

# **Sex at Work**

## **Sex differences in the workplace**

*Prof. Adrian Furnham*

*Dept. of Psychology*

*University College of London*

# SEX DIFFERENCES IN INFANCY

- Boys more active and spend more time awake.
- Girls more physically developed & co-ordinated.
- Girls show R-hand preference at 5mths (not boys).
- Girls have better hearing and are more vocal.
- Girls make more eye contact and more interested in social & emotional stimuli; boys more interested in things & systems.

# PRESCHOOL PERIOD

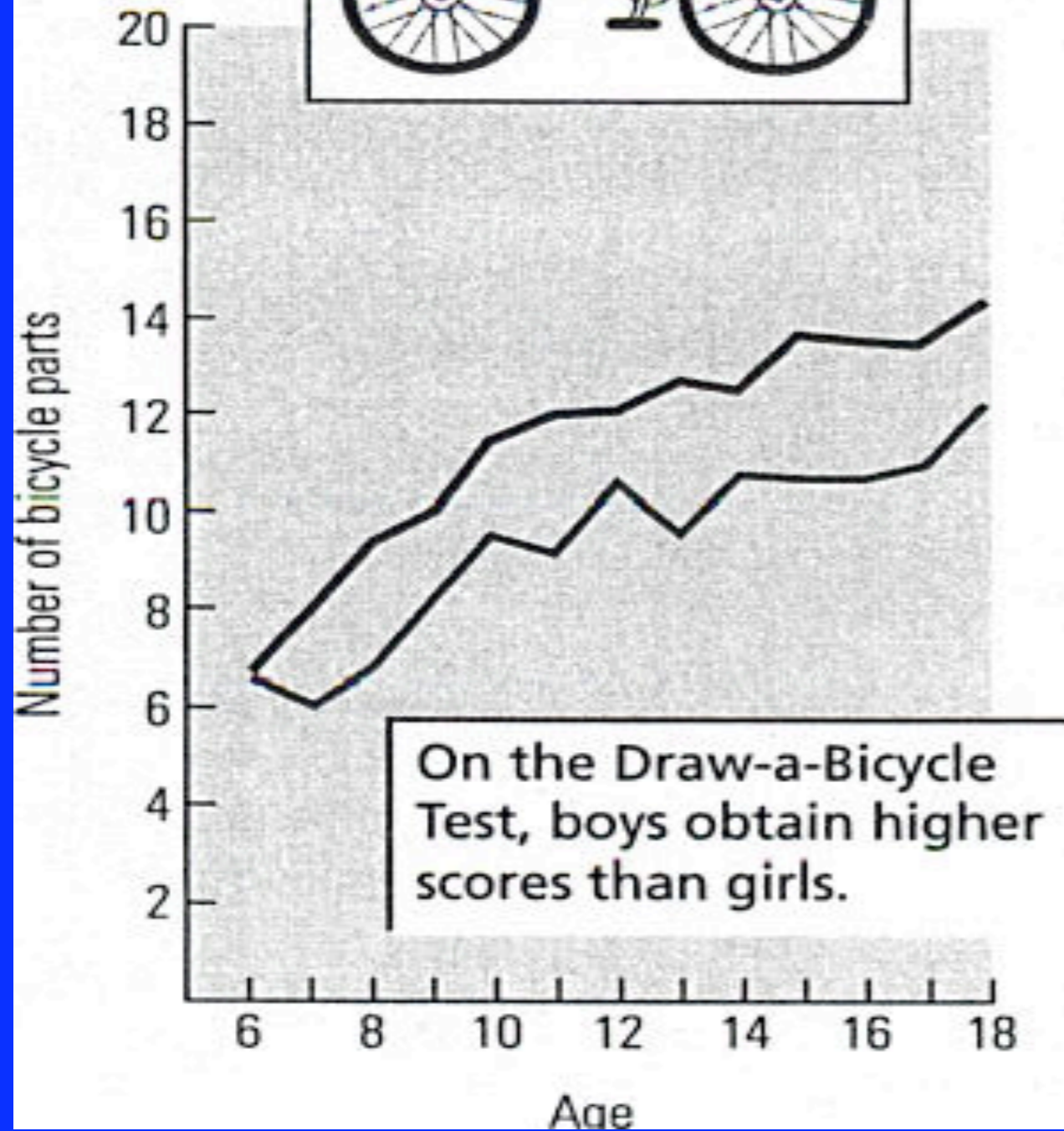
- Boys more interested in block-building & vehicles; girls prefer doll play, artwork & domestic activities.
- Boys like rough & tumble play; girls more sensitive & sedentary.
- Boys show narrow interests; girls a wider range, including boy-typical activities (asymmetrical sex-typing).
- *Gender segregation* (same-sex playgroups) appears for both boys & girls. Boys groups are larger & more concerned with dominance issues; girls play in groups of 2/3 & are more sharing – concerned with fairness.

# LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

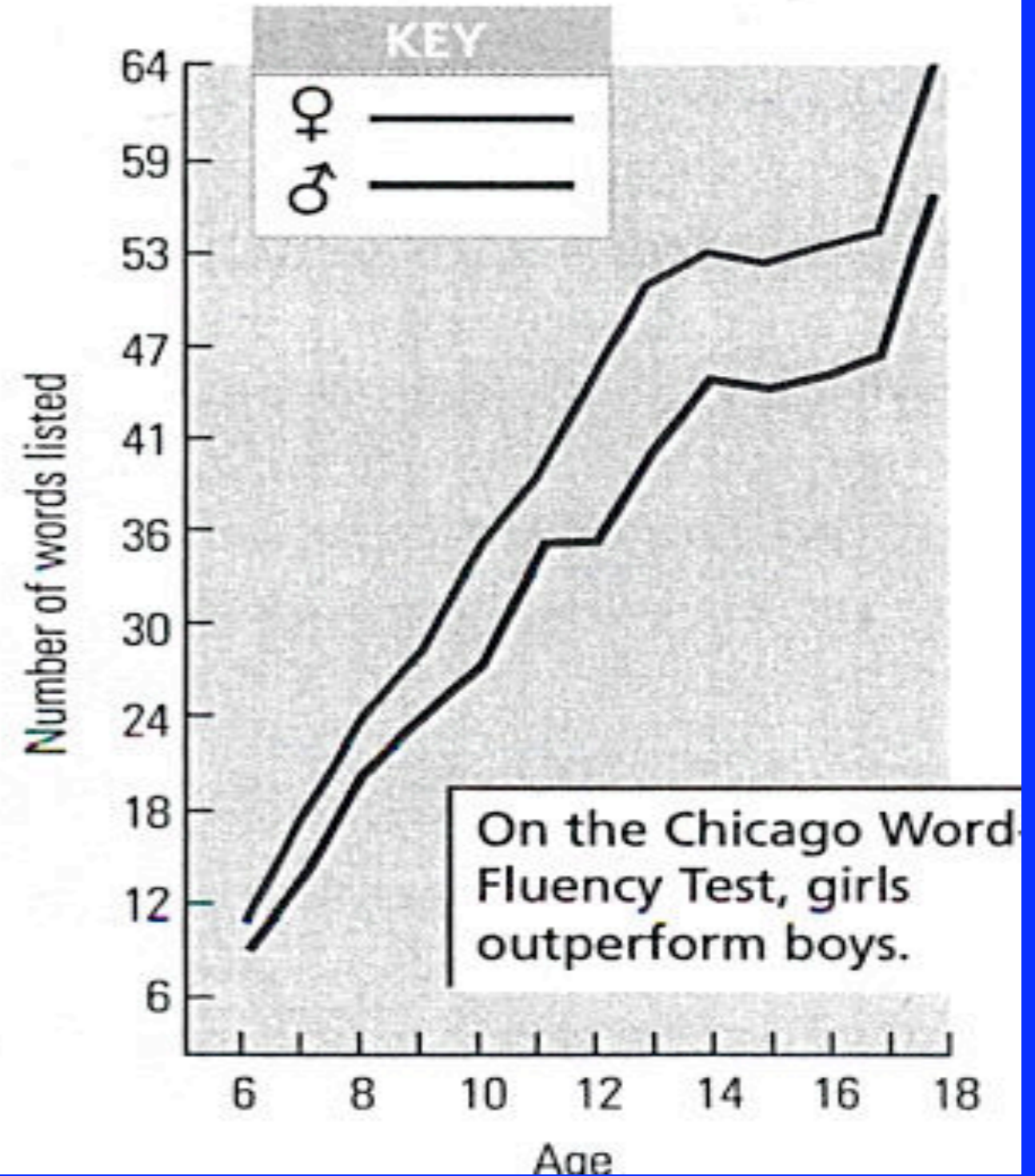
- Girls acquire language earlier than boys and remain more fluent throughout life.
- Girls develop larger vocabularies, use more complex linguistic constructions, enunciate & read better. Boys less communicative & use language instrumentally (to get what they want).
- Brain localisation of language is more bilateral for females than males (MRI & lesion studies).
- Males suffer from bilingual development (e.g. memory deficit); females seem unimpaired.

