

- **I. 5.2 Paul F. Lazarsfeld**

- **II. About Lazarsfeld**

- **A. Austrian, Vienna Jew**

- 1. Being Jew and intellectual in 1920s of Viennese society meant one is likely a socialist
- 2. Anti-semitism blocked Lazarsfeld's academic and political careers
 - a) But was also instrumental in helping him gain the Rockefeller fellowship
- 3. Left-leaning -- a more egalitarian society

- **B. Most important intellectual in shaping modern communication research**

- 1. But did not consider himself mainly a communications scholar

- **C. Considered himself a permanent outsider**

- 1. Jew and foreign
- 2. But tried even harder

- **D. Trained in mathematics**

- 1. Provided basic skills for methodological expertise
 - a) In turn provided means to move from one social science discipline to another
 - (1) And thus founded the field of mass communication research

- **E. Loved to work with data**

- 1. Helped tabulated questionnaires of young socialist meeting

- **F. Employed by Buhler at University of Vienna**

- 1. Presented findings at Charlotte Buhler's seminar
 - a) Conducted studies on contemporary social problems (e.g. morale of unemployed men, etc.)
 - (1) Lazarsfeld's later academic career partly shaped by this social research experience
- 2. Continued teaching at Gymnasium High School to support himself
 - a) Taught maths and physics

- **G. Part time lecturer in psychology**

- **III. Lazarsfeld's Vienna Research Institute**

- **A. Launched the Research Centre for Economic Psychology**

- 1. Important to later development of sociology and communication in America
- 2. Provided communication research centres later with framework of organisational form

- **B. As a means to seek relief from his financial problems**

- 1. But did not dare to resign from Gymnasium
- 2. Only hoped to get a modest salary out of contracts for market research that his institute conducted

- **C. Carried out consumer market research**

- **D. Also conducted audience study for Radio Vienna**

- 1. One of the first media audience investigation in the world
- 2. Which would later influence his Radio Research Project in U.S.

- **E. Institute barely survived economically**

- 1. Researchers were Lazarsfeld's leftish friends, motivated not by wages

- **F. Both business and academic clients**

- 1. e.g. Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, under Max Horkheimer, as one of its clients

- **G. Attempt to understand the life and outlook of Viennese beggars as one of its early studies**

- 1. Helped in the design of the well-known Marienthal study of the unemployed a few years later
 - a) Which would helped Lazarsfeld gain academic recognition and later a fellowship to U.S.

- **H. Pioneered several important methodoogies**

- 1. Question-and-interviewing design
- 2. Cross-tabulation
 - a) Using and eventually integrating different methods to gain a better view of the problem as a whole

- **I. Seemingly incongruous aim and work**

- 1. Centre organised by Socialist to advance social psychology, but conducting market research to increase businessmen's profits at the same time
- 2. But other sources of funding for research was not available then
- 3. Market research needed to pay for the bills

- **IV. Marienthal Study of Unemployment**

- **A. One of the first investigations of unemployment**

- **B. Supported by a small grant from Rockefeller Foundation**

- 1. Rockefeller Foundation's support brought Lazarsfeld to the attention of the foundation's officials and led to his travel fellowship to the U.S>

- **C. Chosen for its exemplification of an acute problem**

- 1. Dominant Austria's textile company bankrupted and threw the whole towns' citizens out of work

- **D. Best known study by the Viennese Research Centre for Economic Psychology**

- 1. Provided Lazarsfeld with academic reputation that would help him obtain travel fellowship to the U.S.
 - a) Presentation at 1932 International Congress of Psychology in Germany a big hit

- **V. Migration to America**

- **A. Migration almost did not happen**

- 1. Blocked from university advancement due to Lazarsfeld being Jew
 - a) By consolation, Karl Buhler (Charlotte's husband) put Lazarsfeld forward for the Rockefeller fellowship
- 2. Rockefeller Foundation official, Kitteridge, alerted by Buhler to Lazarsfeld's academic abilities

