

UNITY AND FRAGMENTATION

- THEMES IN GERMAN AND AMERICAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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One of the most complex problems facing modern government is the need to forge policy coherence to deal with public problems whose solutions require intricate trade-offs of values, priorities, and interests. The problem of generating such policy coherence surely grows as the inventory of past policies and programs increases and as these generate both their own political constituencies and administrative agencies. The more fragmented the apparatus of the state, the greater the difficulty in achieving a coherent reconciliation of values, priorities, and interests. The problem of gaining direction and achieving rational policy management in the face of structural fragmentation has been one of the central themes of Renate Mayntz's work on the governmental apparatus of the Federal Republic of Germany (Mayntz and Scharpf 1975; Mayntz 1980; Mayntz 1984).

The problem of policy coherence varies in kind and from place to place to some degree. While not absent, it seems less severe in highly centralized political systems such as Britain and France. In these countries, a high degree of structural centralization offers opportunities to generate coherent (if frequently short-lived) policies, albeit sometimes at the cost of political legitimacy (Wilsford 1989). In Britain, the Westminster system of majority party rule provides a greater capability to make large changes than in countries where power is not so clearly concentrated (Weaver and Rockman 1993). The capability, however, is often underexercised, suggesting that even centralized structures cannot fully suppress the costs of managing differences of preference and interest (Krauss and Pierre 1993; Vogel 1993). In France, the centralization of the executive and of the state apparatus in Paris also provide opportunities for nationally coherent policies, exemplified in the French decision to invest heavily in nuclear power and thereby to standardize French nuclear plants (Feigenbaum, Samuels and Weaver 1993). While policy coherence remains a universal problem that is not always achieved merely by the centralization and concentration of power, the nature and severity of the problem is affected by the structural characteristics of political and administrative systems. The prospects of attaining policy coherence are weaker where authority structures are dispersed than where they are concentrated. Even though systems that concentrate authority often fail to achieve a carefully managed policy process, those which disperse authority may be inherently limited in their ability to cultivate such a process.

I. THE GERMAN FEDERAL REPUBLIC AND THE UNITED STATES - SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

1. Similarities

The German and American polities have several features in common that make them each more likely to diffuse authority and, therefore, to find the problem of rational and coherent management of public policy to be especially difficult. Structural fragmentation, in general, characterizes the policymaking process in each setting, although the American case represents a more extreme version of fragmentation and power diffusion. Institutionally, there are several respects in which Germany and the United States are alike - or, at least, less different from one another than are other European states from the United States. Federalism, a high degree of legislative independence, and checks and balances are elements of government shared by both systems. Each, of course, also has a powerful and politically insulated central bank.

Federalism

In each country, subnational governments play important policymaking roles, are directly represented in the upper chambers of the legislative body, and can represent important regional and local interests in their nations' respective capitals, as well as the interests of the state governments themselves. As a general matter, the German and American federal governments have far less directing capability than the more commonly found unitary states of Europe. More frequently, they are placed in a bargaining mode with the subnational governments. Within the context of systems in which there is a constitutional dispersion of power geographically, the contemporary American and German polities have some important differences in the operation of their federal systems. For one thing, the sheer number of American states (fifty) compared to German Laender (sixteen with the inclusion of the former GDR, but eleven in the pre-unification Federal Republic) complicates intergovernmental bargaining to a greater degree in the U.S. than in Germany. More actors can cause more complications. Perhaps, more importantly, German and American federalism are essentially different subspecies. German federalism tends to be of the cooperative variety with examples of competition. On financial matters, for example, German law limits the magnitude of differences that might arise between Laender. The American case stresses competition and even at times variability between and among states. The American states compete to attract capital investments, federal subsidies, and access to financial markets so as to ensure economic growth and financial stability. To a greater extent than in Germany, the American states are ships floating on their own bottoms and responsible for their own fiscal fates.

