

Assignment: Why do people participate or not in social movements?

Part I: Do the interview and post it on the discussion board on learn@UW by Sept 25. (Copy/paste your interview into the box to post it, do not do a file attachment. This makes it faster for others to read it.) There is no specific rule about how long or short the interview notes are to be. For most people, the answers will probably be less than 1 single-spaced page.

You are to interview two people. One MAY be yourself, if you wish, but does not have to be. At least one of the people should be someone different from you in some significant way: substantially older or substantially younger than you, from a markedly different cultural background, or has a markedly different level of activism than yours. (Note: if you have good ideas for interviews that do not exactly meet these criteria, check with me for approval.)

Explain that you are taking a class in social movements. You are interested in why people do or do not participate in protest movements of various kinds, and also why they do or do not do other kinds of related things, such as participate in politics, or do charitable or volunteer work. Below are guidelines for questions to ask. You do not have to follow this order if the conversation flows naturally in a different way.

1. What is your general opinion of protest, political involvement, charitable or volunteer work? Do you see them as good things to do? As useful? Are some better than others? (If needed to explain the question: For example, some people think charitable work is good but protest is bad, or the other way around; some people think all of these are a waste of time, it is most important to take care of yourself, etc.)
2. Have you done any activities in the broad categories of protests, political involvement, or charitable or volunteer work have you done? Which have you been doing recently? Around what kinds of issues?
3. Why do you the activities ones you do? How did you first get involved? How do you feel about them? (Satisfying? Useful? Tired? Burned out?)
4. Are there conscious reasons you don't do any of these activities? (Examples: disapprove of it, don't have time, too shy to get involved ).
5. Are there any of these you think you ought to or wish you could do more of?
6. Did your parents or other family members do any of these kinds of activities when you were growing up? Do your friends do these activities?

In addition to a summary of the person's answers to these questions, also include information about the person's sex, approximate age (decade is enough, i.e. 20s), and general cultural background. Label the top of each interview with your initials and a number (1 or 2) so that it will be easy for anyone in the class to refer to a particular interview.

Part II: The paper. Due by October 18.

Write an essay of roughly 500-1000 words in which you select three theoretical claims about why people do or do not participate in movements from section III of the syllabus and discuss how the answers in the interviews collected by some or all of the members of this class support or refute those claims. In the process of writing your essay, you summarize the theoretical claim (including citations to the relevant readings and/or lecture discussions) and then give examples from the interviews that support that claim or refute (or seem to refute) it. We will also be discussing this in class.