

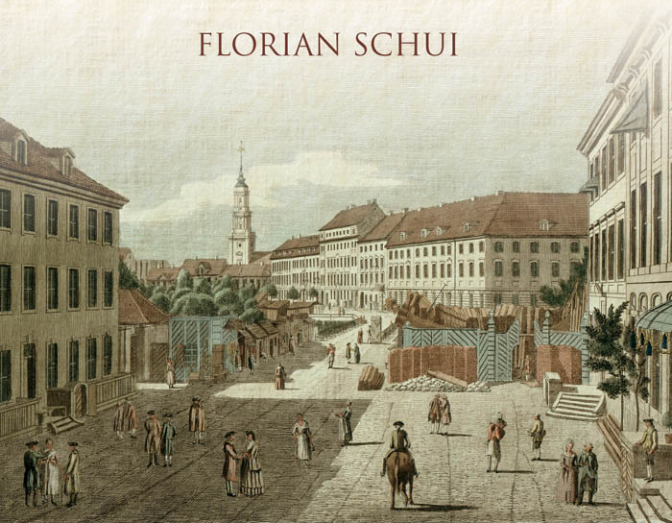
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REBELLIOUS PRUSSIANS

*Urban Political Culture under Frederick
the Great and his Successors*



FLORIAN SCHUI



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the Great and his Successors*

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UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Introduction

Prussian discipline is legendary. However, the notion of deeply engrained authoritarian structures in Prussian society is not only a topos of popular culture but has also played an important role in shaping political developments and historiographical debates. When the remnants of the Prussian state were dissolved in 1947, the Allied Control Council described Prussia as an entity that ‘from early days has been [a] bearer of militarism and reaction in Germany’.¹ Similar views were also influential in historiographical debates of the post-war period and linger, to some extent, even today. One of the prime ‘exhibits’ of historians arguing the case of an authoritarian tradition in Prussia has always been the absence of a bourgeois revolution or other clear sign of civic emancipation in the late eighteenth century.² While the self-reliant bourgeoisies of England and France developed a culture of critical debate and eventually crushed—or at least chipped away at substantial portions of—the power of their monarchies and aristocratic elites, the argument went, Prussians were standing to attention awaiting orders from their monarchs. Various explanations have been put forward for the lack of a more forceful challenge to the political status quo. The earliest and most influential pointed to the alleged weakness of the Prussian bourgeoisie. In this view, most notably associated with the *Sonderweg* (special path) thesis, a retarded economic development meant that the middle class remained smaller and weaker in Prussia than in Western Europe. As a result, the development of critical public discourses and of an effective political challenge to the status quo was crippled and the unbroken rule of traditional elites set Prussia and Germany on a path of development that led directly to the failure of liberal democracy in the twentieth century and to the subsequent rise of national socialism.³ As this view began to be increasingly questioned,

¹ Allied Control Council, ‘Law no. 46. Abolition of the state of Prussia, 25 Feb. 1947’, in Office of Military Government for Germany (US) Legal Division, ed., *Enactments and approved papers of the Control Council and Coordinating Committee* (1947), vol. 6, p. 28.

² David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, ‘Introduction’, in David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, eds., *The peculiarities of German history: bourgeois society and politics in nineteenth-century Germany* (Oxford, 1984), p. 13.

³ There are several excellent surveys of this debate. Dieter Groh, ‘Le “Sonderweg” de l’histoire Allemande: mythe ou réalité?’, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences sociales*, 38 (1983), pp. 1166–87. Blackbourn and Eley, *German history*. Jürgen Kocka, ‘German history before Hitler: the debate about the German Sonderweg’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 23 (1988), pp. 3–16. William Hagen, ‘Descent of the Sonderweg: Hans Rosenberg’s history of Old-Regime Prussia’, *Central European History*, 24 (1991), pp. 24–50. Jürgen Kocka, ‘Asymmetrical historical comparison: the case of the German Sonderweg’, *History and Theory*, 38 (1999), pp. 40–50.

