

**BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS AND RESEARCH NOTES**

**A Perspective on Revitalization**

PROSPERO R. COVAR  
 March 1, 1973

The problem of revitalization has been of interest to anthropologists for some time. In this paper I will consider the period from Linton (1943) to Wallace (1966). In addition to reviewing six of the definitive works of the period, I would like to refer to the Philippine situation and offer an alternative taxonomic model for use in the Philippines.

*From Linton to Wallace*

Sometime in 1943, Ralph Linton was requested by the American Ethnological Society to contribute a paper on nativistic movements. He made it evident then that there was a need for a systematic analysis of nativistic phenomena. Following his paper, a proliferation of taxonomic labels appeared in the anthropological literature. The following account reviews the more popular definitions and taxonomic structures.

Linton (1943) defines nativistic movements as "any conscious, organized attempt on the part of a society's members to revive or perpetuate selected aspects of its culture." In Figure 1 is my illustration of Linton's four-fold classification.

Dawson and Gettys (1954) categorize social movements as either broadly cultural or political. Their classification, as I have reconstructed it, appears in Figure 2.

Smith (1959) defines a vitalistic movement as "any conscious, organized attempt on the

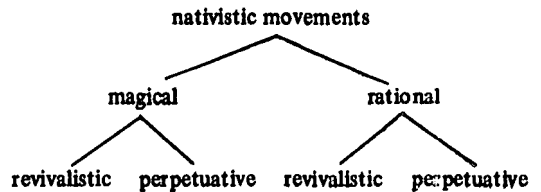


Fig. 1 - Author's illustration of Linton's classification of nativistic movements.

part of a society's members to incorporate in its culture selected aspects of another culture in contact with it." Synthetism is defined as, "any conscious, organized attempt on the part of a society's members to combine selected aspects of two cultures." Linton's definition of nativism is used as a separate category. See Figure 3.

Ames, as reproduced in Clemhout's (1964) article (see Table 1), classifies nativism along two intersecting dimensions, namely: aggression and resistance.

A resistance movement is an aggressive or non-aggressive resistance to the beliefs, values, and practices of the dominant society. A reformative movement is a relatively conscious attempt, aggressive or non-aggressive, on the part of a subordinated group to obtain a personal and social reintegration through a selected rejection, modification, and synthesis of both traditional and alien cultural components.

Aberle (1966) defines social movement as "an organized effort by a group of human beings to effect a change in the face of resistance by other human beings." He singles out locus of

change and amount of change as intersecting dimensions. His scheme appears in Table 2.

Wallace (1956, 1959) defines revitalization as a "deliberate, organized, conscious effort by

members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture." He considers revitalization as a species and all other types as mere varieties. See Figure 4.

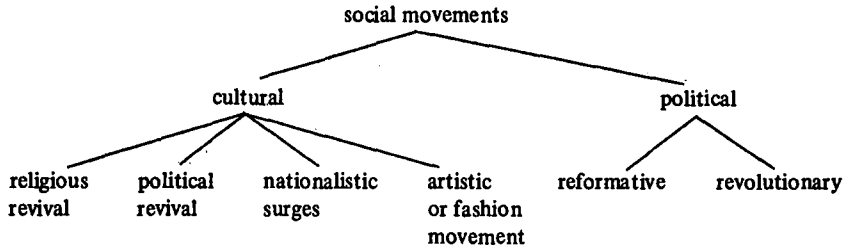


Fig. 2 – Author’s reconstruction of Dawson and Gettys’ classification of social movements.

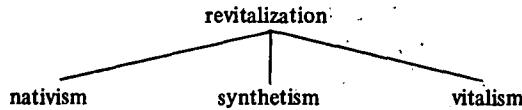


Fig. 3 – Smith’s classification of revitalization movements.

Table 1

Ames’ classification of nativism

	Aggressive	Non-aggressive
Resistive	Revivalistic	Passive resistive (or negativism)
Reformative	Perpetuative Dynamic reformative	Revivalistic, Perpetuative Passive reformative

Table 2

Aberle’s classification of social movements

		Locus of change	
		Supra-individual	Individual
Amount of change	total	transformative	redemptive
	partial	reformative	alterative

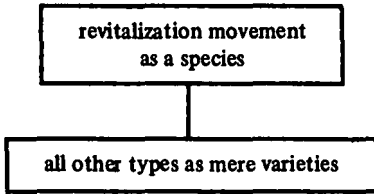


Fig. 4 — Wallace's classification of revitalization.

