# NATIVISTIC MOVEMENTS AND MODERN NATIONALISM

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ABSTRACT. — The concept of nativism was developed originally to describe certain reactions to foreign domination, which were observed among the American Indians. It was applied later to similar developments in Oceania and other colonial areas. It was subjected to a theoretical analysis by several anthropologists and was refocused to a considerable degree. The purpose of this paper is to clarify the relationship between nativism and nationalism, which was tacitly assumed to exist but was never systematically explored, and to suggest a model for the analysis of the development of nationalism among the non-Western peoples, in which nativism, as defined in this paper, is seen as one of its important stages.

The relationship between nativism and nationalism, although implied by the very etymology of the two terms, has not been systematically explored by anthropologists or by sociologists (Barber, 1941; Turner and Killian, 1957; Smelser, 1963). Both groups have been conscious of some characteristics shared by these two types of social movements, but neither has attempted to clarify their theoretical ramifications. The main reason for this was a certain ambiguity in the interpretation of nativistic movements by anthropologists.

The concept of nativism was developed by American anthropologists to describe certain phenomena which were observed among the American Indians. It was not exposed to a theoretical analysis until the growing interest in the problems of acculturation (Herskovits, 1938) had suggested its systematic examination. This was accomplished by Linton (1943).

Linton interpreted nativistic movements as a reaction to the threat of cultural annihilation arising in "a situation of inequality between the societies in contact" (1943, p. 234). He defined a nativistic movement as "any conscious, organized attempt on the part of a society's members to revive or perpetuate selected aspects of its culture" (1943, p. 230). He also set up a typology of nativistic movements by dividing them into the following four categories: revivalistic-magical, revivalistic-rational, perpetuative-magical, and perpetuative-rational.

Although he cited some examples of at least three of these categories, he put such an emphasis on the revivalistic-magical type that the very concept of nativistic movements became identified with what he described as "frankly irrational flights from reality" (1943, p. 233).

The criticisms of Linton's conception were slow in coming, but since 1956 it has been under attack from two main points of view: (1) the validity of setting up "nativistic

movements'' as a distinct category of phenomena, and (2) the validity of his interpretation of such movements as irrational flights from the present into the past.

The very existence of nativistic movements as an independent and separate category was questioned by Wallace (1956), for whom they constitute rather a relatively indistinct subclass within a broader category of revitalization movements. These are defined as ''deliberate, conscious effort[s] by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture'' (1956, p. 265).

Nativistic movements are simply revitalization movements in which there is a strong emphasis on the elimination of alien influences and persons from the life of a given society. ''Because a major part of the program of many revitalization movements'', explains the author, ''has been been to expel the persons or customs of foreign invaders or overlords, they have been widely called 'nativistic movements'. However, the amount of nativistic activity in movements is variable. . . . Nativism is a dimension of variation rather than an elemental property of revitalization movements'' (1956, p. 278).

Other criticisms advanced against Linton's views questioned his interpretation of nativistic phenomena as largely regressive and irrational.

The first serious challenge came from Voget (1956) who pointed out that certain patterns of revivalistic nativism, when seen against the background of passive resistance to acculturation, represent actually a dynamic and creative reaction to the changed conditions of life. Thus, besides the passive and the dynamic types of nativism, it is possible to distinguish also a reformative type which can be defined as ''a relatively conscious attempt on the part of a subordinated group to attain a personal and social reintegration through a selective rejection, modification, and synthesis of both traditional and alien (dominant) cultural components'' (1956, p. 250).

The position taken by Voget was anticipated by the writings of some other anthropologists (Redfield, 1953), but he set it forth much more clearly and explicitly.

The second, even more serious, challenge to Linton's interpretation came from Worsley (1957). ''While the actions taken in the magical type of movements'', observes the author, ''are ineffective as a means of effecting changes in the environment, nevertheless they represent attempts to solve real problems. . . . The people set themselves real tasks, though instead of changing the environment, they only effect changes in their own psyches. In relation to the knowledge and techniques at the disposal of the people, these actions are clearly not irrational . . .'' (1957, p. 26-27).

The traditional content of the movements should by no means be exaggerated. ''There are examples'', says the author, ''in all millenarian movements of the revival of old ideas with a totally new significance in the changed social setting. . . . In addition, one finds new ideas which are not part of the traditional corpus of beliefs and knowledge. . . . What is really important about *re*adoption of *certain* of the old customs is not so much their revival, as the positive

break with European ideology that itself replaced the ancient beliefs". To describe all millenarian movements as "nativistic" in Linton's meaning of the term, is actually to caricature them. There is really little that divides some such movements from "ordinary nationalist movements" (1957, p. 21, 24, 30).

