



Native Americans and the Christian Right: The Gendered Politics of Unlikely Alliances

Andrea Smith

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In *Native Americans and the Christian Right*, Andrea Smith advances social movement theory beyond simplistic understandings of social-justice activism as either right-wing or left-wing and urges a more open-minded approach to the role of religion in social movements. In examining the interplay of biblical scripture, gender, and nationalism in Christian Right and Native American activism, Smith rethinks the nature of political strategy and alliance-building for progressive purposes, highlighting the potential of unlikely alliances, termed “cowboys and Indians coalitions” by one of her Native activist interviewees. She also complicates ideas about identity, resistance, accommodation, and acquiescence in relation to social-justice activism.

Smith draws on archival research, interviews, and her own participation in Native struggles and Christian Right conferences and events. She considers American Indian activism within the Promise Keepers and new Charismatic movements. She also explores specific opportunities for building unlikely alliances. For instance, while evangelicals’ understanding of the relationship between the Bible and the state may lead to reactionary positions on issues including homosexuality, civil rights, and abortion, it also supports a relatively progressive position on prison reform. In terms of evangelical and Native American feminisms, she reveals antiviolenace organizing to be a galvanizing force within both communities, discusses theories of coalition politics among both evangelical and indigenous women, and considers Native women’s visions of sovereignty and nationhood. Smith concludes with a reflection on the implications of her research for the field of Native American studies.

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