OR-06 Historical and traditional mixed organisations

Introduction: The Architecture of Human Cooperation

The historical organization of the sexes beyond the nuclear family provides an indispensable empirical foundation for understanding how human societies manage cooperation, the division of labor, and the distribution of institutional power. Throughout history, societies have experimented with diverse macro-structures to harness the productive and reproductive capacities of both men and women. These organizational forms—ranging from medieval double monasteries and exclusionary artisanal guilds to peasant commons, utopian cooperative movements, and Indigenous confederacies—reveal the complex, often fraught interplay between biological constraints, psychological tendencies, and cultural engineering.

To analyze these historical and traditional mixed organizations with rigorous precision, this report utilizes a tripartite analytical framework consisting of three interacting layers:

1. **Physiology (Measurable):** The inescapable biological realities of the pre-industrial world dictated fundamental organizational constraints. Sexual dimorphism—specifically male advantages in upper-body strength and aerobic capacity—channeled men, on average, into labor requiring burst strength, such as heavy plough agriculture, masonry, and warfare. Concurrently, in the absence of modern contraception and infant formula, the physiological realities of gestation, lactation, and high infant mortality anchored women, on average, to the domestic radius or localized economic spheres to optimize infant survival.
2. **Behaviour (Statistical):** Behavioural traits and occupational interests exhibit overlapping normal distributions. Cross-cultural psychological and historical research demonstrates mean differences in traits such as risk tolerance, status-seeking, and specific occupational preferences (e.g., a relative male skew toward systemizing tasks and a female skew toward empathizing or localized social tasks). Crucially, because these are overlapping distributions, a significant minority of women have always been more status-seeking, risk-tolerant, or system-oriented than the average man. Successful historical institutions often harnessed these median behavioral tendencies while providing structural pathways or safety valves for individual outliers.
3. **Culture (Variable):** Culture encompasses the institutional rules, legal codes, religious edicts, and mythologies that a society overlays onto physiological and behavioral baselines. Cultural frameworks can attempt to suppress physiological realities (e.g., the vow of chastity in monasteries), artificially exaggerate behavioral differences to protect economic monopolies (e.g., coverture laws barring female business ownership), or dynamically balance power between the sexes (e.g., matrilineal descent coupled with gendered political chambers).

Furthermore, this analysis strictly distinguishes between what is known about statistical averages and what can be said about individuals. While historical macro-structures typically evolved to accommodate the median differences between men and women, individual men and

women frequently occupied the extreme tails of these distributions. The tension between the statistical average (which drives overarching institutional design) and the individual outlier (who frequently challenges or breaks these designs) is the primary engine of historical change in mixed organizations.

Religious Orders and the Double Monastery

The monastic movements of medieval Europe represented one of the most radical cultural attempts to transcend physiological and behavioral gender differences. Monasticism was theoretically conceived at its inception as non-gendered, a spiritual space where men and women shared the singular, ascetic ideal of living as perfect Christians[1]. However, the institutionalization of this ideal required complex governance structures, realized most notably in the "double monastery."

Anglo-Saxon Foundations and the Abbess

In the early medieval period, particularly in Anglo-Saxon England, double monasteries—institutions housing both monks and nuns but ruled by a single female Abbess—functioned as massive centers of ecclesiastical administration, scholarly production, and missionary activity[2]. Historian Sarah Foot, in *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England, c. 600-900* (2006, Cambridge University Press), demonstrates that these institutions were essentially "mission stations" from which groups of religious practitioners operated, deeply integrating themselves into the cultural and political life of the region[3].

The Abbesses who presided over these institutions, such as Hild of Whitby, were frequently royal widows or princesses. This structure represented a potent fusion of ecclesiastical authority and aristocratic political power, effectively placing large populations of men under the direct institutional authority of women—an extraordinary configuration in patriarchal medieval Europe[2]. This organizational design generated a wide-ranging theological and cultural controversy regarding the proper limits of female authority and the physical proximity of religious men and women[2].

The theological justification for this female authority often relied on the conceptualization of a monastic "third gender." By adhering to extreme ascetic principles—chastity, poverty, and obedience—monks and nuns supposedly shed their earthly sexual dimorphism[1]. However, the cultural reality was deeply contested. Critics of the "third gender" theory, such as Jo Ann McNamara, note that the prevailing ecclesiastical discourse ultimately defaulted to masculine superiority. Hagiographers praised exceptional ascetic women for acting *viriliter* (courageously, or literally "like a man"), thereby subordinating female identity to a masculine behavioral ideal rather than establishing a truly neutral third gender[1].

