



**CHALMERS**  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

# **Change Management in Software Development Organizations DIT035, 7.5 credits**

## **Lecture 2: Planned approach to change**

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# Previous lecture and reading

- ⚙ Questions?
- ⚙ Examples from exercise to share and discuss?



# Agenda

- ⌘ Student Representatives
- ⌘ Lewin's 4 elements
  - ⌘ Field Theory
  - ⌘ Group Dynamics
  - ⌘ Action Research
  - ⌘ 3-step model
- ⌘ Planned change and its critique
- ⌘ Workshop 1: Use of real world/case to exemplify theories
  - referencing technique





# Student Representatives DIT035, 2022

⚙ ?

⚙ ?

⚙ ?



# **Kurt Lewin and the Planned Approach to Change: A Re-appraisal (Burnes, 2004)**



# Kurt Lewin



- ✧ 1890-1947
  - ✧ German-American psychologist
  - ✧ Modern pioneer of social, organizational, and applied psychology
- ✧ One of the founders of social psychology
- ✧ One of the first to study group dynamics and organizational development

There is little question that the intellectual father of contemporary theories of applied behavioural science, action research and planned change is Kurt Lewin. His seminal work on leadership style and the experiments on planned change which took place in World War II in an effort to change consumer behaviour launched a whole generation of research in group dynamics and the implementation of change programs. (Schein, 1988, p. 239)



For most of his life, Lewin's main preoccupation was the resolution of social conflict and, in particular, the problem of minority or disadvantaged groups.

## A couple of famous quotes by Lewin:

"There is nothing so practical as a good theory."

"If you want truly to understand something, try to change it."



# Field Theory

$$B = f(P, E)$$

behavior is a function of the person in their environment.

Where

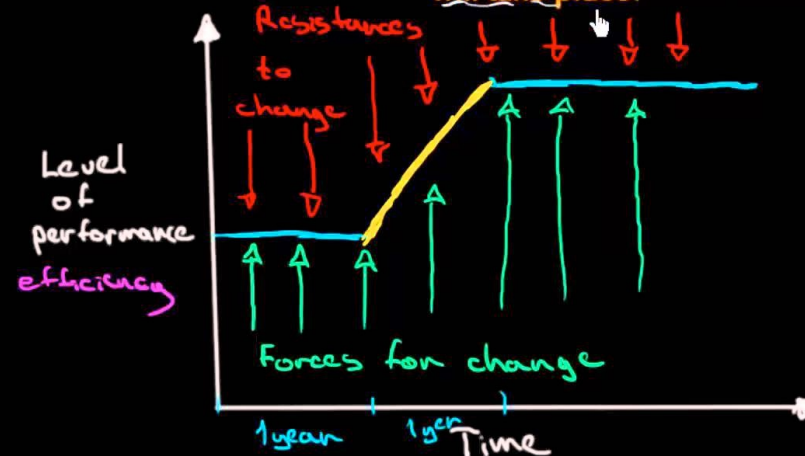
B is behavior,

P is Person, and

E is the environment.

## Kurt Lewin's Force - Field Theory of Change

A theory that argues that two sets of opposing forces within an organization, determine how the change will take place.



1. Unfreeze the organization from its present state

2. Make the desired type of change.

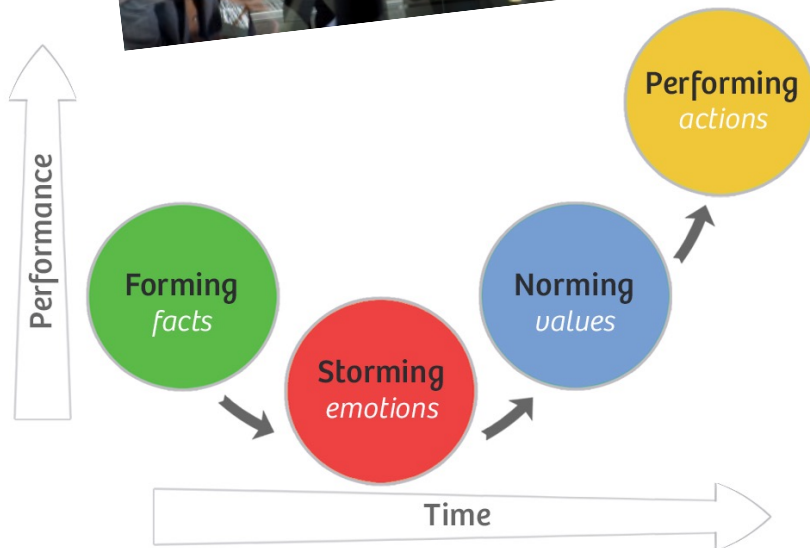
3. Refreeze the organization in a new desired state.

