based on this risk assessment, the government considers it worthwhile to draw on its institutional structure and authority to assign a legislative project to ministries of different incumbent parties and, thus, induce coordination.

To test these theoretical expectations, we draw on a novel dataset of inter-ministerial collaboration. Our sample encompasses over 3000 bills drafted by 11 different coalition governments, meaning that we observe potential collaborations on all bills German governments wrote between 1976 and 2013. We combine this data with information on portfolio designs (Sieberer, Meyer, et al., 2021), coalition authority (Sieberer, 2015) as well as risk assessments of individual legislative projects based on ideological conflict and issue salience (Guinaudeau, 2015; Volkens et al., 2019). Using logistic regression models, we indeed find evidence that coalitions are more likely to mandate cross-party collaboration whenever the institutional structure is either conducive to coordination, or they enjoy authority to enforce it. The effect of institutional structure on collaboration increases noticeably for legislative projects, which the coalition perceives as risky of ministerial deviation. The implications and limitations of these findings are discussed in the conclusion.

2 | ARENAS OF MUTUAL CONTROL BETWEEN COALITION PARTNERS AND THE ROLE OF MINISTERIAL ORGANIZATION

In parliamentary democracies, the bulk of legislation is designed and drafted in ministries. The reasons for this are variegated: the civil servants working within the top executive are generally experts in their policy area and, hence, are able to draft policy that is both effective and fits the existing legal framework (Bonnaud & Martinais, 2014; Kerwin & Furlong, 2019; Page, 2003). Furthermore, executive agencies serve as a bridgehead to relevant societal actors, which enables ministries to draw on additional topical expertize (Epstein et al., 2014; Yackee, 2006; Yackee & Yackee, 2006). However, this ample capability comes at a premium for the coalition at large. Being able to capitalize on an expert organization, ministers enjoy an informational advantage vis-à-vis their colleagues. In combination with the customary division of labor among ministries, this invites parties to exploit the fragile chain of accountability between individual ministers and the coalition to bias policy according to their preference (Laver & Shepsle, 1996). Hence, policy-making in coalition governments is generally bedeviled by agency problems (Andeweg, 2000).

Attempting to mitigate the ensuing risk of policy drift, coalition partners seek mechanisms to control each other and commit the entire government to a jointly agreed policy agenda. Sorting through the set of coalition devices to curb ministerial autonomy, Strøm et al. (2010) identify three distinct political arenas where control devices are deployed ex-ante or ex-post to rein in policy drift. Firstly, in the extra-parliamentary arena, parties can publicly codify their joint policy goals before forming a government, which serves as a yardstick against which suggested policy proposals can be compared (Klüver & Bäck, 2019; Moury, 2011; Müller & Strøm, 2008; Timmermans, 2003, 2006). Once in office, multiparty governments sometimes resort to informal coalition committees to resolve disputes (Andeweg & Timmermans, 2008; Miller, 2011; Miller & Müller, 2010).

Moving from the extra-to the intra-parliamentary arena, coalition partners can use the parliament, which formally holds the final decision-making authority on most high-stakes matters, to ensure that the coalition's policy agreement is being honored. Again, there are both ex-ante and ex-post control devices. Regarding the former, the investiture procedure stipulated in many countries' constitutions allows the incumbent parties to vet the incoming executive before it can take office (Bergman, 1993; Strøm et al., 2010). In exceptional cases (in Europe Slovenia and Switzerland) this power even extends to scrutinizing and potentially rejecting individual ministerial candidates (Sieberer, 2010, p. 124). Among the parliamentary ex-post mechanisms, the probably best-researched control device is legislative review, which refers to parliaments' competence to scrutinize and, if necessary, adapt legislative proposals drafted by the government in the legislative process (Martin & Vanberg, 2005, 2011). Furthermore, coalition partners can draw on the topical expertize of parliamentary committees to vet policy proposals. If the committee chairmanships are distributed strategically among the incumbent parties, parliamentary committees effectively facilitate control across parties (Carroll & Cox, 2012; Fortunato et al., 2017). Lastly, parliamentary questions have been identified as a mechanism to monitor governments. While it was previously thought that parliamentary questions were primarily a tool used by the opposition, Höhmann and Sieberer (2020) showed how coalition partners deploy this device to scrutinize ministers' from other coalition parties.

The last area of control devices concerns the executive arena, which is also the focus of this paper. Most apparent in this regard might be the coordinating authority of the prime minister, who is often supported by an organization that mirrors the individual ministries and thereby seeks to mitigate their informational advantage (Dahlström et al., 2011; Peters et al., 2016). Moreover, seeking to pre-empt deviations from the policy compromise, portfolio allocation allows parties to secure responsibility for policy issues they deem important while leaving less important matters to their future colleagues (Bäck et al., 2011). On a more detailed level, the selection of individual politicians for ministerial office provides parties with an opportunity to identify and expunge potential mavericks from the pool of candidates (Bäck et al., 2016). Lastly, during government formation, coalition partners can install "hostile" junior ministers in ministries, which mitigate the informational advantages of individual ministers by reporting crucial information to the coalition (Lipsmeyer & Pierce, 2011; Thies, 2001).

Importantly, all those executive mechanisms focus on the top level of ministers but neglect the organizational side of the ministerial bureaucracy. This is striking, as the vast resources and expertize of the ministerial bureaucracy are vital for government policy-making (Bonnaud & Martinais, 2014; Kerwin & Furlong, 2019; Page, 2003)—and engendered the theory of ministerial government (Laver & Shepsle, 1996), which raised the theoretical problem of agency loss in the first place (Andeweg, 2000). Traditionally, the model of ministerial government assumes that policy responsibilities are clearly cut up between and assigned to individual ministries. Practically, this results in the customary compartmentalization of all potential policy issues into policy portfolios, which are thought of as being the exclusive realm of one ministry (Laver & Shepsle, 1996).

Like so often, the empirical picture is much messier than stipulated by theoretical assumptions. While this remark per se cannot be a theoretical critique, in the case of the ministerial government model the simplification defines away important control mechanisms used by coalition governments. Ministerial jurisdictions are regularly changed for political reasons (Mortensen & Green-Pedersen, 2015; Sieberer, 2015; Sieberer, Meyer, et al., 2021) and often overlap in certain policy areas, turning the allegedly exclusive realm of ministerial portfolios into an area of shared competence (Klüser & Breunig, 2022). Such areas of shared ministerial responsibility have predominantly been researched from a public administration perspective, suggesting that overlaps are conducive to inter-ministerial coordination and, hence, ministries are less autonomous than assumed by the ministerial government model (Mayntz & Scharpf, 1975; Scharpf & Mohr, 1994). Coalition governments can capitalize on these coordinative structures as an additional control device. If ministries with related or overlapping portfolios are being allocated to different coalition partners, the overlaps in expertize and authority mean that ministries can both coordinate and control each other while policies are being drafted (Fernandes et al., 2016; Klüser, 2022b).

3 | CROSS-PARTY COORDINATION IN LAW SPONSORSHIP

There is a missing link in the postulated argument. So far, research has only established that coalition partners purposefully design and allocate ministerial portfolios to create opportunities for cross-party coordination. However, the desired scrutiny that follows from coordination only works if the incumbent parties draw on those opportunity structures and enforce inter-ministerial collaboration on policy proposals that traverse party lines. Hence, in this paper, we ask to what extent and under what institutional and political conditions governments stimulate cross-party ministerial coordination in an effort to curtail ministerial autonomy.