alternative explanations were put forward. In 1985, for example, Catherine Behrens argued that the absence of social conflict was not due to the weakness of the potential revolutionaries but, rather, to the lack of a cause for revolution. In this view, the superior performance of the Prussian *ancien régime* compared with its European counterparts spared the country a revolutionary escalation. In contrast to the string of failed reforms that characterized for example the French polity in the eighteenth century, the Hohenzollern mounted well-organized and effective responses to the political, economic, and military challenges of this period, thereby reducing the potential for social conflict and the need for revolutionary change.⁴ More recently, another explanatory paradigm that has gained currency among historians interprets the absence of political conflict in this period as the result of the proximity of many leading members of civil society with the state. According to this view, many of the well-educated members of the middle class, as well as public commentators, did not see themselves in a conflictual relationship with the state. On the contrary, often they were employed by the state, linking for it the prospects of political stability and individual prosperity. Moreover, this proximity also meant that leading members of civil society did not see the state as an obstacle to achieving reform but rather as a tool that could be used to this end. The cosiness between the state and many exponents of civil society prevented public debates from taking a subversive turn in the way that they did in France in the same period, and the Prussian public therefore did not pose a threat to the state, but instead accepted the leadership of the state.⁵

The present study presents a fresh perspective on this period of Prussian history. It differs from old and new orthodoxies about the relation between state and urban civil society in Prussia. As I argue, this relationship was characterized by the strength of civil society and its ability to impose its will politically in several instances of conflict with the state during the eighteenth century. Urban dwellers were neither too weak to challenge the state nor were they overinvested in it. Instead, they prevailed in conflicts between themselves and the state, and the absence of a full-blown revolution must be understood in light of these gradual political successes of civil society and the corresponding defeats of state power.⁶ These instances of the successful rebellion of members of civil society lie at the centre of this study. The causes of these conflicts and the means that Prussians used to confront the state, as well as the causes that led to the weakness of the state on these particular occasions and the long-term impact on political culture in Prussia and beyond, form the focus of this study.

In particular, focus is placed on fiscal and economic conflicts associated with the introduction of a new urban tax regime by Frederick II in 1766 and on religious conflicts that were associated with the introduction of a new hymnal under

⁴ C. B. A. Behrens, *Society, government and the enlightenment* (London, 1985).

⁵ Most prominently Tim Blanning, *The culture of power and the power of culture: old regime Europe, 1660–1789* (Oxford, 2006). Michael Sauter, *Visions of the Enlightenment: the Edict on Religion of 1788 and the politics of the public sphere in eighteenth-century Prussia* (Leiden, 2009).

⁶ For a discussion of the relation of revolutionary and incremental change to the rise of bourgeois society see Blackbourn and Eley, 'Introduction', pp. 13–17.

Frederick in 1781. Additionally, we consider the attempt of Frederick William II's minister Johann Christoph von Woellner to impose religious dogma on the Protestant clergy and the wider public from 1787. The monarchs and their officials attached great importance to these reforms, which were eventually repealed as a result of the various forms of resistance raised by the public.

These conflicts shared two related characteristics that determine the perspective adopted in this study. Each of these conflicts gave rise to extensive public debates, and while they were associated with other forms of opposition including passive resistance and violence, the rise of critical public debates was central to the defeats of the state. The other shared feature of these conflicts was their predominantly urban nature. This is most strikingly evident in the fiscal conflicts, since the tax that was the core bone of contention was mainly levied in towns. However, in the religious conflicts too, urban dwellers were often leading the opposition. This was partly because the state's reforms were felt more intensely in the towns, where the government's administrative reach went further than in the countryside. Perhaps more important was the higher level of literacy and the culture of printing in the towns, facilitating the development of political debates in general, but also in particular leaving traces of evidence for historians. This study mainly examines public commentary in the urban context. (We discuss the meaning of the term 'urban' in this period in more detail later in this Introduction, together with the selection of sources.) The urban focus should not be taken to imply that conflicts between authority and ordinary Prussians were not also unfolding in the countryside. On the contrary, William Hagen's forensic study has shed light on the complexity of power relations in the Prussian countryside.⁷

