

# Personal Union and Transfer: Great Britain and Hanover, 1714–1837

by Torsten Riotte

During the transition from early-modern societies to the nation states of the 19th and 20th centuries, the formation of the territorial state performed an important function. The combining of dominions to form a geographical and political unit could occur through the annexation of the weaker territory by the stronger one, but it could also occur with the mutual agreement of the political decision-makers of both territories. In the case of a union, a distinction emerged very early on between a real union and a personal union (or union of crowns). While in a real union agreements under international law were equally binding for both partners, the personal union assumed a special status, in which the person of the ruler was the only connection between the two states. However, this strictly legal definition only applied to the political institutions. Below the state level, there were forms of transfer that could give a personal union a special, transnational character. Academic opinion remains divided on the extent to which these connections, which are referred to using the term "composite statehood", constitute a Europe-wide development.

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## Introduction: Definition and State of Research

The term "personal union" was coined by the Göttingen law professor Johann Stephan Pütter (1725–1807) (→ [Media Link #ab](#)).<sup>1</sup> While law scholars of the 17th century had already discussed the rule (→ [Media Link #ac](#)) of a single person over different territories, Pütter was the first to refer to this in a publication in 1760 as a "unionis solum personalis", thereby introducing the term itself.<sup>2</sup> Pütter pointed out that it was not a contemporary development of the 18th century, but a historical phenomenon. For the whole of the early modern period, it was possible to cite connections in which a single ruler controlled a number of states. Thus, Pütter wrote: "Erfahrungen und Geschichte stimmen damit überein, dass es nichts weniger als ungewöhnlich ist, dass mehrere einzelne Staaten in einen größeren vereinigt werden."<sup>3</sup> In his discussion of the "Teutschen Staats- und Fürsten-Rechte" (rights of German states and princes), Pütter differentiated between two types, which he referred to as a personal connection or "personal union", and a real union.<sup>4</sup> Modern legal history has adopted this distinction and has established criteria for defining a connection as a personal union – that is, when no political obligations between the two states exist apart from the identity of the ruler. The person of the sovereign thus represents the only connection between the two states.<sup>5</sup>

▲ 1

As regards the estate-based societies of the early modern period, in which it was difficult to imagine a statehood independent of the person of the monarch, in which the sovereign held numerous prerogatives and powers of decision, and in which the ruler's court must be viewed as an important political centre, this distinction is not entirely clear.<sup>6</sup> Pütter states that in a personal union "zwey oder mehrere Staaten zwar einerley Regenten haben, aber doch in ihren Grundgesetzen unterschieden bleiben."<sup>7</sup> However, he saw the need to emphasize a further distinction, which explicitly refers to the person of the monarch. In a personal union, he wrote, the regent performs two functions, which should be separated from one another. This means – he continued – "[dass] der König von Großbritannien eine andere Person als König, eine andere als Churfürst von Braunschweig-Lüneburg [ist]". The ruler – he continued – is united in one person, "aber doch in jeder Eigenschaft ganz anders zu betrachten".<sup>8</sup>

▲ 2

That this distinction is theoretically possible but is difficult to maintain in practice is demonstrated by the following example: It was suggested in Hanover in 1801 that the British monarch George III (1738–1820) (→ Media Link #ad) should as elector (*Kurfürst*) of Brunswick-Lüneburg join a coalition of powers that was waging war against Great Britain, that is, against himself. This suggestion seemed bizarre to contemporaries and particularly to politicians of the early-19th century.<sup>9</sup> While the concept of the two bodies of the king, and with it a more abstract understanding of the power of a ruler, existed in Great Britain in particular, the person of the monarch nonetheless remained closely connected with the concept of the state in spite of contemporary concepts of nation and common good, ministers and state representatives. The concept of the "body politic" was in part a literal one in understandings of rule.<sup>10</sup>

▲ 3

Modern historical research has called into question the idea that a personal union consisted of two independent parts. The introduction of the new concept of "composite statehood" for a purely dynastic connection (→ Media Link #ae) between two states was an initial attempt to consciously establish new focuses beyond the person of the monarch. The aim was to avoid an overly simplistic distinction, according to which there were two separate entities on the one hand (personal union), and a homogenous real union on the other. This distinction was problematic in particular in instances where states had entered a contractual union or had annexed foreign territories and special rights remained intact *aeque principaliter*, or autonomies continued to exist, for example in regional legal practice (→ Media Link #af) or in regional politics.<sup>11</sup>

▲ 4

In the context of empire research, which adopts a more global perspective, the discussion about informal dependencies and state connections was expanded and with it the spectrum into which dynastic connections between two states could be placed. One suggestion was that the concept of "empire" with its poles of centre and periphery should be incorporated into research on personal unions as an analytical tool.<sup>12</sup>

▲ 5

Behind these expanded questions is the view that assigning individual cases to the categories of real union and personal union in a simplistic way cannot do justice to the historical reality. At the same time, these different methodological approaches are less interested in the conflicts that emerged from a personal union and more interested in the synergies. From the perspective of legal history, there is a need to define and therefore to distinguish between a personal union and a real union, but it seems legitimate to ask at what point historical reality defies a legal definition of two strictly separate areas.

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Thus, historical studies entered the area of transfer research and opened up to topics beyond legal and political history. Cultural transfer (→ Media Link #ag) in a broad sense, which in addition to forms of art and culture also incorporates the areas of the public sphere, society, the economy (→ Media Link #ah) and science (→ Media Link #ai), attracted increasing interest. Of particular interest were the cases in which concentration on these "soft" categories also produced new findings for the areas of law and politics.<sup>13</sup> This methodological approach fitted into both a modern history of ideas and a cultural history of the political sphere.