- a) Kitteridge interviewed Lazarsfeld and pass him a copy of the application, which he did not submit because he didn't think he stand a chance
- b) Kitteridge cabled Lazarsfeld asking for "reapplication" thinking that they misfiled his application
- **B. Met many scholars, including Robert Lynd, which helped Lazarsfeld**
 - 1. Lynd was offered professorship to Columbia by chair Maclver, who later regretted
 - a) Lynd was empirical scholar who advocated applied sociology
 - b) Maclver was theoretical and felt sociology should be study of social organisation
 - c) Resulting division was to continue until Lazarsfeld and Merton came together in 1941
- **C. Trouble back in Vienna**
 - 1. Nazis annexed Austria; deeply anti-Semitic
 - 2. Nazis raided Research Centre in Vienna
 - 3. Lazarsfeld's first wife Jahoda and his friends arrested
 - 4. Lazarsfeld lost his teaching position at Gymnasium
 - 5. No job to return to in Vienna
- **D. Decide to migrate to America with Lynd's help**
- **E. Secured job at Newark Research Centre**
 - 1. Lazarsfeld oversaw research work of student relief workers tabulating data from questionnaires completed by young unemployed people
 - 2. Appointed acting director of the Research Centre within a year
- **VI. Radio Research Project**
 - **A. Research on radio was needed but radio networks not willing to fund it themselves**
 - 1. Funded by the Rockefeller Foundation
 - 2. Radio networks did not oppose to it as long as Stanton was involved
 - **B. Started by Hadley Cantril (Princeton) and Frank Stanton (CBS radio network)**
 - 1. Lynd recommended Lazarsfeld as the director
 - **C. First two years spent developing research methodologies to be utilised in radio research**
 - 1. Lazarsfeld had free rein over it
 - 2. More interested with methodologies than the field of communication
 - **D. Project different from Stanton-Cantril's idea of laboratory experiments**
 - 1. Lazarsfeld utilised survey research, content analyses of radio programs, ratings and other types of secondary data
 - **E. Project took form of combination of qualitative and quantitative research on radio effects**
 - 1. Upon Cantril's suggestion for open-ended, in-depth personal interviews with individuals especially affected by a radio program
 - **F. Cantril fell out of RRP and it moved to Columbia University**

- 1. Lazarsfeld and Cantril disagreed with who should be listed as author of 'Invasion from Mars' study
- **VII. 'War of the Worlds' radio broadcast**
 - **A. Dramatisation of H.G. Wells story, by Orson Welles**
 - **B. Panicked an estimated 1 million of 6 million Americans**
 - **C. Study led by Cantril, aided by Lazarsfeld**
 - 1. Interviews, surveys, content analyses
 - 2. Why were some frightened and others not?
 - a) No single cause; contingent factors
 - b) People had no other source of information
 - c) Pause and tension build up
 - 3. Program characteristics, context factors and individual differences
 - a) People switched over mid-broadcast more likely to believe [?]
 - b) Lower educated more likely to believe
 - c) More religious more likely to believe (belief of Armageddon)
 - **D. Study published in *The Invasion from Mars* (1940)**
 - **E. Bullet Theory undermined, yet perception of powerful media persist**
 - 1. Only about 20% affected
 - 2. Quite a big number, but effects were not uniform
- **VIII. Lazarsfeld & RRP**
 - **A. More interested in methods of research than substantive content being studied**
 - **B. Sustained his scholarly research pursuits financially through consumer market research**
 - 1. Provided opportunities to advance research methodology
 - 2. But market research was viewed with disdain among American sociologist
 - **C. Two important methodological contributions**
 - **1. Lazarsfeld-Stanton Program Analyzer**
 - a) Measure and records likes and dislikes on audience to radio program or advertising content
 - b) Enabled measuring of responses when audience still remember content
 - c) Adopted later by CBS ('Big Annie') and advertising agencies
 - **2. Focus group interviewing**
 - a) After responding to the analyser, a focus group discussion of their reasons for their likes and dislikes
 - b) Allow investigator to probe reasons for their feelings
 - c) Resultant data mainly qualitative in nature; helpful in later design of a structured data-gathering device like a questionnaire
 - d) Unanticipated responses elicited
 - e) Also became one of the main tools of commercial market research today

- **D. RRP renewed by John Marshall from Rockefeller Foundation after Lazarsfeld's report**
 - 1. But Marshall still felt the project lack coherence and established the Rockefeller Communication Seminar
 - a) Initially to make recommendations about CR projects to fund
 - b) But was to evolve to help government study propaganda (see Lasswell) during WW2