In order to understand fully both the causes of the state's reform attempts that provoked urban resistance, and the reaction of civil society, it is necessary to examine the synchronous and interrelated development of both spheres. The roots of these conflicts lie in the duplicitous nature of the process of state building that accelerated in Prussia after the Thirty Years War (1618–48). As a result of the existential threats that Prussia and other nascent states experienced during this conflict the state concentrated its efforts on expanding military power. This process was associated with an increase in fiscal and administrative capabilities and, in some areas, with an extension of the state's power. However, perhaps less well understood is another aspect of this process, the increasing withdrawal of the state from economic and religious matters. The decrease in the state's involvement in urban economies was directly linked to an attempt to develop urban commerce and manufacturing on the Dutch model and use taxation as a means to fund military expansion. At the same time, the retreat from involvement in religious affairs in the guise of far-reaching religious toleration aimed to defuse the destructive power of religious discord that had been amply demonstrated by the religious wars of Europe. This attempt to insulate the state from the principal source of political destabilization of the period was of particular urgency in Prussia where a Reformed

⁷ William Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians* (Cambridge, 2002).

dynasty ruled over a majority of Lutheran subjects and where the effects of war and occupation had been devastating. Paradoxically, the flip side of the process of state building was thus an increase in individual autonomy in important areas. This dual process is explored in Chapter 1 for the period between the Thirty Years War and the beginning of the reign of Frederick the Great in 1740.

As a result of this retreat of the state a sphere of individuality developed in the towns which contemporaries referred to as 'civil society' ('bürgerliche Gesellschaft'). Urban dwellers used their increasing liberty to pursue their private interests and desires, and they also began to think of urban society in terms of an individualistic culture. When using the word 'individualism' and its variations here, this should not be understood as a reference to the development of a more heterogeneous society. Instead, the term refers to a society in which individual actions were mostly, or at least more so than previously, guided by individual interests and preferences. However, the fact that individual motivations and desires played a greater role does not necessarily imply a greater variety of outcomes. The rise of the concept of 'fashion' in the eighteenth century illustrates this well. Being fashionable was crucially about individual desires and choices, but the result was not diversity, rather homogeneity. Indeed, where individual freedom did not lead to a self-regulating order but to a fragmentation and heterogeneity, as in the case of religious dissenters, this caused deep concerns among contemporaries. The outlook of urban commentators on the rise of individualism was thus not always optimistic, but those who warned of its dangers and those who embraced it still shared a vision of the realities of urban society as fundamentally gravitating around individuals and their needs and desires. In particular, religious freedoms, and also autonomy in choices about participation in an increasingly varied material culture and a vibrant commercial sphere, were seen as central to urban individuality. Chapter 2 examines these self-perceptions of urban dwellers and the fears and hopes that were associated with discourses about rising individualism mainly in the areas of the production and consumption of goods and in religious matters during the reign of Frederick the Great from 1740 to 1786.

While urban self-perceptions saw the individual at the centre of society, official perspectives remained substantially different. These views are examined in Chapter 3. From the state's point of view individual autonomy could be tolerated, it was even encouraged as a means to achieve greater prosperity or avoid religious bickering, but it was not an end in itself. The principal aim remained the creation of prosperity and the preservation of quiet order in religious matters. Where greater individual freedom, rather than direct regulation of individual behaviour, was more efficient in achieving these goals, it was promoted and protected. But where individual freedom produced undesired economic outcomes or religious fragmentation and instability state officials saw no reason why individual freedom should not be curtailed. Overarching, long-term interests of the greater whole, mostly equated with the military-fiscal interests of the state, dominated the discourses of Frederick the Great and his officials concerning the towns. It may be tempting to see this as a contrast between an enlightened public and a state apparatus clinging to retrograde views. But officials cherished the values of rationality, efficiency, and the

