

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STATE ADMINISTRATIONS IN FRANCE AND GERMANY

Totok Minto Leksono¹, Metasari Putri²

¹Universitas Kadiri Indonesia, ²Universitas Hang Tuah Indonesia

¹totokminto.shmh@gmail.com, ²metasariputri17@gmail.com

*Correspondence Author: totokminto.shmh@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.71040/irpia.v10i3.297>

ABSTRACT

Article History

Submitted

August, 13 2025

Reviewed

September, 28 2025

Accepted

September, 29 2025

Published

September, 30 2025

This article compares German and French public administration, focusing on differences in state form, government system, political system, bureaucratic structure, as well as resource, moral, and economic factors. Germany itself, with its federal system and strong decentralization, contrasts with France which is a unitary state with dominant centralization. The method used is descriptive qualitative with a literature study approach. The difference in the form of the state and the system of government affects the mechanism of decentralization, public service management, and the relationship between the central and local governments, in this case decentralization, Germany shows a high level of regional autonomy through a clear division of authority between the federal government and the states (Lander). The analysis shows that the federal government structure provides flexibility and efficiency in public

services, while the unitary model is more centralized and coordinative. The results of this study are expected to contribute to understanding the dynamics of government and its influence on state governance, and become a reference for the formulation of contextual and adaptive public policies in Indonesia.

Keywords: *public administration comparison, germany vs. France, federalism and centralization, decentralization mechanisms, public policy formulation*

INTRODUCTION

The state is the supreme authority in a particular field that is legally legal and recognized by its population. The nation is formed with key elements such as clear areas, people as locals, government as sovereignty of power and sovereignty, giving them the power they legally possess. In the context of national government, administration is very important because it reflects the process of cooperation between individuals or groups to achieve a common goal. Administration itself can be understood as a mechanism for regulating, managing, managing, and leading all activities within an organization, including within the framework of state government. State administration refers to the entire governance process, including the various institutions, structures and functions performed by the state apparatus to achieve national goals. In its implementation, countries have different approaches to their management systems. These differences can be influenced by historical factors, culture, political systems, economic conditions, and developing social values. Therefore, comparing country management is important to systematically understand these variations. The comparison allows us to examine how all countries form national structures and regulate central-regional relations, management of HR departments, devices, and the provision of public services to the public.

The comparative study of state management has strategic value for improving the national management system. Countries around the world face similar challenges in an era of globalization characterized by high complexity and dynamics. These include the need for transparency, bureaucratic efficiency, public participation, and accountability in governance. Comparative approaches in public

administration research are becoming a very useful tool for learning, assessing, and adapting best practices from other countries. The goal is not to imitate the system of other countries as a whole; rather, the goal is to take elements that are relevant and appropriate to the social, political, and cultural circumstances that exist in the country. The analysis between Germany and France, two developed countries in Europe, is one of the most interesting comparative studies. Although both are known as robust, professional, and effective public management systems, their methods are structurally different. Germany uses a federal system, which gives states (Länder) broad authority to make government decisions. German public services can be more responsive to local needs thanks to this decentralization. It also strengthens citizen participation in the policy-making process.

In contrast, France has a centralized (unitary) system of government with a central government that holds strong administrative control. However, due to its very strict bureaucratic structure and disciplined public management system, the country can still provide equitable services and maintain administrative order. These differences in methods include institutional choices tailored to each country's cultural, political, and historical backgrounds. This method also provides important lessons about different governance models that can be used to build better public administration.

METHOD

The research method used in this paper is a qualitative approach that involves some kind of literature study. This approach aims to understand and interpret administrative phenomena through the analysis of various written sources. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) in Anggito & Setiawan (2018:7). Qualitative research is conducted in a natural context, and includes a variety of interpretation methods. As explained by Rosyidhana (2014) in Rusmawan (2019:104). Literature studies were chosen because researchers can learn information from relevant official books, journals and official documents.

