

SEARCHERS,

Louis Leakey

Mary Leakey

Margaret Mead

B. F. Skinner

SEERS, &

John Dewey

Talcott Parsons

Kenneth Boulding

SHAKERS

Gunnar Myrdal

Alva Myrdal

C. Wright Mills

Daniel Patrick Moynihan

MASTERS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

JAMES A. SCHELLENBERG

SEARCHERS,
SEERS, &
SHAKERS



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

SEARCHERS, SEERS, & SHAKERS

MASTERS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

JAMES A. SCHELLENBERG

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2007 by Transaction Publishers

Published 2017 by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Copyright © 2007 by Taylor & Francis.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notice:

Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Catalog Number: 2006051099

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Schellenberg, James., A. 1932-

Searchers, seers, and shakers : masters of social science / James A. Schellenberg.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Contents: Discovers—Theorists—Reformers.

ISBN 0-7658-0350-X (alk. paper)

1. Social scientists—Biography. 2. Social sciences—History—20th century. I. Title.

H57.S34 2006

300.92'2—dc22

[B]

2006051099

ISBN 13: 978-0-7658-0350-4 (hbk)

Contents

Preface	vii
Part 1: Introduction	
1. The Coming of Social Science	3
2. The Three Bases of Social Science	17
Part 2: Discoverers	
3. Louis and Mary Leakey and the Dawn of Humanity	25
4. Margaret Mead and the Varieties of Human Culture	35
5. B. F. Skinner and the Principles of Operant Behavior	49
Part 3: Theorists	
6. John Dewey and the Social Logic of Inquiry	63
7. Talcott Parsons and the Synthesis of Social Theory	75
8. Kenneth Boulding: Economist Without Boundaries	87
Part 4: Reformers	
9. Gunner and Alva Myrdal: Social Science as Social Engineering	99
10. C. Wright Mills: The Social Scientist as Rebel	115
11. Daniel Patrick Moynihan: The Social Scientist as Politician	127
Part 5: Conclusions	
12. Masters of Social Science	147
Notes	159
Bibliography	167
Index	173



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Preface

This work has been developing for more than half a century. It was during my college days, way back in the early 1950s, that I came across *The Proper Study of Mankind*. This book by Stuart Chase, published in 1948, gave a popular overview of developments in the social sciences. It made me want to become a social scientist.

Several of my undergraduate teachers were also prime influences. Two of these were sociology professors, and sociology became my major field. I saw this not only as an interesting field of study, but as a core area for the social sciences. Sociology continued to be my major when I did graduate work at the University of Kansas, but my interests ranged over a much broader area. I saw myself first as a social scientist—intent on applying the methods of science to the understanding of human societies—and only secondarily as a sociologist. I took a great deal of psychology to support my sociology major, for I felt that social psychology was central among the behavioral sciences. By becoming a sociologist and social psychologist I felt ready to tackle the central questions of the social sciences—such as the distinctively human way of becoming social, how behavior is framed by the cultural context, how groups set themselves apart in different ways, and how they may come into conflict with each other. Of course, I focused on specific questions for study (such as mate selection for my doctoral dissertation, and the effects of group size in another early work). However, at the back of my mind was always the conviction that the social sciences had a basic unity, and I intended that my own career would be directed to understanding this unity.

In 1974, I went to Ireland for a year as a visiting professor. The plan was to spend the fall in the North, and the following spring in the Republic. During this time I would be giving my research attention to the conflict in Northern Ireland. But what was I to offer in return? In preparing lectures that I could use in Ireland, I formed what might be called a “biographical approach” to social psychology. I could give general lectures on the lives and ideas of several of the intellectual giants of the field. These could

be used both in my psychology placement in the North (at Coleraine's New University of Ulster) and in my sociology teaching in the South (at University College, Cork).

After returning from my year in Ireland, I adapted my lecture materials into a book, *Masters of Social Psychology*, published in 1978. Here I presented several main approaches to social psychology by looking at the lives and thoughts of four "masters"--Sigmund Freud, George H. Mead, Kurt Lewin, and B. F. Skinner. This book received a generally favorable response, and was ultimately translated into several languages other than English. From this effort I concluded that the biographical approach was at least one useful way to explore ideas in the social sciences.

