

personnel managers developed policies that have defined what “equal opportunity” has meant in practice from 1960 to today. Dobbin’s evidence is drawn from interviews and surveys he conducted with personnel managers from a cross section of industries in 1986 (with 279 employers), 1997 (389), and 2002 (829), as well as published surveys and management journals. A sociologist, Dobbin cites few historians. Still, his book affirms and complements the recent work of Pamela Walker Laird, David Golland, Jennifer Delton, and others, who have similarly looked beyond politicians and activists to the personnel experts and midlevel government bureaucrats who translated the demands of the civil rights movement into policy.

According to Dobbin, corporations turned to personnel managers to develop policies that would put them in compliance with vague new legislation prohibiting discrimination against racial minorities and women. Personnel managers instituted reforms to make hiring and promotion procedures fairer and more transparent, including test validation, performance evaluation, clear steps for hiring, promotion, and firing, and the centralization of personnel decisions. They also institutionalized race-conscious affirmative action guidelines developed by the voluntary Plans for Progress program for recruiting and training minorities (and later, women). The courts approved the reforms, and discrimination came to mean the absence of such policies.

Dobbin shows that while personnel managers adopted race-conscious affirmative action policies, they eschewed quotas, which were incompatible with merit-based reforms. Affirmative action’s “goals and timetables” were aspirational and largely unmet by corporations. During the Reagan administration, personnel managers rebranded their equal employment opportunity programs as “diversity management,” moving away from arguments about compliance and fairness and emphasizing instead the economic benefits of diversity in a global marketplace. Dobbin suggests that these policies may not have been all that effective in workplace integration but that is not his focus; rather, he is interested in how these policies came to be defined as following the law.

This is an excellent, smart book attuned to the implications its argument has for our

understanding of social movements, racial progress, and federalism. For historians, Dobbin’s emphasis on the legacy of Plans for Progress stands out. This was a voluntary program created by major government contractors in 1961 to meet John F. Kennedy’s stepped-up antidiscrimination enforcement. For years, historians have belittled Plans for Progress as ineffective lip service, but its prescriptions have prevailed. Every innovation that companies adopted to put themselves in compliance with civil rights legislation was part of the original Plans for Progress program. Even more than the Philadelphia Plan (which required federal contractors to meet certain goals for hiring African Americans), Plans for Progress transformed the American workplace, insuring millions of Americans opportunities once denied.

Jennifer Delton
Skidmore College
Saratoga Springs, New York

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Constructing Affirmative Action: The Struggle for Equal Employment Opportunity. By David Hamilton Golland. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2011. xiv, 248 pp. \$50.00, ISBN 978-0-8131-2997-6.)

In a lucid introduction to *Constructing Affirmative Action*, David Hamilton Golland explains the reason for his book. It addresses a significant issue: How can and did the federal government change employment practices, especially concerning unionized construction trades, from the late 1950s to the early 1970s? To answer the question that the author examines the history of inequality in those trades, eventually pointing out that most unions were segregated and that in 1961 there were fewer than three hundred licensed black journeymen electricians and plumbers in the entire nation. Traditionally, those jobs went to sons, relatives, and friends of white members—even though the unions had made pledges for years to hire without regard to race, color, or creed. Golland cites bureaucratic inertia as the reason for unions’ failure to integrate before the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which jump-started activity and pressure for equal employment opportunity.

The book then examines how officials in the Johnson administration worked in several cities in the second half of the 1960s to develop what became known as the Philadelphia Plan during the Nixon administration.

Golland makes three arguments in his book. Challenging historians such as Joan Hoff and Kevin Yuill he contends that Richard M. Nixon “was not the ‘father of affirmative action’ or even a ‘civil rights president’ by the standard set by his predecessor in the White House” (p. 4). He also argues that the “federal bureaucracy, which initially worked *against* the implementation of equal employment opportunity programs . . . came to be the most effective player *for* their implementation during the 1960s and 1970s” (*ibid.*). Finally, the author defines “affirmative action *as* equal opportunity” (p. 5). In other words, “Affirmative action means carefully identifying areas of inequality, taking a series of positive steps to alleviate that inequality, and following through in the long term” to get results (pp. 5–6).

Along the way Golland reveals through interesting episodes how federal officials used tax-supported contracts for public works to get unions to open their membership. Readers are introduced to obscure historical actors such as Woody Zenfell and the project to build the St. Louis Arch, Charles Doneghy and public works during the Cleveland race riot of 1966, and Robert C. Magnusson and his attempts to employ integrated unions to build the Bay Area Rapid Transit System in San Francisco. All met incredible resistance and basically failed to bring about results, but all of their plans were the origins of the Philadelphia Plan.

The author spends approximately two chapters on the origins, development, and results of the Philadelphia Plan, and this is a major contribution to the scholarship of affirmative action. He also presents a new interpretation. Historians have used the Nixon administration’s implementation of the plan to demonstrate “a positive civil rights agenda,” but Golland demonstrates that the plan was “developed and implemented by Johnson-era officials” and “that the changes between the original plan and the Nixon-era plan were minimal” (p. 104).

In sum, *Constructing Affirmative Action* offers a thoughtful new interpretation, clearly

presented and based on judicious research in primary sources. It will become the standard book on the struggle for equal employment opportunity in the construction trades.

Terry H. Anderson
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas

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Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare: Photography and the African American Freedom Struggle. By Leigh Raiford. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011. xvi, 293 pp. \$45.00, ISBN 978-0-8078-3430-5.)

In her deftly executed exploration of the uses and meanings of the photographic image for the African American freedom struggle during the last one hundred years, Leigh Raiford cites the intellectual Walter Benjamin’s seminal claim that “to articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it ‘the way it really was.’ It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger” (p. 219). Raiford is careful to clarify early in her introduction that her book “is not about recovering lost histories” (p. 4). Rather, she claims that *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare* should serve, like the photographs it presents, as a nexus for unlocking the relationship between representation, memory, and direct action for social change.

Raiford begins with the photographic representations of lynchings in once-popular lynching postcards, trading cards, and stereographs; in the antilynching campaigns of the journalist Ida B. Wells; and as an organizing tool of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People shortly after its founding in 1909. For the proponents of lynching, photographs of a lynching scene were much like the severed teeth, bone, and hair of the victims—visceral totems of the act itself that connected the practice to earlier forms of ritual relic collection. Raiford argues, however, that the prevalence of photography at the scene of lynching crimes signals “the specificity of lynching’s modernity” and, in fact, that “photography emerged as integral to the lynching spectacle” (p. 37).