Review: Public Opinion in Semisovereign Germany (The HICOGS Surveys, 1949-1955)

Houzvicka, Vaclav

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rise to the challenge of energy and the environment, find a way to universal health insurance, and devise a New Deal for the young, including a new national service. These are worthy causes – but enough of a platform for liberal enthusiasm in a politically cynical population?

The Bush administration has sought uncontrolled power, both in domestic politics by asserting executive privilege, and in international politics by unilateralism. Both failed and rendered weak a state that should have been strong. That has been traumatic. Starr is probably right to advise the liberals to exploit the failure of the neo-conservative experiment and probably right that they have no chance to be put back in power again if they cannot promise a new era of American glory and respect. Therefore, he proposes to sell the liberal project by speaking loudly about power and softly about equality. Accept the principle of rule by law and constitutional constraints, he says, and America will again be strong. But on poverty, for example, he is unable to say that it should be eradicated in the world's richest country, only that it should be reduced.

There probably is no electoral majority to be found in America on a programme that makes social justice the big issue. What is realistic is to smuggle in a bit of justice on the coattails of an ideology of power. If so, let us welcome that liberal project. No liberal who has encountered present American neo-conservatism can but welcome any strategy that may lead to its fall from grace. A pure strategy of social justice would be a prettier sight, but so what, if it cannot be effective?

But it is still a sad state of affairs in American culture that even in the wake of an administration that has brought disgrace on the nation and succeeded only in further enriching the already very rich, there is no space for a serious reform movement around the value of social justice. European liberals today do not have much to learn from their American brethren. The political battle-lines locate differently on the two sides of the Atlantic. In Europe it's about controlling the centre ground, in America about defeating the far right.

Stein Ringen

Anna J. Merritt – Richard L. Merritt (eds.): *Public Opinion in Semisovereign Germany (The HICOGS Surveys, 1949–1955)*
Urbana, Chicago, London 1980: University of Illinois, 273 pp.

This book presents a representative and summarised selection of final reports from public opinion research that was conducted in semi-occupied semi-sovereign Germany between 1949 and 1955. The book's editors, Richard L. Merritt (professor of political science) and Anna J. Merritt (editor and staff associate) have both long worked at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign and have intensively studied the development of Germany since 1945. Other important publications by them include *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany* and *Politics, Economics and Society in the Two Germanies, 1945–1975.*

The role of the occupying administrations (US, UK, France, USSR) in each of the individual occupied zones established immediately after German territory was occupied was of key significance for the future course of development of post-war Germany. The six years of semi-sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) were marked by economic growth and political stability under Konrad Adenauer as the first Federal Chancellor. While in 1949 the economy lay in ruins, by 1955 full employment had been achieved, along with a relatively prosperous living standard. The FRG joined France, Italy, and the Benelux countries in the early stages of the processes of Western European economic integra-

tion, and within the framework of NATO the country's rearmament was permitted. The country's functioning democratic system and the decision to pay reparations to the state of Israel for the crimes committed against Jews in Nazi Germany mitigated fears about the future development of Germany.

While the historical features of the period of partial sovereignty of the FRG are known, less is known about the transformation of the social climate in the Western occupation zones. (See, for example, Karl W. Deutsch and Lewis J. Edinger, *Germany Rejoins the Powers: Mass Opinion, Interest Groups, and Elites in Contemporary German Foreign Policy*, Stanford University Press, 1959). The Allied occupying administrations, which were to lay the foundations of a new, democratic Germany, needed to know the answers to some pressing questions: to what extent had German society rejected Nazism; to what extent did the FRG government and the democratic system enjoy political legitimacy; what did people think about the country's rearmament; how did they view the country's economic cooperation with France and other Western European countries (formerly Germany's enemies); how did they perceive the threat from the Soviet Union; how significant were the plans for the reunification of Germany, and so on. And no less important, it was also necessary to objectively evaluate the mood of the population towards the Allied occupying administrations.

Politicians, especially those from the conservative CDU (Christian Democratic Union), quickly grasped the benefit of public opinion polls. Consequently, public opinion polling agencies experienced an unprecedented boom at the start of the 1950s; for example, EMNID an agency from Bielefeld and especially *Institut für Demoskopie* (under the direction of Elizabeth Noelle and E. P. Neumann). Even before fighting ended, a group of social psychologists and sociologists had been set up

in Germany under the Psychological Warfare Division of the US Army for the purpose of conducting the first polls, which focused on the potential for possible resistance and the expectations connected with permanent military occupation, attitudes toward Nazism, and so on. In October 1945 this research was institutionalised with the founding of the Opinion Survey Section of the Information Control Division of the Office of Military Government (OMGUS), which conducted seventy-two public opinion polls in the American occupation zone.

