

THE SEX TYPING OF ASPIRATIONS AND OCCUPATIONS: INSTABILITY DURING THE CAREERS OF YOUNG WOMEN

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This research examines the extent to which early-life sex-role socialization leads women to pursue sex-typical careers. For young women, three temporal connections are examined: (1) the stability over time of the sex type of occupational aspirations; (2) the connection between these aspirations and the sex type of occupations they enter; and (3) the stability over time of the sex type of their occupations. Data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Women show that each of these three links is weak.

The rapid increase in the labor force participation of women and the rise of the women's movement have stimulated research on opportunities for women at work. The sex segregation of occupations has received a great deal of attention as a barometer of women's employment opportunities (Reskin, 1984; Reskin and Hartmann, 1985; Bielby and Baron, 1986). Occupational segregation by sex has been remarkably stable over the twentieth century (England, 1981; Beller, 1984) and has been associated with a substantial proportion of the wage gap between the sexes (Treiman and Hartmann, 1981). Calls for equal pay for work of comparable value have brought the sex segregation of occupations to the attention of the public (Remick, 1984).

This study questions one of the prominent perspectives on the mechanisms that promote and maintain occupational segregation by sex. Early-life socialization is often accorded an important if not decisive role in shaping the labor force experiences of women. The following section discusses the socialization perspective, and identifies several key assumptions of this approach. The subsequent section outlines an alternative perspective which views sex segregation as the outcome of a lifelong system of social control.

Social Science Quarterly 68(1):122-137. (March, 1987)

Sex Role Socialization and Labor Market Outcomes

Marini and Brinton (1984) provided an excellent survey of theories and research linking sex-role socialization to occupational segregation by sex. They thoroughly reviewed the evidence on sex differences in career aspirations and work-related attributes. They explored a range of mechanisms through which socialization processes can influence boys and girls, including family behavior, parental role models, school influences, sex stereotyping in textbooks and other educational materials, guidance counseling, vocational tracking, and mathematics and science preparation. Marini and Brinton documented numerous sources of information and a multiplicity of factors affecting values. This research clearly implied a connection between these mechanisms and occupational outcomes.

Marini and Brinton presented a balanced view of the role of socialization relative to other factors. They pointed out that while socialization may influence individuals, institutional and historical factors may be required to explain long-term trends in the structure of sex segregation.

Their conclusion regarding the effects of socialization on later life outcomes was that "socialization prior to entry into the labor market appears to be an important determinant of occupational outcomes for individuals, although the extent to which pre-employment differences in worker characteristics account for subsequent sex segregation in the labor market remains to be estimated precisely using longitudinal data" (Marini and Brinton, 1984:223-24).

I propose just such a test. My analysis seeks to determine the strength of the connection between early-life socialization and the sex segregation of occupations.

An important component of the socialization thesis is that socialization experiences account not only for the majority of women who aspire to female-dominated occupations but also the minority of women who do not. If traditional aspirations channel women into female-dominated occupations, women who break out of this traditional mold should be found in male-dominated occupations (Breito and Jusenius, 1978; Daymont and Statham, 1981; Waite and Berryman, 1985). Socialization not only must account for sex differences, but also must aid in distinguishing those women who pursue male-dominated occupations from the majority who do not.

To influence occupational outcomes, early-life socialization experiences must influence a series of behaviors. The strength of the sex-role socialization perspective depends on the strength of five links in the chain between socialization experiences and career outcomes: (1) specific features of one's early family life account for one's sex-role orientation; (2) one's sex-role orientation predicts one's occupational aspirations; (3) the sex type of one's early occupational aspirations remains constant over time; (4) the sex type of one's occupational aspirations predicts the sex type of one's initial

occupational choices; (5) the sex type of one's first job corresponds with the sex type of the occupations held over the course of one's career. While surely no one would expect to find perfect correlations for each of these links, the power of the socialization perspective clearly depends on the strength of these connections.

