- ## I. Kurt Lewin
- ## II. Experimental psychologist
  - **A. In Royal Friedrich-Wilhelms University of Berlin**
    - 1. Led by Wilhelm Stumpf
      - a) Proponent of the experimental approach and Gestalt psychology
        - (1) Filling in a partial lack of information about an individual to form an overall impression, by
          - i) Examining perception holistically
          - ii) Emphasises on context and environment
          - iii) Experimental in nature
        - (2) Turns away from Wilhemn Wundt's tradition of research
  - **B. Berlin Gestaltist vs Lewin**
    - 1. Strict Gestaltists focus on
      - a) Individual perception and
      - b) Learning
    - 2. Lewin's approach was Gestalt-like in orientation, but centers on
      - a) Needs,
      - b) Personality, and
      - c) Social factors
    - 3. *Lewin was mainly interested in forces leading to indivdual action* (See field theory next)
- ## III. Jew & Persecution
  - **A. Persecuted like Lazarsfeld**
  - **B. Exiled to America**
  - **C. Prejudice influenced on his scholarly interests later**
    - 1. Shift from individualistic psychology to social psychology of small-group communication
      - a) Now most noted for founding research and training in group dynamics, and
      - b) for establishing the participative management style in organisations
    - 2. *Helped put the group into communication theory and research, though he does not see it this way*
- ## IV. Marginal University status
  - **A. Limited by how high he could go as a Jew in Germany**
  - **B. Even in America, he did not have any tenured position**
    - 1. School of Home Economics (Cornell)
    - 2. Iowa Child Welfare Research Station
    - 3. Research Centre for Group Dynamics (MIT)
  - **C. Dependent on soft money**
    - 1. Spent much time seeking research funds outside university

- 1. Spent much time seeking research funds outside university
- 2. Funds came with strings attached
  - a) e.g. expectation that solutions to a practical problem be found
    - (1) Probably one of the reason why Lewin was oriented to solving social problems/applied research
      - i) Similar to Lazarsfeld at Columbia University Bureau of Applied Social Research
      - ii) Focus on *action research* did not earn him the respect that he felt he deserved from field of US psychology

V. Influenced by his prior study

A. of medicine, mathematics and especially *physics

- 1. See influence in Field Theory

VI. German learning & way of teaching

A. Totally rejected the norms of German university culture concerning student-professor contact

- 1. Research under Stumpf was carried out in isolation
  - a) Custom precluded him from speaking directly to Stumpf

B. An easy going and engaging supervisor, free of status consciousness

- 1. Asked students to address him as "Kurt"
- 2. Invited doctoral students for dinner
- 3. Dropped by their house unannounced

C. Inspired doctoral students

- 1. Bluma Zeigarnik's study on recall of uncompleted or interrupted tasks

VII. World War I

A. Enlisted as German soldier in 1914

B. Wounded and hospitalised

- 1. Wrote "The War Landscape" in 1917
  - a) Difference in perception between "peace things" and "war things"
    - (1) e.g. meaning of a farmer's barn located in no man's land vs similar barn in peaceful landscape
- 2. Wrote his advanced degree thesis to qualify for professor

VIII. Quasselstripe

A. aka "Chatter line"

B. Formed quasselstripe groups at each of the universities he taught

- 1. Adopted thinking-by-talking approach

C. Open discussion about each other's research, with no criticism allowed

D. Encouraged development of his field theory

IX. Field theory

A. a.k.a. group dynamics and topological psychology

- **A. a.k.a. group dynamics and topological psychology**
- **B. Defined as human behaviour as function of**
  - 1. the individual and
  - 2. immediate environment
- **C. Also, the study of individual in his/her field as a result of forces in an individual's immediate surroundings**
- **D. Theoretical framework or metatheory about theory-building**
  - 1. Very general
- **E. Borrowed methods of representing his theory from physics**
  - 1. But did not lift wholesale, gave them special meaning
  - 2. e.g.
    - a) 'Field', or *lifespace*, as personal environment of individual's activities
    - b) 'Valence' as tension, a motivation or need. e.g. Freudian wishes
    - c) 'Vector' as force pushing and pulling toward a positive/negative perception of an object
    - d) 'Barrier' prevents fulfilment of wish
- **F. Focuses on underlying needs and subjective experience**
- **G. Combined humanistic with scientific**
  - 1. Combined qualitative and quantitative *(from slides, but did he?)
  - 2. Personally debriefed respondents after an experiment in order to understand their perceptions of their behaviour
  - 3. Did not want to use statistical test of significance, but did not discourage his students from taking up such courses
    - a) Did not want the individual case to be lost in aggregation inherent in statistical analysis
- **X. Impact of Field Theory**
- **A. Puts subjectivism back into psychology**
  - 1. As an alternative to Clark Hull's behaviourism, which is centred on S-R learning
- **B. Pioneered to cognitive approach to psychology, which still holds the central position today**
  - 1. Cognation as an inherent role of communication
    - a) "What you have in your mind as the product of received communication, and
    - b) what you tell others as taken from contents of that same mind -- contents that have undergone transformations and interacted with each other"
- **C. Close correspondence between cognitive emphasis of field theory and communication elevated Lewin as forefather of communication study**
- **XI. Intellectual Shift**
- **A. As a result of his move to America:**
  - 1. Mother died in a Nazi concentration camp while he was in America