Institutionalizing the Double Rule: Fontevraud, Sempringham, and Vadstena

Despite cultural anxieties, the model of the double monastery persisted and underwent sophisticated institutional evolution. The Order of Fontevraud, founded in France in 1101 by the itinerant preacher Robert of Arbrissel, established a double rule where neighboring but strictly segregated houses of men and women were both subjected to the supreme authority of the

Abbess of Fontevraud[5]. The cultural justification was deeply Marian: the Abbess represented the Virgin Mary, and the monks owed her the absolute obedience a son owes a mother[7]. The Order grew immensely wealthy and powerful, surviving the Hundred Years' War and the French Wars of Religion, and maintaining its unique female-led hierarchy until it was suppressed during the French Revolution in 1790[5].

Other orders replicated and refined this balanced, segregated structure. The Gilbertine Order in England, centered at Sempringham, finalized its rule in the early thirteenth century[9]. The Gilbertines placed a heavy cultural emphasis on the physical separation of the sexes while enforcing strict equality of resources. General chapter statutes mandated that proctors provide exactly the same food and drink for nuns as for canons, utilizing the shared refectory as a powerful symbol of community equality[9]. Similarly, the Bridgettine Order, founded in 1346 with its motherhouse at Vadstena Abbey in Sweden, operated as a double monastery where independent governance was exercised by an Abbess, demonstrating the broad geographical replication of this organizational form across Northern Europe[10].

The Canonical Backlash: Nicaea II and the Orthodox Prohibition

While double monasteries achieved significant administrative and economic success in the Latin West, they continually faced severe cultural and behavioral anxieties regarding sexual temptation (a physiological reality) and female authority over men (a cultural transgression). In the Orthodox tradition, this culminated in strict, formalized prohibitions.

The Second Council of Nicaea in 787 AD explicitly addressed this organizational anxiety. Canon XX of the Council decreed that "women ought not to live in bishops' houses, nor in monasteries of men" and strictly banned the creation of new double monasteries[13]. This canonical prohibition effectively ended the legitimate expansion of double monasteries in the Eastern Church. However, the behavioral desire for shared ascetic living proved resilient; anecdotal exceptions, such as the contemporary Orthodox Monastery of St. John the Baptist in Essex, demonstrate the persistent historical memory and sporadic, unsanctioned replication of mixed-sex monastic living[14].

Medieval Guilds and the Commercialization of Female Labor

Moving from the spiritual economy to the secular, the medieval and early modern guild system provides a stark empirical example of how cultural institutions can codify gender exclusion to protect economic rents and artificially constrain the overlapping behavioral distributions of the sexes.

The Exclusionary Nature of European Guilds

For decades, economic historians have debated the macro-economic efficiency of the European guild system. Revisionist historians, most notably S. R. Epstein, argued that guilds functioned as efficient institutions that corrected market failures, particularly asymmetric information regarding product quality, and fostered human capital through apprenticeship systems[15]. However, Sheilagh Ogilvie, in her seminal work *The European Guilds: An Economic Analysis* (2019, Princeton University Press), utilizes an exhaustive quantitative dataset of over 5,000

observations and a qualitative database of 12,000 observations spanning eight centuries to systematically dismantle the revisionist view[15]. Ogilvie demonstrates that guilds functioned primarily as rent-seeking cartels that colluded with political elites to restrict competition, manipulate markets, and block technological innovation[16]. This finding of guild inefficiency and rent-seeking has been widely replicated across diverse European datasets[18].

Ogilvie demonstrates that one of the primary mechanisms guilds utilized to artificially inflate their members' wages was the systematic exclusion of women, thereby restricting the economic options of half the population[15]. While women frequently possessed the physiological capacity and behavioral drive to participate in these trades, guild statutes weaponized cultural norms to declare trades as inherently "masculine" or "learned arts" fit only for men[21]. Guilds rarely accepted women into their ranks, except under highly constrained, culturally managed circumstances, such as allowing the widows of guild masters to temporarily continue their husbands' businesses to prevent destitution[15].

The Displacement of the Brewster

The transition of industries from the domestic, localized sphere to the formalized, capitalized guild sphere routinely disenfranchised female labor. Judith Bennett's *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300–1600* (1996, Oxford University Press) rigorously documents this transition in the brewing industry[22].

Using pre-plague manorial court rolls from the village of Brigstock in Northamptonshire, Bennett highlights a sample size of over 300 women—representing an astonishing one-third of the adult female population—who brewed ale for commercial sale in the early fourteenth century[23]. Historically, brewing was an extension of household physiology and behavior, seamlessly integrated with domestic cooking and baking responsibilities[23]. However, as the industry commercialized, introduced hops (creating longer-lasting beer), and shifted to large-scale, heavily capitalized production, male-dominated guilds systematically pushed women out. A cultural narrative of misogyny and the redefinition of brewing as a "learned art" reserved for men facilitated the transition of brewing from a female-dominated local craft to a male-dominated industrialized profession[21].