Evidence supporting these links is necessary but not sufficient evidence for the socialization perspective. As Greenberger and Steinberg (1983) pointed out, the continuities between high school and adult job experiences may reflect discrimination during both periods. If stability is insufficient to verify the socialization perspective, a great deal of change constitutes negative evidence for this framework. The more changeable the behavioral patterns during late adolescence and early adulthood, the more difficult it is to pin the explanation for labor market outcomes on early-life socialization experiences.

This study focuses on the last three of these links, which underscore the connection between socialization and career outcomes. Evidence from the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Women shows that none of these three connections is as strong as one might suspect.

The stability of young women's aspirations (with respect to the sex type of their occupational choices) has not been examined, and the link between aspirations and subsequent employment remains unexplored. Marini and Brinton (1984) reported an index of segregation of 61.0 between the occupational aspirations of young men and women, compared with 66.1 for the labor force as a whole. The correspondence cited here, however, does not indicate a direct causal connection. The missing link in the causal chain is evidence of a connection between the sex type of people's aspirations with the sex type of their subsequent jobs.

Marini and Brinton did not examine the stability of aspirations over time. They reported studies that indicated young children hold sex-typed values and attitudes. However, they presented no studies that showed whether the same girls who aspired to female-dominated occupations as youngsters persist in such desires as teenagers and young adults. The data have long been available, but no studies have examined the serial correlation in the sex type of occupational aspirations.

In addition to being stable, aspirations must also be effective in generating occupational outcomes. The link between socialization and later occupational behavior is not simply a matter of aspiring to a particular occupation and subsequently pursuing that choice, since data indicate low rates of correspondence between particular aspirations and occupations (Marini and Brinton, 1984). Rather, the socialization thesis rests on the proposition that women end up in jobs similar to those to which they aspired. Specifically, if sex segregation is a result of the sex-typical aspirations of young women, then women must end up in occupations similar in sex composition to the

occupations to which they aspired. The continuity on the underlying dimension, in this case the sex-type dimension, rather than the continuity of commitment to a particular occupation, is the crucial proposition for the socialization perspective.

The final issue is the stability of the sex type of occupations young women hold. Even if socialization were a powerful predictor of the sex type of women's first jobs, substantial career mobility between male-dominated and female-dominated occupations could vitiate the impact of socialization. In order for socialization to account for the sex type of the occupations women hold during the middle of their careers, not only must socialization predict the sex type of women's initial occupations, but the sex type of occupations women pursue over the course of their careers must be relatively stable.

By focusing on women's aspirations, I am not exploring differences in socialization experiences between men and women. Rather, my purpose is to determine whether women who are predisposed to male-dominated occupations maintain such predispositions and pursue such jobs.

Sex Segregation and Social Control

Four general considerations suggest why vocational sex-role socialization is likely to be problematic. These arguments suggest that the links between sex-role socialization and occupational outcomes may be weaker than the socialization perspective would indicate.

First, the extremely detailed division of labor in modern industrial society complicates the process of gender-specific vocational socialization. Our occupational structure encompasses many thousands of specific jobs (Cain and Treiman, 1981). Instilling in children gender-specific connotations for the plethora of vocational positions which exist is an extremely difficult task. Second, the volatility of our economic system results in frequent changes in skill requirements. Even if vocational socialization were to work perfectly, many choices would have to be remade as economic conditions dictate (Bluestone and Harrison, 1982). Third, educational choices are often highly removed from specific vocational contexts. The correspondence between gender attributes of educational programs and occupational outcomes is far from direct (Bielby, 1978; National Center for Educational Statistics, 1982:186). Fourth, the acceptability and accessibility of career mobility between male-dominated and female-dominated occupations may tend to attenuate the connection between early-life values and adult outcomes (Rosenfeld, 1983; Jacobs, 1983b; Corcoran, Duncan, and Ponza, 1984). The more diverse and volatile occupations are, and the more remote and changeable occupational choices are, the less influence socialization may have on occupational outcomes. Thus there are empirical as well as theoretical reasons to question the potency of sex-role vocational socialization in determining the sex segregation of occupational results.

