

# Ferdinand Tönnies Beneath and Beyond Post-Colonial Sociology

Or: Das Kind mit dem Bade ausschütten

David Inglis<sup>1</sup>

**Zusammenfassung:** Es ist unklug, “das Kind mit dem Bade auszuschütten”, wie ein altes Sprichwort besagt. Was Ferdinand Tönnies betrifft, haben Kritiker lange Zeit das Kind mit dem Bade ausgeschüttet, und das setzt sich bis heute fort. Dieser Aufsatz thematisiert mögliche postkoloniale Zurückweisungen der Soziologie Tönnies’. Er versucht zu zeigen, dass Tönnies und sein soziologisches Denken subtiler, komplexer und interessanter sind, als es verzerrt negative Bewertungen seiner Ideen erfassen können. Er sollte nicht aus vereinfachenden und fadenscheinigen Gründen aus dem soziologischen Kanon gestrichen werden. Der Aufsatz plädiert dafür, Tönnies’ Soziologie nicht als Feind der postkolonialen Anliegen in der Soziologie zu betrachten, sondern als einen potenziellen Verbündeten derselben. Dies geschieht, indem Tönnies als kreativer post-kantianischer kosmopolitischer Denker betrachtet wird, dessen Kategorien in sensibler Weise auf nicht-westliche und postkoloniale Kontexte, wie z.B. in Indien, angewandt werden können, und dessen Konzepte potentiell weiterhin Interpretationen imperialer und kolonialer Phänomene beleben können.

**Stichworte:** Tönnies, postkolonial, klassische Soziologie, Kanon, Imperialismus, Indien

**Abstract:** It is unwise ‘to throw the baby out with the bath water’, as an old saying goes. Critics have for a long time been throwing the baby out with the bath water as far as Ferdinand Tönnies is concerned, and this continues today. This essay is focused on potential post-colonial dismissals of Tönnies’ sociology. It seeks to show that Tönnies and his sociological thought are more subtle, complex, and interesting than any caricatured negative appreciation of his ideas can grasp. He should not be ejected from the sociological canon on simplifying and spurious grounds. The essay makes a case for Tönnies’ sociology not as an enemy of post-colonial concerns in sociology but as a potential ally of them. This is done by considering Tönnies as a creative post-Kantian cosmopolitan thinker, one whose categories can be applied in sensitive ways to non-Western and post-colonial contexts, such as in India, and one whose concepts can potentially continue to animate interpretations of imperial and colonial phenomena.

**Keywords:** Tönnies, post-colonial, classical sociology, canon, imperialism, India

1 David Inglis is Professor of Sociology at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki.

## Introduction

Thomas Murner's satirical book of verses, *Narrenbeschwörung* (The Conjurament of Fools), is not the first text that social theorists today reach for, dating as it does from the year 1512. But they should consider reading it, for it contains some valuable advice for them.

Its eighty-first chapter has the heading "Das kindt mit dem bad vß schitten". This translates into modern English as "to throw the baby out with the bath (water)". It is the first known written version of this German proverb, which would become popular in the UK and the United States in later times. It is a warning to those foolish persons who, in seeking to rid themselves of something perceived to be bad, destroy whatever good there is in it too (Mieder/Hand 1991).

Every age invents its own versions of Ferdinand Tönnies (König 1955, Bond 2009, 2013a). Some critics have for a long time been throwing the baby out with the bath water as far as Tönnies is concerned, and they continue to do so. It is against that set of tendencies that this essay is ranged. I will focus on actual and possible post-colonial dismissals of Tönnies' sociology. I will seek to show that the case of Tönnies is more subtle, complex, interesting, and flexible than any caricatured negative appreciation of his ideas can grasp.

## Tönnies' Shifting Reputations

To the extent that he continues to be heard of outside of specialist scholarly circles, Ferdinand Tönnies is most known as the progenitor of the distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (1957 [1887]). More people are probably aware of his substantive use of the distinction than of his other deployments of it. In the first case, he used it to describe historical shifts in Europe in two distinct periods, the transition from Rome as a small city-state to the centre of a huge empire, and the transition from feudalism to modernity in northern Europe. Both involved shifts from a situation whereby tightly bound, affectively based groups were the main sorts of social formations, to one where rationally calculating, selfish individuals occupied centre-stage in the social order (Tönnies 1957 [1887]: 234). "The implication is that the transition could also happen at other times and in other parts of the world." However, Tönnies also understood the *Gemeinschaft* / *Gesellschaft* distinction to involve ideal-typical models that could be applied to *any* social circumstances. One might examine a particular social order and find within it mixtures of *Gemeinschaft* and of *Gesellschaft*.

*Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* are themselves derived from two more fundamental notions. Tönnies regards two different types of 'will' as the fundamental building-blocks of human reality. These are the ways in which an individual conceptualises the world around them, especially other people, and acts within and upon it. Tönnies' two types of 'will' are *Wesenwille* (natural will) and *Kürwille* (rational will). While the former involves a judgment as to the intrinsic value of an act rather than its practicality, the latter involves a conscious choice of specific means for the pursuit of a specific end. While *Wesenwille* – characterised by strong affectivity and group-oriented feelings – describes the typical psychological and social-relational dispositions that constitute *Gemeinschaft*, *Kürwille* describes dispositions – involving high levels of individualistic calculation – that constitute *Gesellschaft*.

In the post-WWII period, the debate in German-speaking intellectual life over Tönnies' posthumous reputation partly took the form of responses to Georg Lukacs' (1980 [1962]) claim that his sociology was an expression of broader irrational politics of the kind that made possible, and was extended by, the Nazi regime, and so should be rejected *in toto*. Tönnies himself had already rejected before the war the romanticising and ultra-right interpretations of *Gemeinschaft* that had circulated in the first few decades of the 20th century (Samples 1987). However, the bellicose and anti-Allies tone of Tönnies' writings during WWI could be held up as evidence for the prosecution (Mitzman 1971, Bond 2024a).

In the mid-1960 s, the eminent social scientist Ralf Dahrendorf (1965) also helped to create a negative intellectual atmosphere around Tönnies. Conversely, various attempts to rehabilitate his sociology were made in the decades after WWII. This happened both in Western Europe, where his liberal, Social Democratic, and eventually explicitly anti-Nazi credentials were asserted (Bond 2013b). Some leftist intellectuals, notably Fritz Pappenheim (1959), regarded Tönnies as a viable source for theorising social issues of the day (Klauke 2021). Intellectual rehabilitation was also done, but using different sorts of argumentation, in the Eastern bloc, especially by Rudolph (1968, 1995), where Tönnies relatively high level of compatibility with, and indebtedness to, Marxism were stressed (Klauke 2024). In Rudolph's (1995: 223) book version of his original work from the 1960s, he also noted Tönnies' positions against colonialism and racial discrimination (Klauke 2024: 93).

