# SO-01 Women in political power and what states do

The question of whether, how, and why women's political participation alters the trajectory, policy choices, and overall outcomes of states is one of the most rigorously investigated subjects in modern political economy. For decades, the assumption that "women govern differently" was relegated to the domain of essentialist philosophy, broad sociological observation, or ideological assertion. However, the advent of rigorous empirical methodologies—specifically the use of natural experiments, instrumental variables, and regression discontinuity designs (RDD)—has allowed researchers to isolate the causal impact of female leadership from confounding variables such as underlying cultural progressivism, institutional wealth, or preexisting voter preferences.

To thoroughly understand how women in political power influence state behaviour, it is necessary to unpack the evidence across three distinct layers: measurable physiology, statistical behavioural distributions, and variable cultural institutions. By separating biological constraints from overlapping behavioural tendencies and institutional incentives, a highly nuanced picture emerges. The evidence demonstrates that women do indeed alter state policy, public goods provision, and conflict dynamics, but rarely for the simplistic, essentialist reasons historically assumed. This report synthesizes the leading peer-reviewed literature to evaluate the causal impact of female political power on the state, examining both sides of major academic controversies.

## Layer 1: Physiology (Measurable)

The physiological layer provides the foundational, measurable biological parameters that influence human behaviour. In the context of political leadership, the most frequently debated physiological elements revolve around neuroendocrinology, specifically the roles of testosterone and the oxytocin-vasopressin system in regulating aggression, risk, dominance, and stress.

### Testosterone and the Amplification of Social Status

A pervasive, historically dominant assumption in political psychology is that male-dominated leadership inevitably results in more aggressive state behaviour due to the physiological effects of circulating testosterone. However, contemporary neurobiological literature fundamentally complicates this deterministic narrative. Sapolsky (2017) demonstrates that individual differences in baseline testosterone levels do not reliably predict aggressive behaviour[1]. Instead, testosterone acts as an amplifier of pre-existing social tendencies and cultural conditioning. Its primary physiological function in humans is not to induce brute aggression, but to compel behaviour that maintains, protects, or elevates social status.

Crucially, if a specific culture or institution rewards prosocial, cooperative, or diplomatic behaviour with status, higher doses of testosterone will actually increase prosociality and cooperation[2]. Therefore, projecting male physiological testosterone levels directly onto state-level military aggression relies on a flawed understanding of endocrinology. Testosterone fuels the drive for dominance, but the *expression* of that dominance is entirely dictated by the

institutional rules of the game[2].

### Biobehavioral Responses to Stress: Tend-and-Befriend

Leadership inherently involves crisis management and acute stress response. Taylor, Klein, Lewis, Gruenewald, Gurung, and Updegraff (2000, *Psychological Review*) proposed a highly influential paradigm shift in understanding physiological stress responses, distinguishing between the traditional "fight-or-flight" mechanism and a female-typical "tend-and-befriend" pattern[4]. Based on a comprehensive meta-review of 200 studies comprising 14,548 participants (66% male, 34% female), Taylor et al. identified that while the primary sympathetic nervous system arousal (the fight-or-flight cascade) occurs in both sexes, female physiological responses are uniquely moderated by the oxytocin system, female reproductive hormones, and endogenous opioid peptides[4].

Under acute stress, the heightened secretion of oxytocin in females buffers the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical (HPA) axis, promoting behaviours evolutionarily designed to protect offspring ("tending") and seek out social support networks to reduce vulnerability ("befriending")[4]. In contrast, male stress responses are more frequently mediated by vasopressin, which aligns closer with territoriality and classic fight-or-flight mechanics[7]. While this physiological dimorphism is highly measurable and statistically robust, it represents a baseline biological propensity rather than an absolute behavioral determinant. Its ultimate expression in a political context is heavily mediated by the subsequent layers of statistical behaviour and culture.

## Layer 2: Behaviour (Statistical, Overlapping Distributions)

Moving from the measurable physiological layer to the behavioural layer requires acknowledging a critical statistical reality: behavioural differences between men and women exist as overlapping distributions rather than binary, disjunct categories.

### Risk Aversion, Competition, and Social Preferences

A vast body of experimental economics literature has sought to quantify gender differences in core economic and strategic preferences. Croson and Gneezy (2009, *Journal of Economic Literature*) provided a landmark review of laboratory and field experiments, establishing three robust statistical divergences: women are, on average, more risk-averse than men; women are more averse to competition; and women's social preferences are more situationally malleable[8]. In laboratory settings utilizing dictator games, public goods games, and lottery choices, men consistently demonstrate a higher threshold for financial and strategic risk, while women demonstrate greater sensitivity to the social context of the decision, displaying what Croson and Gneezy term more "malleable" social orientations[8].

