

**Public sphere and *Gelehrtenpolitik* in Wilhelminian Germany:
Friedrich Paulsen (1846-1908) and Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936)**

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First draft

Preliminary remarks

I want to thank David Meola and Jason Young for accepting the proposal I submitted. A lot of changes (job, computer) and involuntary delays held the writing of this paper up, but this unfinished work gives me important incentives to do broader research on the role of academics in the public sphere (particularly Belgian historians through the 20th century in comparison with their French and German fellows), in the double perspective of a history of ideas and of a socio-historical approach linking conceptions and ideals with actions and realizations.

Introduction

In his *Habillationschrift, Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (1961), Jürgen Habermas described the emergence of a bourgeois public sphere in England, France and Germany at the end of the 18th century, characterized by the accessibility to literature, the growing number of newspapers and the apparition of discursive areas (Britain's coffee houses, France's salons and Germany's *Tischgesellschaften*). He pointed out three institutional criteria, which are preconditions for the emergence of a public sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*): disregard of status among the participants to the public sphere; domain of common concern; and inclusivity in the sense that everyone is able to have access to the discussed issues (which have significance for the society as a whole). If such sphere of rational and universalistic politics, free from both the economy and the State, was partly destroyed by the growth of capitalism in the 19th century and by the recurring attempt of the State to limit its influence (like in France under Napoleon III or in Germany under the Wilhelm II), it can be said that there still were some intellectuals or scholars who resisted!

Here I deal with two of them, Ferdinand Tönnies and Friedrich Paulsen, who contributed, as I will shortly outline, to the building or strengthening of a public sphere in Wilhelminian Germany in the sense of Habermas' definition. Their main focus is related to two ideas or programs they developed: the formation of The public opinion and the definition

of *Bildung* as moral and civic education. I will also briefly link these ideas and programs to their role as agent, mainly as university professor and as *Publizist*, by addressing some of their achievements, and by showing strategic and discursive aspects of their writings and by indicating some of the main topics they dealt with.

Why the particular focus on the philosopher and leading pedagogue, Friedrich Paulsen, and on the founder of the German sociology, Ferdinand Tönnies? Coming both from farming communities around the small town of Husum in North Frisia (Schleswig-Holstein now), they developed a narrow bond since Tönnies attended Paulsen's courses on epistemology and Kant's philosophy at the University of Berlin (1875-76). For more than thirty years they were in contact: their correspondence is testament to their mutual esteem, their research topics and their vision of social realities and developments. They shared interest in the scientific tradition established by Hobbes and Spinoza (it is under the influence of Paulsen that Tönnies began to read Hobbes). They shared the same philosophy of history: Paulsen agreed with Tönnies' analysis of the evolution from a community based on feelings of togetherness and on solidarity (*Gemeinschaft*) like in the family and neighborhood in pre-modern (rural) time, to a society grounded on voluntary association and contract (*Gesellschaft*) under the influence of capitalism and individualism linked to industrialization and urbanization in modern States.

Nevertheless, Paulsen and Tönnies didn't agree on all topics. They largely disagreed in the political arena: Paulsen was a defender of the monarchy (he was influenced by Ferdinand de Lasalle and his idea of social monarchy willing to integrate the proletariat into the new *Reich*) and Tönnies, who was influenced by Marxⁱ, stood closer to the Social democracy. They also had different opinions on the merits of the *Kaiserreich*'s governing elites (Paulsen placed hope in the social reform movement since the seventies while Tönnies was opposed to Bismarck's policies).

Despite these differences they both shared a subset of values as well as a lifelong mission, which lays in the case of Paulsen in pedagogy and in the case of Tönnies in social causes. Both belonged to the modernist's camp among university's professors who were very social aware and, as a consequence, concerned by educational matters: Tönnies as a defender of the *Volkshochschule* (which provided adults' education, especially among the lower classes) and Paulsen as a promoter of professional education (*Volksschule* and *Fortbildungsschule*), who also strove for the recognition of the equivalence between *Oberrealschule*, *Realgymnasium* and humanistic *Gymnasium*.

