



FACT SHEET

Equal Employment Opportunity in America

INTRODUCTION

Enacted in 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act made clear for the first time at a national level that the use of racial and gender status distinctions in employment was illegal. The sponsors of the bill hoped this extension of rights would erode race and gender employment segregation and prevent discrimination in employment.

Now, nearly 40 years later, what has happened to the principle of equal opportunity in employment? How did employers and industries comply with the law, and how diverse is the American workplace? In *Documenting Desegregation*, sociologists Kevin Stainback and Donald Tomaskovic-Devey offer a detailed portrait of racial and gender desegregation in the American private sector, drawn from data that describe over 5 million workplaces between 1966 and 2005.

This remarkable historical record, collected by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), has never before been used to systematically evaluate societal change. The data reveal a number of sobering conclusions:

- While African Americans made rapid gains in the 1960s and, along with white women, in the 1970s, the post-1980s period has witnessed a clear deceleration in desegregation. Black employment integration with white men in the regulated private sector essentially came to halt after 1980.
- Since 1990, 43 percent of industries have had significant increases in employment segregation between white women and black women.
- Racial segregation among men is growing in one in six industries.
- In the 25 years after Ronald Reagan became President, employment segregation between white men and black men declined less than it did in two years in the 1960s.

Barring additional political pressure, it is now likely that we will see increased segregation in more workplaces and decreased access to good jobs for groups other than white men. “The United States is no longer on the path to equal employment opportunity,” Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey conclude.

Apart from tracing the historical trajectory of desegregation in the American workplace, the data also showed

changes within industries and particular regions. The following tables and charts from the book provide an overview of the racial and gender dynamics in the American workplace today.

THE VERY WORST LABOR MARKETS: MANAGERIAL JOBS

The table below displays the local labor markets in which white men’s advantaged access to managerial jobs is the most extreme. In these twenty labor markets, white men were found in managerial roles at two to three times their representation in the local labor market more generally. The most striking result for white men is that sixteen of the top twenty labor markets were in the black belt South—the old plantation regions.

With the exception of Brunswick, Georgia, all of the labor markets where white women were the most severely underrepresented in managerial jobs were outside of the black belt South and Hispanic Southwest. White women were least likely to be found in managerial roles in the Midwest and Appalachian regions of the eastern United States.

Table 6.10: The Top Twenty Cities for White Male Overrepresentation and White Female, Black Male, and Black Female Underrepresentation in Managerial Jobs, 2005

White Male Overrepresentation		White Female Underrepresentation		Black Male Underrepresentation		Black Female Underrepresentation	
McAllen, Tex.	307.7%	Decorah, Iowa	51.0%	Bennettsville, S.C.	33.8%	Dyersburg, Tenn.	13.6%
Greenville, Miss.	280.4	McMinnville, Tenn.	54.5	Houma, La.	34.6	Bennettsville, S.C.	16.3
Americus, Ga.	271.7	Morganton, N.C.	57.9	Atmore, Ala.	35.7	Blytheville, Ark.	18.1
Henderson, N.C.	262.8	Columbus, Nev.	58.6	Milledgeville, Ga.	35.7	Americus, Ga.	19.3
McComb, Miss.	252.4	Glasgow, Ky.	59.7	Greenwood, Miss.	36.4	Spartanburg, S.C.	21.9
Laredo, Tex.	251.1	Greensburg, Ind.	59.7	Blytheville, Ark.	36.5	Paris, Tex.	22.1
Greenwood, Miss.	248.6	Spencer, Iowa	60.1	Tupelo, Miss.	37.2	Tupelo, Miss.	22.1
Milledgeville, Ga.	241.6	Rice Lake, Wis.	61.0	Meridian, Miss.	39.5	Jackson, Tenn.	22.8
Laurel, Miss.	235.6	Defiance, Ohio	61.1	Corsicana, Tex.	40.0	Dublin, Ga.	23.2
Clarksdale, Miss.	234.9	Hutchinson, Ind.	61.1	Alexandria, La.	40.7	Corinth, Miss.	23.2
Statesboro, Ga.	232.8	Brunswick, Ga.	61.1	Longview-Marshall, Tex.	40.7	Cambridge, Md.	23.3
Yuma, Ariz.	231.2	Searcy, Ark.	62.2	Dyersburg, Tenn.	42.4	Thomasville, Ga.	23.4
Goldsboro, N.C.	225.0	Sedalia, Mo.	62.8	Washington, N.C.	42.7	Toccoa, Ga.	24.7
Roanoke Rapids, N.C.	224.7	Owatonna, Minn.	63.6	South Boston, Va.	42.9	Corsicana, Tex.	25.6
Thomasville, Ga.	222.7	Keene, N.H.	63.7	Columbus, Miss.	43.3	El Dorado, Ark.	25.9
South Boston, Va.	221.6	Findlay, Ohio	63.8	Statesboro, Ga.	43.3	Gastonia, N.C.	27.2
El Paso, Tex.	217.7	Staunton, Va.	64.0	Chattanooga, Tenn.	43.6	Lufkin, Tex.	27.4
Vicksburg, Miss.	212.7	Henderson, Ky.	64.0	Dublin, Ga.	43.9	Ness City, Kans.	27.6
Nacogdoches, Tex.	205.9	Boone, N.C.	64.1	Martinsville, Va.	44.1	Charlottesville	27.9
Griffin, Ga.	205.2	Columbia, Tenn.	64.2	Jacksonville, N.C.	44.2	Longview-Marshall, Tex.	28.0
Rocky Mount, N.C.	201.1	Gillette, Wyo.	64.3	Spartanburg, S.C.	44.6	Laurel, Miss.	28.8

