

## **Social Movements and Collective Action Area Exam**

Department of Sociology, *University of Notre Dame*

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### **Part I (Day 1).**

Answer two of the following four questions.

1. “Culture” has not meant the same thing throughout the social movement scholarship. For this question, (1) trace the meaning of culture over the course of the social movement scholarship; (2) describe the role that these various conceptions of culture have played in the social movement scholarship during the time period when each was prominent; and (3) anticipate the role emerging notions of culture will play in future social movement scholarship.
2. Among the most important micro-level questions in the field of social movements and collective action is why certain people but not others participate in protest activity and other forms of activism. Summarize the extant literature on this topic, including its theoretical and empirical strengths and weaknesses. Conclude your answer by discussing how the extant literature on differential participation could be improved.
3. In your view, what is the biggest area of neglect in social movement theorizing? Explain why addressing this neglect may lead us to rethink some of the things that we think we already know about social movements and collective action.
4. The discuss ways in which ideas found in the social movement literature could be useful in shedding light on core questions currently being engaged in a different sociological subfield. Also discuss ways in which ideas found in the literature of another subfield could be useful in promoting a better understanding of social movements?

## Part II (Day 2).

Answer two of the following four questions.

1. Types of social movements vary widely. For example, some movements have more cultural targets, others more political. Similarly, some have more macro-level targets and others have more micro-level targets. What types of movements has the history of social movement literature best prepare us to understand? How would you go about strengthening the field's potential to address other ways of organizing for social change?
2. Beginning in the 1970s, social movement scholars offered a prolonged critique of social movement theory and research carried out prior to the 1970s. Discuss the nature of that critique. Consider the extent to which the arguments were valid. In your view, are there important ideas found in social movement scholarship prior to the 1970s that remain relevant today? Explain your thinking on this point.
3. Does research show that social movements generally have consequences? If so, what *specific* consequences do social movements have? What are the leading explanations for why social movements matter? Do you agree or disagree with these explanations? What do you see as the biggest theoretical or empirical challenge to establishing that social movements matter.
4. Theories of social movements come along with assumptions about what motivates potential participants, which are more or less explicit depending on the theory. Trace treatments of motivation and their connections to theories of how social change happens throughout the history of social movement research.