

MODULE

3

EnACTivism

"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better, it's not."

- Dr. Seuss

Introduction

Activism is one of the most effective ways to make change from a citizen's perspective. It had a major role in ending slavery, promoting equality, protecting the environment, and many other relevant issues. This module explains social movements and how they work. It also goes hand in hand with Policy Analysis.

Objectives

1. Students can comprehend modern forms of activism.
2. Students will be able to identify astroturfing and lobbying and compare them.
3. Students will learn more about journalism and news.

Agenda

1. Types of Social Movements
2. Methods of Activism
3. Lobbying
4. Astroturfing
5. Journalism and Fake News
6. Activities

Content

Types of Social Movements

Purpose:

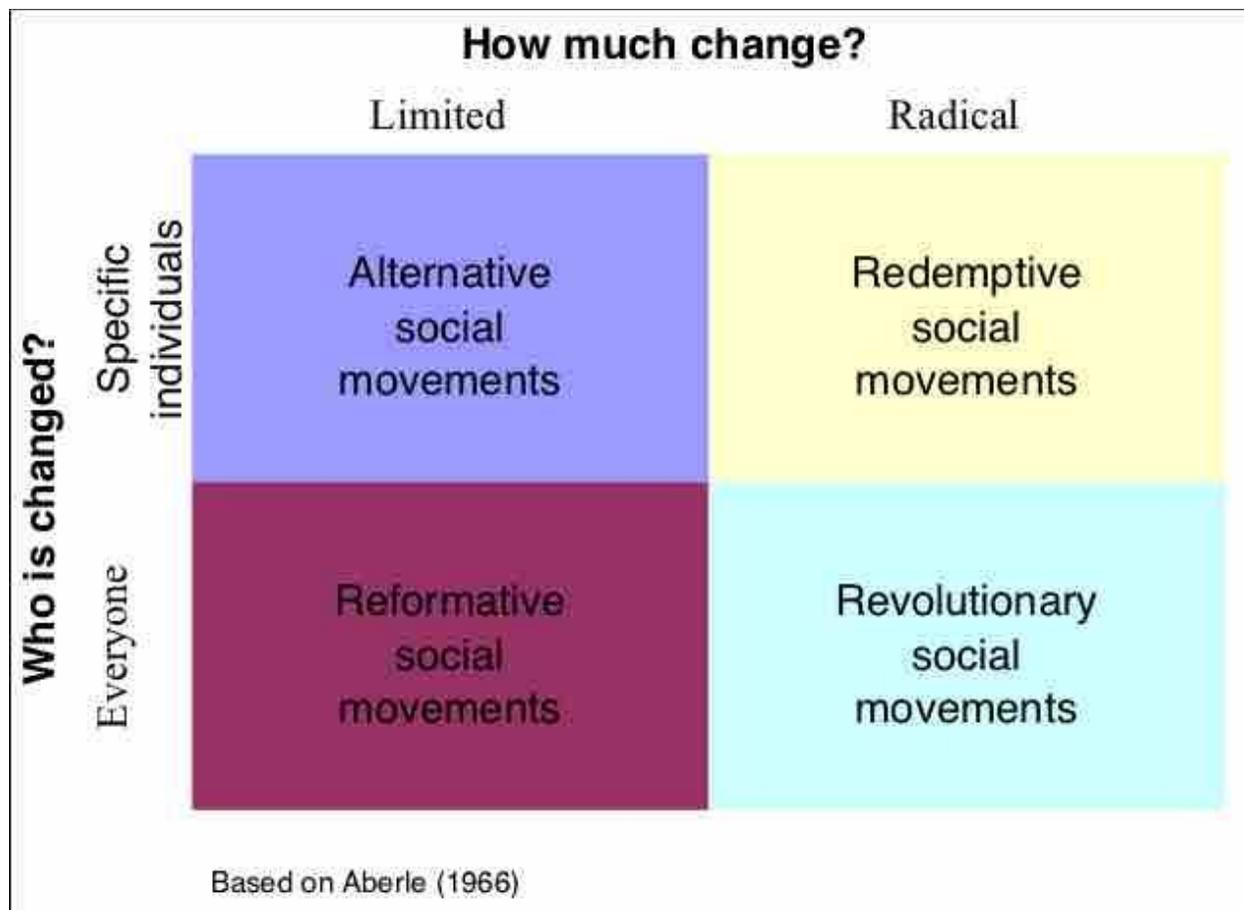
To understand and be able to identify different types of social movements.

