

Mithaug

Equal Opportunity Theory

Fairness in Liberty for All

Equal Opportunity Theory is a clear and comprehensive examination of the idea of self-determination: both the right to self-determination as well as its expression in our society. Author Dennis E. Mithaug examines society's collective responsibility for assuring fair prospects of self-determination for all people. This inclusive volume also describes how social policies derived from the theory of equal opportunity actually impact those with the least likely prospects for self-determination throughout their lives--the poor, the disabled, and people of color. Author Dennis E. Mithaug first presents the logical, philosophical, and psychological basis for equal opportunity theory and then presents its social and judicial background. From this foundation he shows how the optimal prospects principle derived from the theory decreases the discrepancy between the right and the experience of self-determination for children and adults with significant physical, mental, social, and economic disadvantages. Although the main thrust is theoretical, evidence in support of the theory is based upon a combination of empirical, historical, and logical sources. Addressing one of the hottest current topics in American society and public policy today, Equal Opportunity Theory's timeliness will make it of great interest to students and professionals in the fields of sociology, psychology, and political science. "In Equal Opportunity Theory, Dennis E. Mithaug writes about the discrepancy between the right to self-determination and the expression of that right, a problem that is salient to most Americans with disabilities and others who are less well situated in our society. This discrepancy manifests itself in what may be the most 'handicapping' aspect of having a disability, being poor, or being a member of a minority group that experiences frequent discrimination--the lack of control over one's life. Equal Opportunity Theory provides a thoughtful, interdisciplinary treatment of the complex issues related to this problem. The book provides an important differentiation of the impact of individual capacity and opportunity theory as a means to resolve the discrepancy between the right to and experience of self-determination for individuals whose personal, social, and economic circumstances are beyond their control. It also provides a valuable contribution to the debate concerning how best to empower and enable all individuals to live self-determined lives." --Michael L. Wehmeyer, The Arc National Headquarters



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