The various sorts of rehabilitators generally won that reputational battle, such that Tönnies could become once again mentioned in the respectable company of the other 'European' founders of the discipline of sociology (Stafford 1994). Lukacs nowadays is generally viewable as having wildly overstated the case for throwing out both baby and bath water.

Today, however, another two sets of developments, contradictory of each other, are at work in Anglophone sociological circles. On the one hand, going beyond presentations of Tönnies to English-speaking audiences of a generation or so earlier (Mitzman 1971, Cahnman 1973), a small number of dedicated scholars have worked to bring Tönnies' ideas back into widespread circulation in English-speaking sociology (e.g. Bond 2009, 2012, 2013a/b/c, 2024a/b, Adair-Toteff 1995, 2016, 2023).

On the other hand, another and much broader trend threatens to undermine any sort of Tönnies renaissance in such circles. It brings further controversy over the nature and status of Tönnies' politics and his sociological conceptual system, bringing in its wake a potentially fractious debate which could become quite as virulent as the earlier polemics mentioned above.

The latter trend reflects much wider polemics about the allegedly colonialist and imperialist, arrogantly and blindly metropolitan, falsely universalizing, naively 'Western', chronically 'European', and deeply conceptually parochial nature of what was once unproblematically taken as 'classical sociology'. One of the major points of departure for both post-colonial sociology and the de-colonising of sociology movement is the de-constructive critique of the Eurocentric canon of the 'great sociologists' of the past, and the re-construction of which thinkers and writings should be taken as the contemporary discipline's major antecedents and reference points (Connell 1997, 2010, Bhabra 2007a/b, 2016, Kemple/Mawani 2009, Boatcă/Costa/Gutiérrez-Rodríguez 2010, Seidman 2013, Santos 2016, Alatas/Sinha 2017, Al-Hardan 2018, Go 2023).

Critics of broadly post-colonial and/or anti-Western dispositions, especially those operating in the English-speaking intellectual world, now would tend to regard Tönnies – if they

think of him at all – with a mixture of disdain and dismissal. His sociology would be taken to be representative and expressive of the various sins of broader ‘classical sociology’: it is replete with unthinking Eurocentric biases, far too rooted in Global North assumptions to be of any use there still today, let alone to be of any ongoing utility in the Global South, and, with its apparently wholly endogenous account of social transformation towards ‘modernity’ within ‘Europe’ erroneously taken in isolation from the rest of the world, utterly blind to the imperial and colonial social, political, cultural, and economic conditions which produced it (Connell 2007). There would be nothing lost, but indeed much to be gained, in the decolonising throwing out of this particular colonialist baby with its imperialist bath water (Bhambra/Holmwood 2021).

It is not Tönnies himself who is usually the specific object of these critics’ righteous ire. Such critics are much more focused on what they take to be more major figures, who are seen to be in more urgent need of being decentred, taken out of the sociological canon, and in intellectual terms toppled like statues of colonial rulers and slavers. The likes of Comte, Durkheim, Marx, and Weber are far more on the receiving end of the storm of criticism than is Tönnies (Connell 1997, Go 2013a, 2013b, Bhambra/Holmwood 2021).

Instead of being singled out for critique, Tönnies’ name is much more likely to be mentioned in passing while apparently more important, or at least dominant, figures of the past are excoriated. A recent textbook which summarises the current conventional wisdom of post-colonial sociology in the English language does not engage with Tönnies, while concentrating its rather simple and repetitive critique on what are now the obvious targets and usual suspects, namely Marx, Durkheim and Weber (Bhambra/Holmwood 2021). Oftentimes, he is not explicitly mentioned by name in the post-colonial and anti-Western taking down of the ‘classical sociologists’ in general. Nonetheless, he would be assumed to be guilty by association with his nowadays more famous compeers, tacitly understood to breathe the same fetid intellectual air as those bathetic apologists of so-called European superiority (Go 2013a, 2013b, 2016a, 2016b, 2020).

Even within a major source of more serious critique of classical sociology, undertaken within the paradigm of the ‘new’ sociology of empires (Steinmetz 2013: 84, 134, 137), Tönnies is mentioned only passing. Go briefly mentions Tönnies’ presence at the Congress of Arts and Sciences during the St. Louis World’s Fair of 1904, which on Go’s account was a thoroughly imperialist, racist and Western triumphalist affair:

The European speakers were Ferdinand Tönnies and Gustav Ratzenhofer. The roster of American speakers included Lester Frank Ward, Franklin Giddings, George Edgard Vincent, William I. Thomas, and Edward A. Ross – all of whom would later take their turn as presidents of the American Sociological Society formed the subsequent year. They gave their lectures at the Congress at the very same time that fairgoers outside were watching reenactments of the Boer War and living exhibits of Filipinos eating dog. (Go 2013c: 84)

Tönnies is thereby condemned by association and insinuation. In the same volume, Zimmerman (2013) writes thus:

The tension between the primitive and the rationalized, seen in German sociologists from Ferdinand Tönnies to Georg Simmel to Max Weber to Jürgen Habermas, emerged in the decades before World War I in conjunction with practical discussions among national economists about internal colonization in the German East and overseas colonization in German Africa. These national economists not only founded the discipline of sociology in Germany but also shaped the discipline in the United States through, perhaps most important, Robert E. Park and the Chicago School ... Although not every German sociologist supported German colonial efforts, colonialism nonetheless sustained the

emergent discipline intellectually and institutionally. Traces of German colonialism thus remain present in much German sociology. (Zimmerman 2013: 167–168)

Whether the latter claim holds water or not is an open question. But it is clear that within this sort of intellectual milieu and with its typical modes of presentation of the past, no-one today is likely to champion Tönnies as an avatar of projects of de-colonising sociology (Meghji 2021). Instead, he is much more likely to be thrown wholesale out with the bath water. This is so in two ways, each of which reinforces the other.

First, given that the critics often do not even bother to name him directly in their polemics, let alone engage with his wider *oeuvre* in any detail, the whole life's work is generally reduced to his production of the terms *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. These in turn are (wrongly) conflated with other, ostensibly similar dyads, especially Durkheim's (1889) conceptions of mechanical and organic solidarity (Bendix 1967, Bond 2024a). This is a conflation that Tönnies himself rejected, and that present-day Tönnies' scholarship obviously must reject. Any subtleties of interpretation and usage, by Tönnies himself or by later interpreters, are passed over in silence, as if they did not exist. A complex body of work, elaborated over several decades, is thereby reduced to a few stereotypes, making it so much easier to reject in total.

Second, Tönnies can also be ejected from the canon in a wholesale manner because he is assumed to be simply the same as, and certainly no better than, the more prominent figures also being expelled. Having been damned by association with the bigger villains, there is no need to consider his case in any further detail and a negative sentence can be passed. Thereby his reputation is sunk, not even because of targeted condemnation, but simply as the result of collateral damage.

