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# 1

## Introduction: German Federalism in Historical Perspective

*Maiken Umbach*

Federalism is a thorny political issue. On the European level, it refers to what is perhaps the most important legacy of late twentieth-century politics: the gradual dissolution of national sovereignty. Instead, political and economic decision-making increasingly takes place on a supra-national level – in pan-European political institutions and courtrooms – as well as on a sub-national level – in the regions. This process has polarized public opinion in Europe. From the time of Adenauer to Schröder, Germany has played a key role in promoting progress towards a federal Europe. Britain, despite recent moves towards devolution for Ireland, Scotland and Wales, remains sceptical about the erosion of national sovereignty, and of Germany's role in promoting it.

The theoretical literature on European federalism is extensive.<sup>1</sup> Yet it has done little to bridge political divides. The language of academic political science is often arcane and abstract. Even when political scientists have tried to address a wider public, however, their influence has remained limited. European federalism is more than an administrative and 'technical' problem that can be solved by experts – it is eminently political. Historical experience, national memory and ideology shape its meaning, and the word federalism means different things in different cultures. In Britain, federalism is often taken as a synonym for the threat of a bureaucratic European super-state. In Germany, the same term is used to describe an ideal of diversity within unity, emphasizing the element of devolution. It seems that the search for political compromises is futile if this difference of perception is not addressed. An 'objective', scientific definition of federalism cannot solve the problem. On the contrary, if a theoretical definition is superimposed upon people's political instincts, 'federalism', promoted to unite Europeans, will continue to divide them.

How did German ‘federalism’ come to acquire such different connotations from those of the English term? To answer this question, scholars from a wide range of academic disciplines collaborated in a seminar series and conference that took place in 2000 at the University of Manchester. This book presents their findings. The approach we adopt is historical. German *Föderalismus* is not, and never has been, an abstract concept. It has no single founding document and no universal definition. Its meaning evolved gradually, over many centuries.<sup>2</sup> And while this process of evolution is by no means complete, history itself plays a central role in defining federalism in German minds. Indeed, federalism has become, for many, the central embodiment of the country’s history, or at least of its positive (that is, anti-totalitarian) aspects. In the individual chapters of this volume, experts on the various epochs of modern German history examine the changing meaning and reality of German federalism over many centuries. Their contributions are arranged in chronological order, but they do not ‘narrate’ German history. Rather, we have used different approaches – cultural, political, linguistic, constitutional – to examine the concept of German federalism at distinct phases of its evolution.

The investigation begins in the eighteenth century. It was then that federalism was first used in the modern, political sense. America led the way. The War of Independence provided the historical backdrop for the publication of the famous ‘Federalist Papers’ of 1788. America became a federal experiment that excited Europeans as well: for the first time, it seemed, the federal theories of Montesquieu, Rousseau and other leading lights of the Enlightenment were translated into political reality. In the process, the term federalism assumed much more specific connotations. It was no longer one branch of political theory: it became a political movement which faced one important political opposition – and one only. A unitary state was not an option for the diverse set of former colonies. What American politicians disagreed about was merely the degree of independence that individual states should retain. The label ‘Federalist’ was assumed by those who advocated a relatively high degree of political coherence. The state they envisaged was far removed from the centralizing ambitions of European absolutism. Indeed, Montesquieu’s and Rousseau’s federalism which had inspired the American Federalists was conceived as a liberal alternative to absolutist centralization. But the American opponents of the Federalists were not defenders of absolutism: conversely, they were those who advocated an even smaller degree of centralization, at best a loose confederation of states, with no supremacy of federal law, and

the right of secession for all member states. In the political controversy that ensued, therefore, the label 'federalism' gradually became synonymous with promoting greater integration of the American states, and the original opposition between federalism and centralism faded into oblivion.<sup>3</sup> A 'federal' institution or law was one that asserted a unitary authority over the laws and customs of individual states. The civil war, in which many of the fears which Anti-Federalists voiced in the 1770s came true, seemed to confirm the equation between 'federalism' and the forceful imposition of common policies and standards upon unruly regions. This plot has remained largely unchanged. The same theme features in countless popular US movies of recent years, where FBI agents clash with the spirit of self-reliance and anti-Washington sentiment of their counterparts in remote southern or western states. In popular culture, Waco is emblematic of the authoritarian image of 'federal' America.