However, the magnitude, universality, and interpretation of these effect sizes are fiercely contested. Nelson (2015, *Feminist Economics*) conducted a rigorous meta-analysis of 147 estimates from 25 primary studies specifically examining gender differences in risk aversion[11]. Nelson identified substantial publication bias within the discipline, wherein studies finding statistically significant gender differences were preferentially published and cited, while null

results were discarded[11]. When statistically correcting for this publication bias, the actual behavioral difference in risk-taking between men and women diminishes significantly[11]. Furthermore, Nelson highlights the danger of confusing statistical inference (mean differences between two groups) with generalizations about individuals. Using Cohen's *d* to measure effect sizes, Nelson notes that even where statistically significant differences exist, the within-group variance (the differences among women, or among men) vastly outweighs the between-group variance[12]. This means the distributions of male and female risk-aversion heavily overlap.
Recent empirical assessments have further challenged the broad generalizations of the Croson and Gneezy framework. DellaVigna and Pope (2022) tested the "female sensitivity hypothesis"—the idea that women's social preferences are more malleable and responsive to experimental treatments than men's—and found that 93% of between-subject comparisons in their massive dataset were inconsistent with the hypothesis that women respond to treatment while men do not[13]. The literature review revealed that while the hypothesis is heavily cited favourably, actual empirical support for female behavioral sensitivity is exceedingly weak when subjected to rigorous replication[13].

### Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)

Another relevant behavioral metric in political science is Social Dominance Orientation (SDO), a measure of an individual's psychological preference for hierarchical group relations and inequality. Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Malle (1994, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*) established that men, on average, score higher on SDO scales than women, meaning men are statistically more likely to support hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myths[14]. Higher SDO correlates robustly with support for policies that uphold the hierarchical status quo, such as wars of aggression, punitive criminal justice policies, and opposition to social welfare[15]. Lower SDO correlates with egalitarianism, diplomacy, and resource redistribution. This statistical divergence provides a behavioral bridge to the policy choices observed when women assume state power.

### Distinguishing Averages from Individuals

This statistical overlap is vital for understanding political leadership. To state that "women are more risk-averse on average" or "women have lower SDO on average" does not mean that a specific female politician who has successfully navigated the highly competitive, often ruthless pipeline of national politics will embody these traits. Political selection mechanisms act as heavy behavioral filters; the women who emerge at the apex of political power often reside in the extreme tails of the behavioral distributions. Consequently, female heads of state frequently display competitive, risk-tolerant, and dominance-oriented traits that are statistically indistinguishable from their male counterparts. Failure to distinguish population averages from the highly selected individuals who attain political office leads directly to the ecological fallacy.

## Layer 3: Culture (Variable)

The final layer is culture—the institutional rules, electoral systems, historical norms, and socioeconomic frameworks that constrain or enable physiology and behavior. Cultural context dictates whether a physiological propensity or a statistical behavioral average is expressed, suppressed, or penalized.

The profound variability of culture is powerfully demonstrated by Gneezy, Leonard, and List (2009, *Econometrica*), who ran behavioral experiments in two distinct societies: the deeply patriarchal Maasai in Tanzania and the matrilineal Khasi in India[16]. Using an experimental setup to test competitiveness, they found that while Maasai men were significantly more competitive than Maasai women (mirroring standard Western data), this result completely inverted in the matrilineal Khasi society. Among the Khasi, women were significantly more competitive than men[16]. This landmark study proves that the behavioral layer is highly elastic and fundamentally shaped by institutional constraints and cultural incentive structures.

In modern states, electoral accountability, party quotas, media ecosystems, and gender stereotypes form the cultural layer that dictates how female politicians behave in office. With this three-layer framework established, we can analyze the causal evidence regarding what happens when women achieve political power.

# Causal Evidence: Policy, Public Goods, and Welfare

Determining the true impact of female politicians is methodologically difficult because of selection bias and endogeneity: voters who elect women may already prefer distinct, progressive policies, meaning the election of a woman is a symptom of progressive preferences rather than the cause of policy shifts. To separate correlation from causation, economists and political scientists rely on natural experiments, particularly the random assignment of gender quotas and historical enfranchisement shocks.

## The Suffrage Shock and the Size of Government

In the United States, the staggered, state-by-state rollout of women's suffrage prior to the 19th Amendment in 1920 provides a pristine historical natural experiment. Lott and Kenny (1999, *Journal of Political Economy*) analyzed whether women's suffrage changed the size and scope of government[18]. Because women historically bore the primary costs of child-rearing and had lower baseline incomes, standard models of electoral competition predicted that enfranchising women would shift median voter preferences toward social insurance and public goods.

