

Fall 2010

# Conflict and Critical Theories

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**inanutshell**

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# Outline

- Ingredients
  - Genealogy and Branches
  - Historical Imperatives
- Varieties
  - Frankfurt School
  - “Public Sociology” 1950s-60s-70s
  - Disciplinary Self-Critique
  - Collins’ Conflict Theory

# Ingredients

- Genealogy and Branches
- Historical Imperatives

# Genealogy and Branches

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# Genealogy

Machiavelli  
(1469-1527)

Hobbes  
(1588-1679)

Clausewitz  
(1780-1831)  
War... policy...  
other means

Marx  
(class struggle)  
(ideology)  
(consciousness)  
(critical, false)

Weber  
(power)  
(class, status, power)  
(legitimacy)

Simmel  
(1858-1918)  
Conflict as  
sociation

Malthus  
(1766-1834)

Darwin  
(1809-82)

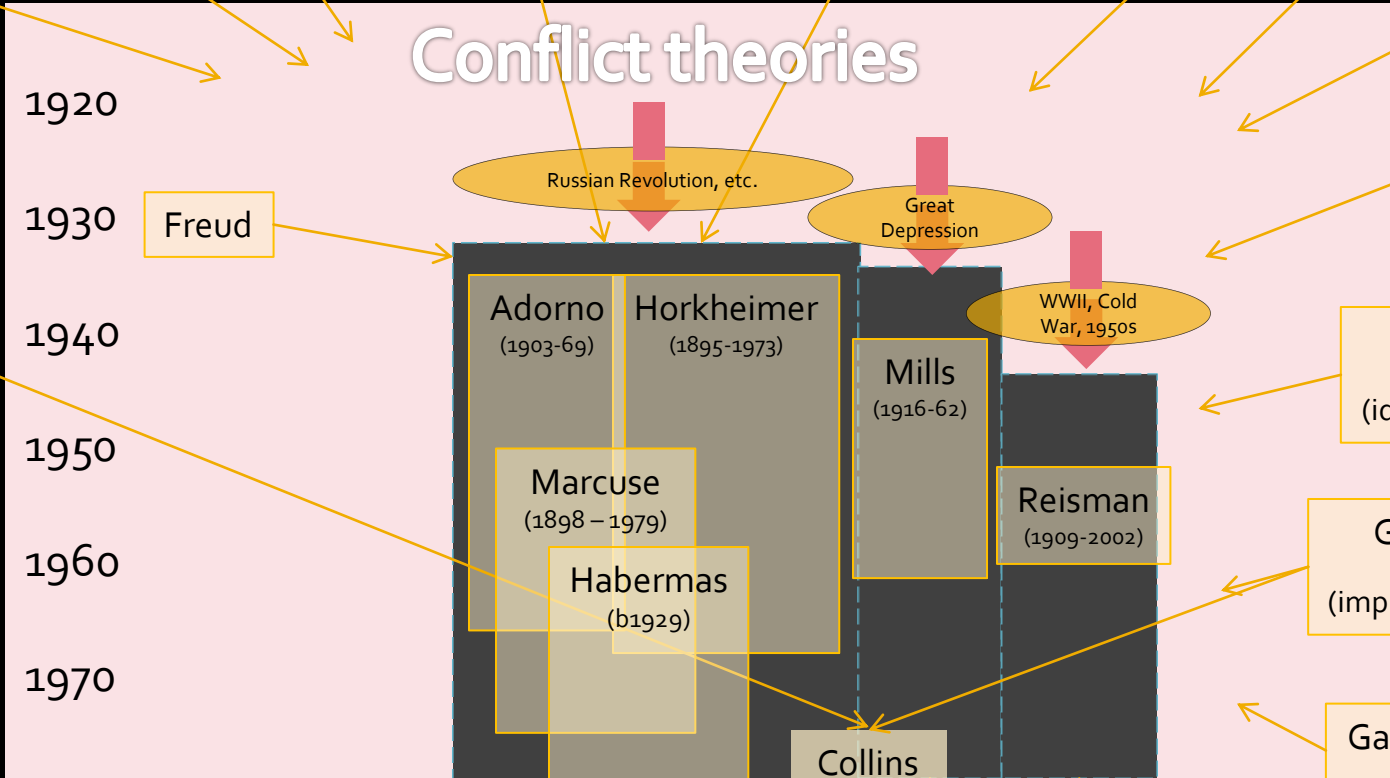
Spencer  
(1820-1903)

Erikson  
(1902-94)  
(identity crisis)

Goffman  
(1922-82)  
(impression mgt)

Game Theory  
(Schelling)

## Conflict theories



Durkheim  
(ritual)

Critical Race Theory

Feminist Theories

QueerTheories

Critical Legal Studies

Critical Etc. Theory

# Historical Imperatives (1920-50)

- Russian Revolution, great depression, Stalin, WWII, fascism, cold war, US becomes world power, the bomb, civil rights, breakdown of colonialism



# WWI, Bolshevik Revolution Change Playing Field for Left

European socialism had three choices

1. support moderate non-revolutionary (SPD) socialists and disavow Moscow
2. accept Moscow, join communist (KPD) party, work against Weimar republic

These were old choices. Recent events gave rise to 3<sup>rd</sup> option:

3. re-examine foundations of Marxist theory, understand past, prepare for future



# Simmel



- *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations*
  1. **Proposition:** Conflict establishes and maintain identity and boundary lines of groups.
  2. **Proposition:** Conflict is not always dysfunctional for a relationship; may even be necessary. Safety valve and signal.
  3. **Proposition:** Conflict is not absence of relationship; conflict presumes a relationship.

# Varieties

- Frankfurt School
- “Public Sociology” 1950s-60s-70s
- Disciplinary Self-Critique
- Collins’ Conflict Theory

# Frankfurt School

- Summer 1922 group of independent thinkers convene to discuss Marxism.
- Inspired organizing formal setting for same purpose.
- 1923 Felix Weil, well-to-do political science PhD, helped to set up an endowment and found the Institute for Social Research affiliated with the University of Frankfurt.

# Institute for Social Research (1923-33)



# Horkheimer & Adorno

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# Habermas

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# Public Sociology 1950s & 60s

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# Disciplinary Self-Critique

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# Collins' Conflict Sociology

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