In Germany, the development of federalism as a political category started at about the same time – but soon took a different turn. Here, too, the ideas of Montesquieu and Rousseau formed the starting point.<sup>4</sup> And as in America, they were quickly absorbed into a political discourse that was essentially practical. Uninterested in pure speculations about an ideal state, German political and legal writers of the eighteenth century such as Johann Stephan Pütter were concerned to address the pressing problems of the day. The polycentric structure of the Holy Roman Empire, which had shaped German politics for many centuries, provided the background. The War of the Bavarian Succession brought home to observers that this imperial constitution was threatened by the ambitions of 'absolutist' rulers, most notably those of Prussia and Austria. Whaley's chapter in this volume examines the response of the intellectuals of the day. It widens the focus from the specialized legal debate to the broader intellectual consensus that emerged from it, showing how federalism became an – albeit implicit – part of German national consciousness. Whaley takes issue with two myths of German historiography. One is the nationalist myth. For the entire nineteenth and for much of the twentieth centuries, German historians condemned the Holy Roman Empire as weak: its destiny was to be quashed by the modern forces of nationalism, embodied by the state of Prussia. Whaley argues that the decentralized structure of the Old Reich was by no means dysfunctional; in fact, it was highly effective in fulfilling its purposes – above all, the maintenance of peace and the rule of law in the German lands. Political centralization, however, was not its purpose, and the absence of centralizing moves thus not a

'failure'. Instead, the Old Reich was in many ways a federal state – but it was not (yet) defined as such. Whaley is sceptical of the current fashion for portraying the medieval or early modern Reich as a model for EU government. This is the second, contemporary myth he sets out to dismantle.<sup>5</sup> The nature of politics has undergone such a profound transformation since the early modern period that formal constitutional comparisons with the present-day situation are nonsensical. If the Reich was not a model for the twentieth century, however, it left an important intellectual legacy behind. Responding to eighteenth-century territorial absolutism, German intellectuals and political commentators began to redefine imperial devolution in an enlightened vocabulary. This influenced German politics for decades to come, by providing a repository of precedents for smaller German states to invoke when they defended their autonomy vis-à-vis central governments.

None of these arguments became obsolete with the so-called unification of Germany in 1871. The nation state that Bismarck created was little more than a federation of largely sovereign individual states, and even under Wilhelm II, Prussia's dominance in the field of high politics did little to eradicate individual-state consciousness and confidence. The third chapter turns to the theme of continuity, by examining a set of arguments that emerged in the 'federal' debate in Germany in the late eighteenth century, and then tracing the ways in which these arguments were revived and recycled by federalists of the post-unification era. German historians have rarely commented on such continuities. Their reluctance is understandable. A healthy mistrust of teleology belongs in every history book. There was no causal chain of events that links the constitution of the Old Reich with contemporary German federalism. Instead, there were many turning points where German history could have turned in different directions – and indeed several points where it did precisely that, as the later chapters of this volume which deal with the anti-federal nature of the Nazi state and the GDR show.

If contingency is writ large, was there any sense in which German federalism had a *longue durée*? Participants of the Manchester conference converged on the view that to understand German federalism, we need to move beyond the conceptual opposition between contingency and historical determinism. German federalism, we suggest, did produce a continuity of a kind. This is to be found not in an unbroken chain of events, much less in causal links between these events, but in the *lieux de mémoire*, the focal points of national memory, that constitute German political culture. Not all German regimes were federal. But

federalism never disappeared from the German political imagination. There was little 'federal' resistance to the centralizing impulses of totalitarian governments. Federalism did, however, play an important role in reconstructing democracy after the end of totalitarian regimes. The late 1940s as well as the early 1990s witnessed a truly remarkable process. Rather than being seen as a hostile plot to subdivide the nation, the 'foreign' introduction of federalism soon acquired the status of an 'authentic' expression of German identities – even when, especially after 1945, few of the new *Länder* directly corresponded to the former states of the Old Reich or the Bismarckian Empire. To be sure, federalism was adopted under considerable pressure from the Western Allies after the Second World War. This provoked some suspicions amongst ordinary Germans, and even more so from some prominent SPD and KPD politicians. Yet given the circumstances, it is not the existence of such opposition, but its relative ineffectiveness and fleetingness which requires explanation. The German states' separate histories were not a direct cause of the successful reinvention of German federalism. But federalism's prominent place in German national memory did facilitate the absorption of what was in fact a new form of federalism into the political culture of the day. Federalism should thus be understood as a continuous sub-current of German history, often inactive and ineffectual, but ready to be revived whenever dramatic political transformations needed to be assimilated.

