

# Repercussions of Government Change on the Career Civil Service in West Germany: The Cases of 1969 and 1982

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## INTRODUCTION

The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) is known to have a very stable political system. Federal coalition governments (with the exception of 1957-1961) under Christian Democratic chancellors (1949-1969) were followed by Social Democratic chancellorships (1969-1982), before the Christian Democrats took power again. The government changes of 1969 and 1982 are regarded as fundamental shifts starting new policy eras after 20 and 13 years, respectively, of uninterrupted rule of the chancellor's party (Bahring 1982; Bohnsack 1983). This governmental stability is accompanied by a high degree of formal civil service continuity typical of an almost closed career system.

We find broad scholarly consensus over the actual and conscious involvement of senior FRG career civil servants in politics (Putnam 1973; Steinkemper 1974; Mayntz and Scharpf 1975, 57; Johnson 1983, 188; Mayntz 1984). The question that arises is what, if any, repercussions were experienced by the administrative elite in the wake of political changes, after long periods of stability? These repercussions would derive, presumably, from attempts by the new government to politically control the bureaucracy previously under orders from another political master.

Generally speaking, the new government will gain control over the bureaucracy by a mixture of the following means: the *communication* of a new agenda with policy preferences and premises; the expectation that duty will induce the bureaucracy to conform to the new agenda; and close scrutiny of its performance, if it goes astray. In addition to the various information-based control measures, *organizational* arrangements can be introduced, e.g. planning systems or staff units to increase control by the political center. Furthermore, in support of communicated policy goals, *budgetary* constraints may steer the discretion of the apparatus in executing a policy. Of no less

importance, however, are *personnel policy* decisions taken by new governments in order to support the other control efforts. Measures of personnel policy will be more drastic as more bureaucrats: (1) become consciously involved in the policy process; (2) adopt a rather political role understanding; and (3) reveal themselves as committed to policy goals of the previous government. It can also be assumed that repercussions in the personnel will be more dramatic the longer the preceding government was in office and dispersing patronage. This article analyses the measures of personnel policy taken after the installation of new governments in Bonn in 1969 and 1982. It will trace changes in the composition of the administrative elite produced by political interventions into the top civil service during government transition.

This article divides into four sections. In the first section, peculiarities of the German civil service system are elaborated. This assessment will present the range of personnel policy measures available and provide us with a framework to analyze what really happened in and to the administrative elite in Bonn after the two government changes. Second, I will describe the various processes which made up the personnel policy of the new governments, and compare the personnel policy strategies and the situations to which they responded in the cases of a rather left-wing (1969) and a right wing (1982) coalition government taking over political power. Third, information is presented about the objective impact that the individual personnel policy decisions had on the respective aggregate elite compositions. Did they matter? if so, did they reflect changes in substantive policy? Can we observe mutations with respect to, for example, social background, training and party affiliations of the administrative elite in Bonn? Finally, I will return to the theme of this issue of *Governance* and discuss some implications for the alteration of subjective role understanding maintained by scientific observers after the government change of 1969.

#### MECHANISMS OF PATRONAGE IN CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEMS

Of course, we know that government changes do not leave the ministerial bureaucracy unaffected. Programmatic policy changes induced by new governments stipulate moves in personnel policy to secure political loyalty and effective transmission of new policy goals, to counterbalance acquired preferences of the career service, or just to symbolize new policy goals by presenting new actors. Domination patronage in recruiting and staffing top administrative positions aims at politically controlling the ministerial bureaucracy and its very

political capacity, whereas alimentation patronage (Weber 1919; Eschenburg 1961) might occur in field offices and lower ranks not under consideration here.

While domination patronage can be regarded as a universal phenomenon, the degree to which it is practiced depends on the possibilities the various national civil service regulations offer. To understand better what will be described empirically in section 3, the following basic mechanisms of personnel policy, that can serve patronage motives, should be distinguished. Their availability to the federal bureaucracy defines the setting in which the post 1969 and 1982 personnel policies had to operate.

### **Closedness of Career System**

Closed career systems are characterized by completely internal recruitment for top positions and by their occupants, having advanced up the career ladder from the bottom. In such systems, the only mechanism to politically control staffing of sensitive posts is *selective promotion* of candidates who are assumed to be particularly capable (according to the criteria of the political leadership) to fulfill the job requirements – whether in the near or in the distant future. A new government party which has been in political opposition for several legislative periods can only draw candidates from the internal reservoir of the grades below the post to be filled. On the other hand, governments which have been in office or at least expect to be in office for a long period might try to separate the collaborators from the troublemakers, the excellent from the mediocre rather early in their careers, and build up a leadership reservoir. Here, opposition parties are at a disadvantage, even if they had the information to carry out informal performance appraisals: their favorites are unlikely to be promoted to the upper levels of the hierarchy while another party rules.

As all western civil service systems including the German are career systems, selective promotion is the only feasible and pertinent mechanism for achieving political control and preventing the bureaucracy from becoming politically self-controlling. Even in the legendary British case with its traditionally neutral civil service, selective promotion overtly occurred after Mrs Thatcher took over the government in 1979 (Fortin 1984; Rose 1984; Ridley 1985). However, even overt party membership is allowed in the FRG. Thus, not surprisingly in 1971 19 per cent of the German higher civil service would have advised younger colleagues to become members of a political party in order to advance their careers (Luhmann and Mayntz 1973, 245; Nolterike 1982, 162).

The German civil service code formalizes a major digression from a pure career system. That is, it stipulates that individuals may be *promoted into the next-plus-one position* in the hierarchy ("jump-promotion") so long as the – ultimately government controlled – independent Civil Service Commission agrees. A further means to gear career civil servants to the political requirements of the day is to *re-shuffle* them in order to move those under suspicion into politically less sensitive positions *within* departments, while moving trusted officials into the vacancies. Rotation *between* departments in Bonn presupposes, however, the agreement of the officeholders concerned and the ministries involved. Relocation, however, presupposes that the civil servant is offered a qualitatively equivalent position. Theoretically, this condition limits the transfer of people from the ministries into government agencies. The latter are small in number anyway – administrative execution of federal programs is basically a matter of the individual states.