RESULT

French and German State Forms

1. France

France is a democratic unitary state with a semi-presidential system of government that emphasizes the principles of freedom, equality, and fraternity found in the French Revolution. Since the French Fifth Republic was founded in 1958, the country has been governed by a constitution

which affirms that the legislature, judiciary, and executive have separate powers from each other. As head of state, the president of the Republic has complete control over foreign policy, defense, and the appointment of prime ministers. On the other hand, the prime minister runs the day-to-day government and is responsible for domestic policy. France has a very centralistic government structure, although it is a unitary state. The central government is responsible for key policies such as education, health, economy, and security, as well as other general policies. Local governments, which consist of communes, departments, and administrative regions, have limited administrative functions and are largely governed by central policies. Since the 1980s, decentralization reforms have been undertaken to give local governments more autonomy in technical and operational terms. However, the principle of unitarianism still applies because the central government still has supreme authority. This centralization is considered essential to maintain policy uniformity across the region, strengthen national integration, and allow for coordination and rapid reaction in crisis situations. Therefore, the French government remained centralized, although there was some administrative decentralization. This makes it a model of a modern unitary state that combines political stability with national bureaucratic efficiency.

2. Germany

Since the union of West and East Germany in 1990, Germany has been a federally formed state with the official name of the Federal Republic of Germany. The country implements a parliamentary republic system of government based on the Grundgesetz (Basic Law), which provides a solid basis for implementing strong democratic government. In the federalist system, power is divided between the Bund

(central government) and the sixteen states (Länder). The Länder has its own constitution, parliament, and self-government, and has legislative autonomy in certain areas, such as education, policing, culture, environmental protection, and spatial planning. The system shows recognition of local diversity, history, and needs and encourages citizens to participate in the political process at the local level. In addition to enabling innovative and experimental policies at the state level, the German federation allows for healthy competition among regions, which promotes increased efficiency and public services. This system enhances democracy and creates a more responsive and accountable government by allowing local governments to change policies according to local situations. In addition, this model makes Germany one of the successful examples of the modern federal state that is able to balance national unity with local diversity and become a global reference for democratic governance practices.

Administrative Justice System in Germany and France

Administrative law in Germany and France is a large public legal system that complements each other within the European public law framework, although each has its own unique characteristics. Administrative law is a field of study that is more than just a collection of rules. It is a discipline that has a way of developing and being evaluated internally, both in academic and judicial contexts. This complexity and tension often leads to conflicts or disagreements between national legal systems (such as Germany and France) and the supranational legal requirements of the European Commission. German administrative law is usually considered to be more "form-oriented" in this context, with an emphasis on procedure, formal legality, and the structure of administrative actions. However, French administrative law is more "function-oriented", focusing on the substantial legitimacy of administrative actions in the context of the fulfilment of state duties and public services. This difference in orientation reflects the different approaches to the principles of legality and effectiveness in the implementation of public administration in the two countries.

Profile of the State of France and Germany The State of France

1. Geographical Location

Francais, or République Française, is a Western European country with significant history, culture, and international connections. France is located at the western tip of the Eurasian mainland, between latitudes 42° to 51° N. To the east, the country is bordered by Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. To the south, the country is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, Spain and Andorra. To the northwest, the Bay of Biscay and the English Channel. To the north, the Strait of Dover (Pas de Calais) connects France with Britain directly.

The country is administratively divided into 13 metropolitan areas, 101 departments, and more than 35,000 communes, with their respective mayors in charge of everything. France is a democratic republic with the principle of people's sovereignty: government for the people, by the people, and for the people. In general elections, every citizen has the right to vote. The Constitution of the Fifth Republic, which came into force in 1958, established its legal system. By guaranteeing that the law applies equally to all persons and state institutions, it affirms the principle of the rule of law and strengthens democracy.

2. Human Resources

At the beginning of the 20th century, France was the country with the largest population in Europe, with about one in six people. However, as time went on, the populations of neighboring countries such as Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands surpassed France, mainly due to faster industrialization and higher birth rates. In addition, France's population growth was greatly influenced by several major wars, such as the Revolutionary War, World War I which killed more than 1.5 million people- and World War II which killed about 600,000 people. France's population continues to grow every year despite a slowdown. The population of France reached about 51 million in 1973 and continues to increase with an average growth of about 300 thousand people per year. In 2001, the population reached 60.7 million people and in 2015, it reached 66.4 million people, according to INSEE data. French society comes from a mixture of various ethnic groups formed during the history of international relations. The native Gauls (Celts) blended with Germanic peoples such as the Franks and were also strongly influenced by the ancient Romans. Each region of France has its own unique culture and ethnicity. The Bretons lived in the west, the Aquitanians lived in the southwest, the Alemans lived in the northeast, and the Ligurians

lived in the southeast. This diversity reflects the multicultural heritage that shapes French identity.

