THE CHANGING VOICE OF THE ANTI-ABORTION MOVEMENT

The Rise of “Pro-Woman” Rhetoric in Canada and the United States

When journalists, academics, and politicians describe the North American anti-abortion movement, they often describe a campaign that is male-dominated, aggressive and even violent in its tactics, religious in motivation, anti-woman in tone, and fetal-centric in its arguments and rhetoric. Are they correct?

In *The Changing Voice of the Anti-abortion Movement*, Paul Saurette and Kelly Gordon suggest that the reality is far more complicated, particularly in Canada. Today, anti-abortion activism increasingly presents itself as “pro-woman”: using female spokespersons, adopting medical and scientific language to claim that abortion harms women, and employing a wide range of more subtle framing and narrative rhetorical tactics that use traditionally progressive themes to present the anti-abortion position as more feminist than pro-choice feminism.

Following a succinct but comprehensive overview of the two-hundred-year history of North American debate and legislation on abortion, Saurette and Gordon present the results of their systematic, five-year quantitative and qualitative discourse analysis, supplemented by extensive first-person observations, and outline the implications that flow from these findings. Their discoveries are a challenge to our current assumptions about the abortion debate today, and their conclusions will be compelling for both scholars and activists alike.

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