

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910816611003321
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Titolo	Inventing equal opportunity // Frank Dobbin
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Princeton, N.J., : Princeton University Press, c2009
ISBN	9786612259203 1-282-25920-2 1-4008-3089-3
Edizione	[Course Book]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (321 p.)
Disciplina	331.1330973
Soggetti	Discrimination in employment - United States Affirmative action programs - United States Diversity in the workplace - United States Sexual harassment of women - United States Civil rights - United States Personnel management - United States
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- CONTENTS -- ACKNOWLEDGMENTS -- 1. Regulating Discrimination -- 2. Washington Outlaws Discrimination with a Broad Brush -- 3. The End of Jim Crow -- 4. Washington Means Business -- 5. Fighting Bias with Bureaucracy -- 6. The Reagan Revolution and the Rise of Diversity Management -- 7. The Feminization of HR and Work-Family Programs -- 8. Sexual Harassment as Employment Discrimination -- 9. How Personnel Defined Equal Opportunity -- NOTES -- BIBLIOGRAPHY -- INDEX
Sommario/riassunto	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 1970's to eradicate bias by managers; how in the 1980's 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.