Federalism's relative vagueness and shifting meaning was an important ingredient in this success story. Federalism can be associated with 'authentic national identity', because both concepts are flexible enough to change with the times. Moreover, federalism, in reconciling a regional and a national sense of belonging in a non-hierarchical order, is predicated on the assumption of a plurality of identities, and thus defies any attempt to equate it with a single political concept or ideology. Many historians have pointed out that federalism has no clear-cut political meaning. To date, however, few have seen this lack of precision as the secret of federalism's success in the German political imagination. This conclusion runs as a guiding thread through most of the chapters of this book. Federalism has survived dramatic historical transformations because it is cloaked in the most successful political rhetoric of the modern age: the rhetoric of pragmatism. It therefore adapts more easily to changing circumstances, and it appeals to people from a wider political spectrum, than classical ideologies.

Notwithstanding their ideological flexibility, federal systems in German history functioned in highly specific ways, and generated

complex political mechanisms and institutions. Federalism combines both: a vague sense of cultural belonging, and a sophisticated constitutional mechanism of devolved government. Debating this issue at our conference, we found it helpful to draw upon a categorization proposed by the American sociologist Theda Skocpol. Considering the role of cultural modes of analysis for social and political sciences, Skocpol introduced a distinction between what she called 'cultural idioms' and 'political ideologies'.<sup>6</sup> Cultural idioms are enshrined in popular beliefs and mentalities, a particular register of language, a set of (largely unreflected) stereotypes, a 'habitus'. They provide the framework within which political discourse takes place; they influence what is thinkable in a political culture. They do not, however, determine practical outcomes or 'cause' political decisions. Political ideologies, by contrast, are more conscious, deliberate creations. They tend to be highly specific to a particular time and place, they change rapidly and depend on the agency of individuals or distinct groups.

The Germans' pronounced sense of regional identity is a cultural idiom in Skocpol's sense. It formed a necessary prerequisite for all German federal constitutions. Only if we take into account the way in which Swabian, Bavarian or Hanseatic identities were defined, defended and redefined over long periods of time can we make sense of German federalism. This requires extending the scope of the investigation beyond high politics and constitutional history. The chapters by Confino and Durrell show how regionalism functioned as a part of day-to-day German culture. Durrell examines the role of dialects in the era of German unification. Linguistic theories of the period reflect the interplay of cultural and political factors in German federalism. High German, nineteenth-century linguists argued, was a peripatetic language: it evolved as a result of contact with the shifting intellectual centres of Germany's history. The language absorbed vital impulses in fourteenth-century Prague, sixteenth-century Wittenberg, and so on. In this view, the High German that had emerged at the end of this journey represented an organic synthesis of Germany's regional cultures: it was a truly 'federal' language.

Such academic debates went hand in hand with a powerful popular revival of regionalism. Not all European states that experienced a resurgence of regionalism during the long nineteenth century became federal states. The best example is France, probably the most centralized state in Western Europe at the time. Both here and in Germany, local and regional identities gained momentum in the age of triumphant nationalism. This trend was reinforced by the experience of

the First World War. Yet there are few signs of France's political system moving towards a more federal composition – Corsica is an exception rather than indicative of a general trend. The regional revival of the nineteenth century cannot, therefore, provide a sufficient explanation for political federalism. Other, more contingent factors encouraged the adoption of a federal system in Germany. Does this mean we can dismiss the role of the cultural idiom of regionalism for the history of German federalism? Hardly. Federalism is unthinkable without it. This was partly due to the historical precedent of the Holy Roman Empire. Even if we now know that early modern French absolutism was less centralized than historians thought a generation ago, its intellectual legacy allowed for a very different approach to central government in France than in the German lands.<sup>7</sup> The significance of these two different histories was not that they in themselves prescribed federal or centralist styles of government. But the Holy Roman Empire did provide an important argument for the defenders of German federalism that their French counterparts lacked. This was all the more important because the age of nation-state formation in Germany was an age that was intensely historically minded. It witnessed the birth of academic history writing as well as the triumph of 'historicism' as an architectural and artistic style. In this climate, the historicity of federalism was a useful argument for those pushing for a federal constitution. Their motivation in doing so, however, tended to be practical. Bismarck's decision to unify Germany as a federal state in 1871, like the decision of the Allies to recreate at least a semblance of that federal structure after 1945, or indeed the decision of the Kohl government to engineer the German unification of 1990 as federation of the West German and the East German Länder (instead of the unification of two states) – all these have to be accounted for with reference to power politics, international relations, the personal vision of key political actors, and other 'non-cultural' factors. It is not the purpose of this book to invalidate such modes of explanation. It merely suggests that such explanations leave important questions unanswered. The authors of this book draw attention to underlying cultural paradigms which made such decisions possible and feasible in the first place.