The tactical moves juridically available for a politically motivated personnel policy decisively depend on the *number of vacancies* open for selective promotion or re-shuffling or both. Before other measures to increase the number of vacancies are outlined, it should be mentioned that organizational reforms often broaden the degree of freedom for patronage: after 1969 the federal bureaucracy established staff units in a number of ministries in an effort to intensify systematic policy planning; positions which were occasionally filled by unorthodox recruitment.

### Openness of Career System

Although in principle the German Civil service is a closed career system, there are certain exceptions to the rule. The rigidity on the "input"-side of the personnel system is loosened by the possibility to recruit candidates into federal ministries not merely from other federal ministries (rotation), but also *civil servants from Länder and local government administrations*. This broadens the reservoir of potential recruits – in particular for new government parties and their ministers – which normally have been in power somewhere in the federation during their opposition time in Bonn. The vertical separation of powers can provide a new government – even after a long term in opposition – with experienced top administrators of proven loyalty.

Furthermore, *candidates from other elite sectors*, industry, trade unions, or even politics, may be recruited into many posts – not merely top administrative positions – if they promise to bring in an expertise not normally found in the predominantly juridically trained German higher civil service. These candidates' qualifications are checked by the Civil

Service Commission. Occasionally they are asked to serve on a job one degree below what they are applied for. The majority of cases dealt with by the Civil Service Commission concerns the federal railways and the postal service. This suggests that external recruitment is not solely designed for politically motivated appointments, although it may be sued for patronage purposes. An exception to this external recruitment procedure is the highest civil service position attainable. That is, secretaries of state, if externally recruited, need not be scrutinized by the Civil Service Commission. Occasional non-career civil servants should not be confused with American politically appointed, top executives. All German federal civil servants, regardless of their background, from section head above, i.e. ministerialrat, ministerialdirigent (head of subdivision), ministerialdirektor (division head), and state secretary are formally appointed by the Federal President on recommendation of the cabinet, to whom candidates are proposed by individual ministers.<sup>1</sup>

Flexibility of personnel policy and a certain degree of openness of the otherwise closeknit, career system is also achieved on the "output" side by *retiring administrators before they reach the age of 65*. This does not mean breaking tenure; retired civil servants – regardless of the event leading to retirement – receive tenure and continue under the civil service code. The first category are those *prematurely retired*: in case of physical incapacity, a federal civil servant may retire for medical reasons at the age of 61 if certified, or at the age of 63 without a physician's certificate. Between 1969 and 1981, 114 federal civil servants retired prematurely.<sup>2</sup>

This figure can only be fully appreciated in relation to the second category of retirements, which is of special interest here: *temporary retirement of so-called political civil servants*. "Political civil servants" are expected to be in full accord with the partisan goals of government and may be temporarily retired at any point in their careers without justification. This procedure reaches back to the 1848 revolution in Prussia, when the government needed an argument to safeguard the political loyalty of top civil servants, who inclined toward the political opposition parties or even held an opposition mandate (Kugele 1978). This instrument has been preserved and applied throughout German history since the 19th century, notably after regime changes (1919, 1933), to carry out *political purges* (Derlien 1987).

The positions in the federal ministries having the status of political civil servants are naturally the highest ones: secretaries of state and ministerialdirektoren, i.e. since the late 1960s about 25 and 100 persons, respectively, compared to roughly 200 subdivision and 1200 section heads.<sup>3</sup> Between 1949 and 1983, 260 political civil servants were

temporarily retired, among these about every third secretary of state (56) and every eighth ministerialdirektor (87) who had been in office (Derlien 1984). The 114 premature retirements between 1969 and 1981, also refer to political civil servants and can be regarded as a functional equivalent to temporary retirement. Temporary retirement presupposes the initiative of the politician although his decision can be provoked. Premature retirement is requested by the official and often preferred to an impending, temporary retirement. This is because they have had long tenure anyway and the chance for them to be reactivated after the age of 61 is low.

With respect to the *quantitatively small class of political civil servants* within the administrative elite, the German system is similar to the French and resembles the American practice of making political appointments. In contrast to the political appointee in Washington, the political civil servant in Bonn is in principle a career civil servant by recruitment and by staying in office after a change in government. On the input-side, despite the possibility of external recruitment, the German administrative elite is not at all – as we will see in more detail – a “government of strangers” (Hecló 1977). On the output-side, temporary retirement is far from having traits of a spoils system. Nevertheless, systemically both aspects interact. The more top executives are temporarily retired in case of a change in government, the more vacancies can be disposed of for selective appointment of particularly capable and loyal successors – whether the latter come from the internal or the external elite reservoir of a government. Therefore, the time-consuming process of streamlining a career civil service (Cole and Caputo 1979, 407) can be accelerated in the FRG by increasing turnover in top positions and thus engendering a “chimney-effect” for the ranks below the political civil servant.

If we were to locate the German federal bureaucracy – with respect to the use of domination patronage – somewhere between the British and the American system, we could call it a *career system with loopholes*. Through an almost closed career path, it allows external recruitment and, therefore, changes in the composition of the administrative elite beyond those that selective, internal promotion could possibly produce. On the other hand – with the institution of the political civil servant, the highest administrative elite positions can be legally purged without breaking with the principle of tenure. Thus, normal turnover can be enhanced. The vacancies in turn may be used to appoint politically loyal experts in order to adapt the bureaucracy to the political program of the new government.

