

INDIGENEITY IN NEW SETTINGS, I: URBANIZATION & “SUPRATRIBALISM”

Cornell, Stephen. 1988. *The Return of the Native: American Indian Political Resurgence*. New York: Oxford University Press. (Ch. 8, The Politics of Indianness, 128-148)

1. Cornell begins with a short theoretical treatment of the subject of urbanization and identity. Using that material, on what basis can one argue that cities would not destroy Indian identity in the United States?
2. Focusing on the early to mid-1900s, what were the forces at work in moving American Indians into cities?
3. Was there any voluntary element to relocation? How much for “choice” does the article allow?
4. What is the paradox of “Pan-Indianism”? What are the origins of “urban supratribalism”?
5. For supratribalism to emerge, is it enough to just have “lots of Indians” living close together in cities?
6. We are being introduced to something new in this article, and that is a different way of conceptualizing indigeneity than we learned from the materials on race and tribe. What are the bases that constitute this new urban indigeneity?
7. Why did a generic “Indianness” become relevant in cities?
8. How have the processes of cultural transformation associated with Indian urbanization affected rural reservations?
9. In which ways does Cornell’s argument mirror that of Sahlins in “Anthropological Enlightenment”?
10. Mobility and cohesion, urbanism and tribalism—are these paired opposites?
11. Cornell ends with a deflated view of the power of supratribalism to ever replace or substitute for tribalism. What do you think of his argument, and on what bases is it constructed?

Sissons, Jeffrey. 2004. “Maori Tribalism and Post-Settler Nationhood in New Zealand.” *Oceania*, 75 (1), 19-31.

1. Sissons, more so than Cornell, emphasizes the dividing lines between urban and rural Maori. What are some of the key features of this division?
 2. Is “Maori” a generic label, like “Indian” in the US?
 3. How many Maori are urban? How many do *not* identify with a given tribe? How does this compare to the US case above?
 4. Please pay careful attention to Sissons’ explanations of “individualized dispossession” and “official tribalism.”
 5. Please pay especial attention to the Conclusion, where Sissons compares New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the United States. The root problem, he seems to suggest, is that of “oppressive authenticity”. Please explain how that problem relates to the ambiguous position of urban indigenous peoples.
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