Research on Tönnies and Paulsen

Despite their distinctive qualities as social scientist and as philosopher, it seems that more attention has only recently been given to many aspects of their work.

Admittedly, Tönnies' bestseller *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* is viewed as a key sociological work, which was translated into English and French among other languages. However, his work on public opinion (*Kritik der öffentlichen Meinung*) was not seen as fundamental as his previous piece. Some critics point out the failure to analyze the role of pressure groups in the formation and manipulation of public opinion as well as the absence of quantitative and statistical discussion. Such deficiencies are mainly due to Tönnies' view of the nature and purpose of sociology: he adhered to the formal school of sociology, which emphasizes conceptual treatmentⁱⁱ. It is only recently that selected parts of this book have been translated into English (*Ferdinand Tönnies on Public Opinion: Selection and Analysis* by Hanno Hardt; Slavko Splichal, 2001).

One of Tönnies' commentators explains the lack of positive reception of the Nestor of German sociology by stating that: "Tönnies has clearly not received the scholarly attention that some of his contemporaries have come to enjoy. Among the reasons for this relative neglect are a somewhat archaic style of presentation, the complexity of his thought, and the fairly widespread accusations against his theoretical position (Adair-Toteff 1995). Also, Tönnies' ambition to combine competing schools of thought and the diffusion of his work over many publications in various matters of sociology did not promote an adequate reception of his thought. With some recently published English translations, the ambitious publication of a *Gesamtausgabe* in 24 volumes on behalf of the Ferdinand-Tönnies-Gesellschaft (founded in 1956), and continued analyses that apply Tönnies' thought, there are signs of a resurgence of interest in Tönnies' sociology, but its long-term impact is uncertain"ⁱⁱⁱ.

The intention of the *Gesamtausgabe* is of course to contribute to a better comprehension of this major sociologist who published more than 900 pieces, for a great part in very widespread reviews and newspapers. We can only hope that such an addition will fill the gap between the interest in the theoretical work of Tönnies, on one side, and his articles on applied sociology as well as his political writings on the other. Tönnies was more than a theorist: his writings addressed very different topics such as the dock workers' strike in Hamburg, voting patterns, criminality and suicide, but also ethical issues like in *Die Sitte* (1909) and political matters (see the numerous articles in newspapers and reviews, especially

in *Das freie Wort*: “Deutsch-französische Beziehungen”, “S’Gravenhage und Stuttgart: Zwei Weltkongresse”,).

As far as the research on Paulsen is concerned, the case is not much better. He was one of the most popular scholars in his time (more than 300 hundred publications, numerous editions of several works and translations into English, French, Russian, Chinese and Japanese), and was later almost better known for his educational writings than as a pure philosopher. His courses on ethics at the University of Berlin were ironically characterized by the well-known philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey as *Caféhausetik*^{iv}. Such a lack of recognition in philosophy is partly due to the fact that Paulsen didn’t want to build up a philosophical system: on the one hand, he was a commentator (see his work on Kant’s philosophy, for instance); on the other, he was a *philosophe engagé* preoccupied by the role of philosophy for daily life issues (See his *Einleitung in die Philosophie* and his *System der Ethik* in two volumes).

Paulsen’s major influence through the 20th century is related to his study on the history of the German universities, a work in 2 volumes which was first replaced by new studies in the 1960^s. His writings on education continued to be studied and were at times the subject of PhD^v. However, it seems that only at the 100th anniversary of his death that several books giving a more comprehensive view of Paulsen’s thought and action appear (see bibliography).

How did Paulsen and Tönnies deal with the ideas of public opinion and public sphere? If the first tackled the concept directly, the second tackled it more indirectly through his involvement in political and civic education.

The concept of public opinion by Tönnies: normative and descriptive characterizations

Public opinion is a subject which occupied Tönnies for many years from *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (1887) until the late twentieth (*Kritik der öffentlichen Meinung*, 1922 and other later articles). Tönnies’s main concern in this book, which gives a comprehensive analysis of a huge literature on public opinion, is to clarify conceptually the meanings given to this concept in different countries and at different times.

