



DISCUSSION GROUPS

“The snake which cannot cast its skin has to die. As well the minds which are prevented from changing their opinions; they cease to be mind.”

Friedrich Nietzsche

Assignment Overview

In order to get the most out of the literature you are reading for the course, you have been put together in reading groups. In these, we ask you to reflect on the assigned chapters of the book of your choice together with the other group members and hand in a discussion summary. This is in preparation for the student-led seminars and discussions that will take place in Module 3.

Task

In the group, we ask you to reflect on following points:

- Discuss the content of the chapters
- Talk about unclarities
- Relate the chapters to the actors that you have listened to in the course
- Relate the chapters to the additional literature that you have been reading
- Think about the individual/systemic perspective of the content of the chapters

Please summarise your discussion in a paper no longer than a page.

Literature Overview

Below, you find excerpts from the books to choose from to give you an impression of their content to facilitate your choice.

1. Crutchfield, How Change Happens

“In writing this book, we specifically wanted to understand what makes the movements and campaigns behind certain causes so successful. the range of issues covered here is purposely broad: how did members of the LGBT

movement triumph in their quest to make marriage legal for same-sex couples in the United States? What did members of Mothers against drunk driving (MADD) do to cut by half alcohol-related driving deaths since the 1980s? In the same timeframe, the national rifle association (NRA) has successfully advocated to expand gun access and Second amendment rights, markedly easing restrictions on firearm purchases and sales. Teddy bear manufacturers are now subject to greater regulation than gun makers are.

This book is also about why certain changes *don't* happen. Gun safety advocates have fought the NRA on the national stage for decades, and have largely lost. Why is it that most American voters support tighter gun laws, and yet the NRA continues to win so resoundingly? Or consider other vexing modern issues, such as climate change. Environmentalists were able to eliminate acid rain in North America by the turn of the 21st century, but have since struggled to cut carbon emissions in the United States and globally. And despite public health officials' best efforts to promote healthier eating and exercise habits, rates of obesity and diabetes have climbed to epidemic proportions. Why do some changes occur, but others don't? What are the factors that drive successful social and environmental change campaigns, while others falter? This book examines the leadership approaches, campaign strategies, and ground-level tactics employed by a range of modern social change efforts peaking since the 1980s."

2. Brown, Emergent Strategies

"This book is for people who want to radically change the world. To apply natural order and our love of life to the ways we create the next world. To tap into the most ancient systems and patterns for wisdom as we build tomorrow.

This book is not one that will teach you all about hard science, as I am not a scientist. As Octavia Butler said, "I would never have been a good scientist – my attention span was too short for that."

My style is more "Ooh ah wow how??" than "Empirical data proves that..." I am writing this book primarily for other people like myself, who crinkle our brows and lean away when someone starts speaking math, who fall asleep almost immediately when attempting to read nonfiction, but who get spun into wonder about the natural world and want to know things, who feel and know more than we can say or explain, and want to know how knowing those things can transform the ways we approach changing the world."

3. Massey, Ways of Social Change

"Ways of Social Change, like most college texts, took its inspiration from my having taught social change over many years, both as a course and as an integral dimension to other sociological topics. Most books about social change – several of which I assigned students to read – are about theories of social change. They illustrate on theory or another with examples of real-world events and trends. Most of what the student learns from these books is how academic think and the ideas scholars bring to their inquiries about social change.

Ways of Social Change has a different purpose. Its intention is not only to explain social change but to help students make sense of the changing world around them. Doing this means confronting the world as it is, recognizing how it came to be this ways, and understanding the forces that influence so much of what happens in the world today. Two fundamental approaches – historical and comparative analysis – guide this effort. With this understanding, students can choose to become actively involved in social change."

4. Stroh, Systems Thinking of Social Change

"Systems Thinking for Social Change uses clear, down-to-earth language to explain and illustrate systems thinking, why it matters, and how it can lead to greater success in the social sector. The book is brief yet deep, big picture

yet rigorously analytical. Stroh displays considerable narrative skill, especially when he shares numerous stories from his practice of applying various systems tools that led groups to new and startling conclusions. Reading this book will test the reader substantially, as the author invites us to a deeper level of introspection about our own role in systems failures of every kind—organizational and societal—and gently asks us to embrace a new way, not merely of thinking but of being in the world. A remarkable book.”

Systems Thinking for Social Change helps you achieve these benefits by understanding what systems thinking is and how it can empower your work. It will also help you appreciate the basic principles and tools of systems thinking, and learn how to apply it to problem solving, decision making, and strategic planning *without* becoming a technical expert.”