Strong Legislature

Germany and the United States also have in common strong legislatures that are divided into functionally important work groups and which, therefore, have significant staffing. Nelson Polsby (1975) distinguished two types of legislatures - those which serve largely

as arenas for parliamentary parties and preexisting majorities or coalitions and those which can independently transform the course of legislation or initiate inquiries and examinations. The first type, Polsby characterized as legislative arenas. He characterized the second type as transformative bodies. When legislatures function as arenas, they essentially ratify decisions made in cabinet, possessing little in the way of independent investigative, interrogative, or legislative powers. In Europe, the French Assembly and the British House of Commons typically reflect the role of legislatures as arenas, although in recent years the British House of Commons has generated more non-plenary activity through its special committees. In Germany, however, most of the marks of a transformative parliamentary body are apparent. By the standards of a parliamentary system, which after all fuses executive and legislative authority, the Bundestag is well-staffed and the party-based *Fraaktionen* serve important fact-finding functions, if through the lenses of partisan interest. Differences between the U.S. Congress and the German parliament must begin, of course, with the difference between a separation of powers system and a parliamentary one. Whatever marks of a transformative institution the Bundestag has, the U.S. Congress has them more thickly and deeply. Committees and subcommittees play critical legislative roles, staff are abundant at just about any level - those attached to individual members, to subcommittees, to committees, to caucus and party groups, to the overhead functions of each chamber, and to central auditing, budgetary, and policy inquiry organizations that Congress has set up. Members of each chamber are remarkably autonomous and, while parties are important in American legislative life, members are rarely punished for defections from party positions. Hence, legislative majorities are not always what they appear to be by looking merely at surface numbers. Finally, the U.S. Congress is a genuine bicameral legislature in which equal but different powers are given to the two chambers, proliferating both veto points in the American system as well as points of policy initiation. Still, while there clearly remain substantial differences in the transformative characteristics of German and American legislative institutions, there is no doubt that the Bundestag constitutes one of the most active and independent legislative bodies among the parliamentary democracies, probably second only to the American Congress (Thaysen, Davidson and Livingston 1990).

Checks and Balances

The American system traditionally has been described as a checks and balances system. By that, it is typically meant that the separation of powers system gives independent authority to three co-equal branches of government - the executive, the legislative, and the courts, with the latter exercising a judicial review over the actions of the executive and legislative branches. The American system of checks and balances is a highly intricate one, frequently requiring concurrent and extraordinary majorities to move past a given veto point in the system. Because the German system is a parliamentary one, and because Americans often associate a parliamentary system with a Westminster style model of majority party governance and parliamentary (really cabinet) supremacy, it is difficult at first to realize that the German Federal Republic also is a system of checks and balances. There are a number of aspects to the German system of checks and bal-

ances, including a more limited and purely constitutional judicial review by the Constitutional Court than the U.S. Supreme Court exercises. Another aspect, however, that is both similar and different are the constraints imposed on the top executive leader in each system. In the United States, the president's preferences can be blocked in Congress directly and more indirectly within his own administration. While the president is described as chief executive in the American constitution, what this means has been left quite unclear. Legal political resistance can be encountered from Congress or the courts. Congress, in fact, "has at least as much constitutional authority over administration as does the president" (Fesler 1984, 89). Realistically, the vast span of control in dealing with the executive means that the president may encounter more subtle forms of political opposition within the executive branch and the ability of those forces to seek alliances with actors outside of the government as well as with congressional staffs and members.

Although from the standpoint of informal political machinations, the decisionmaking process is a more orderly one than in the U.S., the German Chancellor is actually less empowered to direct the process of policymaking than is the American president (Mayntz 1980). The cabinet in the FRG is a genuine policymaking institution, whereas in the United States it is largely a collection of the president's subordinates. In describing limitations on the chancellor's capacity to impose direction on the government, Axel Murswieck (1993, 88) notes that "Leadership functions are not accorded exclusively to the Chancellor, but are shared with the ministers and the cabinet, as a collective decision-making body." The story line here is that both top political leaders have limits placed upon their ability to exercise policy discretion. They are each checked, but in different ways. The German Chancellor is checked frequently within the cabinet and must therefore consult and bargain with his fellow ministers, a condition required also by the coalitional nature of every German government except the Adenauer government of 1957-61. Obviously, the process of checking and balancing in the United States is a more wide open and public process than in Germany.

Political Pressures

In both the United States and Germany, and possibly all of the world's mature democracies, there has been a perception of growing political intrusions into the sphere of public administration and the civil service. This concern has echoed in both countries, though it has often been expressed differently. Mayntz and Derlien (1989), for example, note a substantial growth in the perception of German senior civil servants of a trend toward politicization in the top parts of the civil service between 1970 and 1987. Moreover, they trace a growing percentage of senior civil servants who have become party members in that same time interval, perhaps evidence of the *Parteibuch* phenomenon. In the United States, there also are indications that civil servants have moved in their political affiliations as well (Aberbach and Rockman 1990). There was an even clearer effort to assure that the political appointees in the United States were more consistently of the political persuasion of the presidential administration in power and on its wave length. There has been some effort as well to push the civil servants in the U.S. farther away from policy roles and closer toward neutral management roles (Rockman 1993).