*Assessment of the History of Knowledge on Revitalization*

In this review presentation, two things deserve our comment, namely, partial agreement on a common definition, and the proliferation of classificatory labels.

*Partial agreement on definition.* The various authors under review recognize (along with Wallace) the existence of a species of socio-cultural change, namely, a conscious, organized attempt on the part of a society's members to change. This species is contrasted to the classic processes of culture change, namely, evolution, drift, diffusion, and so on (Wallace 1956: 265).

*Proliferation of classificatory labels.* Moreover, there is a wide variation in the selection of contextual loci, as expressed in the second half

of every definition reviewed. Consequently, there is a proliferation of classificatory labels. Linton picked on whether a portion of culture is revived or perpetuated, magically or rationally; Dawson and Gettys' classification contrasted inner sentiments with the overturning of the social order; Smith emphasized cultural growth through revival, recombination, or incorporation of cultural elements; Ames' characterization was along the lines of aggression and resistance; Aberle distinguished amount of change and locus of change; and finally, Wallace subsumed all other types as mere varieties of his revitalization.

*A suggested taxonomic model.* In this cursory review of various classification schemes, at least 20 labels for revitalization movements are available. The number of categories alone requires a subgrouping of the array, to make the classification productive, replicable, and economical, following Conklin's (1969) suggested criteria for evaluating the adequacy of ethnographic statements. I suggest the dimensions of contrast and associated labels shown in Figure 5.

A taxonomic model with greater breadth, at least four segregates, is likely to evolve from this more systematic classification, as compared

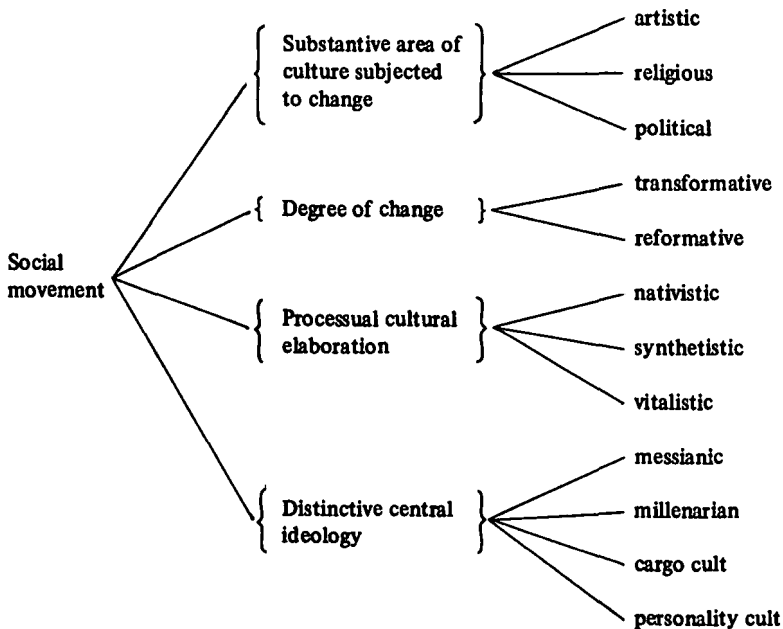


Fig. 5 — Suggested taxonomic model.

with Wallace's general lumping procedure. Operationally, a particular revitalization movement may be messianic in central ideology; vitalistic in processual cultural elaboration; reformative in the degree of change wished for; and religious as far as substantive area of culture change is concerned. The character of a particular revitalization movement within its life history may change. Empirically, there are not many studies which monitor the change in a movement's life style during its life time. This is so because studies of movements have been primarily one-shot deals.

*Plausible explanation of causes.* More interesting are the plausible explanations offered concerning the origins of movements; namely: Linton's hypothesis of dominant/dominated societies; Dawson and Gettys' hypothesis of social unrest; Aberle's deprivation hypothesis; and Wallace's congruence of mazeway and real systems hypothesis.