Female Monopolies: The Paris Seamstresses

While the average guild excluded women, individual women and specific female collectives managed to carve out institutional power when they could align their behavioral interests with state support. Clare Crowston's *Fabricating Women: The Seamstresses of Old Regime France, 1675-1791* (2001, Duke University Press) documents the extraordinary rise of female-exclusive guilds[24].

In 1675, with the backing of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, French seamstresses attained independent guild privileges, granting them a corporate monopoly over the production of clothing for women and children (though culturally restricted from making clothing for men or boys over age eight)[26]. The scale of this female-led institution was massive, proving that women were highly capable of managing complex, formalized corporate structures.

Paris Seamstresses Guild Demographics	Metric / Value

(18th Century)	
New Apprentices (Yearly Average, 1746-1759)	419
Total Active Apprentices at any given time	~1,250
Total Female Mistresses	>2,000
Proportion of Mistresses employing an Apprentice	~50%

Data source: Crowston, 2001[25].
As demonstrated in the table above, seamstresses constituted the largest group of apprentices, male or female, in eighteenth-century Paris[25]. This indicates that when cultural constraints (state backing) provided women with localized monopolies, their behavior successfully replicated the hierarchical, formalized training, and market-control mechanisms typically associated with male guilds.

Peasant Villages, Family Firms, and the European Marriage Pattern

The vast majority of historical populations lived not in double monasteries or guild-controlled urban centers, but in rural peasant villages. In this environment, the brutal necessity of agricultural survival required a highly integrated, pragmatic combination of the sexes, balancing physiological constraints with economic imperatives.

The "Working Couple" (Arbeitspaar)

Renowned social historian Heide Wunder, in *He Is the Sun, She Is the Moon: Women in Early Modern Germany* (1998, Harvard University Press), fundamentally challenges the historical narrative of absolute female subordination in the rural economy[28]. Wunder introduces the concept of the *Arbeitspaar* (the "working couple"), demonstrating that the successful operation of a peasant household, artisan workshop, or merchant business relied explicitly on the shared, complementary responsibility of husband and wife[28].
While cultural edicts (such as the 1578 Book of Marital Discipline) prescribed male headship, behavioral and economic realities necessitated functional, balanced partnerships. The metaphor "He is the sun, she is the moon" was not historically understood as a hierarchy of absolute dominance and subordination, but rather a reflection of different but equal, interdependent statuses[28]. Physiologically, men on average handled the burst-strength requirements of the heavy plough and timber felling, while women managed vast, complex portfolios of continuous

agricultural production, dairy management, domestic textile production, and local commerce[28].

The European Marriage Pattern (EMP)

This relative female autonomy within the *Arbeitspaar* was structurally supported by a profound demographic shift known as the European Marriage Pattern (EMP), analyzed extensively by Tine De Moor and Jan Luiten van Zanden in the *Economic History Review* (2010)[31]. The EMP emerged in northwestern Europe (particularly the North Sea region) in the late medieval period and was characterized by exceptionally late marriage (mid-to-late 20s for both sexes) and a high proportion of the population never marrying at all[32].

De Moor and van Zanden argue that the Catholic Church's stringent promotion of marriage based on mutual consensus eroded the cultural power of patriarchs to arrange marriages[31]. Physiologically, this delayed the onset of childbearing. Behaviorally and economically, it allowed young women (sometimes as young as eight) to enter the booming wage labor market as domestic servants or agricultural workers[32]. This cultural and demographic shift effectively transformed wage labor into a key stage of the female life cycle. By accumulating capital, skills, and savings prior to marriage, women entered the *Arbeitspaar* not as dependents, but as closer economic equals to their husbands, permanently altering the balance of institutional power within the early modern household[32].

The Commons and Green Governance

Peasant survival relied heavily on access to the commons—shared pastures, forests, and water sources. Nobel Laureate Elinor Ostrom established the foundational framework for understanding how local communities successfully manage common-pool resources through polycentric governance and collective action, avoiding the theoretical "tragedy of the commons"[33].

Building directly on Ostrom's framework, economist Bina Agarwal in *Gender and Green Governance: The Political Economy of Women's Presence Within and Beyond Community Forestry* (2010, Oxford University Press) provides the most statistically rigorous analysis to date of how the gender composition of governance groups affects environmental outcomes[35]. Historically, research focused merely on women's exclusion from forestry institutions; Agarwal turned the question to efficiency: Does women's presence actually improve conservation?

Statistical Impacts of Female Governance

Agarwal utilized a massive primary dataset collected between 2000 and 2001, sampling 135 Community Forestry Institutions (CFIs)—65 in Gujarat, India, and 70 in the middle hills of Nepal[37]. The results present a compelling case that integrating women into environmental governance yields statistically significant improvements in conservation.