Tönnies acknowledges two main senses of public opinion, a descriptive one and a normative one: the public opinion as it actually functions in modern societies and the public opinion as a pure ideal-typical construct. As he wrote, “Ich begreife die öffentliche Meinung erstens als eine ‘gesellschaftliche’, also sonderlich moderne Form, zweitens als die wesentlich

geistig und moralische Form eines Gesamtwillens" (Tönnies, "Zur Theorie der öffentlichen Meinung", *Schmoller Jahrbuch*, 40, 1916, 393-422, here 395). Going from Christian Garve's definition of the public opinion as "Übereinstimmung vieles oder des größten Teils der Bürger eines Staates in Urteilen, die jeder einzelne, zufolge eines eigenen Nachdenkens oder seiner Erfahrungen, über einen Gegenstand gefasst hat", Tönnies considered the public opinion in an ideal-typical manner as claiming to establish norms that are general and valid in *Gesellschaft* („Zur Theorie der öffentlichen Meinung“, 415sq).

Such a distinction between a theoretical/normative sense and a historical/descriptive one also gives the structure of Tönnies' book on public opinion. Tönnies' attempt to create an ideal construct of public opinion was guided primarily by the desire to integrate the concept in his general sociology where public opinion was subsumed into social will (*Kürwille*) (Lindt/Gollin, Gollin, 186). The most important expression of the collective will in *Gesellschaft* is that of public opinion: "public opinion is the common way of thought, the corporate spirit of any group or association, in so far as theses opinions are built upon thought and knowledge rather than on unproven imaginings, beliefs or authority" (KOM, 77-78). Tönnies compared public opinion to a court of law whose rules and decisions constitute expressions of social norms and judgments.

Conventions are oriented primarily to economic life, and legislation to the political realm; public opinion is primarily concerned with the ethical aspects of social life (KOM, 228). In this sense, Tönnies' concept of public opinion is a normative one. "Tönnies believed that public opinion appropriately educated by means of a responsible and reformed press, could provide the foundation for a universal humanistic morality which would supplant the religious creeds of an earlier era" (Lindt/Gillian, 193).

Second, Tönnies' attempt in *Kritik der öffentlichen Meinung* tended to trace the changing manifestations of public opinion. It is related to what he called 'applied sociology', in which he sought to clarify the major historical forms of society and their transformations (Lindt/Gollin, Gollin, 184). Tönnies considered public opinion to be the true sovereign in the modern State, particularly in the democratic State, in so far as public opinion and the *Volkswille* coincide. Public opinion in the society (*Gesellschaft*) tended to replace what religion has been for the community (*Gemeinschaft*). The principle of "Meinen" is criticism; the principle of "Glauben" is piety (Tönnies, "Zur Theorie der öffentlichen Meinung", 396).

The origins of public opinion are in the urban culture and are linked to the apparition of the bourgeois or middle class, based on wealth or *Bildung* at the end of the 18th century. Such class is not closed but open; its ideas can be shared on the level of the whole nation. But

it is best represented by its elites: it is why Tönnies considered the *Gelehrtenrepublik* as the *eigentliche Subjekt* of the *Öffentlichkeit*, in other words the privileged agent of the public sphere (GG, 289; *Zur Theorie der öffentlichen Meinung*, 397)^{vi}. It means that the public opinion is in essence expressive of the thoughts and values of an educated and politically influential group that claimed to represent the whole society.

Analyzing the general features of public opinion, Tönnies distinguishes three states or degrees of cohesion (*Aggregatzustände*): solid, fluid and gaseous. In its **solid** state, public opinion is “a universal, irrefragable conviction of the public, which as the bearer of such convictions represents a whole nation or a will wider circle of ‘civilized mankind’” (KOM, 137). The clearest expression of the solid state lays in the convictions of the intellectuals, where it manifests itself as a “reasonable” *Weltanschauung*. The idea of personal freedom is an example for solid opinion. The solid public opinion may pass into a **fluid** state: the conviction then gains in intensity but loses in unity. Examples can be given where public opinion manifested only a limited consensus over time: for instance, the conception of work or of social bounds which differ in times and societies. Finally, it may assume a **gaseous** or vaporous form, a quickly changing state phenomenon (*öffentliche Meinung des Tages*), related to specific acts of individual and governments. This last type of public opinion is credulous and uncritical and is most directly influenced by the daily press while the solid type of public opinion is in closer touch with the monthly and quarterly reviews and books.