These four explanatory hypotheses may be combined and stated formally thus: inequality of segments in a particular society may create a feeling of deprivation among the members of that society owing to incongruity between the fit of mazeway and real systems, which situation is conducive to the formation of social unrest. Under these preconditions a movement may arise.

*Analytical approaches.* A number of analytical approaches have also been suggested to handle revitalization movements systematically. It would be worthwhile to mention them in passing. They are event analysis (Wallace 1956, 1959, 1966); contextual analysis (Smith 1959); cluster-profile analysis (Kopytoff 1964); and paradigmatic analysis (Covar, unpublished).

### *The Philippine Case*

The preceding review of theories and approaches on revitalization movements provides us with a better perspective on more or less similar phenomena. In my study of the Watawat (Covar 1961), I used social movement as a head label equivalent to Wallace's revitalization movement. Foronda (1961) and Sturtevant (1969) use cults of Rizal and Rizalistas respectively as collective terms. This is to suggest that central

ideology, e.g., personality cult, is the main criterial attribute used in attaching an identification tag. The listing of Elwood (1968) includes religious movements which are not necessarily Rizalistas. Elwood utilizes the traditional distinction between churches and sects.

### *A Perspective on Revitalization*

In anthropological theorizing, revitalization movements fall under the general rubric of acculturation. Culture contact has been identified as preconditioning the situation. This perspective is too general to be useful (Wallace 1966; Smith 1959a and 1959b). In the Philippine case I suggest that we view revitalization as a creative process. This is contrary to the popular notion that movements are bandwagons for the misled. It means granting to the leaders and followers of a movement the capacity to put together out of available material a new whole.

This perspective has several consequences. At the outset, we focus on what the people have done and can do rather than on the formulating of causal explanations. We judiciously avoid the value-loaded explanations of cultural deprivation, social unrest, mazeway resynthesis, and similar dicta. Second, we free ourselves from the limits of the acculturation viewpoint, which focuses on reaction, articulated severally as acceptance, rejection, or syncretism. Consequently, we skirt around the resolving of two perpetually competing prototypes — the Marxist way. Finally, we disengage ourselves from too much futile wrangling about the synthetic classification of movements, cults, revitalization, and the like.

### *Note*

This is the revision of a paper read at the Philippine Sociological Society convention held January 20-21, 1973, at Bocobo Hall, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City.

Prospero R. Covar is head (on leave) of the training department, Agrarian Reform Institute, University of the Philippines. He is a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology, University of Arizona. Currently, he is a research grantee of the Modern History Research Program, Philippine Social Science Council.

### References

- Aberle, David F.  
1966 *The Peyote religion among the Navajo*. Publications in anthropology, no. 42. New York, Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Inc.
- Clemhout, Simone  
1964 *Typology of nativistic movements*. *Man* 64: 14-15.
- Conklin, Harold C.  
1969 *Ethnogenealogical method*. In *Cognitive anthropology*. Stephen A. Tyler, ed. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Pp. 93-122.
- Covar, Prospero R.  
1961 *The Iglesia Watawat ng Lahi: A sociological study of a social movement*. M.A. thesis, University of the Philippines.
- Dawson, Carl A., and Warner E. Gettys  
1954 *Introduction to sociology*. Rev. ed. New York, Ronald Press.
- Elwood, Douglas J.  
1968 *Churches and sects in the Philippines: A descriptive study of contemporary religious group movements*. Dumaguete City, Silliman University.
- Foronda, Marcelino A.  
1961 *Cults honoring Rizal*. Manila, Garcia Publications.
- Kopytoff, Igor  
1964 *Classification of religious movements: Analytical and synthetic*. Seattle, University of Washington Press.
- Linton, Ralph  
1943 *Nativistic movements*. *American Anthropologist* 45(2): 230-40.
- Smith, Marian W.  
1959a *Towards a classification of cult movements*. *Man* 59: 8-12.  
1959b *Towards a classification of cult movements: Some further contributions*. *Man* 59: 29-30.
- Sturtevant, David R.  
1969 *Agrarian unrest in the Philippines*. Athens, Ohio, Center for International Studies, Southeast Asia Program, Ohio University.
- Wallace, Anthony F. C.  
1956 *Revitalization movements: Some theoretical considerations for their comparative study*. *American Anthropologist* 58(2): 264-81.  
1959 *Towards a classification of cult movements: Some further considerations*. *Man* 59: 25-26.  
1961 *Culture and personality*. New York, Random House.  
1970 *Culture and personality*. 2d ed. New York, Random House.