After having elaborated the formal traits of the German career system and its potential for patronage, we can proceed to analyze the

processes by which the new federal governments in 1969 and 1982 made use of the personnel policy devices available. In the sections that follow I will focus exclusively on the political civil servants. These take in the two highest positions in the ministries. Roughly 125 members comprise the federal administrative elite at any given time. Table 1 contains the data of the almost 100 per cent sample we are dealing with; it also relates numbers of political civil servants to politicians before and after the two government changes under scrutiny.<sup>4</sup>

TABLE 1  
Federal Politico-Administrative Elite

<i>Position</i>	<i>Point in Time</i>				
	1949- 84	9/1969	6/1970	9/1982	6/1983
Ministers	121	20	16	17	17
Parliamentary State Secretaries	72	6	14	19	25
State Secretaries	155	27	25	24	24
Ministerial- direktoren	436	86	88	104	103
Total	784	139	143	164	169

#### PURGE, RESHUFFLING, AND RECRUITMENT

Because the methods available to the German federal ministries for domination patronage were not uniquely designed for change of government, a certain degree of turnover in personnel and fluctuation in positions has to be regarded as normal. Natural turnover is induced by old age retirements. And, premature as well as temporary retirements are not limited to changes of government; nor is reshuffling and rotation between departments so limited. Subsequent appointments to fill vacancies, however, intensify in years of government transition. The longitudinal analysis of the careers of the entire federal executive elite in office between 1949 and 1984 shows that the years of federal elections and government formation are outstanding in the number of appointments – in particular with respect to the politicians. In quantitative terms, 9.6 per cent (75) of the entire sample were appointed in 1969/70 and even 12.5 per cent (98) in 1982/83 (Table 2) followed by 1974 (government Schimdt I) with 42 (5.4 per cent) appointments.

TABLE 2  
Appointments to Highest Position

Period	Minister		Parliamentary Secretary of State*		Secretary of State		Ministerial-direktor		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
10/69-6/70	13	10.7	13	18.1	15	9.7	34	7.8	75	9.6
10/82-6/83	16	13.2	24	33.3	15	9.7	43	9.9	98	12.5
1949-1984	121	100.0	72	100.0	155	10.0	436	100.0	784	100.0

\* Existing since 1967.

TABLE 3  
Temporary Retirement

Rank	1949-84		Period 10/69-6/70		10/84-6/83	
	Cases	Positions	Cases	Positions	Cases	Positions
State Secretary	56	155	11	27	13	24
% of positions	36.1		40.7		54.2	
Ministerialdirektor	87	436	27	88	35	104
% of positions	20.0		25.0		33.7	
Total	143	591	33	115	48	128
% of positions	24.2		28.7		38.4	



These years of government formation had extraordinary repercussions on the top positions in the career civil service, underlined by the fact that the highest percentage of appointments of incumbents of both ranks under consideration occurred in 1969 and 1982, and were hardly less frequent than the appointment of ministers.<sup>5</sup> In general, appointments of political civil servants are closely related to appointments of politicians, as becomes apparent from the fact, that 21 per cent of them compared to 41 per cent of the politicians were appointed in October, the month of the year when (with the exceptions of 1972 and 1983) federal elections took place and new governments were formed. Let us now look at the various mechanisms, by which the civil service appointments were brought about.

### Temporary Retirement

Of the 56 state secretaries and the 87 ministerialdirektoren temporarily retired between 1949 and 1983, 40.7 and 25.0 per cent respectively, suffered this fate in 1969/70, while even 54.2 and 33.7 per cent, respectively, were reported after the government change in 1982 (Derlien 1984), if we again extend the period of transition into mid-1970 and mid-1983 (Table 3) and account for the time it normally takes to implement the personnel policy of the new governments in Bonn: 50 per cent of the changes take place within the first week the new government is in office, another 25 per cent follow during the first half of the next year.

Ministerialdirektoren had not been temporarily retired at all in the 20 years before 1969, whereas 11 secretaries of state (7.1 per cent) had been temporarily retired, 7 of these only during the Grand Coalition of Christian and Social Democrats (1966-1969). As the Social Democrats had controlled 6 ministries during this period, the purge following October 1969 was rather mild compared to the 1982 transformation when the Christian Democrats returned to government after 13 years of opposition. After the 1982 change every second state secretary and every third ministerialdirektor, who had served in the social-liberal administration, were temporarily retired amounting to 38.4 per cent of the political civil servants; whereas in 1969 merely 28.7 per cent were replaced. The official documents, from which these figures are taken, contain additional information about temporary retirements in the secret services and the diplomatic corps, where 114 retirements had occurred between 1949 and 1983. In executing chancellor Brandt's new Ostpolitik 30 diplomats were dismissed in 1969/1970 out of the 100 foreign office cases altogether. Although numbers are not available for 1982/1983, it is highly unlikely that diplomats were temporarily retired

beyond the normal rates. This was because the foreign minister and vice-chancellor Genscher stayed in office and foreign policy hardly changed. Typically those ministries, held under the grip of an SPD minister in 1969 (6) and liberal ministers in 1982 (3) did not have to purge their top civil service ranks after government changes. A complete exchange of the two top ranks occurred only in the chancellor's office in 1969 and 1982.

### Normal Retirement

The turnover accompanying both government formations was, however, higher than these figures reflect. The natural fluctuation due to old age or premature retirement increased the total turnover. Therefore, the number of dismissals in 1969/70 did not have to be as high as it was in 1982/1983 because four times more top civil servants normally retired during the former transition than did in the latter. This different situation of the two government installations is reflected in the fact that the average age of civil servants leaving office was far higher in 1969 (Table 4).

### Reshuffling

Fluctuations accompanying government transition is more evident when we take into account those people who are reallocated to other positions. This often happens because, in the eyes of the new government, they no longer match their former function. When inspecting merely horizontal mobility in and between departments without concomitant promotion, reshuffling of the top executives under consideration is hardly noticeable. There were only 1 (StS) and 2 (MD) cases in 1969-70 and 0 (StS) and 6 (MD) cases in 1982-83.