systematic use of empirical information as much as members of civil society did. The two spheres were not differentiated by their preferred means and epistemological values but by the interests pursued. Whereas urban dwellers thought of certain areas as their prerogatives, state officials saw themselves legitimized, if necessary, to interfere with individual freedoms for the protection of the state's interest. While they were committed to discourses about balancing private and state interests, they also saw it as their task to preserve and determine the nature of this balance. This was particularly true in economic matters but also regarding religious toleration, which was rarely embraced out of principled commitment but rather because of political expediency. Officials increasingly armed themselves with the tools of rationality and empiricism in this period, reinforcing their faith in the legitimacy of their actions but doing little to lessen the differences in outlook between state and civil society.

The conflicts between urban civil society and the state that unfolded during the second half of the eighteenth century emerged as a result of the different outlooks of officials and urban dwellers analysed in Chapters 2 and 3. Frictions developed because of attempts by the state to increase its reach in certain areas. Partly as a result of the fiscal crisis after the Seven Years War (1756–63) and partly because individual autonomy in religious matters came to be seen as a political threat rather than as a guarantee of stability, the Prussian state tried to reduce individual autonomy in matters related to the consumption, circulation, and production of goods and in religious and educational questions. The conflicts often happened at the same time and were interrelated on many levels. However, for the sake of clarity they are explored here in two separate chapters, one on economic and fiscal conflict (Chapter 4) and one on religious conflict (Chapter 5). In these conflicts, urban dwellers deployed a variety of methods of resistance, including petitions, passive resistance, violence, and, most importantly, public commentary, that forced the state to retreat and confirm the individual liberties that it had sought to limit. The wide variety of forms of opposition makes these conflicts particularly interesting, but also more difficult to write their history. In his critique of Jürgen Habermas, Geoff Eley has drawn our attention to the existence of multiple publics in the nineteenth century and his arguments raise important questions for our period.⁸ Should the different types of responses—often adopted by urban dwellers in different cities of a polity with an extremely fragmented geography—be treated as a unified movement or public? Should acts of resistance be distinguished from verbally expressed opposition? And should the latter be treated as a whole when publicly voiced critique differs in important ways from that expressed in petitions and complaints to officials? Such questions have been discussed by modern historians but they were also asked by contemporaries.⁹ Perhaps not choosing his examples entirely at random, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) argued in 1784, in his *What is enlightenment?*, that it was acceptable to complain about taxes so long as

⁸ Geoff Eley, 'Nations, publics, and political cultures: placing Habermas in the nineteenth century', in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the public sphere* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), pp. 289–339.

⁹ For a theoretical framework see Albert Hirschmann, *Exit, voice and loyalty: responses to decline in firms, organizations and states* (Cambridge, MA, 1970).

one kept paying them. Printed commentary on taxation was even part of the commendable ‘public use of reason’ that was bound to promote the progress of enlightenment. In this way, Kant distinguished between the social utility of different responses to conflict, but also acknowledged their inherent connection. Disobedience and reasoning were both possible reactions to conflict and both could be observed in Königsberg at the time Kant was writing. Kant’s arguments sought to convince fellow Prussians that reasoning was the ‘enlightening’ reaction to grievances and to alleviate official fears that freedom of thought was inherently associated with subversion or rebellion. Despite the varied forms that resistance took, the underlying conflicts thus emerge as the unifying element of disparate forms of response that originate in civil society.