There are compelling reasons why coalition governments prefer cross-party coordination as a governance device. First, being involved in the drafting process of other ministries allows coalition partners to gain early information on policy initiatives of their partners and which policy position they will adopt. Second, and contrary to ex-post scrutiny of drafted policy proposals, the direct involvement in the policy design process allows invested parties to participate in setting the details of new policies. Ideally, this ensures that all preferences are being considered while the bill is being drafted in the ministerial bureaucracy. Third, overlapping jurisdictions move the process of coalition control out of the public spotlight and into the daily bureaucratic routines, which renders this a particularly beneficial governance device because it avoids the political costs of public disunity and, hence, maintains the coalition's reputation. Furthermore, corrections at this stage entail no loss of face for the responsible minister, which should render compromises more likely and efficient. Nevertheless, if disagreements prevail, parties still retain the opportunity to escalate the conflict to the political level and settle disputes under public scrutiny.

Arguably, the coalition, being composed of incumbent parties, cannot be perceived as an independent actor. However, we contend that coalitions collectively follow rationales that expend beyond strategic partisan concerns or individual ministerial ambitions. First, coalitions often spend quite some time and effort to conceive and draft policy compromises that represent a carefully balanced bargain among all involved actors. While it might beneficial in the short term for parties to deviate from this compromise, coalitions are aware that individual deviations can trigger chain reactions that can quickly turn substantial policy documents into teethless paper tigers (Timmermans, 2003). Moreover, any deviation bears the risk of reputational damage to the coalition government as such, as the public rarely honors open displays of government disunity. Such theoretical deliberations can also be backed up by empirical evidence, as it was found that final polices are best represented by the weighted policy positions of incumbent parties—read: the coalition compromise (Martin & Vanberg, 2014). Hence, in the following we develop and argument pitching individual ministers against the coalition at large, explaining the conditions under which ministries held by different parties control each other during the process of drafting legislation. On a very basic level, we argue that coalitions must possess the necessary opportunity to stimulate cross-party coordination among their ministries. We focus on two crucial aspects of the coalition's opportunities: its institutional structure and its authority vis-à-vis individual ministers. All derived hypotheses are summarized in Table 1.

Institutional structure refers to the coalition's bureaucratic and legal capacity to encourage the collaborative design of policy. Being in charge of ministries with jurisdiction over a policy area enables parties to understand, evaluate and fruitfully collaborate on relevant drafts written by ministries of other parties (Klüser, 2022a). However, overlaps are far more than mere opportunity structures. Rather, they often provide the formal foundations for ministries to participate in the drafting process of bills initiated by other ministries. For instance, the German government's rules of procedure, which regulate the executive's internal procedures, stipulate that "In

TABLE 1 Overview of hypothesized effects on the probability of ministerial collaboration. Each cell denotes the hypothesized effect composition and the expected effect direction.

Opportunity	Baseline	Risk
Institutional structure	H1 (+) Institutional structure	H1.1 (+) Institutional structure X Risk
Authority	H2 (+) Authority	H2.1 (+) Authority X Risk

matters affecting the business areas of several federal ministries, these ministries shall cooperate to ensure the uniformity of the federal government's actions and statements (…)".[3] In light of this directive, the leading ministry is generally expected to coordinate with other ministries whose stakes the prospective legislation touches upon (Busse, 2010, p. 226). However, whenever a piece of legislation only affects the jurisdiction on one ministry, there is at least no legal foundation for ministries to cooperate. We, therefore, expect cross-party collaboration to be more likely in scenarios where jurisdictions transgress party boundaries and, thus, enable several coalition partners to participate in policymaking (H1).

Another opportunity coalitions can use to influence the ministerial policymaking process is their authority vis-à-vis individual ministers. The question of which ministry leads or participates in the drafting process is not fully circumscribed by coalition agreements or organizational decrees but is generally determined on a case-by-case basis. In fact, the process of determining the leading and supporting ministries in Germany is merely guided by a shared understanding of substantive responsibilities, but there are no formal rules that regulate it (Busse, 2010, pp. 225–226). Yet, the empirical allocation of government bills to individual ministries is suggestive of political negotiations among ministers in the cabinet, who seek to participate in the policymaking process (Klüser & Breunig, 2022). During these negotiations, we assume that strong ministers, who enjoy authority within the cabinet, are more successful in getting their will. Recalling that coordination is a prime coalition control device, leading ministers will generally be eager to exclude their colleagues from the policymaking process to enjoy more leeway in biasing legislation. This means that the coalition must enforce coordination against the wish of the leading minister. However, strong ministers are presumably in a much better position to fend off such requests, whereas ministers without much authority at the coalition table are likely to be forced into coordinating with other ministers. Therefore, we expect inter-ministerial collaboration to be more likely on legislative projects where the leading minister is weak, resulting in higher coalition authority (H2).

Our two baseline hypotheses on the effects of structure and authority merely address opportunities for the coalition to enforce inter-ministerial coordination; yet, they are silent about whether the coalition deems it worthwhile to involve more than just one ministry in a policy project. Putting it more pointedly, the existence of jurisdictional overlap only facilitates inter-ministerial coordination but does not mandate or enforce it. Jurisdictional overlap is only a necessary (legal), not a sufficient condition. This is an important point to consider given the high transaction costs that inter-ministerial coordination entails for the involved parties (Mayntz & Scharpf, 1975; North, 1990). Therefore, collaboration ought not to be expected irrespective of the stakes involved in a policy decision (Klüser, 2022b). Following the coalition governance literature (e.g., Fortunato et al., 2017; Martin & Vanberg, 2005, 2011; Thies, 2001), we argue that coalition partners are particularly prone to monitor the faithful implementation of the coalition compromise whenever there is a high risk of deviation if the responsible minister remains unchecked.

In our case, this means that coalitions should be particularly likely to demand collaboration if they have both the opportunity to enforce it *and* perceive it necessary to guarantee that the policy outcome is unbiased. In brief, coalitions do not only consider opportunities but also risks.

In the context of coalition governments, incumbents can reap benefits from implemented policy (Müller and Strøm, 1999). These benefits are a function of two individual components, which jointly factor into the government's risk assessment about whether inter-ministerial coordination is warranted. The first component is the policy conflict within the government. Since a party's benefits hinge on the difference between a policy outcome and its preferences, incumbent parties and their ministers generally strive to design legislation that aligns closely with their own ideal point (Laver & Shepsle, 1996). If there is little conflict regarding a policy project, ministers are less likely to deviate from the coalition guidelines, because the potential gains are rather limited, given that the incumbent parties largely agree on the proper handling of the matter. In contrast, policy projects on which coalition parties disagree represent prime cases where the coalition might deem inter-ministerial collaboration warranted. If such projects remained under the exclusive purview of a single minister, the eventual outcome could grossly misrepresent agreed government policy, which not only leaves the passive coalition partners with large policy losses but also potentially tarnishes the government's reputation if deviations are publicly spotted and rectified during parliamentary review.

The second factor playing into the coalition's risk assessment is the relative importance of policy issues to ministers and their political parties. All members of a coalition government may hold some (submerged) preferences about any given issue, but in some cases simply do not care enough to debate about it. “One party may emphasize cultural issues but be relatively indifferent about economic issues, while a coalition partner may weigh the issues in the opposite way” (Andeweg & Timmermans, 2008, p. 276). As a result, the potential benefits of policymaking that incentivize ministers to dishonor the coalition compromise is not a simple function of policy conflict on a given issue, but rather the product of conflict and issues salience jointly considered (Falcó-Gimeno, 2014).