Moreover, Tönnies distinguishes between *a* public opinion, that is the opinion of a particular class, party, region, or locality and *The* public opinion, which refer to the consensus among divergent opinions within a nation. The second one is equivalent to the solid public opinion and the first one to the fluid or vaporous types.

The description of Tönnies’ conceptual framework on public opinion brings two main important aspects of interest: first, the normative role of public opinion which is directed to ethical and social norms; second, the role of the elites, and particularly the scholars, in the formation of public opinion. Both aspects are major topics in Paulsen’s work. Studying them from a philosophical and pedagogical perspective, they are related to *Bildung*. In the first case, the development of a (individual and collective) public opinion has to do with youth and adult’s education; in the second case, Paulsen considered the scholars as the natural representatives of *The* public opinion.

The concept of *Bildung* by Paulsen

I mentioned how much educational matters were at the center of Paulsen's interest. His writings, contacts and handling^{vii} made him a *Schulreformer*. He is seen as one of the introducers of modern languages' and natural sciences' to German school programs.

That said, Paulsen didn't conceive the *Bildung* as being only the acquisition of theoretical knowledge at school or university. Education has a much broader meaning and has to do with socialization; it means practical learning in and from the society: "Außer durch die häusliche Erziehung und den schulmäßigen Unterricht wirkt die Gesellschaft durch tausend Mittel und Wege formend und bilden (...): Straße und Spielplatz, Werkstatt und Wirtshaus, Zeitungen und Bücher, Theater und Schaustellungen, Gesellschaften und Vereine, Kirche und Predigt, alles, was auf die öffentliche Meinung und durch sie wirkt, formt von frühester Jugend an die Empfindung und das Urteil, die Anschauungen und der Willen" (Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts auf der deutschen Schulen und Universitäten vom Ausgang des Mittelalters bis zur Gegenwart*, 2 vol., Leipzig, 1885, V).

Along these lines, Paulsen was very concerned by the education of the workers in order to correct the effects of industrialization, which he described as a "System der Sklaverei" (Paulsen, *Ausgewählte pädagogischen Abhandlungen*, ed. by C. Menze, 1960, 361). Paulsen's pedagogical involvement also served a political purpose. Through education he wanted to preserve social peace and the Reich's institutions. One of his major concerns was to neutralize the potential for class struggle of the Social democracy: he looked for its "stillschweigend Heranziehung zur positiven Mitarbeit im Staat und in der Gemeinde" (Paulsen, *System der Ethik*, 416). One way was social reforms, another way was to educate the masses.

For Paulsen, education didn't mean that all young people should study (*Gleichheit der Bildung aller*); instead, it meant that all should have the right to study (equality of chances): it meant, "gleiche Chance für alle, sich zu einem Maximum persönlicher Kultur und sozialer Leistungsfähigkeit nach dem Maß ihrer Anlagen auszubilden" (Paulsen, quoted in Kellmann, 2010:91). In the same context, he underlined the equal value of *Kopfarbeit* and *Handarbeit*: such an idea reflects Paulsen's organicist conception of the society (*organische Volksgemeinschaft*), where all physical and intellectual needs of its members must be fulfilled.

His writings on *Bildung* were directed at at least three types of public: the student, the pupils, the youth - especially of the lower classes, and his fellow citizens. For each kind of public he wrote articles or books in which he supported social or educational reforms,

described institutional frameworks and gave advices on life's conduct. *Bildung* was first aimed at the moralization of public sphere and public opinion. Paulsen's main contribution to the creation of a solid public opinion in Tönnies' sense based on shared values was his work, *System of ethics* (*System der Ethik*). The book was a bestseller ("regelrechtes Kultbuch und Ratgeber", Kellmann, 2010: 86), which sits in many households between the Bible and the *Gesangbuch*. As Paulsen underlines in the preface, his *System of ethics* is not intended for philosophical experts, but for all those who are interested in the problems of practical philosophy and who are in need of a guide. His main purpose is the following: "(...) to bring the old truth^{viii} into living touch with the questions which occupy our age is, in my opinion, the most important function of modern ethics..." (*System of ethics*, preface of the English translation).