As my career continued at Western Michigan University and Indiana State University, I pursued a broad range of research and teaching. Ultimately the study of social conflict and conflict resolution became my central focus. In two of my books in this area (in *The Science of Conflict*, published in 1982, and in *Conflict Resolution*, which appeared in 1996) I used a biographical approach in some of the chapters. I felt that looking at the lives of key people helped to describe their ideas and influences. This in turn helped me to clarify several main approaches to the study of social conflict.

As I embarked on plans for the present book, two central convictions were in the back of my mind. One was that there is a fundamental unity behind the various forms of social science. There is a general *social science* as well as a variety of social science *disciplines*. My second conviction was that a biographical approach was a useful tool for making clear some of the central ideas of social science. By looking at the lives and ideas of selected "masters," we should be better able to understand the fundamental nature (or natures) of social science.

Then came the most interesting part. I read about the lives of many of the leading social scientists of the twentieth century. Finally, I selected eleven for special attention. These are the persons treated at length in this book—Louis and Mary Leakey, Margaret Mead, B.F. Skinner, John Dewey, Talcott Parsons, Kenneth Boulding, Gunnar and Alva Myrdal, C. Wright Mills, and Daniel P. Moynihan. I also looked at two men from earlier centuries (the Marquis de Condorcet and Auguste Comte) who helped set the stage for modern social science.

Certainly there are other men and women who have had a tremendous impact on social science. But I feel that my selections at least serve to illustrate the broad nature of social science—including the discovery of new understandings, the development of theories about them, and applications of our knowledge toward the betterment of human society.

J.A.S.

Part 1

Introduction



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

1

The Coming of Social Science

Mathematician and Philosopher

Born in northern France in 1743, he was christened with a long name: Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas de Caritat. Soon, however, he became known as the Marquis de Condorcet, for he was born into the French nobility. His father, a French cavalry officer, died before Condorcet was five years old. His mother, a deeply religious woman, consecrated her frail child to the Virgin Mary and saw that he had the very best education provided by Jesuit schools. To further protect him, she tried to isolate him from other boys and saw that he wore only girls' clothes till he was nine years old. Extremely shy as a boy, he became as a man what one biographer has described as "extremely refined with a craving for intimacy and affection to which was joined indecision, a certain timidity, and a dangerous impressionability."¹

In 1758, Condorcet was sent to Paris to further his education. His associations at the Jesuit school there were limited mostly to teachers and books. He showed a special interest in mathematics, and presented learned papers in this subject while still a teenager. When he completed his formal education, he decided, much to the dismay of his family, to pursue a career as a professional mathematician. In 1765, he published his first work, *Essay on Integral Calculus*. Soon he was known as one of the leading French mathematicians and as such was welcomed into the intellectual circles of Paris. He was supported very modestly there through an allowance from his mother.

This was the Age of Enlightenment. Established forms were being questioned everywhere, and in no country was the contrast greater than in France between the new forces and those established by the past. The interests of the rising groups of businessmen, industrialists, and professionals challenged the Old Regime of the monarchy, the Catholic Church, and the privileges of the nobility. In Paris, the intellectual center

4 Searchers, Seers, and Shakers

of the world at that time, it became fashionable to be critical of everything, even in the salons of the nobility. Those persons of letters who led the questioning and promoted a new Age of Reason became known as *philosophes*. They included leading scholars such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Diderot, and Turgot. They also included hundreds of lesser-known intellectuals, and Condorcet soon became one of these.

Condorcet was awkward in the atmosphere of the fashionable gatherings in private salons. He was more at home in the company of individual scholars, who recognized his outstanding ability in mathematics. But he was not content to be just a mathematician; he aspired to become a full-fledged philosopher. Grounded in the rational disciplines of mathematics, he sought to apply the dictates of reason to everything in the world.