If history was one of these underlying paradigms, the fashion for things vernacular that accompanied industrial modernization in Germany was another. As Confino shows, the German *Heimat* movement's reputation as merely conservative is in urgent need of revision.<sup>8</sup> In this book, Confino argues that *Heimat* was a highly dynamic concept. It reinvented local and regional traditions in such a way as to

make them compatible with a very modern nationalism. As a half-hearted compromise between the new nationalism and the old particularism, federalism's appeal would have been somewhat limited in an age of 'charismatic politics'. The success story of German federalism in this period relied on the way in which the peculiarity and diversity of the regions could be presented as an asset to the nation as a whole. The *Heimat* movement provided the missing link, which enabled people to project a spontaneous sense of belonging to the locality or region onto the more abstract entity of the nation at large. This cemented the poly-centric structure of the German state and made full-scale centralization more difficult – but by strengthening the bonds between the citizens and the state, regionalism benefited the national movement.

Of course, this story requires social differentiation. A positive identification with locality and region strengthened the national allegiance of those who maintained strong ties with their native homelands. The *Heimat* movement thus proved highly effective in mobilizing a broad base of support from German soldiers serving in the First World War, the majority of whom came from rural areas. For those who had recently migrated large distances to find work in the newly industrializing cities, however, the experience was different. Germany's Social Democratic Party opposed regionalism. My own chapter highlights this difference by focusing on the Free Hanseatic City of Hamburg. In defending the city's special privilege to maintain a free-trade harbour, the senators of Hamburg argued that the city's political and economic autonomy was vital for its role as the Germany's 'Gateway to the World' – a core element of Wilhelmine nationalism. In promoting this claim, the senators used historical arguments, alluding to a largely fictitious history of the medieval Hanseatic League. They also drew upon the modern vocabulary of the *Heimat* movement, notably when the new free harbour was constructed in a vernacular North German style. The synthesis between regionalism and nationalism was successful, in that it convinced authorities in Berlin to preserve Hamburg's autonomy after unification. But it excluded the lower classes, whose vision of the nation was more egalitarian, and who, having arrived in the city as a highly mobile industrial workforce, had no personal ties with the city-state's history or its culture of Hanseatic regionalism.

With the emergence of the Nazi dictatorship and of the 'German Democratic Republic', early twentieth-century Germany witnessed a process of political centralization in which federal institutions more or

less disappeared. The motivations are complex, and little research has yet been done in this area. The myth of federalism as the anti-totalitarian doctrine *per se* has prevented historians from taking the question why these two regimes set out to eradicate federalism as seriously as we ought to take it. This book offers some preliminary answers, which are suggested by the story of German federalism as we have traced it up to this point. We can distinguish two important factors. One is that both these totalitarian regimes subscribed to the traditional belief that a strong state is a centralized state. In that respect, they relied on the historical model of territorial absolutism. But their centralizing policies also had modern aspects. Especially the GDR could build upon the anti-federal sentiments that had characterized the German working-class movement from the later nineteenth century. This connection is explored in Mary Fulbrook's chapter. She sees the abolition of federalism in East Germany not merely as a repressive measure to assert total political control. Instead, she argues that the cultural sense of regionalism, too, disappeared in East Germany within less than a generation, because the GDR succeeded in portraying it as alien in spirit to the community of all workers. These workers were united by a history in which region had played a subservient role, but more importantly, by a sense of a common fate in the future, for better or worse, given their enforced confinement in the East German state. This interpretation is bound to spark off much debate amongst historians in years to come. Fulbrook does of course concede that the acceptance of 'democratic centralism' was uneven. Regionalism was preserved in some areas, notably by minorities such as the Sorbs, or by the organizational structure of the Church seeking to evade central party control. The association between opposition politics and regionalism in East Germany raises interesting questions about the swift restoration of federalism in East Germany after 1989, and it is hoped that our publication will inspire future research in this area.