We argue that coalitions use this information as a simple heuristic to assess which bills require the attention of various ministries. The risk that ministers dishonor the coalition agreement is low when there is little conflict regarding a policy project and the leading minister does not deeply care about the matter. Hence, commissioning ministries of different parties to work on a bill may not be warranted. In contrast, policy projects that are both hotly debated within the government and important to the responsible minister are classic cases of high-risk-high-reward. Ministers and their parties can reap high rewards from biasing policymaking to their favor; hence, the coalition must regard such policy projects as risky, because the final bill is unlikely to represent the coalition agreement.

This argument implies an interaction effect between opportunities and risk assessment. First, coalitions should be more likely to capitalize on jurisdictional overlap and demand inter-ministerial collaboration whenever they perceive the risk that an individual minister would distort the policy outcome and misrepresent the coalition's policy intention (H1.1). Second, the coalition should be more successful in using its authority, that is, enforce cross-partisan collaboration, vis-à-vis an individual minister in risky policy areas. While the coalition may defer to powerful ministers on topics without much potential for costly policy divergence, they are more likely to rein them in on risky issues (H2.1).

Two contrasting cases serve to illustrate how political disagreement effectively “activates” jurisdictional overlap to hedge the risk of policy deviation. The first case concerns a law the Bundestag passed in 2013 to amend the federal “Finance and personnel statistics law”, which was necessary to harmonize important legal sources of metrology with European developments. The proposed law aimed to create a new consistent system for legal metrology, serving the purpose of legal unification by eliminating different approaches in German and European law in favor of a unified approach in accordance with European law. At that time, the ministerial competence to deal with this policy issue was distributed across five federal ministries, with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Finance being at the forefront. Moreover, the responsibility was not only shared administratively, but also politically between the then-incumbent parties: the Liberals (FDP) were responsible for the economic portfolio, whereas finance was held by the Conservatives (CDU/CSU). However, this administrative and political distribution of responsibility did not lead to inter-ministerial collaboration, because neither political party was seriously concerned about policy deviations. First, the issue was uncontested, as both parties were similarly positioned on the overarching dimension of Economic Affairs.[4] Second, neither party cared about the legislative initiative, rendering any potential policy deviation meaningless.[5]

In contrast, in the case of the law "Income Tax Act in implementation of the decision of the Federal Constitutional Court" of May 7, 2013, the interests of the coalition partners were highly contested, whereby the overlapping responsibilities were exploited to push the drafting of the bill. The law enforced the equal taxation of civil partnership with married couples; thus, the policy content of the bill was mainly located in the Ministry of Family Affairs (CDU) and the Justice (FDP), However, the Ministry of Finance (CDU) took the lead because taxation policies are matter of its portfolio. During the coalition negotiations both coalition partners had agreed to reduce disadvantages in tax law that were against equality and to push for equality of civil partners with spouses6 but the conservative CDU/CSU was not willing to put this issue on the legislative agenda. The liberal FDP in particular pushed for legislation in this area, as both tax issues and the equality of civil partnerships is an important topic for the liberal party, whereas the implementation of equality of civil partnerships with married couples was tantamount to a paradigm shift for the conservative CDU and CSU.

4 | CONCEPT OPERATIONALIZATION, MEASUREMENT, AND MODELLING STRATEGY

The theoretical arguments are tested on all legislative procedures in Germany from 1977 to 2013—or 12 different German coalition governments—that led to the adoption of a government bill.[7] Beyond data availability reasons, the decision to focus on Germany is rooted in the fact that German ministries and their ministers are rather powerful and autonomous actors in the policy-making process (Müller-Rommel, 1994), even in a comparative perspective (Laver and Shepsle, 1994), which is a prerequisite for governments to even consider cross-party coordination as a governance device. At the same time, Germany is an unlikely case to find *politically motivated* ministerial coordination that transgresses party lines. The reason is that Germany has a strong parliament that is equipped with multiple institutions to gather relevant information and scrutinize government bills (Lijphart, 1999; Martin & Vanberg, 2011). As a result, German governments are not compelled to draw on executive institutions to curb ministerial discretion but could in principle also relegate this task to parliament. Therefore, if it can be shown that cross-party collaborations are often politically motivated in Germany, there is good reason to assume that countries with weaker parliaments might resort to the same mechanism. In the following, we describe the operationalization and measurement strategies of all relevant concepts. Summary statistics of all variables in Tables A.2 and A.3 in the online appendix.

Our dependent variable cross-partisan collaboration is binary and measures whether ministries controlled by different parties were involved in the process of drafting a given government bill. For every policy proposal, one ministry has the primary responsibility to formulate a draft. However, ministries that are affected by the policy proposal need to be involved in the drafting according to the Joint Rules of Procedure of the Federal Ministries (§ 19 GGO). After formal adoption, each bill is signed by all ministers that were involved in the drafting process. Using Optical Character Recognition, we read the list of signatories from each government bill passed by the German Bundestag.[8] Subsequently, we map signing ministers on their respective political parties. This data stems from Sieberer (2015), which was extended to match the timeframe of this study. As in our window of observation all coalition governments consisted of two coalition parties,[9] the variable is coded 1 if the bill was co-signed by at least a minister belonging to the coalition partner and 0 otherwise.

The first explanatory concept in the realm of opportunities—institutional structure—is operationalized as the degree of jurisdictional overlap between coalition partners in a policy area. For its measurement, we rely on a novel dataset on the portfolio design of the complete national ministerial bureaucracy in Germany from 1949 to 2013 (Sieberer, Angela Dzida, & David Schmuck, 2021). While the scholarship on portfolio design has gained traction in recent years and produced commendable data sources (e.g., Bertels & Schulze-Gabrechten, 2021; Danielsen & Fleischer, 2023; Fleischer et al., 2018; Fleischer et al., 2022; Kuipers et al., 2021; MacCarthaigh, 2012; Sieberer, Angela Dzida, & David Schmuck, 2021), our dataset improves on such studies in one important way: it emancipates policy issues from the organizational structure responsible for them. Our data not only map organizational changes, but also provides detailed information about where individual policy responsibilities lie within ministerial administration. Even more, given that the data is elicited the level of individual working units within the ministries, it enables us to specify both the location and distribution of policy responsibility across different ministries (see Figure A1, A3 and A4 in online appendix).

The data collection draws on organizational charts of the ministries that display the jurisdictions of each organizational unit of a ministry at a certain time point. When changes occur in the organizational structure, personnel, or jurisdictions of a ministry, a new organizational chart is published. If several considerable changes in the jurisdictions of a ministry were made, the dataset includes at least two organizational charts per year for every ministry. Every single policy responsibility of the working units ("*Referate*") in the ministerial bureaucracy was assigned to a distinct policy area according to the Comparative Agenda Project (CAP) scheme. The CAP scheme differentiates between 21 major policy areas and around 220 subcategories. From this dataset on portfolio design in Germany, we created a monthly time-series cross-sectional dataset that allows mapping the policy responsibilities of every ministry for different policy subcategories at a certain time point. We aggregate this information on jurisdictions for every policy subcategory and ministry and then assigned the party affiliation of the minister to the ministry.