The serial defeats of the state in the face of resistance from urban civil society should not only lead us to reconsider our understanding of the balance of political power in the Hohenzollern polity in this period. The outcomes of these conflicts were also part of a structural shift in the long-term rise of bourgeois society in Prussia. As Eley and Blackbourn have argued, the concern with revolutionary change has often led historians to overlook the incremental structural change that allowed the bourgeoisie to become the dominant social class.¹⁰ In late eighteenth-century Prussia we can observe shifts of this kind that were not revolutionary in nature, but the development was still driven by direct confrontation with the state. It is often argued that far-reaching reform was bequeathed on Prussians by a combination of military defeat at the hands of Napoleon and a set of liberal officials fortuitously in the right place at the right time. However, this overlooks the way in which urban dwellers forced Prussian absolutism to make gradual but significant steps towards concessions in the preceding decades. The outcome of these conflicts not only led to structural political shifts, but also gave rise to discourses about individualism, feeding directly into the development of liberal political thought in Prussia and the rest of Europe. Crucial for this connection between rebellious Prussian burghers of the eighteenth century and liberal thinkers of the nineteenth were the early political writings of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835). The conflicts and debates explored here formed the original historical context in which Humboldt developed his views in *On the limits of state action* which he wrote in the early 1790s and which subsequently influenced John Stuart Mill (1806–73) and other liberals across Europe. These European connections are explored in Chapter 6, but it is a central concern of this study to discuss the Prussian developments in a European and Atlantic context in the preceding chapters. In all chapters reference is made to the many instances in which ideas, publications, and individuals that moved between Prussia and other European countries and North America played a crucial part. This interconnectedness points to structural similarities in European history. The advice of French tax officials would have been meaningless in Prussia, as a Prussian tract on the limits of state action would have been in Britain, without the existence of structural similarities in the challenges

¹⁰ Blackbourn and Eley, ‘Introduction’, pp. 13–18.

and developments that contemporaries faced. By employing a connective approach instead of looking at comparisons, I suggest that the European history of this period might best be approached as an integrated whole rather than as a bundle of special paths. This is one of the central arguments of this book and hopefully it will emerge clearly from the following chapters along with the details and complexities that have been omitted here for the sake of clarity and brevity.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

The arguments put forward in this book build on the work of generations of historians. Rather than acknowledging specific debts—this is done in the notes in the usual way—I point out here where I see the place of this contribution among the existing historiography. This book relates, principally, to three overlapping historiographical debates that centre on the issues of state building, the rise of a critical public, and the development of Prussian towns.

The process of state building is the point of departure of the analysis presented here and in doing so I am responding to some extent to the recurring plea to bring the state back into historiography and the social sciences, as formulated by Theda Skocpol and others in 1985.¹¹ However, while this was an important call in the light of the preponderance of social history and a lingering Marxist influence, at times reducing the state to a puppet of the ruling class, it certainly did not resonate in the Prussian case in the same way as it did in other national contexts. Perhaps no other historiography has a richer tradition of engagement with the process of state building. Otto Hintze, Gustav von Schmoller, and Hans Rosenberg are among the giants on the shoulders of whom Prussian historians of the state can stand.¹² Rather than bringing the state back in, it may therefore be a matter of bringing society, specifically urban society, into the historiography of Prussia. Often the focus on institutional development and its inner logic has obscured the social context in

¹¹ Theda Skocpol, 'Bringing the state back in: strategies of analysis in current research', in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the state back in* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 3–43.

¹² See among others Gustav von Schmoller, *Der preussische Beamtenstand unter Friedrich Wilhelm I.* (Berlin, 1870). Gustav von Schmoller, *Das brandenburgisch-preussische Innungswesen von 1640–1806 hauptsächlich die Reform unter Friedrich Wilhelm I.* (Berlin, 1887). Gustav von Schmoller, *Über Behördenorganisation, Amtswesen und Beamtentum im Allgemeinen und speziell in Deutschland und Preußen bis zum Jahre 1713* (Berlin, 1894). Gustav von Schmoller, *Der deutsche Beamtenstaat vom 16.–18. Jahrhundert. Rede gehalten auf dem deutschen Historikertag zu Leipzig am 29. März 1894* (Leipzig, 1894). Gustav von Schmoller, *Preussische Verfassungs-, Verwaltungs- und Finanzgeschichte* (Berlin, 1921). Gustav von Schmoller, *Das Merkantilssystem in seiner historischen Bedeutung staedtsche, territoriale und staatliche Wirtschaftspolitik* (Frankfurt, 1940). Otto Hintze, *Die Hohenzollern und ihr Werk: fünfhundert Jahre vaterländischer Geschichte* (Berlin, 1915). Otto Hintze, 'Staatenbildung und Verfassungsentwicklung', in Gerhard Oestreich, ed., *Staat und Verfassung* (Göttingen, 1970), pp. 34–51. Otto Hintze, 'Der österreichische und der preussische Beamtenstaat im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert', in Gerhard Oestreich, ed., *Staat und Verfassung* (Göttingen, 1970), pp. 321–58. Otto Hintze, 'Der Commissarius und seine Bedeutung in der allgemeinen Verwaltungsgeschichte', in Gerhard Oestreich, ed., *Staat und Verfassung* (Göttingen, 1970), pp. 242–74. Hans Rosenberg, *Bureaucracy, aristocracy and autocracy: the Prussian experience, 1660–1815* (Cambridge, MA, 1958).