## Sociologists Consider the Problems and Prospects of Societal Change

RANDOLPH S. DAVID

February 10, 1973

On the afternoon of January 20, 1973, the first day of the PSS National Convention, those in attendance joined a small group of their choosing and discussed one of five different topics. What follows is an almost verbatim summary of the various group leaders' reports.

### 1. *The Role of the Sociologist Today*

Presented with the question: Can the sociologist still play a critical role in the New Society?

the group asked whether the sociologist ever played a critical role in the *old* society. The studies undertaken by sociologists have usually been superficial, with very little effect on government policy. However, it was pointed out that, while the role of the sociologist must always be distinguished from that of the carping political critic, the pursuit of truth is necessarily critical and may contradict the premises of policy makers.

What are the various problems faced by the sociologist under the New Society? As in the past, research problems to be studied are usually defined by policy makers or businessmen, rather than by the sociologist himself. In view of this, there apparently exist certain subtle pressures on the sociologist, a point not wholly accepted by all the participants in the group. Other problems arose in the course of discussion. They are most easily verbalized in the form of the following questions: Is it possible for sociologists to cooperate with the New Society and still remain true to their professional role? What are the present constraints, fears, and hesitations, of the social scientist? What are the dangers, if any, of being coopted by the New Society? This question must also be asked: What are the aims of these reforms in government? Is there really a genuine desire to reform, or are these reforms only made to patch up something? One may be sincere in helping certain agencies in government but fail to see the implications. Finally, it was agreed that the sociologist may participate in the New Society, but there were hesitations and other un verbalized fears on this point. What is the possibility, for example, that the social scientist may be used to justify, rationalize, or legitimize policies of government?

### 2. Agrarian Reform and Agrarian Reformers

Presidential Decrees numbers 2 and 27 formally instituted land reform in the Philippines. The group discussed problems faced by the government in implementing land reform, and came up with the following list.

- a. How can we gauge the seriousness of the government in implementing the program of land reform?
- b. There are problems of financing. On the basis of the experience in Nueva Ecija, it is estimated that the Philippines would need more than P1 billion annually to implement the program, and that amount of money is not likely to be available.
- c. The implementation of land reform is slow mainly because of four reasons. First, because of the varied relationships between owner and tiller in the past, there is the problem of defining what is a tenant. Second, landlords and some other social groups with landlord interests have created opposition leading to a slow listing of tenants. Third, large numbers of tenants are for one reason or another not interested at this time in becoming landowners. Fourth, coordination

within and between government and private agencies is often less than ideal.

d. What can be considered an economic family-sized farm? Can we solve the problem of under-production if we fragment the land? This was answered in the following manner. The fragmentation takes place at the level of *ownership*, but at the level of *production* there is consolidation, not fragmentation. This is made possible through P.D. no. 2, which obliges the new landowner to belong to a cooperative and to practice compact farming.

### 3. Constitutional and Social Change: Perils and Possibilities

To use legislative and constitutional acts to hasten change in keeping with planned strategies and policies, so that legislation becomes a catalyst of change — that is a possibility.

The perils cited by the group were the following.

- a. Can we be sure that there is a direction in government legislation?
- b. Are we sure that the changes will be accepted by the people?
- c. Can any specific law or constitutional provision obtain and apply uniformly throughout the entire nation, so that there will be smooth transitions of change in all areas?
- d. Can we be sure that the right norms are being chosen for the right areas?

The group also discussed the need for a feedback system to let government know what is happening at the grassroots level. The feedback system has been somewhat curtailed by the disappearance of the 420 — the senators, congressmen, and delegates. It has been somewhat enhanced by the rise of the citizens' assemblies, the *Katipunan ng mga Barangay*.