# PERFORMANCE OF BOYS & GIRLS ON TWO TESTS

(A) Draw-a-Bicycle



(B) Chicago Word-Fluency



# TASKS FAVOURING WOMEN AND MEN

## Tasks favoring women

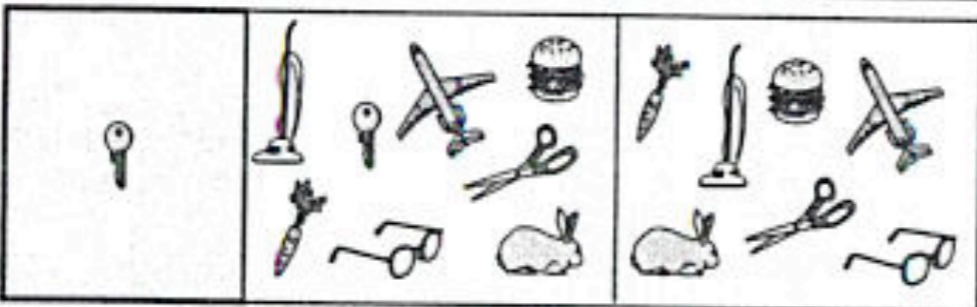
Mathematical calculation

65	$13 \times 4 - 21 + 34$
73	$2(13 + 17) + 18 - \frac{20}{4}$

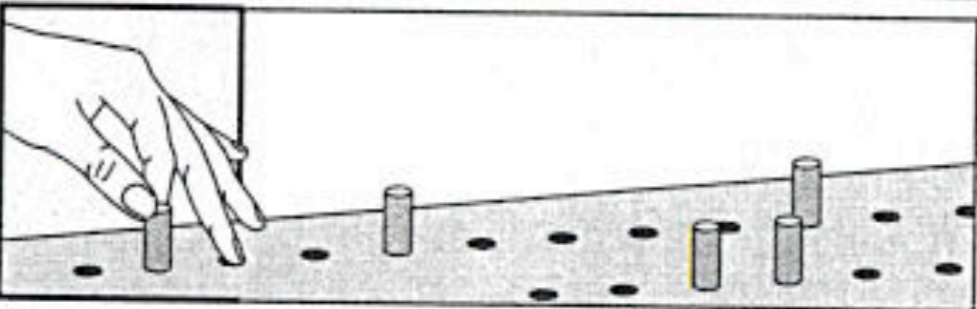
Recall of a story, a paragraph, or unrelated words

Story...	Run, flower, casserole, water, explosion, pencil, horse, newspaper, book, pliers, bath, dancer...
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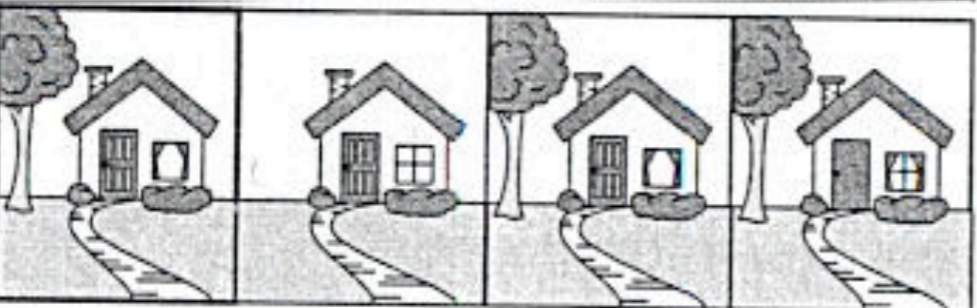
Remembering displaced objects