3. Economics

France is the fifth largest economic power in the world, with Germany in second place in Europe and fifth worldwide. A high Human Development Index and a comparable standard of living support this achievement. A strong and equitable public health and health care system, although financed by fairly high taxes, is a key supporting factor. This creates a solid foundation for building quality human resources. France is widely known in the production industry for its excellence in various sectors, including railways, automobiles, aerospace, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, luxury goods, telecommunications, and defense. In addition, the French economy depends on tourism, which makes France the country with the most tourists in the world every year. France is Europe's main agricultural producer due to its strategic location between the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, and large mountain ranges such as the Alps and Pyrenees. However, France still faces significant economic and social problems. The unemployment rate is still high, especially among the youth. In addition, poverty, although relatively low, tends to be concentrated in areas with limited infrastructure, poor education, and lack of access to public services. In addition, discrimination in the labor market still needs to be addressed comprehensively.

Comparison of Political and Government Systems in Germany and France German State

The government and political systems of the major European democracies of Germany and France are different. As a federal state, Germany has a parliamentary system with a Chancellor elected by the federal parliament (Bundestag). Liberal democracy is a stable German political system based on democracy, the rule of law, the protection of human rights, and freedom of opinion and association. Powerful independent institutions, such as the Federal Constitutional Court, support the German government structure. It safeguards the constitution and ensures that legislative, executive, and judicial powers are balanced.

The two main legislative bodies in the German political system are the Bundestag and the Bundesrat. These two institutions are very important in the process of making policies and laws. The Bundestag is the federal parliament responsible for the formation of laws, oversight of the government, budgeting, and the election of the Federal Chancellor. The Bundestag also participates in international affairs and has special committees that deal with specific issues. In contrast, the Bundesrat is a legislative body at the federal level that represents the interests of the state (Länder). The state government, not the directly elected people, appoints representatives, and the number of representatives is proportional to the population of each state. The Bundesrat is an important part of the legislative process because they must give approval to any legislation passed, and they can also make proposals or make revisions to the Bundestag's draft laws.

The Bundestag and the Bundesrat work together when making political decisions to represent the interests of the German people and their state. Therefore, the German political system affects many aspects of human life, such as the economy, security, education, and others. Here is an explanation for each component:

1. Economics

Germany's political system, consisting of a federal and parliamentary system, provides a solid foundation for political stability and legal certainty. These two components are critical to creating an environment that supports inclusive and sustainable economic growth. In the federal system, the central government and the 16 states (Länder) share power equally. Each of the Länders has the authority to create and implement its own economic policies according to its own potential, needs and characteristics. This method allows for the diversification of economic development approaches, which will increase economic resilience in different regions and reduce inequality between regions. At the national level, economic policy-making is done democratically through cross-party parliamentary agreements, resulting in consistent and sustainable long-term planning. This is crucial for fostering investor confidence, improving export performance, and driving industry innovation and growth. In addition, Germany adopted a market social economic system, or market social economy. It is a unique model that combines free market mechanisms

with state interventions to provide social protections, such as a complete social security system, protection of labor rights, and broad access to public services. This system prioritizes not only economic growth but also the principles of solidarity, social balance, and sustainability. By combining economic efficiency and social justice, Germany has built a society with high levels of welfare, a strong labor market structure, and an inclusive social protection system. This makes Germany one of the most developed and stable countries in terms of economy and welfare in the world.