Above all in the U.S., there has been a tendency, especially during periods of divided government, for the Executive Office of the Presidency (EOP) to circumvent statutory constraints through the use of executive directives and alternatively to impede departmental program initiatives through a complex process of internal regulation. During this same period - and perhaps partially brought about by EOP efforts to gain greater control over the management of policy - the Congress also has intruded more frequently and directly into the administrative process. Some of this undoubtedly also results from an enlarged congressional capacity to monitor the agencies when congressional program interests are threatened (Aberbach 1990). Politicization is a very tricky concept and seems to mean different things to different observers. Moreover, perceptions of a phenomenon so hard to define may be highly unreliable. Nevertheless, at a time when national economies are growing slowly and governments are struggling with a precarious fiscal balance, new programs are relatively more difficult to initiate. Politicians are apt, consequently, to devote relatively greater attention to the implementation of policy.

2. Differences

Despite the similarities, there also are important differences in the way the two systems operate. These differences have both institutional and normative roots.

The Role of the Civil Service

The German and American civil service systems at their upper reaches are given different responsibilities. In the first place, German civil servants, unlike their American counterparts, do not have layers of political appointees above them. Not only do they have direct access to political decisionmakers, they are also expected to provide the political leadership with advice. Overall, that is a vital distinction between the respective civil service roles. German civil servants explicitly and by law are expected to be policy advisers and, to some extent, political mediators; Americans are expected to be managers. While the American system is constitutionally silent on the precise responsibilities of the administrative agencies of the federal government and on the role of the civil service (which had not yet been invented when the American constitution was being written), traditional American doctrine draws a normative distinction between policy (something political agents of the presidential administration are responsible for) and management (an activity that civil servants can be given responsibility for under carefully guided as well as guarded conditions). Civil servants closest to the top in the German system (state secretaries and ministerial directors) are regarded as part of a class of political civil servants, a percentage of whom are expected to leave their posts (though not the civil service) when governments change (Derlien 1988). In the U.S., civil servants who take appointed high policy positions are then regarded as partisan and do not return to the civil service system. Hence, the risks of moving into a "policy" role in the U.S. are more severe than in Germany where it is an expected role for the higher civil service. From a normative standpoint, as well, the German political system and the Basic Law grant significantly greater deference to civil servants in Germany

than is the case in the United States. This, of course, stems in part from traditional differences in the conception of the role of the state in Germany and in the United States.

The Role of the State

The British political scientist Kenneth Dyson (1980, 270) views the German "state tradition" as fitting squarely in the mold of the state "as an agent or trustee whose authority is not merely derived from the 'majority' or the 'popular will'." In this context, Dyson conceives of the United States as a stateless society that is "profoundly individualistic and [endowed] with a populist belief that all authority emanates from the people....The result [is] administrative fragmentation and a competitive system of government...[which has the effect of] raising the price...of getting collective action" (271). Given these different views of the role of the state and of the authority of the state, Americans are likely to seek its strict accountability and to view that as the central value in the relationship between public authority and the populace. Strict accountability, ironically, produces mountains of red tape and may lead the citizenry to be even more skeptical of government. On the other hand, the greater degree of deference accorded the state and the civil service in Germany leads to placing a premium on competence in the behavior of the civil service.

Institutions and cultures mesh in ways that sometimes make it difficult to disentangle strictly institutional effects from ideational ones. In the United States, institutional structure and norms regarding the role of state authority seem to be largely compatible with one another. A liberal and individualistic culture is highly coincident with a state that structures the competition for influence over policymaking much like a market (Rockman 1992). The American system, in the words of its key architect, was designed so that "ambition can be made to counteract ambition." (Federalist 51) This conception of the state as merely an arena for conflict, as exemplified by the structural fragmentation and the norms that promote conflict between the governing authorities, encourages behavior in which interests often clash in very public ways.

3. In Sum

The U.S. and Germany face in common the problem of generating coherent direction and rational responses to policy problems. Each system disperses power and grants considerable countervailing opportunities to influence policy. In the United States, the president is potentially a more commanding figure within the executive branch since he is less dependent upon civil servants and the cabinet than the German chancellor. On the other hand, the American president is more likely to be countered outside of the executive in highly public ways than is the German chancellor. Either way, harnessing the horses together is a complex task as the interests of various institutions and ministries or departments are articulated. The pieces of policy response are held by different actors. The puzzle for political leadership is how to put them all together.