We rely on the Inverse Simpson Diversity Index, generally well known to political scientists as the measure of the "effective number of parties" (Laakso & Taagepera, 1979) to operationalize our independent variable, which is the degree of jurisdictional overlap between coalition partners in a policy area. Analogously applied to our data, it yields the effective number of coalition parties with responsibilities for a policy issue. Mathematically, the measure is defined as $1/\lambda = 1/\sum_{i=1}^{N} p_i^2$, where N denotes the total number of parties (in our period of observation always 2) and p_i describes the proportional abundance of working units belonging to party i in each policy area. For a two-party coalition this measurement ranges from 1, that is, one coalition possesses exclusive jurisdiction over a policy area, to 2, that is, both parties are equally responsible, and the jurisdictions are maximally overlapping between portfolios of the coalition partners. Importantly, our measure is based on the distribution of individual policy issues across organizational units and not on organizational unites as such. Hence, jurisdictional overlap is not a function of organizational assignments, but of the distribution of ministerial—and, thus, ultimately political—responsibility for policy issues across ministries. While not yet established in the discipline of public policy, a similar operationalization has already been used and corroborated (Klüser, 2022a; Klüser & Breunig, 2022). We provide additional empirical description regarding the measure's validity and distribution in the appendix (Figures A1—A5 in the online appendix).

Our second independent variable tapping into the concept of opportunities is authority. Drawing on Alexiadou (2015) we argue that ministries that are party heavyweights enjoy more authority within the cabinet than their colleagues without a strong position in their party. Ceteris paribus, this means that the coalition at large can exercise less authority over such ministers, rendering a minister's authority and the coalition's powerlessness two sides of the same coin. To measure the coalition's authority vis-à-vis individual ministers we, therefore, observe whether ministers with primary responsibility for a bill are leaders of their political party, either on the regional or national level. If the leading minister is a regional or national party leader at the time of appointment, she is strong and, thus, the coalition enjoys less authority to enforce cross-party coordination. In contrast, the coalition is in a better position if they face a party lightweight. Hence, this dummy variable is coded 0 for bills where the leading minister is a party leader and 1 otherwise. For this information, we draw on the extended dataset from Sieberer (2015).

The perceived risk of policy deviations is operationalized as the product of ideological conflict and policy importance. This multiplicative operationalization ensures that all policy projects that are either uncontested within the coalition or unimportant to the leading minister are not perceived as risky. In contrast, the combination of both components does not just linearly add, but multiplicatively reinforces each other and, thus, drives the coalition's risk assessment. The measurement of both components relies on party manifestos. Ideological conflict with regard to a policy project is operationalized as the distance between the coalition parties' ideal points on a given policy issue. Since all observed coalitions are composed of two parties, the simple absolute distance provides an easy measure of the conflict potential. In order to measure parties' ideal points, we use the data on party manifestos from the MARPOR project (Volkens et al., 2019), which includes positional information on hand-coded quasi-sentences of party manifestos. In order to match policy positions for parties from the MARPOR dataset to the policy areas of the CAP scheme, we create five larger policy dimensions according to the approach by Hohendorf et al. (2021) (see Table A.4 in appendix). These five major policy dimensions are “interior and justice”, “economic affairs”, “social affairs and education”, “foreign affairs and defense”, “environment”, and “other policy areas”. We compute the policy positions of coalition parties for every policy dimension with the logit procedure proposed by Lowe et al. (2011) and calculate the difference in the policy positions for the parties in the coalition. Larger values represent a larger ideological distance of coalition partners in a policy dimension.

Issue importance, the second component of the coalition's risk assessment, also draws on party manifestos; however, due to the higher resolution of individual policy issues, we use manifestos coded according to the Comparative Agenda Project (Baumgartner et al., 2019; Breunig & Schnatterer, 2020; Guinaudeau, 2015). We operationalize importance as the salience of a policy issue, which is measured as the share of quasi-sentences referring to a given policy issue within a party manifesto.

We control for several factors that could confound our relationship of interest. We account for features of bills that systematically affect coordination in coalition governments. First, we include a dummy variable that indicates if a bill amends the constitution or not. *Amendments of the constitution* require a qualified majority in parliament, which was never given by the parliamentary party groups of the parties in government in Germany. Second, bills that are *ratifications of international agreements* always involve at least two ministries, the ministry for foreign affairs and the ministry to whose portfolio the treaty topically belongs. This co-sponsorship does not result from coalition governance and is thus accounted for by a control variable.

Furthermore, we control for the complexity of a bill measured by its length (cf. Huber & Shipan, 2002). Longer bills reflect more complex issues that might affect the jurisdictions of more ministries. We measure the length of a bill as the logged number of characters. We also add dummies for the *different major policy areas* of the CAP scheme to our models. The policy areas differ in their complexity (and thus in their number of existing subcategories), which affects the degree of dispersion among different portfolios (of coalition parties) and the coalition parties' incentives to involve in the drafting process of a policy proposal. In addition, some policy areas (e.g., environmental policy) are more cross-sectional, while other policy areas are more insulated from other areas (e.g., education). Moreover, we include *cabinet dummies* in our models in order to capture the covariance of confounders that only differ across coalition governments. For instance, the number of ministries that coalition parties are responsible for varies between cabinets and affect the measurement of effective parties in charge of jurisdictions as well as the bill's co-sponsorship of the coalition partner.

We use logistic regression to explain cross-party coordination on bills in coalition governments because in two-party coalitions the dependent variable is dichotomous, that is, either the coalition partner is involved in a policy drafting or not. We compute clustered standard errors at the level of cabinets because the bills are not independent of other bills within cabinets, for example, coalition parties can logroll between bills. Moreover, we include fixed effects for the different major policy areas and cabinets to remove the unobserved time-invariant heterogeneity between these groups in our time-series dataset.

5 | RESULTS

We estimate five different specifications of a logistic regression model (Table 2). Models 1 and 2 only show the main effect of both opportunity variables on the probability of cross-party coordination, while models 3 and 4 add multiplicative terms capturing the hypothesized interaction effects between these opportunities and risk assessment. Specification 5 estimates all hypothesized effects in a single model.[10] All models include our battery of control variables and fixed-effects dummies for both cabinets and policy areas. To ease the interpretation and gauge the substantive significance of our findings, we present average marginal effects (AME) and average predicted probabilities (Figure 1, Figure 2).

Model 1 investigates whether coalition governments capitalize on jurisdictional overlap to mandate cross-party collaboration, irrespective of their risk assessment. The empirical data indeed supports this first hypothesis, as the corresponding coefficient is positive and significant at the 1% level ($b = 0.68$, $\text{se} = 0.21$). Translating this effect into predicted probabilities renders the interpretation more intelligible. Fixing overlap at its first quartile, the probability of cross-party collaboration, averaged across all observations, is 31%. In comparison, policy projects where jurisdictional overlap lies at the third quartile are 9% points more likely to be elaborated jointly among ministries of different parties.

As a specification of the first hypothesis, we expect the positive effect of jurisdictional overlap to grow as coalitions perceive it more likely that ministries deviate from the government's policy idea. Hence, Model 3 estimates an interaction effect between overlap and the coalition's

TABLE 2 Logistic regression analysis. Cabinet dummies and dummies for CAP major codes not shown. Standard errors clustered on cabinet.