Not a mathematical equation, rather a heuristic formula





# Group Dynamics



Group dynamics deal with internal nature of group, how they are formed, what structure and processes they adopt, how they function and affect individual members, other groups and organization





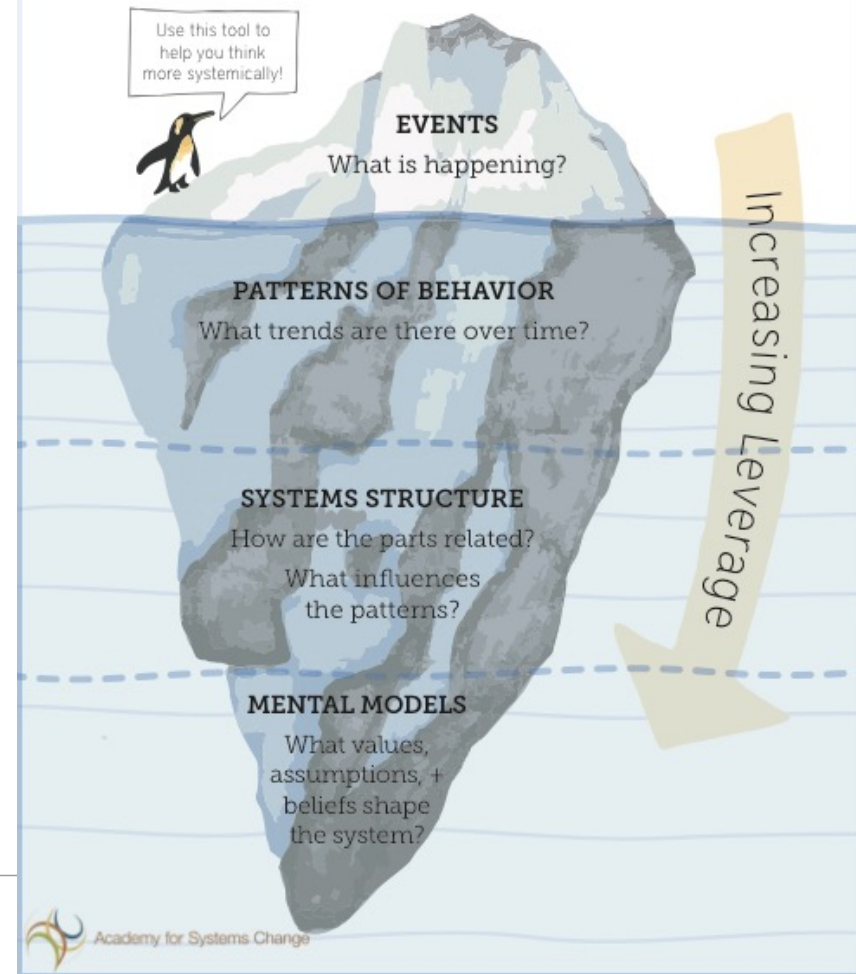
# Group Dynamics

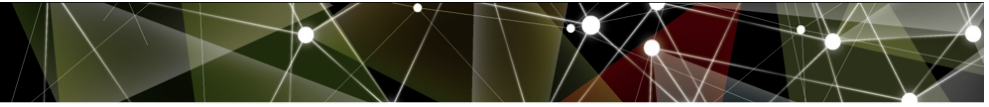
Focus of change should be at the group level and should concentrate on factors such as group norms, roles, interactions and socialization processes to create “disequilibrium” and change.

Content, concepts, intellect, tasks, time, orders...

Fear, sympathies, antipathies, desires, trust, tolerance, intolerance, taboo, status, safety...