There is a minority of more acute post-colonial and anti-Western critics who actually may bother to read the original texts of the figures they are criticising, at least in (probably imperfect) translation (Steinmetz 2013, 2014). The majority, however, seem to have very imperfect knowledge about their objects of criticism. Why become an expert in the detailed ins and outs of a given thinker if the whole point is ultimately to reject them on general or *a priori* grounds? The cultivation of expertise in such persons would be a complete waste of time.

Conversely, becoming an expert may make one somewhat too reluctant to discern intellectual flaws where they exist, including those of the sort that more considered post-colonial critique may identify. For example, the recent monograph-length reintroduction of Tönnies to English-speaking audiences by Adair-Totef (2023) impresses with its great scholarship but does not take on post-colonial and de-colonial criticism of his thought, thereby leaving the question open as to what sort of use Tönnies' thinking may or may not possess for the purposes of sociological theorising today.

A middle-ground position would involve defending a figure like Tönnies where one reasonably thinks they deserve it, and admitting flaws and problems where, on an open-minded appraisal, they are seen to exist (Inglis 2026 forthcoming). There is no point in wholesale rejection of post-colonial thinking and its typical modes of critique of Western sociology, for to do that would be to throw out another baby and its bath water (Felsch 2023). Giving post-colonial and de-colonial appraisals of 'classical sociology' a fair hearing (McLennan 2003, 2014), while not slavishly buying into all of their claims and not accepting all of their assumptions, is what is required (Inglis/Almila 2020). It is in that vein that I will mount a partial defence of Tönnies from some actual and potential post-colonial critique.

## Acknowledging Complexity

If post-colonial and de-colonial criticisms of so-called ‘classical sociology’ become too generalising, involving un-nuanced and blanket criticism of all aspects of all thinkers hitherto consecrated as members of the Western canon, then they risk creating their own kinds of epistemological myopia and historical silencing. They would fail to appreciate how some versions of classical sociology were more attuned to, and sometimes explicitly critical of, imperial and colonial matters than may otherwise be admitted (Smith 2022).

One could make such an argument concerning the appreciation of colonial Others that pertained in early 20<sup>th</sup> century French sociology and anthropology, which led to self-critical awareness of the limits of Western sociological concepts previously dominant in the discipline, and a concomitant rethinking of what the nature and bases of ‘modernity’ were (Kurasawa 2003). Contentions as to the attuning of major figures to colonial matters are perhaps particularly abstruse and conflicted when they are applied to the critical appreciation of Marx (1969) and Marxism, which have long and very complicated relations to imperial and colonial phenomena (Anderson 2010, Chibber 2013).

Moreover, the ethnicities of some of the major figures in the Western canon raise further complicating issues. Such matters are made even more acute by the fact that some of the major Western sociological figures, including such famous luminaries as Durkheim and Simmel were of Jewish extraction (Stoetzler 2014). They faced antisemitic prejudice in various forms during their lifetimes, and their sociological perspectives embody very complexly mediated relations to their own, often challenging, social circumstances. Consequently, they cannot simply be lumped together with more obviously complacent or triumphalist Eurocentric thinkers of the time. Their Jewishness, in terms of how others saw them and how they saw themselves, involves matters of some subtlety that should not be ignored in any account of them and the texture of their sociological imaginings (Dawson 2021).

Clearly, more dominant figures such as Max Weber hailed from the upper reaches of dominant ethnic groupings of their time, partly accounting for their ethnocentric biases. But not all such personages enjoyed such privileged positions within European societies, and this affected the nature of their sociological visions in complicated ways (Smith 2022)

Tönnies presents a rather nuanced case in this regard. He came from a Frisian peasant community in a peripheral rural region located between Germany and Denmark (Mitzman 1971). This was a socio-biographical situation which was one of the bases for his precarious position within the German academic system for much of his working life, and generative of his political sympathies for underdog groups. He did not hail from a central or metropolitan environment, nor did he occupy any sort of ascendant social position within Germany. He was not by any means simply a dominant figure from a dominant social grouping within the country. His sociological vision expresses that situation in multiply-layered ways (Adair-Toteff 2023). The title of Uwe Carstens’ (2013) book nicely locates Tönnies as being both Frisian and “Weltbürger” – cosmopolitan citizen of the world – and therefore existing intellectually betwixt and between small-scale, delimited *Gemeinschaft* and boundless global *Gesellschaft*.

Bond (2013a) speculates that the affinity Tönnies had with Adam Ferguson’s account of the development of civil society is partly rooted in the biographical fact that Ferguson grew up in the southernmost part of the Scottish Highlands, and to some extent his theorising of pre-

modern and modern social orders reflected that experience (Brewer 2007). Both thinkers “emerged from the relatively backward periphery of a prosperous civilization” (Bond 2013a: 144). The history of Scottish resentment towards control from London has certain similarities with the inhabitants of Schleswig finding rule from Berlin problematic in various ways.

One could add in a post-colonial vein that both societies in each thinkers’ adulthoods were peripheries of the central regions of the core countries of burgeoning overseas empires, in one case late 18<sup>th</sup> century England, and in the other case Prussian-dominated unified Germany in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Nonetheless, none of the sorts of detailed considerations of social, geographical, and historical locations and located-ness noted above can easily make their way into the post- and de-colonial critique machine. Neither Ferguson nor Tönnies were straightforwardly ‘metropolitan’ thinkers in the sense that post-colonial and related thinking typically operate with (Connell 2010). These issues remain awkward facts that post-colonial critique cannot and should not just chew up and spit out regardless.

Post-colonial critique is complicit in the ingoing construction of an entity it calls ‘classical sociology’ (Connell 1997), defining this as simply and homogeneously ‘European’ or ‘Western’, seeking its deconstruction or destruction, at the same time as it reproduces this entity. In so doing, it omits to account for social and intellectual complexities, both within the countries where such sociology was produced, and in relations between them and those of the rest of the world. The Germany of Tönnies’ time is an acute case in point here. As Manjapra (2014) points out, formally unified late 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany exhibited massive complexity politically and ideationally. This did not just involve tensions deriving from Prussian dominance of the rest of the territory. It also was characterised by politico-intellectual divisions among German thinkers, as to how like or unlike Germany was, or should be, from the Western European imperial powers of Britain and France.

It was eminently possible for ‘Germany’ to be constructed as something wholly antithetical to the latter, both apparently exhibiting more idealistic cultural traits than the money-grubbing capitalistic English in their empire, and more strong orientations towards community than did the individualistic rationalism of the French in theirs. Many German speakers “increasingly identified with an anti-Western and Asianate Europe that ferociously proclaimed its distance and superiority vis-à-vis British and French civilization[s]” (Manjapra 2014: 291).

Manjapra (2014: 291) interprets Tönnies as in effect drawing “a line straight down the continent, vindicating German ‘community’ (Gemeinschaft) over Western European ‘society’ (Gesellschaft)”. While this oversimplifies complex matters of Tönnies’ political sympathies and epistemological orientations, it does nonetheless point to the location of Tönnies within a broader splintering of opinion in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as to what ‘Europe’ was or should be. It was certainly not the homogeneous bloc of some present-day post-colonial imaginings.