	Dependent variable				
	Cross-party collaboration				
	(1)	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**
Jurisdictional overlap	0.680***		0.582***		0.577***
	(0.208)		(0.134)		(0.134)
Authority		0.275*		0.132	0.114
		(0.164)		(0.197)	(0.196)
Risk			−66.405***	−6.940	−68.893***
			(20.274)	(15.564)	(26.068)
Jurisdictional overlap × risk			44.471***		43.422***
			(13.054)		(10.424)
Authority × risk				7.306	5.995
				(19.500)	(15.611)
Complexity	0.135***	0.135***	0.148***	0.150***	0.149***
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.051)	(0.051)
Total salience	−8.536	−4.272	−6.108	−2.120	−4.388
	(11.220)	(10.818)	(11.817)	(12.004)	(11.507)
Constitutional amendment	2.582**	2.565**	2.746***	2.734***	2.748***
	(1.017)	(1.029)	(0.913)	(1.012)	(0.937)
Treaty	2.528***	2.506***	2.704***	2.603***	2.706***
	(0.367)	(0.370)	(0.428)	(0.425)	(0.421)
Constant	−3.416***	−2.712***	−3.186***	−2.774***	−3.174***
	(0.508)	(0.513)	(0.641)	(0.596)	(0.665)
Observations	2996	2996	2858	2858	2858
Log likelihood	−1471.963	−1476.839	−1345.267	−1364.962	−1343.885
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3015.925	3025.678	2764.534	2803.925	2765.770

*$p < 0.1$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$.

risk assessment. The relevant coefficient is positive and significant on the 1% level ($b = 44.47$, se = 13.05), lending empirical support to H1.1. Importantly, the estimated effect is not just statistically, but also substantially significant. Figure 1 visualizes the AME of an IQR-change in jurisdictional overlap, expressed as percentage points, across the empirical range of coalition risk assessments. The upward-sloping line illustrates the positive interaction effect between both covariates, whereas the gray area visualizes the 95% confidence interval around the effect. As the confidence band does not include zero across the entire range of risk, the AME of overlap is significant for all values of the moderator. The y-intercept marks the AME of jurisdictional overlap for legislative projects that the coalition does not deem risky of policy deviation. In such scenarios, the AME is about 5% points. However, the effect size doubles for legislative projects, whose risk assessment sits at the eighth quantile, and almost triples if coalitions consider a project extremely risky.

Next, we turn to the interpretation of the results regarding the second component of coalitions' opportunities to mandate cross-party collaboration: authority over the lead minister measured

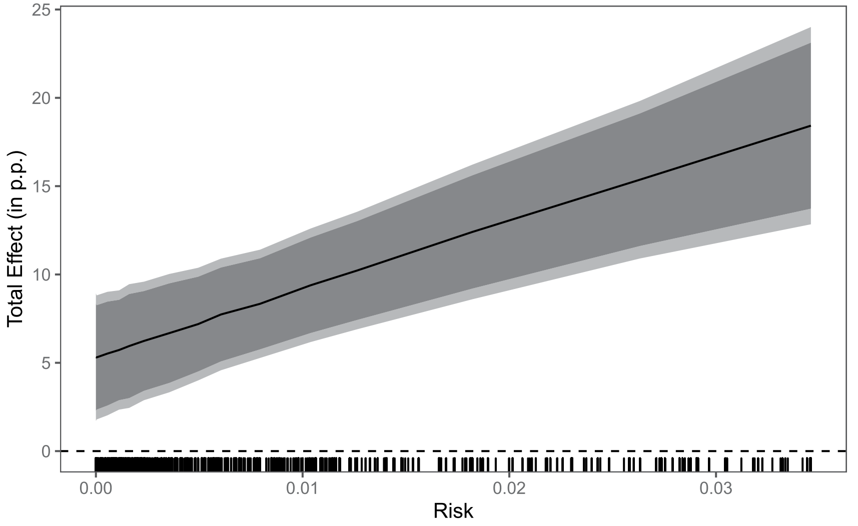

FIGURE 1 Average marginal effect of an IQR change in jurisdictional overlap on the probability of cross-party collaboration (based on model 3). Black line denotes the instantaneous AME at different values of risk. Gray area shows 90% and 95% confidence bound, based on 1000 draws from the sample distribution. Rugs on the *x*-axis visualize the 5th to 95th quantile range of empirical observations.

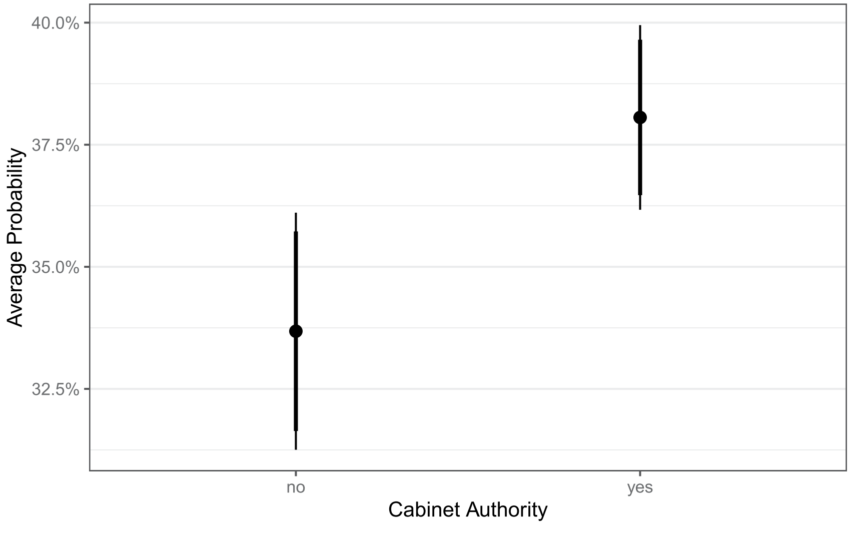

FIGURE 2 Predicted probability of cross-party collaboration, averaged across all observations. Whiskers denote 90% and 95% confidence bounds, based on a 1000 samples drawn from the sample distribution (based on model 2).

by the fact that the minister is not a party heavyweight. Model 2 only estimate the main effect of the coalition wielding authority over a responsible minister, whereas model 4 also includes the stipulated interaction effect of authority and risk (Table 2). Generally, cross-party collaboration is statistically significantly (at the 10% level) more likely for weak ministers ($b = 0.28$, $se = 0.16$). We interpret these findings as providing some empirical support to our expectation that coalitions draw on their authority vis-à-vis responsible ministers to mandate collaboration with ministers from other parties (H2). However, this effect is not robust but vanishes once being inspected more in detail (H2.1).

Figure 2 shows the average predicted probability of the coalition mandating cross-party collaboration in situations where it enjoys authority over the responsible minister versus situations in which it does not. Whenever the minister leading a legislative project is strong and, hence, the coalition wields less authority, the average probability of collaboration is about 33.75%. This figure increases by 4.40% points to about 38.13% in scenarios where the coalition can more easily exercise its authority and ensure that bills are jointly drafted by ministries led by different parties. This difference is at the border of customary levels of statistical significance.

However, the effect wanes once risk is included as a moderator into the regression equation ($b = 0.11$, se $= 0.20$) and neither does the expected interaction effect between both covariates attain statistical significance ($b = 6.00$, se $= 15.60$). Overall, these findings provide some empirical support to our expectation that coalitions draw on their authority vis-à-vis responsible ministers to mandate collaboration with ministers from other parties (H2). However, contrary to theoretical expectations, this effect does not increase for risky bills and vanishes once risk is introduced to the model (H2.1).

