

- **Dobbin, Frank. 2002. “Is America Becoming More Exceptional? How Public Policy Corporatized Social Citizenship,” in Rothstein and Steinmo (eds.), *Restructuring the Welfare State: Political Institutions and Policy Change*.**

The paradox of American exceptionalism in the provision of the “social rights of citizenship” is that the American state makes social benefits nominally private rather than public, and ties them to employment rather than to citizenship. Dobbin argues that governmental activism has been the driving force behind the expansion of this system of private social coverage. America’s federal institutional capacities -- weak party system, her peculiar federal state structure and her weak administrative capacity in social provision -- contributed to public policies favoring corporate welfarism that depended on tax incentives and complex regulations. Furthermore, since the 1960s, new protections have been institutionalized through a process that does not depend on either strong working-class organizations or a strong state. Instead, new specialists hired by firms to help them interpret the complex of federal regulations on employment law have become an internal constituency favoring the expansion of employment-related social protections. This argument raises important questions about theoretical frameworks that pose a simple dichotomy between ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ states, as in the US case, a weak state deliberately made the private sector expand.