Journey into Social Activism

Atkinson, Joshua D.

Published by Fordham University Press

Atkinson, Joshua D.
Journey into Social Activism: Qualitative Approaches.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/49055
Part II explores the different research sites of social activism, divided into sites of congregation (chapters 4 and 5), where activists come together, and sites of action (chapters 6 and 7), which constitute the work and endeavors of activists.

Chapter 4 explains the concept of activist organizations and discusses two common approaches to assist in their study: the focused approach, which involves the exploration of activist organizations through the use of ethnographic means, and the cross-section approach, which constitutes a broad examination of different organizations through interviews.

Chapter 5 focuses on activist networks and reviews two approaches that may be used to study them: the external approach, which involves the examination of texts produced by different nodes in a network, and the internal approach, which comprises ethnographic methods or interviews and focuses on the inner workings of specific parts of a network.

Chapter 6 looks at activist events and actions and includes a review of the literature that has helped to conceptualize and categorize on- and offline activist events. The chapter also highlights two key approaches that have emerged from past research endeavors: using texts as windows into events and using supplemented interviews with activists involved in events.

Chapter 7 differentiates alternative media from a similar topic of activist media by comparing different genres across both media that have emerged in past research. The chapter also examines three approaches that are based on a multilevel view of media—production, audiences, and content—which involve the use of interviews or ethnographic methods, as well as qualitative content analysis or rhetorical criticism.
Ultimately, these four research sites do not exist independently from each other: organizations, networks, actions, and alternative media are intertwined; actions are carried out by organizations, and many networks are interconnected by alternative media texts. As a result, many of the concepts or categories associated with one research site may also be applied to other research sites. The goal is to introduce the individual sites, explain what makes them sites for activism, and provide qualitative approaches to studying them.