Forest Area Protected by CFI Gender Composition (Nepal Sample)
All-Women CFIs (N=27): Mean 20.9 Hectares
Other CFIs (N=43): Mean 41.6 Hectares

Total CFIs (N=70): Mean 33.6 Hectares

Data source: Agarwal, Ecological Economics, 2009[37].

Despite the fact that all-women Executive Committees (ECs) in Nepal were structurally disadvantaged—receiving significantly smaller (mean 20.9 hectares vs 41.6 hectares) and more highly degraded forest tracts from the state—these groups demonstrated vastly superior forest regeneration and canopy growth compared to male-dominated groups[37].

The mechanisms driving this efficiency are rooted in both physiology and behavior. Due to the gendered division of labor, women interact with forests differently than men. Men typically prioritize timber (a long-gestation, cash-crop resource), whereas women prioritize daily survival needs like firewood, fodder, and non-timber forest products (NTFPs)[37]. Consequently, women possess superior, specialized ecological knowledge of plant species and extraction methods. When women are integrated into governance, they institute stricter rule compliance and better forest protection protocols[37].

Agarwal's analysis identifies a "critical mass" effect: executive committees require approximately 25% to 33% female representation before women can comfortably overcome cultural silencing and actively influence policy[39]. Furthermore, Agarwal demonstrates a direct link between cultural empowerment and behavioral participation: households where women held land rights (solely or jointly) exhibited a 16.5 percentage point higher probability of participating in cooperative forest management[41]. These findings have successfully replicated across various South Asian contexts, proving that female inclusion is not merely an equity imperative, but an operational necessity for sustainable green governance[42].

Utopian and Cooperative Movements: Ideology vs. Behaviour

The industrial revolution triggered extreme social dislocation, giving rise to new forms of mixed organizations designed explicitly to combat economic inequality. These utopian and cooperative movements often incorporated deep ideological commitments to gender equality, providing a historical laboratory for observing the clash between cultural engineering and behavioral baselines.

The Rochdale Pioneers and the Credit Union

The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, established in England in 1844, is widely considered the foundation of the modern cooperative business model. From its inception, the Rochdale model embedded cultural rules of open membership regardless of sex, race, or creed, and introduced the revolutionary concept of the patronage dividend, rewarding members financially based on their participation rather than capital investment[44].

This egalitarian legal structure allowed for the rapid growth of female political and economic participation. This culminated in the formation of the Women's Co-operative Guild in 1883. The Guild functioned as a massive, parallel female institution that leveraged economic cooperation

into political power, heavily advocating for maternal health, infant care reform, and women's suffrage[46].

Women's Co-operative Guild Membership Growth
1890: 1,640 members
1900: 12,809 members
1910: 25,897 members

Data source: Women's History Network / Open University[46].

Concurrently in Germany, amid the economic distress of the mid-19th century, Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen (1864) pioneered the rural credit union model in Heddesdorf[48]. Raiffeisen's model—based on Christian charity transitioning into mutual self-help, self-governance, and unlimited liability—aimed to rescue farmers from predatory moneylenders[48]. While historically male-dominated at the executive level in its early years, the structural DNA of the Raiffeisen credit union proved highly adaptable and fiercely resilient (even limiting exposure to debt-deflation crises in the 1920s[51]). Today, the International Raiffeisen Union model encompasses roughly 900,000 cooperatives with 500 million members globally, and has evolved to heavily serve and empower female memberships in the developing world[52].

The Kibbutz Experiment: The Snapback of Averages

Perhaps the most exhaustive modern attempt to structurally erase gender differences occurred in the Israeli kibbutz movement, beginning in 1910. Founded on fierce socialist and egalitarian principles ("from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs"), the early kibbutzim actively sought to eliminate the traditional sexual division of labor, viewing it as an oppressive bourgeois construct[53]. Culturally, women were systematically relieved of individual childcare and domestic duties through communal dining halls and collective child-rearing (children sleeping in children's houses), theoretically freeing women to participate equally alongside men in heavy agricultural production, construction, and defense[53].

However, despite three generations of intense, structural cultural engineering, the kibbutz experienced a massive reversion to traditional gender roles. Lionel Tiger and Joseph Shepher, in their highly controversial but widely cited sociological study, *Women in the Kibbutz* (1975, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), documented this stark regression[54].

