



# Documenting Desegregation: Racial and Gender Segregation in Private Sector Employment Since the Civil Rights Act

*Kevin Stainback, Donald Tomaskovic-Devey*

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Enacted nearly fifty years ago, the Civil Rights Act codified a new vision for American society by formally ending segregation and banning race and gender discrimination in the workplace. But how much change did the legislation actually produce? As employers responded to the law, did new and more subtle forms of inequality emerge in the workplace? In an insightful analysis that combines history with a rigorous empirical analysis of newly available data, *Documenting Desegregation* offers the most comprehensive account to date of what has happened to equal opportunity in America—and what needs to be done in order to achieve a truly integrated workforce.

Weaving strands of history, cognitive psychology, and demography, *Documenting Desegregation* provides a compelling exploration of the ways legislation can affect employer behavior and produce change. Authors Kevin Stainback and Donald Tomaskovic-Devey use a remarkable historical record—data from more than six million workplaces collected by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) since 1966—to present a sobering portrait of race and gender in the American workplace. Progress has been decidedly uneven: black men, black women, and white women have prospered in firms that rely on educational credentials when hiring, though white women have advanced more quickly. And white men have hardly fallen behind—they now hold more managerial positions than they did in 1964. The authors argue that the Civil Rights Act's equal opportunity clauses have been most effective when accompanied by social movements demanding changes. EEOC data show that African American men made rapid gains in the 1960s at the height of the Civil Rights movement. Similarly, white women gained access to more professional and managerial jobs in the 1970s as regulators and policymakers began to enact and enforce gender discrimination laws. By the 1980s, however, racial desegregation had stalled, reflecting the dimmed status of the Civil Rights agenda. Racial and gender employment segregation remain high today, and, alarmingly, many firms, particularly in high-wage industries, seem to be moving in the wrong direction and have shown signs of resegregating since the 1980s. To counter this worrying trend, the authors propose new methods to increase diversity by changing industry norms, holding human resources managers to account, and exerting renewed government pressure on large corporations to make equal employment opportunity a national priority.

At a time of high unemployment and rising inequality, *Documenting Desegregation* provides an incisive re-examination of America's tortured pursuit of equal employment opportunity. This important new book will be an indispensable guide for those seeking to understand where America stands in fulfilling its promise of a workplace free from discrimination.

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