• IX. Adorno and Lazarsfeld

- **A. Invited Adorno from Frankfurt to the RRP**
 - 1. Wanted Adorno's expertise on music to deal with one subproject of the RRP on the role of music
- **B. Wanted to see if critical and empirical school can collaborate in a common research endeavour**
 - 1. But found out they could not
- **C. Elitist European scholar Adorno viewed the RRP with complete disdain**
 - 1. Saw RRP as highly applied research
- **D. Fundamental theoretical dispute about nature of communication research**
 - 1. Set the tone for future difficult relations between the empirical and critical school

• X. Lazarsfeld & Administrative Research

- **A. 'Administrative':**
 - 1. Saw his empirical research as being in service of government and media, status quo
 - 2. Contrasted with critical communication research
 - a) Saw administrative research as 'selling out'
- **B. Lazarsfeld wanted to bridge empirical and critical research to no avail**
 - 1. Most critical scholars oppose administrative research

• XI. Quantitative and Qualitative Research

- **A. Lazarsfeld sought to combine both methods**
- **B. Deviant case analysis**
 - 1. Look in greater depth at individuals whose behaviour does not conform to a relationship characterising most of the other people in the study
 - a) By rereading the survey questionnaires, or reinterviewing
 - b) Finding a third variable to explain deviance
- **C. Early proponent of triangulation**
 - 1. Using multiple methods of measurement, data gathering and data analysis to obtain a many-sided view of the object of study
 - 2. Not necessarily 3, just multiple

• XII. Lazarsfeld Expands his Research Focus

- **A. From market research to political communication**

- 1. Still focused on attitudes and behavior
 - a) A lot of market research on consumer behavior
 - (1) Castigated; not a favourable comparison between comparing selling consumer goods and politicians
 - i) But similarities as well. On persuasion.
- 2. Predominantly survey methods
 - a) Not telephone, etc.
- **B. The Erie County Study**
 - 1. Work looking at 1940 election of Roosevelt vs Wilkie
 - 2. A panel study looking at people's voting choices
- **C. Erie as a bellwether county**
 - 1. The way that people voted represents the majority of the county typically
 - a) Exceptions such as San Francisco, etc.
- **D. Funded by Rockefelle, Life magazine, ORR, Elmo Roper, +++**
 - 1. Roper was an early pollster
 - 2. Had to include survey questions about consumer products (e.g. refrigerator)
- **E. The People's Choice (1948)**
 - 1. From this study; significantly after the fact (8 years after)
 - 2. The most famous work?
- **XIII. Details of the Erie County Study**
 - **A. Longitudinal design (panel study)**
 - 1. Seven personal interviews, conducted at monthly intervals
 - 2. Enabled Lazarsfeld to determine time-order of various independent variables
 - 3. Over time; in contrast to cross-sectional survey (at one point in time)
 - 4. Very difficult to undertake, a lot of resources, time, to get in touch with people simultaneously
 - 5. Very rigorous, largest communication study at its time
 - a) Allows them to factor in changes; people don't stay the same
 - **B. Probability sampling**
 - 1. Lazarsfeld's a methodologist
 - 2. Each and every person in the population has an equal chance of being brought into the sample
 - a) Gives some degree of representation
 - (1) Allows generalisation: sample reflects wider population
 - 3. Control groups used as a check
 - a) For people not exposed to radio messages
 - **C. Deviant case analysis**

- 1. Strategy for examining unusual/uncommon cases, through
- 2. Contingency tables
 - a) Simple, useful way of presenting information
 - b) Easy to understand
 - c) e.g. 2-by-2 table (see slides)
 - (1) Political party affiliation (Democrat v Republican) v 2-variable (continuous) SES (Socio-economic status: education & income. Income & education usually correlate.)
 - (2) Using median (split) instead of mean; so that outliers don't alter the results
 - (3) Higher SES people tend to be republican; lower SES people tend to be democrat
 - (4) In-depth analysis, sometimes qualitative, on the minority (deviant)
 - i) Found that spouse affect
- 3. Cross tabs [?]

