

# Sex-Segregated Occupations: Relevance for Nursing

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OCCUPATIONAL segregation by sex predates the industrial revolution and is rooted in predominantly patriarchal cultural patterns.<sup>1</sup> In the United States, nursing is one of the occupations with the highest percentage of women.<sup>2</sup> (For purposes of analysis it is generally agreed that when 70% of the work force in any job category is of one sex, that category is segregated by sex.) What is not always apparent is that among female-dominated occupations, nursing ranks highest in terms of prestige, with a National Opinion Research Center prestige rating of 62. High as that is, when all occupational groups are considered, it falls far short of the highest-rated group: physicians (including osteopaths) with a rating of 82.<sup>3</sup> The Department of Labor classifies nurses as professional-technical workers; however, within this major occupational category, women's income as a percentage of men's is 63.3. These figures indicate that

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while nurses may be at the top of the prestige scale relative to other women and classified in the highest occupational category of professional and technical workers, they are nowhere near the top for all occupations in prestige or compensation.

An understanding of some of the implications of occupational segregation by sex is important to nursing for the following reasons:

1. Implicit assumptions about women as workers and the nature of work done by women is reflected in national health care labor force policy and is of vital interest to the nursing occupation.
2. Increased understanding of the working conditions affecting the nurse will promote the development of nursing science.

What are the fundamentals that underlie occupational sex segregation? How—to take one example—can the job of home health aide be officially ascribed a lower complexity rating than that of newspaper deliverer? The answers are elusive. Much social science theory lacks explicitly stated assumptions. Furthermore, deriving implicit assumptions from theoretical statements or propositions is not easily done and is often omitted altogether. In such cases, the necessary conditions upon which the scientific theory must rest are simply not questioned—they are taken on faith. However, increasing interest in the sociology of knowledge indicates a concern by social scientists for understanding the context and presuppositions out of which social science theories have evolved.<sup>4</sup>

## THEORY CONSTRUCTION IN NURSING

### *Women and Theory*

In her critical essay "Toward a Woman-Centered University" Rich points out the powerful influence of the world view according to a male perspective.<sup>5</sup> Whatever else may be produced contemporarily, says Rich, the classics are still studied with a passion—and the classics are authored by and reflect the world view of men. The way nurses think, the way they come to know their world and themselves, has been shaped by inquiry and exposition from a male point of view, according to Rich. This includes understandings of the nature of things, the nature of man *qua* man and the nature of man *qua* human being. The

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"natural" has been defined from an androcentric perspective. For instance, March points out that Engels assumed the division of labor by sex was a natural phenomenon.<sup>6</sup> The focus of inquiry is another way the androcentric view has influenced nurses' knowledge of reality. March also notes that Weber's analysis of the visible public structures of formal religion and political and economic institutions had the *de facto* effect of exclusion of women,

since women had no role in these institutions.

For the most part androcentric thought has relegated women to the private realm of the family, the public realm being reserved for men. For this reason, the assumption that the generic term *man* includes woman does not always hold, for often the analysis is of men only.

In discussing the treatment of women in the social stratification literature, Acker points out that the basic unit of analysis is the family.<sup>7</sup> From this come further assumptions that the social position of the family is determined by the male head of the household and that the social position of women is determined by the man. Women thus determine their own social status only when they are not attached to a man.

Domestic labor—that done in the home by women—has been removed from the analysis of work. Marx referred to domestic labor as “nonproductive” while he called wage work “productive.” Although Marx’s choice of terms was no doubt aimed at gaining conceptual precision, the connotations of the words *productive* and *nonproductive* as generally understood are hard to miss.

A critical evaluation of the androcentric perspective is long and continues to grow as women’s studies confront the epistemological problems stemming from the dearth of theoretical perspectives developed from a woman’s point of view.<sup>8-12</sup> For present purposes, it is sufficient to call attention to some of the more overt assumptions found in the classical literature of selected disciplines, particularly

those having a bearing on the division of labor by sex.