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B. From individuals to group work and collaboration
- 1. As a result of his persecution, see Jew & Persecution
- 2. Centrally interested in group influences on individual behaviour
  - a) "Membership in a group is part of the 'ground' upon which a person stands"
- 3. Identification with a group provides an individual with a point of view, a perspective, and a self-meaning
  - a) Meaning received by individual is in part determined by the group which the person belongs
- 4. Self-hatred among Jews
  - a) Ordinarily, a person will leave a group whose negative aspects outweigh the positive attractions, but
  - b) no member of a minority group is allowed to leave it because of the greater power of the majority group
  - c) i.e. a Jew who converts is still considered a Jew by others
    - (1) Frustrated at being classified as Jewish by others, individual turns against his/her own minority group and himself or herself

C. Focus on social problems
- 1. Less of an individual learning-and-perception psychologist
- 2. Focused on human communication problems, although communication did not then exist as an academic field
- 3. Focus on
  - a) Prejudice
    - (1) One sign of Lewin's lasting influence on social psychology in the US is the field's continuing interest in prejudice
  - b) Authoritarian leadership
  - c) Race relations
  - d) Status of women

D. Towards applied problems
- 1. From philosophical and fundamental concerns in psychology toward applied problems
- 2. Lewin was interested and very involved in application, which took up much of his time
  - a) Other psychologists of his day resisted this orientation
    - (1) But Lewin believed that applying a theory is one way to test its validity
- 3. Both practical and theoretical
  - a) Though research still driven by theory, not data

XII. Leadership Style Studies

A. Inspired by one of his doctoral student, Ronald Lippitt
- 1. Had a degree in group work

XII. Leadership Style Studies

- 1. Had a degree in group work
- 2. Background as Boy Scout executive
  - a) Inspired by the Boy Scouts (?)
- **B. Compare performance of making theatrical masks by 11-year-old boys**
- **C. Described as "experimental anthropology"**
  - 1. Creating group cultures in their laboratory
  - 2. By anthropologist Margaret Mead
- **D. Politically motivated, but compelling results**
  - 1. Study of autocratic versus democratic group leadership motivated by Lewin's experience of prejudice and persecution by fascist/authoritarian Nazis
- **E. Different leadership styles: Autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leaders**
  - 1. <u>High degree of control</u>
    - a) Autocratic
  - 2. <u>Low degree of control</u>
    - a) Democratic: very active in stimulating group discussion and decisions
    - b) Laissez-faire: passive, hands-off role
- **F.**
- **G. Basic findings**
  - 1. Quantity of work unaffected (? - productivity decreases?)
  - 2. Satisfaction is better with democratic style
  - 3. Consultative vs. participatory democratic style (?)
  - 4. Replications have been difficult
  - 5. Original studies criticized
- **H. Hawthorne effect**
  - 1. Attention matters (?)
  - 2. Perhaps overstated
- **I.**
- **J. Implications of the study for Lewin**
  - 1. Decisive turning point in Lewin's change from individualistic psychology to social spychology
  - 2. Finally established his reputation in America

XIII. Two studies conducted

- **A. Experiment 1**
  - 1. 2 groups of boys with democratic adult leader vs 2 groups with autocratic way
  - 2. <u>Results</u>
    - a) Autocratic
      - (1) unhappy and less productive