Source: Author’s calculations based on data from EEO-1 surveys (EEOC, various years).

Note: Limited to labor markets with more than thirty EEO-1 establishments; for black men and black women, limited to labor markets with at least 5 percent black employment.

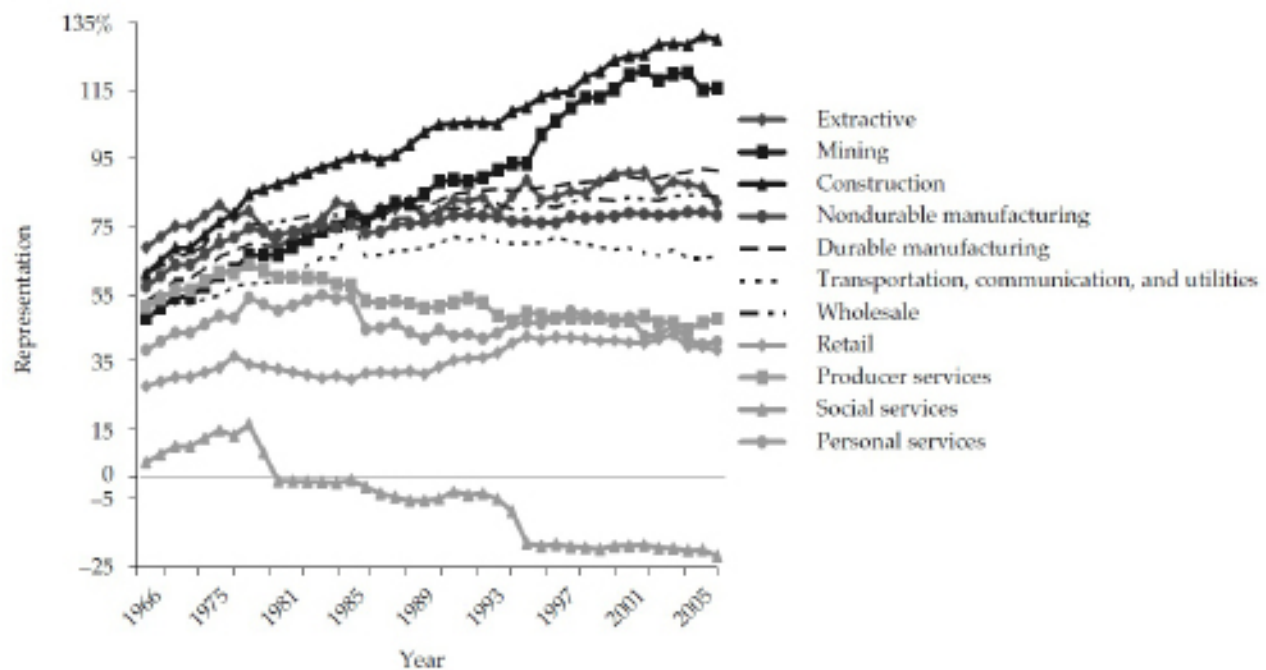
MANAGER JOBS BY INDUSTRY

Did the pool of managers in America become more diverse after the Civil Rights Act? The figure below reports sector trends in white male managerial representation. White men showed an increase in access to managerial jobs in almost all sectors after 1966.

There was some variability by sector: White male managers are most overrepresented in mining and construction, a trend that has grown steeply over the years. By 2005, white male managerial representation was 136 percent of their general private-sector labor force participation.

The social service sector shows a different trajectory. In 1966, white men were employed as managers in social service firms at about their general labor market participation levels. After the initial bump produced by the post-Civil Rights Act, which inspired the hiring of minorities and women into lower-level jobs, white male representation in social service management declined steadily.

Figure 7.4 White Male Managerial Representation by Sector, 1966 to 2005



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from EEO-1 surveys (EEOC, various years).

GENDER SEGREGATION BY SECTOR

The table below examines gender segregation levels across sectors. Segregation is measured using the conventional index of dissimilarity. The index equals 100 when groups are completely segregated from each other, and the level of the index suggests what percentage of a group would have to switch occupations in order to end segregation in a workplace.

Gender segregation was consistently highest for all comparisons in the extractive, mining, and construction sectors. Both black women's and white women's segregation from white men was lowest in the social and personal service sectors.

Table 7.1: Gender Segregation Levels by Sector, Ranked from Lowest to Highest, 2005

White Men - White Women		White Men - Black Women	