### *Policy and Theory*

Dickoff, James and Wiedenback speak of situation-producing theory, the fourth level of theory also known as prescriptive or normative theory.<sup>13</sup> This level of theory requires predictive power and addresses the question: Given situation A, what intervention is needed to arrive at the desired situation B? The goal of situation-producing theory serves as a standard for evaluating activity. The theory is thus valiative or normative. It is easy to see that cost-accountable bureaucratic organizations would be highly interested in a prescriptive line of scientific inquiry. Prescription based on accurate prediction is necessary for policy decisions aimed at specific outcomes.

However, the predictive component of a social science theory rests in large part on satisfaction of the necessary conditions from the outset. It is of course recognized that many policies do not rest on scientific theory but rather on arbitrary decisions that may or may not reflect rational thought. The impact of these policies is nonetheless real and it is therefore crucial to understand and critically evaluate the thinking they represent.

### *The Perspectives*

A multidisciplinary approach to any topic requires specification of limits to guard against undue superficiality and excessive length. In addressing research on

26 occupational segregation by sex, Kanter states:

In any area of social science inquiry that corresponds to major public policy concerns, models of research and intervention are closely intertwined. The connection found by intellectual historians and sociologists of knowledge between "objective" science and its political context must be even firmer in areas such as the "woman question," in which research findings are likely to be quickly seized by policymakers and activists as a guide to their efforts in making or resisting change.<sup>14(p282)</sup>

Kanter goes on to show how the choice of models has important ramifications for the level of intervention particularly in regard to work settings. Thus seeking an explanation for occupational segregation within women themselves implies characteristics in women that need to be remedied. Assertiveness training programs for women in industry are aimed at helping them overcome personal defects that keep them out of male-dominated occupations or roles. Although such assertiveness training may be of some value, there is no evidence that it produces changes in occupational segregation. Likewise, social science explanations focusing on the division of labor within the family encourage intervention strategies aimed at altering individual role conceptions. Again, while loosening of traditional role conceptions within the family may be to the good, such emphasis on family roles also stereotypes single women and women without children, providing employers with convenient excuses to assign them inferior status relative to men. Implicit here are the assumptions that all women have similar family responsibilities competing for their

time and energy and that men have no such responsibilities.

Kanter proposes a third model of inquiry that is directed at the organizational structure of the institutions within which people work. This level of analysis gives a more macrocosmic view of work settings, and interventions at this level have more wide-ranging effects. At the same time, analysis at this level has important implications for the individual at the microcosmic level. In private discussions of occupation-related problems, nurses are often heard to say, "Nurses are their own worst enemies." Although such conceptions may be valid to some extent, they fail to acknowledge the social structure of the situation and how that impinges on the individual. Elsewhere Kanter speaks of the condition of "stuckness": "Much of the behavior that has been attributed to women in the workplace emerges as behavior characteristic of stuckness, for men who are stuck exhibit the same tendencies."<sup>15(p3)</sup>

The following discussion of sex-segregated occupations will be limited to a macroanalytic view from the perspective of economics and a microanalytic perspective primarily from social psychology. The juxtaposition of the two perspectives is intended to highlight the interplay between the two levels.

## THE MACROANALYTIC VIEW

### *The Neoclassical Model*

Neoclassical economic theory, also known as orthodox economic theory, assumes that people, as individuals and as

corporate groups, act in the market so as to maximize their satisfaction. In price theory, profit is the term most often used to represent satisfaction. The law of demand states simply that as prices go down, market demand for a product increases, and, conversely as prices increase, demand decreases.<sup>16</sup> In the health care industry, the existence of third party payments has retarded recognition of this law. Third party payments have the effect of decreasing the out-of-pocket expense of health care to the individual, thus increasing the demand for health care.<sup>17</sup> The consequent growth of the health care industry in recent years together with an industry inflation rate that has outpaced overall inflation has encouraged economic analysis of the industry in attempts to gain better data for policy decisions.