▲ 7

## Methods: Great Britain and Hanover as a Paradigmatic Research Object

A comparative European study on personal unions remains a gap in historiography.<sup>14</sup> This article cannot fill this gap, but instead concentrates on the question of transfer between the two parts of a personal union. The dynastic connection between the United Kingdom (Great Britain and Ireland) and the electorate (*Kurfürstentum*) of Brunswick-Lüneburg – which was elevated to the kingdom of Hanover in 1814 – was chosen as the research object.<sup>15</sup>

▲ 8

A discussion of this connection seems worthwhile for a number of reasons. First of all, there were considerable differences between the two parts. As the Hanoverian elector George I (1660–1727) (→ Media Link #ak) travelled to London in 1714 to ascend the British throne, Great Britain and Brunswick-Lüneburg were very different as regards their political influence, economic development and socio-political structure. The electorate, which was commonly referred to as Hanover, was much smaller. It was a state within the Holy Roman Empire and did not carry substantial political weight in its own right within the European concert of powers. The difference is clearly demonstrated by the populations of the two capitals. While London already had a population of over 500,000 in 1700, the

population of Hanover (the city itself) rose from about 10,000 in 1680 to about 14,000 in 1735. By the end of the personal union, the difference had grown even larger. The population of the British capital was now 1.6 million, while Hanover only had a little over 23,000 inhabitants. There were also numerous differences in the areas of industrialization (→ Media Link #am), the press (→ Media Link #an) and global expansion (→ Media Link #ao) that illustrate that this personal union connected two very different partners.<sup>16</sup>

▲ 9

However, Hanover in 1700 must be viewed as a dynamic state within the context of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. When the principality of Brunswick-Lüneburg gained the status of an electorate in 1692, it entered the exclusive circle of "emperor makers";<sup>17</sup> Hanover was thus politically on a par with Brandenburg-Prussia in 1700. While the Hohenzollern dynasty assumed the title of king of Prussia in 1701, in the same year the British parliament passed the Act of Settlement declaring Elector Sophie (1630–1714) (→ Media Link #ap) and her descendants the rightful heirs to the British throne. At the beginning of the 18th century, it was not yet possible to predict the dynamics that would develop out of this connection.<sup>18</sup>

▲ 10

From 1714 onward, the House of Guelph ("Welfen" in German) sat on the British throne. In spite of how differently the two states developed, the personal union endured for 123 years, until it was dissolved in 1837 due to different rules regarding succession. In Great Britain, the term "Hanoverian Britain" is used to describe the period from 1714 to 1837. George I was succeeded by his son George II (1683–1760) (→ Media Link #aq) and the latter's grandson George III as the ruler of both states. The last two Hanoverian rulers of Great Britain were brothers, George IV (1762–1830) (→ Media Link #ar), the eldest son of George III, and William IV (1765–1837) (→ Media Link #as), who was also one of the many offspring of George III and Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (1744–1818) (→ Media Link #at).<sup>19</sup> While Queen Victoria (1819–1901) (→ Media Link #au) was referred to as the "the last Hanoverian monarch", from 1837 Ernst August (1771–1851) (→ Media Link #av), the Duke of Cumberland, ruled in Hanover, which had been elevated to a kingdom at the Congress of Vienna in 1814.<sup>20</sup>

▲ 11

The intensive contemporary debate was another reason for focusing on the personal union between Great Britain and Hanover. In the two countries, the relationship was discussed with varying intensity at different times. The abolition of pre-censorship in England in 1695 and the importance of parliamentary debates in public discourse make the discussion in Britain particularly interesting.<sup>21</sup> In Hanover, the public debate was not so intensive, but there were nonetheless some reflections on the two states of the sovereign, for example after the abolition of censorship in the electorate in 1803, and in individual publications such as travelogues and political treatises.<sup>22</sup>

▲ 12

Of course, the approach of discussing a single personal union has its weaknesses given the heterogeneity of such connections. Hungary and Bohemia in the 15th century, Poland and France in the 16th century, the Netherlands (→ Media Link #aw) and England in the 17th century, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and Spain (→ Media Link #ax), and Prussia and Neuchâtel in the 18th and 19th centuries are examples of different states and different connections. Personal unions did not always arise from the same circumstances either. Instead of dynastic and confessional reasons, the election of a king could connect two states through a common ruler, as in the case of Saxony and Poland. Other differences could be cited. The approach chosen here nonetheless appears as a sensible compromise in view of the state of research to date.

▲ 13

The article is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the institutions and networks that emerged through the personal union as an institution but also from the difficulties that resulted from having one ruler but two courts. Both state structures and informal relationships are discussed in this context. The central question addressed in this section is whether structures emerged from the dynastic connection that gave the relationship continuity. The second part focuses on individual forms of exchange. While the anglophilia (→ Media Link #az) of many Germans from the Holy Roman Empire has been the subject of lively academic debate, few researchers have pointed to the exchange between the two states that resulted from the personal union. This article problematizes the concept of transfer to the extent that not only the possibilities that a personal union offered are highlighted, but it is also shown that parts of society distanced themselves from the associated other. The implicit demand for transfer between two states provoked resistance and led to a strong internal homogeneity instead of an opening up to the outside.

▲ 14

## Institutions and Networks

The connection between Great Britain and Hanover was legitimized in two ways by the Protestant succession. On the one hand, this legitimacy came from the dynastic connection between the British royal house and the family of Elector Sophie of Brunswick-Lüneburg. Sophie was the daughter of the English princess Elisabeth Stuart (1596–1662) (→ Media Link #b0), whose father, James VI of Scotland (1566–1625) (→ Media Link #b1), had ruled England from 1603 to 1625 as James I.<sup>23</sup> In addition to this dynastic legitimation, there was a confessional legitimation. In the conflict between the crown and the parliament, the principle of Protestant succession in England had prevailed in the context of the Glorious Revolution of 1688/1689. By naming Sophie as the successor, the Act of Settlement of 1701 once again reinforced what had already been decided in 1689: Only a Protestant ruler would ascend the throne in England from now on. Under Queen Anne (1665–1714) (→ Media Link #b2), there had been acrimonious debates between the two parties of the Whigs and the Tories regarding succession. But in spite of the strength of Jacobitism as a political ideology and two rebellions against state power, after 1714 a Catholic king as sovereign and thus as head of the Anglican church did not seem an appealing option.<sup>24</sup>