Civil servants in each system can be both a part of the problem as well as part of its solution depending upon the extent to which they see matters through the lenses of their

agencies or programs or the extent to which they are integrated more broadly into the policymaking process. The theme of rational integration, however, often implies that a rational or coherent response must perforce be a top-down leadership-driven one. But as Lindblom (1959) and Braybrooke and Lindblom (1963) suggested, synoptic rationality may be beyond the capacity of human nature, not merely beyond the capacity of a given political system.

From that perspective comes the pluralistic notion that the process of bargaining and hammering out agreement may itself produce a rational outcome in the sense that it is both acceptable and feasible. Starting out with partial perspectives may lead to bigger agreements - at least that is the premise.

The values of policy rationality and political pluralism may or may not be in conflict. That depends upon one's perspective of human nature as well as the constituent ingredients of the concept of rationality. However, both the German and American political systems have ample elements of pluralism to them; to some degree, German political culture gives some order to the pluralism, whereas American political culture tends to magnify the effects of pluralism.

Senior civil servants in each country, whatever the prevailing mythologies, are involved with policy even where, as in the U.S., the lore is that administration does not require policy involvement. Civil servants in modern democracies frequently are thrust into the position of reconciling their preferences for rationality (though often their approach to rationality is focused on the problems they work on rather than on the perspective of the government as a whole) with behavior that accommodates pluralistic influences on policymaking.

II. SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS IN GERMANY AND THE UNITED STATES - ATTITUDES AND PERSPECTIVES TOWARD POLICYMAKING AND ADMINISTRATION

In 1987, Renate Mayntz and Hans-Ulrich Derlien carried out a study designed to examine the attitudes, perspectives, and values of senior German civil servants and members of the Bundestag. This inquiry was a follow-up to a 1970 study conducted by Robert D. Putnam of German civil servants and parliamentary politicians. Similarly, in 1986-87, Professors Aberbach and Rockman followed up their earlier (1970) study of high level U.S. federal executives (political appointees and senior civil servants). The topics covered in the U.S. study were similar to those in the German investigation, since both were initially undertaken as part of a large comparative project (Aberbach, Putnam and Rockman 1981). The totality of these studies contain a vast amount of data on the attitudes of U.S. and German federal executives concerning politics, the policy process, the administrative environment, and their roles. Senior administrative officials play a pivotal role in their governments. They are at the interstices of leadership (the power to direct) and knowledge (the power to know what might work or not). In each system, the bureaucracy is both a part of the problem and a part of the solution as it struggles to

combine coherent direction with rational and feasible alternatives. A critical element in the equation of governmental policymaking in democratic polities, however, is political support and approval. Politics is inherently disorderly. It always interferes with top-down imposition. In democratic systems, bureaucrats must live with a process that in some ways complicates their lives. Many, however, may enjoy the challenge that politics brings to public problem-solving.

In the analysis that follows, we examine in a very preliminary way some of the attitudes of German higher civil servants and American federal executives (noncareer and career) about the policy process, the relationship between politics and administration, and roles of senior officials. This examination, we hasten to add, is exactly as we have described it - preliminary. More intensive analysis will follow in the future. Nonetheless, we can gain some insight as to how senior executives at the federal level weigh the values of substantive rationality vis-a-vis those of pluralistic politics.

Samples were drawn in 1986 and 1987 of higher level executive officials at the federal level in both Bonn and Washington. A stratified sample was drawn in each country from the career civil service hierarchy. In the United States, we also interviewed non-career political appointees. In Germany, two layers of the civil service provide some rough equivalency to the U.S. political appointees. These are the state secretaries and the ministerial directors. Most of the state secretaries and about a third of the ministerial directors tend to be replaced with political changes of government in Bonn. In Germany, 147 federal executives were interviewed. Thirteen of these are high-fliers expected to become senior officials at some point in their careers. The German samples include individuals from the following positions: Staatsekretär, Ministerialdirektor, Ministerialdirigent, and Ministerialrat. In the United States, 199 federal executives were interviewed, including both individuals holding line or program posts and a subsample of individuals who were responsible for policy evaluation and analysis positions. For purposes of the comparison to the German sample, we have removed the latter subsample so that the number of U.S. respondents is 144, all of whom hold line or program posts, like their German counterparts. The American respondents are drawn from the following types of positions: those passed with the advice and consent of the Senate, those who are noncareer officials in the Senior Executive Service (American law permits ten percent of the SES members to be noncareer appointees), career officials within the SES who report to a political official, and career officials within SES who report to another career SES executive. To simplify matters, we have drawn a vertical distinction between three layers of officials across the two samples. The top group, we call "political officials." In the United States, these are political appointees (noncareer officials) and in Germany this category includes the state secretaries and ministerial directors, although they are career civil servants in the German system. A second tier of officials, we will call "Career-I" (CA-I). In the United States, this group includes the career SES officials who report to a political official; in Germany, the category includes the Ministerialdirigenten. A third tier of officials is given the label of "Career-II" (CA-II). In the U.S., they are career SES officials who report to other career officials; in Germany, the equivalent are the Ministerialräte.

