

Social Movements and Collective Action Area Exam

Department of Sociology, *University of Notre Dame*

Fall 2017

Part 1 (Day 1).

Answer two of the following four questions.

1. Discuss the state of the art on research that addresses the role of social media in social movement mobilization. Consider not only the way that activists may use social media to recruit supporters, but also how social media can be used to bring about changes in the context in which movements operate (e.g., through generation of conscience constituents, reshaping the political opportunity structure, securing organizational resources, etc.).
2. Identify a theoretical claim about social movements that is generally accepted by scholars in the field, but you think should be challenged. Discuss the kinds of evidence that you might gather to challenge that claim. Also discuss the potential benefits that could come from discarding that claim and replacing it with a different understanding of how social movements can be understood.
3. Early social movement theories made assumptions about the motives of activists (e.g., they are acting based on anxiety, frustration, etc.) without considering activists' own accounts of their reasons for acting. Yet relying solely on activists' explanations for their actions may not provide completely satisfying answers to the kinds of questions that social movement scholars want to address. Discuss the role that activists' voices play in explaining key questions in the study of social movements. How should we, as social movement scholars, treat these voices (e.g., for what types of questions are they most, and least, useful?).
4. Social Movements can have many different consequences, at several different levels. Drawing on relevant literature, identify two distinct levels at which social movements mattered in the past. Then, explain whether different (or similar) methodological and theoretical approaches were employed to capture the distinct outcomes you selected and whether different (or similar) approaches were involved in doing so.

Part II (Day 2).

Answer two of the following four questions.

1. Why certain people but not others participate in social movements is a longstanding question in the field of social movements. Yet, answers to this question tend to focus on the factors that *facilitate* participation. Equally important for understanding differential participation are the factors that undermine protest action. What does extant literature tell us about these factors? Are they simply the absence or inverse of those that facilitate protest action? Do we need to focus on a different set of factors and develop new theories to explain why people don't take to the streets? What are the implications of your answers to these questions for advancing knowledge of differential participation?
2. Until relatively recently, the majority of social movement research has involved the study of movements with progressive goals. Discuss ways in which studying conservative movements can actually enhance our understanding of progressive movements. Also consider the extent to which factors that explain the emergence and consequences of conservative movements are similar to, or different from, those that explain the emergence and consequences of progressive movements.
3. Provide a detailed discussion of how the logic that can be found in various theories of social movements could be applied to address a research question on a topic not traditionally studied by social movement scholars.
4. Discuss a social movement that is familiar to you, and then discuss the ways in which intensive and prolonged study of that movement could advance our general understanding of social movements and collective action.