Reshuffling after government change occurred more frequently among positions below the ranks of political civil servants. This was

TABLE 4  
Average Age when Leaving Office\*

Rank	Time of Exit			
	10/1969-6/1970		10/1982-6/1983	
Sts	57.2	s = 7.3	52.7	s = 6.4
MD	55.7	s = 8.2	52.5	s = 6.1
n	StS	19	15	
	MD	27	44	

\* Including rotations.

noticeable with departments' press officers and personal assistants to ministers and to both groups of state secretaries, i.e. staff people. In Germany, this group enjoys the intimate trust of their superiors and cannot be removed after government change except by reshuffling them to less sensitive positions (Wagener and Rückwardt 1982). Within three weeks after the new government had come to power 72 of these people were shifted to other positions in 1969, and 102 in 1982.<sup>6</sup>

When we review the data on *interdepartmental mobility*, we see that 45 StS (29 per cent) entered their highest rank on transfer. This figure includes combinations of *rotation with promotion*. Due to better interdepartmental promotion opportunities merely 36 MDs (8.3 per cent) made a similar move within the 35 years covered by this study. Table 5 reveals that these shifts of StS are more characteristic of a government's term in office than of transition periods. This suggests that bonds of loyalty and/or ossification have developed during political stability. Not surprisingly the number of interdepartmental rotations drops after government changes (with slight differences between the two cases in point). Interdepartmental mobility, therefore, should be viewed as a precondition of advancing to the highest civil service positions in normal periods. It is a normal feature of the permanent civil service. Compared to temporary retirements, reshuffling career paths with or without promotion, does not play an important role in political purging of the top ranks under consideration here.

## Recruitment

How were the vacancies filled that resulted from natural, premature, or temporary retirement or from resignation,<sup>7</sup> or reshufflement? What was the origin of the new recruits for the 49 positions (47.5 per cent) of 1969-70, and the 58 positions (45.5 per cent) to be filled in 1982-83?

Observers of the 1969-70 repercussions in the federal bureaucracy (Putnam 1973, 264; Steinkemper 1974, 30; von Beyme 1974, 104; Dyson 1979, 105; Aberbach et al. 1981, 71) have noted an unusually high percentage of non-career recruits who moved into leading department positions from other sectors of society. In fact, immediately before coming to Bonn, 40 per cent of the newly appointed state secretaries (6) and 11.8 per cent of the division heads (4) had been working in private enterprise (3), as judges or professors (3), as functionaries of an interest group (3) or in politics (1). Compared to the overall figures for 1949-1984, the percentages for external recruits in 1969-70 are above the average of 17.4 per cent (27) state secretaries and 5.7 per cent (25) ministerialdirektoren. These 20.4 per cent of the new appointments,

TABLE 5  
**Interdepartmental Rotations  
when Taking over Final Positions**

<i>Rank</i>	<i>1949-1984</i>		<i>9/1969</i>		<i>Period 6/1970</i>		<i>9/1982</i>		<i>6/1983</i>		
	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	
StS	45	29.0	9	33.3	2	8.0	10	41.7	6	25.0	
MD	36	8.3	5	5.8	11	12.5	7	6.7	6	5.8	
Total	StS	155	100.0	27	100.0	25	100.0	24	100.0	24	100.0
	MD	436	100.0	86	100.0	88	100.0	104	100.0	103	100.0

who were recruited irregularly during the first months of the Social-Liberal government, were explained by many observers as a lack of SDP sympathizers in the bureaucracy due to its long absence from central government since 1930. Yet the recruitment pattern of the Christian-Liberal government in 1982 seems entirely out of step with the long-exile hypothesis. Every fourth of the new recruits originated outside the public sector. This influx appears normal for government changes despite a long (20) or short (13) term of uninterrupted control. In 1982-83 almost the same 20.7 per cent (12) were externally recruited; however, there were more ministerialdirektoren (8) brought in than state secretaries (4). If one ignores the fact that 5 of the 12 external recruits had been party or parliamentary-faction employees (1970: 1 member of parliament), the only difference between the two government transitions with respect to external recruitment is the absence of any public and political outcry in 1982.

Twenty per cent external recruitment among the new entrants in both cases, nevertheless, does not mean that 80 per cent were drawn from the lower ranks of the federal ministries (Table 6), 6.1 per cent (3) and 10.3 per cent (6) came into office by *pure-rotation* after 1969 and 1982, respectively, as we saw in the previous section. Merely 53.1 and 44.8 per cent were recruited by *promotion* from the ranks of the ministries in both periods. This holds only for every fifth state secretary (3) in each case. The normal recruitment pattern of a career service could be observed with almost every second of the division heads during the formation of both new administrations; there were, however, 5 and 3 cases of *jump-promotions* after 1969 and 1982, respectively. *Reactivation* of temporarily retired officeholders was seldom in both cases. In general, internal competition for appointment is high and candidates from the temporarily retired might have reached the age for mandatory retirement.

In addition to the rate of external recruitment in 1969-70, many of those who were recruited from the civil service – in particular some state secretaries – were not promoted within the federal civil service, but came from *Länder* or even local government. Again, with 13.8 compared to 12.2 per cent, the recruitment pattern of 1982 closely resembles the external recruitment pattern of 1969, but considerably exceeds the long-term average of 7.1 per cent recruitment from *Länder* and local government.

The mixed character of the German career civil service should become clear in view of these exceptional years of government transition. On the one hand, both new governments carried on while retaining the majority of political civil servants; on the other, the 47.5 per cent of new appointments within 9 months of the 1969 transition

TABLE 6  
**Modes of Recruitment of New Entrants**

<i>Mode</i>	<i>Period</i>			
	<i>10/69-6/70</i>		<i>10/82-6/83</i>	
	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>
External recruitment	10	20.4	12	20.7
Pure rotation	3	6.1	6	10.3
Promotion from ministerial rank	26	53.1	26	44.8
Promotion from federal agency	1	2.0	3	5.2
Recruitment from Land, local government	6	12.2	8	13.8
Re-activation	2	4.1	1	1.7
Missing values	1	2.0	2	3.4
Total	49	100.0	58	100.0

and the 45.7 per cent of turnover in 1982-83 both appear extraordinarily high for a civil service – such as West Germany's – which considers itself a career-based system.