Condorcet later was to summarize the central ideas of the *philosophes* as “always proclaiming the independence of reason and the freedom of thought as the salvation of mankind.” Behind these ideas were the assumptions that nature (including human nature) is fundamentally benign, and that it can be accurately perceived through science and reason when the freedom of thought is allowed to flourish. Furthermore, it was assumed that despite the impediments of traditional forms, humans had certain natural rights upon which a proper social order must be based. Later these became enumerated as the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in the American Revolution’s *Declaration of Independence* or, in the French Revolution’s *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, as liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.²

A special boost for the fortunes of the *philosophes* came in 1774 when one of them, Jacques Turgot, was appointed minister of finance by King Louis XVI. Here was the opportunity to put into practice reform measures inspired by the ideals of free trade. When chosen by Turgot for the post of inspector of the mint (or, in effect, controller general of France), Condorcet was given the opportunity to move into a governmental residence, receive a respectable salary, and take on the mission of economic reform. He wrote papers advocating the abolition of all restrictions on trade and labor and generally helped his friend (Turgot was the fellow *philosophe* that he most idealized) carry out new economic policies. Pressures from the nobility, however, soon were arrayed against Turgot, and he was replaced after only two years by a man who was more tolerant of internal tariffs. Condorcet immediately resigned his position, writing to Voltaire “We have had a beautiful dream, but it has been brief. I am going back to geometry and philosophy.”³

Later Condorcet was to resume his duties as inspector of the mint, but with fewer opportunities to influence economic policies. Meanwhile, he continued to be recognized as a mathematician and philosopher. Having been elected in 1769 to membership in the French Academy of Science, he served that body as secretary for most of the remaining years of his life.

In 1786 Condorcet met, fell in love with, and married a woman named Sophie, the daughter of the Marquis de Grouchy. She has been described as, at the time, “beautiful, refined, intelligent, enlightened, rich, and twenty-two.” In any event, the two of them appeared to have had a very happy marriage, blessed by one child, a daughter born in 1790. The Condorcet household, inspired by the grace of the young wife and with the increasingly free spirit of the husband, became a center for gatherings of the intelligentsia of Paris. Distinguished guests from other countries were also made welcome, including Adam Smith of Great Britain and Thomas Jefferson from America.⁴

The Revolutionary

Condorcet had been an advocate of social revolution long before the beginning of the French Revolution, and he also favored rather drastic measures for political reform. But he was a pacifist by nature, and his public statements never supported violent methods of change. The political system he favored—before the Revolution—could be best characterized as a constitutional monarchy. It should include, he felt, such forms as the direct election of national legislators from those who held property, decentralized forms of local government, a minimum of governmental restrictions in economic affairs, women’s suffrage, full citizenship rights for members of all races, universal public education, and an absolute freedom of thought. He was strongly opposed to any recognized political role for the Church. All of these were clear elements of Condorcet’s political philosophy before the Revolution.

In most basic respects Condorcet’s political philosophy remained unchanged until the time of his death. He was always the rationalist, calmly trying to identify through intellectual analysis the best forms of political organization and action. But he also changed in important ways, coming to advocate the removal of the monarchy and the establishment of a national democracy.

Condorcet was the only one of the *philosophes* to take an active part in the French Revolution, since by then all other major figures of that movement had died. Condorcet was not at first in favor of the move

when, facing economic woes, the king called for a meeting of the Estates General in 1789, since that body recognized the formal power of the nobility and clergy. He would have preferred a more direct role for popular participation. But when the Third Estate seceded from the Estates General to form the National Assembly, Condorcet fully approved. He took the opportunity to draft a rather elaborate Declaration of Rights which he proposed to the Assembly, and this later became summarized by a more simply stated *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*.

Impressed by the popular uprising which led to the Fall of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, Condorcet soon became convinced that the monarchy should be replaced by a republican form of government. He renounced his noble title and became elected, in 1791, to the municipal council of Paris. In this role he sought to influence the national reforms of the newly established Constituent Assembly. His plan for governmental finance was approved by the Assembly in 1791. During the short period of the Legislative Assembly (October 1791, to September 20, 1792) he became a more active leader, serving eventually as president of that body. Condorcet then kept busy drafting proclamations and making addresses, but he was not very persuasive. His manner of speaking has been described as “cold and awkward,” with gestures “restrained and weary” and lacking “spontaneity and variety.” Nevertheless, he was highly respected because of his reputation and character.⁵

When elections to the new National Convention were held late in 1792, Condorcet was easily elected to a seat. But the uprising of the Paris mob had grown, and he was confused by the sudden declaration of the Republic on September 21. He opposed the subsequent attempts to try (and eventually behead) the king. The Convention soon became the setting for a fierce battle between two factions, the Girondins and the more radical Jacobins. Condorcet avoided any formal tie to either group, though it soon became clear that the Jacobins considered him part of the enemy. Nevertheless, he attempted to draft a constitution for the Republic. It was a lengthy document which won the support of most Girondins, but the Jacobins were harshly critical. Their leader Robespierre had only contempt for the document. He told Condorcet that it appeared “designed not for mankind, but for the rich, for monopolists, for stock jobbers, and for tyrants.”⁶