• XIV. Key findings of the Study

- **A. Social categories linked to voting intentions and elections participation**
 - 1. e.g. overseas experience, SES, religion
- **B. Temporal nature of the process**
 - 1. Things that vary over time
 - 2. Most people decide early and remain unchanged
 - a) Contradicts conventional thinking that people don't decide until they go to the poll
 - 3. Late deciders uninterested, or experiencing cross pressures
 - a) Lazarsfeld concentrated on this group
 - b) Cross pressures: e.g. spouse voting for another candidate, parents diverged on decision, etc.
 - c) Some don't decide due to concern about alienating people in their social sphere
- **C. Three patterns of media campaign influence**
 - 1. Activation
 - a) When people come into contact with campaign; agenda-setting
 - b) Stimulates people to be involved
 - 2. Reinforcement
 - a) Simply confirmed their previously held beliefs
 - b) Consolidation; selective listening to messages, but difficult to document
 - 3. Conversion
 - a) Minority group
 - b) Not many people actually change their minds based on the campaign, primarily through the mass media

- c) Voter who keeps an open mind to issues and candidates, then decides on basis of what is best for the nation is a fiction

- **D. Medium differences (newspaper v radio)**

- 1. Different groups of SES were using different medium
- 2. Newspaper for higher SES, radio for lower SES
- 3. But radio was able to have some impact

- **XV. Implications of the Erie County study**

- **A. Mass communication functions through a nexus of mediating factors to influence audience**

- 1. Media a contributory agent, but not the sole cause

- **B. Launched the era of limited effects in mass communication**

- 1. Lazarsfeld expected direct and powerful effects of media
- 2. However found the opposite: informed and persuaded only a few key individuals called opinion leaders
 - a) Magnified the effect through interpersonal communication links with their 'followers'
- 3. Limited media effects dominated U.S. communication scholars for the next several decades

- **C. Opinion leadership gives rise to Two-step Flow model**

- 1. OL Came from Lippmann's *Public Opinion*, which influenced father of PR Bernays, then Lazarsfeld

- **D. Conceptual contribution far outweighed research findings**

- 1. Lazarsfeld's measure of opinion leadership leaves much to be desired
- 2. Empirical evidence for two-step flow of communication scanty

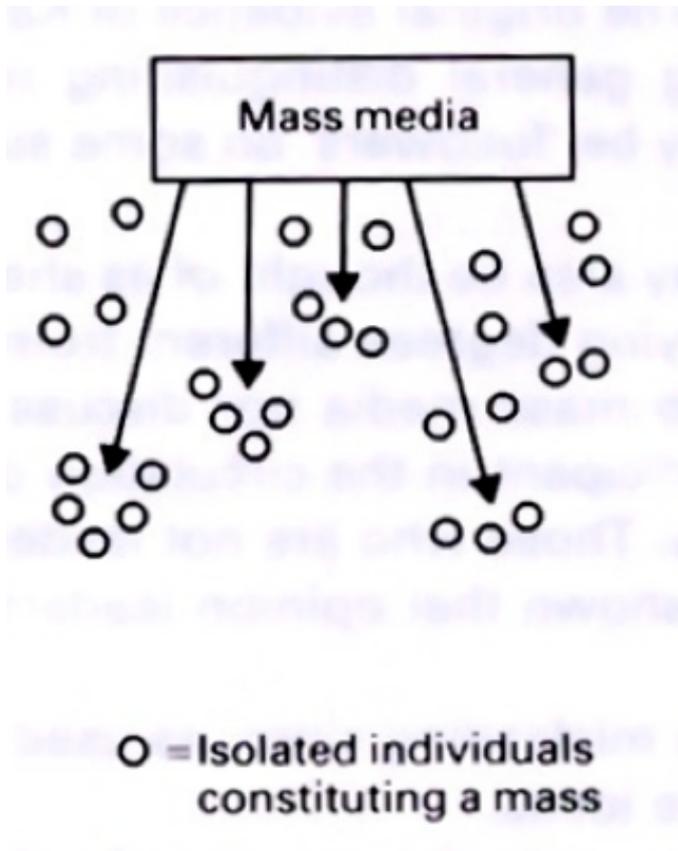
- **XVI. Two-step Flow Model**

- **A. Interpersonal influence matched or exceeded media influence**

- 1. Interpersonal interaction as important, or if not more important than mass communication
- 2. Contradicts the prevalent fear of the impact of mass communication