In brief, the samples are a broad cross-section of the Bonn and Washington bureaucracies, minus those involved in national security activities. In the United States people were interviewed across twenty-one different agencies and in Germany the interviews spanned thirteen agencies.

III. EVIDENCE FROM THE COMPARATIVE ELITES PROJECT

Our description of the political institutions and cultures of Germany and the United States lead to the conclusion that in spite of some important differences, the two countries have much in common. The two political systems tend to disperse power both horizontally and vertically. From this, we infer that there should be more similarities than differences in the political cultures of German and American bureaucratic elites - that is, the ways in which bureaucratic elites perceive and evaluate the political and bureaucratic worlds in which they operate. On the whole, the data we have collected by interviewing high officials in Germany and the United States are consonant with this conclusion, and these findings reinforce data collected in the 1970s which suggested that, among European civil service elites, those in Germany held attitudes closest to their American counterparts (Aberbach, Putnam, and Rockman 1981). But, of course, as expected, there are also interesting differences. For example, Germany has a more ordered and less inchoate political process than the United States and, therefore, as our data show, German bureaucrats are more comfortable with the political role that, to some degree, all top bureaucrats play. Here, the finding is accounted for in significant part by law. German law explicitly gives civil servants a role in the policy process, thereby making the political role they play less controversial than the comparable role is in the United States.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the data, one caveat is in order. The evidence presented here is in the form of very elementary tabular presentations of the views of German and American civil servants on a series of questions concerning such topics as the nature of social and political conflict in the two systems, the ways in which the policy process should and does work, views about the role of the higher level administrator, and notions about the nature of politics and administration in the two countries. The analysis breaks down the responses of high level officials in Germany and the United States by the administrative level of the respondent, but does not go any further. In future work, we will examine the beliefs described here in relation to such factors as the political party affiliations and ideological views of these elite respondents. For now, however, we will confine ourselves to a broad sketch of the similarities and differences in the perspectives of higher level administrative officials in the two countries,

particularly as they bear on the conceptual issues of policy rationality and the limits of governing capability.

1. Perceptions of the Policy Process

Table 1 lays out the views held by the two nations' administrative elites about the policy process. The first thing to note is the overall similarity in the answers given by the respondents to the questions reproduced in the table. With the exception of item 1-B on the proper role of interest groups in the policy process after elections, where there is a pronounced and consistent difference in the views of the two elites, German and American top executives tend to hold basically similar views of the policy process.

There are, however, interesting differences, although, as noted, they are mainly differences of emphasis. Americans are slightly more likely than Germans to believe that *compromise* is more important than efficiency in government (1-A) and somewhat more apt to believe that no government program will be effective unless it is actually supported by the interests it most affects (1-B). The response to 1-A suggests that administrators in both countries place a greater value on the substantive goal of efficiency than on the political means for attaining agreement, but that the Americans are slightly more inclined toward compromise. Similarly, but in the opposite direction, both elites agree (1-B) that *interest group support* is needed for programs to be effective, a recognition of the role that interest groups play in generating support or opposition to policies. In both cases, the American responses tilt somewhat more than the Germans toward the pluralistic side of the spectrum, perhaps a reflection of the less ordered, more pluralistic politics of the U.S. system.

This interpretation is buttressed by the results in Table 1-C. While a majority of the executives in both nations are uncomfortable with interest groups seeking to hinder elected officials from implementing policy proposals once elections have been held - the question explicitly states the legitimacy of an active role for interest groups in elections themselves - the top German executives are consistently and overwhelmingly opposed to interest groups making such an attempt. Top American executives also are opposed, but the proportion in opposition is much smaller. Americans may be more accustomed to a rough and tumble world of interest group politics that is much more a part of the policymaking process in the U.S. Both systems disperse authority. That provides interest groups with access and opportunities. However, that dispersion is of greater magnitude in the U.S. where interest groups are actively involved in all stages of the policy process and across nearly all arenas in which decisions are made.