Noakes's chapter shows that, by comparison, the Nazi's anti-federal programme was less successful, but also less unequivocal. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler declared that federalism was a mask that needed to be torn from the face of the German polity. But in practice, federalism was only abolished on paper, and at least partly reinstated when it came to the day-to-day process of political decision-making. The issue of centralization versus federalism was caught up in the dynamic of competing institutions in the Nazi polycracy: if the Interior Ministry pushed for more centralization, rival institutions competing for the

support of the Führer were quick to defend devolution as a means of undermining the Ministry's bid for power. At the same time, the anti-federal programme was less radical from the outset: what was attacked was simply administrative federalism – in keeping with the idea that centralization equalled power, and that historical particularism stood in the way of the Nazi social revolution. Cultural regionalism, however, was excepted from this attack; in fact, *Stammesbewusstsein* – German 'tribal' consciousness – was an important part of Nazi propaganda.

With the collapse of the Nazi state, the stage for federalism's success story in West Germany was set. In the current German constitution, important areas of policy-making remain the prerogative of the individual Länder. They include key issues such as education and the control of large parts of the national budget. Indeed, the subdivision of power in the Federal Republic became more rather than less prominent as post-war Germany developed. While some historians referred to the Federal Republic's early days as 'closet centralism',<sup>9</sup> more recently, political observers have tended to criticize the German constitution's development for 'excessive federalism', a degree of decentralization verging on the total fragmentation of political power. In his survey of federalism's role in West German politics, Jeffery examines the dynamic nature of the German model of 'cooperative federalism'. Beginning with the 1969–79 constitutional reforms, he diagnoses a trend towards ever-greater autonomy of the Länder governments – a 'Sinatra' style of federalism. Yet to Jeffery this is no reason to subscribe to the gloomy view prevalent amongst many German political scientists today, who believe that the development of federalism has effectively reached a dead end. Political debates in Germany may be marked by financial squabbles between the Länder and the national government in Berlin, and the controversy is far from resolved. But ultimately, both sides continue to believe that they stand to gain more than they lose from the federal division of powers between the centre and the regions. Renzsch's chapter analyses the ongoing debate about the future of federalism in German political circles. The author combines the perspective of a political scientist with that of an 'insider' of the German political system. Although he agrees with Jeffery's perception of an increasing disentanglement of German federalism, if not formally, then at least de facto, he argues that German federalism still qualifies as largely cooperative: hardly any federation goes as far as the German one when it comes to centralizing legislative but decentralizing executive authority. Recent years have, it is true, seen a modest

transfer of legislative powers back to the Länder. Yet many regions have been surprisingly reluctant to demand more regional taxation powers – not least because they do not want to shoulder the responsibility for taxes unlikely to be popular with voters.

Whatever the outcome of these complex negotiations will be, they are affected by, and they affect, the wider European integration process. Not only do the German Länder have to adjust their agenda to European Union policies: unlike the more technical term ‘subsidiarity’, federalism for many Germans is a political virtue in its own right – and their passport to European civilization. Developments after 1989 reinforced this notion: federalism was invoked to reassure Germany’s neighbours in Europe that reunification would not lead to a resurgence of the old German nationalism, and that the new state would pose no threat to others. And if Germany was more Euro-compatible in a federal shape, the same surely applied to the countries. The more ‘federalized’ Europe as a whole became, so the argument ran, the easier national conflict would be avoided in future. A ‘Europe of the regions’ may well be a projection of German identity onto Europe. Yet it is a projection intended to counteract forces of German nationalism – quite the opposite of a callous plot to bring other European states under German dominion.<sup>10</sup>

Even in Germany, however, federalism has many critics. Those on the left of the German political spectrum tend to blame federalism for creating social inequalities between the richer and the poorer Länder, and fear for the future of the financial equalisation mechanism. They also argue that federalism has allowed traditionally conservative Länder such as Bavaria to use a regional platform for defying German constitutional law on issues ranging from banning abortion to the presence of crucifixes in the classrooms of state schools. The fact that radical right-wing parties such as the Bavarian-based ‘Europäische Föderalistische Partei Deutschlands’ use the federalism label to promote their political ends aggravates such concerns.