Social services	45	Social services	61
Personal services	51	Personal services	66
Business services	52	Business services	69
Durable manufacturing	54	Durable manufacturing	69
Retail	55	Retail	71
Nondurable manufacturing	56	Nondurable manufacturing	71
Wholesale	60	Wholesale	74
Transportation, communication, and utilities	63	Transportation, communication, and utilities	75
Extractive	68	Mining	82
Mining	74	Extractive	84
Construction	80	Construction	85

Source: Author's calculations based on data from EEO-1 surveys (EEOC, various years).

RACE SEGREGATION BY SECTOR

The table below shows race segregation levels across sectors. White men and black men were most likely to work in equal-status roles in the heterogeneous category of transportation, communication, and utilities. These are the industries with the longest history of federal regulation. This sector is also among the least race-segregated among women.

Table 7.2: Race Segregation Levels by Sector, Ranked from Lowest to Highest, 2005

White Men - White Women		White Men - Black Women	
Transportation, communication, and utilities	47	Retail	47
Personal services	50	Business services	47
Mining	50	Transportation, communication, and utilities	48
Durable manufacturing	50	Personal services	48
Business services	52	Durable manufacturing	50
Construction	52	Wholesale	50
Nondurable Manufacturing	52	Mining	50
Retail	53	Social services	51
Wholesale	53	Nondurable manufacturing	52
Social services	57	Construction	59
Extractive	61	Extractive	64

Source: Author's calculations based on data from EEO-1 surveys (EEOC, various years).

WHERE IS WHITE MALE DESEGREGATION AND RESEGREGATION HAPPENING NOW?

Although the pace of desegregation slowed considerably after 1980, desegregation trends continued after 2000 in numerous industries. Employment desegregation in private-sector EEOC-reporting firms remained the dominant trend for white men and white women.

In forty-six of fifty-eight industries, the slope remained negative, although in many industries the gains were now slight. The security, commodity brokers, and investments category showed a -.8 percent desegregation rate.