Lott and Kenny found that within a single year of suffrage law enactment, voting patterns of male legislators shifted immediately to capture the new female electorate, and local public health spending rose by roughly 35%[20]. This influx of public health funding was heavily directed toward maternal and child welfare, culminating in landmark legislation like the Sheppard-Towner Act of 1921[20]. The cultural constraint of the ballot box forced politicians to adapt to the behavioral preferences of women.

## The Indian Panchayat Quota Experiments

The most rigorous modern causal evidence originates from India's 1993 constitutional amendment, which randomly reserved one-third of Village Council (Gram Panchayat) leader (Pradhan) positions for women. Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004, *Econometrica*) utilized this randomized policy experiment to study 265 village councils in West Bengal and Rajasthan[21]. Because the reservation was strictly random, any differences in policy outcomes could be causally attributed to the gender of the leader, completely bypassing selection bias.

The effect sizes were profound and demonstrated that women legislators invest in public goods that closely align with the stated preferences of female constituents. In West Bengal, where

women disproportionately complained about a lack of safe drinking water, female leaders invested significantly more budget into drinking water infrastructure than male leaders[23]. In Rajasthan, where men frequently traveled outside the village for work and prioritized road quality, female leaders invested less in roads than their male counterparts, redirecting funds to welfare[23]. Furthermore, the presence of a female leader doubled the likelihood that female constituents would speak up and participate in village council meetings, demonstrating a powerful civic engagement spillover effect[23].

An essential follow-up question is whether these quotas have lasting effects once withdrawn. Bhavnani (2009, *American Political Science Review*) examined municipal elections in Mumbai, analyzing wards where reservations had lapsed. Bhavnani found that the probability of a woman winning office in a previously reserved constituency was approximately five times higher than in a constituency that had never been reserved[24]. Quotas forced political parties to field women, allowing voters to learn that women could govern effectively. This dismantled cultural biases and created a pipeline of female incumbents whose electoral viability survived the removal of the quota[24].

## Health Outcomes: Neonatal and Maternal Mortality

The election of women yields highly measurable, life-saving impacts on human capital and survival rates, particularly regarding reproductive and child health. Bhalotra and Clots-Figueras (2014, *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*) examined the impact of female representation in Indian state legislatures on neonatal mortality. They found that a 10 percentage point increase in women's political representation caused a 2.1 percentage point reduction in neonatal mortality—an immense effect size representing a 33.5% decline from the baseline mean[26]. The mechanisms driving this outcome were tangible policy deliveries: increased antenatal care, higher rates of iron supplementation, and a higher probability of institutional births in government facilities[27].

Expanding this to a global scale, Bhalotra, Clarke, Gomes, and Venkataramani (2023, *Journal of the European Economic Association*) evaluated the impact of national parliamentary gender quotas across developing countries. Using a dynamic event-study approach to leverage the staggered timing of quota legislation, they identified a sharp, sustained 8% to 12% reduction in the maternal mortality ratio (MMR)[28]. This macro-level effect was driven by specific, measurable mechanisms: a 5 to 8 percentage point increase in skilled birth attendance, a 4 to 8 percentage point increase in prenatal care utilization, and a 6% to 7% decline in fertility, alongside an increase in young women's schooling by 0.5 years[28].

Historical evidence corroborates these modern findings. Bhalotra et al. (2023) also analyzed the arrival of the first antibiotics (sulfa drugs) in the U.S. in 1937. They found that maternal mortality declined by 15% *more* in states that had enacted early women's suffrage compared to late-suffrage states[30]. The longer history of women's political voice laid the groundwork for greater acceptability, funding, and quicker uptake of medical technologies that improved women's health[31].

| Policy Domain | Key Study | Methodology & | Causal Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | Sample | / Mechanism |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Local Public Goods** | Chattopadhyay & Duflo (2004) | Randomized Quota (265 Indian Village Councils) | Budgetary shifts precisely matching female constituent preferences (e.g., increased water infrastructure, decreased road infrastructure). |
| **Civic Engagement** | Bhavnani (2009) | Natural Experiment (Mumbai Municipal Elections) | 5x higher probability of a woman winning office after quota withdrawal due to voter learning and pipeline effects. |
| **Infant Health** | Bhalotra & Clots-Figueras (2014) | Instrumental Variables (Indian State Legislatures) | 10 pp quota increase = 2.1 pp (33.5%) drop in neonatal mortality via increased antenatal care. |
| **Maternal Health** | Bhalotra et al. (2023) | Event Study (Cross-country panel data) | Quota adoption = 8-12% drop in maternal mortality ratio via 5-8 pp increase in skilled birth attendance. |
| **Historical Welfare** | Lott & Kenny (1999) | Natural Experiment (U.S. State Suffrage Rollout) | 35% immediate increase in local public health spending following female enfranchisement. |