6 | ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

All results discussed above have been subjected to several robustness checks, whose presentation is largely relegated to the online appendix and only briefly summarized here. First, we estimated a model that probes into all stipulated hypotheses simultaneously (Model 5 in Table 2). The results do not substantially diverge from the findings stated previously.

Second, while the model specifications shown here do control for the effect of bills being either ratifications of international treaties or constitutional amendments, we re-estimate all models on a sample that excludes such bills (Table A5 in the online appendix). This exclusion reduces the sample size by about one third. However, the results remain substantially the same: Jurisdictional overlap increases the probability of cross-party collaboration, which is positively moderated by the coalitions risk assessment. As before, authority can neither conditionally nor unconditionally explain a coalition's propensity to engage in cross-party collaboration.

Third, we re-estimate our models drawing on a simple OLS regression model instead of the previous logistic regression approach (Table A6 in the online appendix). Again, the results are virtually similar to the findings reported above.

The fourth robustness check addresses a commonly violated assumption of interaction models, namely that the estimated interaction effect transpires linearly across the range of the moderator (Hainmueller et al., 2019). To this end, we discretize the coalition's risk assessment into tercentiles and subsequently re-fit our models using this discrete variable as the moderator (Table A7 in online appendix). The models show a constant increase of the total effect of jurisdictional overlap, which implies that the interaction effect is indeed linear across the range of the moderator.

As a last robustness check, we perform a “leave-one-out” analysis to ensure that our results are not driven by policy-specific characteristics such as issue complexity, regulatory approach, or interest group strength. Addressing this concern, we sequentially drop all observations pertaining to one policy issue and re-estimate Model 5 (Figure A6 in online appendix). Our results are consistent across virtually all subsamples. Only in one case, leaving out laws regarding taxation (CAP code: 1–07), the main effect of the governments risk assessment turns insignificant.

However, given that none of our hypotheses posits an independent effect of risk assessment, this does not tarnish our results.

7 | CONCLUSION

When and why do ministries collaborate on policy projects? While there certainly is an administrative perspective on this question, there also is a political twist to it: in many instances, inter-ministerial collaboration transgresses party boundaries, effectively including different coalition partners in the process of drafting legislation. Such a perspective contrasts with the conventional assumption of ministerial autonomy, which stipulates those ministries have near-exclusive jurisdiction over policy issues pertaining to their portfolio (Laver & Shepsle, 1996). However, we argue that observed cross-party collaborations are not a bug, but a feature of coalition governments. Collaboration across party lines requires coordination among the involved actors and, thus, ensures that potentially conflicting views can be reconciled while bills are drafted by the ministerial bureaucracy, ideally resolving disputes before they see the light of day. In this sense, cross-party coordination at the level of ministries stands in a long line of coalition governance devices (for an overview, see Strøm et al., 2010).

Yet, legislative projects must meet some conditions for coalitions to demand cross-party collaboration: coalitions must possess the right institutional structure to mandate fruitful collaboration and see the incentive to incur costs the necessary coordination entails. Using a new data set of ministerial collaborations in Germany from 1976 to 2013, we generally find support for our expectations. Coalitions having the right institutional structure to enforce collaboration in certain policy areas are more likely to assign respective bills to multiple ministries controlled by different parties. Likewise, we find that authority over ministers—who, as a rule of thumb, prefer not to coordinate with opposed colleagues—helps coalitions to enforce cross-party collaboration. However, given that collaboration is potentially costly (Mayntz & Scharpf, 1975; North, 1990), coalitions carefully assess the risks of ministers going rogue. If coalitions deem a legislative project risky, that is, they are worried about the potential of gross policy deviations from the coalition agreement, they are more likely to draw on the institutional structure and demand inter-ministerial collaboration across party lines.

Naturally, the extent to which our results are generalizable beyond the German case is an open question. In international comparison, German ministries are lavishly staffed and centralized (Wegrich & Hammerschmid, 2018). This concentrates a lot of policy-making expertize and capacity within the ministerial bureaucracy, which is conducive to cross-party collaborations. On the other hand, in comparison with prime ministers in other parliamentary democracies, the German chancellor has a strong standing (Bergman et al., 2003). As a result, coalitions do not need to exclusively rely on cross-party collaborations to ensure that the bills reflect government policy, but could simply draw on hierarchy and authority (Andeweg, 2000). Thus, the finding that inter-ministerial coordination is used for the purpose of coalition oversight even though an alternative would be available (at least for the party of the chancellor) suggests that inter-ministerial collaboration should be even more prevalent in countries such as Sweden where government is characterized by flat hierarchies and a collegial style of decision-making (Larsson, 1994). However, a higher prevalence does not mean that inter-ministerial collaboration follows the same political rationale as we have argued here. Rather, in a more collegial setting inter-ministerial cooperation may just be the modus operandi of executive governance, regardless of political necessities and motives.

Our findings directly speak to the larger coalition governance literature. Besides just being another device in coalitions' toolbox to curb ministerial autonomy, we think that there are three reasons rendering cross-party collaborations particularly advantageous to multi-party governments. First, collaborations among involved ministries happen at an early stage of the policymaking process and, therefore, help to prevent deviations before they emerge. This directly relates to their second advantage, being their comparatively private nature. In contrast to protracted coalition negotiations or public scrutiny in parliaments, cross-party collaborations largely take place outside of the public view. This means discussions and debates involve fewer political costs compared to visible conflicts in parliament, which ensures that the coalition's reputation remains intact. Lastly, relying on the ministerial bureaucracy to ensure the faithful implementation of government policy means drawing on an ample pool of expertize and resources. Civil servants within the bureaucracy are generally experts within their field and, thus, in a privileged position to not only oversee the policy-making process but also foresee potential long-term implications that could ensue from politically biased legislation.

Yet, coalitions may not always prefer cross-party collaborations to curb ministerial autonomy. Firstly, collaboration requires both a certain degree of redundancy in the ministerial structure and binds the attention of more than just one ministry, which is why this coalition governance mechanism is comparatively costly within the executive. In certain instances, coalitions might prefer resorting to other forms of coalition governance. For example, relying on parliamentary review shifts the burden of coalition management from the executive to the legislative branch of government. From the perspective of ministers, this clears their own agenda while shifting the burden of control to their fellow partisans in parliament. Furthermore, coalition parties may have incentives to draw attention to their pure position rather than a coalition compromise for signaling purposes and may mutually profit from doing this if preferences are tangential (cf. Martin & Vanberg, 2020). These brief considerations once again highlight the importance of theorizing and empirically analyzing the conditions under which coalition coalitions choose different mechanisms to monitor each other. In future research on this topic, cross-cutting jurisdictions on the ministerial level should be considered as one important choice on the menu.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors want to thank Paula Moser for her excellent research assistance as well as the participants of the panel "Organizational silos and bureaucratic routines: drivers, variation, and change" at the 2022 ECPR General Conference. This project received funding from the German Research Foundation (DFG) as part of the larger project "Die Politik des Ressorzuschnitts in Deutschland" (Grant SI 1470/6-1).

Open access funding provided by Universitat Zurich.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors have no conflict of interest to disclose.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

ORCID

Ulrich Sieberer https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4027-1393

ENDNOTES

[1] Unless otherwise stated, collaboration here always refers to collaboration at the level of ministries.

[2] Whereas *collaboration* describes the empirical observation, we use *coordination* to refer to the inter-ministerial interactions that collaboration presupposes.