In September 1949 the military occupation formally ended and OMGUS was replaced by the US High Commission for Germany (HICOG), and in its Public Affairs division the Reactions Analysis Staff (RAS) continued the work on sociological research. Research operations were directed by Dr. Leo P. Crespi. At the end of 1950 the sample of respondents was extended to take in the entire area of the FRG and the RAS began to work closely on data collection with a newly established agency, *Deutsches Institut für Volksumfragen* (DIVO). Over the course of its five-and-a-half year existence the HICOG Reactions Analysis Staff carried out more than one hundred public opinion polls in West Germany. These polls were mainly of two types. The first type was the regular monthly polls, requiring the field collection of data over a duration of three weeks and based on interviews with approximately three thousand adult respondents from the area previously encompassed within the American occupation zone, along with 500 inhabitants in West Berlin, and 300 respondents in the American-controlled enclave of Bremen in the former British zone. A specific feature was the use of the 'split-sample' method, wherein the sample was divided into two halves, each of which was presented with a slightly different questionnaire.

The second type was 'flash' polls, the aim of which, using a relatively small sample of 640 respondents, was to ob-

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tain a quick idea of the attitudes of people in large towns throughout the entire FRG, and not just in the American zone. In March 1951 "flash" polls were replaced with an 'intermediate' sample of 800 West Germans nationwide, based on stratified probability sampling. Some polls also included citizens of the GDR visiting or having fled to West Berlin. The acquired data were then analysed and published in periodicals.

The book under review is based on the authors' study of 237 survey reports published between September 1949 and May 1955. Basic data are presented for each report: the report number and the date of its preparation, the title or sub-title of the poll, the characteristics of the sample, and the data of data collection. The thematic range of poll topics is broad, covering the opinions of West Germans on adult education, Western European unification, or the agricultural exhibitions organised by the United States Information Service (USIS). The authors selected and sorted the reports according to the seriousness of the topics and they endeavoured to structure the work by dividing it into two basic thematic areas. The first includes polls on attitudes towards various aspects of the activities of HICOG and relates mainly to West Germany's transition in the aftermath of Nazi dominance. The second encompasses topics focusing on the FRG's foreign policy and opinions on East Germans and the efficiency of the US information programme.

From the perspective of this Czech reviewer, it is interesting to observe how the situation of the Cold War and the rapid polarisation of West and East that emerged out of the ruins of the anti-Hitler coalition facilitated a rapid rapprochement of former adversaries. This applied not just to the relationship between Germany and the United States but also to that between the Germans and the populations of Western Europe. The deeply felt experience of a common threat within a new situation resulted in the relatively rapid internalisation of attitudes of 'reconciliation'.

The purpose of the post-war Allied occupation of Germany was to prevent the country from ever becoming a threat to its European neighbours again in the future. The primary tool was the 're-education' of Germans towards democracy. More detailed analyses from the start of the 1950s indicated that only one-third of respondents rejected National Socialism outright: 'In eight nationwide surveys conducted from May 1951 to December 1952, an average of 41 per cent saw more good than evil in Nazi ideas, and 36 per cent more evil than good. Only a tiny minority (4%) thought that all Germans bore a certain guilt for Germany's actions during the Third Reich although many more (21%) felt some responsibility for rectifying these wrongs.' (p. 7) The analyses also revealed repeatedly that the population as a whole was divided in their assessment of basic issues: what some regarded as the maintenance of law and order, others saw as the absence of freedom.

The treatment of the Jews was an especially delicate topic in post-war Germany. Respondents repeatedly assessed the persecution of Jews and other minorities among the bad practices of National Socialism. Only 5% saw a sense in collective guilt, while '59 per cent saw no need for guilt or responsibility except for those who really committed something'. One-fifth (21%) even argued that 'the Jews themselves were partly responsible for that happened to them during the Third Reich' (p. 9).

However, at the same time, the large majority of respondents strongly supported the drafting of legislation to protect Jews living in West Germany, even though many Germans (27%) believed that it would probably be better for those Jews still in Germany to leave the country. Conversely, two out of three West German citizens asked "urged the Bundestag to reject an agreement of August 1952 according

to which the Federal Republic was to pay 715 million US dollars to Israel as restitution for what had happened to Jews during the Third Reich' (p. 9).

While West Germans expressed deep regret over the crimes committed, they saw very little use in the idea of personal or collective responsibility for those crimes. With regard to the trials with war criminals, at the start of 1950 polls recorded three basic trends in German public opinion. The first trend expressed disappointment in the justice practised by the occupying powers during the course of the Nuremberg and other trials. The number of people that supported the claim that the trials were unfair rose from 6% to 30% within the month of October 1946 alone. The second trend was the view that the time had come to end the war crime trials, and by the middle of 1952 only 59% of respondents agreed with the approach the Western powers were taking. The third trend in opinions expressed a growing feeling that the very purpose of the original trials was just a feeble attempt at enforcing the law. 'Respondents saw political motives driving the hands of the judges. Bolstering this perception was resentment that commando raiders who killed the German prisoners, pilots who had bombed Dresden and Hiroshima, and those who had committed the Katyn Forest massacres were never prosecuted.' (p. 11) When at the start of 1950 the allies lightened some of the sentences, the majority of Germans saw it as pure opportunism, designed to obtain their support for the fight against the Soviet Union.

