ADMINISTRATION OF FRANCE AND GERMANY: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

STANLEY AIBIEYI
Department Public Administration and Management,
Institute of Public Administration and Extension Services,
University of Benin, Benin City.

Introduction
The field of Public Administration is said to be concerned with the organisation, personnel, practices and procedures essential to effective performance of the civil functions assigned to the executive branch of Government. Edigin and Otoghile have argued said that Public Administration simply means the administrative activities of government or the activities of public officials concerned with administering government business. It is a structure and process that performs the function of executing policies.¹

In 1963 Peter Blau stated that France otherwise known as French Republic, is a country in Western Europe, bounded on the north by the English channels, the Strait of Dover, and the North Sea (which separate it from Great Britain); on the North-east it is bounded by Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany; on the East by Germany, Switzerland, and Italy; on the South-east by the Mediterranean Sea; on the South by Spain; and on the West by the Bay of Biscay (an arm of the Atlantic Ocean).

France is approximately hexagonal in shape, with an extreme length from north to south of about 965 km (600 ml) and a maximum width of about 935 km (580 ml). The Republic includes ten overseas possessions. These include the overseas departments of French Guiana, in South America; Martinique and Guadeloupe, in the Caribbeans; and the Reunion, in the Indian Ocean. Territorial collectivities and dependencies include St Pierre and Miquelon, Mayotte, New Calendonia, French Polynesia, the French Southern and Antarctic Territories, and Wallis and Futuna Islands. The total area of metropolitan France, which also includes the Island of Corsica in the Mediterranean, is 543,965 sq km (210,026 sq ml).²

According to E. Isah, Germany which is described as the Federal Republic of Germany, is a country in central Europe, bordered on the North by the North Sea, Denmark, and the Baltic Sea; on the East by Poland and the Czech Republic; on the South by Austria and Switzerland, and on the West by France,
Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands. For much of German history, Germany was a geographical term for an area occupied by many states. A unified nation for 74 years (1871-1945), it was divided after World War II into the Federal Republic of Germany, FRG; (commonly referred to as West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic, GDR (commonly known as East Germany). On October 3, 1990, East Germany, or the GDR, became part of the FRG, and Germany once again became a unified nation. It has an area of 356,970 sq km (137,827 sq mi). Berlin is Germany’s capital and largest city.

**Theoretical Framework**

Bureaucracy as a focus to the study of comparative administrative system is chosen in favour of comparative study of whole or entire political system for a number of reasons. G.A. Almond and J.S. Coleman have observed that bureaucracy as a specialised political structure offers a better basis for treatment that would make a choice of one or more functional categories. Our objective here is therefore a comparison of public administration across politics, not the comparison of whole political systems. Such a narrowing of interest forces us to choose the most promising basis for comparison for the particular purpose (in this case Public Administration). For the student of public administration, the structure of bureaucracy has some advantages over the function of rule application as postulated by Almond or any functional alternative that has been suggested.

The major objection made by Almond and others to comparative studies (i.e. bureaucracy) is that structures may vary substantially from system, and like structures in different system may have significant functional differences that are overlooked. These cautions do not seem to vitiate the utility of a structural approach in the comparative study of public administration. Apparently, bureaucracy as a specialised structure is common to all modern nations. Any partial comparative analysis of political system presents a dilemma whether the approach is functional or institutional. This may not be serious in Western countries where there is a high degree of correlation across systems, between structures and corresponding functions, but either approach runs into serious difficulties in the developing countries. A structural basis of comparison is feasible, if the institution or institutions being studied actually exist in corresponding form in the political systems under study, and if notice is taken of variations in the functional role of these institutions in different systems.

From another angle, it may be argued that a comparison of bureaucratic structure and behaviour is deficient because it offers only partial coverage of topics traditionally dealt with in books on public administration in particular