Sources:

1. <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-sociology/chapter/social-movements/>
2. <http://oer2go.org/mods/en-boundless/www.boundless.com/sociology/textbooks/boundless-sociology-textbook/social-change-21/social-movements-140/types-of-social-movements-768-4965/index.html>
3. <https://study.com/academy/lesson/social-movement-definitions-alternative-redemptive-reformative-revolutionary.html>
4. <https://sociologydictionary.org/r/resistance-movement/>

Lecture Notes:

- Five main types of social movements
 - Reform
 - *occurs at a broader group or societal level and advocate for minor changes*
 - Revolutionary
 - *Occurs at a broader group or societal level and advocate for radical changes*
 - Redemptive
 - *At the individual level and advocates for radical changes*
 - Alternative
 - *Occurs at a smaller group level and advocate for limited societal change*
 - Resistance
 - *Occurs within a portion of a civilised government that organize to prevent or reverse social, cultural, or economic structural change*
 - They can be differentiated by the scope of their target audience and how radical of a change they aim for. (The given graph shows four of them – resistance is not included)



Reform Movements

- Aim to change a specific aspect of a nation's social, political, or economic structure.
- Example: Abolition Movement

Revolutionary Movements

- Revolutionary movements disagree with large portions of society
- Aim for a total overhaul of societal structure
- Often political in nature
 - Want to overthrow the current government in favor of a new one
- Example: Russian Revolution

Redemptive Movements: (Little, 21.2)

- Aim to provoke ambitious levels of inner change in certain individuals in society
- Target audience is limited.
Example: Alcoholics Anonymous

Alternative Movements:

- Aim to change certain actions and beliefs in large portions of society. Their

goals are limited in scope.
Example: Pro-life movement

Resistance/Reactionary Movements:

- Aim to resist or reverse a change in society and/or a political decision.
Example: Protests against the war in Vietnam

Facilitation Suggestion

- Maybe give definitions of each type of movement but then ask the class for examples of each in order to strengthen their understanding and keep the class engaged

Methods of Activism

Purpose:

To explain to students the different forms of activism

Sources:

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slacktivism>
2. <https://searchsecurity.techtarget.com/definition/hacktivism>
3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hashtag_activism

Lecture Notes:

- Education
- Boycott / economic activism
- Demonstrations, protests, and strikes
- Media activism
- Petitioning
- Propaganda
- Hacktivism
 - The act of using technology to promote a political agenda or a social change
 - Anonymous: attacked Church of Scientology, uses Guy Fawkes mask, has been known to “declare war” on politicians
- Slacktivism
 - the practice of supporting a political or social cause by means such as social media or online petitions, characterized as involving very little effort or commitment
- Hashtactivism or Hashtag Activism
 - the act of showing support for a cause through a like, share, etc. on any social media platform, such as Facebook or Twitter
 - #MeToo
 - #BlackLivesMatter
 - #JusticeForSudan

Discussion Questions:

1. Is slacktivism similar to hashtactivism? How are they related?

2. Why do you think slacktivism is on the rise?
3. What's the most effective method of activism?

Lobbying

Purpose:

Students will understand how lobbying works.