Simultaneous with the development of German critique of the perceived flaws of British and French modes of social organisation, both domestically and in their empires, went a growing sense of Germany being a superior role model to be followed and viewed sympathetically, which arose among anti-colonial intellectuals within the French and, especially, British empires. Among anti-British thinkers in India, Germany was both a rising European powerhouse that was to be admired as an alternative to the British one, and a great intellectual storehouse to be entered into and learned from (Manjapra 2014). This group included some Indian students of sociology, who travelled to Germany to study with German sociological masters such as Sombart. In so doing, they imbibed the intellectual atmosphere which was in part influenced by Tönnies (Repp 2000).

The current vogue for finding alternative forms of social theory in 20<sup>th</sup> century anti-colonial thought, as championed by the likes of Go (2020), does not properly account for the fact that already in some ways Tönnies' thought was a contributing factor to an intellectual atmosphere which an earlier generation of anti-colonial intellectuals had already taken inspiration from. Such genealogies of intellectual influence, especially those of a more subterranean and indirect character, need to be brought to the surface, in order to combat simplifying narratives as to the allegedly homogeneously colonialist and imperialist characteristics of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century sociology in Germany, and elsewhere too.

## On the Complexity of Intellectual Sources

One may from a post-colonial position characterise the thinking of any given thinker as 'Eurocentric' on the basis of demonstrating that all of the thought-tools that they utilised were provided by European thinkers, all of whom themselves were deeply Eurocentric in their thinking too. Thus, the very intellectual fabric woven out of previous ideas can be proven to be Eurocentric through and through. On the face of it, Tönnies would seem to be easily characterisable in this regard. The intellectual resources he drew upon are very much either of the standard European social scientific canon, such as Hobbes, or very much of their time, like Sir Henry Maine, and whose appreciation of non-Western societies is hugely limited by both available sources and by the prejudices of their scholarly habitus (Bond 2013a).

However, matters are again much more complicated than a simplifying post-colonial critique can or would admit. The great and nuanced indebtedness to Marx already complicates the picture, both in terms of how critically German – and more broadly modern European – society is characterised by Tönnies, and of the ways in which he could represent the European empires, both the British and French ones, and the developing German one. Ambivalence and acute awareness of great contradictions mark Marx's own thoughts on matters of empires and colonies, and anyone indebted to Marx would inherit at least some of those ambivalences and ambiguities (Smith 2022).

To the extent that Tönnies' sociological system is based upon the fundamental distinction of *Wesenwille* and *Kürwille*, it is less a social-structural one than one oriented to the study of modalities of action by persons and the corresponding characteristic modes of interaction between them. The concept of 'will' comes out of Nietzsche (Rudolph 1990) and beyond him, Schopenhauer and the latter's reworking of Kant (Bond 2013a). Schopenhauer's concept of will was also inspired by what the philosopher found in East Asian philosophies (Brobjer 2004). Thus, in an indirect manner, Tönnies' system has some non-Western roots, that play in interesting, if subterranean ways, with his more obviously 'European' intellectual sources. This is a feature of his sociology certainly unremarked upon by post-colonial criticism, for it does not fit the template of characterising everything within classical sociology as simply and exclusively 'European'. Moreover, the indebtedness of some of Tönnies' thinking about the human will and other phenomena to Spinoza – a figure both Jewish and in some senses an intellectual renegade as far as some Western intellectual and religious orthodoxies were concerned – also does not fit any neat and homogenising account of the supposedly purely 'Western' nature of classical sociology's intellectual antecedents (Ferraresi 2017).



Complexity also reigns with regards to Tönnies' intellectual relations to another very major figure of the European philosophical and social scientific canons, Immanuel Kant (Bond 2013a). A post-colonial debate has raged over the last two decades about the Eurocentric biases and racist overtones of the lineage of European cosmopolitan thought (Bhambra/Narayan 2016). An important part of those debates has considered how Kant's cosmopolitan philosophy may actually be a deeply Eurocentric form of intellectual parochialism. Kant's broader intellectual projects in the human sciences have also been accused of being fundamentally flawed by the author's racism, involving his disparagement of non-white groups and setting up of white people as the progressive drivers of human history (Uimonen 2020). The ongoing debates consider how Kant's racial biases might "infect his best-known philosophical writings", and whether the wider *oeuvre* must be "be rejected as a set of tainted goods" (Mensch 2017: 125). The debates are too convoluted, involving subtleties of interpretation and counter-interpretation, to allow clear-cut condemnations or absolutions of Kant. My own view is that Mensch (2017: 144) is correct to say that, while "Kant is certainly impugned" by failing to observe his own universalising moral standards, "the standards themselves are not axiomatically tainted as well".

Samples (1987) notes the complex position of Kantian political philosophy in Tönnies' thought, as regards the status and nature of individualism within modern forms of community association (also Bond 2013a). Samples (1987: 262) reads Tönnies' major contribution to neo-Kantian political thinking as involving his "indicating the ways in which modernity threatens its own ideals of freedom and democracy". The Kantian background to Tönnies' theorising is certainly Eurocentric in some ways, but not necessarily in all ways, nor is it reducible to Kant's own tendencies towards racism, at least in some texts and in some parts of his career. Yet some post-colonial critics find all such thinking hopelessly flawed by the original Kantian taints (Giri 2018). This is a position that seems to me more to do with importing a sense of irredeemable original sin into the narration of the history of thought than it is of carefully drawing up a balance-sheet of what remains workable today in historical thinkers and what should be jettisoned (Mensch 2017).

I have argued at length elsewhere that a non-Eurocentric, and certainly non-racist, account of globalization, understood as the global spread of *Gesellschaft*, can be reconstructed today from Tönnies' writings (Inglis 2009). I find evidence of a relatively direct influence of Kant's cosmopolitan writings in Tönnies' account of what today can be called 'globalization'. I understand Tönnies as a major post-Kantian global and cosmopolitan thinker in a sociological vein (Inglis 2014), at least as noteworthy as Durkheim in that respect (Inglis/Robertson 2008). (But for differences between Kant and Tönnies on ideas of a 'world state', see Bond 2013a: 144).

In his own time, Kant (2006a/b) discerned only the beginnings of a world-level cosmopolitical order. But he was confident that a universal cosmopolitan condition will come into being at some point in the future (Kant 2006b). He discerned in his own time the first flourishing of a world-level moral community. Within this "a violation of rights in [any] one place is felt *throughout the world*" (2006b: 83; emphasis added). This is an important early anticipation of later notions of a world-spanning moral culture, based around sentiments of revulsion for, and condemnation of, actions which undermine human rights. Regardless of where those actions might happen, the condemnation that follows is literally *global*: it comes from all over the world, and in effect is the moral response of the *whole world*, understood as a single moral entity (2006b: 83).