Jacobin leaders drafted a new constitution, which was formally approved on June 24, 1793. The Girondins, now expelled by the Convention, were subject to trial as traitors to the Republic. Condorcet wrote energetically against the new constitution, and for these efforts, on July

8, he was added to the list of those subject to arrest. In hopes of aiding him to escape the guillotine, his friends arranged that he find refuge in a small pension kept by a Madame Vernet. As the weeks there turned into months, he determined to make use of his time by writing.

Condorcet's Vision

During the nine months he was in hiding at the home of Madame Vernet, Condorcet frequently heard news about formerly close associates who met their death at the guillotine. That too, it appeared, would be his fate, if and when he might be found. But he sought to put his time to more creative use than worries about his personal safety. Using whatever materials he could find for writing, he began to record his own experiences, seeking to justify the role he had played. But he soon abandoned this attempt in favor of something much more ambitious. He would put the Revolution itself into its broad historical context. Never mind the tragic events then being experienced by his country and by himself personally; he could spend his time contemplating the broader issues about human existence. By retelling his version of the history of the world, he could show how the future was bound to be brighter. He could show how the ideals of the Revolution—that faith directed to Nature, Reason, and Humanity rather than the old religious ideas—would prove triumphant in the end.

Condorcet's *Sketch of an Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* divides human history into nine main periods or epochs. These show how mankind has gradually increased in the knowledge of the world and has made this knowledge ever more useful for human society. For example, his eighth epoch began with the invention of printing and continued until the philosophical contributions of René Descartes. Printing became a way that knowledge could be preserved and given almost unlimited circulation. This diffusion of knowledge made it impossible for significant contributions to be lost and helped to develop a better educated populace. Further, it provided for more rational discourse and inspired new scientific contributions, such as those of Copernicus and Galileo.⁷

After Descartes, ever more rational discourse could be encouraged. This led to the discovery of basic laws of the universe by Isaac Newton. Also, the fundamental laws of the mind, based on the human senses and their combinations, were put forward by John Locke. Such psychological knowledge could lead to truth in the social sciences as certain as were the truths of natural science. This great ninth epoch brought us to the

French Revolution, which, with its great ideals of reason and freedom, would usher in a new pattern of society.

The next epoch would be one of almost unlimited progress, with human equality (between nations, between classes, and between individuals) as a key theme. True, there would continue to be setbacks now and then. Progress, though it “at present may appear chimerical,” will inevitably be the story of the future. Truth, he said, “in spite of the transient success of prejudices, and the support they receive from the corruption of governments or of the people, must in the end obtain a durable triumph” for “nature has indissolubly united the advancement of knowledge with the progress of liberty, virtue, and respect for the natural rights of man.”⁸

The main theme of his essay, as stated in its introduction, is that “no bounds have been fixed on the improvement of the human faculties; that the perfectibility of man is absolutely indefinite; that the progress of this perfectibility, henceforth above the control of every power that would impede it, has no other limit than the duration of the globe upon which nature has placed us.”⁹

Such is the vision of scientific optimism produced by Condorcet as he hid from his enemies during the most violent period of the French Revolution. His optimism was based primarily on the growth of knowledge made possible by modern science. But it was also based on the methods and ideas of science extending more and more into the realm of human society. He thus envisaged the development of a social science tied together firmly with the advances of natural science. For man is a part of nature, and the methods of science must be extended to humans and their society as well as to the study of physical matter in motion. His prophecies concerning the betterment of humanity reserved a clear place for the development of social science.

As news came of many of his former associates being executed, Condorcet became increasingly concerned about his safety. He was also especially concerned about the safety of his benefactress, for Madame Vernet would surely be punished if found to be harboring a fugitive. Perhaps it is characteristic of Condorcet that he seemed more concerned about another person than for his own life as he began plans for an escape.