An alternative perspective views occupational segregation by sex as the outcome of a lifelong system of social control. Sex-role socialization may help to initiate occupational segregation by sex, but the values and beliefs learned by individuals at a young age must be constantly reinforced. The most effective pressure which serves to reinforce the sexual division of labor may be that applied closest in time and in space to occupational outcomes. Social control mechanisms are numerous, including sexual harassment from co-workers, discrimination from employers, and criticism from family and friends. Those most influenced by adult social control need not be the same individuals who were most influenced by early-life socialization. This perspective can allow for the mobility of individuals at the same time that the overall structure of sex segregation remains.

The social control perspective maintains that the pressure for women to pursue female-dominated positions does not end in early childhood. It is continually reinforced and recreated throughout young adulthood and continues during the years in the labor market. Individual women can and do successfully challenge these constraints, but the multiplicity of constraints suffices to keep working women as a group segregated from men as a group. This perspective can account for the persistence of occupational segregation by sex, even if the same women do not stay in female-dominated occupations.

Data and Methods

Data were obtained from the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Women (NLS), one of four samples collected under a project initiated by Herbert Parnes. This representative national sample of women who were aged 14-24 in 1968 has been surveyed 10 times between 1968 and 1980. Nearly 75 percent of the women remained in the sample by 1980. These data have been extensively analyzed in studies of young women's participation in the labor force. Detailed descriptions of the data and the sample characteristics have been provided by the Center for Human Resource Research at Ohio State University (CHRR, 1977; see also Mott, 1978).

Included in the NLS data is a question regarding the mid-life aspirations of the young women. Specifically, the women were asked the occupation to which they aspired when they reached age 35 in each of the survey years. The detailed (Census three-digit) occupations to which they aspired were each assigned a percent female score based on the sex-composition of the occupation in 1970. It was thus possible to compare the sex type of aspiration at different times and determine the constancy of these aspirations. The serial correlation (the correlation at one time with those at a subsequent time) was used as a measure of the consistency of occupational aspirations. The analysis focused on employed women in the labor force, so that the results do not reflect high school students' changing unrealistic aspirations.

The NLS data also include information on the detailed occupations of young women for each of the survey dates. The second stage of the analysis examined the degree to which the sex type of occupational aspirations predicts the sex type of occupations in which the women were actually employed.

Finally, I examined the continuity in occupations over time. Just as it is possible to examine the serial correlation in the sex type of aspiration, so it is possible to examine the serial correlation in the sex type of occupations held by the women.

I did not attempt to develop a multivariate model of the aspirations and attainment process, in part because high-quality measures of psychological variables are not available in this or in other representative, longitudinal data sets. Rather, I am inquiring into the upper bound of the explanatory power of such a model. If there is little stability in the dependent variable, then it can be concluded that the gamut of early life determinants explain little of the dependent variable. In essence I am estimating the maximum strength such a model can explain.

Researchers who study occupational mobility have found it fruitful to distinguish between "stayers" and "movers." The distinction between "stayers" and "movers" has a long history in the study of career mobility (Blumen and McCarthy, 1955; Jacobs, 1983a). Stayers are people who remain in the same detailed occupation over the period under examination; movers are individuals who change detailed occupations. Distinguishing stayers from movers is important in understanding mobility processes. No matter what attribute of occupations is examined, the serial correlation in this attribute will be stable for the group remaining in the same occupation over time. However, the attributes of movers' occupations may remain the same or change as the movers change occupations. It is important to distinguish between those attributes of work that remain with people even as their jobs change and those that are permanent only by virtue of continued employment in the same job.

For example, when a random code number was assigned to each detailed (Census three-digit) occupation, a significant serial correlation over time was found for this random code for all employed women but not for occupation changers. When the serial correlation between 1970 and 1980 for randomly generated occupational codes was examined, a weak but statistically significant relationship was obtained for all women employed in both years ($r = .17$, $p < .001$, $n = 1,252$). However, for all women changing occupations, the serial correlation was essentially zero ($r = .01$, $n = 982$). This feature of employment is stable only to the extent that people stay in the same occupations; among movers the relationship vanishes.