This view of the really existing nature of a global moral culture furnished Kant with the grounds strongly to criticise colonizing European states which had gone to “terrifying lengths” to subjugate other peoples, stealing their lands from them (2006b: 83). Kant describes how inter-group trade, which should be naturally oriented to peaceful intercourse between groups, can be abused by the powerful. In India, the English “under the pretence of establishing economic undertakings ... brought in foreign soldiers and used them to oppress the natives, excited widespread wars among the various states, spread famine, rebellion and perfidy, and the whole litany of evils which afflict mankind” (2006b: 83). The basis from which Kant believes he can meaningfully criticise the European powers is the emerging world-level moral culture that itself is a product of globalizing historical processes. If colonialism is a facet of globalization, so too is the very globe-spanning moral culture that provides grounds for colonialism’s condemnation. Globalization simultaneously produces both colonialism, and the moral norms and means (e.g. newspapers of global reach) for condemning it.

About a century later we find Tönnies elaborating on some of these themes. A mega-city like Berlin

... contains representatives from a whole group of nations, i.e. of the world. In the metropolis, money and capital are unlimited and almighty. It is able to produce and supply goods and science for the entire earth as well as laws and public opinion for all nations. It represents the world market and world traffic; in it world industries are concentrated. Its newspapers are world papers, its people come from all corners of the earth, being curious and hungry for money and pleasure (Tönnies 1957 [1887]: 266–267).

Tönnies echoes Kant’s points about the emergence of global public opinion through the emergence of trans-national media. The metropolis has a press that publishes “world papers”, which both report events from all parts of the world and express opinions that can reverberate all around the planet. Thus

the press is not confined within natural [sic] borders, but, in its tendencies and potentialities, it is definitely international ... [I]ts ultimate aim [is] to abolish the multiplicity of states and substitute for it a single world republic, coextensive with the world market, which would be ruled by thinkers, scholars and writers and could dispense with means of coercion other than those of a psychological nature. Such tendencies and intentions will perhaps never find a clear expression ... but their recognition ... [shows] that the existence of ... [nation-]states is but a temporary limitation of the boundaryless *Gesellschaft* (Tönnies 1957 [1887]: 221).

Planet-wide *Gesellschaft* brings with it new forms of association which cross national borders, bringing into being a new “world republic” governed by the force of reason. Here we see the more positive side of rationalistic *Kürwille*. Rational will involves not only selfish calculation, but also the capacity to sift evidence and provide reasoned opinions, the elements of rationality that Habermas (1997), also working with some originally Kantian terms, has sought more recently to recuperate.

Tönnies furthermore emphasised that in the huge urban agglomerations, “the arts must make a living; they are exploited in a capitalistic way. Thoughts spread and change with astonishing rapidity. Speeches and books through mass distribution become stimuli of far-reaching importance” (Tönnies 1957 [1887]: 227–228). The capitalist commodification of thoughts and opinions is at the root of metropolitan life’s faddishness and orientation towards the ever new. Novel ideas, opinions and styles are created. They are at first taken up by metropolitan elites. In metropolitan conditions, “the views of the upper and ruling classes ... are formed outside of custom ... These views partially originate in deviant new usages and

habits, and the latter are frequently based on an imitation of strangers” and foreigners more generally (Tönnies 1961 [1909]: 114). In these ways, ideas and realities are constantly being cosmopolitised – an anticipation of claims later made by Ulrich Beck (2002).

Different elite strata play variant roles: ‘younger’ elite groups (e. g. *nouveau riche* groups, ‘new money’) import new ideas from abroad, thus exhibiting globally oriented, cosmopolitan *Gesellschaft*-style tendencies. Meanwhile, ‘older’ elite groups (‘old money’, the traditionalistic aristocracy and long-established upper bourgeoisie) do not just try to retain, but also in fact *create*, more apparently ‘traditional’ *Gemeinschaft*-style forms of culture. That the latter group do not just attempt to reproduce ‘traditional’ cultural forms, but also in fact have to invent and perform the allegedly traditional, is indicated by Tönnies’ comment that a de-traditionalised metropolitan *Gesellschaft* “is inclined to idealize its opposite; the antique becomes the [contemporary] style. One longs to return to nature; old castoffs are resurrected; old forms of life and old customs are valued and preserved” (1961 [1909]: 135).

Through a series of what are nowadays called “inventions of tradition” (Hobsbawm/Ranger 2012), compelled by the conditions of metropolitan *Gesellschaft*, particular elite groups try to construct forms of culture that are allegedly expressive of older forms of *Gemeinschaft*. The lower middle and working classes eventually take up the cultural forms, both (supposedly) native and more cosmopolitan, imported or invented by their social superiors (Tönnies 1961 [1909]: 117). Once the elites of metropolises create, and are compelled to have, culturally complex dispositions – expressing both new modes of *Gemeinschaft* and cosmopolitan *Gesellschaft* – the lower social classes eventually enter into such conditions too, with the realities lived by all social groups becoming thoroughly cosmopolitised over time.

Tönnies thereby provides an interesting, and I would say still generally valid, post-Kantian account of the globalisation of *Gesellschaft* and of how it generates new forms of *Gemeinschaft*. The general dynamics he alludes to have operated in both Global North and Global South, both in his period and down to our own time.

## Tönnies and/in India

The question remains as to whether a Tönnies-derived sociology of these and related processes can be sensitively and successfully applied in particular non-Western contexts. I will briefly argue now that India provides an example of how this has already been to some extent achieved or is in principle achievable.

Under British rule, India was often regarded by the imperial masters as much as a mirror through which to make sense of the nature of their own society, as it was an object of social scientific investigation in its own right. Within the latter, India was scrutinised through the twin lenses of the need for colonial control and a deeply layered series of orientalist myths, which themselves bedevilled Indian sociology in its early days (Turner 1974).

Ever since Indian independence, there have been lively, sometimes fraught, debates about how appropriate or inappropriate originally Western sociological concepts are for understanding society and social change in India (Chaudhury 2015, Jayaram 2020, Sharma/Bor-gohain 2024). Indian sociologists have looked back to the Western roots of the discipline, either with a view to rejecting them altogether, or in finding alternative sources of inspiration

within more neglected or more heterodox writings (Momin 1978). There have also been multiple attempts to indigenise originally Western sociological concepts for the purposes of making them work more effectively in the Indian setting (Mucha 2012).

Tönnies has been a *prima facie* candidate for use for Indian sociological purposes (D'Souza 2006). This is partly because 'community' and its juxtaposition to more impersonal forms of social organisation have been seen by many Indian sociologists to be vital themes for understanding the nature of the country (Venkatesan 2006). It was also because modernising India was seen to be a very complex admixture of residues of medieval social structure and rising forms of individualism, with varying effects on the nature of communal and individual identities (D'Souza 2006, Hegde 2001).

