

August Comte(1798-1857)

- He was considered the founder of sociology. He had once been personal secretary to Saint-Simon. Comte coined the term sociology. Previously, he had called the discipline “positive philosophy”(social physics), both to stress its scientific nature and to distinguish it from traditional philosophy. The aim of sociology, as he saw it, was to find the “invariable laws” of sociology upon which a new order could be based.

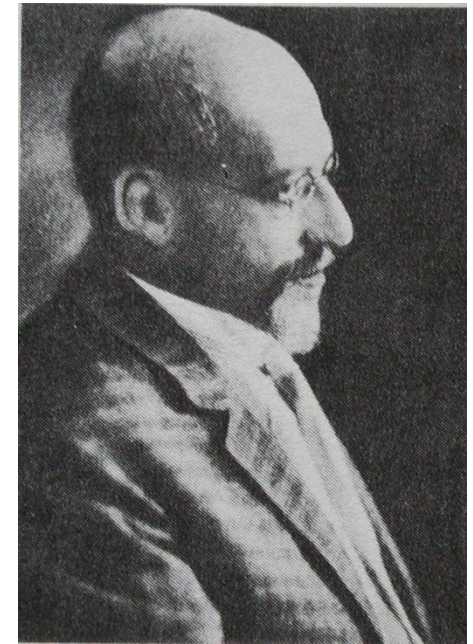


AMERICAN CAPITALISM:

You have two cows. You sell three of them to your publicly listed company, using letters of credit opened by your brother-in-law at the bank, then execute a debt/equity swap with an associated general offer so that you get all four cows back, with a tax exemption for five cows. The milk rights of the six cows are transferred via an intermediary to a Cayman Island company secretly owned by the majority shareholder who sells the rights to all seven cows back to your listed company. The annual report says the company owns eight cows, with an option on one more. You sell one cow to buy a new president of the United States, leaving you with nine cows. No balance sheet provided with the release. The public buys your bull.

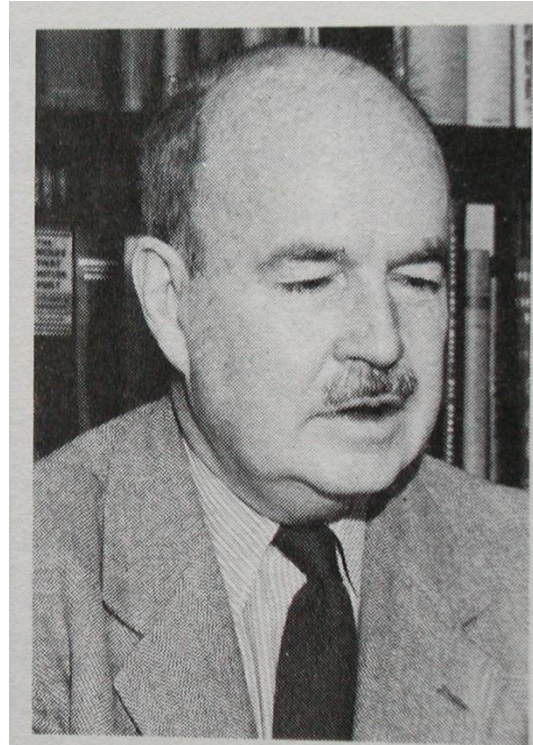
George Simmel(1858-1918)

- Unlike the other theorists we have discussed, who were interested in studying the larger structures of society, George Simmel focused on smaller social units. He put forth the idea that society is best seen as a web of patterned interactions among people. He also believed the main purpose of sociology should be to examine the basic forms that that these interactions take. Some examples of the basic forms of interaction that Simmel analyzed are cooperation and conflict, leaders and followers, and the process of communication.



Sociological theories (1)

- The functionalist perspective
 - It emphasizes the way in which each part of society contributes to the whole so as to maintain social stability. According to this perspective, **society is like the human body or any other living organism**. Like the parts of the body (such as the limbs, the heart, and the brain), the parts of society (such as families, businesses, and governments) function together in a systematic way that is usually good for the whole. Each part helps to maintain the state of balance that is needed for the system to operate smoothly.



Talcott Parsons.

Culture and social structure

- **Society** refers to a group of people who live within the same territory and share a common culture.
 - Very simply, culture has to do with the customs of a people, and society with the people who are practicing the customs.
 - Culture provides the fabric that enables human beings to interpret their experiences and guide their actions, whereas society represents the networks of social relations that arise among a people.

Classification of societies

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- Sociologists have classified societies in a good many ways. One popular approach is based on the principal way in which the members of a society derive their livelihood. Clearly, survival confronts all peoples with the problem of how they will provide for such vital needs as food, clothing , and shelter.