The *Bildung* at the core of this system has a comprehensive meaning and is intended to link thinking and handling: "A perfect human life is a life in which the *mind* attains to free and full growth, in which the *spiritual forces* reach their highest perfection in *thought*, *imagination* and *action*" (SE 277). Paulsen's system of ethics is full of practical wisdom: he discusses topics like self-control, bodily, economic and spiritual life, honor, justice, benevolence and veracity, the family, sociability and friendship, property and property rights, society and the social order, socialism and social reform, the nature and the origin of the State, forms of government, the function of the State and its limits.

In Paulsen's writings, university education was a major topic, not only related to the acquisition of knowledge but also to the political and civic education of the students: their first duty was "not to make but to study politics and political life" (Paulsen, *The German universities and university study*, 1906, 353ff)^{ix}. Such a study was important to acquire the intellectual tools to act properly in the society. The idea of a university education which Paulsen followed was also to bridge the gap between the masses and the educated classes (Paulsen, *The German universities*, 360). Another duty of the "academic world" was to keep alive the idea of the unity of humanity and the importance of values like law and government, science and art, morality and religion (intellectual goods which form the content and value of human life). In Paulsen's eyes, narrow nationalism may be pardonable in the masses but not among academics and educated people: they should feel themselves to be the representatives of a universal humanity (Paulsen, *The German universities*, 361).

In all these areas, *Bildung* strove to give readers the tools to act rationally and properly, to fulfill his duties in the family, at work and in the society. If need be, it also means to be critical of the State insofar as it threatens liberties (like the university's *Lehrfreiheit*) or

as it tends to be too chauvinistic (Paulsen disliked the “Hurrastimmung”, it means the military nationalism of his time).

Impact of the university professors on public opinion: Paulsen and Tönnies and *Gelehrtenpolitik*

In his bundle of articles published under the title *Gelehrtenpolitik, Sozialwissenschaften und akademische Diskurse in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Rüdiger vom Bruch highlights the distinctive quality of the *Gelehrtenpolitik* in the *Kaiserreich*. Scholars are no longer leaders of political opinion (*politische Meinungsführer*) like their predecessors in the *Vormärz*, but they wanted to handle as “überparteilich-objektiver Deutungsinstanz” (p. 22-23), a role they could play with the help of scientific objectivity. They tried to have an influence in the public sphere through their action in associations (*Vereine* and *Verbände*). Tönnies adhered to the *Gesellschaft für ethische Kultur* (founded in 1892) and Paulsen was a member of the *Realschulmännervereine* (created in 1875): in such places, they were able to discuss their views and suggested reforms.

Such involvement in associations pursuing cultural and political goals was again linked to their activity as *Publizist*. Paulsen and Tönnies wanted “to guide public opinion” (Kellmann, 2010: 40). Both were critical of the press, which they viewed as the main bearer of public opinion. As far as related to ephemeral opinion and also to fallacies, newspapers deserved the self-interest of groups and parties. Meanwhile, one of the most effective strategies to reach a large number of people was to actually write in newspapers. Paulsen and Tönnies used mainly the liberal ones (*Vossische Zeitung, Berliner Tageblatt, Münchner neuesten Nachrichten, ...*) to discuss current topics concerning education and political matters (see Paulsen, *Zur Ethik und Politik. Gesammelte Vorträge und Aufsätze*; see also Tönnies’ articles in *Ethische Kultur*).

The *Gelehrtenpolitik* of Paulsen and Tönnies was based on their conceptions of the social duty of the cultural elites in Wilhelminian society (the so-called mandarins as in Ringer’s book on *The decline of the German mandarins*). As we have seen, Tönnies made a clear distinction between public opinion (*öffentlichen Meinen*) and The public opinion (*wahre, wissenschaftlich geprägte öffentliche Meinung* (GG, 1887, 289). He was convinced that the educated people played a major role in the creation of the public opinion.