Table 7.8: Ten Steepest Yearly Desegregation Trajectories, 2001 to 2005

White Men - White Women		White Men - Black Men		White Men - Black Women	
Building materials and garden supplies	-2.0	Personal services	-1.8	Personal services	-1.6
Trucking and warehousing	-1.5	Real estate	-0.7	Building materials and garden supplies	-1.4
Personal services	-1.4	General merchandise stores	-0.6	Fabricated metal products	-0.7
Apparel and other textile products	-1.4	Apparel and other textile products	-0.5	Apparel and other textile products	-0.6
Miscellaneous manufacturing industries	-1.1	Building materials and garden supplies	-0.5	Miscellaneous repair services	-0.6
Miscellaneous repair services	-0.9	<i>Instruments and related products</i>	-0.5	<i>Pipelines, except natural gas</i>	-0.6
Water transportation	-0.9	<i>Petroleum and coal products</i>	-0.5	Banks	-0.5
Transportation services	-0.8	Agriculture, forestry, and fishery	-0.5	Water transportation	-0.5
Fabricated metal products	-0.8	Miscellaneous manufacturing industries	-0.5	Trucking and warehousing	-0.5
<i>Security, commodity brokers, and investment</i>	-0.8	<i>Banks</i>	-0.5	Food stores	-0.4

Source: Author's calculations based on data from EEO-1 surveys (EEOC, various years).

Note: *Italics* indicates the industry is in the top third of the industry income distribution. **Bold** indicates the industry is in the bottom third of the industry income distribution.

There is, however, widespread resegregation of white men and black men. Nineteen of fifty-eight industries—nearly one-third of all industries—showed a trend toward racial resegregation among white men and black men in this century.

Table 7.9: Industries with Positive Segregation Trajectories, 2001 to 2005

White Men - White Women		White Men - Black Men		White Men - Black Women	
<i>Pipelines, except natural gas</i>	0.5	Transportation services	1.2	Lumber and wood products	0.5
<i>Transportation by air</i>	0.5	Lumber and wood products	0.7	Transportation by air	0.4
<i>Railroad transportation</i>	0.4	Leather and leather products	0.6	Leather and leather products	0.2
Local and interurban passenger transit	0.3	Motion pictures	0.6	<i>Mining</i>	0.2
General merchandise stores	0.2	Transportation by air	0.5	<i>Railroad transportation</i>	0.2
<i>Instruments and related products</i>	0.1	Amusement and recreation services	0.5	Automotive dealers and service stations	0.2
<i>Mining</i>	0.1	<i>Pipelines, except natural gas</i>	0.4	Textile mill products	0.2
		Stone, clay, and glass products	0.3	Social services	0.1
		<i>Primary metal industries</i>	0.3	Stone, clay, and glass products	0.1
		Rubber and miscellaneous plastics products	0.3	Transportation services	0.1
		<i>Industrial machinery and equipment</i>	0.3	Lumber and wood products	0.5
		Construction	0.3		
		Social services	0.2		
		Textile mill products	0.2		
		Apparel and accessory stores	0.2		
		Educational services	0.2		
		Wholesale trade	0.1		
		<i>Security, commodity brokers, and investment</i>	0.1		

Source: Author's calculations based on data from EEO-1 surveys (EEOC, various years).

Note: *Italics* indicates the industry is in the top third of the industry income distribution. **Bold** indicates the industry is in the bottom third of the industry income distribution.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS ON SEGREGATION IN THE AMERICAN WORKPLACE

- Segregation tends to increase as relative industry wages rise. In contrast, segregation declines in industries that are more reliant on workers with a college degree. As educational credentials become more important in job screening, they may crowd out considerations of race and gender in hiring.
- Segregation between white men and white women is the only comparison in which the data found continued progress in almost all industries. Enhanced employment equality between white men and black men appears to have stalled thirty years ago, and white women and black women are becoming more segregated in most industries.

- Hiring more white men into management jobs is likely to reduce equal opportunity progress, both because white men tend to hire other white men and because they tend to oppose the development of equal opportunity human resource practices.

Documenting Desegregation argues that the Civil Rights Act has been more effective when accompanied by social movements demanding changes. Without the political pressures of the civil and women's rights movements, workplaces do not generally adopt equal opportunity goals or policies. "At this point in the history of private-sector equal opportunity," the authors conclude, "the dominant pattern is inertia."