Under the evolved system in West Germany, a potential for political control takes root in the fact that political civil servants expose themselves to the risk of temporary retirement. In addition normal and premature retirements create enough vacancies to streamline the bureaucracy by targeted recruitment. Meanwhile, reshuffling serves as means to purge the lower ranks. Among the recruitment means, internal promotion – typical for career systems – was the most important. This resulted in an administrative elite three quarters of whom had been socialized in the Bonn bureaucracy. The civil service reservoir is, however, enlarged by recruitment of experts from Länder and local governments. Although used more frequently in periods of transition than under conditions of stability, external recruitment – often viewed as the counterpart of temporary retirement – is less typical for the system.

Both government changes and their respective personnel policy greatly resemble each other. Temporary retirement was practised slightly more often in 1982-83 due to a lower rate of normal retirement and the fact that the chancellor's party had not been a coalition partner. It was the public repercussions and private irritations of the personnel policies which differed markedly in the two cases. After 1969, "party politicization" soon became a cause celebre (Derlien 1985). After 1982, the same process was seen simply as the exploitation of the

German civil service code to its full extent. So far, we have looked at *flow* data, abstracting from the *stock* of half the administration elite, who remained in office. How did the inflow of new personnel affect the overall composition of the administrative elite after things had settled into routine?

#### IMPACT ON ELITE COMPOSITION

Undoubtedly, the turnover brought on by the changes of government of 1969 and 1982 went far beyond normal fluctuation in the ministerial career service. Was the impact on the composition of the administration elite in Bonn exceptional too? Comparing the old civil service elite with the new composition resulting from personnel turnovers by the middle of the year after each government had come into power, we arrive at the following results.

#### Professional Life

The number of persons not promoted from the lower ranks within the ministries increases after changes of government. Meanwhile the percentage of those holding new positions by internal promotion or reshuffling correspondingly falls. Thus, the fact that only 59.2 per cent (1969-70) and 55.1 per cent (1982-83) of the new entrants (Table 6) came into office by internal horizontal or vertical mobility, clearly affected the overall composition of the respective elites nine months after government change. Table 7 reveals a difference between the two cases under scrutiny: the old elite of 1969 more than that of 1982 were not drawn from the ranks of the ministerial bureaucracy. However, every second state secretary had come into office from federal agencies, Länder, local government, or other sectors, presumably due to the advent of the Social Democrats in government in 1966. Furthermore, the unorthodox recruitment method is more typical of the state secretaries cadre than it is for ministerialdirektoren. The latter group – before and after government changes – are drawn overwhelmingly from the internal reservoir of candidates.

When analyzing the *entire professional life* of the various administrative elites after their education, we again notice the distinctiveness of state secretaries: overall they are more likely to reveal a mixed career, i.e. to have changed sectors and to have worked more than four years prior to entering the civil service. In longitudinal perspective, their professional distance from the career civil service was greatest in the mid-70s. Furthermore, mixed careers among state secretaries were more frequent in the old elite of the grand coalition in 1969 than they were in 1983. On the other hand, the share of ministerialdirektoren

TABLE 7  
Previous Position of Office Holders

<i>Previous Position</i>	<i>Point in Time</i>																			
	1949-1984				9/1969				6/1970 Rank				9/1982		6/1983					
	<i>StS</i>		<i>MD</i>		<i>StS</i>		<i>MD</i>		<i>StS</i>		<i>MD</i>		<i>StS</i>		<i>MD</i>					
	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>				
In ministry	91		338		14		71		9		72		21		93		13		82	
		59.9		86.0		51.9		92.2		36.0		85.7		85.5		89.4		54.2		81.2
Outside ministry	61		55		13		6		16		12		3		11		11		19	
		40.0		14.0		48.1		7.8		64.0		14.3		12.5		10.6		45.8		18.8
Total	152		393		27		77		25		84		24		104		24		101	
Missing values	3		43		-		9		-		4		-		-		-		3	



TABLE 8  
Type of Career

Career	1949-1984				9/1969				Point in Time 6/1970 Rank				9/1982				6/1983			
	StS		MD		StS		MD		StS		MD		StS		MD		StS		MD	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Uninterrupted civil service career	74		177		13		31		9		37		14		40		14		43	
		48.4		51.0		48.1		56.4		36.0		55.2		58.3		39.6		58.3		41.7
Deferred entrance into civil service	12		78		3		12		2		12		3		36		3		32	
		7.8		22.5		11.1		21.8		8.0		17.9		12.5		35.6		12.5		31.1
Mixed external and internal career	67		90		10		12		14		17		7		23		7		26	
		43.8		25.9		37.0		21.8		56.0		25.4		29.2		22.8		29.2		25.2
Not in civil service before	-		2		1		-		-		1		-		2		-		2	
		-		0.6		3.7					1.5				2.0					1.9
Total	153		347		27		55		25		67		24		101		24		103	
		100.0		100.0		100.0		100.0		100.0		100.0		100.0		100.0		100.0		100.0
Missing observations	2		15		-		23		-		21		-		2		-			

who have gone through a closed, uninterrupted civil service career has remained nearly the same through the two government changes. Since 1969, this proportion has declined independently of government change. This was especially true between 1970 and 1982. Conversely, the percentage of those whose entrance into the civil service was deferred up to four years after finishing their education, has grown.

Table 8 indicates that the 1983 conservative government relied more heavily on state secretaries with an uninterrupted civil service career than did the 1970 government. It also might have arrested the decline in the proportion of ministerialdirektoren with orthodox careers. Nevertheless, mixed careers occurred within the 1983 subsample slightly more frequently than they did in 1982.