In his article, “Die deutsche Universitäten und die Volksvertretung” (PJJB, 89, 1897)^x, Paulsen made the distinction between natural people representation (*natürliche Volksvertretung*) and elected people representation (*gewählte Volksvertretung*), the first being

the academics and especially the university professors, the second being mainly representatives of parties defending particular interests. And Paulsen described the duty of the first, which are the true bearers of the *Volk* (keeping alive the knowledge of his values and traditions) as being the appropriate monarch's counselors. The actual ground of such assessment lays in the fact that university professors are in Paulsen's eyes the supporters of universal interests (the interests of the national society but also of the mankind in general).

As far as Tönnies is concerned, he became progressively less convinced by the leading role of the universities. In the new *Weimarer Republik*, Tönnies asserted "that (public opinion) will be influenced, changed, and occasionally disturbed from below" (Tönnies, *Kritik*, 1922, p. XX), especially as education expands.

Modeling public opinion: values and topics

In their wish to model public opinion, both Paulsen and Tönnies underlined the principles of the Enlightenment: rationality and participation to the public sphere through *Bildung*, which means acquisition of knowledge and moral values as well as judgment's formation.

At an internal political level

Paulsen was a defender of a 'enlightened' monarchy: "it would be of great service to the German people and the Hohenzollern dynasty to make the Prussian kings understand that they should revert to the traditions of philosophical free thinking (Enlightenment) ... and active philanthropy (socialism)" (letter from 28/7/1878, 35). Modeling the public opinion in the sense of Paulsen meant mainly to adjust people to the *Kaiserreich* by increasing the general educational level of his fellow citizens – it is the main goal of his *System der Ethik*.

In his writings Paulsen deals with a lot of topics and issues: most of them are related to *Bildung*, to politics in relationship with moral, to German intellectual tradition (like "das geistige Leben des deutschen Volk im 19. Jahrhundert", *Hilfe*, 7. Januar 1900). The argumentative way Paulsen generally deals with his subjects is a dialectic one: he opposes two principles (in this article, Goethe as the representative of the German *Geist* – "das Volk der Dichter und Denker" – and Bismarck as the representative of German force – "das Volk der Kämpfer, der gewaltigen Krieger") and tries to reconcile them: the German force has to be subordinate to German *Geist* in order to maintain the peace ("die Macht im Diensten von Ideen"). Most articles not only express their author's opinion but also indicate how to interpret the issue and how to transform it in a concrete way.

Modeling the public opinion in the sense of Tönnies meant mainly supporting the parties' system and contributing to the improvement of people's welfare. The place where Tönnies outlined his ideas on this last topic was the review *Ethische Kultur* published by the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für ethische Kultur*. It is through this society that Tönnies was involved in his most specific activity as a social reformer (Mitzman 1971 512ff). His articles testify that he tried to develop plans to counteract the ills of the *Gesellschaft* with the development of a community based on groups of families (cooperative model: partnerships – *Genossenschaften* - of families). He searched for social reforms where people are involved in their conception and in their implementation^{xi}.

Other demands of Tönnies are the abolition of the urban real estate, the prohibition of child labor, the limitation of working hours for women and youth, the inspection of factory conditions, a total state insurance against all forms of personal emergency, and also the “greatest possible increase in agricultural activity, which is physically and morally healthier, and serves the needs of all, at the cost of industrial and commercial activities, and of personal services, which to a great extent only serve the luxury of the few” (“15 Thesen”, EK, 1895, 310, quoted by Mitelman, 1971: 514).

At an international level

Both Tönnies and Paulsen were promoters of a peaceful world in which individuals and nations tried to learn from one another.

The articles of Tönnies in *Das freie Wort* in the years 1905-1907 dealt with current issues (*S'Gravenhage und Stuttgart: Zwei Weltkongresse; Französisch-deutsche Beziehungen, ...*). In each of them, Tönnies tried to reconcile his allegiance to Germany with his concern for world peace.

