

2.5 Conflicts between genes and self-cognition

Each person behaves in a manner that is advantageous either to his or her genes or his or her self.

There is a natural conflict between the interests of each person's genes and each person's self.

From the perspective of genes, all is advantageous that aides in their reproduction or procreation. The interests of the self are different.

Genes have primed humans to sacrifice themselves for their offspring. From before humans achieved self-cognition, they were equipped with the emotions of both, sexual desire and parental love.

Self-cognition, however, can well conclude that self-sacrifice would be in the benefit of the offspring, but not in the benefit of the person sacrificing himself or herself. .

Would a person save his or her only child if it meant his or her own death? Assume that the sacrifice would definitely save the child. Assume furthermore that a person's own destruction would be certain.

The interests of the genes and the interests of an individual with a good degree of self-cognition are fundamentally contradictory.

Suicide to preempt senseless suffering, or dulling one's senseless existence in drugs, or a gentle death, and before that, a life of optimal sex, are interests of an individual with a high degree of self-cognition. The interest of genes is procreation, at any cost. The interest of the individual who carries these genes, is at least to minimize suffering.

A person's genes and a person's self can dictate vastly different behavioral patterns, and the conflict between the two is more pronounced in women than it is in men.

A man's self desires optimal sexual satisfaction, which needs a considerable variety of sexual partners. Incidentally, optimizing his sexual satisfaction by changing sexual partners also is in the interest of his genes. Men theoretically can sire a child every day.

For a woman, pursuing optimal sexual satisfaction with a considerable variety of sexual partners potentially runs against the interest of her genes. The best setting for a woman's genes through tens of thousands of years has been to be careful in choosing a sexual partner and having sexual contact only with a man who would then be a committed father.

From women, more than from men, genes also demand a higher willingness to sacrifice herself for the benefit of her children, not just in situations when there is acute danger, but in everyday situations. After all, children, especially small children, need constant attention and care.

Women, more than men, have a genetically primed ability to control sexual desires in favor of a partner committed to their offspring

For this reason, it is no surprise that any empirical study of "what women want" in societies around the world arrives at the conclusion that women are more inclined towards monogamy than are men.

It does not mean that in previous societies, just as in current societies, there would not have been a large number of women who would have had a strong inclination towards enjoying sexual contact with a large number of men for the purpose of optimal sexual satisfaction. It's just that their behavior wasn't preserved well from generation to generation, as children from such mothers didn't survive as easily as did those who would forgo sexual satisfaction for the benefit of their children.

Humans have a great capability to adapt to changing situations, both genetically and behaviorally. Genetic adaptations for which there is a compelling reason can happen over just a few generations. Behavioral adaptations can happen in a society over just a few years.

That women are genetically primed to control their desire for optimal sexual satisfaction doesn't mean that their sexual desires would have been reduced. This would not even be in the interest of her genes. The interest of her genes would be that as soon as there is no child to sacrifice her sexual desire for, the sexual desire will be there in full force, and not necessarily be directed towards just one man.

For individuals with a good degree of self-cognition, if they don't just commit suicide, an ideology of pursuing a comfortable death, precluded by optimal sex, makes as much sense for women as it does for men.