Opinions on the process of *denazification* evolved in a manner similar to that of the views on the war crime trials. At the start of the 1950s the whole idea acquired a negative reputation. Two out of three respondents believed that the former members of the Nazi party should have the same opportunities in business and politics as other Germans. This did not means that Germans longed for the return of

former Nazis to positions of power, but just that they did not see them as a threat to the state's democratic development.

An important factor in the viability of the new democracy was the role of political parties in the political system of the FRG. The left of the political spectrum was represented by the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the right by a bloc of Christian democratic parties (CDU/CSU). The year 1953 marked a turning point when the SPD began to lose its position and public opinion inclined towards the conservative right. In 1949 the right won 35% of the mandates but in 1957 it managed to win 270 seats in the Bundestag. Support for the government of Chancellor Adenauer long hovered around 70%, and he as a figure, and his international prestige, significantly contributed to these high ratings.

A decisive point in the construction of the FRG's relationships to countries in Western Europe and the United States was the escalating tensions in international relations, especially following the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. Americans especially pressed for the inclusion of the FRG in the defence system of the West. 'Given these dramatic shifts in Allied policy, the analysis of public opinion data is especially relevant to an understanding of postwar West German society.' (p. 19)

West German society was also divided over the question of its rearmament and the creation of its own army. In the wake of the brutal wartime experiences, an anti-militaristic spirit dominated the immediate post-war period. However, that situation changed quickly: 'A series of thirteen surveys conducted by the *Institut für Demoskopie* from November 1950 to February 1955 yielded an average of 41 per cent who favored an independent German army and 40 per cent who opposed it.' (p. 46) Support for the FRG's membership in NATO peaked in 1950, when the Korean War broke out. A year later it fell to 52%. When the Paris Agreements came into effect in

May 1955 the Federal Republic of Germany was set on the path to re-armament: 'Bolstered by the explicit blessing of the Western occupying powers and the support of its own population. What had been unthinkable ten years earlier was now accomplished fact.' (p. 23)

In the current context of the domestic debate within Germany over the post-war integration of millions of displaced people, mostly ethnic Germans transferred from Eastern and Central Europe, it is interesting to note a poll that was conducted in August 1951 in the refugee camps in West Germany. The findings provide an idea of what those people had been through: 'A sense of rejection by the outside world was extensive. As many as 42 per cent had never been helped by any relief or welfare group, and some never even heard of such organisations.' (p. 166) These incoming Germans were for the most part met with a cool reception. They were regarded as a burden, adding to the already complicated situation in a country devastated by war. 'A large number of the respondents in this survey did not seem to want to be assimilated into German life. As many as 64 per cent claimed to have no friends among native Germans. 48 per cent felt that employers preferred to hire natives.' (p. 166) It is no surprise that in this situation many longed to return to their former homes, however much under the given circumstances that was impossible: 'A solid majority (72%) said they would like to return to their homeland. Most felt that the Eastern nations and their communist governments, as well as the Great Powers, were responsible for their expulsion.' (p. 167)

The American reconciliation strategy after 1949, when it was transferred to the authority of the bodies of the FRG, focused mainly on an information policy (the use of radio stations like RIAS Berlin, which 99% of respondents were listening to in 1949, and Voice of America, and the magazine publications *Amerikanische Rundschau, Der Monat, Heute, Neue Auslese,* etc.). Another important component in the US information programme was the 'American Houses' information centres (which had a large library and numerous films and offered professional lectures), which were attended primarily by people with a university-level education (34%). Despite the costs the entire programme was evaluated as very successful, and it continued long after the occupying role of the United States had finished. It significantly contributed to shaping the ideas of the social elites who then influenced the wider social strata.

The reviewed book represents a valuable contribution to the understanding of the development of society in post-war West Germany through authentic contemporary reflections mediated in sociological form by public opinion polls. It is also evident from the content of the polls that among the Allies it was mainly the Unites States that strove to establish a democratic state and an independent Federal Republic of Germany.

Václav Houžvička

Sandrine Cazes – Alena Nešporová:
Flexicurity: A Relevant Approach in Central and Eastern Europe
Geneva 2003: International Labour Office, XIV and 262 pp.

For several years and across developed Europe, flexicurity has been considered one of the main tools for coping with the challenges of globalisation. While globalisation is considered to be beneficial for growth and employment, it also requires adequate responses from the labour market and social protection systems. Following the renewed EU Lisbon strategy, more and better jobs should be created through flexibility and security. A group of seven top experts set up by the European Commission, in its thorough report 'on pathways towards im-