[3] Gemeinsame Geschäftsordnung der Bundesministerien (GGO), §19 Abs. 1 (https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/veroeffentlichungen/themen/ministerium/ggo.pdf;jsessionid=C756705410D2379FDB24CEF9515B04BB.2_cid295?__blob=publicationFile&v=12, visited on July 5, 2022)

[4] Their policy distance (0.44) is within the lowest empirical quantile of our data.

[5] Neither party mentioned the policy issue once in the corresponding manifestos.

[6] See coalition agreement, *p.*12; https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=83dbb842-b2f7-bf99-6180-e65b2de7b4d4&groupId=252038

[7] About 84 percent of all bills initiated by the government were adopted in the window of observation (see Table A.1 in the online appendix).

[8] For the analysis, we omit the annual budget bills because for these bills no signature of single ministers is available.

[9] We consider the political parties of CDU and CSU as a single coalition party because they do not compete in elections but share a joint policy program in national elections and both parties do not exert mutual control on each other in coalitions.

[10] The RHS variables are not collinear. Please see correlations in Table A.3 in the appendix.

REFERENCES

Alexiadou, D. (2015). Ideologues, partisans, and loyalists: Cabinet ministers and social welfare reform in parliamentary democracies. *Comparative Political Studies*, *48*(8), 1051–1086. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414015574880

Andeweg, R. B. (2000). Ministers as double agents? The delegation process between cabinet and ministers. *European Journal of Political Research*, *37*(3), 377–395. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.00518

Andeweg, R. B., & Timmermans, A. (2008). Conflict management in coalition government. In K. Strøm, W. C. Müller, & T. Bergman (Eds.), *Cabinets and coalition bargaining: The democratic life cycle in western Europe, comparative politics* (pp. 269–300). Oxford University Press.

Bäck, H., Debus, M., & Dumont, P. (2011). Who gets what in coalition governments? Predictors of portfolio allocation in parliamentary democracies. *European Journal of Political Research*, *50*(4), 441–478. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2010.01980.x

Bäck, H., Debus, M., & Müller, W. C. (2016). Intra-party diversity and ministerial selection in coalition governments. *Public Choice*, *166*(3–4), 355–378. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11127-016-0327-6

Baumgartner, F. R., Breunig, C., & Grossman, E. (Eds.) (2019)., *Comparative policy agendas: Theory, tools, data* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press.

Bergman, T. (1993). Formation rules and minority governments. *European Journal of Political Research*, *23*(1), 55–66. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.1993.tb00348.x

Bergman, T., Müller, W. C., Strøm, K., & Blomgren, M. (2003). Democratic delegation and accountability: Cross-national patterns. In K. Strøm, W. C. Müller, & T. Bergman (Eds.), *Delegation and accountability in parliamentary democracies* (pp. 109–220). Oxford University Press. https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/019829784X.001.0001/acprof-9780198297840. Accessed 20 July 2022.

Bertels, J., & Schulze-Gabrechten, L. (2021). Mapping the black box of intraministerial organization: An analytical approach to explore structural diversity below the portfolio level. *Governance*, *34*(1), 171–189. https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12486

Bonnaud, L., & Martinais, E. (2014). Drafting the law. Civil servants at work at the French ministry of ecology. *Sociologie du Travail*, *56*, e1–e20. e1–e20. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soctra.2014.07.005

Breunig, C., & Schnatterer, T. (2020). Die politische agenda deutschlands. *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, *61*(1), 131–149. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11615-020-00226-6

Busse, V. (2010). Regierungsinternes gesetzgebungsvorbereitungsverfahren. In K. H. Schrenk, W. Ismayr, & M. Soldner (Eds.), *Analyse demokratischer Regierungssysteme: Festschrift für Wolfgang Ismayr zum 65. Geburtstag* (pp. 221–236). VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Carroll, R., & Cox, G. W. (2012). Shadowing ministers: Monitoring partners in coalition governments. *Comparative Political Studies*, *45*(2), 220–236. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414011421309

Dahlström, C., Peters, B. G., & Pierre, J. (2011). *Steering from the centre: Strengthening political control in western democracies*. University of Toronto Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3138/9781442687066. Accessed 20 July 2022.

Danielsen, O. A., & Fleischer, J. (2023). The effects of political design and organizational dynamics on structural disaggregation and integration in Norway 1947–2019. *Governance*, *36*(1), 299–320. https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12669

Dewan, T., & Hortala-Vallve, R. (2011). The three as of Government Formation: Appointment, allocation, and assignment. *American Journal of Political Science*, *55*(3), 610–627. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00519.x

Epstein, D., Farina, C. R., & Heidt, J. (2014). The value of words: Narrative as evidence in policy making. *Evidence and Policy*, *102*(2), 243–258. https://doi.org/10.1332/174426514x13990325021128

Falcó-Gimeno, A. (2014). The use of control mechanisms in coalition governments: The role of preference tangentiality and repeated interactions. *Party Politics*, *20*(3), 341–356. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068811436052

Fernandes, J. M., Meinfelder, F., & Moury, C. (2016). Wary partners: Strategic portfolio allocation and coalition governance in parliamentary democracies. *Comparative Political Studies*, *49*(9), 1270–1300. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414016628189

Fleischer, J., Bezes, P., James, O., & Yesilkagit, K. (2022). *'The politics of government reorganization in Western Europe'*. Governance. n/a https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/gove.12670. Accessed 14 April 2022.

Fleischer, J., Jana, B., & Schulze-Gabrechten, L. (2018). *Stabilität und flexibilität: Wie und warum ändern sich ministerien?* (1st ed.). Nomos.

Fortunato, D., Martin, L. W., & Vanberg, G. (2017). Committee chairs and legislative review in parliamentary democracies. *British Journal of Political Science*, *49*(2), 785–797. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123416000673

Guinaudeau, I. (2015). Documentation on the coding of German manifestos.

Hainmueller, J., Mummolo, J., & Xu, Y. (2019). How much should we trust estimates from multiplicative interaction models? Simple tools to improve empirical practice. *Political Analysis*, *27*(2), 163–192. https://doi.org/10.1017/pan.2018.46

Hohendorf, L., Saalfeld, T., & Ulrich, S. (2021). Veto power fosters cooperative behaviour: Institutional incentives and government-opposition voting in the German Bundestag. *West European Politics*, *44*(4), 921–945. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2020.1739868

Höhmann, D., & Sieberer, U. (2020). Parliamentary questions as a control mechanism in coalition governments. *West European Politics*, *43*(1), 225–249. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2019.1611986

Huber, J. D., & Shipan, C. R. (2002). *Deliberate discretion?: The institutional foundations of bureaucratic autonomy* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press. https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/9780511804915/type/book. Accessed 26 July 2022.

Kerwin, C. M., & Furlong, S. R. (2019). *Rulemaking: How government agencies write law and make policy* (5th ed.). CQ Press, an imprint of Sage Publications, Inc.

Klüser, K. J. (2022a). *'From bureaucratic capacity to legislation: How ministerial resources shape governments' policy-making capabilities'*. West European Politics. online first, 1–27.

Klüser, K. J. (2022b). Keeping tabs through collaboration? Sharing ministerial responsibility in coalition governments. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 1–18. online first. https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2022.31

Klüser, K. J., & Breunig, C. (2022). *Ministerial issue dominance in parliamentary democracies*. European Journal of Political Research. online first.