An early attempt to operationalise Tönnies' thought for the comprehension of Indian society was carried out by the highly influential French scholar of caste Louis Dumont (1980). Interestingly, Dumont (1986: 184, 211) found the work of Tönnies far less restrictively Eurocentric in its nature and assumptions than that of Max Weber (Berg 2015). Dumont indeed finds Weber's development of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* into more active processes, by rendering them into the verbs *Vergemeinschaftung* and *Vergesellschaftung*, less useful than others might have thought. Instead, Tönnies is championed over Weber for providing a more useful sociological vocabulary for connecting very long-term social processes to more immediate ones in the study of caste in India. Dumont's animadversions in this direction were in turn criticised by Bêteille (1986), with the status of the usefulness of Tönnies for the sociological understanding of Indian social phenomena remaining unclear in its wake.

Nonetheless, for at least some Indian sociologists, the general thrust of Tönnies' sociology remains appropriate for understanding the very broad transformations in Indian society that have pertained over the post-independence period. While forms of *Gesellschaft* develop in the very large cities, supplanting the *Gemeinschaft* of villages and small towns as it does so, at the same time *Gesellschaft* compels the creation of newer forms of *Gemeinschaft* too (D'Souza 2006: 289).

Going further back in time, into the British colonial period, Tönnies' terms become workable for the purposes of analysis if they are not read in a fashion that assumes that *Gesellschaft* necessarily obliterates and replaces *Gemeinschaft*. Instead, colonial policy-making can be understood as creating new hybrid social forms characterised by mixtures of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. Some 'traditional' forms of association, such as the domination of local elites over subaltern groups and the continuation of the caste system, commingle with newer modes of colonialist political power and capitalist socio-economic relations (Devapriya 2023).

Devapriya (2023) reads the situation in late colonial period Sri Lanka as being "neither *Gemeinschaft* nor *Gesellschaft*". But it could equally be understood as involving *both* *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, if the context is comprehended in the spirit of Tönnies' investigations into empirically existing admixtures of ideal types. At least in some ways, then, Tönnies' concepts can be put to work to understand both colonial and post-colonial contexts.

## Conclusion

This essay has defended the sociology of Ferdinand Tönnies from actual and possible post-colonial criticism. To say what I have said in Tönnies' favour is not to engage in special pleading, or arbitrary and *ad hominem* defences. But it is to demand nuance in judgment, which post-colonial and de-colonial perspectives are not well set up to provide when dealing with figures deemed too 'Western', and thereby already pre-condemned already.

Tönnies' life and works may certainly be describable as 'Eurocentric' in a very general sense. But that general sense is not good enough for serious intellectual purposes. If critical appraisal is to take account of nuances and differences, as post-colonial thinking itself otherwise often avers, then his sociology cannot simply and fully be lumped together with that of more hegemonic, and in some senses more obviously 'Eurocentric', figures like Max Weber. The reasons for Tönnies' potential expulsion from the sociological canon may not be as straightforward as they may seem to those too unaware of the details of his social positioning, his long and complicated intellectual career, and his sociological position-takings as these developed over the decades.

Tönnies need not be necessarily construed as either antagonist to post-colonial thinking or as a victim of its moves to dislodge older European thinkers from the sociological canon. Rudolph (1995: 223) already some decades ago highlighted Tönnies' criticisms of colonialism and racial discrimination (Klauke 2024: 93), which post-colonial critique of him should certainly not ignore. Moreover, the neglected writing of Henricksen (1992) points a possible constructive way forward. That author sought to develop a Tönnies-inspired literary hermeneutics to interpret the novels of Joseph Conrad and the multiplicity of narrative voices at play within them. The interpretation is applied to novels which have already had deep, if ambivalent, significance for post-colonial literary scholarship. How Tönnies' categories of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, as well as *Wesenwille* and *Kürwille*, could be put to work in creative ways to understand post-colonial matters – as to ongoing coloniality around the world today, and of how neo-imperialist phenomena operate – remains an open but vital question. Some of the possibilities in that direction have been alluded to in this brief paper.

As Meghji (2021: 150) remarks, while "building a decolonial canon [in sociology, or elsewhere] may appear to be a justifiable course of action ... we may continue to reproduce inequalities if we merely put new scholars on the sociological pedestal". That point applies to attempts to canonise both post-colonial and de-colonial scholars of previous generations, and also those of the current generation (Moosavi 2020, 2022). A more genuinely inclusive canon-formation process involves preservation and extension as well as destruction. Tönnies' place in the canon as it moves forward throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not guaranteed. It must be carefully and convincingly argued for. This paper has attempted to contribute to the beginnings of such a conversation.

## References

- Adair-Totef, Christopher (1995): Ferdinand Tönnies: Utopian Visionary. In: *Sociological Theory*, 13, 1, pp. 58–65.
- Adair-Totef, Christopher (2016): *The Anthem Companion to Ferdinand Tönnies*. London: Anthem.

- Adair-Toteff, Christopher (2023): *Reintroducing Ferdinand Tönnies*. London: Routledge.
- Alatas, Syed F./Sinha, Vineeta (2017): *Sociological Theory Beyond the Canon*. London: Palgrave.
- Al-Hardan, Anaheed (2018): *The Sociological Canon Reconfigured: Empire, Colonial Critique, and Contemporary Sociology*. In: *International Sociology* 33, 5, pp. 545–557.
- Anderson, Kevin B. (2010): *Marx at the Margins*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Beck, Ulrich (2002): *The Cosmopolitan Society and Its Enemies*. In: *Theory, Culture and Society* 19, 1–2, pp. 17–44.
- Bendix, Reinhard (1967): *Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered*. In: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 9, 3, pp. 292–346.
- Berg, Dag-Erik (2015): *Caste, Hierarchy and Race in a World-Historical Perspective: Louis Dumont and His Critique of Max Weber*. In: *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 36, 4, pp. 413–430.
- Béteille, Andre (1986): *Individualism and Equality*. In: *Current Anthropology* 27, 2, pp. 121–128.
- Bhambra, Gurinder K. (2007a): *Rethinking Modernity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Bhambra, Gurinder K. (2007b): *Sociology and Postcolonialism: Another “Missing” Revolution?*. In: *Sociology* 41, 5, pp. 871–884.
- Bhambra, Gurinder K. (2016): *Postcolonial Reflections on Sociology*. In: *Sociology* 50, 5, pp. 960–966.
- Bhambra, Gurinder K./Holmwood, John (2021): *Colonialism and Modern Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bhambra, Gurinder K./Narayan, John (2016): *European Cosmopolitanism*. London: Routledge.
- Boatcă, Manuela/Costa, Sergio/Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, Encarnacion (2010): *Introduction: Decolonizing European Sociology: Different Paths Towards a Pending Project*. In: Boatcă, Manuela/Costa, Sergio/Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, Encarnacion (Eds.): *Decolonizing European Sociology*. London: Routledge, pp. 1–12.
- Bond, Niall (2009): *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft: The Reception of a Conceptual Dichotomy*. In: *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 5, 2, pp. 162–186.
- Bond, Niall (2012): *Ferdinand Tönnies and Max Weber*. In: *Max Weber Studies* 12, 1, pp. 25–58.
- Bond, Niall (2013a): *Ferdinand Tönnies and Enlightenment: A Friend or Foe of Reason? The European Legacy* 18, 2, pp. 127–150.
- Bond, Niall (2013b): *Ferdinand Tönnies’ Appraisal of Karl Marx: Debts and Distance*. In: *Journal of Classical Sociology* 13, 1, pp. 136–162.
- Bond, Niall (2013c): *Understanding Ferdinand Tönnies’ “Community and Society”. Social theory and political philosophy between enlightened liberal individualism and transfigured community*. Berlin/New York: LIT.
- Bond, Niall (2024a): *Ferdinand Tönnies and the French Speaking World*. In: Bond, Niall (Ed.): *The Concept of Community in Global Perspective*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 99–124.
- Bond, Niall (2024b): *Tönnies on the Tension between Community and Society During the First World War*. In: *Journal of Classical Sociology* 24, 4, pp. 375–388.
- Brewer, John D. (2007): *Putting Adam Ferguson In His Place*. In: *The British Journal of Sociology* 58, pp. 105–122.
- Brobjer, Thomas H. (2004): *Nietzsche’s Reading About Eastern Philosophy*. In: *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 28, pp. 3–35.
- Cahnman, Werner J. (1973): *Ferdinand Tönnies. A New Evaluation*. Leiden: Brill.
- Carstens, Uwe (2013): *Ferdinand Tönnies: Frieze und Weltbürger. Eine Biographie*. Bredstedt: Nordfriisk Instituut.
- Chaudhury, S.K. (2015): *Indian Sociology: Some Issues*. In: Gupta, Surendra K./Kumar, Vinay Sri-vastava (Eds.): *Exploring Indian Society*. Delhi: Indus Publications, pp. 169–182.
- Chibber, Vivek (2013): *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital*. London: Verso.
- Connell, Raewyn W. (1997): *Why is Classical Theory Classical?*. In: *American Journal of Sociology* 102, 6, pp. 1511–1557.