▲15

In research on the personal union, emphasis has always been placed on the confessional legitimation, among other reasons to emphasize the coincidental nature of the connection between Great Britain and Brunswick-Lüneburg.<sup>25</sup> More than 50 candidates with more direct claims to the throne were not considered because they were Catholic.<sup>26</sup> Contemporaries also stressed this aspect when they referred to the accession of George I as a Protestant succession. However, the House of Guelph tried to put the dynastic legitimation to the fore, and to do this they used not only the Stuart kings but also the medieval Guelph king Henry the Lion (1129–1195) (→ Media Link #b3) and his English connection as a reference point.<sup>27</sup>

▲16

The first years of the personal union were characterized by a lack of stability. The political reactions in Great Britain can be explained by the fact that the country had already experienced the accession of a foreign prince to the throne in the recent past. Direct references to the reign of William III of Orange (1650–1702) (→ Media Link #b4) can be found, particularly in the legal provisions that were passed in parliament around the time of the succession of George I. William III had granted offices and estates to a group of his favourites. To prevent this happening under the Hanoverian kings, parliament passed laws which were intended to prevent George I from giving preferential treatment to people close to him in Germany. A law was passed stating that no foreigner could take up a political office in Great Britain.<sup>28</sup> Together with the monarch, a number of Hanoverians from the electorate of Brunswick-Lüneburg had established themselves in London with the intention of engaging in politics close to the ruler, and they initially cooperated with a section of the British ministers and politicians. In this process, the diverging interests were not necessarily determined by the national origins of the protagonists, and the emerging political camps could not be described as "British" or "Hanoverian". However, the prohibition of foreigners holding offices resulted in the Hanoverians withdrawing from politics in Great Britain from the 1720s onward.<sup>29</sup> This was quite literally the case: The Hanoverian privy councillor Johann Casper von Bothmer (1656–1732) (→ Media Link #b5) moved out of his house in Downing Street, and Robert Walpole (1676–1745) (→ Media Link #b6) established a long tradition of prime ministers residing there shortly afterwards.<sup>30</sup>

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Other regulations also demonstrate the defensive reaction of the British to the accession of George I. For example, parliament wanted to prohibit the monarch from leaving the country without the permission of parliament, a regulation which originally passed both houses of Parliament, but which was subsequently rescinded.<sup>31</sup> The decision not to send an ambassador to Hanover falls into another category. According to the diplomatic understanding, a diplomat was accredited with the person of the ruler, therefore an ambassador in Hanover seemed superfluous from the British perspective. It should nonetheless be noted that British ministers knew considerably less about Hanover than they did about the other estates and states of the Holy Roman Empire and the German Confederation. This only changed after 1837, when a British ambassador was sent to Hanover after the end of the personal union.<sup>32</sup> The personal union did not give rise to any institution in Britain that strengthened the connection between Great Britain and Hanover beyond the person of the monarch. There was no political representative with responsibility for the personal union, no Hanoverian was brought into the political bodies, and the usual diplomatic contacts did not exist either.

▲18

The sole Hanoverian representation in London was the so-called "German Chancery", two small rooms in St. James's Palace.<sup>33</sup> A privy councillor from Hanover represented the *Rätegremium* (Hanoverian government) in London, though his actual duty consisted of overseeing communication between the monarch and the privy councillors, particularly regarding German affairs. The Hanoverian representative was not a member of the British cabinet. Rather, his status was comparable to that of a foreign ambassador, who has

direct access to the monarch without having to laboriously go through the British ministers.<sup>34</sup> Recent academic opinion is divided regarding the significance of the German Chancery. The privy councillors in Hanover did not like to have a strong figure in London and the post was thus usually filled with a representative who the councillors did not expect to have any initiative of his own. It was only during the Napoleonic Wars (→ Media Link #b7) – and instructively only after the privy councillors had been relieved of their positions and the *Rätegremlium* had been reappointed – that the chancery in London developed to its full political potential.<sup>35</sup> After the end of the personal union in 1837, the head of the chancery did not assume the function of a diplomatic representative in the British capital, but instead returned to Hanover.

▲ 19

The view from Hanover across the channel initially showed uncertainty regarding the continuing existence of the personal union. As he was departing from the electorate, George I had left behind provisional rules regarding government which were subsequently modified in a number of points. The privy councillors in Hanover were authorized to make a number of decisions independently, though in most cases they were still obliged to consult the sovereign in London. Among other things, policy with regard to the Holy Roman Empire and foreign policy generally remained the prerogatives of the monarch.<sup>36</sup> The laborious correspondence between Hanover and London resulted in numerous delays in this regard, which proved to be politically very disadvantageous.<sup>37</sup>

▲ 20

In his will, George I ordered that the personal union be dissolved and each of his two sons be given sovereignty of one of the two states. But George II suppressed his father's will.<sup>38</sup> During the Seven Years' War and the Regency Crisis of 1788/1789, there were discussions in Hanover about whether the personal union should be dissolved, but the provisional regulations mentioned above remained in force.<sup>39</sup> Apart from the German Chancery, no other political institutions with responsibility for contact between Great Britain and Hanover were established, and in many instances informal channels of communication were used. British ministers received much of their information from Regensburg, where a British ambassador observed proceedings at the Reichstag.<sup>40</sup> The monarch corresponded with Hanoverian and British representatives at other European courts, with the information in some cases being relayed through the privy councillors in Hanover, and bypassing them in others. The diplomatic representatives of the two countries also communicated with one another and generally worked to the same ends, in individual cases even cooperating intensively.<sup>41</sup> In places where there was no Hanoverian representation, such as North Africa, it even occurred that British consuls issued documents to Hanoverian subjects.<sup>42</sup> Many such instances of contact are documented, but no set pattern emerges from them. They often arose out of the initiative of individual Britons and Hanoverians.