This last observation of Worsley reiterates the views of several other students of nativism in Oceania (van der Kroef, 1946; Allen, 1951; Guiart, 1951, 1956; Keesing, 1946; Oliver, 1952) and brings us back to the problem of the relationship between nativism and modern nationalism. This relationship has been taken for granted by such anthropologists as Linton (1943), Krober (1948), or Gillin (1948), but its theoretical implications were somehow ignored. The only attempt to reinterpret the meaning of nativism from the point of view of continuity between the two was that of Honigmann (1959), who defined it broadly as "any social movement arising under culture contact in which members of a community assert cultural or social identity, affirm dominance, or effect psychological readjustment" (1959, p. 262).

This definition as well as some of Honigmann's references to the specific movements bring nativism so close to nationalism that the distinction between the two is by no means clear. Before we consider this problem, however, let us summarize the main elements of current anthropological views on nativism:

1) movements traditionally, and loosely, labelled 'nativistic' are essentially movements of cultural reconstruction or revitalization, their varying degree of nativistic coloring is not their distinctive characteristic;
2) they are not to be interpreted as instances of irrational flights from reality, but as attempts, however inadequate, to cope with it;
3) they are not exclusively, or even predominantly, regressive, but represent always some form of synthesis between the old and the new;
4) they are not peculiar to the non-literate societies, but may appear in any society experiencing a profound threat to its way of life;
5) they are not a separate class of social movements, but rather a primitive counterpart of modern revolutionary movements, such as socialism, communism or nationalism.

In view of these conclusions, further use of the term 'nativistic movements' to describe the broad category of social movements caused by the catastrophic impact of culture contact, does not seem to be justified. It ought to be limited to those of them which contain, as Wallace puts it, "strong emphasis on the elimination of alien persons, customs, values and/or materiel from the mazeway" (Wallace, 1956, p. 267).

Such movements, however, have a distinct affinity to nationalism and, in fact, seem to represent one of its primitive forms. This has not been generally recognized because such primitive manifestations of nationalism are limited to the developing countries and in this area the very definition of nationalism is still an open question.

To some students of the developing countries, for example, Hodgkin (1956), it is justifiable to apply the terms "nationalist" and "nationalism" to any and all groups which explicitly assert the rights and aspirations of a given native society in opposition to European authority, no matter what their institutional forms

and objectives. This would naturally include nativistic movements as well.

To others, for example, Coleman (1963), a basic distinction must be drawn between the "modern nationalism" and the "traditional nationalism". The latter category would include: movements of resistance to the initial penetration and occupation, early revolts provoked by political and economic oppression, and nativistic or messianic movements. The category of modern nationalism would include: sentiments, activities, and organizational developments aimed explicitly at the self-government and independence of a given country as nation-state.

This delimitation of what is to be considered as modern nationalism is quite satisfactory, but the extension of the same term, even with a qualifying adjective, to the pre-nationalist forms of resistance, is rather confusing.

Thus, the most logical seems to be the third approach represented, for example, by Emerson (1960), which would definitely restrict the use of the term to the political movements aiming at the self-government and led by the Westernized urban elite with a certain degree of modern supra-tribal identification.

Emerson pays very little attention, however, to various forms of the pre-nationalist protest. His Hegelian three-stage scheme of the development of nationalism among the non-Western peoples: (1) a xenophobic defense of the existing order, (2) an uncritical self-humiliation and acceptance of alien superiority, and (3) a nationalist synthesis, is, perhaps, like an earlier similar one by Elkin (1936/1937), too sweeping. I would like, therefore, to propose a somewhat broader model for the analysis of the typical process of development by breaking it up into at least four phases:

1) *the phase of xenophobic defense of the old order*—this would include initial resistance and later revolts;
2) *the phase of resignation, passive submission, and self-abasement;*
3) *the phase of the pre-nationalist protest immediately preceding the development of true nationalism and leading to a gradual redefinition of the group's self-conception* — this would include such phenomena as messianic and millenarian movements (if these involve a strong anti-alien sentiment), separatist churches, and varied forms of civil disobedience (riots, boycotts, non-cooperation, etc.);
4) *the phase of genuine nationalism.*

Within this theoretical model, the term nativism could, then, be logically applied to all the phenomena of pre-nationalist protest and resistance, preceding immediately the development of genuine modern nationalism. *The implication here is that a nativist reaction, especially in the form of nativistic movements* (in the revised meaning of the term), *is one of the important components in the development of nationalism, but not that nativist reaction or movements must inevitably and necessarily lead to nationalism.* There are too many intervening variables to be considered in each specific case. It is significant, however, that even in the case of classical "nativistic movements", that is, those observed among the American Indians, it was pointed out that some of their forms have provided an "affect-base" upon which "a nationalistic Pan-Indianism seems now to be emerging". (Voget, 1956, p. 259).

I submit that such a redefinition of the original meaning of the term

"nativistic movements", following Wallace's interpretation, but extending it beyond the limits of the tribal society *sensu stricto*, would contribute to the clarification of some knotty problems involved in the study and definition of modern nationalism.

When set up against this variable background of nativist unrest, the genuine nationalism may be perceived more clearly as a phenomenon representing a somewhat more advanced level of social development and may be defined in its essentials as "the active solidarity of a group claiming to be a nation and aspiring to be a state" (Symmons, 1965, p. 227).

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