TABLE 1: VIEWS ABOUT THE POLICY PROCESS IN GERMANY AND THE UNITED STATES, BY ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL *

[Entries are percentages of respondents agreeing strongly or agreeing with reservations with the item.]

IA. *Compromise is more important than is efficiency in government.*

	<u>Germany</u>	<u>United States</u>
Political Officials	33	41
CA-I	22	48
CA-II	50	31
Total Sample	33	39

IB. *If a program is going to be effective, it must be actively supported by the interests most affected.*

	<u>Germany</u>	<u>United States</u>
Political Officials	63	76
CA-I	69	82
CA-II	70	90
Total Sample	67	82

IC. *It is proper for interest groups to seek to influence elections, but improper for them to hinder those who are elected from implementing their proposals.*

	<u>Germany</u>	<u>United States</u>
Political Officials	88	63
CA-I	90	54
CA-II	92	54
Total Sample	90	57

ID. *In policymaking, it is essential for the good of the country that technical considerations be accorded more weight than political factors.*

	<u>Germany</u>	<u>United States</u>
Political Officials	34	48
CA-I	41	56
CA-II	45	47
Total Sample	39	51

IE. *Government should be more properly judged by the effectiveness of its policies than by anything else.*

	<u>Germany</u>	<u>United States</u>
Political Officials	71	85
CA-I	68	96
CA-II	70	79
Total Samples	70	87

* Note: N's for the administrative levels in the samples for the two countries are as follows:

	<u>Germany</u>	<u>United States</u>
Political Officials	59	54
CA-I	51	50
CA-II	37	40
Total Samples	147	144

The U.S. sample reported here contains only those in line positions so that it is comparable to the sample drawn for the German study.

U.S. data may be slightly modified when final check-coding is completed.

It would be incorrect, though, to infer that contemporary German administrative elites hold stereotypical views, often attributed to bureaucrats, about the role of technical rationality versus political pluralism. The data in items 1-D and 1-E, for example, indicate that top American administrative elites at every level, in fact, are somewhat more likely to want *technical considerations* to take primacy over political factors in policymaking (1-D). And, as the entries in 1-E show, Germans are somewhat more likely than Americans to allow that there are more important factors in judging governments than the effectiveness of their policies. Presumably this includes such factors as the ability of governments to build consensus, their willingness to adhere to democratic norms, and their general sensitivity to the political process. In short, although some aspects of the political process, notably interest group pressures, appear to be less tolerated as a norm by German bureaucrats than by U.S. bureaucrats, in other respects, especially in the balancing of political and technical criteria and in the ways in which government should be judged, there is more acceptance than among the Americans of norms that fit comfortably with political processes and which may be somewhat more skeptical of the possibility of attaining a closed rational policy universe.

2. Political Aspects of Role

This interpretation is reinforced by the data presented in Table 2 on administrators' feelings about the political aspects of their jobs.

TABLE 2: FEELINGS ABOUT POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE JOB, BY COUNTRY AND ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL		
2A. <i>It is at least as important for a public manager to have a talent for politics as it is to have any special management or technical subject skill.</i>		
[Entries are percentages agreeing strongly or agreeing with reservations with the item.]		
	<u>Germany</u>	<u>United States</u>
Political Officials	93	81
CA-I	82	86
CA-II	81	85
Total Sample	86	83
2B. <i>Likes political aspects of the job.</i>		
[Entries are percentages of respondents who report that they like or like with reservations the political aspects of their jobs.]		
	<u>Germany</u>	<u>United States</u>
Political Officials	90	63
CA-I	92	60
CA-II	78	53
Total Sample	88	59

As Table 2-A demonstrates, both groups of top administrators believe that it is at least as important for public managers to have a talent for politics as it is for them to have specialized managerial and technical skills. But it is the Germans and not the Americans

who are most likely to *enjoy the political aspects* of their jobs (Table 2-B). This may well be in large part a reflection of the more ordered political setting in Germany where the civil servant's role in the policy process is better defined, but it also shows that top German administrators are quite comfortable in "the grey area" of political involvement, compromise, and interest group politics that any high level administrator must deal with.

3. *Politics and Administration*

In a related area, Table 3 examines the views of top administrators in the two countries on the relationship between politics and administration, the latter being an issue that has long been a core concern of public administration specialists. The table demonstrates some of the more interesting differences between the two administrative cultures. First, and not too surprisingly, it is American administrators who are the most concerned about *legislative interference* in the work of the agencies. The activist U.S. Congress, which in recent years has often been accused of "micromanaging" the bureaucracy, is clearly a greater concern to U.S. administrators than the Bundestag is to administrators in Germany as a source of intrusion into the administrative process.