2. Results

- (1) unhappy and less productive
- (2) restless and aggressive; fought amongst themselves
- (3) hostility and scapegoating 30 times higher than democratic groups
- (4) boys functioned as individuals, without much concern for group's goals or interests of other group members
- b) Democratic
  - (1) friendlier with each other and showed more group spirit
  - (2)
- 3. Flaws
  - a) Sample size very small: 2 groups in each condition
  - b) Not randomly assigned
  - c) But overlooked due to it being a socially significant topic with Hitler's invasion during 1938-1939
- **B. Experiment 2**
  - 1. Changes and manipulations
    - a) Added laissez-faire style of leadership
      - (1) Inadvertently incorporated when supposed democratic leader Ralph White engaged in a do-nothing, hands-off style
    - b) "Janitor" criticising work of boys in leaders' absence to test for response:
      - (1) United resistance, docile acceptance or scapegoating
    - c) Each group had 1 of 3 style for 6 weeks, followed by another style
      - (1) Each boy has experience of working in two different leadership style group
  - 2. Results
    - a) Happiness and productivity: democratic > laissez-faire > authoritarian
    - b) Members of laissez-faire group that came from autocratic group frightened and disturbed
    - c) All but one of the 20 boys preferred democratic leadership most
  - 3. Flaws
    - a) Only four replications of experimental treatment
      - (1) Insufficient for statistical test of significane or
    - b) No accounting of order effect
      - (1) e.g. were results of new leadership style affected by previous style?

- **XIV. Other applied research**
- XV. Changing Food Habits (Iowa food studies)

- **A. Motivated by WWII**
  - 1. To cope with efforts in America to cope with food shortages, rationing
  - 2. Needed dietary changes to improve public nutrition and health

- **B. Worked with Margaret Mead**

2. Needed dietary changes to improve public nutrition and health

- **B. Worked with Margaret Mead**
- **C. The sweetbreads study (lecture vs. discussion)**
  - 1. Objective to increase consumption of "undesirable" glandular meats (e.g. sweetbreads) due to scarce food supply
  - 2. <u>Findings</u>
    - a) Lecture-form (3%) vs Discussion-form (32%)
  - 3<u>.</u> <u>Flaws</u>
    - a) Different discussion leader and lecturer leader
    - b) Discussion-form included public commitment by raising hands, and were informed of follow-up
- **D. Nonetheless, still classic study of differences between interactive interpersonal communication vs one-way mass communication**
- **E. Deduced 3-step model of behaviour change: unfreezing, moving, freezing**
  - 1. Group discussion, interpersonal communication, has a 'freezing' effect for future action
- **F. Housewives as gatekeepers**
  - 1. Gatekeepers control the flow of messages in a channel
  - 2. Housewives control foods that their families ate
  - 3. Later adopted by communication scholars to study role of gatekeepers in
    - a) mass media institutions, and
    - b) organisation communication research

XVI. Harwood Pajama Factory studies

- **A. Participatory management as a means of bringing about change**
  - 1. Led to increased productivity
- **B. New Harwood plant suffered from:**
  - 1. low performance, poor morale, frequent absences, slow-downs of work and high turnover rate
- **C. Invited Lewin to study the problem, who recommended management to stop pressuring employees for higher production**
  - 1. Instead, when employees asked to set their own production goals, they managed to attain what they previously thought was unattainable
- **D. Employees involved in discussion of change of pajama manufacturing style maintain level of performance**
  - 1. Productivity of those not included in discussion fell 35%

XVII. Research Centre for Group Dynamics (RCGD)

- **A. Lewin and his group move to MIT (1945)**
  - 1. Iowa became increasingly inhospitable to Lewin
    - a) Colleagues criticised him for frequent absences (due to need to source for 'soft' funding)
    - b) Kenneth Spence, champion of Clark Hull-type behaviourism, became chairperson of Department of Psychology and criticised Lewin's brand of social psychology (field theory)

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- **B. Trained PhD students in group psychology**
  - 1. Outstanding students who carried forward Lewin's thinking to future generations of social psychology
- **C. Westgate Study of communication networks (Festinger)**
  - 1. Studied comm network links among all married students living in Westgate apartments at MIT
  - 2. Significance: experimental researcher who conducted a non-laboratory study
    - a) Field study conducted to understand interaction of all kinds of variables
  - 3. Findings
    - a) Physical distance/Spatial distance as a major/main determinant of whether a dyadic link occured between any two household/of who talks to whom
- **D. Network research (Alex Bavelas and others)**
  - 1. Laboratory studies of experimentally created networks
    - a) Chain, wheel, star
    - b) Idea from Lewin's idea that group relationships can be represented as cells with lines connecting them (from analogy of cell biology)
  - 2. Wheel: Allowed individuals to exchange written notes freely
  - 3. Star: Exchange messages only with a central individual
  - 4. Line: Very restricted
  - 5. Findings
    - a) Networks with less restricted communication had higher performance in solving group problems
    - b) But star outperformed wheel, which suffered from information overload
    - c) Suggested that communication structures of social networks can be analysed mathematically
- **E. The centre moves to Michigan (1948)**
  - 1. Unique situation in academe where entire set of scholars and their doctoral students moved in a body from one university to another, moreover twice