# Causal Evidence: Economic Performance and Competence

A persistent stereotype is that because women prioritize social welfare, health, and education (which have long-term returns), they may be less effective at managing short-term economic growth and fiscal policy. Baskaran, Bhalotra, Min, and Uppal (2018/2023, *Journal of Economic Growth*) rigorously debunked this using a regression discontinuity design (RDD) on 4,265 competitive elections to India's state legislative assemblies[32]. By strictly comparing constituencies where a woman narrowly beat a man to those where a man narrowly beat a woman by a few votes, they effectively randomized the election outcome, isolating the causal effect of gender[32].

The authors found that female legislators generated economic growth (measured objectively by satellite luminosity data) that was 1.8 percentage points higher per year than their male counterparts[32]. When probing the mechanisms behind this heightened economic performance, the researchers found that women legislators were significantly less likely to carry pending criminal charges (male legislators in the close-election sample were three times more likely to have criminal charges)[32]. Furthermore, using asset accumulation as a proxy for corruption, female legislators accumulated assets at a rate 10 percentage points lower per annum than men while in office[32]. Women were more efficacious, less corrupt, and less vulnerable to political opportunism, leading to superior net economic growth.

# The Gender and Corruption Controversy

The finding by Baskaran et al. that female leaders in India exhibit lower rates of corruption reflects one of the most intense and heavily researched debates in political economy: Are women inherently less corrupt than men?

## The "Fairer Sex" Hypothesis

The debate began with Dollar, Fisman, and Gatti (2001, *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*), who analyzed cross-country data from over 100 countries. They discovered a strong, statistically significant negative correlation between the proportion of women in a country's legislature and the level of perceived corruption[35]. They estimated that a one standard deviation increase in female political participation resulted in a 20% of a standard deviation decline in corruption[36]. Concurrently, Swamy et al. (2001) found similar micro-level evidence in World Values Survey data[36]. This birthed the "Fairer Sex" hypothesis, heavily predicated on the essentialist assumption that women possess higher intrinsic moral standards and are fundamentally more honest[38].

## The Purity Myth and the Institutional Critique

The essentialist "Fairer Sex" argument was systematically dismantled in subsequent years by scholars pointing to variable cultural institutions. Esarey and Chirillo (2013, *Politics & Gender*) challenged the idea that women are biologically or psychologically immune to corruption. They argued that the gender gap in corruption is highly context-dependent, explicitly referring to the

essentialist view as a "Purity Myth"[37]. Analyzing international survey data, Esarey and Chirillo demonstrated that the negative association between female political participation and corruption exists strictly in democracies, but disappears entirely in autocracies[37].

If women were inherently more honest, the negative correlation should hold regardless of regime type. Instead, Esarey and Schwindt-Bayer (2018, *American Journal of Political Science*) proved that the relationship is moderated entirely by *electoral accountability*[40]. They evaluated a time-series cross-sectional dataset of 76 democratic-leaning countries and found that women only reduce corruption in systems where the risk of detection and electoral punishment is high (e.g., strong press freedom, parliamentary systems, low baseline corruption norms)[40].

Two overlapping mechanisms explain this institutional interaction:

1. **Risk Aversion:** Drawing on Croson and Gneezy's (2009) behavioral findings, women are statistically more risk-averse. Therefore, in democratic systems where corruption carries a high risk of exposure and punishment, women are less likely to engage in it. In autocracies, where corruption is a normalized, low-risk mechanism of statecraft (and often required for political survival), women participate at rates similar to men[40].
2. **Gender Stereotypes and Voter Punishment:** Barnes and Beaulieu (2014, 2018) provided experimental evidence showing that voters hold female politicians to higher ethical standards[36]. Because voters stereotype women as inherently more honest, a female politician caught in a corruption scandal experiences a much harsher electoral penalty than a male politician committing the exact same offense[40]. Thus, women face higher structural costs for corruption, incentivizing cleaner governance in accountable systems.

Ultimately, the strongest evidence indicates that women are not inherently purer; rather, overlapping behavioral distributions (statistical risk aversion) interact with cultural constraints (harsher voter punishment) to produce less corrupt outcomes under specific, highly accountable democratic conditions.