▲ 21

The question arises whether – apart from the network of diplomatic representative, which as a *Corps diplomatique* were not specifically a phenomenon of personal union – instances of informal contact can be found in other areas that led to more solid structures and continuities and were thus transpersonal in character. In this context, it is surprising that there was apparently little or no cooperation in the economic sphere, even though Hanover became an export market for Great Britain and a transit point for British exports.<sup>43</sup> However, the monarchs of the House of Hanover showed an interest in knowledge transfer between the two states in the areas of cartography and agriculture. George II and George III had detailed maps made and had parts of the country surveyed.<sup>44</sup> In 1764, George III supported the foundation of an agricultural academy in Celle.<sup>45</sup> However, the foundation of these institutions did not result in institutional connections with Great Britain. The Hanoverians experienced the rapid industrial development in the United Kingdom primarily as observers rather than participants. Proposed collaborative projects such as the construction of a harbour at Harburg were never realised.<sup>46</sup>

▲ 22

However, the influence of the personal union did make itself felt in military affairs. The British side explicitly demanded that British resources should not be used for Hanoverian interests. The annexation of the dukedoms of Bremen and Verden during the Great Northern War in 1715 represented a first, very controversial precedent.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, in the event of war Britain was happy to accept the support of Hanoverian troops. In almost all military conflicts from the beginning of the personal union, Hanoverian troops fought alongside British troops because the British monarch as the elector of Brunswick-Lüneburg was able to recruit (→ Media Link #b8) troops in Hanover.<sup>48</sup> But here too qualifications are necessary, particularly as military cooperation occurred in very different ways. While in 1783 a group of Hanoverians who had been recruited voluntarily were sent to India, it was conscripted Hanoverian soldiers that fought against the French army in the French revolutionary wars.<sup>49</sup>

▲ 23

Strongly connected with the Hanoverian memory of the personal union is the King's German Legion, a foreign corps that fought in the British army against Napoleonic France between 1803 and 1815, which was dissolved in 1816. From 1801, Hanover was alternately occupied by France and Prussia. Hanoverian officers recruited soldiers there for the fight against Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) (→ Media Link #b9) in the name of George III, the king of Great Britain and the elector of Hanover. A son of George III, Adolph Friedrich (1774–1850) (→ Media Link #ba), the Duke of Cambridge, became the supreme commander of these troops.<sup>50</sup> The King's German Legion holds a prominent place in the memory of the Napoleonic Wars in Hanover. The Waterloo Column and the monument to the general Count Karl von Alten (1764–1840) (→ Media Link #bb) in front of the Main State Archive of Lower Saxony are testament to this up to the present day. Whether joining the legion was really an expression of patriotic loyalty in the context of the personal union or whether the difficult economic and social changes in the aftermath of the occupation were the primary motivation, cannot be definitively answered.<sup>51</sup> However, the negotiations regarding the remuneration of officers and soldiers and particular regarding pension demands that were formulated by the legionnaires in 1815/1816 show that for Great Britain the legion remained a foreign corps – at least from the legal and political perspective.<sup>52</sup>

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The personal union between Great Britain and Hanover did not give rise to institutions of state or to networks that went beyond the initiative of individual people and thus developed greater continuity. Recruiting for the King's German Legion, which continued for more than twelve years, is nonetheless a possible argument for the existence of continuing forms of cooperation between the two states and thus of transfer. The memories of many legionnaires illustrate that contemporaries discussed the connection between service in the legion and the personal union. However, the immediate dissolution of the legion and the treatment of the legionaries by the British authorities after 1816 created the impression that it was not a very successful model of cooperation and transfer. Just as the personal dynastic element played a decisive role in the personal union, transfer between the two states was generally limited to individual interests and initiatives.

▲ 25

## Individual Forms of Transfer

The many individual cases of exchange and transfer that occurred during the 123 years of personal union between Great Britain and Hanover serve as a counterbalance to the more pessimistic view of the significance of personal union. Borders to freedom of movement and mobility, entrepreneurship and political thought strongly influenced the lives of Europeans in the late-18th and early-19th century.<sup>53</sup> The world had just begun to change.<sup>54</sup> In this context, the fact that many Hanoverians moved to Great Britain and vice versa seems a remarkable result of the personal union.

▲ 26

When discussing transfer between Great Britain and Hanover, the travels of the monarchs from Great Britain to Hanover deserve particular focus. George I and George II travelled from London to Hanover several times by ship, in some cases sailing for up to 40 days to get there due to weather conditions. The monarchs were also accompanied by a number of British ministers. A governing council was established in London for the period of the king's absence.<sup>55</sup> In the British Library, there is a map of the hunting reserve in Gôhrde, which shows the monarch George I and a number of other people who are deep in conversation.<sup>56</sup> At hunts, receptions and other ceremonial occasions that occurred during royal visits, Britons and Hanoverians had a chance to meet and exchange political ideas and plans. This is well documented for the travels of George I and George II.<sup>57</sup>

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George III, by contrast, never set foot in Hanover. For more than 60 years, the inhabitants of the electorate never saw their sovereign, which doubtlessly caused a degree of alienation.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, important decisions taken by the third representative of the House of Guelph on the British throne demonstrate his interest in the Holy Roman Empire. The commitment of the royal family to Hanover was demonstrated by the appointment of George III's son, Frederick Augustus of York and Albany (1763–1827) (→ Media Link #bd), the Duke of York, as bishop of Osnabrück, the fact that three of his sons studied at Göttingen University, and the appointment of Adolph Friedrich, the Duke of Cambridge, as commander of the King's German Legion.<sup>59</sup> The Duke of Cambridge was appointed general governor in Hanover in 1814 and viceroy in 1831. It was his family that were still considered the real Hanoverian family in the 19th century, while his brother George IV only visited the electorate in 1820 after his accession. William IV did not visit Hanover during his reign.<sup>60</sup>

▲ 28

In addition to individual members of the dynasty, British noblemen also travelled to Hanover and vice versa. While the electorate – and subsequent kingdom – did not become a regular destination (→ Media Link #be) for British grand tours (→ Media Link #bf), in other areas interest in the other emerged. The establishment of the University of Göttingen under the title "Georgia Augusta" in honour of George II made a particularly important contribution to exchange between British and Hanoverian academics. Communication via the German Chancery created an academic network (→ Media Link #bg), which transported publications, manuscripts and correspondence quickly and dependably from London to Göttingen and vice versa. In this way, the university library in Göttingen received large orders of books through the diplomatic post.