The health care industry is in the business of producing a service, health care. This health care service is the output of the industry. Input factors are generally classified as capital and labor. Nursing care is a factor input classified as labor. According to neoclassical economic theory, wage (the price of labor) is taken to be equal to the marketplace value of a worker's marginal product, the additional output produced by an additional worker. A major problem in the current labor market is the widening wage gap between men and women. This fact cannot be explained by the value of marginal product alone since there is no basis for assuming that an additional male worker produces more than an additional female worker. Several hypotheses from neoclassical theory have been proposed to thus explain the wage gap, including overcrowding and human capital.

#### DISCRIMINATION

In discussing the economics of discrimination, which forms the basis for occupational segregation, Becker identifies three sources of market discrimination. Focusing on the tastes of employers, employees and consumers, he states: "If an individual has a 'taste for discrimination,' he must act *as if* he were willing to pay something either directly or in the form of a reduced income, to be associated with some persons instead of others."<sup>18(p14)</sup> This hypothesis places major emphasis on a utility factor, taste, to explain market behavior. The cost of this taste for discrimination is inconsistent with the utility maximizing principle assumed to motivate the behavior of all individuals participating in the market. It is not clear why employers of women, and women themselves as employees and consumers of the goods and services produced by women, should combine in such a way as to produce the prevailing male/female pay differentials. Outlawing discrimination in hiring and wage policies is the intervention strategy suggested by this hypothesis.

#### OVERCROWDING

The overcrowding hypothesis maintains that due to occupational segregation by sex, women are crowded into fewer occupations than men, creating an oversupply of workers in these occupations.<sup>19</sup> Also these occupations have a relatively low capital/labor ratio, indicating that they are more labor intensive than men's occupations in general. Labor-intensive production as a rule has lower output per worker than capital-intensive production. Thus not only are women crowded into

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fewer occupations, but also these occupations have lower productivity associated with them. Competition of many women workers for relatively fewer jobs, combined with the lower productivity, tends to keep the wages of women lower than those of men. The intervention policy suggested by this hypothesis is integration of the labor force and is similar to the intention of the antidiscrimination laws. Such laws that have been in effect in recent years have done little to change wage differentials between men's and women's jobs.

#### HUMAN CAPITAL

Human capital is the amount of investment in health, education and on-the-job training that the individual worker possesses. According to Blau and Jusenius, the major point of this hypothesis is that men and women are not perfectly substitutable for one another due to different labor force participation patterns.<sup>19</sup> The human capital model modifies the traditional work/leisure dichotomy and includes the effects of family responsibilities on women's labor force participation. In other words, men's behavior relative to labor force participation is based on a trade-off between time spent in wage work and time spent in leisure. For women, the allocation of finite time is between wage work, household work and leisure. Human capital involves investment relative to

wage work, and on-the-job training does not include training or experience in household work.

From this model has come a good deal of recent inquiry related to the "dual careers" of women. Kreps states that "a large part of women's current discontent with housework can surely be attributed to society's expectation that they meet this domestic obligation, regardless of the demands of their market jobs—a career constraint not imposed upon men."<sup>20(p77)</sup> Since work in the household is not included in the calculation of the GNP because worker productivity is determined only in terms of wage labor, it is easy to see why comparisons of men's and women's labor force participation does not give an accurate picture.

All three of these hypotheses from neoclassical economic theory fail to deal adequately with the problems of a sex-segregated labor force. The implicit equality of the perfect competition model basic to neoclassical theory is difficult to overcome in a reality that is historically and persistently unequal. The policy of equal pay for equal work becomes academic when the majority of men and women in fact do different work. Integrating the labor force has not made great strides in spite of recent affirmative action efforts. Clearly there is a need to come to grips with the problem of the undervaluation of the work traditionally done by women. Relying on the market to determine the value of what has often been a nonmarket activity has not been satisfactory.