## THE ICEBERG MODEL





# Bring about change

- ⌘ Understanding the internal dynamics of a group is not sufficient by itself to bring about change.
  - ⌘ Lewin recognized the need to provide a process whereby the members could be engaged in and committed to changing their behaviour.
  - ⌘ This led Lewin to develop Action Research and the 3-step model of change.
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# Action Research

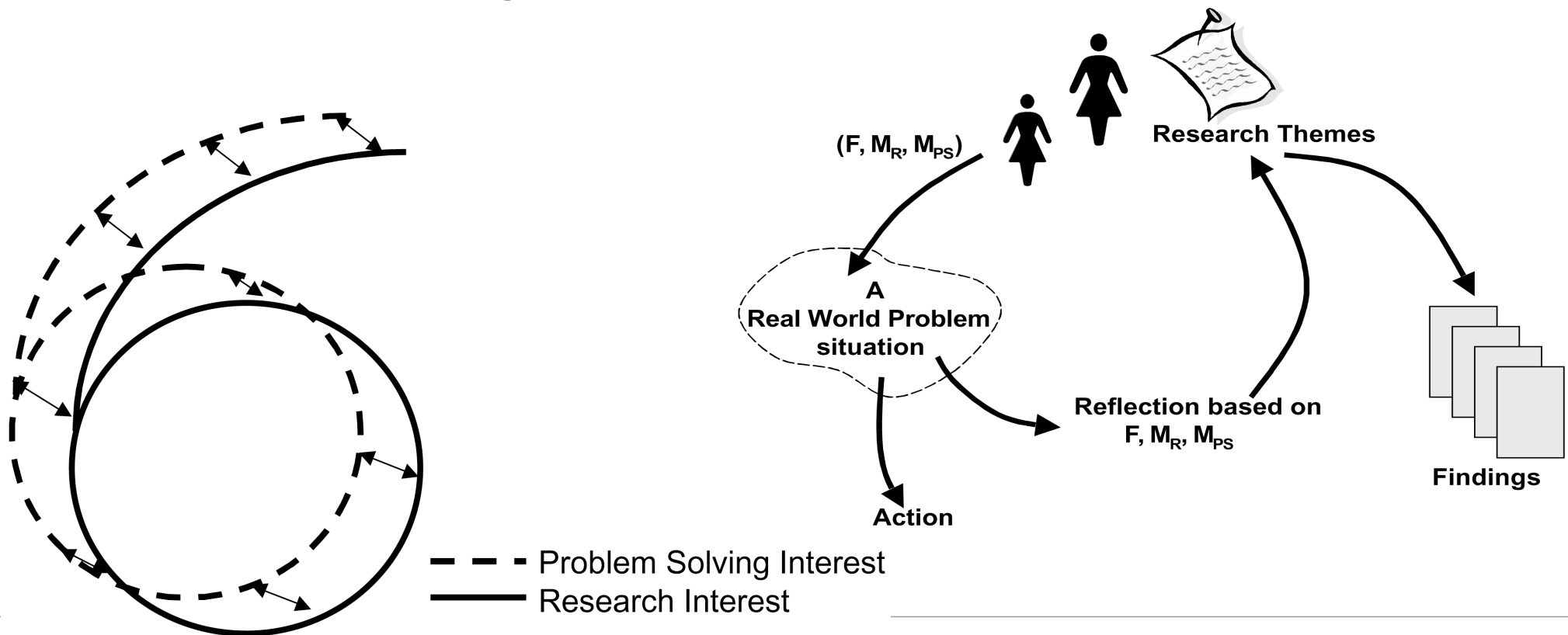


1. What is the present situation?
2. What is the danger?
3. What shall we do?

“If you want truly to understand something, try to change it.”



# Background/Curiosa: Action research as scientific research method with dual cycle process





# Permanency problem

- ⊗ A change towards a higher level of group performance is frequently short lived
  - ⊗ Group life soon returns to the previous level
  - ⊗ Permanency at the new level, or permanency for a desired period should be included in the objective
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# 3-Step Model



