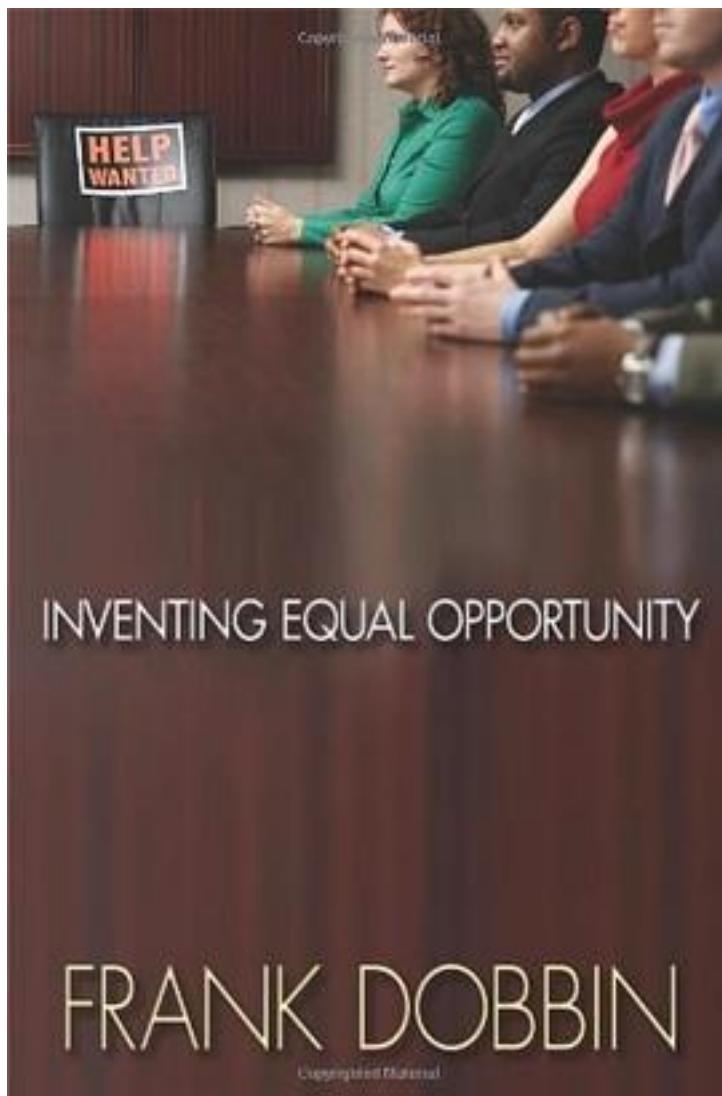


# Inventing Equal Opportunity



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Equal opportunity in the workplace is thought to be the direct legacy of the civil rights and feminist movements and the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. Yet, as Frank Dobbin demonstrates, corporate personnel experts - not Congress or the courts - were the ones who determined what equal opportunity meant in practice, designing changes in how employers hire, promote, and fire workers, and ultimately defining what discrimination is, and is not, in the American imagination. Dobbin shows how Congress and the courts merely endorsed programs devised by corporate personnel. He traces how the first measures were adopted by military contractors worried that the Kennedy administration would cancel their contracts if they didn't take 'affirmative action' to end discrimination. These measures built on existing personnel programs, many designed to prevent bias against unionists. Dobbin follows the changes in the law as personnel experts invented one wave after another of equal opportunity programs. He examines how corporate personnel formalized hiring and promotion practices in the 1970s to eradicate bias by managers; how in the 1980s they answered Ronald Reagan's threat to end affirmative action by recasting their efforts as diversity-management programs; and, how the growing presence of women in the newly named human resources profession has contributed to a focus on sexual harassment and work/life issues. "Inventing Equal Opportunity" reveals how the personnel profession devised - and ultimately transformed - our understanding of discrimination.

## 作者介绍:

Frank Dobbin received his B.A. from Oberlin College in 1980 and his Ph.D. from Stanford University in 1987. Dobbin studies organizations, inequality, economic behavior, and public policy. His *Inventing Equal Opportunity* (Princeton 2009) shows how corporate personnel managers defined what it meant to discriminate. With Alexandra Kalev, he is developing an evidence-based approach to diversity management. Innovations that make managers part of the solution, such as mentoring programs, diversity taskforces, and special recruitment programs, have helped to promote diversity in firms, while programs signaling that managers are part of the problem, such as diversity training and diversity performance evaluations, have not. These findings have been covered by The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Boston Globe, Le Monde, CNN, and National Public Radio.

Professor Dobbin's work in economic sociology generally is both historical and contemporary. His *Forging Industrial Policy: United States, Britain, and France in the Railway Age* (Cambridge 1994), traces nations' modern industrial strategies to early differences in their political systems. The *New Economic Sociology: A Reader* (Princeton 2004) assembles classics in economic sociology. The *Sociology of the Economy* (Russell Sage 2004) compiles research in economic sociology from leading scholars. The *Global Diffusion of Markets and Democracy* (Cambridge 2008) explores the rise of neoliberal policies in the post-war period. *Stanford's Organization Theory Renaissance, 1970-2000* (Emerald 2010) is a modern-day *Rashomon* about the revival of organizational studies in Palo Alto after 1970.

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## 标签

经济社会学

sociology

## 评论

课程要求阅读。关于平权运动从法律到正式实践的详细历史记载，以国家/法律、大企业、人力管理职业界、社会运动与平权分子四方面为相互制约的行动者，从制度主义视角出发，认为获得大企业授权的人力管理从业者才是真正将平权运动落实的行动者，美国特有的较为弱势国家机器/法律没有a

priori严谨定义平权含义，主要是后发将企业实践合法化，但作者提出的弱国家悖论指出，正因为国家行政和法律机器较为分散和容易被社运及积极分子输入，从业者在平权方面行动较为缜密而渐进。随着80年代平权运动在政治和法律上的松懈，及女性人力资源从业者的崛起，平权渐渐远离原本以种族/族裔为基础的基础，转为关注性别平等，且有脱离大众民意和法律监督倾向。材料丰富论述清楚，不过拿ASA韦伯奖（组织、职业与工作社会学类）似乎有些拔高了。

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## 书评

Frank Dobbin, documenting the entire transformation process of equal opportunity from law to practice, challenges conventional wisdom that it was politicians, activists and judges who brought equal opportunity in to being. Instead, personnel managers and pr...

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