which the process of state building took place. This is perhaps most apparent in the studies of fiscal institutions that often achieve the remarkable feat of discussing taxation almost entirely in the absence of any consideration of reaction and agency of taxpayers in relation to the institutional change, while, at the same time, devoting extraordinary attention to the organization of the administrative structure.¹³ Here the historiography of state building in Prussia needs to broaden its perspective and take inspiration from the tradition of fiscal sociology pioneered by Rudolf Goldscheid and others.¹⁴ The present study thus seeks to emphasize the way in which the objectives of the state—the preservation of security and more broadly speaking the creation and maintenance of order—led it to act, in part, independently of the interests of the social groups on which its power rested. Actions of the state took place in a context that consisted of motives related to its self-preservation and the interests of the main actors who were directly invested in it, in this period mainly the ruler and administrators. However, the agency of the state must also be seen as conditioned by imperatives and tensions at the level of the administrative and communicative practices through which it interacted with its citizens.¹⁵ It is therefore crucial to understand the development of the state and its actions in the context of the simultaneous and corresponding evolution of civil society. The complex interrelation between the two processes in the area of the regulation of sexuality has recently been discussed by Isabel Hull in an innovative study and it has been the ambition of this present volume to bring some of her dialectical perspective to the analysis of the changes in the interaction between state and individuals in economic and religious matters.¹⁶

If Prussian civil society has often received short shrift at the hands of historians of the state, it initially did not fare much better among those studying conflicts between civil society and the state. In his seminal work on the rise of the bourgeois public sphere in Europe, Habermas explicitly excluded Prussia from his analysis on the grounds that the weak local bourgeoisie never mustered the strength to challenge the state in this way.¹⁷ Habermas' thesis—closely linked to the *Sonderweg* argument—led to a protracted debate that unfolded essentially in two waves

¹³ Gustav von Schmoller, 'Die Epochen der preußischen Finanzpolitik', *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft im Deutschen Reich*, 1 (1877), pp. 32–114. Walther Schultze, *Geschichte der preussischen Regieverwaltung von 1766 bis 1786, ein historisch-kritischer Versuch* (Leipzig, 1888).

¹⁴ See among others Rudolf Goldscheid, *Staatsozialismus oder Staatskapitalismus* (Wien, 1917). Joseph Schumpeter, 'The crisis of the tax state', in Richard Swedberg, ed., *Economics and sociology of capitalism* (Princeton, 1991), pp. 99–140. Edwin Seligman, *Essays on taxation* (New York, 1913). Isaac Martin et al., eds., *The new fiscal sociology* (Cambridge, 2009).

¹⁵ Peter Becker, 'Sprachvortrag: Kommunikation und Verwaltung', in Peter Becker, ed., *Sprachvortrag im Amt* (Bielefeld, 2011), pp. 9–44.

¹⁶ Isabel Hull, *Sexuality, state and civil society in Germany, 1700–1815* (Ithaca, NY, 1996). A lucid discussion of the interrelation of state and civil society building can be found in Schumpeter, 'The crisis of the tax state'. However, Schumpeter's article remained a largely theoretical treatment which lacked the detail expected of professional historians.