Klüver, H., & Bäck, H. (2019). Coalition agreements, issue attention, and cabinet governance. *Comparative Political Studies*, *52*(13–14), 1995–2031. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414019830726

Kuipers, S., Yesilkagit, K., & Carroll, B. (2021). Ministerial influence on the machinery of government: Insights on the inside. *West European Politics*, *44*(4), 897–920. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2020.1768737

Laakso, M., & Taagepera, R. (1979). Effective" number of parties: A measure with application to west Europe. *Comparative Political Studies*, *12*(1), 3–27. https://doi.org/10.1177/001041407901200101

Larsson, T. (1994). Cabinet ministers and parliamentary government in Sweden. In M. Laver & K. A. Shepsle (Eds.), *Cabinet ministers and parliamentary government, political economy of institutions and decisions* (pp. 169–186). Cambridge University Press.

Laver, M. & Shepsle, K. A. (Eds.) (1994)., *Cabinet ministers and parliamentary government*. Cambridge University Press.

Laver, M., & Shepsle, K. A. (1996). *Making and breaking governments: Cabinets and legislatures in parliamentary democracies*. Cambridge University Press.

Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of Democracy: Government forms and performance in thirty-six countries*. Yale University Press.

Lipsmeyer, C. S., & Pierce, H. N. (2011). The eyes that bind: Junior ministers as oversight mechanisms in coalition governments. *The Journal of Politics*, *73*(4), 1152–1164. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022381611000879

Lowe, W., Benoit, K., Mikhaylov, S., & Laver, M. (2011). Scaling policy preferences from coded political texts: Scaling policy preferences from coded political texts. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *36*(1), 123–155. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-9162.2010.00006.x

MacCarthaigh, M. (2012). Mapping and understanding organizational change: Ireland 1922–2010. *International Journal of Public Administration*, *35*(12), 795–807. https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2012.715558

Martin, L. W., & Vanberg, G. (2005). Coalition policymaking and legislative review. *American Political Science Review*, *99*(1), 93–106. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055405051518

Martin, L. W., & Vanberg, G. (2011). *Parliaments and coalitions: The role of legislative institutions in multiparty governance*. Oxford Univ. Press.

Martin, L. W., & Vanberg, G. (2014). Parties and policymaking in multiparty governments: The legislative median, ministerial autonomy, and the coalition compromise. *American Journal of Political Science*, *58*(4), 979–996. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12099

Martin, L. W., & Vanberg, G. (2020). What you see is not always what you get: Bargaining before an audience under multiparty government. *American Political Science Review*, *114*(4), 1138–1154. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055420000337

Mayntz, R., & Scharpf, F. W. (1975). *Policy-making in the German federal bureaucracy*. Elsevier.

Miller, B. (2011). Der koalitionsausschuss. Nomos http://www.nomos-elibrary.de/index.php?doi=10.5771/9783845228730. Accessed 20 July 2022.

Miller, B., & Müller, W. C. (2010). Managing grand coalitions: Germany 2005–09. *German Politics*, *19*(3–4), 332–352. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2010.515776

Mortensen, P. B., & Green-Pedersen, C. (2015). Institutional effects of changes in political attention: Explaining organizational changes in the top bureaucracy. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *25*(1), 165–189. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muu030

Moury, C. (2011). Coalition agreement and party mandate: How coalition agreements constrain the ministers. *Party Politics*, *17*(3), 385–404. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068810372099

Müller, W. C. & Strøm, K. (Eds.) (1999). Policy, office, or votes? *How political parties in western Europe make hard decisions*. Cambridge University Press.

Müller, W. C., & Strøm, K. (2008). Coalition agreements and cabinet governance. In K. Strøm, W. C. Müller, & T. Bergman (Eds.), *Cabinets and coalition bargaining: The democratic life cycle in western Europe, comparative politics* (pp. 159–199). Oxford University Press.

Müller-Rommel, F. (1994). The role of German ministers in cabinet decision-making. In M. Laver & K. A. Shepsle (Eds.), *Cabinet ministers and parliamentary government, political economy of institutions and decisions* (pp. 150–168). Cambridge University Press.

North, D. C. (1990). *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance*. Cambridge University Press.

Page, E. C. (2003). The civil servant as legislator: Law making in British administration. *Public Administration*, *81*(4), 651–679. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0033-3298.2003.00366.x

Peters, B. G., Rhodes, R. W. A., & Wright, V. (2016). *Administering the summit: Administration of the core executive in developed countries*. Palgrave Macmillan Limited. https://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=5640947. Accessed 20 July 2022.

Scharpf, F. W., & Mohr, M. (1994). *Efficient self-coordination in policy networks. A simulation study*. MPIFG Discussion Paper.

Sieberer, U. (2010). Parlamente als wahlorgane. Nomos http://www.nomos-elibrary.de/index.php?doi=10.5771/9783845222721. Accessed 20 July 2022.

Sieberer, U. (2015). Die Politik des Ressortzuschnitts zwischen Koalitionsarithmetik und thematischer Profilierung. *Eine koalitionspolitische Erklärung für Kompetenzänderungen der Bundesministerien, 1957-2013', Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, *56*(1), 77–103. https://doi.org/10.5771/0032-3470-2015-1-77

Sieberer, U., Angela Dzida, & David Schmuck (2021). 'Portfolio design in Germany, 1949-2013'. In *The politics of portfolio design in Germany*.

Sieberer, U., Meyer, T. M., Bäck, H., Ceron, A., Falcó-Gimeno, A., Guinaudeau, I., Hansen, M. E., Kolltveit, K., Louwerse, T., Müller, W. C., & Persson, T. (2021). The political dynamics of portfolio design in European democracies. *British Journal of Political Science*, *51*(2), 772–787. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123419000346

Strøm, K., Müller, W. C., & Smith, D. M. (2010). Parliamentary control of coalition governments. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *13*(1), 517–535. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.071105.104340

Thies, M. F. (2001). Keeping tabs on partners: The logic of delegation in coalition governments. *American Journal of Political Science*, *45*(3), 580–598. https://doi.org/10.2307/2669240

Timmermans, A. (2003). *High politics in the low countries: An empirical study of coalition agreements in Belgium and The Netherlands*. Ashgate.

Timmermans, A. (2006). Standing apart and sitting together. Enforcing coalition agreements in multiparty systems. *European Journal of Political Research*, *45*(2), 263–283. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2006.00298.x

Volkens, A., Krause, W., Lehmann, P., Matthieß, T., Merz, N., Regel, S., & Weßels, B. (2019). *The manifesto data collection. Manifesto project (MRG/CMP/MARPOR)*. Version 2019a. Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WBZ).

Wegrich, K., & Hammerschmid, G. (2018). Public administration characteristics and performance in EU28: Germany. In N. Thijs & G. Hammerschmid (Eds.), *The public administration in the EU 28* (pp. 354–388). Publications Office of the European Union.

Yackee, J. W., & Yackee, S. W. (2006). A bias towards business? Assessing interest group influence on the U.S. Bureaucracy. *The Journal of Politics*, *68*(1), 128–139. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00375.x

Yackee, S. W. (2006). Sweet-talking the fourth branch: The influence of interest group comments on federal agency rulemaking. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *16*(1), 103–124. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mui042

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

How to cite this article: Klüser, K. J., Schmuck, D., & Sieberer, U. (2023). Colleagues or adversaries: Ministerial coordination across party lines. *Governance*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12784