**Tönnies, Ferdinand (1855-1936)**

Ferdinand Tönnies was central to the professionalization of European sociology, co-founding the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie* (German Society for Sociology) in 1909, along with Max Weber and Georg Simmel (Adair-Toteff 2005). He was born in 1855 in rural Schleswig (present-day Germany) to a family of Lutheran pastors and cattle breeders; he died in urban Kiel, Germany, in 1936. He is best known for proposing that *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* form a constitutive binary of modernity (Tönnies 1957). *Gemeinschaft* (community) is an organic social form typified by village life historically and family life generally, where people are bound in mutual dependency, custom, and shared experience. In contrast, *Gesellschaft* (society) is an artificial social form where individuals enter and exit associations frequently and voluntarily; the city-dweller is famously freed from obligations of blood and tradition, which restrict and support the villager. Tönnies argued that such freedoms carry a cost to the city-dweller, who is prone to atomization and alienation. Tönnies’ portrait of *Gemeinschaft* served to highlight the shortcomings, even pathological attributes, of modern society (Löwy and Sayre 2001). Tönnies believed that the movement from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* was historically inevitable – the human values of village life were doomed to disappear.

*P. S. Moore, Ryerson University and A. J. Paravantes, York University*

**List of works**

Tönnies, F. (1957 [1887]) *Community and Society (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)*, ed. and trans. C. P. Loomis, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

------ (1961 [1909]) *Custom: An Essay on Social Codes*, trans. A. Farrell Borenstein, New York: Free Press.

------ (1974) *On Social Ideas and Ideologies*, trans. and ed. E. G. Jacoby, New York: Harper & Row.

**References and further reading**

Adair-Toteff, C. (2005) *Sociological Beginnings: The First Conference of the German Society for Sociology*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Liebersohn, H. (1988) *Fate and Utopia in German Sociology, 1870-1923*, Cambridge: MIT Press.

Löwy, M. and Sayre, R. (1991) ***Révolte et mélancolie: le romantisme à contre-courant de la modernité***,trans. C. Porteras *Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.