Movers are not a small, aberrant, and uninteresting group. Nearly 35 percent of the experienced civilian labor force changed detailed (Census three-digit) occupations between 1965 and 1970, a rate reasonably consistent with other data on rates of occupational mobility (Somers and Eck, 1977;

Rosenfeld, 1979). Young women are most likely to change occupations. Of the NLS Young Women employed in both 1970 and 1980, nearly 80 percent changed occupations in the interim. A recent reanalysis of the 1970 Census revealed that occupation changers are substantial even among such professions as law, medicine, and engineering (Evans and Laumann, 1983).

I applied this distinction to the sex type of aspirations and the sex type of occupations, and examined the strength of these relationships over time as well as the extent to which these relationships are more than simply a reflection of persistence in the same occupations.

Another methodological question is the appropriate categorization of the sex type of aspirations. I began by treating the sex type of occupations in a continuous manner, with each detailed occupation assigned a percent female score from 0 to 100. In the log-linear analysis, I constructed a four-category model, grouping together male-dominated occupations (0–29.9 percent female), male-oriented occupations (30–49.9 percent female), female-oriented occupations (50–59.9 percent female), and female-dominated occupations (60 percent or more female). These splits are justified with Goodman's tests of partitions of a larger sex-type mobility table.¹

Finally, I tested log-linear models of the variation of sex-type mobility by age, race, education, marital status, collar color (manual versus nonmanual), years in the labor force, and sex type of aspiration. This analysis investigated whether specific groups of individuals are more prone to persist in the same sex-type positions than are others. I examined occupational mobility between 1975 and 1980, after most of the women had had the chance to complete college. The age (in 1975) categories used in the analysis are 21–24, 25–27, and 28–31. The race categories are white and nonwhite. The educational categories are 1–11 years completed (by 1975), 12 years completed, 13–15 years completed, and 16 or more years completed. The marital status categories are as follows: married; widowed, divorced, and separated; and never married. Years in the labor force were grouped into three categories: 1–3 years, 4–6 years, and 7 or more years. In the log-linear analysis, the sex type of occupations was grouped into the same four categories employed for the sex-type of aspirations.

Results

Table 1 presents the serial correlation of the sex type of occupational aspirations for the NLS Young Women. The sex type of aspiration for each year is compared with the sex type of aspiration in 1980, measured continuously from

¹I initially constructed a 10-by-10 sex-type mobility table, the rows and columns of which were sex-type deciles. Thus column 1 included occupations with 0–9.9 percent women, column 2 included occupations with 10–19.9 percent women, and so on. I tested whether this table could be collapsed into a smaller number of categories, as Breiger (1981) suggested. Goodman (1981) partitioning tests, applied simultaneously to rows and columns, indicated the homogeneity of the four categories employed.

TABLE 1
Serial Correlation of Sex Composition of Occupation Desired (for Age 35)
with That of Occupation Desired in 1980

	Women Employed Both Years		Women Employed Both Years Who Changed Desired Occupation during Interval	
	<i>r</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>n</i>
1968	.17**	668	.06	552
1969	.22**	936	.08*	769
1970	.25**	944	.08*	754
1971	.29**	991	.11**	776
1972	.29**	1,047	.08**	810
1973	.35**	1,072	.15**	821
1975	.43**	1,161	.16**	806
1977	.43**	1,290	.12**	820
1978	.55**	1,412	.24**	842

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

0 to 100 percent female. The first pair of columns includes all women employed at both times; the second pair of columns includes women who changed their detailed (Census three-digit) occupational aspirations in the intervening period.

The results indicate a high degree of instability in the sex type of occupational aspirations. The serial correlation between 1970 and 1980 for all women who answered the question both times is weak ($r = .25$). Thus, just over 6 percent of the variance in the sex type of aspirations can be explained by the same measure obtained 10 years earlier. This relationship is only slightly stronger than the relationship for the random occupation codes discussed above over the same time period.

Even more dramatic is the weakness of the relationship for those who changed their occupational aspirations. Between 1970 and 1980, the correlation for women who changed aspirations is barely statistically significant ($r = .08$, $p < .05$). Thus, for aspiration changers, less than 1 percent of the variance in sex type of aspiration is explained by the same measure 10 years earlier.