Precision, fine motor coordination



Rapidly matching items in perceptual tests



Tests of mathematical reasoning

Mentally finding a geometric form in a complex picture

Mentally rotating a solid object

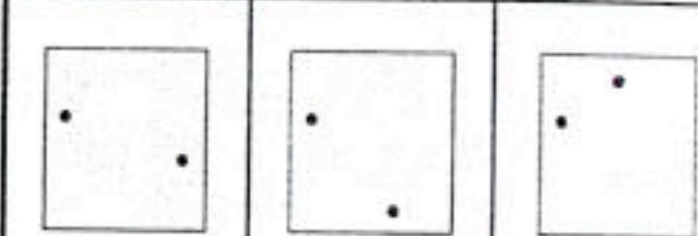
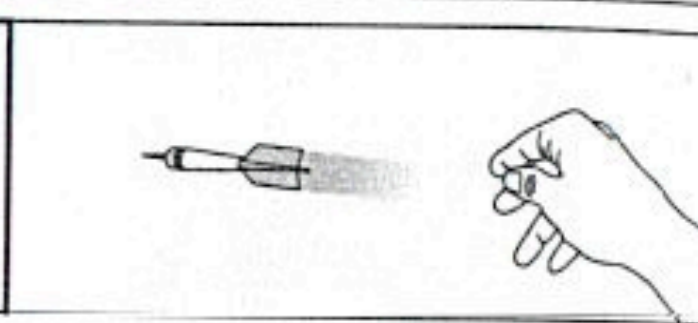
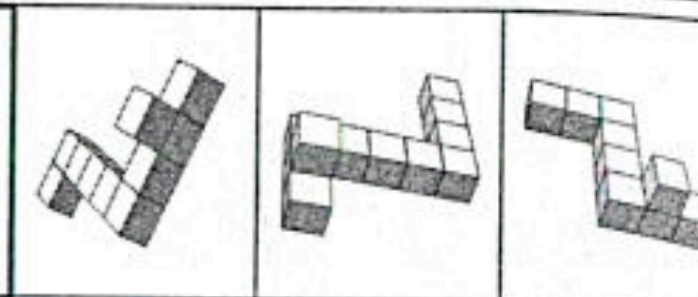
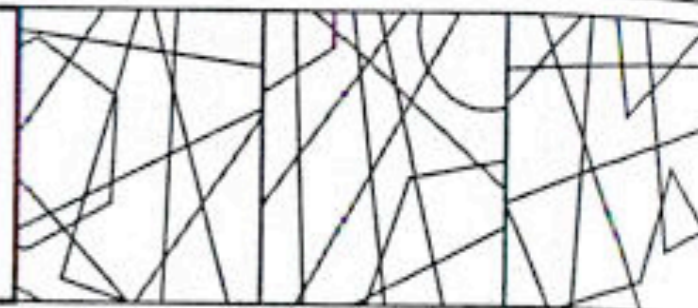
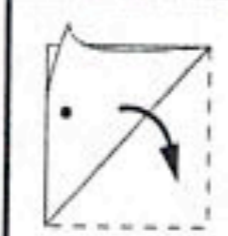
Target-directed motor skills

Visualizing where holes punched in a folded paper will fall

## Tasks favoring men

1650

If only 40% of seedlings will survive, how many must be planted to obtain 660 trees?



# SELF-ESTEEM

- Boys express more self-competence in sport & maths; girls in reading & music
- *Gender labels are self-fulfilling* - children told that a task is appropriate to their gender do better at it.
- *Learned helplessness* more common in girls; boys more likely to attribute failure to lack of effort than lack of ability. Teacher feedback might take this difference into consideration; girls may need special reassurance that failure reflects effort, not ability.
- *Mixed sex groupings* result in diminished influence for girls (reinforcing self-esteem deficits) – Single sex schools preferable?

## BOYS LESS EMPATHIC BUT MORE SENSITIVE

Girls show more concern for feelings of others.  
Generally better at “mind-reading”.