- Connell, Raewyn (2007): *Southern Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Connell, Raewyn (2010): *Periphery and Metropole in the History of Sociology*. In: *Sociologisk Forskning* 47, 1, pp. 72–86.
- Dahrendorf, R. (1965): *Gesellschaft und Demokratie in Deutschland*. München: R. Piper & Co.
- Dawson, Matt (2021): *Whiteness, Judaism and the Challenge of the Postcolonial Critique*. In: *Thesis Eleven* 167, 1, pp. 145–148.
- Devapriya, Uditha (2023): *Neither Gemeinschaft Nor Gesellschaft: Sri Lanka Under British Rule*, Medium, March 27, <https://udithadevapriya.medium.com/neither-gemeinschaft-nor-gesellschaft-f7239b76225e> [11.03.2025].
- D'Souza, Victor S. (2006): *Individuation in Indian Society: From Collective Identity to Individual Identity*. In: *Sociological Bulletin* 55, 2, pp. 281–299.
- Dumont, Louis (1980): *Homo Hierarchicus*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Dumont, Louis (1986): *Essays on Individualism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Durkheim, Émile (1889): *Ferdinand Tönnies. Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. In: *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger* 27, pp. 416–422.
- Felsch, Maximilian (2023): *The Scientific Shortcomings of Postcolonial Theory*. In: *International Studies* 60, 1, pp. 113–130.
- Ferraresi, Furio (2017): *Between Hobbes and Spinoza: Research on the Philosophical Matrix of Ferdinand Tönnies' Sociological Categories*. In: *Scienza & Politica. Per Una Storia Delle Dottrine* 29, 56. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1825-9618/7103> [18.03.2025].
- Giri, Ananta K. (Ed.) (2018): *Beyond Cosmopolitanism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Go, Julian (2013a): *For a Postcolonial Sociology*. In: *Theory and Society* 42, 1, pp. 25–55.
- Go, Julian (2013b): *Postcolonial Sociology*. Bingley: Emerald.
- Go, Julian (2013c): *Sociology's Imperial Unconscious: The Emergence of American Sociology in the Context of Empire*. In: Steinmetz, George (Ed.) (2013): *Sociology and Empire: The Imperial Entanglements of a Discipline*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 83–105.
- Go, Julian (2016a): *Global Sociology, Turning South: Perspectival Realism and the Southern Standpoint*. In: *Sociologica* 10, 2, pp. 1–42.
- Go, Julian (2016b): *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Go, Julian (2020): *Race, Empire and Epistemic Exclusion: Or the Structures of Sociological Thought*. In: *Sociological Theory* 38, 2, pp. 79–100.
- Go, Julian (2023): *Thinking Against Empire: Anticolonial Thought as Social Theory*. In: *British Journal of Sociology* 74, 3, pp. 279–293.
- Habermas, Jürgen (1997): *Kant's Idea of Perpetual Peace, With the Benefit of Two Hundred Years Hindsight*. In: Bohman, James/Lutz-Bachmann, Matthias (Eds.): *Perpetual Peace. Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, pp. 113–154.
- Hegde, Sasheej (2001): *On the Tracks of Community and Identity*. In: Jodhka, Surinder S. (Ed.): *Community and Identities: Contemporary Discourses on Culture and Politics in India*. Delhi: Sage, pp. 59–79.
- Henricksen, Bruce (1992): *Nomadic Voices: Conrad and the Subject of Narrative*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Hobsbawm, Eric/Ranger, Terence (2012): *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Inglis, David (2009): *Cosmopolitan Sociology and the Classical Canon: Ferdinand Tönnies and the Emergence of Global Gesellschaft*. In: *British Journal of Sociology* 96, 12, pp. 813–832.
- Inglis, David (2014): *Cosmopolitanism's Sociology and Sociology's Cosmopolitanism: Retelling the History of Cosmopolitan Theory from Stoicism to Durkheim and Beyond*. In: *Distinktion* 15, 1, pp. 69–87.
- Inglis, David (2026 forthcoming): *Probing the Post-Colonial: Some Problems and Risks of Post-Colonial and De-Colonising Sociologies, and Some Ways to Overcome Them*. In: Maddanu, Simone/