#### *The Institutional Model*

The 1978 Wellesley conference on equal pay and equal opportunity in the United

States, Canada and Europe addressed the problems of sex-segregated occupations. Among the conclusions was the need to broaden the goals of equal employment policy to include equal pay for work of comparable worth.<sup>21</sup> This leads to other explanatory models within economics that incorporate nonmarket factors into the analysis. The institutional model combines neoclassical analysis with rules imposed by business concerns, trade unions and government.<sup>22</sup> These rules may be formalized into laws and contracts or they may be in the form of customs or guidelines. An example of the type of government guidelines that clearly affect women's work generally and nursing specifically may be found in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (DOT) published by the Department of Labor.<sup>23</sup> According to Briggs, this publication is used by federal and state employment agencies as well as private employment services for occupational research and establishing job classification and training programs.<sup>24</sup> It indirectly affects wages in that it determines a job complexity skill rating, which serves to

place jobs into hierarchical relationships. It also gives some indication of the amount of formal education and on-the-job training necessary for successful performance of these jobs. The fourth edition of the DOT contains information of this type on approximately 20,000 jobs.

It is worth examining the DOT's rating scale for job complexity codes. Each job is rated in relation to data, people and things. A score of 0 indicates highest complexity, the higher the number the lower the complexity. (See Table 1.) One is immediately taken with the rating for helping. Surely helping, as conceived by the "helping professions," involves a much more complex set of activities than this complexity scale implies. Table 2 is a brief sampling of occupational complexity ratings from the fourth edition of the DOT. When one reflects that nursing is at the apex of female-dominated occupations, a glance at Table 2 accentuates the undervaluation of all women's work. (Briggs made interesting comparisons from the third edition of the DOT, published in 1965. In that edition a foster

TABLE 1  
Rating Scale for Job Complexity Codes

Data	People	Things
0 synthesizing	0 mentoring	0 setting up
1 coordinating	1 negotiating	1 precision working
2 analyzing	2 instructing	2 operating-controlling
3 compiling	3 supervising	3 driving-operating
4 computing	4 diverting	4 manipulating
5 copying	5 persuading	5 tending
6 comparing	6 speaking-signalling	6 feeding-offbearing
	7 serving	7 handling
	8 taking instruction-helping	

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor. *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* 4th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office 1977).



TABLE 2  
Excerpt from Occupational  
Complexity Ratings

374.....	staff nurse in a medical setting
374.....	office nurse
374.....	licensed practical nurse
[In the 3rd edition of the DOT (1965) all three of the above were rated 378.]	
361.....	laboratory technician in a veterinary service
474.....	hotel and restaurant bartender
101.....	physician in general practice
364.....	physician's assistant

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor. *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* 4th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office 1977).

mother, child care attendant, home health aide and nursery school teacher were all given lower complexity ratings than a newspaper delivery boy.<sup>23</sup>

Attempts to rectify the wage inequalities by seeking equal pay for comparable work have met with a good deal of resistance. The following excerpt from *Fortune* summarizes these efforts and reflects some of the established attitudes toward them.

The nurses of Denver are angry. The city and county, which employ them, pay their plumbers more. The nurses brought a sex-discrimination suit against the city and county. They lost their case in U.S. District Court in Denver last spring. But the issue they raised has acquired growing importance. The theory behind the nurses' complaint—that there should be equal pay for work of equal value—has won the support of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and thus has ominous implications for all employers, many employees, and even the future course of the U.S. economy.

In a number of courts and other arenas,

the EEOC has been insisting that jobs traditionally held by women, such as those in nursing, bookkeeping, and light manufacturing, are chronically underpaid and that salaries should be raised to the level paid men who hold quite different kinds of jobs. In essence, this contention rests on the fallacious notion that apples are equal to oranges and that prices for both should be the same, even if that means overriding the law of supply and demand.

... More troubling are the possible economic consequences of the EEOC's egalitarian move. Even if only partly successful, it could have an enormous inflationary effect.<sup>24(p38)</sup>

(For an update on the Denver nurses case see A. Jacox's article in *The American Nurse*, August 20, 1979.)