Kibbutz Occupational Segregation by Gender (Tiger & Shepher, 1975)	Male Participation (%)	Female Participation (%)

Agriculture	88%	12%
Construction	99%	1%
Management / Politics	67%	33%
Education	17%	83%
Childcare & Services (Laundry, Kitchens)	15%	85%

Data source: Tiger & Shepher (1975)[54].
Tiger and Shepher argued from a biological determinist position, suggesting that these data proved innate, physiological, and behavioral differences between the sexes that could not be engineered away; women naturally gravitated back toward localized, kin-based, and service-oriented tasks[54].
This finding of occupational segregation has successfully replicated in broad strokes across the kibbutz movement in subsequent decades. Adar (1992) and Palgi (1997) found that as the level of task prestige increased, female participation plummeted; women constituted only 2% of senior central positions compared to 9% of men[55].
However, feminist scholars vehemently critique Tiger and Shepher's biological conclusions. Critics argue that women originally *wanted* to work in agriculture but were systematically marginalized by male managers who defined "productive" labor exclusively as heavy physical work (physiology), thus devaluing women's contributions[53]. Others suggest that the return to the nuclear family and domesticity was an active, female-led rebellion against a sterile, masculine standard of equality that forced women to act like men[53]. Regardless of the exact causal mechanism—whether innate behavioral preference or a reaction to subtle patriarchal structures—the kibbutz data highlights the immense difficulty cultural institutions face when attempting to permanently overwrite deeply ingrained behavioral preferences and physiological constraints on a population level. Averages invariably reasserted themselves, even as individual women continued to thrive in leadership or heavy agricultural roles.

Indigenous Councils: The Haudenosaunee Confederacy

The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy provides an extraordinary historical model of distinct but rigidly balanced institutional power, avoiding the homogenization attempted by the kibbutz while circumventing the exclusionary hierarchies of European guilds.
Formed prior to European contact—archaeologist Dean Snow posits 1450, while oral traditions calculate dates as early as the solar eclipse of 1142—the Confederacy united five (later six)

nations under the Great Law of Peace[56]. Haudenosaunee society was deeply matrilineal (descent traced through the mother) and matrilocal (husbands moved into the wife's longhouse)[58].

Physiologically and economically, women completely controlled the agricultural production (the "Three Sisters" of corn, beans, and squash) and the physical infrastructure of the longhouses[58]. Anthropologist Judith K. Brown, in her foundational *Ethnohistory* paper (1970), posited that this absolute female control over the economic base and the means of production translated directly into institutional political power[59].

The institutional design of the Haudenosaunee carefully segregated male and female power into distinct, balancing chambers. The Grand Council consisted of 50 male sachems (chiefs) who deliberated on war, peace, and inter-tribal treaties[56]. However, these male chiefs did not inherit their titles through male lines, nor were they elected by a general male populace. They were nominated, heavily monitored, and—if they failed in their duties or behaved erratically—summarily deposed by the Clan Mothers, the elder women of each matrilineage[59]. This structure created a robust system of constitutional checks and balances. Ethnohistorian Elisabeth Tooker (1978) notes that while women did not generally sit in the male councils and speak directly (often communicating through delegated male speakers), their institutional veto power and control of the agricultural treasury meant that male chiefs simply could not initiate warfare or sustain diplomacy without female consent and provisioning[63].

The extent of this female power remains a subject of historical controversy. Eighteenth-century Jesuit observers like Father Joseph-François Lafitau claimed that women held "all real authority" and were the true arbiters of peace and war[63]. Conversely, Tooker adopted a more conservative view, arguing that men still held the primary political power and that women merely "influenced" them as they did in European societies[63]. More recently, scholars like Roland Viau argue that Haudenosaunee culture was "strongly feminine" and that female governance expanded dramatically post-1650 due to high male fatalities in colonial warfare[63]. Regardless of the nuances, the Haudenosaunee design stands as a masterclass in acknowledging physiological and behavioral differences (men primarily fought and hunted; women primarily farmed and managed the household) while utilizing a complex cultural superstructure to guarantee absolute political equilibrium between the sexes.

Summary of Robust Findings

Double monasteries in the medieval period successfully placed large communities of men under the direct authority of female Abbesses, utilizing theological justifications to override patriarchal norms until the practice was canonically banned by Nicaea II in 787 AD. Conversely, traditional European guilds functioned primarily as rent-seeking cartels that weaponized cultural codes to systematically exclude women and maintain male monopolies over lucrative, capitalized trades. The transition of industries from the domestic sphere, where women historically dominated (such as the 300 alewives of pre-plague Brigstock), to the capitalized public sphere consistently resulted in the displacement of female labor by men. However, when granted legal monopolies by the state, such as the Paris seamstresses in 1675, women successfully managed massive, hierarchical corporate institutions with thousands of members. In rural economies, survival relied

on the *Arbeitspaar* (working couple), a highly integrated and complementary economic partnership between husband and wife, supported demographically by the European Marriage Pattern which allowed women to accumulate pre-marital capital. In modern natural resource management, empirical data from India and Nepal proves that forestry executive committees with a critical mass of women (25–33%) yield statistically significant improvements in conservation outcomes compared to male-only groups. Attempting to completely erase the sexual division of labor through extreme ideological engineering, as seen in the Israeli kibbutz, generally fails; populations on average revert to traditional occupational sorting, demonstrating the resilience of behavioral and physiological baselines. Yet, across all these structures, while statistical averages show clear gendered sorting, overlapping behavioral distributions ensure that individual men and women consistently and successfully engage in atypical gender roles when not legally or culturally barred. Ultimately, the most stable historical model of political gender parity, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, utilized rigidly separate spheres where male chiefs held operational and diplomatic power, but female Clan Mothers held the absolute constitutional power to nominate, fund, and depose them.