- ## XVIII. Research Areas of RCGD
  - **A. Group productivity: why was it that groups are so ineffective in getting things done?**
    - 1. Relation to industrial society -> Optimize performance of workers
  - **B. Communication: how influence is spread throughout a group**
    - 1. Together with flow of info
  - **C. Social perception: how a person's group affected the way they perceived social events**
    - 1. c.f. symbolic interactionism?
  - **D. Intergroup relations**
    - 1. Note: Above points on intra-group relations. Now, inter-group
  - **E. Group membership: how individuals adjust to these conditions**

    D. Intergroup relations

- **E. Group membership: how individuals adjust to these conditions**
  - 1. People coming into and going out of groups -> Effect of changes?
  - 2. Issue of group cohesion
- **F. Training leaders to improve the function of groups (T-groups i.e. training groups)**
  - 1. Applied research
  - 2. Teach group dynamic skills etc
  - 3. But a Western model of psychology. What new considerations would need to be taken into account when applied in Sg for e.g.?

- ## XIX. Legacy of Group Dynamics

- **A. Started as a training course, as an application of field theory**
  - 1. Consisted mainly of lectures about group psychology and prejudice
  - 2. But workshop staff met every evening to discuss day's events and planned for next
- **B. Meeting/discussion became the most significant training event of day**
  - 1. Training lectures cancelled
  - 2. Replaced with group exercises, feedback, discussion of group and individual process
- **C. Became less and less geared towards research; more and more as a training experience**
- **D. Annual seminars formalised into NTL (National Training Laboratory)**
  - 1. Shift in emphasis to training leaders
  - 2. T-groups are somewhat controversial
    - a) Part of it had to do w self-actualisation movement (connecting w oneself) (?)
    - b) Sometimes pushed the boundaries of what is acceptable behaviour
      - (1) e.g. put people in situations where conflict was intentionally created to make people confront their prejudices etc
  - 3. Esalen Sensitivity Training (or EST)
    - a) "sensitivity training" general term used for Lewin-style group training
    - b) Explosion in interest for group dynamic training

- ## XX. Theory of Group Dynamics

- **A. Formation of groups: Group members being bound together**
  - 1. <u>Interdependence of fate</u>
    - a) by virtue of some characteristic beyond your control
      - (1) e.g. Jews; born into the faith which influenced their lives
  - 2. v.s.
  - 3. <u>Task interdependence</u>
    - a) Come together to achieve goals
    - b) Bonds not as strong as in fate interdependence
- **B. Group cohesion and groupthink**

- **B. Group cohesion and groupthink**
  - 1. Japan as model of work groups, but model failed as Japan entered recession
- **C. Elements of T-groups**
  - 1. Feedback (either continuous/during interaction or after)
  - 2. Unfreezing (challenging beliefs)
    - a) But sometimes went beyond what people can tolerate (see controversial above)
    - b) Recall: Unfreezing, thawing, freezing (in sweetbreads study)
  - 3. Participant observation (emotional engagement and detached analysis (?))
    - a) Ethnographic approach – leaders of training groups also members
  - 4. Cognitive aids (facilitate learning)
    - a) e.g. Johari Window

- ## XXI. Experiential Learning
  - **A. Lewin believed that learning is best facilitated when there is a conflict between**
    - 1. immediate concrete experience and detached analysis within the individual

- ## XXII. Extensions of Group Dynamics
  - **A. Network research**
    - 1. Social network analysis (e.g. Westgate study)
    - 2. Draw out connections with nodes etc
    - 3. Maps as social network analysis
    - 4. "Six degrees of separation" (from study by Stanley Milgram – small world phenomena)
    - 5. The strength of weak ties (by Mark Granovetter
      - a) Casual acquaintances were the ones who provided the best opportunities/new info, since closest friends usually share the same experiences etc.
    - 6. Internet as a test bed (e.g. smallworld -> sending email, but small world phenomena may not be a likely outcome)
  - **B. Group think**
    - 1. The "dark side" of group cohesion
    - 2. Causes
      - a) Group homogeneity, directive leadership, isolation

- ## XXIII. Factors contributing to Group Think
  - **A. Illusion of invulnerability**
  - **B. Belief in inherent morality of group**
  - **C. (CLOSED-MINDEDNESS)**
  - **D. Rationalisation**
    - 1. Focusing on past successes to predict future successes
      - a) Thus downplaying information that predicts negative outcome