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The staff of the German Chancery were the driving force behind this rather than the political decision-makers. The Best family played a particularly important role in this regard. Members of this family held the position of secretary of the German Chancery for decades.<sup>61</sup> Numerous Britons were also made members of the Göttingen Academy of Sciences, and Göttingen was one of the first German universities to introduce the teaching of English. Göttingen professors such as Johann David Michaelis (1717–1791) (→ Media Link #bh) and Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742–1799) (→ Media Link #bi) were in regular contact with British scholars,<sup>62</sup> though these connections came about solely due to the efforts of the university and personal contacts with the German Chancery. There was no funding of the sciences by the monarch or any other political institution, which was also reflected by the relatively small number of British students in Göttingen.

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Ambitious Hanoverian politicians travelled to London to introduce themselves to the monarch. The most successful Hanoverian politician in London Count Ernst Herbert of Münster (1766–1839) (→ Media Link #bj) was known to the monarch long before he entered state service by virtue of a stay in London. Contemporaries already drew a connection between his political career from 1801 onward and his good relationship with George III.<sup>63</sup> However, such visits could also be disadvantageous, as in the case of Karl August von Hardenberg (1750–1822) (→ Media Link #bk), who subsequently served as a minister in Prussia. The obvious interest of the Prince of Wales in his wife caused him to break off his efforts to obtain a position in London and to withdraw from Hanoverian service altogether.<sup>64</sup> Ernst Ludwig Julius von Lenthe (1744–1814) (→ Media Link #bl), who subsequently became director of the German Chancery, travelled Great Britain and recorded his impressions of industrial complexes, mines and parliamentary elections in his diary.<sup>65</sup>

▲31

In the 18th century, court was a very political place frequented by representatives of various milieus and groupings.<sup>66</sup> In Hanover, the absence of the monarch meant that courtly life and the cultural and political networks connected to it increasingly lost significance.<sup>67</sup> In Great Britain, after the fire of 1512 the court had moved from the political centre in Westminster to Hampton Court and the other smaller palaces near London. From 1530, it shifted to the Palace of Whitehall.<sup>68</sup> Under George I and George II, Kensington Palace was enlarged. George III purchased Buckingham House, though he spent a lot of his time in Kew in Surrey.

▲32

Thus, from 1714 the British-Hanoverian monarchs were located to a degree outside of the political centres of both states. Of course, this thesis requires qualification. Even though the distance between the monarch and Parliament had increased during the course of the civil wars, restoration and revolution in the area of politics also, the sovereign nonetheless remained a centre point to which the representatives of the different interest groups and parties were drawn. The privilege of making appointments to offices at court and high-ranking positions in the church, the possibility of providing financial support and other forms of protection, and also influence over the appointment of ministers ensured that the monarch retained his political weight for the whole period of the personal union.<sup>69</sup>

▲33

In addition to the highest posts at court, the monarch also gave positions to musicians, nannies (→ Media Link #bm) and readers from the electorate. The most famous Hanoverian, Georg Friedrich Händel (1685–1759) (→ Media Link #bn), already arrived in London before the reign of George I, and scientists like Friedrich Wilhelm Herschel (1738–1822) (→ Media Link #bo), who was a refugee from the Seven Years' War, and Georg Christoph Lichtenberg also spent some time in Great Britain. In the royal household, Hanoverians took up posts for example as choirmasters and schoolmasters (→ Media Link #bp). There were also subjects of other German and European states in the circle around the royal family. However, the Hanoverian monarchs appear to have preferred Lutheran clergymen from the electorate and kingdom of Hanover for the German Chapel in St. James's Palace.<sup>70</sup>

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Overall, however, exchange was episodic and coincidental in nature, and there was no substantial emigration of people from Hanover to Great Britain. The island kingdom across the English Channel was considered to be expensive and unhealthy,<sup>71</sup> and the Hanoverian elites in the electorate were financially secure due to their incomes from agriculture and faced few financial challenges during the period of the personal union. In the political realm also, there were no serious controversies until the end of the personal union. The constitution based on the British model that was adopted in 1814 at least potentially undermined the dominant position of the nobility in Hanover, and it consequently came under attack from conservative noblemen in particular. While it was the British prince, the Duke of Cambridge, who had declared the parliament (*Landstände*) open in 1814, it was his older brother, Ernst August, the Duke of Cumberland, who in 1837 not only ascended the throne in Hanover, but also revoked the constitution in the same year.<sup>72</sup> Up to that point, the Hanoverians – like many other Germans – admired the United Kingdom; they followed with great interest its economic and industrial development, its political debates and its very stable parliamentary democracy. In spite of the personal union, however, Hanover scarcely progressed past observing and – as a British observer remarked in the case of Göttingen – imitating British conditions. Not many inhabitants of the electorate decided to move across the English Channel.<sup>73</sup>

▲ 35

From the British side also, politicians, individual aristocratic visitors and a small number of interested people from the areas of science and the arts engaged with the electorate and later kingdom.<sup>74</sup> However, another aspect seems more important for the question of the transfer of political ideas, concepts and worldviews. While a British national sentiment was forming during the 18th century,<sup>75</sup> images of the enemy – in this case, France in particular – played a decisive role. Making a hard distinction with regard to the outside helped to form a clearer picture of the inside, which had the effect of considerably reducing internal differences, such as those between the Scots, the Irish and the English. A similar development can be observed in relation to the personal union and the relationship of the British to the electorate. The public discourse about the connection with Hanover strengthened one's own political identity and created a more homogeneous image of "us" or the "nation".<sup>76</sup> This already manifested itself in 1715, when there was a heated debate about the annexation of the dukedoms of Bremen and Verden in the British parliament and public.<sup>77</sup> Almost all of the military confrontations from the War of the Polish Succession (1733–1738) to the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–1748), the French occupation of Hanover during the Seven Years' War (1756–1763) and the occupation and annexation of Hanover by France and Prussia in the military confrontation with Napoleonic France resulted in public debates in the press, in parliament, and – it can be assumed – in the population at large. The question of whether Britain should commit itself militarily for the sake of the German interests of the British monarch and under what circumstances remained controversial.<sup>78</sup> Was Hanover, as Pitt the Elder (1708–1778) (→ Media Link #bq) put it, a millstone around the neck of Great Britain?<sup>79</sup> Or was one obliged, as Charles James Fox (1749–1806) (→ Media Link #br) argued two generations later, to fight politically – and if necessarily militarily – to maintain the liberty of Hanover and with it peace on the continent?<sup>80</sup> In this way, the image of Hanover as Britain's Achilles heel emerged, which remained a significant factor in British foreign policy up to the American War of Independence. Even for the period after 1783, there are arguments in favour of defining the electorate of Hanover as a "British interest".<sup>81</sup>

