

# **GERMAN SOCIOLOGY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649438280

German Sociology by Philip P. Jacobs

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**PHILIP P. JACOBS**

**GERMAN  
SOCIOLOGY**



# GERMAN SOCIOLOGY

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By

PHILIP P. JACOBS, A.B., B.D.

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, IN THE FACULTY OF  
POLITICAL SCIENCE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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NEW YORK,  
1909

SEKINMAN & FOLTS,  
LANCASTER, PA.

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CONTENTS

309  
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	PAGE
INTRODUCTION—Survey of the literature of German Sociology.....	5
CHAPTER I— <i>What is Society?</i> —1. Society as a Unity, including views of Schaeffle, Lillienfeld, Barth, Toennies, Stammeler, Nordenholz, Eisler, and Buecher. 2. Society as an Aggregation of Groups, including views of Gumplowicz, Simmel, and Schubert-Soldern. 3. Society as a Process or an Association, including views of Ratzehofer, Stein, Holzapfel and Thorsch.....	17
CHAPTER II— <i>Definition and Scope of Sociology</i> —Considered under two heads: 1. The Scope of Sociology—defined as a social philosophy by Schaeffle, Stein, Barth, and Ratzehofer; defined as a limited science by Simmel and Gumplowicz .....	37
CHAPTER III— <i>Definition and Scope of Sociology</i> (continued). 2. The Relation of Sociology to the Other Sciences—(1) History and the Philosophy of History; (2) History of Civilization; (3) Ethnology; (4) Biology; (5) Psychology; (6) Other Sciences .....	53
CHAPTER IV— <i>Some Characteristics of German Sociology</i> —Gumplowicz's Idea of Social Group; Ratzehofer's Principle of Interest; Simmel's Study of Form; Schaeffle's Theory of the State; Stein's Principle of Sociability .....	63
CHAPTER V— <i>Factors in the Social Process</i> —Discussion of Differentiation and Integration, Individuation and Socialization, as given by Ratzehofer, Simmel, Gumplowicz and Schaeffle.....	76
CHAPTER VI— <i>Conclusions</i> —General Characteristics of German Sociology; Opposing Views of Society and Sociology; Definitions are Easily Harmonized; Some Lacks of German Sociology.....	85
APPENDIX— <i>Bibliography of German Sociology</i> .....	97
VITA .....	107

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# German Sociology

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## INTRODUCTION.

Scientists have tended to group themselves in two distinctive ways, first about the central idea of the science which they represent, and secondly about some special element in their respective fields of study, which gives to their own work a more or less national character. From the soothsayers, the astrologers and the "wise men" of antiquity, gathering themselves together in small national groups, to the modern French, German, English, Italian or American schools of the various sciences, the tendency has been one and the same. It is not surprising then, that in the newest of the social sciences, sociology, there should be manifest certain peculiar characteristics, by which we may be able to group its exponents into more or less distinct national schools.

The comparatively recent rise of sociology into scientific prominence accounts in part for the fact that the national lines are not yet very sharply drawn. Still we may, with a certain degree of definiteness, speak of an Italian School of Sociologists, for instance, centering about the activities of Lombroso, Ferri, Vaccaro or Mantia; of a French School, represented with some degree of diversity by such men as Tarde, Durkheim, Le Bon, or Worms; of an English school, whose work is manifest in the writings of Darwin, Spencer, Pearson, Galton, Jevons, Bagehot and Bryce; of an American School, represented by Giddings, Small, Ward, Ross, Carver and others. And finally, we may with some qualification, speak of a German School of Sociologists, whose most prominent representatives we note in Schaeffle, Gumplowicz, Ratzel, Simmel, Barth, Stein and Tönnies.

In fact "Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie" was formed in Berlin on January 3, 1909, embracing in its membership repre-

representatives from many of the German universities, and allying with itself the Swiss and the Austrian sociological societies. Throughout this study we shall consider as German sociologists, however, not only those who are natives of Germany itself, but also those in Austria, Switzerland and even Russia, who write regularly for the German public. This is a study of German sociology, not of sociology in Germany.