The relationship weakens as time elapses. Aspirations measured two years apart seem reasonably strongly related ($r = .55$; $r = .24$ for movers). The relationship gradually diminishes over the course of the decade. The short-term consistency in attitudes, however, does not constitute support for the socialization thesis, which requires that early values must predict later values. Socialization presupposes a strong relationship over the long run. The evidence demonstrates that early aspirations are only weakly related to later ones.

TABLE 2

Correlation of Sex Composition of Occupation Desired (for Age 35)
with Sex Composition of Occupation in 1980

	Women Employed Both Years		Women Employed Both Years, 1980 Occupation Differs from Desired Occupation	
	<i>r</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>n</i>
	1968	.21**	1,077	.06*
1969	.15**	1,390	.04	1,187
1970	.18**	1,407	.03	1,171
1971	.24**	1,463	.09**	1,211
1972	.23**	1,536	.03	1,229
1973	.28**	1,534	.07**	1,203
1975	.36**	1,703	.08**	1,152
1977	.37**	1,829	.06*	1,168
1978	.34**	1,835	.04	1,196
1980	.54**	1,674	.06*	718

* $p < .05$.** $p < .01$.

The effectiveness of aspirations in predicting the occupations pursued by young women is examined in Table 2. Again the interval from 1970 to 1980 indicates only a modest positive relationship. For all women employed in 1980, the sex type of aspiration in 1970 is weakly related to the sex type of occupation in 1980 ($r = .18$), explaining less than 4 percent of the variance in 1980. For those who did not pursue the same occupation to which they aspired, there is no predictive power for the sex type of occupational aspirations ($r = .03$, $p > .1$).

Finally, the extent of sex-type occupational mobility is indicated in Table 3. The sex-type correlation is weak for all women employed during both 1970 and 1980 ($r = .21$), and is absent for those who changed occupations during the decade ($r = .04$, $p > .1$). Thus, even if socialization perfectly explained the sex type of women's initial occupations, extensive career mobility which crosses sex-type lines vitiates this relationship for the majority of women. The mobility across sex-type categories is striking, and is discussed at greater length below.

The mobility of women is not random: in socioeconomic terms, aspirations are reasonably stable; aspirations predict subsequent employment; and occupations held over time are reasonably strongly related. The serial correlation for the socioeconomic status of aspirations between 1970 and 1980 for aspiration changers is .40 ($r = .51$ for all women employed in 1980); the relationship between the status of aspirations in 1970 and the status of

TABLE 3

Serial Correlation of Sex Composition of Occupation with That in 1980

	Women Employed Both Years		Women Employed Both Years, 1980 Occupation Differs from Previous Occupation	
	<i>r</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>n</i>
	1968	.14**	1,024	.02
1969	.18**	1,137	.05*	916
1970	.21**	1,252	.04	982
1971	.21**	1,317	.01	985
1972	.27**	1,428	.07**	1,048
1973	.32**	1,569	.07*	1,078
1975	.40**	1,654	.08**	997
1977	.47**	1,798	.13**	955
1978	.54**	1,894	.15**	888

* $p < .05$.** $p < .01$.

employment in 1980 for occupation changers is .42 ($r = .51$ for all women employed in 1980); and the serial correlation of status for occupation changers is .30 ($r = .45$ for women all employed both times). Thus, movement is not random, nor is the sex-type mobility presented above an artifact of the methods employed. The socioeconomic status of occupations is linked to aspirations, while the sex type of occupations is not.

The degree of occupational mobility between male-dominated and female-dominated occupations calls for more detailed analysis. The interval of 1975 to 1980 was examined. As discussed in the methods section, I first grouped occupations into four categories: male-dominated occupations, those with 0–29.9 percent women; male-oriented occupations, with 30–50 percent men; female-oriented occupations, with 50–59.9 percent women; and female-dominated occupations, with 60 percent or more women.