Study of 6 year olds listening to recorded sound of crying baby. Girls expressed more sympathy; boys twice as likely to turn the speaker off (though HR suggested boys were more anxious).

Boys more affected by bereavement, separation, maternal depression, etc; but inclined to deny loss or sorrow.

Similar effects observed in monkeys isolated from maternal Care (males more likely to freeze in test situations).

Many caregivers are unaware of male sensitivity – assuming them to be tougher.

# BIOLOGICAL ORIGINS

- Similar differences observed across time, culture & species (hence unlikely to be learned).
- Predictable on basis of evolutionary specialisation (hunter/warrior vs gatherer/nurse/educator).
- Brain differences established by prenatal sex hormones; later on, hormones affect ability profiles (e.g. spatial suppressed by oestrogen; HRT maintains verbal memory).
- Sex-typed activity appears before gender-role awareness. At age 2, girls talk better; boys better at construction tasks.
- Environmental effects (e.g. expectations, experience training) are minimal. May exaggerate (or perhaps reduce) differences.

# THE VULNERABILITY OF MALES

## *M/F Preponderance of various conditions*

- Autism (communication problems) .....4x
- Asperger's syndrome (milder form) .....15x
- Dyslexia (reading & writing problems)...3x
- Dyspraxia (co-ordination difficulty).....3x
- Tourette's syndrome (tics)..... 3x
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder...4x
- Behavioural disorders (e.g. aggression)... 2x
- Risk-taking, accidents, suicides.....2x

# REASONS FOR MALE VULNERABILITY

- Boys have only one X chromosome, hence no back-up for “error”- result is that males are more likely to be anomalous (including exceptionally high IQ, savants & genius)
- Theory that testosterone stimulates right-brain development at expense of left; also greater divergence of L/R hemispheres leaves each function more exposed.
- Many of these traits are extremes of male tendencies (e.g. overactivity, lack of empathy).

# EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- Has society become intolerant of “boyish” behaviour (high energy, competitiveness, risk-taking) in favour of female virtues like sociability and teamwork?
- Boys may benefit from highly structured classroom routine, combined with more sport and outdoor activity.
- Feminisation of schools? As teachers become more female, so do values, syllabus, & exams (boys overtake girls in IQ at about age 15 but modular courses and continuous assessment favour female diligence.)

Boys may benefit from more active, competitive environment (sport), more formal (traditional) classroom structure, and independent, visual modes of instruction (e.g. computers). May also benefit from more male teachers as role models/evaluators.

Girls may benefit from more sharing, group activity (e.g. class projects) and more verbal presentation modes. Also prone to self-blame for failure. Possible that girls gain examination advantage from single-sex education – though perhaps at expense of general social development?

Awareness/acceptance of natural differences between boys & girls would benefit everybody.

### *List A*

- Men are bigger and stronger than women
- Men don't live as long as women, and they lose their mental faculties earlier.
- Men are more promiscuous than women.
- Men are more self-interested than women.
- Men are more likely to take risks than women.
- Men like to play games more than women.
- Men have more skill and interest in using heavy tools and weapons than women.
- Men focus on tasks in a more single-minded fashion than women.
- Men have better mental mapping skills than women.

### *List B*

- Women feel and express emotions more easily than men.
- Women are more empathetic than men.
- Women are more dextrous than men.
- Women are more nurturing than men.
- Women have better social skills than men.
- Women have better verbal skills than men.
- Women are more cooperative than men.
- Women are better memory for object location than men.
- Women are better at spotting embedded objects.

# What more important for men and women

## Results of 4 studies

### *1. More important for men*

Advancement

Earnings

### *2. More important for men*

Freedom

### *More important for women*

Supervision

Social aspects of the job

Working conditions

Ease of work

### *More important for women*

Co-workers

Clearly defined responsibilities

Working hours

Working conditions

Convenient travel to and from work

3. *More important for men*

Advancement

Supervising others

Responsibility

Working on problems central  
to the organisation

Earnings

Creativeness

4. *More important for men*

Advancement

Earnings

Up-to-dateness

*More important for women*

Congenial associates

Ample leisure time

Relationship with superiors

Physical conditions

Variety

*More important for women*

Friendly atmosphere

Position security

Manager

cooperation

# Masculine & Feminine Cultures

*Low MAS Counties*

- Relationship with manager, cooperation, friendly atmosphere, living in a desirable area, and employment security relatively more important.
- Managers relatively less interested in leadership, independence, and self-realisation.
- Belief in group decisions.