A concern for the health of the economy and the political implications tied to it has acted as a restraint on change strategies initiated by women. For instance, fearing widespread opposition, the U.N. Conference on International Women's Year settled for the phrase "equal pay for equal work" rather than the more radical "equal pay for work of equal value."<sup>26</sup>

Failure to improve the position of women relative to men in the labor force has increased interest and pressure from women to develop a new standard of equal value: comparable worth as a basis of wage comparison. In relation to this, Ratner points out:

It must be remembered that, within the market setting, there is unequal power between employers and employees, unequal power between male and female employees; and that the goal of business is to maximize profits. These features of the market place severe constraints on the likelihood of



achieving equal pay for work of equal value.<sup>21</sup>(p26-27)

### *Radical Economic Theory*

Greater emphasis on the concept of nonmarket power brings us closer to a radical economic theory that is developing out of neo-Marxist thought.<sup>27</sup> Stressing ownership or control of the means of production, radical economic theory is further modified by socialist feminists concerned with the political oppression and economic exploitation of women.<sup>28</sup> Of particular interest to the socialist feminists is the relationship between nonwage household work performed by women and wage work performed by women in sex-segregated occupations. The expectation that women are motivated to work by the love of family rather than for wage has deep cultural roots. Traditional women's professions such as nursing, elementary school teaching and library science have all grown out of work roles delegated to women in the family. Cultural emphasis on the importance of the family along with the assumption that this is woman's rightful place have had and continue to have a major impact on the sex-segregated professions.

Before and during most of the 19th century, nursing was performed by family members. As they became available, trained nurses were hired only by those families with extra resources. Apart from these wealthy families, the bulk of nursing care services was subsidized by the free labor of women in the home. This free labor has gradually been replaced over the last 100 years by wage labor of nurses in homes and later in hospitals.<sup>29</sup>

Increasing interest in health care inflation in recent years and attempts to reduce production costs have renewed interest in the home nursing care provided by women family members. A headline in the May 20, 1979, issue of *The American Nurse* exemplifies this trend: "New Care Unit to Cut Hospital Cost by 40%." This program aims to teach self-care to patients who have been acutely ill. However, to qualify for the program, the patient is required to have a "care partner." Described as a relative or friend, the care partner will be trained to assist the patient in daily home care. The sex of the care partner is not mentioned. However, labor force participation patterns suggest that the bulk of this home care aimed at saving the hospitals so much money will be performed by women. In a similar vein, econometric studies of health care have reasoned that the number of women out of the labor force will have a positive effect on health as indicated by a reduction of the use of hospital services.<sup>30</sup> In other words, women out of the labor force may be seen as a substitute for nursing services.

Another concept central to radical economic theory and related to the discussion of sex-segregated occupations is false consciousness. This term refers to the acceptance of the world view as defined and explained by the ruling class. In feminist terms, false consciousness means the unquestioning acceptance of andro-

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centric social theory. Mannheim addresses this issue as a problem of determining the validity of reality in a given situation free from the ideology pertaining to another time or situation. Thus, maintains Mannheim, ethical precepts based on a particular set of social relations result in false consciousness when used to evaluate the reality stemming from a different set of relations. For instance, the rule that lending be carried out without interest was practical in "a society which economically and socially was based on intimate and neighborly relations."<sup>31(p95)</sup> That is, the norm corresponded to the social structure. This norm was formalized by the church into its ethical system, but as society moved toward more capitalistic economic structure and social relations changed accordingly, the ethical precept was no longer practical. It became necessary to circumvent the rule until such time that the church discarded it.

In this sense, false consciousness represents an ideology whose time has passed. From this it may be reasoned that the ideology supporting the free household labor of women will give way only when the social means of supporting that labor fail. Thus as long as one male breadwinner is sufficient to support all family members and as long as all people are supported within a family, the ideology is valid. Observations of contemporary reality indicate that these conditions no longer hold for many individuals. Arguments based on the assumption that they do exist illustrate a false consciousness. Bringing to light fallacious assumptions underlying social science theory is an attempt to counteract false consciousness and make social

science more consistent with social reality.

