

Unit on Gender and Age

Participant Observation: Interview Elderly Person

For your participant observation assignment this week, you will be interviewing an elderly person; someone you know very well who is 60 years or older. The interviewee could be your neighbor or a friend of your family. This interview may be more interesting if s/he is an immigrant. I suggest you ask a series of open ended and follow up questions. It should be informal and not necessarily a structured interview, but please use my suggested questions or prepare alternative or additional questions. Then, write a summary of your findings from the interview and post this on your blog.

Include in your blog post:

- Brief biography of interviewee: birthplace, Age, Sex, number in family; cultural, educational, and professional background.
- Relate or make connections with one or more of the theories (symbolic interactionist, functionalism, and conflict) in text.
- Discuss how you feel the interviewee perceives aging, based on your interview.

Interview Questions:

1. What were the factors that led you to decide what you wanted to do with your life and how do you feel about the choices that you made?
2. Do you feel differently about yourself now from how you felt when you were younger? How?
3. What is your most memorable event(s) during your lifetime and why?
4. What do you think is the same in the society and what changes have you noticed in society compared to when you were younger? How have these changes impacted your life? In your view, are those changes positive or negative?
5. What was the most challenging situation in your life and how did you deal with it?
6. How does this society view elderly people? If you come from another culture, how does this compare to U.S. society's views?

Post your Participant Observations to the blog by 11:59 pm, Thursday.

Post your responses to your classmates' Participant Observations by 11:59 pm, Sunday.