Critics of a liberal or moderately conservative persuasion tend to focus on other aspects of the federal system, but are often none the less outspoken in their attacks. Typically, they dismiss German federalism on the grounds that it creates unnecessary tiers of bureaucracy and renders political decision-making inefficient. Economics plays an important role in their arguments. One oddity of the German federal system which is often pointed to is the absence of a single national stock exchange. Unlike all its European neighbours, Germany not only has a central exchange, the Frankfurt *Börse*, but also seven additional

Länder-based exchanges in Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, Hanover, Düsseldorf, Munich and Stuttgart – and that is not counting specialized exchanges for particular products, such as the two derivatives exchanges in Stuttgart and Frankfurt, or the agricultural commodities exchange in Hanover. Federal traditions such as these seem fundamentally at odds with the economic flexibility required by the process of European economic integration and the recent wave of international mergers usually summarized under the heading ‘globalization’. In demanding less Länder-based bureaucracy, modern conservatives differ from nineteenth-century critics of federalism. While traditional nationalists attacked federalism on the grounds that it weakened the (central) state unnecessarily, contemporary conservatives make the opposite assertion. Having absorbed the liberal credo that the state governs best that governs least, they attack German federalism for extending the scope of state intervention by multiplying political institutions, where the market should be given a free hand.

These criticisms notwithstanding, the federal nature of Germany continues to be a centrepiece of German national identity. On this, commentators from a broad political spectrum are in agreement. Even the more radical of the reform proposals currently under debate do not envisage the abolition of the Länder’s political autonomy. Interestingly, the most adventurous critics who advocate the total abolition of some Länder are often also the ones who make the case for greater sovereign rights for the remaining Länder. In other words, alongside those who warn of excessive federalism, there are those who advocate yet greater decentralization of political power in Germany.

German federalism’s viability can certainly be defended in pragmatic terms. Yet its continuing attraction for the Germans is in no small part a result of the country’s turbulent history. Not only does German federalism go back a long way. It is associated with epochs in German history that are perceived as relatively unproblematic. After the anti-federal policies of the twentieth-century dictatorships, federalism stands rehabilitated as an idea. The victorious Allies after the Second World War certainly thought so, when they dissolved Germany’s most centralizing power, the state of Prussia, and subdivided the nation into individual Länder. What might have seemed like a hostile Allied intervention was embraced by German public opinion. Germans have no ‘French Revolution’ to invoke in order to lend a sense of historical legitimacy to modern democratic governments. In place of a French-style revolutionary tradition, Germany’s federal traditions could be presented as a home-made alternative to authoritarian politics. For many,

federalism is an authentically German recipe for protecting political pluralism and cultural diversity (at least amongst Germans themselves). The authors of this book take a critical view of the historical mythology surrounding the idea of federalism as an anti-totalitarian safeguard. Our response, however, cannot be to adopt an ahistorical perspective.<sup>11</sup> To appreciate the real meaning and the ideological significance of German *Föderalismus*, we have to understand the concept historically. Federalism, we conclude, was never an automatic feature of German history, not even in 'non-totalitarian' periods. But since the eighteenth century, it has played a prominent role in the German political imagination. As a focal point of national memory, it was called upon many times to legitimate the creation of federal constitutions throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Today, the attraction of the federal option is undiminished. For better or worse, Germans and, increasingly, Europeans live in an age of federalism.