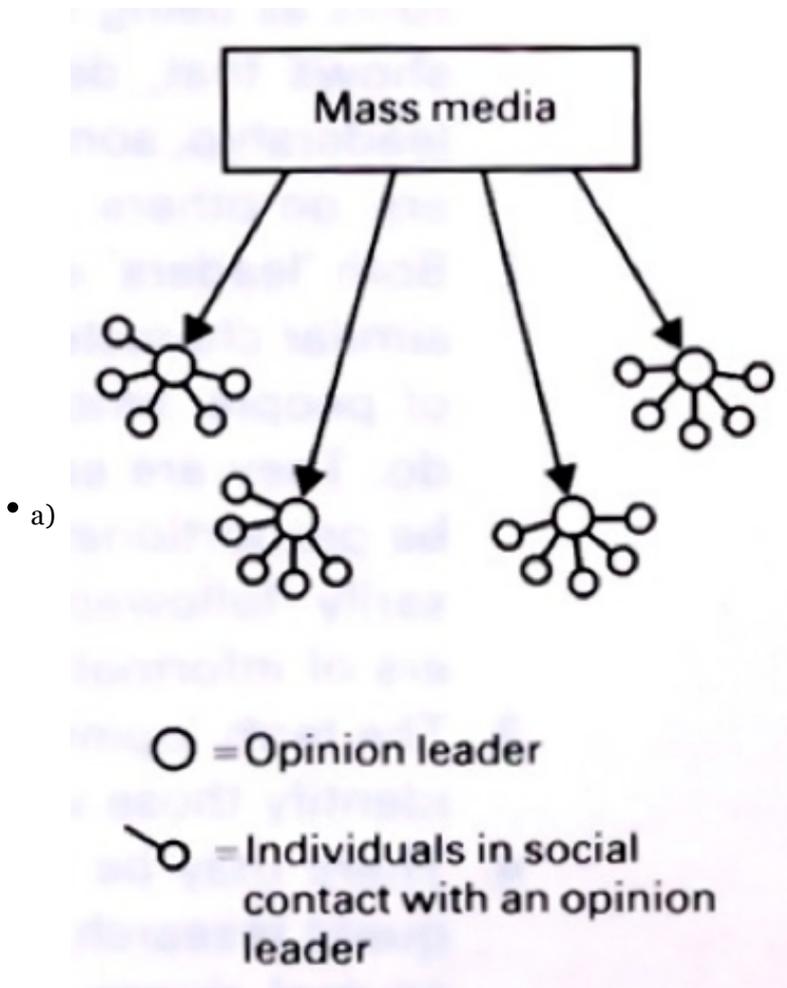
- **B. Media influence is indirect**

- **C. Diagram**



- 1.

- 2. Mass media shooting messages to anonymous, alienated mass
 - a) Media was very important in influencing them
 - b) Lazarsfeld disagrees: only some people are actually paying attention
- 3. Two-step flow model



- a)
- b) Mass media indirectly affects people through opinion leader
- 4. Media influence is indirect, through opinion leaders
 - a) Views that people matter more; influentials
 - b) Lazarsfeld picked up this idea from Bernays, father of PR (see next lecture)
- 5. Problems with the model
 - a) Active/passive dichotomy vs. continuum
 - (1) Active receivers
 - (2) Passive processing of information
 - (3) But active/passive changes with other contextual factors
 - i) e.g. depends on how much impact the message has on the person
 - b) Opinion leader? Where do ideas originate?
 - (1) Who made them leaders? Do they really exist? How and why are they special?
 - c) Media can have direct effects
 - (1) Doesn't have to be through opinion leaders
 - d) Not impregnable theory, but picked up by scholars for many years
 - (1) Conceptual contribution more important
- **D. Led to idea of minimal media effects**

- 1. Media ineffective in changing people's thinking
- 2. Later contingent effects
- **E. Media effects are not automatic, not all powerful, but contingent on various factors**
 - 1.