¹⁷ Jürgen Habermas, *The structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society* (Cambridge, 1989). Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft; mit einem Vorwort zur Neuauflage 1990* (Frankfurt am Main, 2009).

following the publication of the original work in 1962 and its English translation in 1989.¹⁸ Apart from being a testimony to the lack of globalization in the world of professional historians, the trajectory of the debates also meant that it became even more sprawling than was perhaps necessary: one reviewer counted over 12,000 contributions.¹⁹ We concentrate on those aspects of the debate that are directly relevant to our project.

Most relevant is Habermas' claim that a critical public never developed in Prussia. This view has been proved wrong many times and in arguing that public criticism was the primary form of opposition helping urban dwellers to prevail over the state's power, this work agrees with the critics.²⁰ However, we hope to do more than this and shed light on a blind spot in the revisionist historiography about Prussia's public. Oddly, the many studies that have discussed the vibrant political debates that existed in Prussia have studiously ignored fiscal debates and the important role that economic issues played in contemporary exchanges.²¹ This is surprising, because fiscal debates are one of the focal points of the historiography of contemporary public debates in France, the North American colonies, and elsewhere. In particular, governmental efforts to fiscalize growing consumption and social resistance against them have recently been the subject of innovative studies.²² The omission of this subject in Prussian historiography may well reflect a lingering notion that the Prussian public was only politicized up to a certain degree, but ultimately preferred loftier discourses to the mundane and potentially confrontational questions of public finance. This work will contribute to a more rounded view of the Prussian public.

¹⁸ For a survey and critique see Andreas Gestrich, 'The public sphere and the Habermas-Debate', *German History*, 24 (2006), pp. 413–31.

¹⁹ Stéphane Van Damme, '“Farewell Habermas”? Deux décennies d'études sur l'ancien régime de l'espace public', in Patrick Boucheron and Nicolas Offenstadt, eds., *L'espace public au moyen âge: débats autour de Jürgen Habermas* (Paris, 2011), pp. 42–55.

²⁰ Summarizing the revisionist research about the politicization of the German public: Eckhart Hellmuth, 'Towards a comparative study of political culture', in Eckhart Hellmuth, ed., *The transformation of political culture: England and Germany in the late eighteenth century* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 1–38.

²¹ Contemporary commentary on fiscal matters is occasionally mentioned but never systematically explored. See, for example, Günter Birtsch, 'Die Berliner Mittwochsgesellschaft', in Hans Bödeker and Ulrich Herrmann, eds., *Über den Prozess der Aufklärung in Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1987), pp. 94–112, at p. 101. Eckhart Hellmuth, 'Aufklärung und Pressefreiheit: zur Debatte der Berliner Mittwochsgesellschaft während der Jahre 1783 und 1784', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 9 (1982), pp. 315–45. Horst Möller, 'Wie aufgeklärt war Preußen?', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, Sonderheft 6 (1980), pp. 176–201. Rudolf Vierhaus, 'The Prussian bureaucracy reconsidered', in Eckhart Hellmuth, ed., *Rethinking Leviathan* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 150–64, at p. 163. Even Ingrid Mittenzwei who examines fiscal conflicts in the western provinces in some detail argues that economic discourses did not play an important role in the Prussian context and takes this as an indication of the retarded development of Prussia compared with England. Ingrid Mittenzwei, *Preußen nach dem Siebenjährigen Krieg: Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Bürgertum und Staat um die Wirtschaftspolitik* (Berlin, 1979), p. 71.

²² Michael Kwass, *Privilege and the politics of taxation in eighteenth-century France: liberté, égalité, fiscalité* (Cambridge, 2000). William Ashworth, *Customs and excise: trade, production and consumption in England, 1640–1845* (Oxford, 2003). T. H. Breen, *The marketplace of revolution: how consumer politics shaped American independence* (Oxford, 2004). Nicolas Delalande, *Les batailles de l'impôt: consentement et résistances de 1789 à nos jours* (Paris, 2011).