

Book Review

Work and Occupations

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Stainback, K., & Tomaskovic-Devey, D. (2012). *Documenting Desegregation: Racial and Gender Segregation in Private-Sector Employment Since the Civil Rights Act*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation. 412 pp. \$45.00 (paper).

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Kevin Stainback and Donald Tomaskovic-Devey have produced an impressive and valuable volume. The book is at once comprehensive data analysis, living history, and a story of the data source itself: the employee information forms (EEO1 forms) required by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission since 1966. The law against workplace discrimination created an unprecedented data stream of information about workplaces, and in this telling, the forms themselves are part of the political and legal history; the exemptions and exclusions, what was collected and for whom, all reflected the political contests of the time. In recent years, a growing community of scholars has begun to mine this data source, culminating in this book as the foundation upon which future research will be built.

The data they use in some ways are frustratingly limited. The main information provided is the number of workers by race and gender in each of nine occupational categories for each private sector firm over a certain size. However, because these occupational categories are hierarchically ordered (and especially because one of the categories is managers), and firms are nested within both geographical territories and industrial sectors, a creative analysis such as this one can construct complex trajectories of occupational segregation and labor market hierarchies. (In fact, the data serve as a vital reminder of the centrality of divisions of labor in the system of inequality.)

For many readers, the strongest part of the book will be its historical story, which traces occupational segregation from the pre-Civil Rights period through 2005 over four detailed chapters. The book breaks this

2

history into four eras, beginning with hypersegregation before the Civil Rights Act, leading to a period of uncertainty (1966–1972) in which employers were unsure of the scope of antidiscrimination enforcement and its implications. A short regulatory decade followed, from 1972 to 1980, in retrospect emerging as the heyday of antidiscrimination, before the bureaucratic power of the federal government was stymied under the Republican Party's Southern strategy. Since 1980, the story is one of spreading neoliberal policy and stagnation in desegregation. During this period, only White women made substantial progress against segregation, partly as a result of their increasing presence in managerial occupations (including human resources, a perch which has become both a strategic location and an occupational ghetto).

Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey highlight the connections between social movements, political action, legal change, administrative power, and cultural change. In simplistic outline, we might say: Black men made occupational progress first in the late 1960s and 1970s because they were on the political agenda first. White women made progress next in the 1970s and 1980s because of the women's movement and their increasing educational attainment. White women's progress was sustained thereafter partly because they had entered managerial positions and because their own numbers created a political constituency within organizations. Black women caught the tail end of both movements, and then stalled, even resegregating in more recent years. In the last decade, even White women's progress stalled in the absence of new political energy and successful legal innovations.

The second part of the book, which focuses on local and industrial variation in segregation trajectories, underscores a key historical insight: The progress that followed the Civil Rights Act allowed the country to transition from a national regime of hypersegregation to a patchwork of local regimes in which the variation became the story. The very micro-level processes that so engage contemporary researchers, which produce segregation or desegregation within organizations, were substantively irrelevant before the 1960s because segregation was virtually complete.

As the authors acknowledge, the limitations of the EEO1 form are substantial, both for researchers and for antidiscrimination enforcement. They do not include wages, job detail, or anything about the hiring process. As with most other analyses of labor inequality, then, we are stuck studying job discrimination by looking at people who got the jobs. Further, the public sector is not included, and neither are small firms. And finally, individual workers are not followed through time—a

gender-specific turnover, for example. As a result, the data seem ill-suited to today's legal framework for antidiscrimination, which relies on a *motive-based notion* of discrimination. That limitation, of course, is part of the story of employment discrimination that this book so ably conveys.