

Call for Papers

10th International Tönnies Symposium

On the occasion of the publication of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (Community and society)*—the main opus of Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936)—as volume 2 of the edition of his complete works, the 10th International Tönnies Symposium will take place at Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, Germany, from 5 to 7 September 2019. The symposium (held in German and English) will be organized by the Ferdinand Tönnies Gesellschaft.

Titled *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft: Gemeinwohl und Eigeninteresse heute (The common good and self-interest today)*, the symposium will focus on Ferdinand Tönnies's thinking against the background of today's diverse social challenges and crises. It will also illuminate the wealth of topics he analyzed within the context of the history of science of the 19th and 20th centuries. Contributions from all scientific fields are welcome.

Proposals for lectures could address the following topics, for example:

- **Tönnies as a political thinker**

With respect to his political thinking, Ferdinand Tönnies is known to this day for his staunch opposition to National Socialism in his writings. But he was already active as a political publicist and critical commentator during the time of the German Empire, the First World War, and the Weimar Republic. He advanced realistic proposals that would enable broad consensus among democratic forces to defend the Weimar Republic. He also developed, among other things, an original theory of democracy which provides the foundation for strong constitutional jurisdiction and mass communications about public affairs organized according to public law, anticipating, as it were, the constitutional concept of Germany's Basic Law. What distinguishes Tönnies as a political thinker in his historical context; do his approaches point to the future?

- **Tönnies and the emerging social sciences I—The context of the natural sciences, esp. biology (positivism)**

Tönnies developed his sociology in a time of very rapid increase of knowledge in the natural sciences, in particular in the theory of evolution. He was a firm, but reflected positivist and simultaneously an opponent of sociobiological hubris. Does his work incorporate contributions to today's discourses within the sciences, scientific ethics, and society?

- **Tönnies and the emerging social sciences II—The context of philosophy and intellectual history**

Tönnies was convinced that sociology was "a philosophical science." Accordingly, he took on a broad range of philosophical thinking, from the Greeks to contemporary philosophy. Is a sociology grounded in this manner still timely? And, conversely, could it itself perhaps enliven the discussion between individual sciences and philosophy?

- **Tönnies and the ambivalence of modernity**

In particular in *Community and society*, Tönnies functions as a modern analyst of the ambivalences of the project of modernity. Can we benefit from his analyses with a view to the current debates about a) business ethics, b) membership and belonging to political associations, and c) sustainable use of natural resources?

- **The invisible Tönnies**

Tönnies is above all a classical sociologist and is perceived as such to this day—yet this kind of reception is not always made explicit, but often takes place in parallel lines of reasoning. This "invisible Tönnies" can be made visible.

- **Community—Virtuality—Public opinion**

In his criticism of public opinion, Tönnies attempts to understand sociologically how people form opinions. Today, we are discussing the dynamics of public opinion formation in the digital world, where the image of "community" is often conjured up. Social influencers boost their followers' loyalty using pseudo-community tricks. Phenomena such as filter bubbles and digital formats encouraging fake news counter Tönnies's idea of a court of public opinion and make it more relevant than ever in order to counteract the intentional entangling of information and disinformation. What would be the task of a legal framework for published opinion and public opinion under the conditions of the digital world?

- **Tönnies and the global community—International political sociology, international relations, and international law**

Is the concept of a global community imaginable—both in positive and in negative terms—on the basis of Tönnies's work? What is the role of the law in this context?

- **Findings and desiderata of research on Tönnies**

To date, nine volumes of the edition of the complete works of Tönnies have been published. Does the material now available change our view of Tönnies? Which topics and relationships are yet to be examined closely?

Please submit abstracts (max. 2,000 characters) in German or English to Sebastian Klauke, Scientific Officer, Ferdinand-Tönnies-Gesellschaft e.V., by 15 November 2018. ftg-kiel@t-online.de