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Political Advocacy and Its Interested Citizens

Neoliberalism, Postpluralism, and LGBT Organizations

Matthew Dean Hindman

Advocates representing historically disadvantaged groups have long understood the need for strong public relations, effective fundraising, and robust channels of communication with the communities that they serve. Yet the neoliberal era and its infusion of money into the political arena have deepened these imperatives, thus adding new financial hurdles to the long list of obstacles facing minority communities. To respond to these challenges, a professionalized, nonprofit model of political advocacy has steadily gained traction. In many cases, advocacy organizations sought to harness and redirect the radical verve that characterized the protest movements of the 1960s into pragmatic, state-sanctioned approaches to political engagement.

In *Political Advocacy and Its Interested Citizens*, Matthew Dean Hindman looks at how and why contemporary political advocacy groups have transformed social movements and their participants. Looking to LGBT political movements as an exemplary case study, Hindman explores the advocacy explosion in the United States and its impact on how advocates encourage citizens to understand their role in the political process. He argues that current advocacy groups encourage members of the LGBT community to view themselves as stakeholders in a common struggle for political incorporation. In doing so, however, they often overshadow more imaginative and transformational approaches that could unsettle and challenge straight society and its prevailing political and sexual norms. Advocacy groups carved out a space within a neoliberalizing political process that enabled them to instruct their members, followers, and constituents on serving effectively as industrious political claimants. *Political Advocacy and Its Interested Citizens* thus sheds light on grassroots politics as it is practiced in present-day America and offers a compelling and original analysis of the ways in which neoliberalism challenges citizens to participate as consumers and investors in the advocacy marketplace.

Matthew Dean Hindman teaches political science at the University of Tulsa.

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