Contested or Open Questions

- **Guilds and Human Capital:** Did the systematic exclusion of women in European guilds ultimately harm macro-economic growth by stifling female human capital, or were guilds (as Epstein argues, contrary to Ogilvie) necessary institutional solutions for market failures and skills training?
- **The Mechanism of Kibbutz Segregation:** Did women in the early kibbutz movement voluntarily retreat to domestic spheres due to innate, biological behavioral preferences (as argued by Tiger and Shepher), or were they systematically pushed out by a patriarchal redefinition of "productive" labor that favored male physical strength?
- **Global Applicability of Green Governance:** Does Agarwal's robust finding that a critical mass of women improves environmental conservation in developing-world community forests replicate in post-industrial, fully mechanized Western resource management?
- **Pre-Contact Iroquois Matriarchy:** Did Haudenosaunee Clan Mothers truly wield absolute, constitutional veto power over all male decisions, or is this an exaggerated ethnohistorical projection by modern scholars contrasting Indigenous structures with oppressive colonial patriarchy?
- **The Monastic Third Gender:** Did medieval asceticism truly elevate nuns to equal standing with monks by creating a gender-neutral spiritual space, or did it merely require women to psychologically and culturally adopt masculine virtues (*viriliter*) to achieve ecclesiastical respect?

Essential Sources to Read in Full

1. **Agarwal, Bina. (2010).** *Gender and Green Governance: The Political Economy of Women's Presence Within and Beyond Community Forestry.* Oxford University Press.
2. **Bennett, Judith M. (1996).** *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300–1600.* Oxford University Press.
3. **Brown, Judith K. (1970).** "Economic Organization and the Position of Women among the

Iroquois," *Ethnohistory*, 17(3/4), 151-167.
4. **Crowston, Clare Haru. (2001).** *Fabricating Women: The Seamstresses of Old Regime France, 1675-1791.* Duke University Press.
5. **De Moor, Tine, & van Zanden, Jan Luiten. (2010).** "Girl power: the European marriage pattern and labour markets in the North Sea region in the late medieval and early modern period." *Economic History Review*, 63(1), 1-33.
6. **Foot, Sarah. (2006).** *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England, c. 600-900.* Cambridge University Press.
7. **Ogilvie, Sheilagh. (2019).** *The European Guilds: An Economic Analysis.* Princeton University Press.
8. **Tiger, Lionel, & Shepher, Joseph. (1975).** *Women in the Kibbutz.* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
9. **Tooker, Elisabeth. (1978).** "The League of the Iroquois: Its History, Politics, and Ritual." *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 15.
10. **Wunder, Heide. (1998).** *He Is the Sun, She Is the Moon: Women in Early Modern Germany.* Harvard University Press.

Implications for living together

When designing modern couples, families, organizations, or societies, historical data demonstrates that attempting to force exact, 50/50 parity in every specific occupational or domestic role often fails to accommodate statistical behavioral differences and physiological realities. The kibbutz experiment illustrates that extreme cultural pressure to completely eliminate the sexual division of labor often results in a rapid snapback to traditional norms, generating resentment in the process. Conversely, the exclusionary European guild system proves that utilizing cultural laws to aggressively bar the sexes from specific economic spheres stifles innovation, creates inefficient rent-seeking cartels, and actively suppresses the individual outliers who naturally fall outside behavioral averages.

The most successful and enduring historical mixed organizations—such as the peasant *Arbeitspaar* and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy—did not ignore the differences between the sexes, nor did they use physiological differences to justify total subordination. Instead, they recognized distinct spheres of competence and designed cultural frameworks to ensure an absolute balance of institutional power between those spheres.

Following the naturalistic fallacy, we must remember that just because sexual dimorphism and behavioral differences are *natural* does not mean the historical inequalities that arose from them are *good* or inevitable. The implication for modern living is that institutional design should guarantee absolute equality of authority, dignity, and legal rights (as seen in successful female forestry committees or Clan Mother vetoes) while allowing organic, uncoerced sorting of roles based on overlapping, individual preferences. Modern organizations must be structurally robust enough to support the median statistical differences between men and women, while remaining entirely permeable and supportive for the vast number of individuals who defy those averages.