This finding holds for all ranks of top administrators, but there is an equally important effect in the table by level. Political officials are most concerned about legislative interference in both systems and lower level officials (within this top stratum) are less concerned. The relationship is clearly stronger in the U.S. - there is a 43 percent difference between the percentage of political officials and those at the Career II level in their agreement that the legislature interferes too much in the U.S. as compared to a 20 percent difference across the equivalent strata in Germany - but it is present in both countries. The clear implication is that the political officials in each country, but especially in the United States, are often in competition with the legislature. Conversely, the officials in the CA-I and CA-II categories may hold more positive views toward the legislature because they are somewhat more insulated than their superiors from direct legislative interference or because they need to form tacit alliances with legislative committees and interest groups to protect their programs from budget cuts or from administrative coordinators who work with those at the central level. The latter explanation seems especially plausible in the United States. The findings we earlier reviewed in Table 1 regarding the role of interest groups in the policy process, especially in the U.S., suggest some support for the tacit alliance explanation, that is where the CA-I and CA-II officials develop relationships with legislators and interest groups to shield them from undesired policy changes.

A related explanation, at least in the U.S., has to do with ideological differences between political appointees and senior career civil servants. American political appointees have been much more conservative than career civil servants in the U.S. during the Nixon and Reagan administrations (Aberbach and Rockman 1990). This would lead political appointees to be more negative than career executives about interference in the work of the agencies by the U.S. Congress since the Congress tends to be the guardian

of previously existing programs, a stance that the more moderate career civil servants would find reasonably congenial.

TABLE 3: POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION, BY COUNTRY AND ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL

[Entries are percentages of respondents agreeing strongly or agreeing with reservations with the item.]

3A. *The Bundestag/Congress too often interferes with the work of the agencies.*

	<u>Germany</u>	<u>United States</u>
Political Officials	39	74
CA-I	29	46
CA-II	19	31
Total Sample	31	52

3B. *A senior civil servant should limit his or her activities to the precise application of the law.*

	<u>Germany</u>	<u>United States</u>
Political Officials	10	49
CA-I	10	37
CA-II	5	36
Total Sample	9	42

3C. *In order to rationally evaluate administrative activities it is necessary to eliminate political considerations.*

	<u>Germany</u>	<u>United States</u>
Political Officials	9	33
CA-I	12	16
CA-II	11	13
Total Sample	10	23

3D. *Too often, officials look at matters from the viewpoint of their agencies or specific responsibilities and not that of the government as a whole.*

	<u>Germany</u>	<u>United States</u>
Political Officials	75	77
CA-I	61	90
CA-II	73	68
Total Sample	69	80

3E. *If an administration comes to power with relatively clear policy proposals in your area that you think are very undesirable or ill-considered, what courses of action do you think are appropriate?*

	<u>Germany</u>	<u>United States</u>
Support Administration (Government) Even if Disagree	82	42

3F. *Basically, social conflicts bring about progress in modern society.*

	<u>Germany</u>	<u>United States</u>
Political Officials	58	72
CA-I	44	86
CA-II	62	85
Total Sample	54	80

Top American administrators not only are more likely to believe that the legislature interferes too often in the work of the agencies (3-A), they are also much more likely than their German counterparts to believe that a senior civil servant should limit his or her activities to the *precise application of the law* (3-B). Again, differences in law may be a central part of the explanation. German law explicitly grants top civil servants a role in policymaking while the American constitution says nothing about the subject since the founders of the United States had little or no vision about the role of a civil service in the small state they envisioned and American tradition, as we noted above, emphasizes a distinction between policy and management. Despite the legal differences, the same pattern that appears in table 3-A is manifested also in 3-B. In table 3-B, we see that political officials, particularly in the American case, are more likely to agree with the statement that civil servants should limit themselves to a precise application of the law. The same underlying explanations - legal factors and political sympathies - that were used to explain the findings to legislative interference (3-A) are probably applicable to this item (3-B) as well.

When we turn from answers that may be influenced by specific legal differences or differences in the prevailing political situation at the time of the interviews to more general issues of politics and administration, the data show a somewhat different pattern between the two nations. Administrators in both countries are convinced that *officials fail to look at matters from a sufficiently broad perspective* (3-C). This is particularly true of the Americans. Overall, however, the differences (except, and for inexplicable reasons, the CA-I category) are not very great.