• XVII. Bureau of Applied Social Research

- **A. Renamed from ORR (Office of Radio Research) in 1944**
 - 1. Lazarsfeld insisted on 'Applied': interested in practical aspects of his study
- **B. Gradually became a part of Columbia U.**
 - 1. ORR moved on campus in 1940
 - 2. Lazarsfeld appointed A/P in Sociology in 1941
 - 3. Legitimacy of a Ivy League university
 - 4. Robert Merton named Associate Director in 1943
 - a) Very strong sociologist, collaborated very well with Lazarsfeld
 - b) Lazarsfeld was mostly known of his methodological prowess
 - c) Merton was the big picture person, theoretician
 - 5. As bureau became more embedded in University, Rockefeller Foundation funding dwindled
- **C. Columbia U. did not provide funding, except for free rental, until later**
 - 1. Lazarsfeld had to devote considerable time to raising research funds
 - a) Detracted from his academic research and from his work with doctoral students at the university
- **D. Continued conducting market research**
 - 1. In order to pay the bills
 - 2. 'Robin Hooding', shuttling funds from one study to another, paying deficit of last study with grant for the next study
 - 3. Served two masters
 - a) Conducted applied research for corporate sponsors
 - b) Published academic book years later aimed at scholarly audience

• XVIII. The Decatur Study (1945)

- **A. Decatur in City of Illinois, 'Rovere'**
- **B. Initially sponsored by *Time***
 - 1. Wanted to know if there are other types of opinion leaders in American communities
 - a) But many of Rovere 'influentials' (op. leaders) did not read *Time*
 - 2. Then funded by MacFadden publications
 - a) Whose *True Story* was read by lower-class influentials in Rovere
- **C. Second to County of Erie study**
- **D. Study of 'influentials' (opinion leaders) by C. Wright Mills**

- 1. Recognition that interpersonal communication was very important
- **E. Mills fell out with Lazarsfeld; got fired from Decatur project and the Bureau later**
 - 1. Mills dedicated to problems of radical social change
 - 2. Lazarsfeld perspective centered on system maintenance
- **F. *Personal influence* published in 1955**
 - 1. Published 10 years later after study was done
- **G. Found:**
 - 1. Media provided information,
 - 2. But only when information was transmitted from one individual to another as personal influence
 - 3. That individuals were motivated to make decisions and take action

• XIX. Diffusion of innovations

- **A. Bureau's study of Pfizer's new antibiotic**
- **B. Fundamentally a social process of people talking to people about a new idea**
- **C. First individuals to adopt an innovation (i.e. innovators) not respected by others in system**
 - 1. Rate of adoption increases slowly
- **D. Opinion leaders in system adopt**
 - 1. Interpersonal discussions about innovation causes rapid increase in adoption
- **E. Rate of adoption characteristic of S-curve**
 - 1. Characteristic of radio and television adoption in U.S.

• XX. Bureau's Research Style ***

- **A. Favour localised designs to random samples [? - did they pioneer random sampling?]**
 - 1. Enabled study of interpersonal communication and social relations
- **B. Absence of statistical tests**
 - 1. Reason was that Columbia researches mainly exploratory in nature
 - a) Designed to formulate hypotheses about human behaviour rather than to provide a definitive test
 - 2. Business of identifying tentative understandings
 - 3. Critics argue that absence of statistical tests means hypotheses were accepted/rejected based on intuition

• XXI. Research on Radio Signals

- **A. Cannot look at media influence in isolation; need to look at it in the context of interpersonal/social communication**
- **B. Four studies by Herta Herzog in early 1940s**
 - 1. Interested in daytime serial as "soap operas"
 - a) Melodramas, love games, etc.