Works cited

1. Nuns and Monks at Work: Equality or Distinction between the Sexes, https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cambridge-history-of-medieval-monasticism-in-the-latin-west/nuns-and-monks-at-work-equality-or-distinction-between-the-sexes-a-study-of-frankish-monasteries-from-the-sixth-to-the-tenth-century/C420511062ACF2DB784003EBD08D1BF9
2. Defending the Double Monastery: Gender and Society in Early, https://www.medievalists.net/2011/09/defending-the-double-monastery-gender-and-society-in-early-medieval-europe/
3. The Priesthood in Anglo-Saxon England, https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:21163779-5879-4da7-9582-7fd3b7a489f1/files/mbb21a876718f38a9d786e6f82cea0ce8
4. Monasticism in the British Isles: A Comparative Overview - MDPI, https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/12/9/767
5. Order of Fontevraud - Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Fontevraud
6. Fontevraud Abbey - Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fontevraud_Abbey
7. Why Write Medieval Mysteries? - Crime Reads, https://crimereads.com/why-write-medieval-mysteries/
8. Abbaye Royale de Fontevraud - Bernard Smith, https://www.bernardsmith.name/castles_loire/fontevraud/
9. Keeping Nuns in Order: Enforcement of the Rules in Thirteenth, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-ecclesiastical-history/article/keeping-nuns-in-order-enforcement-of-the-rules-in-thirteenthcentury-sempringham/51F34B5AF57626118EB447C9CC2265AC
10. Vadstena Abbey - Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vadstena_Abbey
11. The Life and Liturgy of Saint Birgitta of Sweden - Medievalists.net, https://www.medievalists.net/2021/03/saint-birgitta-sweden/
12. Syon Abbey and the bridgettine order - Tudor Place, http://www.tudorplace.com.ar/Documents/SyonAbbey.htm
13. Council of Nicaea II - Women Priests, https://womenpriests.org/tradition/can-nic2-council-of-nicaea-ii/
14. Reflections on a Contemporary Case of Double Monastery in ... - MDPI, https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/10/8/453
15. Review of Sheilagh Ogilvie, The European Guilds: An Economic, https://www.independent.org/article/2021/09/27/review-of-sheilagh-ogilvie-the-european-guilds-an-economic-analysis/
16. Sheilagh Ogilvie. The European Guilds: An Economic Analysis., https://academic.oup.com/ahr/article-abstract/125/4/1494/5933466
17. Guilds Book - Sheilagh Ogilvie, https://sheilaghogilvie.com/guilds-book/
18. Apprenticeship and occupational mobility in early modern Genoa, https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/330674/1/1940465303.pdf
19. STATE CAPACITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH - Sheilagh Ogilvie, https://sheilaghogilvie.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/Ogilvie-2022-State-Capacity-and-Economic-Growth-Cautionary-Tales-from-History.pdf
20. Sheilagh OGILVIE - University of Oxford - ResearchGate,

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Sheilagh-Ogilvie
21. Why is beer so male and white? - The Growler B.C., https://bc.thegrowler.ca/features/why-is-beer-so-male-and-white/
22. Industrial brewing in early modern London | Urban History, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/urban-history/article/industrial-brewing-in-early-modern-london/CF2759E6227B8C7B81C9AABC7DFA0286
23. ALCOHOL IN THE MIDDLE AGES - S T R A V A G A N Z A, https://stravaganzastravaganza.blogspot.com/2017/12/alcohol-in-middle-ages.html
24. Royal Policy and the Secularisation of the Paris Guilds in ... - H-France, https://h-france.net/rude/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/vol5_02_Garrioch_Royal_Policy_and_Guilds_final.pdf
25. Women, Gender, and Guilds in Early Modern Europe: An Overview, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-review-of-social-history/article/women-gender-and-guilds-in-early-modern-europe-an-overview-of-recent-research/8DD0903AB406FDC4778EC779182053EA
26. Guilds in medieval Europe - Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guilds_in_medieval_Europe
27. Women at Work in Preindustrial France 9780271034799, https://dokumen.pub/women-at-work-in-preindustrial-france-9780271034799.html
28. He is the Sun, She is the Moon: Women in Early Modern Germany, https://books.google.com/books/about/He_is_the_Sun_She_is_the_Moon.html?id=HX5RmYlhXs4C
29. Heide Wunder - Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heide_Wunder
30. Scholarship on Women, Gender, and the Reformation, https://historicalpapers.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/historicalpapers/article/download/39677/35980
31. Girl power: The European marriage pattern and labour markets in, https://pure.eur.nl/en/publications/girl-power-the-european-marriage-pattern-and-labour-markets-in-th/
32. "Girl Power": study shows how changes to marriage patterns, http://medievalnews.blogspot.com/2010/01/girl-power-study-shows-how-changes-to.html
33. A GENDER–NATURAL RESOURCES TANGO - CGSpace, https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstreams/b0485b42-3ae7-4976-82d1-151bebf86a9c/download
34. (PDF) Gender and Sustainable Forest Management in East Africa, https://scispace.com/papers/gender-and-sustainable-forest-management-in-east-africa-and-3amdlk84x8
35. Books - Bina Agarwal, https://www.binaagarwal.com/books.htm
36. Gender and Green Governance: The Political Economy of Women's, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270588915_Gender_and_Green_Governance_The_Political_Economy_of_Women's_Presence_Within_and_Beyond_Community_Forestry
37. Gender and forest conservation - Sign in,