This is not the only trend of the 1970s that was reversed by the personnel policy of the Kohl government in 1982. During the 1970s *appointment age* of both ranks of political civil servants decreased. However, this figure rose after October 1982, as did the average number of years spent by members of the elite in professional life before their appointments. The 1969 Social-Liberal government had replaced officials whose average age on entering the service was 54.9 (StS) and 51.9 (Md), with appointees aging 50.0 and 49.6 respectively. On the other hand, the new appointees of the conservative-liberal 1982 government were 53.1 (StS) and 54.2 (Md) years old when taking office from their ousted predecessors. The latter's average ages at time of appointment had been a comparatively low 48.3 and 48.4 years respectively. Clearly, the rejuvenation of the 1970 elite was due to the lowered appointment age. Contrariwise, the higher average age of appointment in 1983 was due to a policy of selecting state secretaries almost as old, and ministerialdirektoren 3.5 years older than their colleagues in the 1969 elite. Obviously, sympathizers with the Christian Democrats were rewarded and/or, simultaneously, the principle of seniority was strengthened when the new government took power.

### Political Generations

The older 1983 administration is rather surprising in view of the fact that the appointment age had continuously decreased since 1962 and 1966. Robert Putnam had already pointed out that the heightened awareness of one's political role in 1970 might correlate with a *change in generations* (Putnam 1973, 283). When we chart the age composition according to political generations – assuming political socialization takes place between the age of 15 and 21 (Fogt 1982) – we arrive at Table 10.

TABLE 9  
Age at and Professional Life before Appointment (averages)

	Period				
	1949- 84	9/1969	6/1970	9/1982	6/1983
Appointment age					
StS	52.9	53.9	50.9	49.7	52.6
MD	52.5	51.7	50.8	49.2	51.8
Years in professional life before appointment					
StS	25.5	25.0	22.8	21.6	24.1
MD	24.8	24.3	24.0	21.4	23.2

Following four-year intervals since 1966 and separating the state before and after the two government changes, we can observe historically older generations leaving and younger generations entering the administrative elite. The oldest generation, which in 1966 had made up one third of the state secretaries and a quarter of the ministerialdirektoren, disappeared in a short time. By the time of the grand coalition in 1969, this generation had no division heads left. It had one state secretary in office in mid-1970. Also by 1970, the percentage of those politically socialized during the stable years of the Weimar Republic had dropped to one fifth and one third of the elite during the government transition. By 1974, they had almost disappeared.

The generation of 1905-10, who had been the backbone of the grand coalition, were reduced to one third of the division heads by mid-1970; side by side with another third who had been politically socialized during the critical years of the Weimar Republic. The state secretaries of the early Social-Liberal government represented a younger generation. They consisted of people mostly brought up during the period of National-Socialism. By September 1982, only every sixth official grew up before WWII. Currently, the war generation forms the biggest group in the administrative elite. The post-war generations occupy every fourth or third position. In fact, the 1982-83 government transition appears to have slowed the replacement of the WWII generation. Even in 1984, 44.1 per cent of the ministerialdirektoren belonged to this political generation.

Clearly, the 1969 government transition *accelerated* the replacement of those born in 1910 and before; whereas the 1982 government change *postponed* the expansion of post-1929 ministerialdirektoren. Yet the pattern deviated in the case of state secretaries. In mid-1970, they were

TABLE 10  
Distribution of Political Generations (%)

<i>Period of birth and socialization</i>		1966	9/69	6/70	1974	1978	9/82	6/83	1984
Revolution and Crisis 1899–1904	StS	32.0	11.1	4.0	–	–	–	–	–
	MD	24.6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Table Weimar Rep. 1905–1910	StS	44.0	37.0	20.0	–	–	–	–	–
	MD	52.2	47.1	29.6	5.2	–	–	–	–
Weimar Republic in Crisis 1911–1916	StS	16.0	25.9	12.0	4.0	4.0	–	–	–
	MD	20.3	23.7	28.2	19.8	6.7	–	–	–
Establish. National- Socialism 1917–1922	StS	8.0	26.9	40.0	23.0	19.0	16.8	12.6	8.0
	MD	–	14.0	16.8	21.9	20.2	14.6	19.4	14.7
World War II	StS	–	7.4	20.0	38.5	3.85	45.8	45.8	36.0
	MD	–	–	–	34.5	27.0	25.0	37.5	48.0
Postwar Reconstruction 1929–1934	StS	1.5	5.6	7.7	16.7	25.0	30.1	28.1	30.4
	MD	–	–	–	–	11.5	12.6	4.2	8.0
Establish. Adenauer era 1935–	StS	–	–	–	–	2.0	8.7	10.7	10.8
	MD	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
No.	StS	25	27	35	26	26	24	24	25
	MD	69	86	78	96	104	103	103	102

the spearhead of the approaching 1917-22 generation. In mid-1983, the percentage from the next (1923-28) generation among state secretaries came in close to that for ministerialdirektoren. It actually declined further in 1984. Thus, the Kohl administration dipped disproportionately into the postwar reconstruction generation when selecting state secretaries.

### **Social Background**

Owing to the law of increasing disproportionality (Putnam 1976, 22), the politico-administrative elite in the FRG was, of course, never socially representative of the population (von Beyme 1974; 1971, 261). Politicians as well as top bureaucrats originate predominantly from civil service homes and the entrepreneurial class; nevertheless, the elected ministers and parliamentary secretaries of state claim a working class background (19.6 per cent) more often than do the appointed political civil servants.

It hardly seems possible that government changes could have so directly affected the social composition of the administrative elite. Still there have been some shifts in the social backgrounds of top officials. Both in 1969 and 1982, state secretaries more often than not claimed that their fathers had been civil servants. The new administration in 1970 had turned this overrepresentation into a fairly balanced relation between the offspring of civil servants and those of entrepreneurs. On the other hand, the new government in 1983 had greatly increased the proportion of state secretaries whose fathers had been entrepreneurs. At the same time, it preserved the high proportion of ministerialdirektoren whose fathers had been higher civil servants. The 55.6 per cent of state secretaries from entrepreneurial fathers in 1983 corresponds to the exceptionally high 54.8 per cent of politicians with the same background.