▲ 36

There were definite echoes of Great Britain's process of self-discovery within the discourse on the personal union.<sup>82</sup> To this extent, the thesis that "composite statehood" was a European phenomenon and was comparable to the modern Europe (→ Media Link #bs) of regions (→ Media Link #bt) is only partly convincing.<sup>83</sup> Borders were indeed crossed and cultural transfer and mutual influence played a significant role in the personal union. However, at closer inspection, the formation of national identities was equally as important for the rules of play within the personal union. Consequently, transfer research should not only examine the possibility of exchange, but also the strengthening of resistance that could result from the flow of ideas and contacts.<sup>84</sup>

▲ 37

## Conclusion

The end of the British-Hanoverian personal union is described in the academic literature as being "sang- und klanglos" (barely a whimper). No serious attention was paid to the dissolution of this connection either in Great Britain or Hanover, it is claimed.<sup>85</sup> In London, a new political actor entered the stage in the form of the young Queen Victoria, whose youth appeared to herald a new era.<sup>86</sup> The celebrations organized in 1814 to mark the victory of the allies over Napoleon and the hundredth anniversary of the personal union now seemed a distant memory.<sup>87</sup> In Hanover, a British prince, the Duke of Cambridge, who had performed the function of viceroy there, took his leave of the population in the form of public parades.<sup>88</sup> He handed over the reins of power to his brother Ernst August, the Duke of Cumberland, who was partly to blame for the end of the personal union, as he did not enjoy much popularity among the British population. In the public consciousness, his reputation as an arch-conservative was combined with rumours of his rude treatment of subordinates and his antipathy towards his niece, the new queen.<sup>89</sup> He had lived from 1818 to 1828 in Berlin at the Hohenzollern court. After the end of the personal union, there was a humorous medal in circulation entitled "Back to Hanover", which



depicted the new king of Hanover on a horse allegorically jumping over the English Channel. This medal was a direct reference to the commemorative coin that appeared in 1714 to celebrate the accession of the first Hanoverian to the British throne.<sup>90</sup> From the British perspective, the stock of the personal union had fallen considerably.

▲ 38

The German Chancery was ultimately disbanded and a Hanoverian embassy was established in London.<sup>91</sup> The British also sent a diplomatic representative to Hanover. It remains to enquire if the forms of transfer described above were continued. Dynastically, the two ruling houses remained in close contact in spite of the difficult personal relationship between Victoria and Ernst August. In particular, the family of the Duke of Cambridge became a "Hanoverian" family.<sup>92</sup> However, after the establishment of a court in Hanover, politicians and royal favourites had hardly any reason to travel to London anymore.<sup>93</sup> On other levels, however, the status quo appeared to continue. Economically, Hanover remained an export market for the British,<sup>94</sup> and interest in the other side in broader society also continued.

▲ 39

At the same time, there were efforts in Hanover from as early as 1814 – while the personal union was still in existence – to step out of the shadow of Great Britain. However, this process – which should not be equated with the formation of a national identity in Great Britain as described above, but can be understood as a similar result of the personal union – intensified after the end of the union.<sup>95</sup> Notwithstanding their affection for Britain and their admiration of its successes, the Hanoverians now stressed their own identity. For the British, Hanover increasingly became a reminder of the past and, in the context of a discourse on progress, of regression.<sup>96</sup> Though there are many indications that economic, legal and political developments began later in Hanover than in other states of the German Confederation, the personal union with Great Britain appears nonetheless to have strengthened the perception of the backwardness of Hanover. In this sense, the image that we have of the kingdom of Hanover after 1837 is also a product of the dynastic relationship with Great Britain. However, if one takes a view over the entire duration of the personal union, the argument that this relationship helped to establish a European tradition in British history has its merit. The value of this European dimension is only superficially lessened by the fact that this European idea primarily emerged in the heads of individuals and cannot be detected in institutions, and that the greater part of the exchange and transfer resulted from individual initiatives and life stories.<sup>97</sup>