D. **Rationalisation**

- a) Thus downplaying information that predicts negative outcome
- E. **Stereotyping of outsiders**
  - 1. Close of ideas from outside from group/isolation
- F. **(PRESSURE TOWARDS UNIFORMITY)**
- G. **Self-censorship**
- H. **Direct pressure**
  - 1. On any deviance from any assumed group consensus
- I. **Mindguarding**
  - 1. Discouraging others from expressing their own views
  - 2. Suppressing of other documents and information
- J. **Illusion of unanimity**
  - 1. Members are discouraged from straying away from making the decision

- XXIV. Preventing Group Think
  - A. **Bring in critical evaluators**
  - B. **Avoid being directive**
  - C. **Open climate**
  - D. **Avoid insulation**

- XXV. Cognitive Dissonance (Leon Festinger)
  - A. **Theory developed by Leon Festinger (1957)**
  - B. **Based on Heider's balance theory, Osgood's congruity theory, Lewin's Field Theory and Gestaltist perspective**
    - 1. Balance theory
      - a) State when a person likes, and is liked by A and B, who would then be expected to like each other
  - C. **Dissonance created by inconsistency between "cognitions" (e.g., beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and/or actions):**
    - 1. Degree to which an individual faces two conflicting cognitive elements
  - D. **Dissonance as an aversive state**
  - E. **People have a natural "drive" to minimize or avoid aversive states**
  - F. **Two basic predictions**
    - 1. "The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance"
    - 2. "When dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase the dissonance"

- XXVI. Dealing with Dissonance
  - A. **Dissonance reduction strategies**
    - 1. Change cognitions (or attitudes, behaviors)

XXVI. Dealing with Dissonance

- 1. Change cognitions (or attitudes, behaviors)
- 2. Add cognitions
- 3. Alter importance of cognitions
- **B. Avoid dissonance inducing situations: Effect of dissonance**
  - 1. Engage in selective exposure, avoid exposure to conflicting message
    - a) e.g. purchase of a new car and avoiding advertisements of other makes
- **C. Examples of dissonance inducing situations**
  - 1. <u>Minimal justification</u>
    - a) Eliminating dissonance of behaving against one's beliefs for something infinitesimal will change one's attitude about the situation
    - b) Students paid $1 or $20 to convince others to do a boring task they had just done
    - c) $20-paid students rated task less positively than $1-paid students later
      - (1) $1-paid students were forced to internalize the attitude they were induced to express, because they had no other/insufficient justification (thus cognitive dissonance)
      - (2) When asked to lie about the tasks, they sought to relieve this hypothetical stress by changing their attitude
        - i) This process allows the subject to genuinely believe that the tasks were enjoyable.
  - 2. <u>Post-decision dissonance</u>
    - a) Favouring the alternatives they had selected more strongly after making a decision (Jack Brehm)

XXVII. Action Research

- **A. Investigations that are intended to lead to social action by solving social problems**
  - 1. With the action researcher deeply involved with the system of study
- **B. Application of research to social problems**
- **C. Cyclical, linked to experiential learning**
- **D. Fell out of vogue in the 1960s**
- **E. Criticized as non-scientific**
- **F. Rediscovered by education researchers**
- **G. Gaining in popularity again in some quarters**

XXVIII. Lewin's Contributions

- **A. Founded distinctive school of cognitive and experimental social psychology in America**
- **B. Trained a generation of psychologists; great academic influence through his brilliant students**
  - 1. e.g. Festinger (cognitive dissonance), Alex Bavelas (network)
- **C. Developed group dynamics theory**
  - 1. More than field theory, as field theory was a meta-theory
  - 2. Group dynamics more a theory of the middle range/testable

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  1. More than field theory, as field theory was a meta-theory
  - 2. Group dynamics more a theory of the middle range/testable
- **D. Emphasised the role of communication**
- **E. Made applied/action research respectable**
  - 1. Argued that applications can be guided by theory and that
  - 2. Theories can be tested by applying them to real-life social problems
- ## XXIX. Shift focus from
  - **A. Individual mental processes to**
    - 1. e.g. Zeigarnik effect
  - **B. Effects of group communication on individual behaviour to**
    - 1. e.g. Iowa study of group leadership styles, sweetbreads study
  - **C. Applied research**
    - 1. Wartime field experiment on changing food habits (sweetbreads?) and studies of prejudice (?)
  - **D. Centre of interest in social psychology shifted to study of cognition in 1960s**
    - 1. Intra-individual explanations of individual behaviour
    - 2. Group communication studies are relatively passe these days (1950s golden era for Lewinians)