### **Religious Denomination**

With respect to religious background, politicians are more representative of the general populace than are civil servants. However, the Social-Liberal cabinets were overwhelmingly Protestant. During the grand coalition in 1969, 61.1 per cent of the ministers were Protestant. Chancellor Kohl's cabinet displays a more balanced composition with 52.9 (ministers) and 51.2 (parliamentary StS) per cent who are Catholic. These changing proportions apply as well to the administrative elite. Covering all officials included in this study, 68 per cent of the state secretaries and 55.1 per cent of the division heads were Protestant. After 1969, the proportion of Protestants among the former grew to

TABLE 11  
Social Background of Administrative Elite (%)

<i>Occupation of father</i>	<i>Politi- cians</i>	<i>1949-1984</i>		<i>9/1969</i>		<i>Point in Time 6/1970</i>		<i>9/1982</i>		<i>6/1983</i>	
		<i>StS</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>StS</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>StS</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>StS</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>StS</i>	<i>MD</i>
Laborer	19.6	3.9	5.0	0.0	3.0	4.8	6.5	5.9	11.5	0.0	11.8
Entrepreneur/ leading employer	37.7	42.9	39.0	39.1	42.4	42.8	45.2	29.4	19.2	55.6	17.6
Functionary	4.3	1.9	2.5	0.0	0.0	4.8	3.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9
Civil servant (higher c.s.)	34.1	47.5	49.1	60.9	48.5	42.8	41.9	58.8	69.2	38.9	64.7
Other	21.0	41.7	45.8	47.8	42.4	28.6	35.5	35.3	57.7	27.8	52.9
No.	4.3	2.9	4.2	0.0	6.1	4.8	3.2	5.9	0.0	5.6	0.0
	138	103	118	23	33	21	31	17	26	18	17

85.7 per cent in 1970. It reached 83.3 per cent in the last Social-Liberal administration. Meanwhile, the figure for ministerialdirektoren rose even more dramatically – from 37.5 per cent in September 1969 to 62.2 per cent in 1982. Again, this trend had been reversed by the conservative government when it took office in 1982. Most recently, the proportion of Protestants in both civil service groups sank below the average for the entire span of this study. For instance, the Kohl government exactly matched its 52.9 per cent of Catholic state secretaries to its percentage of ministers.

### Education

In general, the *educational level* of top civil servants is higher than that of politicians. The percentage of university graduates among the politicians in office between 1949 and 1984 works out to 73.9 per cent for ministers and 66.7 per cent for PStSs. In the same period, 93.5 (StS) and 98.0 (MD) per cent of top career civil servants had earned a university degree. Indeed, 67.1 and 65.8 per cent, respectively, had earned doctorates. Since the grand coalition, state secretaries with doctorates had fallen to 50 per cent by mid-1983. With some fluctuating, the percentage of ministerialdirektoren with PhDs has remained in the neighbourhood of 60 per cent.

More subject to variation is the *content of officials' university training* (Table 12). Law, the traditional curriculum for the German senior civil service, has lost some of its attractiveness for division heads since 1969, and economics has taken up the slack. A parallel trend with state secretaries has not emerged. The frequency of legal education among StSs had fallen sharply by mid-1970. However, law regained importance in the last Social-Liberal administration. Since 1983, it has risen to an unprecedented 75 per cent.

### Party Membership

Quite predictably, the most obvious effect of a change in government is on party-political affiliations. While we gathered data from documents for 50 per cent of the secretaries of state, the results for division heads are meager. We may safely assume, however, that the actual proportion of party members among them is higher than table 13 indicates (Derlien 1985).<sup>8</sup> Parallel to the changing party-political composition of government, the overt party-political structure of the civil service elite altered as a result of the purging and restaffing of senior positions. In 1969 during the grand coalition, both the CDU and CSU, and the SPD distributed their followers in the state secretary level. The CDU/CSU members among the StSs disappeared within half a year.

TABLE 12 Subject Studied (%)

<i>Subject</i>	<i>1949–1984</i>		<i>9/1969</i>		<i>Point in Time 6/1970</i>		<i>9/1982</i>		<i>6/1983</i>	
	<i>StS</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>StS</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>StS</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>StS</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>StS</i>	<i>MD</i>
	60.0	64.2	63.0	73.1	45.8	66.7	66.7	64.1	75.0	62.7
Economics	16.7	11.3	18.5	9.0	25.0	11.5	12.5	15.5	12.5	17.5
Natural science	11.9	13.9	11.1	13.5	20.8	12.9	12.5	13.6	4.2	13.6
Liberal arts, Social science	8.1	8.3	3.7	1.5	0.0	5.2	4.2	5.8	8.4	4.9
No study	3.3	2.3	3.7	3.0	8.3	3.8	4.2	1.0	0.0	1.9
No.	150	372	27	67	24	78	24	103	24	103

TABLE 13 Party membership

<i>Party and rank</i>		<i>1949–1984</i>	<i>9/1969</i>	<i>Point in Time 6/1970</i>	<i>9/1982</i>	<i>6/1983</i>
CDU/CSU	<i>StS</i>	21	5	–	–	5
	<i>MD</i>	17	7	3	2	5
SPD	<i>StS</i>	29	7	11	8	–
	<i>MD</i>	26	6	11	16	7
FDP	<i>StS</i>	9	1	5	1	–
	<i>MD</i>	11	2	1	5	3
(liberal)	<i>MD</i>	11	2	1	5	3
	<i>StS</i>	15	2	1	9	9
Explicitly none	<i>MD</i>	4	2	3	2	2
	<i>StS</i>	74	15	17	18	14
Total	<i>MD</i>	58	17	18	25	10



Meanwhile, the members of the constituent parties of the ruling SPD/FDP coalition increased dramatically. The same pattern recurred with the shift from SPD/FDP to CDU/CSU/FDP in 1982–83. With both transitions, state secretaries belonging to the former government party were totally ousted. Ministerialdirektoren occasionally managed to survive.