▲ 40

Torsten Riotte, Frankfurt am Main

## Appendix

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## Notes

1. ^ Hoke, Personalunion 1984, column 1601.
2. ^ Pütter, *Elementa iuris publici germanici* 1760, p. 106.
3. ^ Idem, *Beyträge* 1777, p. 21 ("Experience and history both agree that it is not in the least unusual that multiple individual states be unified in a larger one." transl. by N. Williams).
4. ^ *Ibid.*, p. 22.
5. ^ See Hoke, Personalunion 1984.
6. ^ See Monod, *Power* 1996; Koschorke, *Der fiktive Staat* 2007.
7. ^ Pütter, *Beyträge* 1777, p. 37 ("two or more states have one regent, but nonetheless remain different in their constitutions." transl. by N. Williams).
8. ^ *Ibid.* ("the king of Great Britain is one person as king, and another person as elector of Brunswick-Lüneburg", "but must be viewed as entirely different in each capacity". transl. by N. Williams").
9. ^ Riotte, *Hannover* 2005, pp. 103f.; for a counter-argument in the context of the personal union of Prussia and Neuenburg-Neuchâtel: Hoke, Personalunion 1984; on this, see also Stribrny, *Könige* 1998.
10. ^ On this, see in particular Koschorke et al., *Staat* 2007.
11. ^ Elliot, *Monarchies* 1992, particularly p. 50.
12. ^ For example, how did the connection between the thirteen British colonies in North America with the home country differ from the relationship between Great Britain and Hanover? In the contemporary discussion, this topic did arise and the American settlers discussed the dynastic connection in Europe as an option for their political confrontation. See Harding, *Hanover* 2007, particularly pp. 194–206.
13. ^ See *ibid.*; and Biskup, *University* 2007.
14. ^ In general, we know relatively little about the historical significance of personal unions. Pütter, who was quoted above, was basically not interested in the topic. His discussion on "Teutschen Staats- und Fürsten-Recht" attempted to describe the peculiarities of the connections at state level and above in the Holy Roman Empire, as well as the relationships of the individual states with the emperor. In doing so, he created a stereotypical category of "personal union", which only served as a template to emphasize the special features of the constitution of the Holy Roman Empire. This is already made clear by the fact that Pütter ascribed different connections to this type: The government of Matthias Corvinus (1443–1490) in Hungary and Bohemia in the 15th century, the Saxon electors sitting on the Polish throne from the end of the 17th century until the death of August III (1669–1763), as well as the electors of Brunswick-Lüneburg sitting on the British throne from the 18th century into the 19th century – he cites all these examples without discussing the specific characteristics of the election of kings and Protestant succession (Pütter, *Beyträge*, p. 47). Similar to Pütter, modern research initially approached the topic of "personal union" in legal-historical and political-historical works. In these, particular focus was placed on the political conflicts that result from such relationships, as well as the definition of the concept. Basically, the researchers were interested in the political and military crises that result from – or in spite of – a personal union. (The most recent contribution offering this interpretation that lists further reading is: Black, *Hanoverians* 2006; Simms, *Victories* 2007.) A group of historians has tried to come to terms with the challenges of the topic through a comparison. The collection of articles by Rex Rexheuser discussing the personal unions of Saxony-Poland (1697–1763) and Hanover-England / Great Britain (1714–1837) methodically adopts a comparative approach (see Rexheuser, *Personalunionen* 2005). However, though the collection has the subtitle "Ein Vergleich" (a comparison), only four of the 22 authors adopt a genuinely comparative approach. 18 of the articles concentrate on individual aspects of one of the two personal unions. The four articles in the collection that have a comparative approach illustrate the difficulties that the comparative approach creates for a discussion of the topic. Due to the very different socio-political contexts of all four of the states involved, it is difficult for a discussion of all of them to go beyond a very general perspective and ultimately amounts to a depiction of two developments running parallel to each other. This is not intended to diminish the academic value of the articles by Lukowski, Black, Duchhardt and Blanning. Blanning in particular chose as a methodological middle way to concentrate on a very limited topic. Researchers such as Nicolas Harding, Helga Schnabel-Schüle and Andreas Gestrich opted for a thematic focus which lends itself to further discussion. Nicolas Harding approaches the relationship between Great Britain and Hanover from the perspective of media history and the history of ideas (Harding, *Hanover and the British Empire* 2007). How and when was the personal union discussed in both countries? Thus, Harding discussed topics of the political public in Great Britain and Hanover. Helga Schnabel-Schüle and Andreas Gestrich investigate the discourse on foreign rule, which was of

great significance not only for personal unions (Schnabel-Schüle, *Fremde Herrscher – fremdes Volk* 2006). In a narrow thematic approach, it is possible to integrate findings into larger thematic complexes – in these cases public, migration, images of the enemy. In this way, the phenomenon of "personal union" is not investigated in isolation. However, many aspects of a dynastic relationship are ignored by concentrating on a thematic focus.

15. ^ In this article, the electorate of Brunswick-Lüneburg is used synonymously with the electorate of Hanover. On the elevation of the electorate to a kingdom, see Klüber, *Acten des Wiener Congresses*, I, 1, pp. 64–67; Hundt, *Staaten* 1996; John, *Wunschbilder* 2003. For a comparative methodological approach to the dynastic connection between Prussia and Neuenburg-Neuchâtel, see Stribny, *Könige* 1998.
16. ^ The figures for London come from Inwood, *History of London* 1998, p. 269, and Sheppard, *London* 2006, pp. 363f.; the figures for the city of Hanover were taken from Hauptmeyer, *Residenzstadt* 1992, p. 190, and Brosius, *Industriestadt* 1994, p. 355.
17. ^ On the terminology, see *Terminologie Hills-Brockhoff / Matthäus, Die Kaisermacher* 2006; on the electoral dignity (*Kurwürde*) of Hanover see mainly Schnath, *Geschichte Hannovers* 1976–1982.
18. ^ Press, *Kurhannover* 1986.
19. ^ See Black, *Hanoverians* 2006; Königs, *Dynastie* 1998.
20. ^ Cannadine, *The last Hanoverian Sovereign* 1989.
21. ^ Harris, *Hanover and the public sphere* 2007.
22. ^ Oberschelp, *Kurhannover* 1977.
23. ^ Sophie's father was the Palatine elector Friedrich V. (1596–1632), who became famous during the Thirty Years' War as the "Winter King". On the succession, see Hatton, *George I.* 1978.
24. ^ The question of whether the Jacobite rebellions in 1715 and 1745 had any prospect of success is a matter of controversial debate; on this, compare the argumentation in Sankey, *Jacobite Prisoners* 2005, with Thompson, *Britain* 2006.
25. ^ For a discussion of this aspect, see Smith, *Georgian Monarchy* 2006, pp. 2–9.
26. ^ See Hatton, *George I.* 1978, or Smith, *Georgian Monarchy* 2006.
27. ^ Smith, *Georgian Monarchy* 2006, p. 40.
28. ^ Simms, *Victories* 2007, p. 83.
29. ^ See *ibid.* sowie Grieser, *Deutsche Kanzlei* 1952.
30. ^ Thompson, *Bothmer* 2005.
31. ^ Simms, *Victories* 2007, pp. 113f.; on these visits, see Richter-Uhlig, *Hof* 1992.
32. ^ Mößlang, *British Envoys* 2002, pp. XV, 249–287.
33. ^ Grieser, *Deutsche Kanzlei* 1952; Riotte, *Hannover in der britischen Politik*, pp. 51–59; Campbell, *The International Legal Relations*, *passim*.
34. ^ Campbell writes that the German Chancery is "a potential source of confusion" (*The International Legal Relations*, p. 184); compare the argumentations *ibid.* and in Riotte, *Hannover in der britischen Politik*, particularly pp. 54f.
35. ^ Riotte, *Hannover* 2005, pp. 164–168.
36. ^ Dann, *Hanover* 1991, pp. 6–11.
37. ^ See Aengeneyndt, *Okkupation* 1922.
38. ^ Drögereit, *Testament* 1937.
39. ^ See Wellenreuther, *Bedeutung; Blanning, George III.* 1989.
40. ^ See Schütz, *Gesandtschaft* 2007; Thompson, *Britain* 2006.
41. ^ Cf. Thompson, *Britain* 2006; Riotte, *Hannover* 2005.
42. ^ Harding, *North African Piracy* 2000.
43. ^ Riotte, *Hannover* 2005, pp. 31–35.
44. ^ See Engel, *Kurhannoversche Landesaufnahme* 1995. The maps of George II are in the British Library. I am very grateful to Peter Barber for bringing the large collection of maps of George II and George III to my attention.
45. ^ Achilles, *Georg III.* 2001.
46. ^ Püster, *Möglichkeiten* 1966.
47. ^ Harding, *Hanover* 2007, pp. 53–76.
48. ^ Riotte, *Hannover in der britischen Politik* 2005, pp. 61–64.
49. ^ *Ibid.*
50. ^ Schwertfeger, *Geschichte* 1907.
51. ^ On this, see the unpublished MA thesis by Riotte, *Der Ursprung der Königlich Deutschen Legion (1803–1806)*, Cologne University 1999.
52. ^ See the correspondence between Münster and Castlereagh in TNA, FO 34/15.
53. ^ Fahrmeir, *Revolutionen* 2010, particularly pp. 13–21.
54. ^ The phrase is a reference to Osterhammel's work *Die Verwandlung der Welt* published in 2009.
55. ^ Richter-Uhlig, *Hof* 1992, pp. 33–35, pp. 160–163.
56. ^ I am grateful to Peter Barber for bringing this to my attention.
57. ^ Simms, *Victories* 2007, *passim*.