- Yassine, Rachid Id/Rebughin, Paolo (Eds.): *The Routledge International Handbook of Post-Colonial Sociology*. London: Routledge.
- Inglis, David/ Robertson, Roland (2008): *The Elementary Forms of Globality: Durkheim and the Emergence and Nature of Global Life*. In: *Journal of Classical Sociology* 8, 1, pp. 5–25.
- Inglis, David/Almila, Anna-Mari (2020): *Sociological Masters of the World: For and Against 'Global Sociology'*. In: *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia* LXI, 4, pp. 741–769.
- Jayaram, Narayana (2020): *Towards Indigenization of an Uncertain Transplant: Hundred Years of Sociology in India*. In: *Tajseer* 1, 2, pp. 99–122.
- Kant, Immanuel (2006a): *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Perspective*. In: Kleingeld, Pauline (Ed.): *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 3–16.
- Kant, Immanuel (2006b): *Toward Perpetual Peace; A Philosophical Sketch*. In: Kleingeld, Pauline (Ed.): *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 45–66.
- Kemple, Thomas J./Mawani, Renisa (2009): *The Sociological Imagination and its Imperial Shadows*. In: *Theory, Culture & Society* 26, 7–8, pp. 228–49.
- Klauke, Sebastian (2021): *Zur linken Rezeptionsgeschichte von "Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft" bis 1936: Eine Spurensuche*. <https://www.soziopolis.de/zur-linken-rezeptionsgeschichte-von-gemeinschaft-und-gesellschaft-bis-1936.html> [18.03.2025].
- Klauke, Sebastian (2024): *Günther Rudolph – A Sketch of the Life and Work of a Tönnies Scholar in East Germany*. In: Bond, Niall (Ed.): *The Concept of Community in Global Perspective*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 86–98.
- König, Rene (1955): *Die Begriffe Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft bei Ferdinand Tönnies*. In: *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 7, pp. 348–420.
- Kurasawa, Fuyuki (2003): *Primitiveness and the Flight from Modernity: Sociology and the Avant-Garde in Inter-War France*. In: *Economy and Society* 32, 1, pp. 7–28.
- Lukacs, Georg (1980 [1962]): *The Destruction of Reason*. London: Merlin.
- Manjapra, Kris (2014): *Transnational Approaches to Global History: A View from the Study of German-Indian Entanglement*. In: *German History* 32, 2, pp. 274–293.
- Marx, Karl (1969): *Colonialism and Modernization*. Garden City: Anchor.
- McLennan, Gregor (2003): *Sociology, Eurocentrism and Postcolonial Theory*. In: *European Journal of Social Theory* 6, 1, pp. 69–86.
- McLennan, G. (2014): *Complicity, Complexity, Historicism: Problems of Postcolonial Sociology*. In: *Postcolonial Studies* 17, 4, pp. 451–464.
- Meghji, Ali (2021): *Decolonizing Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Mensch, Jennifer (2017): *Caught between Character and Race: "Temperament" in Kant's Lectures on Anthropology*. In: *Australian Feminist Law Journal* 43, 1, pp. 125–144.
- Mieder, Wolfgang/Hand, Wayland D. (1991): *"(Don't) Throw The Baby Out With The Bath Water": The Americanization of a German Proverb and Proverbial Expression*. In: *Western Folklore* 50, 4, pp. 361–400.
- Mitzman, Arthur (1971): *Tönnies and German Society, 1887–1914: From Cultural Pessimism to Celebration of the Volksgemeinschaft*. In: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 32, 4, pp. 507–524.
- Momin, A.R. (1978): *Indian Sociology: Search for Authentic Identity*. In: *Sociological Bulletin* 27, 2, pp. 154–172.
- Moosavi, Leon (2020): *The Decolonial Bandwagon and the Dangers of Intellectual Decolonisation*. In: *International Review of Sociology* 30, 2, pp. 332–354.
- Moosavi, Leon (2022): *Turning the Decolonial Gaze Towards Ourselves: Decolonising the Curriculum and "Decolonial Reflexivity" in Sociology and Social Theory*. In: *Sociology* 57, 1, pp. 137–156.
- Mucha, Janusz (2012): *Sociology of India, Sociology in India, Indian Sociology*. In: *Polish Sociological Review* 178, pp. 145–150.



- Pappenheim, Fritz (1959): *The Alienation of Modern Man: An Interpretation Based on Marx and Tönnies*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Repp, Kevin (2000): *Reformers, Critics and the Paths of German Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rudolph, Günther (1968): Die Einwirkungen des ‘Kapitals’ von Karl Marx auf den bürgerlichen Demokraten Ferdinand Tönnies. In: *Wirtschaftswissenschaft* 5, pp. 760–778.
- Rudolph, Günther (1990): Friedrich Nietzsche und Ferdinand Tönnies. “Der Wille zur Macht” widerlegt von den Positionen eines “Willens zur Gemeinschaft”. In: Rudolph, Günther (Ed.): *Der Nietzsche-Kultus: Eine Kritik*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, pp. 107–139.
- Rudolph, Günther (1995) *Die Philosophisch-Soziologischen Grundpositionen von Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Kritik der Bürgerlichen Soziologie*. Hamburg: Rolf Fehner.
- Samples, John (1987): Kant, Tönnies, and the Liberal Idea of Community in Early German Sociology. In: *History of Political Thought* 8, 2, pp. 245–262.
- Santos, Boaventura D. S (2016): *Epistemologies of the South*. London: Routledge.
- Seidman, Steven (2013): The Colonial Unconscious of Classical Sociology. In: *Political Power and Social Theory* 24, pp. 35–54.
- Sharma, Chandan K./Borgohain, Bhaswati (2024): Indigenization and Vernacularization of Social Science in India: Revisiting the Debate. In: *Postcolonial Studies* 27, 2, pp. 229–247.
- Smith, Andrew (2022): Tearing Asunder the Pretty Fancies of Capitalism: Reflections on Marx and Empire. In: *Journal of Classical Sociology* 22, 4, pp. 402–409.
- Stafford, William (1994): Ferdinand Tönnies: A Candidate for the Canon?. In: *Politics* 14, 1, pp. 15–20.
- Steinmetz, George (Ed.) (2013): *Sociology and Empire: The Imperial Entanglements of a Discipline*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Steinmetz, George (2014): The Sociology of Empires, Colonies, and Postcolonialism. In: *Annual Review of Sociology* 40, pp. 77–103.
- Stoetzler, Marcel (Ed.) (2014): *Antisemitism and the Constitution of Sociology*. Omaha: University of Nebraska Press.
- Tönnies, Ferdinand (1957 [1887]): *Community and Society*, transl. and ed. by Charles D. Loomis. London: Routledge.
- Tönnies, Ferdinand (1961 [1909]): *Custom: An Essay on Social Codes*. New York: Free Press.
- Turner, Bryan S. (1974): The Concept of Social “Stationariness”: Utilitarianism and Marxism. In: *Science and Society* 38, 1, pp. 3–18.
- Uimonen, Paula (2020): Decolonising Cosmopolitanism. In: *Critique of Anthropology* 40, 1, pp. 81–101.
- Venkatesen, Soumhya (2006): Shifting Balances in a “Craft Community”: The Mat Weavers of Pattamadai, South India. In: *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 40, 1, pp. 63–89.
- Zimmerman, Andrew (2013): German Sociology and Empire: From Internal Colonization to Overseas Colonization and Back Again. In: Steinmetz, George (Ed.) (2013): *Sociology and Empire: The Imperial Entanglements of a Discipline*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 83–105.