## Notes

1. Only some exemplary works can be listed here: A. Bosco, *What is Federalism? Towards a General Theory of Federalism. The Theory, the History and its Application to European Unification* (London 1996); J. J. Hesse and V. Wright, eds, *Federalizing Europe: The Costs, Benefits and Preconditions of Federalism in Europe* (Oxford 1996); D. Elazar, *Exploring Federalism* (Tuscaloosa 1988); M. Burgess, *Federalism and European Union: Political Ideas, Influences and Strategies in the European Community, 1972–1987* (London 1989); C. Jeffery, ed., *The Regional Dimension of the European Union: Towards a Third Level in Europe?* (London 1997); M. Keating and J. Loughlin, eds, *The Political Economy of Regionalism* (London 1997); M. Keating and B. Jones, eds, *Regions in the European Community* (Oxford 1985); R. Morgan, ed., *Regionalism in European Politics* (London 1986). In addition, there are a number of important German studies, such as G. Ammon et al., eds, *Föderalismus und Zentralismus: Europas Zukunft zwischen dem deutschen und dem französischen Modell* (Baden-Baden 1996); K. Assmann and T. Goppel, eds, *Föderalismus: Bauprinzip einer freiheitlichen Grundordnung in Europa* (Munich and London 1978).
2. See, for example, Dieter Langewiesche and Georg Schmidt, eds, *Die föderative Nation: Deutschlandkonzepte von der Reformation bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Munich 2000).
3. The controversy is documented in J. R. Pole, ed., *The American Constitution: For and Against. The Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers* (New York and Toronto 1987). A useful short commentary is Isaac Kramnick's introduction in James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, ed. by I. Kramnick (Harmondsworth, New York etc. 1987), pp. 11–82.
4. Reinhardt Koselleck, 'Bund, Bündnis, Föderalismus', in Reinhardt Koselleck, Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, eds, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches*

- Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, 8 vols (Stuttgart 1972–97), i, 1, pp. 624–35. For a more detailed discussion of the debate about imperial reform in the Enlightenment, see Wolfgang Burgdorf, *Reichskonstitution und Nation: Verfassungsreformprojekte für das Heilige Römische Reich* (Mainz 1998).
5. This myth dates back to the inter-war period, when intellectuals such as Ernst Robert Curtius (*Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter*, Bern 1948) promoted the idea of a common European culture based on the medieval Catholic heritage to overcome the forces of modern nationalism. In this they were partly inspired by similar attempts one century earlier, when statesmen such as the Austrian Chancellor Metternich and the Romantic philosopher Friedrich Schlegel promoted these notions in the journal *Europa*. All harked back to the pre-Reformation Holy Roman Empire as a precedent for confessional and political unity. Such ideas were revived by some German conservative politicians after the Second World War, notably Chancellor Adenauer.
  6. Theda Skocpol, *Social Revolutions in the Modern World* (Cambridge 1994).
  7. For a sceptical reassessment of the limits of absolutist centralization, see Nick Henshall, *The Myth of Absolutism: Change and Continuity in Early Modern European Monarchy* (London and New York 1992). Absolutism's enduring impact on French political culture and the idea of the state is analysed in Chandra Mukerji, *Territorial Ambitions and the Gardens of Versailles* (Cambridge 1997).
  8. Apart from Confino's own *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany and National Memory 1871–1918* (Chapel Hill and London 1997), the other major contribution to this new reassessment is C. Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley 1990). Both books are concerned with cultural regionalism. Confino's chapter in this volume is the first to establish a connection with political federalism. For the older view of the *Heimat* movement as purely reactionary, see, for example, E. Klueting, ed., *Antimodernismus und Reform: Zur Geschichte der deutschen Heimatbewegung* (Darmstadt 1991) and W. Hartung, *Konservative Zivilisationskritik und regionale Identität am Beispiel der niedersächsischen Heimatbewegung 1895 bis 1919* (Hanover 1991).
  9. For example by H. Abromeit, *Der Verknappte Einheitsstaat* (Opladen 1992).
  10. 'On the European dimension of German federalism', C. Jeffery and P. Savigear, eds, *German Federalism Today* (Leicester 1991).
  11. On those rare occasions that existing studies on German or European federalism adopt a long-term historical perspective, this tends to focus on the history of political thought. Notable amongst these intellectual histories are A. Bosco, ed., *The Federal Idea*, i, *The History of Federalism from Enlightenment to 1945*, and ii, *The History of Federalism since 1945* (London 1991–2), as well as the older Bernard Voyenne, *Histoire de l'idée fédéraliste* (Nice 1973), and J. Touchard, *Histoire des idées politiques*, esp. ii, *Du XVIIIe à nos jours*, 10th edn (Paris 1988). Unlike the above, this book is concerned with German federalism as constituted by historical practice, rather than political theory. See also J. Huhn, *Lernen aus der Geschichte? Historische Argumente in der westdeutschen Föderalismusdiskussion 1945–1949* (Melsungen 1990).

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