*High MAS Countries*

- Earnings, recognition, advancement, and challenge relatively more important.
- Managers have leadership, independence, and self-realization ideal.
- Belief in the independent decision maker.

- Students less interested in recognition.
- Weaker achievement motivation.
- Achievement defined in terms of human contacts and living environment.
- Work less central in people's lives.
- People prefer shorter working hours to more salary.

- Students aspire to recognition (admiration for the strong)
- Stronger achievement motivation
- Achievement defined in terms of recognition and wealth.
- Greater work centrality.
- People prefer more salary to shorter working hours

- Company's interference in private life rejected
- Greater social role attributed to other institutions than corporation.
- Employees like small companies.
- Entire population more attracted to smaller organisations.
- Lower job stress.
- Less scepticism as to factors leading to getting ahead.

- Company's interference in private life accepted.
- Greater social role attributed to corporation.
- Employees like large corporations.
- Entire population more attracted to larger organisations.
- Higher job stress.
- Scepticism as to factors leading to getting ahead.

- Students more benevolent (sympathy for the weak).
- Managers have more a service ideal.
- “Theory X” strongly rejected.

- More women in jobs with mixed sex composition.
- Smaller or no value differences between men and women in the same jobs.
- Sex role equality in children’s books.

- Students less benevolent.
- Managers relatively less attracted by service role.
- “Theory X” (employees dislike work) gets some support.
- Fewer women in jobs with mixed sex composition.
- Greater or no value differences between men and women in the same jobs.
- More sex role differentiation in children’s books.

# The Masculine Societal Norm

*Low MAS*

- People orientation
- Quality of life and environment are important.
- Work to live.
- Service ideal.
- Interdependence ideal.
- Intuition.
- Sympathy for the unfortunate.

*High MAS*

- Money and things orientation.
- Performance and growth are important.
- Live to work.
- Achievement ideal.
- Independence ideal.
- Decisiveness.
- Sympathy for the successful achiever.

- Levelling: don't try to be better than others.
- Small and slow are beautiful.
- Men need not be assertive but can also take caring roles.
- Sex roles in society should be fluid.
- Differences in sex roles should not mean differences in power.
- Unisex and androgyny ideal.
- Excelling: try to be the best.
- Big and fast are beautiful.
- Men should behave assertively and women should care.
- Sex roles in society should be clearly differentiated.
- Men should dominate in all settings.
- *Machismo* (ostentative manliness) ideal.

## *Consequences for Organisations*

- Some young men and women want careers, others do not.
- Organisations should not interfere with people's private lives.
- More women in more qualified and better-paid jobs.
- Young men expect to make a career; those who don't see themselves as failures.
- Organisational interests are a legitimate reason for interfering with people's private lives.
- Fewer women in more qualified and better-paid jobs.

- Women in more qualified jobs not particular assertive.
- Lower job stress.
- Less industrial conflict.
- Appeal of job restructuring permitting group integration.

- Women in more qualified jobs are assertive.
- Higher job stress.
- More industrial conflict.
- Appeal of job restructuring permitting individual achievement.

# Gender. Job choice: Teachers

## 1. Language

Subject	No. of Teachers	% Women	% Men
Spanish	2700	78	22
French	16200	75	25
German	8100	75	25
Drama	8900	67	33
Other Languages	1300	70	
30			

## 2. Science

Subject	No. of Teachers	% Women	% Men
Physics	4400	82	18
Info Technology	10700	69	31
Sciences	28900	65	35
Chemistry	4600	62	38

### 3. Arts

<b>Subject</b>	<b>No. of Teachers</b>	<b>% Women</b>	<b>% Men</b>
Biology	5100	49	51
Business Studies	6400	50	50
History	13800	54	46
Geography	14200	56	44
Social Studies	11000	52	48
Music	5600	51	49
Careers Education	1900	47	53
Personal & Social education	74200	47	53
General Studies	7900	53	47
Classics	510	47	53
Physical Education	20100	58	42
Religious Education	13400	56	44
Art	9400	44	56