Sources:

5. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/lobbying>

Lecture Notes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOvBA7oIIgc> (only 6 minutes start at :46)

Lobbying is when people attempt to influence the actions, policies, and voting records of politicians. Lobbying can be done by people in the private sector, corporations, and interest groups (groups that try to influence public opinion and policy like the NRA and ACLU). Lobbying can be seen as corrupt because people with more money have more political power and can better serve their interests. It can also be good because it can force politicians to fight more for their constituents' private groups than other broader groups.

Discussion Questions:

1. Are there certain situations where lobbying is more effective than other methods of activism?
2. Should there be a limit on how much corporations can spend to lobby? Is that democratic? (don't just think about big pharma or oil companies for lobbying think about like Greenpeace too)

Astroturfing

Purpose:

To help students understand ways that companies rally against and for issues.

Sources:

6. <https://www.businessinsider.com/astroturfing-grassroots-movements-2011-9>
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/feb/08/what-is-astroturfing>

Content:

Astroturfing is the creation of a fake grassroots organization to lobby for a specific issue that doesn't have much support. These organizations can be publicized through social media and newspapers. This term was first coined in 1985 by Senator Lloyd Bentsen of Texas. One of the most prominent examples is the video of Al Gore's Penguin Army. Al Gore was a supporter of climate change, believing that people should take action before the climate is completely ruined. The Al Gore Penguin Army video seems quite silly as it displays Al Gore's new movie, "An Inconvenient Truth", as boring and mindless. 'An Inconvenient Truth' is about how humans have messed up the planet and led it into the condition it is in today. After people first saw this video, they discredited his movie, leading to Al Gore's movie not having

the effect that it could have.

There are many other examples of astroturfing, but they all have the same purpose: to discredit or support issues behind the face of a grassroots organization.

Discussion Questions:

1. Is astroturfing ethical? (play devil's advocate)
2. How can one identify astroturfing in organizations?
3. How can the government prevent astroturfing? Should they work to prevent it?

Recommended Activities

Snowballs of Activism (20 minutes)

Purpose:

Students will be in the headspace to think about problems and how to solve them. It will give them the basic, barebones ideas of activism and then they will go more in depth as the module continues.

Materials:

- Piece of paper for each student
- Pens

Directions:

Each student will get a piece of paper. Ask the students to write down one big problem in the world, such as Hunger. Then they will crumple up the paper and throw them around the room to replicate a snowball fight. After that, ask the students to pick up the closest snowball and write down one solution to the problem. Throw it around a few more times to get more solutions and then, finally, have everyone pick their final ball and read aloud the problem and solutions.

Discussion:

1. Looking at these problems, are they conceivable to try to fix?
2. Read over the solutions, are they also possible or too out there?
3. How would you go about doing the solutions put on the paper if you were put in charge of this project?
4. People who have the same problem, are your solutions different? The same? Have you thought of different ways to implement them?
5. How do people with different solutions to problems come together in a group and implement things? (How do activist groups form with so many people?)

Is this Real or Fake?

Purpose: To bring light to the issue of fake activist movements that push forward a company.

Materials: N/A

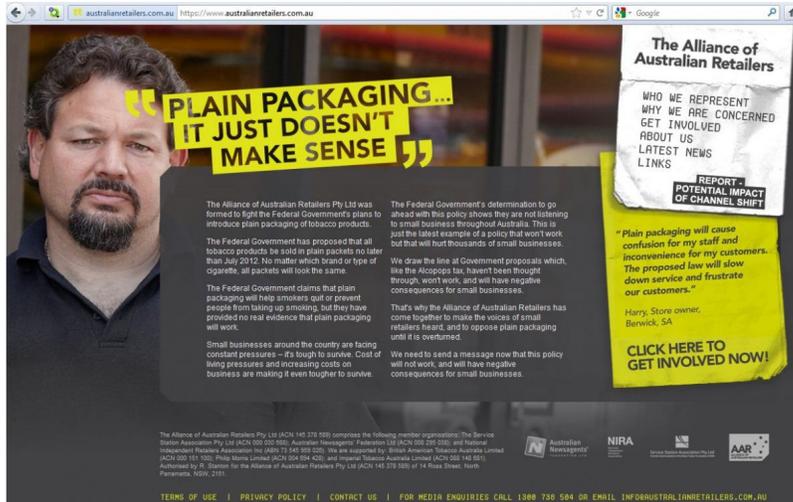
Directions: Show students these various blogs or twitters or websites. All of these are fake activist movements or things. Ask the students, is this a real thing or do you think it's fake?