Public discussion about party-politicization has hypothesized a relationship between external recruitment and party membership. We tested this relationship, but did not find any significant statistical association between a specific party and mode of recruitment – even when we controlled for rank and period. There is a slight statistical relationship between mode of recruitment (external vs. internal) and party membership (contingency coefficient 0.16) for state secretaries only. If not by 1969, certainly by 1982, parties assuming power could draw upon a large internal reservoir of sympathizers and even overt party members when they selected individuals for politically sensitive positions. This is not to say that all officials have associated themselves with a specific party. For instance, around 50 per cent of ministerial-direktoren, had pursued their careers without acquiring a party book. As a matter of course, any officials – especially state secretaries – who publicly document their party affiliations cannot assume that they will retain their offices when another party government comes into power. This fact accords with a provision of the civil service statute which declares that officials occupying sensitive positions may be “in permanent consensus with the government’s policy goals.”

In trying to assess the consequences – intentional and unintentional – of both government transitions, one can probably maintain that in each case the composition of the administrative elite was altered without changing the traditional features of the ministerial bureaucracy. Obviously, intentional purges and appointments produced greater congruence between the party membership of top executives and their political masters. As an unforeseen consequence, the religious identifications of the former reconfigured to reflect the sectarian backgrounds of the politicians as well. Finally, the professional structure of the top levels of bureaucracy were somewhat altered after each transition – largely due to external recruitment.

During the Social-Liberal coalition, the average age of the civil service elite went down. This phenomenon accelerated generational succession. We also noted a tendency for SPD/FDP to recruit more economists. Finally, the 1970 administration tended to favor an amalgam of external and internal career elements. However, this preference did not alter the basic characteristics of the federal bureaucracy: predominantly legal training and uninterrupted internal administrative careers.

In 1983, the government drew more heavily than did its predecessors on older civil servants. This tack slightly retarded generational change, accentuated the appointment of jurists by the last Schmidt government, and reinforced the traditional character of the administrative elite by advancing those with classical, uninterrupted, civil service careers.

## CONCLUSION

This article has demonstrated how the personnel policy instruments available in the German civil service were applied after two changes in government – 1969 and 1982. The loopholes of an otherwise closed career system – external recruitment and temporary retirement – were used for the selective recruitment and purging of the administrative elite well above normal use for a government holding power for a long period. Furthermore, temporary retirement is quantitatively more important than non-career recruitment – especially since new governments can then draw experts from their reservoir of loyal officials in Länder and local governments.

The administrative elite in Bonn, although distinctly different from their political masters in a number of respects, is becoming similar to the political elite with respect to education, religious denomination and, above all, political party membership. Still, it should be kept in mind that the two top ranks under investigation are quantitatively small. Furthermore, even among these top administrators, normal internal careers without open party allegiances characterize the majority of cases.

Returning to the problem of conscious involvement of career civil servants in politics, a phenomenon ascribed to parts of the Bonn elite after the 1969 government change, a new question arises from our findings: Did this phenomenon persist throughout the 1970s and can it still be observed in the 1980s? Assuming that conscious involvement in politics, the “political bureaucrat” of Image III or even Image IV (Aberbach et al. 1981), evolved beside the “classical bureaucrat” after 1969, how can we explain this development and what are the prospects for the late 1980s?

The *generation change* as such hardly explains the new attitudes. The evidence suggest that it accelerated the careers of people whom one does not expect to display a “democratic” role understanding. That is, it advanced the very generations whose political socialization took place in darker years of German history. In any case, inferring role understanding from political generations is fraught with difficulties. Putnam (1973, 283) has suggested that “The younger the official,

regardless of party sympathies, the less likely he is to display the characteristics of a classical bureaucrat". However, this conclusion was derived from a sample completely different from ours. Putnam interviewed only 37 ministerialdirektoren – the majority of his respondents were subdivision heads and "high-fliers". The state secretaries in 1970, although younger than in 1983, were likely to hold a more traditional self-concept than they do today.

The Putnam findings may derive from a periodization effect, produced by the circumstances of the 1969 government change. Our results, in fact, can be interpreted to substantiate this thesis. The ferocity of public discussion about the 1969-70 personnel policy was enormous. Thus, we might attribute the 1970 findings to the repercussions of the public rather than the personnel policy itself, which, indeed, the participants could not objectively judge. If such were the case, then we could predict less politicizing by the 1982 government transition. By then, top bureaucrats had made their historical peace with government transitions (Lowery and Rusbult 1986, 52).

The political role understanding of 1970 could be a periodization effect in the sense that it emerged from the *Zeitgeist* calling for democratization. The world view of the efficacy of government programs had drastically changed by the early 1980s. Could problems of governability, fiscal crisis and terrorism, accompanied by withdrawal of the state from society have led to a resurrection of the classical bureaucrat? We expect to draw out the answer to the question from our ongoing replication of the 1970 elite survey (Aberbach et al, 1981; Putnam 1973). Whatever it may be, it is increasingly clear that politicians have become more conscious of the political roles played by the civil service elite. More and more, they tailor their patronage according to the limits set by existing statutes and conditions. They do so not in order to bring about a specific role understanding, but to reinforce civil servants' commitments to government policy.

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### Notes

1 Cabinet, however, deals mostly with the two highest ranks, often without discussion.

- 2 See Bundestags-Drucksache 9/933.
- 3 In addition positions from grade A16 (ministerialrat) upwards in the "services": foreign office, espionage and home intelligence.
- 4 In the research project another 119 division heads are analyzed who did not have the status of a political civil servant, but were ministerialdirigenten and occasionally employees. For the sake of comparability they are excluded here together with another 38 inspectors general of the Bundeswehr in the Defense Ministry.
- 5 Percentages of parliamentary state secretaries are higher, because the number of positions to be filled increased considerably in these very periods under consideration.
- 6 Bundestags-Drucksache 6/107, p.1; steno.Bericht Bundestag 9, p. 7474 ff.
- 7 There were some cases, when federal civil servants immediately moved into Länder administrations, as happened in October 1982 when 3 state secretaries took over positions in North-Rhine-Westfalia. Without knowledge of the personnel files it is impossible to tell if they quit service in Bonn or were fired; these cases were classified as temporary retirements.
- 8 I should, however, prefer (as a methodological device) to stick to Wittgenstein's imperative: what we cannot speak of, we must be silent on.

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