58. ^ See Blanning, *Horrid Electorate* 1977.
59. ^ See *ibid.* and Riotte, *George III*. 2007.
60. ^ See Riotte, *House* 2008.
61. ^ See Biskup, *University* 2007.
62. ^ See Willenberg, *Distribution* 2008.
63. ^ Strube, *Lebenskultur* 1992, pp. 8–99.
64. ^ Haussherr, *Hardenberg* 1966, p. 659.
65. ^ See Lenthe, *Bericht* 1780.
66. ^ See Barmeyer, *Hof und Hofgesellschaft in Hannover*; *idem*, *Hof und Hofgesellschaft in Hannover*, and on this also: Smith, *Georgian Monarchy* 2006.
67. ^ See *ibid.* and for the later period: Roolfs, *Hof* 2005.
68. ^ Thurley, *Whitehall Palace* 2008, p. 9.
69. ^ Cf. Simms, *Victories* 2007, and particularly Ditchfield, *George III*. 2002.
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74. ^ See Biskup, *University* 2007.
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78. ^ On this, see Harris, *Hanover* 2007; Riotte, *Hannover* 2005.
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80. ^ Cf. *idem*, *Question* 1995; Riotte, *Hannover* 2005, pp. 147–162.
81. ^ On this, cf. Simms, *Victories* 2007; Thompson, *Britain* 2006; Riotte, *Hannover* 2005.
82. ^ Thompson, *Hanoverian Dimension* 2007, p. 87.
83. ^ Elliot, *Europe* 1992, p. 49; in the same vein: Harding, *Hanover* 2007, pp. 1f.
84. ^ On this, see Muhs, *Aneignung und Abwehr* 1998.
85. ^ Bertram, *The End of the Dynastic Union* 2007, p. 126.
86. ^ Riotte, *House* 2008, pp. 80f.
87. ^ *Idem*, *Hannover* 2005, pp. 209–215.
88. ^ See the 42 documents in the *Cambridge Papers, 1837: Addresses on 1st Duke's Departure from Hanover*.
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90. ^ I am very grateful to Dr. Rainer Cunz of the State Museum of Lower Saxony for bringing this to my attention. See also Wolf, *Unus* 2005, p. 98.
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92. ^ See Riotte, *House* 2008.
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94. ^ Gruner, *England, Hannover und der Deutsche Bund* 1986, p. 88.
95. ^ Riotte, *Hannover* 2005, pp. 193–208.
96. ^ On this, see the reports of the British ambassador John Duncan Bligh (1798–1872) in: Mößlang, *British Envoys* 2002, pp. 251–287; and the correspondence between Foreign Secretary George Hamilton-Gordon, Earl of Aberdeen (1784–1860) and Bligh in the *Aberdeen Papers*, ADD MSS 43101 fols. 1–4.
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Translated by: Niall Williams  
 Editor: Andreas Gestrich  
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## Eingeordnet unter:

European Networks › Dynastic Networks › Personal Union and Transfer

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



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



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



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#### Link #bp

- German Education and Science (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/models-and-stereotypes/germanophilia-and-germanophobia/bas-van-bommel-between-bildung-and-wissenschaft-the-19th-century-german-ideal-of-scientific-education>)

#### Link #bq

- William Pitt the Elder (1708–1778) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/34466316>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118792385>) ADB/NDB  (<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118792385.html>)

#### Link #br

- Charles James Fox (1749–1806) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/39462521>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118684353>) ADB/NDB  (<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118684353.html>)

#### Link #bs

- Model Europe (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/models-and-stereotypes/model-europe/heinz-duchhardt-model-europe>)

#### Link #bt

- Region (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/de/threads/crossroads/politische-raeume/politische-raumvorstellungen/martina-steber-region>)