

Aberle, David. 1970. A Note on Relative Deprivation Theory as Applied to Millenarian and Other Cult Movements. Millennial Dreams in Action: Studies in Revolutionary Religious Movements. Ed. Sylvia Thrupp. New York, NY: Schocken Books

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Week 2

Relative deprivation—a negative discrepancy between legitimate expectation and actuality.

- where an individual or group has a particular expectation and this expectation is considered to be a proper state of affairs, and where something less than that expectation is fulfilled is relative deprivation

- a difference between an anticipated state of affairs and a less agreeable reality

3 situations that constitute RD

- 1) one's past versus one's present circumstances
- 2) one's present versus one's future circumstances
- 3) one's own versus some one else's present circumstances

-critical feature is that it is deprivation that stems from change, actual or anticipated

-change that creates discrepancies between legitimate expectations and actuality

Classification of Deprivations into four groups: possessions, status, behavior, and worth

-may be personal or group experiences.

**can eliminate purely personal deprivations for if an individual does not find that there are others in like circumstances, their significance for social movements would appear to be trivial.

Uses Navajo example of relative deprivation for status, behavior, and worth.

-any type of deprivation, measured by any of the above reference points, is the possible basis for efforts at remedial action to overcome the discrepancy between actuality and legitimate aspiration

**Fact of deprivation is clearly an insufficient basis for predicting whether remedial efforts will occur, and, if they occur, whether they will have as aims changing the world, transcending it, withdrawing from it, whether the remedy will be sought in direct action or ritual, and whether it will be sought with the aid of supernatural powers or without.

Millenarian movements—seek supernatural help, or which see supernatural intervention in the affairs of men

**The ideology of the movement will be related to the type of deprivation—Ex. Peyotism Pg 212

-not limited to absolute deprivation, nor to the assumption that the deprived are always those at the bottom of the status hierarchy

-it does have a certain excessive flexibility—it is always possible after the fact to find deprivation

-what is important is to be able to predict either the types of deprivations that lead to certain ideological formations, or the degree of deprivation which crystallizes a cult movement.