



Public Interests: Media Advocacy and Struggles over U.S. Television

Allison Perlman

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Nearly as soon as television began to enter American homes in the late 1940s, social activists recognized that it was a powerful tool for shaping the nation's views. By targeting broadcast regulations and laws, both liberal and conservative activist groups have sought to influence what America sees on the small screen. *Public Interests* describes the impressive battles that these media activists fought and charts how they tried to change the face of American television.

Allison Perlman looks behind the scenes to track the strategies employed by several key groups of media reformers, from civil rights organizations like the NAACP to conservative groups like the Parents Television Council. While some of these campaigns were designed to improve the representation of certain marginalized groups in television programming, as Perlman reveals, they all strove for more systemic reforms, from early efforts to create educational channels to more recent attempts to preserve a space for Spanish-language broadcasting.

Public Interests fills in a key piece of the history of American social reform movements, revealing pressure groups' deep investments in influencing both television programming and broadcasting policy. Vividly illustrating the resilience, flexibility, and diversity of media activist campaigns from the 1950s onward, the book offers valuable lessons that can be applied to current battles over the airwaves.

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