Madame Vernet strongly opposed his leaving. She said to him: “The Convention has the power to put you outside the law, but it has not the power to put you outside of humanity. You will remain.”¹⁰

Finally, eluding his protector, Condorcet left the house in disguise. For several days he avoided capture, then was discovered after hungrily seeking food at an inn. His stay in prison was brief, for the very next

morning, on April 8, 1794, he was found dead in his cell. Apparently (though some scholars have speculated otherwise) his death was a case of suicide.

Condorcet's great legacy was his *Progress of the Human Mind*, first published the year after his death. It is generally seen as his primary contribution to social philosophy and to social science. We may, however, mention another of his writings which even now in the early twenty-first century, remains as a contribution to social science. In 1785 he wrote his *Essay on the Application of Analysis to the Probability of Majority Decisions*. This work was clearly mathematical in nature, but it was intended for social science applications. Here he introduced what has become known as "Condorcet's Paradox," the demonstration that majority voting was subject to certain possible inconsistencies. Considering three candidates for an office, A, B, and C, a majority might prefer Candidate A to B; at the same time a majority might prefer B to C, and still another pairing might prefer C to A. This possible lack of consistency posed, in Condorcet's view, a real problem for democratic elections.

Condorcet also worked out a rational method for dealing with such electoral problems. It has become known as the "Condorcet Method," which uses pair-wise comparisons as a key part of voting. It has given rise to several variations discussed by modern theorists of voting procedures. Never mind that no nation today uses elections based directly on the methods Condorcet promoted, his enunciation of the mathematical problems in counting votes are still important in the literature of game theory.¹¹

After the Revolution

The French Revolution was one of the great watersheds of Western thought. It had been based on ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, in turn seen as expressions of an underlying devotion to human reason and natural law. These ideals did not die with the rise of Napoleon (indeed, Napoleon used them as part of the ideology for his rule) or with the restoration of the monarchy which followed his rule. At the same time, a revulsion against the excesses of the revolution strengthened the resolve of conservatives to resist new ideas. France in particular became a battleground between liberals and conservatives—a split which has continued well beyond the nineteenth century.

There was no doubt about the sympathies of the family into which Auguste Comte was born. They were Roman Catholic and Royalist. Despite the fact that his father was a government employee in the Department of Taxation and thus part of Napoleon's rule, he did everything possible

to see that his son would not be contaminated by the radical movements then afoot. In this his success was short-lived.

Born January 19, 1798, in Montpellier, southern France, young Comte soon showed himself to have ideas of his own. He seemed to question everything he was taught. After being educated locally, he went to the prestigious École Polytechnique in Paris to prepare for a career in engineering. Soon, however, his insubordinate spirit caused a change in plans. He led students in petitioning to dismiss an unpopular professor, with the direct result that he and the other students involved were expelled.¹²

Returning to Montpellier in 1816, Comte tried briefly to carry on scholarly activities there; but he found his intellectual ambitions stifled by his conservative parents. Within a year he was back in Paris, seeking to function there as an independent scholar. He supported himself mainly by giving private lessons in mathematics. He became generally known as an able young man of letters, and he translated into French a book written by a British mathematician. He enjoyed the cultural life of Paris and sought recognition within its highest intellectual circles.

One group Comte soon discovered was that which was gathered around Claude-Henri, Comte de Saint-Simon. Saint-Simon, though limited in his formal education, was a man of enormous intellectual interests, and these were shared with a group of followers. He wrote several books on science and sought in the idea of gravitation the basic foundation for all science. Saint-Simon, a brilliant though erratic thinker, then changed his focus to the social sciences and to social reform. His *Reconstruction of European Society* was published in 1816. Soon thereafter he renounced his noble title, began giving away his property, and devoted himself to the ideals of socialism.

In 1817 Comte heard that Saint-Simon was seeking a new secretary. He sought to take advantage of this, and was accepted by the famous writer. He remained working closely with his mentor for six years, writing a good deal of the material that came out under Saint-Simon's name. This included an extended essay on "The Scientific Labors Necessary for the Reorganization of Society," which Saint-Simon published as his own work in 1824. This angered Comte, who abruptly broke off his relationship to Saint-Simon. The elder scholar died the next year and became something of a cult hero among a small group of Christian socialist followers.

Although many of the ideas Comte published in his later works had a remarkable similarity to key themes of Saint-Simon, he avoided mentioning his early mentor as their source. After his break with Saint-Simon,