unfreeze

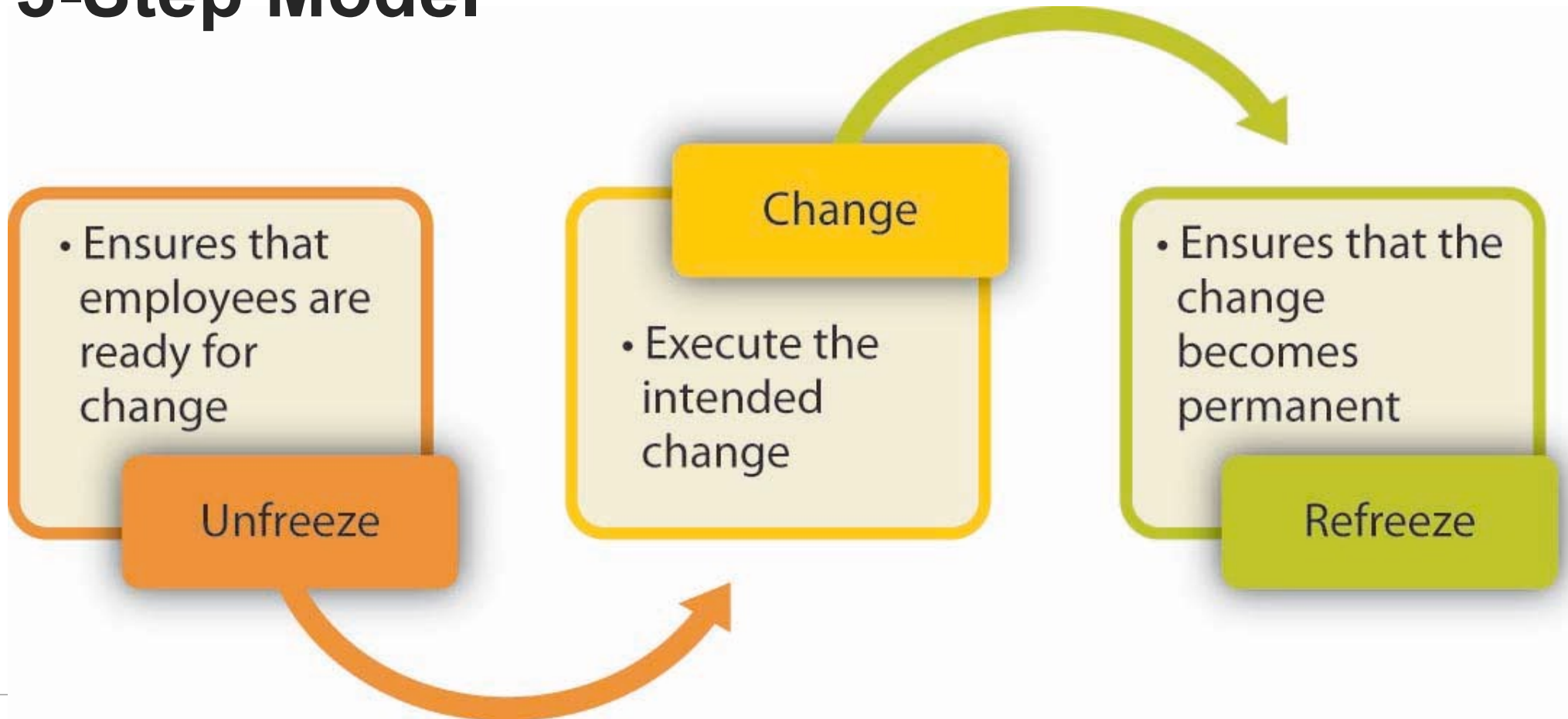


change



refreeze

# 3-Step Model





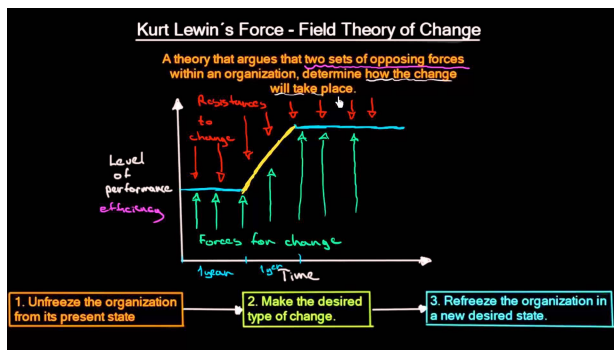


# Resolving social conflict through behavioral change – two requirements for success:

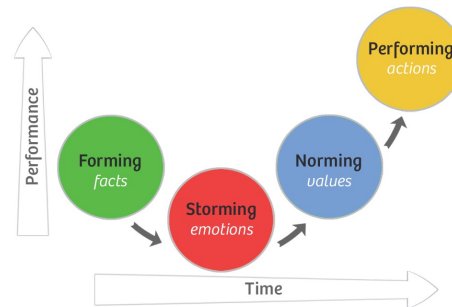
- ⚙ To analyze and understand how social groupings were formed, motivated and maintained
    - ⚙ Field Theory and Group Dynamics
  - ⚙ To change the behavior of social groups
    - ⚙ Action Research and the 3-Step model of change
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# Group Discussion - Breakout session