But German sociology has always been, and is still confounded with so many other sciences, that it has with difficulty gathered its representatives together into any sort of coherent group. Indeed, much of German sociology may be called to-day as it was designated by O. Thon in 1896, either "an importation,"<sup>1</sup> or else an adaptation of some other field of social science to pure sociological thinking. In 1898 Thomas Achelis, writing a popular article, discusses the position of sociology with the following biting sarcasm: "The newer sociology, which in connection with natural science, on the one hand, and historical discipline on the other, has made itself felt in the last decade, begins gradually to gain an entrance among us, we who suffer because of a certain academic 'wiggdom' (Verzöpfung) and an official anachronism. It is indeed a significant sign of the times that in Berlin a chair of statistics is being considered. France, England, America, Austria, and even Russia are ahead of us in this regard, that is, as to what the general interest and understanding of the sociological problem demands."<sup>2</sup> The situation was also well outlined by Ratzenhofer, in 1904, when he said: "One must, like myself, live in the atmosphere dominated by the traditions of learned Germany in order to have an idea of the bitter struggle which the special sciences have waged against sociology. Nevertheless, this struggle, in spite of the outbreaks of hatred toward the founders of sociology, as, for example, Gumplowicz, has already turned in their favor. The book market is swamped with bulky works which try to assume the appearance of sociological intelligence, and the designation, "Sociology," is applied to the most incongruous fields of thought."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Amer. Jour. Sociol., II: 567.

<sup>2</sup> "Eine Geschichte der Slaverei," Die Zeit, Jan. 1, 1898, p. 3. For full information concerning German periodicals, see Bibliography.

<sup>3</sup> "The Problems of Sociology," Amer. Jour. Sociol., Sept., 1904, p. 177.

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It is therefore necessary to notice a few of the men who represent German sociology in a preliminary sketch, characterizing them briefly, and reserving more extensive criticism for later discussion.

Not even his bitterest opponent would deny to Albert Schaeffle the foremost place in the influence he has exerted on sociological study in Germany. His "Bau und Leben des Socialen Körpers," appearing in its first edition in 1875, was for years<sup>1</sup> the leading and most comprehensive sociology in the German Language. Through this work and in his frequent writings in "Die Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft," Schaeffle has done much to give sociology the scientific place it is now attaining in German thought.<sup>2</sup>

Related somewhat in theory to Schaeffle, and often erroneously confused with him, is Paul von Lilienfeld, the famous Russian Sociologist, whose "Gedanken über eine Socialwissenschaft der Zukunft" appeared about the same time as Schaeffle's first work.<sup>3</sup> Probably the length of Lilienfeld's work, six volumes, together with its somewhat obscure phraseology and extreme point of view, tended to prevent his writings from exerting a marked influence on German Sociology until a more recent date, after he had revised and shortened his work into a more readable and acceptable form.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of the dogmatic dress in which his writing is clothed, the sociology of Ludwig Gumplowicz has been of great value, both to German thought, and to sociology in general. His "Rechtsstaat und Socialismus," 1881; "Der Rassenkampf," 1883, and "Grundriss der Soziologie," 1885, presented for the

<sup>1</sup> Although Lilienfeld's work appeared in the meantime, little or no additional sociology was written in German until Gumplowicz began to write in the early eighties.

<sup>2</sup> Schaeffle's "Bau und Leben" was revised in a second edition of two volumes in 1896. A posthumous volume, entitled "Abriss der Soziologie von Albert Schaeffle," edited by his colleague, Karl Bücher, appeared in 1908, and gives a fair and briefer presentation of Schaeffle's sociology.

<sup>3</sup> The first of Lilienfeld's six volumes appeared in 1873, but his work did not become known generally until some time after Schaeffle's book.

<sup>4</sup> Zur Verteidigung der organischen Methode in der Soziologie. For full information concerning books cited, see Bibliography.