- b) Soap because they're sponsored by soaps manufacturer
- c) Household generally run by housewives
 - (1) Most people don't have domestic helpers
 - (2) Radio will be on in the background as they do housework
- **C. Measure size and dedication of the radio audience**
- **D. Describe characteristics and gratification**
 - 1. Some differences in education, reading behaviours, radio listening patterns
 - 2. No real differences in personality or income
 - 3. Gratifications obtained
 - a) Attracted ladies
 - b) Provided emotional relief, wishful thinking, dreams, aspirations and helpful advice
- **E. Launched the Uses and Gratifications research tradition**
 - 1. Invert the media effects paradigm
 - a) The media do things to people
 - b) Uses and gratifications state that people not interested in what media do to people; but what people make of media
- **F. Motivational research and market research**
 - 1. Looking at people who actually have certain goals in minds
- **XXII. Robert K. Merton (1910 - 2003)**
- **A. Theoretically inclined sociologist**
 - 1. Many sociologists work in communication departments
- **B. Well matched partner for Lazarsfeld (methodologists)**
 - 1. Theoretical inclination complement and helped Lazarsfeld achieved academic credibility
 - 2. Diplomatic skills called upon by Lazarsfeld to extricate him from problems with others
- **C. Developed many key concepts**
 - 1. Self-fulfilling prophecy
 - a) Once people hold a certain view, they'll work unconsciously to attain the prophecy
 - 2. Theories of the middle range
 - a) Range refers to level of abstraction
 - b) Low level: descriptive, not much theory involved
 - c) High level: very abstract and untestable
 - d) Wanted to focus on theories that can be empirically examined and tested
 - 3. Narcotizing dysfunction
 - a) Sometimes people would surround themselves with media for surveillance
 - b) They believed they're actually doing something, but end up being apathetic, stupid

- c) Marx's false consciousness: we've got so much information out there, sense of engagement, participation. but that doesn't mean you're actively involved.
- d) Thus universities goal to encourage active citizenry than just education
- 4. Pseudo-Gemeinschaft (read Ger-mine-shaft)
 - a) Kate Smith broadcast
 - (1) Popular singer and radio personality on air for 18 hours
 - (2) Brought in \$39 million of purchases and pledges for U.S. war bonds
 - (3) **Conclusion:** Media can have direct effects on a massive scale when persuasive messages are highly emotional and come from a source made credible by "technicians of sentiment"
 - b) Gemeinschaft: Being connected to people; integrated into society
 - c) Pseudo-Gemeinschaft: False sense of belonging, community. *Feigning of personal concern for another individual in order to manipulate the individual more effectively.*
 - d) Before interactive technologies, Internet
 - (1) Internet could be argued as a real sense of community
 - e) How might the media create a false sense of community
 - (1) e.g. market campaigns, idols (?)
 - f) One of the way media appeals top people
- **D. Key member of the Bureau**
 - 1. Maintain quality and integrity of research
 - 2. Lazarsfeld benefited from Merton's contributions
- **XXIII. Wrapping up Lazarsfeld**
 - **A. Impact on communication**
 - 1. Directed towards studying individual in social context
 - 2. Directed towards studying of effects
 - a) Other important research issues were not studied or receive scant attention
 - (1) e.g. questions of ownership and control of mass media were generally ignored
 - 3. One-way paradigm
 - a) Two-way/interactive communication ignored
 - 4. Lead to search for indirect effects (effects of effects)
 - **B. Three key contributions to communication**
 - 1. Initiated media effects tradition
 - a) Became dominant paradigm in U.S. mass communications research
 - b) Developed several important theoretical concepts
 - (1) Opinion leadership
 - (2) Two-step flow of communication

- (3) Pioneered studying role of interpersonal vs mass media channels in communication campaigns
- 2. Advanced survey research methods
 - a) e.g. longitudinal, deviant-case analysis
 - b) Transformed public opinion polling methods, usually descriptive then, to survey analysis
- 3. Created prototype of research institutes
 - a) Driven by market forces, selling research
 - b) Importance to have university affiliation
 - (1) Tap into human resource of university
 - (2) Tap into prestige
 - c) Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University served as model for many other university research institutes
 - (1) Organisational form imitated
- 4. Brought Merton in his Bureau and thus communication study
- **C. Several criticisms**
 - 1. Abstracted empiricism
 - a) Lazarsfeld focused too much on his data, stuff that he can measure
 - b) Too abstract, drawn away from real-world problems
 - c) vs. Chicago school which is interested in real-world stuff
 - d) Wasn't asking the important questions not driven by empirical analysis, but by values, etc.
 - (1) e.g. how do you influence voters, was this electoral system the best, etc.
 - 2. Seductive empiricism
 - a) Getting scholars to focus on ... than normative theories, how things ought to be, value-based
 - 3. Overemphasis on individual effects
 - a) When critics say he should be focusing on societal level
 - 4. Bureaucratization of social research
 - a) Mills: Fact-cluttered studies Contain little/no direct observation by those in charge of them
 - 5. Entrepreneurial role
 - a) Many U.S. wanted academic sociology well removed from applications
- **D. Still widely respected**