Table 4 presents log-linear tests of the generality of the mobility patterns described above. I tested a model which fit all two-way relationships ((1-2) (1-3) (2-3)) and omitted the three-way relationship. This model tests whether the pattern of sex-type mobility varies with the third variable: if the model fits the data, then it may be concluded that no additional parameter for the three-way relationship is needed, i.e., the degree of sex-type mobility does not vary with the independent variable.

These log-linear tests provide support for the generality of the mobility patterns described above. The results in Table 4 indicate that the mobility between male-dominated, sex-neutral, and female-dominated occupations does not vary with age, race, education, marital status, the sex-type of

TABLE 4

Log-Linear Models of Three-Way Sex-Type Occupational
Mobility Tables, 1975-80

Variable	Independence		Quasi-Independence		(1-2)	(2-3)	(1-3)
	L2 ^a	df	L2	df	L2	df	df
Age	49.2*	20	8.8	11	17.4	18	
Race	44.9*	12	10.6	6	7.3	9	
Education	95.9*	28	17.3	16	36.1	27	
Marital status	53.3*	20	7.1	11	12.6	9	
Manual/nonmanual	63.1*	12	14.6*	6	14.8	9	
Sex type of desired occupation, 1977	51.9*	20	9.5	11	26.7	22	
Years employed	53.2*	20	13.8	11	26.8	18	

Age (in 1975): 21-24; 25-27; 28-31.
Race: White; nonwhite.
Education: 1-11 years; 12 years; 13-15 years; 16+ years.
Marital status: Married; separated, widowed or divorced; never married.
Sex-type of desired occupation: Same as sex-type of occupation (0-29.9 percent female; 30-49.9 percent female; 50-59.9 percent female; 60-100 percent female).
Years employed: 1-3; 4-6; 7-10.

* Likelihood ratio chi-squared statistic.

* $p < .05$.

occupation of aspiration, the number of years in the labor force, or occupational collar color (manual-nonmanual). The pattern of sex-type mobility does not vary with these independent variables. These variables are associated with employment in female-dominated occupations, but do not interact with the pattern of sex-type mobility.

Discussion

The temporal connection central to the socialization perspective is not as strong as many assume. Indeed, the data indicate that over a 10-year period the connection between occupational aspirations and subsequent achievements is extremely weak. The relationship is mostly due to that small minority of young women who pursue the same occupations they initially desired.

The women examined here were in their late teens, twenties, and early thirties. We would suspect much greater instability in aspirations among girls in their early teens and under 10. Thus, the evidence that young girls and boys can distinguish "men's work" from "women's work," while interesting and informative, says little about which boys and which girls will end up in

any particular job. Most little boys may want to be firemen, and most little girls may want to be nurses, but children may revise these inclinations countless times before (and after) they enter the world of work.

The evidence on the instability of aspirations and occupations is consistent with a social control explanation for occupational segregation by sex. Let us consider three separate aspects of the results which need to be explained: (1) the ubiquity of changes in aspirations and occupations; (2) the movement from female-dominated occupations to male-dominated occupations, and (3) the movement from male-dominated to female-dominated occupations.

The volatility of aspirations is a familiar finding dating back to early studies of high school and college students. Studies have shown approximately 80 percent of high school students change their vocational plans; approximately 50 percent of college students change their majors at least once during college; and approximately 50 percent of college students enter first jobs unrelated to their field of study in college (Jacobs, 1986). As we have seen, the NLS data indicate that approximately 80 percent of young women changed occupational goals between 1970 and 1980, and a comparable proportion changed occupations as well. Aspirations change frequently as young women and men are "cooled out" (Clark, 1960) from their initial choices, as they find out about other career options, as they become more serious about their goals, as they change their interests and desires. Much early career mobility reflects similar motives, and is also influenced by the behavior of bosses, spouses, and co-workers.

Female-dominated occupations are known to exhibit high turnover. Nursing, teaching, clerical work, and waitressing, as well as many other female-dominated occupations, are characterized by short job tenures. Many women aspire to such "nurturant" occupations as teaching and social work, only to "burn out" as a result of excessive emotional demands, insufficient support, and insufficient rewards. Blocked promotion opportunities may also contribute to high turnover rates in female-dominated occupations. Thus turnover, and its attendant impetus to mobility, is especially evident in female-dominated occupations.

