

THOMAS SOWELL

This is supposed to be the age of science, but many scientific discoveries do not make a dent on the assumptions behind current thought or government policy.

Brain research, for example, shows that women and men think differently. A woman uses more parts of her brain for solving the same problem that a man thinks about in a much more localized sector of his brain. It was considered courageous for the scientist who discovered this — a woman — to say so, because the prevailing dogma among the politically correct is that all differences between men and women (except for “plumbing”) are due to “society.”

Despite unisex dogmas, other research has shown that the females of mammal species in general are more resistant to environmental hazards than their male counterparts are: Whether you believe in creation or evolution, that makes perfect sense because young mammals take so long to develop, both physically and mentally, and

Science vs. rules of political correctness

the females have to be able to function continuously if the species is going to survive.

The role of fathers and mothers have never been the same, except in the utopian fantasies of some intellectuals. The role of males in the perpetuation of most mammal species is very limited and not very demanding. The really demanding activities, beginning with pregnancy and birth, fall on the female. The young cling to her, as the first and most important figure in their lives.

It is almost embarrassing to have to explain such elementary facts of life that earlier generations would have taken for granted. Yet so much that has been said and done in recent decades proceeds as if these

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basic facts did not exist.

For example, the great game of comparing the numbers of women and men in various occupations, industries, or income levels is comparing apples and oranges. Every aspect of women's lives is heavily

influenced by motherhood, actual and prospective.

Women have long been much more concentrated in occupations where you can interrupt a career and then resume it in later years, after having children and raising them to the point where they can be left in child-care centers. Occupations with very fast rates of technological change — computers or aerospace, for example — tend to be heavily male, as do occupations with such long hours of work that taking care of a home and family are out of the question.

Being a lawyer in a high-powered law firm or chief executive officer of a huge corporation are not 9-to-5 jobs. You have to work whenever and wherever you are needed, no matter where else you might be needed.

Understandably, many women do not want to go that route. Even if they are lawyers, they prefer to be government lawyers who work from 9 to 5 or lawyers in roles elsewhere that do not eat up virtually all their waking hours when the

legal crunch comes.

Rabid feminists do not want to hear any of this. All numbers that do not match their expectations are attributed to male meanness. You would think men and women were rival species, rather than people whose ties with one another are some of the closest anywhere, whether as spouses, parent and child or otherwise.

Brain research has also turned up some other findings that have a bearing on the attempt to produce statistical parity between men and women. The amount of attention that children receive has now been shown to affect the actual physical development of their brains.

In other words, an infant or small child who is constantly being handled, talked to, or engaged in various interesting activities develops more brain networks that will serve him or her for a lifetime. The child who is allowed to vegetate in a day care center, or even at home when the mother is busy watching television or sleeping off her hangovers, ends up with a brain that is just not

as capable as it would have been with a better environment.

This also has implications for our notions of personal “merit,” which often confuse both the political left and the political right. Many very able people may be beneficiaries of more developed brains, even if they personally had little to do with it.

What has been enormously tragic for the whole society has been the radical feminists' denigration of the role of mother and homemaker and making women feel like they are not really doing much if they merely perpetuate the species and civilize their offspring.

We are all paying a very high price for uncivilized offspring. Now, it turns out, society is also paying a price for brains that will never reach their potential because other things were considered more important than raising children.

Put the good mother back on that pedestal. She deserves it.

Thomas Sowell is a nationally syndicated columnist.