The country differences become much greater, though, when we examine what career officials say they would do if an administration (government) came to power advocating policies they thought undesirable or ill-considered. German officials overwhelmingly indicate that in the end they would *support the government even if they disagreed* with it, perhaps registering disagreement behind closed doors with superiors only but going no further. The Americans are more feisty. They are much more likely to talk about trying multiple means of exerting influence within the organization as well as considering the possibility of seeking allies outside and resigning if disagreements prove too great.

These findings fit with the generally more optimistic view of conflict present in American society generally and among administrative elites. For example, while top German administrators are more likely than their U.S. counterparts to regard social and political conflict as a more typical condition in society than consensus - the figures for the total samples are 58 and 42 percent respectively for the two national elites - the U.S. administrators are more likely to believe that *social conflict brings about progress* in society (3-F). This is true across all levels of the two samples as well as overall. One implication is that, in the end, the high level American bureaucrat's world is a more fractious and conflictual one than the equivalent German bureaucrat's world. A further implication is that the rules of the game by which German bureaucrats play give them a more privileged position than those applicable to the one that U.S. bureaucrats operate

in. The more advantageous position accorded German bureaucrats undoubtedly provides them with fewer incentives to circumvent formalized procedures than is the case for their American counterparts.

IV. OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

Preliminary analysis of data from our comparative elites project shows many overall similarities in the attitudes and beliefs of top level U.S. and German administrators. But the data also indicate some differences tied to our theme of unity and fragmentation in the political systems of the two countries. American administrators are generally more supportive of pluralistic politics and more comfortable with the rough and tumble world of interest group politics which is far more widely dispersed across institutional and organizational levels in the U.S. system than in Germany. German administrators are more apt to like the political aspects of their jobs, while Americans are more likely to believe that the legislature interferes too often with the work of the agencies. We attribute the differences in reaction to politics at least in part to legal provisions specifying an active policy advisory role for German bureaucrats, therefore making them more comfortable about the political role that higher level officials inevitably play. The greater reaction of American administrators to interference by the legislature in part is a function of the more active role in the administrative process actually played by the U.S. Congress in a separation of powers system and, in part, is related to the level of the administrator. Lower level officials were less concerned about an active congressional role because, on the one hand, they are less directly exposed to many of the negative effects of congressional interference than are the political appointees and, on the other, they and the programs they administer are frequently the beneficiaries of congressional intervention (which is often directed against the political appointees).

Finally, German executives were more likely to express a willingness to support their administration (government) even if they disagreed with it, while Americans were more likely to express a willingness to go public with a disagreement or even to resign. Americans, in fact, seem to be more comfortable with conflict, and to see it as beneficial, a fact almost surely related to the greater levels of conflict present in America's fragmented society and polity. From this standpoint, the American administrative culture is likely to add to the fragmented nature of the system, whereas the German administrative culture does not reinforce as much the structural fragmentation of the German policymaking process.

Overall, then, despite their many similarities, the relative unity of the German system and the relative fragmentation of the American system leave their marks on their respective administrative cultures. At the same time, while the administrative cultures are not sharply different, they also influence the policymaking process. To a considerable extent, structural fragmentation in the American system is reinforced by norms that produce little unity or cohesion and which emphasize the articulation of interests and advocacy of positions through whatever means are available for that purpose. And such

means are not lacking in the American case. In Germany, a significant but somewhat more modest extent of structural fragmentation is perhaps not adequately countered by the norms of the administrative elite, but is at least not reinforced by them. Thus, while the problem of bringing coherence from fragmentation is a problem inherent to pluralist democracies, it is more severe in some settings than in others. The German and American settings are, in this regard, more fragmented than most. In that, there is a fair amount of similarity, although the fragmentation in the American case is more extreme and the diffusion of political resources even more widespread. The critical difference in the two cases appears to be in the norms of the actors. The German administrative elites like politics and an ordered pluralism more than they like conflict or procedures that appear to be outside of the rules of the game. Their American counterparts, on the other hand, operate in an environment where the rules of the game are understood to encompass seeking influence by whatever means are at hand in a system that makes those means greatly accessible. The irony in all of this, of course, is that in giving civil servants overt access to policy influence, the German system helps contain the boundaries of politics, whereas keeping them at a poorly defined distance, as in the U.S., is less likely to remove civil servants from the politics of the policymaking process than it is to expand the boundaries of politics.

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