2. Security

In the German federal system, security responsibilities are divided between the central and state governments (Länder). This results in a flexible and structured system that adapts to local situations. Each state has the authority to oversee local police and security agencies. This gives them the ability to create security policies and strategies tailored to the social, cultural, and geographic needs of the area. This allows for creativity and productivity in dealing with domestic security issues in a more contextual and rapid manner. In contrast, central government agencies such as the Bundeskriminalamt (BKA) are responsible for handling cross-border crimes such as terrorism, cybercrime, and organized crime. This federal agency ensures uniform standards of procedure in the face of large-scale threats and serves as a communication hub between state and international law enforcement agencies. Germany's security system is able to maintain stability and public order without sacrificing decentralization, the basis of its federal system. This can be achieved through good cooperation between the central and regional governments. By working together, we can strike a balance between effective law enforcement and the protection of individual rights, and strengthen democratic legitimacy in national security management.

3. Education

Each German state (Länder) has full authority to manage its own education system. This includes creating a curriculum, evaluation system, academic calendar, and school policies. This led to differences between regions, but this method of decentralization allowed states to tailor their education systems to their own social, cultural, and economic needs. The system is considered to be successful in reflecting the diversity of German society and enabling educational innovation based on regional contexts, despite the differences. The dual system model, which is an important component of the German education system, combines theoretical learning in schools with practical training in the world of work, especially through cooperation with companies. These systems have proven to be successful in producing skilled and ready-to-use workforces, especially in industry, engineering, and manufacturing. This is also one of the reasons why the unemployment rate among young Germans is low.

4. Health

In Germany, everyone has access to universal healthcare. The system is managed in a decentralized manner, with more tasks assigned to states and various non-governmental agencies. Compulsory health insurance, or Gesetzliche Krankenversicherung (GKV), is the main source of costs of the German healthcare system. Almost all Germans have this insurance. The contributions are deducted directly from the worker's income, which is divided between the employer and the employee. Only the central government establishes laws and general policies to regulate this system. This includes setting basic standards and service regulations. However, various public institutions and non-governmental organizations carry out their technical and operational operations, such as managing clinics, hospitals, and other healthcare providers. This method of decentralization makes the German health system more adaptive to local needs, while still following the national standards set by the central government.

France

The system of unitary state government embraced by France uses a semi-presidential framework, which divides executive power between the president and the prime minister. The French president, who is directly elected by the people through elections for a five-year term, has an important role in the national political structure. Especially in terms of foreign policy, defense, and other strategic affairs, it has broad powers. Appointing a prime minister is one of the president's main powers. The prime minister is then responsible for the implementation of domestic policies and the day-to-day administration of the

government. Although there is a theoretical division of power between the president and the prime minister, the president is often the most influential person in determining the strategic course of government, especially when his political party controls parliament. In a unitary state system, the central government holds a lot of power. Local governments such as administrative areas, departments, and communes (municipalities) have very limited policies and funds. Through regulation, administrative oversight, and control over local public finances, the central government has full control over the regions. Central and regional governments deal with each other within a strong hierarchical framework, where the regions act as implementers of national policies. Thus, regional governance is highly dependent on central directives and policies. It has a profound impact on people's lives because any changes in national policies are directly felt by communities across the region, who do not have much flexibility to adapt to local situations. Although since the 1980s there have been efforts to disseminate government, especially to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of local bureaucracy, the core of power remains in Paris as the center of government. National policy uniformity and strong integration between regions are made possible by this system, but it also limits local policy innovation and grassroots community participation in decision-making. As a result, France's political system influences many aspects of its people's lives, from education, health, the economy, to public services, through centralized policies that apply throughout the country:

1. Economics

Due to the nature of France's unitary state and its semi-presidential system of government, the central government is responsible for the country's economic policies. This structure allows the president of the Republic to work closely with the prime minister and cabinet of ministers to create and implement short-term and long-term economic policies. This centralization of power allows the central government to quickly address inflation, global financial crises, or fluctuations in international markets. The state budget, reform of the tax system, and the regulation and distribution of public investment are carried out entirely by the central government. This method is used by France to ensure that policies are applied consistently across the country's regions, preventing chaos or inequality of implementation due to regulatory differences between regions. Although the degree of local economic autonomy is limited by this system when compared to federal states such as Germany, France's centralized decision-making model has proven to help maintain macroeconomic stability and unify national development priorities. This model also minimizes the administrative and bureaucratic barriers that often arise in the federal system, thereby strengthening the state's ability to carry out large-scale economic programs across the board

2. Security

France has a highly centralized security system in which the central government holds full authority over the military, the national police (Police Nationale), and the intelligence agencies. As head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, the president has strategic power to determine the country's defense and security policies, including the authority to deploy troops abroad or respond to major threats to the country. This centralization allows for national coordination and rapid response to national and international security issues. However, centralized structures also pose problems, especially in dealing with local security issues such as radicalization, social unrest, or the threat of terrorism, which often require immediate attention and action at the regional level. In situations like this, relying on central decisions can make field coordination more difficult. This can also lead to effective cooperation with local governments or local authorities who better understand local dynamics.