## THE MICROANALYTIC VIEW

In reviewing the impact of organizational structure on individuals, Kanter maintains that

what appears to be behavioral predispositions of women in the workplace—at least in the United States and perhaps in other Western countries—may instead be the characteristic behaviors and styles induced by particular kinds of structural positions in organizations in which women have been disproportionately found, because it (examination of the structure of organizations) shows that men in similar structural positions exhibit many of the same tendencies.<sup>14(p1)</sup>

The two concepts used to explore the sociopsychological ramifications of sex-segregated occupations are homosociality and marginality. Both concepts have originally been developed in relation to man *qua* men with man *qua* human assumed. These concepts can be adapted to fit the situation of women.

### *Homosociality*

Lipman-Blumen defines homosocial as "the seeking, enjoyment and-or preference for the company of the same sex. It is distinguished from the "homosexual" in that it does not *necessarily* involve (although it may under certain circumstances) an explicitly erotic sexual interaction between members of the same sex."<sup>32(p16)</sup> Lipman-Blumen then goes on to describe homosociality in terms of men in work and leisure settings and finds

research evidence for it in early childhood development, adult interaction patterns and animal studies. The concept is thus approached through the analysis of male homosociality with the explicit recognition that male-controlled economic and social resources create a situation in which men identify with and seek help from other men. The issue of female homosociality is not addressed.

To ignore the importance of preferred relationships among women in work and leisure settings implies that they do not count and are therefore not worthy of examination. In spite of the dearth of scientific study there does seem to be evidence that women do in fact identify with and enjoy the company of other women. Predominantly women, nurses have developed collegial relationships, taken each other's work seriously and appear able to enjoy each other's company. Whatever the strength and power nursing has within the health care industry rests in no small part on this cooperation among women.

To view the segregation of any nondominant group as having only negative effects on its members is to ignore tremendous contributions that have come to us from oppressed people throughout history. The analysis of these contributions and the processes that have nurtured individuals within nondominant groups can lead to an affirmation of human resources. This is not to suggest that oppression and its effects should be idealized, but rather to point out that the oppression of one human group by another does indeed exist and understanding the processes by which oppressed groups endure and contribute

to the overall society is an important step in a fuller appreciation of our humanity.

### *Marginality*

The concept of marginality was developed by scholars concerned with the effects on the individual's personality stemming from immersion in two distinct cultures. Early work on this concept is attributed to Park and Stonequist. Stonequist conceived of marginal man as "one whom fate has condemned to live in two societies and in two not merely different but antagonistic cultures."<sup>33(pxxv)</sup> He likens the marginal man to Simmel's concept of the stranger. Encompassing a unity of wandering and liberation, the stranger according to Simmel is both fixed within a particular spatial group and at the same time cannot claim membership in the group.<sup>34</sup> Hughes draws on these ideas and further points out that the phenomenon of marginality "is one that may occur wherever there is sufficient social change going on to allow the emergence of people who are in a position of confusion of social identity, with its attendant conflicts of loyalty and frustration of personal and group aspirations."<sup>35(p63)</sup>

Much of this earlier work on the concept of marginality was in response to the problems of racial or ethnic minorities. More recent inquiry into the situation of women has drawn on an analogy between the experience of blacks and women.<sup>36</sup> Looking at the position of American women in politics, Githens and Prestage find that "woman's view of herself is in conflict with man's concept of her. Thus the educated and ambitious woman, like

her black counterpart, finds herself in a marginal situation.<sup>37(p423)</sup>

Considering the issues of a sex-segregated labor force, one can see it is not merely the educated and ambitious among women who find themselves in a marginal situation relative to men, but indeed all women who perform wage work. Stemming from an ideology that defines man's domain as the public sphere, and woman's the home, assumptions that all women are supported within families and enter the labor market only to earn pin money continue to appear. Related to this are assumptions that women are more qualified to perform certain jobs including nonmarket family tasks. At the same time the realities and demands of the world of wage work are defined by use of the standard of the male worker. Thus women in this wage work setting find themselves in marginal positions.