https://pure.manchester.ac.uk/ws/files/27373794/POST-PEER-REVIEW-PUBLISHERS.PDF
38. (PDF) Is gender an important factor influencing user groups' property, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228832820_Is_Gender_an_Important_Factor_Influencing_User_Groups'_Property_Rights_and_Forestry_Governance_Empirical_Analysis_from_East_Africa_and_Latin_America
39. The power of numbers in gender dynamics - Bina Agarwal, https://www.binaagarwal.com/downloads/apapers/Power%20of%20numbers.pdf
40. Does Women's Proportional Strength Affect their Participation, https://liberiafti.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/agarwal_does-women_s-proportional-strength-affect-their-participation1.pdf
41. The Impact of Women's Participation in Community Forest Governance, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46490461_Gender_and_Forest_Conservation_The_Impact_of_Women's_Participation_in_Community_Forest_Governance
42. (PDF) Does the gender composition of forest and fishery, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299312717_Does_the_gender_composition_of_forest_and_fishery_management_groups_affect_resource_governance_and_conservation_outcomes_A_systematic_map
43. Beyond Family Farming: Gendering the Collective., https://www.balzan.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/ABL10-Agarwal-Download.pdf
44. Five Things You Didn't Know about Co-ops | The Tyee, https://thetyee.ca/Presents/2013/10/14/Five-Things-About-Co-ops/
45. TO BUILD A STRONGER FUTURE, https://www.ica.coop/sites/default/files/2021-12/ACI_%20ENG_125_V3%20(1).pdf
46. Spring 2016 - Women's History Network, https://womenshistorynetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/wh_spring16_02_04.pdf
47. gender and politics in Dundee - Open Research Online, https://oro.open.ac.uk/58142/1/DX222333.pdf
48. Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen | ICA - International Cooperative Alliance, https://ica.coop/en/friedrich-wilhelm-raiffeisen
49. Pioneering Co-operative Credit: The German Model - The Law Institute, https://thelaw.institute/co-operation-genesis-principles-values-growth-and-development/german-cooperative-credit-model/
50. Chapter 11: Credit Unions: Prospects and Challenges in - IMF eLibrary, https://www.elibrary.imf.org/display/book/9781616352653/ch011.xml
51. Banking on a Religious Divide: Accounting for the Success of the, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-economic-history/article/banking-on-a-religious-divide-accounting-for-the-success-of-the-netherlands-raiffeisen-cooperatives-in-the-crisis-of-the-1920s/DE73735374E004326EDC6C608E4A0E50
52. Resilience of the Cooperative Business Model in Times of Crisis, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_108416.pdf
53. Kibbutz | Encyclopedia - Jewish Women's Archive,

https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/kibbutz
54. iJ '. E,arlyBolshevik -Work Among Women r, https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/w&r/WR_012_1976.pdf
55. Women in the Changing World of the Kibbutz - bac-lac.gc.ca, https://epe.bac-lac.gc.ca/100/201/300/women_judaism/v04n01/index.php/wjudaism/article/download/163/270.pdf
56. Haudenosaunee - Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haudenosaunee
57. History of the Haudenosaunee - Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Haudenosaunee
58. View of Forty Canoes of Women - Labour / Le Travail, https://lltjournal.ca/index.php/llt/article/view/6199/7264
59. Alison - Race Gender and Colonialism | PDF | Iroquois - Scribd, https://www.scribd.com/document/116747825/Alison-Race-Gender-and-Colonialism
60. Class Structure and Female Autonomy in Rural Java - ResearchGate, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237959349_Class_Structure_and_Female_Autonomy_in_Rural_Java
61. Haudenosaunee Clan Mother - Snekcoatl, http://freyathefrypan.blogspot.com/2019/01/haudenosaunee-clan-mother.html
62. Great Law of Peace--Matriarchy - Indigenous Network, https://www.indigenousnetwork.org/post/great-law-of-peace-matriarchy
63. Ungoverned Tongues among Haudenosaunee Women and Their, http://jannoel.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Ethnohistory-2010-Noel-201-23.pdf
64. The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois, https://dokumen.pub/the-great-law-and-the-longhouse-a-political-history-of-the-iroquois-confederacy-0806141239-9780806141237.html