3. Education

The French government has a very centralized education system. The Ministry of National Education has full control over various aspects of education policies, curriculum, and exams, as well as the regulation of education levels from elementary to tertiary levels. This centralization allows for a consistent quality of education throughout France, both in urban and rural areas. This method aims to reduce inequality between regions and ensure that everyone, regardless of socio-economic background or geographical location, has equal access to high-quality education. This consistent system is intended by the

French government to build a fair education system, where every student has an equal opportunity to reach his or her potential. This method also works as a basis for building broader social mobility, strengthening social cohesion, and preparing young people to face competitive challenges around the world. This highly centralized system, however, is sometimes criticized for being deemed inadequate to local needs or a more contextual pedagogical approach. Nevertheless, the French education system is still considered one of the important tools of the state to ensure social justice and the progress of society.

1. Health

Among countries with a welfare state model, the French health system is often considered the most comprehensive, effective, and high-performing. The central government has primary responsibility in terms of strategic planning, strict regulation, and funding of the health system to ensure the quality and equality of services across the region. This method ensures that every citizen, regardless of location, gets medical services that meet national standards. In the provision of healthcare services, close collaboration between the public and private sectors is the main strength of this system. They work closely with independent practice physicians, health insurance agencies, and private and public hospitals to build systems that are inclusive, efficient, and responsive to people's needs. The main system is the universal health insurance scheme (Sécurité Sociale), which requires all citizens to be registered and contribute, but also provides comprehensive protection without discriminating against people based on their social, economic, or occupational status. With this system, France demonstrated its commitment to social justice, national solidarity, and the recognition of everyone's right to health services. This model improves social cohesion by providing fair and sustainable health protection.

DISCUSSION

From the results that have been explained above, there are similarities and differences between France and Germany, which are as follows:

No.	Aspects Compared	France	Germany	Similarities of the French State and the German State	Differences between France and Germany	Advantages and Disadvantages of the French State	Advantages and Disadvantages of the German State
1.	System of Government	Republic of Semi - Presidential. This means that executive power is divided between the president and the prime minister.	Republic of the Federal	Republic Shaped	Government Leaders. The state of France is divided between the President and the Prime Minister. Meanwhile, the German state is divided between the President and the Chancellor	Advantages: Weaknesses : prone to internal executive conflicts	Advantages: more institutionally stable and strong in decentralization Weakness: slow in policy due to coalition system.
2.	Regional Autonomy	Centralized.	Decentralization (Federalism)	The Existence of a Regional Autonomy System	The difference is in terms of decision-making. Country	Advantages: Commonality of national policies: Entire regions	Advantages: The policy is more in line with local needs. Regions can

			i		France all important decisions are determined by the central government, while the German State grants rights and broad authority to the regions to regulate the affair of their own states.	countries can follow the standards and same rules . Weaknesses: Potential development inequality: The central government can focus more on certain areas, ignoring other areas.	Setting policies based on the social, economic, and cultural characteristics of each and citizens can be more indetail governat Disadvantages: The decision-making process takes longer, which requires time-consuming coordination between the central and regional governments .
3.	Regional Structure	The administrative area is centrally regulated (unitar is). This means that the central government has great control over local government.	The state (Länder) has broad authority. This means that each State (Länder) has its own constitution, parliament, and self-government, as well as legislative authority in a number of areas.	Has a division of administrative areas	The level of independence of the administrative area. This is because France emphasizes central control, while Germany gives full autonomy to states.	Advantages: Decision-making is faster and more efficient because the central government can directly regulate without having to negotiate with the regions. Weaknesses: Low local participation because each region has limited space to innovate or formulate policies according to its characteristics.	Advantages: Policy innovation is more open: Each state can provide creative and solution policy ideas. Weakness: Risk of gap between regions, namely the State The part that The richer tend to grow faster , while the weak are left behind.