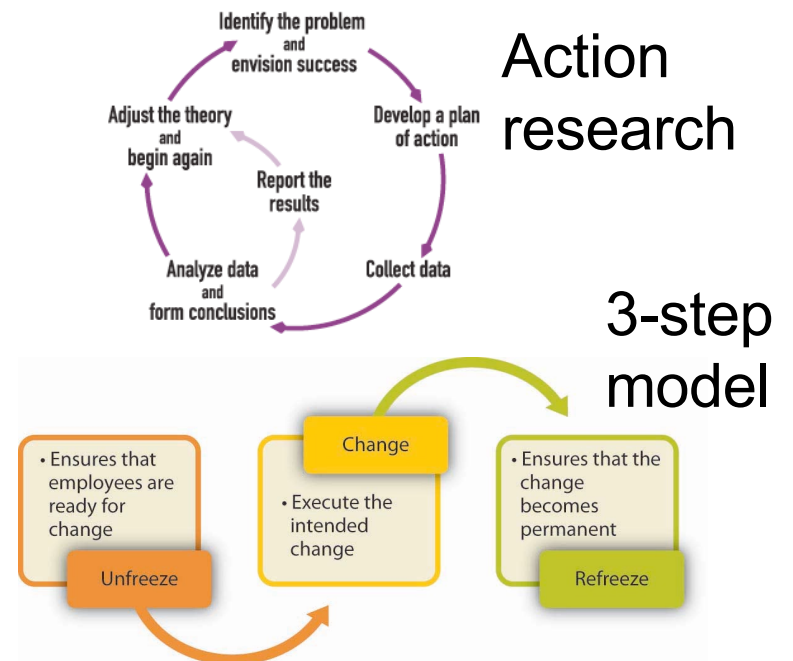
How can you use Lewin's four elements to prepare and execute a change initiative?



Field theory



Group dynamics





# Newer perspectives on change

## ⊗ Culture-Excellence school

- ⊗ Argue that change must emerge in an organic, bottom-up fashion from the day-to-day actions of everyone in the organization

## ⊗ Postmodernists

- ⊗ Argue that change is more likely to be determined by power struggles than by any process of consensus-building or rational decision-making

## ⊗ Processualists

- ⊗ Argue that change needs to be studied across different levels of analysis and different time periods, and that it cuts across functions and hierarchical divisions, and has no neat starting or finishing point;



# Main critique against Lewin – and responses

1) too simplistic and mechanistic for a world where organizational change is a continuous and open-ended process

- ✧ viewed change as a complex and iterative learning process where the journey was more important than the destination, where stability was at best quasi-stationary and always fluid, and where, given the complex forces involved, outcomes cannot be predicted but emerge on a trial and error basis

2) only relevant to incremental and isolated change projects and is not able to incorporate radical, transformational change

- ✧ over time, incremental change can lead to radical transformations, concerned with behavioral change at the individual, group, organizational and societal levels



# Cont.

3) ignoring the role of power and politics in organizations and the conflictual nature of much of organizational life

- ✧ addressing racism and religious intolerance required ‘. . . taking into account differences in value systems and power structures of all the parties involved . . .’

4) advocating a top-down, management-driven approach to change and ignoring situations requiring bottom-up change

- ✧ effective change could not take place unless there was a ‘felt need’ by all those concerned, commitment and full involvement of those concerned



# Conclusions – the theory is still highly valid

1. Lewin's work stemmed from his concern to find an effective approach to resolving social conflict through changing group behaviour (whether these conflicts be at the group, organizational or societal level)
2. Lewin promoted an ethical and humanist approach to change, that saw learning and involvement as being the key processes for achieving behavioral change.
3. Lewin's Planned approach to change is based on four mutually reinforcing concepts, Field Theory, Group Dynamics, Action Research and the 3-Step model, which are used in combination to bring about effective change.



# Exercise

- ⚙ Define and explain the key concepts in the theory of planned change by Lewin (Burnes 2004).
  - ⚙ Describe a scenario of a planned change effort (own experience or selected case) and apply the key concepts of the theory of planned change (Burnes 2004) to explain the scenario?
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