Another general feature of Tönnies' writings, which characterizes several scholarly works, is his steady concern for comparative analysis: it expresses Tönnies' conviction on the necessity to learn more about other countries. The *Kritik der öffentlichen Meinung* gives a comparative analysis of the historical evolution and of the characteristics and interrelations of the three states of public opinion (solid, fluid and gaseous) in several western nations: the United States, Great Britain, France and Germany. Another study, *Die Entwicklung der sozialen Frage bis zum Weltkrieg* (1926), analyzes this social issue in Germany, in France and in Great Britain.

As far as Paulsen is concerned, a major issue is also the maintenance of peace and the promotion of the idea of a European *Völkergemeinschaft* in which each nation has its place.

Two of his main concerns on that topic are the learning of foreign languages (especially French and English) and the mediating role of Germany between East and West, North and South of Europe (See his articles in *Zur Ethik and Politik*, especially “Deutsche Bildung-Menschheitsbildung”, first published in *Blätter für die Erhaltung des Deutschtums im Auslande*, 1903).

Conclusion

How far do the ideas of Paulsen and Tönnies fulfill Habermas’ conditions for the construction of a public sphere go?

Unlike the Bourgeois public sphere of the 18th century, made up of a *Geselligkeit* to which potentially all individuals were able to participate, Paulsen and Tönnies attributed to the universities a particular role in the constitution of the *Öffentlichkeit*. They themselves took very seriously their role as social leaders, a position which was called *Gelehrtenpolitik*. It is a fact which illustrates the growing role of the university education for the sake of professional concerns in the second part of the 19th century. It is also a fact which shows how much the scholars insisted on the preservation of a critical public sphere against the attempts of the German State to limit universities’ autonomy (see Aron’s case) or to intervene in the definition of school programs (the creation of the *Historikertage* in 1893 is partly due to the opposition of German historians to Wilhelm instructions concerning national history).

The criterion of a common social concern is, in the case of Paulsen and Tönnies, mainly illustrated by the ideas of (moral) education and welfare. Both issues were at stake in different discursive forms: scholarly books, reviews’ articles, newspapers’ articles. Furthermore, they intended to reach a lot of different publics.

Finally, the criterion of inclusivity is implemented through *Bildung* and through the principle of an equal access to higher education for everyone.

All these aspects show that the public sphere in Tönnies’ and Paulsen’s views needed to be enlightened by the universities as spaces of knowledge and values. They understood themselves as representatives of this role in the sense they supported reforms adjusting the school to the needs of the society and tackling the issue of workers’ living and working conditions.

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ⁱ See the introduction to *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*.

ⁱⁱ This remark does not apply to all the writings of Tönnies. He made a lot of what he called sociographical studies on topics with statistical treatment. Examples to give.

ⁱⁱⁱ See Deflem, Mathieu. 2001. "Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936)." In the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, edited by Edward Craig. London: Routledge. <http://deflem.blogspot.be/2001/08/tonnies-ferdinand-1855-1936-2001.html>:

^{iv} Quoted by Kellmann XXX This teaching gave birth to the *System der Ethik*.

^v Examples to give.

^{vi} Compare with: The public opinion refers "to the educated, politically articulate public which I consider as if it were crystallized in the conception of the *Gelehrten-Politik*" (KOM, 153-154).

^{vii} Paulsen got a full professorship in Berlin only after 20 years: he declined all the propositions from other German universities such as Kiel, Leipzig, Bresslau, München, for he wanted to stay in the capital, near the center of decisions.

^{viii} By the 'old truth' Paulsen means the teleological conception of morality which governed the thinking of most philosophers (Aristote to Kant).

^{ix} The tools for the "training of the political judgment" are not only historical works but also the "literature of the day" such as the newspapers, not only one but many (exercise of the critical judgment). Another way is the attendance upon political meetings (the sessions of the imperial parliament inclusive).

^x The background of this article seems to be the debate about the Aron's case.

^{xi} Voir *Die Philosophie der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen*, ed. by R. Schmidt, Leipzig, Meiner (1922), p. 32: he maintained that he was an advocate for social reforms as that his interest was always working to change the economic conditions so that people could lead healthy physical and rewarding spiritual lives.