CONCLUSION

Although Germany and France are developed countries with strong democracies in Europe, comparisons between their administrative systems show that their approaches to the system of government and public administration are very different. This is because of the history, political culture, and structure of each country. Because Germany uses a federal and parliamentary system, the state (Länder) has many powers to regulate various areas, such as education, health, and security. The decentralization generated by this system allows for policy changes that are more in line with local needs, increases citizen participation in politics, and encourages administrative innovation at the regional level. Institutions such as the Bundestag and Bundesrat, as well as legal systems that uphold constitutional supremacy, strengthen the balance between central and local governments. In contrast, France uses a unitary state system with a highly centralised semi-presidential government. The President has the most executive authority, especially in terms of foreign and defense relations. Although the administration has been distributed, the central government is still taking important decisions. However, this method ensures efficient coordination, consistency of national policies, and equitable distribution of public service standards, including in the fields of education and health. France and Germany have solid universal health insurance systems, but Germany relies more on a decentralized system with many non-governmental institutions, which makes it more centralized but inclusive. When it comes to education, Germany sets uniform national standards, while France provides full flexibility for each state. This comparison shows that no system is truly perfect; Each system has its own strengths and weaknesses. Other countries can learn from Germany's locally participatory and responsive model and from the efficiency and equitable distribution of France's centralistic system. Comparative studies like this are essential to create policies that are contextual, flexible, and oriented towards improving public services at the national and local levels.

DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the discussion on the comparison of public administration between Germany and France propose that, in the development of public administration practices in other countries, especially those that are undergoing bureaucratic reforms, it is necessary to take into account the characteristics of the governance structure adopted. Countries with a federal system can emulate Germany in terms of flexibility and empowerment of local governments to improve the efficiency of public services. In contrast, countries with unitary systems can emulate France in terms of national policy consistency and strong administrative control to maintain government stability. To prevent overlapping authority and policy, the recommendations also encourage strengthening coordination between the central and regional governments across the federal and unitary systems.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Irma, A., Damanik, M., & Fadilah, T. Y. (2023). Education Systems in European countries (UK, France, Germany and the Netherlands). *RAZIQ: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 2(2), 102-109.
- Dahlan, A. I. B., Anjani, C. E., Andalas, F. S., Rafi, N. A., & Anggraeni, S. D. (2024). Analyzing the Comparison of Public Administration in Germany and France. *ULIL ALBAB: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin*, 3(8), 347-362.
- Faturohman, F., & Rahmawan, D. (2024). Analisis Sistem Perbandingan Kekuasaan Kehakiman Antara Negara Indonesia Dengan Negara Prancis. *Uniku Law Review*, 2(1), 25-34.
- Nazara, A. M. (2023). Comparison of the French-Indonesian Government System in The Reign of Jokowi and Emmanuel Macron. *Publicio: Jurnal Ilmiah Politik, Kebijakan dan Sosial*, 5(1), 1-13.
- Brehm, W. (2009). Sistem Pemerintahan Dan Pemilihan Umum Di Jerman. *Konstitusi Jurnal*, 2(1), 125.

Muhtadi, A. (2008). *Studi komparatif sistem pendidikan di Jerman dan Korea Selatan*. Yogyakarta State University.

<https://repository.uir.ac.id/5222/6/BAB%20II.pdf>

<https://repository.umi.ac.id/bitstream/handle/123456789/31302/F.%20BAB%20II.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y>

<https://dspace.uin.ac.id/bitstream/handle/123456789/12377/7.%2005%201%20bab%201.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y>

https://repository.upi.edu/51301/4/S_PGSD_1606399_Chapter3.pdf

<https://download.garuda.kemdikbud.go.id/article.php?article=714209&val=7386&title=Sistem%20Desentralisasi%20di%20Republik%20Federasi%20Jerman>

<https://repository.umi.ac.id/bitstream/handle/123456789/7014/FILE%20%20F.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y>