

Literature guide

Massey, G: Ways of Social Change

To help you connect the literature to the themes of the course, we've created a literature guide for Massey's book *Ways of Social Change*. This is primarily for your own learning process, and can be useful as a preparation for the literature seminar on April 4th. You can read the book in the order you prefer, but we believe it can be beneficial to read according to the schedule provided below, because it will be easier to connect the topics of the book to the lectures in class. Keep the questions in mind as you read, and if possible discuss with a classmate! You'll also notice that there are topics for discussion at the end of each chapter in *Ways of Social Change* – these can also be helpful to you in understanding the material.

General questions when reading the book:

Throughout the book, Massey discusses what he sees as the factors that shape the direction, scope and speed of social change: science and technology, social movements, war and revolution, large corporations and the state. Do you agree with his view that these are the drivers of social change, or are there missing perspectives?

Are there other perspectives that you think Massey has neglected in the book?

Module I: Chapters 1-3

Read	Chapter 1: The personal experience of social change
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Massey tells the story of Iris Summers to demonstrate social change in the 20th century in the USA. What would such a story look like in your country? If you are from the USA, what other stories and perspectives is Massey missing?
Read	Chapter 2: Recognizing Social Change
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a look at Massey's five-fingered approach to conducting research (p. 43). Try to apply the approach to some question of social change that you are interested in. (This is good practice for when you will write a research paper in Module II.) What is the difference between causality and correlation? Can you think of some examples where the two are often confused?
Read	Chapter 3: Understanding and explaining social change
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Massey talks about "competing narratives" (p. 84). What does he mean? Can you think of competing narratives with regard to some social or environmental issue? The chapter describes two main views on social change within the social sciences: Society as an evolving system and society as a site of conflict, power and the resolution of contradictions. How would you summarise these two perspectives on social change, and who are some of their main proponents? Which of the two do you think best describes how social change happens?

Module II: Chapters 4-9

Questions that connect the reading to the specific lectures.

Lecture 22 Feb: **Olivia Linander** - Do grassroots movements create change?

Read Chapter 5: Social movements

Questions

- What do you think are the strengths of social movements as a strategy for change? What may the weaknesses or challenges?
- What do you think is necessary for a social movement to succeed?
- Massey talks about diagnostic, prognostic and motivation frames. What do these mean? Try to apply the frames to other social movements.

Lecture 29 Feb: **Sean Westcott** - Business for good

Read Chapter 7: Corporations in the modern Era

Questions

- Do you think business can play a decisive role in creating a more sustainable society? Why, or why not?
- Try to think of businesses you think are contributing to sustainability. If you can't think of any that already exist, could you imagine one?
- Massey describes the history and role of the corporation in the American context. Is this similar or different to your own country? If you are American, see if you can find out more about corporations in the Swedish context.

Lecture 7 March: **Helena Strömberg** – Social practice theory – why do people change behaviors?

Read Chapter 4: Technology, Science and innovation

Questions

- What do you think about the potential of technology, innovation and science in contributing to sustainability? Can you think of any technologies or innovations that you are particularly excited about with regards to this?
- What might be necessary conditions in order for technological developments or innovations to actually contribute to positive change? (For example, will renewable energy technologies be a potent strategy for change if the patents placed on them limit their usage?).
- If you could invent a new technology, what would it be? Would it be a machine, a service or a way to organise activity? (From Massey, p. 148).

Lecture 14 March: **Doreen Stabinsky** – Change from the top-down

Read Chapter 8: The State and Social Change

Questions

- What role do you think the state should play in working for sustainable development? Are there things that only the state can do?
- One of the course goals is examining strategies, room to manoeuvre and limitations of societal actors. What strategies will work particularly well for governments or states? What limitations might governments experience when trying to work for change?



Lecture 21 March: **Joakim Medin** – Using your voice

Read Chapter 6: War, Revolution and Social change

Questions

- At present, one of the wars that is discussed the most is the war in Syria. The war is also affecting other countries because of the massive displacement of refugees it is causing. What connections do you see between the war in Syria and other sustainability trends? Did you find any new perspectives on this war by reading Massey and listening to Joakim? How do you think we will look back upon the Syrian war in the future?

Lecture 28 March: **Reading week**

Read Chapter 9: Making Social Change

Questions Take this time to reflect upon your own role in creating change. What do you feel are the most urgent issues to address? What strategies do you think are most and least useful? What kind of contributions do you think you would like to make?

SEMINAR 4 April: The literature seminar will be about this book and other literature we've read so far in the course.