

## The Power of a Vulnerable State: The Rights Revolution and the Emergence of Human Resources Management Departments

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**Abstract :** After the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted, federal policy transformed employment rights. Equal employment opportunity law, legislation for occupational safety and health, and regulations for fringe benefits were established to ensure that employees have rights to equal protection, health and safety, and the benefits guaranteed by employers. In research analyzing data from 279 organizations over time, it was discovered that legal changes prompted organizations to establish personnel, antidiscrimination, safety, and benefits departments to ensure compliance. However, as the process of institutionalization advanced, middle managers began to separate these fresh offices from policy and rationalize them solely in economic terms as a component of the new human resources management model. This common occurrence is seen in the United States, where the Constitution represents government control of business as unlawful. It could potentially clarify the extended lack of a state theory in organizational analysis and shed light on a puzzle pointed out by state theorists: the federal state is weak in terms of administration but strong in terms of norms.

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