Lewin describes the dilemma of group loyalty and negative chauvinism that arises among members of a marginal group. All groups, says Lewin, have layers of beliefs and attitudes that are more culturally central to the group and layers that are more peripheral. Members of an underprivileged group who strive to join the more acceptable and privileged group develop a negative chauvinism toward their own group and thus deemphasize the underprivileged group's positive qualities. These individuals, existing on the periphery of the underprivileged group, are frustrated by their inability to cross over into the higher status group. Lewin describes the situation:

We know from experimental psychology and psychopathology that such frustration

leads to an all-around state of high tension with a generalized tendency to aggression. The aggression should, logically, be directed against the majority, which is what hinders the minority member from leaving his group. However, the majority has, in the eyes of these persons, higher status. And besides, the majority is much too powerful to be attacked. Experiments have shown that under these conditions, aggression is likely to be turned against one's own group or against one's self.<sup>38(p193)</sup>

He further points out that there is a tendency for leadership within the underprivileged group to arise from the periphery since individuals in these positions are most acceptable to the dominant group.

While Lewin's ideas are compelling and examples of this type of leadership may readily be found within the nursing occupation, it may also be that as false consciousness is replaced with more reality-based conceptions a new type of leadership emerges. Furthermore, the marginality concept tends to blame the victim, or find within the underprivileged group the reasons to justify its secondary status.

### *Impact of Organizational Structure*

As to the theme of women's disadvantage with respect to power, Kanter points out that, within the organization, power or lack of it has a good deal of impact on leadership style. She has found that leaders in organizationally powerful positions tend to "foster higher group morale; engender more cooperation and less criticism from subordinates; delegate more control and allow subordinates more latitude and discretion; provide opportunities for sub-

ordinates to move along with them; be better liked, talk more often, and receive more communications in meetings."<sup>14(p12)</sup> In contrast to this she finds that leaders in relatively powerless positions within the institution tend to "foster lower group morale; behave in more directive, authoritarian, controlling ways; supervise too closely; restrict opportunities for subordinate's growth or autonomy; use more coercive than persuasive power; be very concerned about threats to their authority and thus to engage in a great deal of territorial domination; and be less well liked, less talkative in meetings with high power people."<sup>14(p12)</sup> These characteristics, she emphasizes, are the result of the power of the position and *not* the sex of the individual in the position. Women in institutions are most often channeled into leadership positions that are not organizationally powerful. Kanter contends that derogatory stereotypes of women leaders or bosses stem primarily from the lack of organizational power of their positions.

Kanter's views have developed out of research on men and women in a large multinational corporation. Application of this research design to nonprofit health care corporations may well show similarities in the distribution of organizational power between the sexes. What is more significant is the new light the broader scope of her analysis lends to the introspective view of women's occupations, making it all more comprehensible.

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## GOVERNMENT POLICY AND NURSING THEORY

The implications for nursing of the perspectives presented herein on sex-segregated occupations are far reaching. Government policy decisions with wide ramifications for the occupation and the nursing services provided the American public are being made with or without input from the occupation itself. Assumptions about nurses and the nature of the work done by nurses constitute an integral part of these decisions. Realizing that the nursing occupation must help make such policy decisions within the context of a sex-segregated labor market, nurses may ask: What theoretical basis guides these decisions?

Most nursing theory development to date has focused on the metaphysical nature of the person to be nursed and the process of interaction between that person and the nurse—i.e., the micro level of analysis. The macro level, including the context within which nurses work and the implications for behaviors of nurses, has yet to be incorporated into the theorizing that guides national policy decisions on nursing. Such theorizing is long overdue.

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