- Al Gore's Penguin Army
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZSqXUSwHRI> "Al Gore's Penguin Army"
 - In 2006, Al Gore released a documentary called "An Inconvenient Truth" that attempted to expose the dangerous effects that carbon was wreaking on our environment. It was seemingly released by a normal 29 year old guy, but the video -- which was the first sponsored clip on Google the same day as the movie's release -- could be traced back to DCI Group, a public relations and lobbying firm employed by Exxon Mobil. Exxon Mobil is an oil company that was exposed for knowing that carbon emissions from oil would be detrimental to the environment back in the 1980s.

Discussion:

1. How do you reliably tell the difference between astroturfing and real activism?
2. Is there anyway to combat astroturfing?



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- AAR for Small Company Rights
 - The AAR was a group that campaigned against a law that would require cigarettes to be packaged in a plain box, with health warnings and the brand name in plain lettering. This campaign gained decent traction because of the argument about the effect bad branding would have on small businesses. The AAR, however, was eventually found to be financed by Big Tobacco brands like Phillip Morris International, British American Tobacco, and Imperial Tobacco.
- <https://japantoday.com/category/business/mcdonalds-admits-1000-people-paid-to-join-queue-for-quarter-pounder-debut-in-osaka>
 - McDonald's paid people to get in line for a Quarter Pounder burger in Japan http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/86/McDonald%27s_Himeji_Miyukidoori.jpg/800px-McDonald%27s_Himeji_Miyukidoori.jpg
The release of the Quarter Pounder in Japan was a pretty big deal, judging by the size of the crowds. In fact, it was a record-setting day for the McDonald's in Osaka.
As it turns out, McDonalds had recruited 1,000 part-time employees to line up -- starting at midnight before the store even opened -- and generate buzz for the burger. The "customers" were paid for their time and had their meal compensated. McDonalds admitted to the ploy, but said it was part of a "customer feedback" for "market research."

Discussion:

1. Did these surprise you? Have you heard of them before?
2. Are you rethinking any activism groups that may only be astroturfs?
3. How does this fake activism affect real activism and how people support it? How are they hurting real grassroots movements?
4. Are there any ways to combat or find out if the organizations are real or not people run?

Social Movement Identification (10 minutes)

Purpose:

To help students become aware of social movements and understand what they are.

Materials:

Phone + Students

Directions:

Have each student pull out their phone and go to Instagram or any other popular social media platform and find social movements, mostly in the form of hashtags. They can be found by looking up the words 'social movements' in Instagram and then going to 'Tags'. After about five minutes, have the students discuss with the class different social movements and describe what each of them are. Also discuss what type of movement these are. If the students can't find many or they don't address some of the popular movements, they are listed below.

Some popular movements:

#blacklivesmatter – speaks for violence and racism towards black people

#metoo – helps survivors of sexual assault and harassment in underprivileged communities, specifically women of color, speak out

#fridaysforfuture - brings awareness to climate change run by students, calls for students to skip school on Fridays to make change

#nobannowall - calls for no Muslim ban and no border wall, stands against President Trump's immigration policies

Discussion:

1. Do you think that online activism is effective? If yes, is it more or less effective than tangible activism like marches and boycotts?
2. Are these movements examples of hashtactivism or slacktivism? If there is one, is the difference between hashtactivism and slacktivism significant?