It seems that there is another source of feedback, and that is the writing of social anthropologists and other social scientists who can by their various techniques tell the intelligence of the times and give proper feedback to the authorities. Whether or not it will be accepted, we do not know, but at least this is another possible feedback source.

Going back to the citizens' assembly, the group said that this is, in embryo at least, a social organism, a mechanism which can be made to work, which can organize itself, come to its own decisions, have its own debates and discussions, not always very freely but within

bounds. Here is a nucleus, a possible feedback system. Its proper use and development will require much patience and guidance, the group concluded.

#### *4. The Plausibility and Perils of Population Policy*

There is a need at the moment for a population policy that calls for an immediate and drastic decrease in the rate of population growth in the Philippines. Only in this manner will socioeconomic development efforts be able to match the population size and give it adequate support. The problem: Who determines what support is adequate?

A really thorough population policy must take into account more components than those already considered in present population policy. If we want to integrate the small family norm into the Philippine sociocultural value system, we must judge to what extent this norm is advanced or enhanced by supportive education, health, and welfare policies, in other words, by the total socioeconomic system now existing. These relationships will have to be considered if the population policy is to succeed.

#### *5. Pressure Points for Change in Philippine Institutions*

The group started out by defining our

national goals. These, they said, are economic development, social justice, and national identity. The problem lies in the nature of consensus. Who decides national goals — are they based on the aspirations of the majority, or are they defined by the people in power?

The discussion centered on the role of the educational institution. Education was seen as an institution with great potential for effecting change. It was pointed out, however, that education often acts, not as an agent of change, but simply as a reflector of the status quo. If indeed, the government alone defines policies and national goals, passing them on to the educational institution for implementing, then it seems that the innovation potential of education is limited. In view of this, we should not fail to consider other institutions as possible agents of change.

#### *Note*

The author is an instructor in the department of sociology, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Q.C. He is currently a candidate for the Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Manchester (England).

**INSTITUTE OF  
SOUTHEAST ASIAN  
STUDIES**

**RESEARCH APPOINTMENTS**

Applications are invited from suitably qualified Asian nationals for research appointments in the Institute. Candidates must have the Ph.D. or equivalent qualifications in the social sciences or humanities, with special emphasis on southeast Asia. Total monthly emoluments range from about S\$1500 to S\$3500 depending on qualifications, experience, and level of appointment offered.

In addition there are excellent leave, medical and other benefits.

Please apply to the Director, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Cluny Road, Singapore 10, Republic of Singapore, giving curriculum vitae with full personal particulars and also the names and addresses of three references.

Republic of the Philippines, Department of Public Works and Communications, Bureau of Posts, Manila

**SWORN STATEMENT**

Required by Act 2580

The undersigned, Alfonso de Guzman II, Managing editor, *Philippine Sociological Review*, published quarterly in English at Loyola Heights, Quezon City, after having been duly sworn in accordance with law, hereby submits the following statement of ownership, management, and circulation, which is required by Act 2580, as amended by Commonwealth Act 201:

Editor: Frank Lynch, S.J., of P.O. Box 154, Manila D-406  
Managing editor: Alfonso de Guzman II of P.O. Box 154, Manila D-406  
Business manager: Virginia A. Miralao of P.O. Box 154, Manila D-406  
Owner: Philippine Sociological Society, Inc., of P.O. Box 154, Manila D-406  
Publisher: Philippine Sociological Society, Inc., of P.O. Box 154, Manila D-406  
Printer: The Journal Press, of 161 15th Avenue, Quezon City  
Office of publication: Loyola Heights, Quezon City

Number of copies printed and circulated of the last issue dated January 1973: Sent to paid subscribers, 600; sent to other than paid subscribers, 400; total, 1000.

Signed: Alfonso de Guzman II, Managing editor  
*Philippine Sociological Review*

Subscribed and sworn to before me this third day of April 1974 at Manila, the affiant exhibiting his Residence Certificate A-382803, issued at Manila on January 7, 1974.

Signed: Pedro Hernandez  
Postal Inspector

Note: This form is exempt from the payment of the documentary stamp tax.