The attractiveness of many sex-neutral or male-dominated occupations is understandable, since pay is higher, and career opportunities are brighter. Given high turnover, it is not surprising that a small but significant minority of women who start in female-dominated occupations leave to pursue sex-neutral or male-dominated occupations. A minority of women are constantly escaping the ghetto of low-paid female-dominated occupations.

More problematic is explaining why such a high proportion of women leave male-dominated occupations. Of those in the labor force both years, only 54.5 percent of women in male-dominated occupations in 1975 remained in male-dominated occupations in 1980; of occupation changers, this figure was 32.7 percent. I posit that a multiplicity of pressures on women in male-dominated

positions result in significant outward occupational mobility. Discrimination from bosses, subtle and overt harassment from co-workers, skepticism from family and friends, each may contribute to women leaving male-dominated occupations. These mechanisms are surely important in maintaining occupational segregation by sex.

Evidence is accumulating on the difficulties women encounter in male-dominated occupations (see Reskin and Hartmann [1985] for a review). One consequence of these pressures may be the high rate of attrition from male-dominated occupations observed here. Kanter (1977) has argued that many problems women face stem from their minority, and particularly token, status. The present data are consistent with Kanter's thesis about pressures women face on the job, but the data on aspirations suggest that similar pressures may be in force off the job as well. The attrition among women aspirants to male-dominated occupations may result from the pressures placed on sex-role deviants (Shur, 1984).

But one need not overemphasize the efficacy of any one mechanism. The system is maintained by the collective effect of these pressures, not by any single one. Thus individual women successfully circumvent these constraints, but a high level of occupational segregation by sex nonetheless is maintained.

The maintenance of sex segregation requires a lifelong system of social control. The acquisition of sex role orientation by young women and men is insufficient to maintain sex segregation by itself, since aspirations change and may not be realized. Thus sex-type occupational pursuits are promoted by early life socialization, are then reinforced by peer pressure in high school, are recreated in college and early jobs, and finally are recreated again in the context of the labor market. It is only the cumulative effect of continual social control mechanisms that accounts for the maintenance of occupational segregation by sex.

The evidence on instability in the sex type of occupational aspirations is an important contribution to the literature: the issue apparently has never been investigated directly. The evidence on the career mobility between male-dominated, sex-neutral, and female-dominated occupations adds to a small but growing literature on such patterns (Jacobs, 1983b; Rosenfeld, 1983; Corcoran, Duncan, and Ponza, 1984). Three studies, begun separately but completed at roughly the same time, have indicated significant career mobility into and out of male-dominated occupations. The present findings extend this line of inquiry to show the same dramatic mobility patterns for the youngest members of the labor force.

The social control perspective implies the desirability of a range of policy measures. The social control perspective argues that the system of sex segregation rests on a multiplicity of control mechanisms which are collectively required to maintain the distinctions between male-dominated and female-dominated work. As sex-role definitions are challenged, the weakening of

any of these mechanisms can serve to broaden opportunities for women. The efforts to improve opportunities for women should follow a variety of avenues, among them an attempt to broaden the aspirations of young women.

These findings may have more specific implications for research than for policy. First, studies should focus on the interplay between women's aspirations and jobs. Rich longitudinal data are available for such studies. The present analysis indicates a great deal of instability in aspirations and occupations. But detailed longitudinal analysis might reveal interesting links between changes in aspirations and jobs. The comparison with men should also be instructive.

Second, the weakness of the link between aspirations and jobs needs to be examined. Why do so many young people pursue occupations other than the ones to which they recently aspired? Is this pattern more a result of changing values or restricted opportunity? Such questions can be pursued in the framework of the panel data currently available.

Third, the reasons for the dramatic movement of women out of male-dominated occupations need to be examined in more detail. Reducing the alarming rate at which women leave male-dominated occupations may be an important way to reduce the sex segregation of occupations. **SSQ**

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