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Nos</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>% Men</b>	<b>Source</b>
Flight Engineer Airlines	51	51	Nil	100%	Ansett
Engineer	1608	1608	Nil	100%	Inst. Engineers
Racing Driver	2822	2818	4	99.8%	Auto Racing Club
Nuclear Eng.	1185	1167	18	98.3%	Inst. Nuclear Eng.
Pilot	2338	2329	9	99.6%	Qantas
	808	807	1	99.9%	Ansett
	3519	3452	67	98%	British Airways
Air Traffic Control	1360	1274	86	94%	Dept. Civil Aviation
Dragcar/Bike Racer	250	234	16	93.6%	Drag-Racers Association
Architect	30529	27781	2748	91%	Inst. Architects
Flight Deck Officer	19244	17415	1829	90.5%	Gov. Statistics
Actuary	5081	4578	503	90%	Inst. Actuaries
Billiards & Snooker	750	655	95	87%	Billiards Assoc.
Accountant	113221	93997	19224	83%	Inst. Accountants

## Socio-Biology: Pease & Pease (1999)

Boys like things; girls like people

Boys compete; girls co-operate

Women value relationships; men value work.

“ If a woman is unhappy in her relationships, she can't concentrate on her work. If a man is unhappy at work, he can't focus on his relationships”

“If a woman sharing problems with her friends is a sign of trust and friendship”

“When you are dealing with an upset woman don't offer solutions or invalidate her feelings- just show you are listening”

## **Socio-Biology & the gendered World (Nicholson, 2000)**

“The world of business organisations remains male in rationale, design And functioning.”

**In Business today we find mainly:**

- **Men in leadership positions**
- **Elaborate hierarchies that feed male status aspirations**
- **Competitive systems enabling men to test themselves against one another**
- **Goal-focused strategies and procedures to satisfy male achievement motivation.**
- **Highly specified tasks and roles that fit male single-mindedness.**

Imagine a world in which most of the police, soldiers, engineers, air traffic controllers, factory bosses, financiers, boxers, orchestral conductors, and criminal masterminds are women. In this same world the nurses (not their managers), the manicurists, personal counsellors, preschool teachers, telephone sales staff, and prostitutes are men.

We could do much more to rebalance the rewards of men and women, but if nursing becomes more highly paid and prestigious than engineering, it is a sure bet that men will start to enter nursing in greater numbers. Men go where the money and status are, even if the work suits them less well than it suits women. Does this mean high pay could turn Currently female jobs into male ones? No, many jobs call upon abilities in which men and women differ. Men, for example, are better at the spatial mapping required for air traffic control, and women are more motivated to nurse the sick and elderly. Culture works in tandem with biology.

Put men and women together in something like equal numbers and you lose the elements of gender polarisation. Men and women temper each other. If they are perceptive, women can learn from men the benefits of suspending the expression of emotion for the sake of getting things done. Men can learn from women how much more effective they can be by tuning in to how other people feel before jumping in with both feet. Offices with roughly equal numbers of men and women are healthier. They provide opportunities for mutual learning and adjustment.

Within organisation, where are the women? Wherever interpersonal skills and relationships are at a premium. So we find women concentrated in human resources and public relations, and also in many customer-facing roles, which just happen to be located at the bottom of the hierarchy. Men are in the technical command and control roles, which also just happen to lead to the executive positions in most companies. This is a sexual division of labour that can be found almost universally in the business world, including those firms that most assiduously promote equal opportunity. No amount of legislation to advance the careers of women can counteract the choices that men and women themselves make and what they feel most comfortable doing.

Yet our analysis suggests some things will not change. The sexual division of labour will continue to be found because women and men prefer different kinds of roles. Leadership will remain a male preserve in many organisations. Although, we are seeing increasing numbers of women in the middle levels of most businesses, reach the top. Who gets there depends on the interplay of three things: what people want their leaders to do, what kind of human raw material is available for leadership positions, and how leaders get chosen.