5. Senge, The necessary revolution

“One thing we have learned from working on organizational and systemic change is that leaders are hard to identify in advance. Sometimes they are CEOs or presidents, but often they do not occupy positions of obvious power in a corporate hierarchy. They are not the flag wavers, campaigning vocally for change, but rather passionate individuals working to transform their organizations from the bottom up. They are most often open-minded pragmatists, people who care deeply about the future but who are suspicious of quick fixes, emotional nostrums, and superficial answers to complex problems. They have a hard-earned sense of how their organizations work, tempered by humility concerning what any one person can do alone. They often do not think of themselves as leaders, but time proves them wrong.

This is the sort of person for whom we have written this book. You may find it hard to get a handle on the immensity of the challenges we face today. But you likely understand those aspects what are more immediate – air quality or waste where you work, local water shortages or contamination problems where you live, the anxiety people in your community feel about the future. You see the larger imbalances and sense that major changes are needed. You may have found it hard to see how all the problems fit together and to know exactly what you – and the organization you work in – can do to help. But you know these problems are important to you, and you genuinely want to contribute to addressing them.

If that is true for you, welcome. You are the person for whom we have written *The Necessary Revolution*, and our highest hope is that it will help in your work.”

6. Scharmer, Theory U

“This is an unusual book because it lays out theory and method in equal proportions. Although many academic books expound theories, they usually represent their authors’ thinking but not their lived experience. On the other hand, most management books are full of purported practical ideas but very light on where these ideas come from – the presumption apparently being that most practical people are too busy fixing problems to have much interest in serious thinking. In the pages that follow, Otto Scharmer shares his autobiography with us. And his blind spots. He encourages us to look at the problems we each face, and learn to recognize that they arise from systematic blind spots in our thinking and ways of doing things. When that is the case, new tools and techniques applied from within the same mental models and ways of operating are not likely to produce much real change. As he illustrates, we all need alternative ways forward, and the model U is one.

In this sense, this is a book for those whom my MIT colleague, Donald Schön, called “reflective practitioners”, managers, principals, team leaders, government officials, and community organizers who are far too committed to practical results and dissatisfied with their current capabilities to rest on past habits; pragmatic, engaged people who are open to challenging their own assumptions and listen to their deepest inner voice. For it is only through this listening that we will unlock our collective capacity to create the world anew.”

Recommended Timeline

Schedule	How Change Happens	Emergent Strategy	Ways of Social Change	The Necessary Revolution	Theory U	Systems Thinking for Social Change
Weeks 6-7 (4-17 Feb)	Chapter 1	Chapters 1-2	Chapter 1-2	Chapters 1-7	Chapters 1-3	Chapters 1-2
Weeks 8-9 (18 Feb-03 Mar)	Chapter 2	Chapters 3-4	Chapters 3-4	Chapters 8-11	Chapters 4-7	Chapters 3-4
Weeks 10-11 (04-17 Mar)	Chapter 3	Chapters 5-6	Chapter 5	Chapters 12-14	Chapters 8-10	Chapters 5-6
Weeks 12-13 (18-31 Mar)	Chapter 4	Chapters 7-8	Chapters 6	Chapters 15-18	Chapters 11-14	Chapters 7-8
Weeks 14-15 (01-14 Apr)	Chapter 5	Chapters 9-10	Chapter 7	Chapters 19-24	Chapters 15-17	Chapters 9-10
Weeks 16-17 (15-28 Apr)	Chapter 6	Chapters 11-13	Chapters 8-9	Chapters 25-29	Chapters 18-21	Chapters 11-13

As you can see, some of the books have a disproportionate amount of chapters compared to others. If you are in a group that is reading Theory U for example, it is fine to split up the chapters between group members and to give feedback to your peers. Whereas, if you're reading How Change Happens, we would expect every group member to have a well-rounded knowledge of the entire text.

Instructions

Formal Requirements

- No more than a page
- Font Size: 12. Spacing: 1.5. Font: Times New Roman. Margins: 25mm
- Write your names on top of every page (in the header)
- The submission must be in WORD or PDF format.
- Name the file in the following way: groupnumber.title (example: group1.title.pdf)
- Upload file(s) on Studentportalen

Deadlines

17th of February – 1. Discussion group hand-in
3rd of March – 2. Discussion group hand-in
17th of March – 3. Discussion group hand-in
31st of March – 4. Discussion group hand-in
14th of April – 5. Discussion group hand-in
28th of April – 6. Discussion group hand-in

Related course goals

- give an account of, and be able to evaluate, the strategies, room to manoeuvre and limitations of different societal actors in striving toward a sustainable society;
- be able to discuss individual/actors perspectives compared to structural/system perspectives on cultural change;