# Conflict Behavior, Peace, and War

Does female political empowerment lead to a more peaceful state? The evidence presents a striking dichotomy between modern correlational hypotheses and robust historical causal data.

## The "Women and Peace" Hypothesis (Correlation)

Hudson et al. (2012, *Sex and World Peace*) aggregate vast amounts of demographic data to propose the "women and peace" hypothesis, arguing that the physical security of women and the level of gender equality within a state are the strongest predictors of that state's peacefulness on the international stage[45]. Higher levels of female political representation correlate negatively with state-sponsored violence and interstate conflict. While this macro-correlation is robust, critics correctly point out that it suffers from severe endogeneity: peaceful, wealthy, highly institutionalized democratic states are simultaneously more likely to empower women and less likely to fight wars.

## Queens vs. Kings: A Natural Experiment in War (Causation)

To isolate the true causal effect of female leadership on state military aggression, Dube and Harish (2020, *Journal of Political Economy*) conducted a sweeping historical analysis of 193

reigns in 18 European polities between 1480 and 1913[47]. Because hereditary succession rules dictate leadership regardless of democratic preferences or peacetime conditions, this era provides a clean natural experiment. Dube and Harish utilized instrumental variables—whether the previous monarch had a first-born male, or had a sister—to control for selection bias and succession crises[48].

The findings wholly contradict the essentialist assumption of female pacifism. Dube and Harish found that polities led by queens were **39 percentage points more likely to engage in war** in a given year compared to polities led by kings[47].

Crucially, the study unpacks the mechanisms behind this aggression, finding massive heterogeneity based on marital status. Unmarried queens were significantly more likely to be *attacked* by foreign powers, suggesting that rival states perceived female rulers as weak and vulnerable targets[47]. Conversely, married queens were significantly more likely to be the *aggressors* in conflicts compared to married kings[47]. Dube and Harish attribute this to a division of labor dictated by historical gender norms: married queens routinely enlisted their husbands to manage the military and fiscal bureaucracy, effectively giving the state a dual-executive capacity that allowed for highly aggressive foreign policy and better alliance building[47]. Married kings, constrained by patriarchal norms, rarely shared such institutional power with their wives[47].

This robust finding indicates that when institutional constraints (such as voter punishment for aggression) are removed, and state capacity is high, female leaders are statistically highly capable of, and willing to initiate, lethal state conflict.

### Women in Peace Processes

If female leaders are not inherently pacifist, what role do women play in resolving conflicts? The inclusion of women in peace negotiations has become a global norm since UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Paffenholz (2014/2015) conducted an exhaustive qualitative and quantitative study of 40 peace processes to evaluate the efficacy of this inclusion[51].

Paffenholz found that simply counting the number of women at a negotiation table (descriptive representation) does not magically increase the likelihood of a peace agreement. *Influence*, rather than mere presence, is the determining factor[52]. In cases where female delegates were beholden to hardline political parties (quotas without independence), they advanced the conflict objectives of their factions rather than peace[53].

However, when independent civil society women's coalitions were able to exert strong influence, the probability of reaching and sustaining a peace agreement increased significantly[53]. Women's groups consistently exerted mass action and pressure to force belligerents to sign deals[53].

Krause, Krause, and Bränfors (2018, *International Interactions*) quantitatively confirmed this through an original dataset of 2,299 delegates across 116 comprehensive peace agreements, finding a robust statistical correlation between agreements signed by female delegates and the long-term durability of the peace[54]. Women's involvement correlated with agreements that featured higher implementation rates and broader political reform provisions[55].

## Economic Development and Women's Empowerment

Finally, there is the broader question of how women's empowerment interacts with

macroeconomic development. Duflo (2012, *Journal of Economic Literature*) posited a bi-directional relationship: economic development drives down inequality, and empowering women benefits development[57]. However, Duflo provocatively concluded that the inter-relationships are probably too weak to be self-sustaining, arguing that economic development alone is insufficient, and that continuous, deliberate policy commitment to equality for its own sake is necessary[57].

This framework has drawn criticism from feminist economists. Critics argue that the "randomista" approach (relying strictly on RCTs) favored by Duflo leads to a piecemeal analysis that ignores structural history and context[59]. Feminist critiques argue that claiming gender equality is best achieved through gender-neutral policies ignores the patriarchal structures that have actively curtailed women's productive potential[59]. Thus, targeted, structural interventions (like the quotas discussed earlier) are viewed by critics as superior to waiting for generalized economic development to trickle down into gender equality.

## 10-line summary of robust findings

The empirical literature demonstrates that female political empowerment substantively alters state policy, but not due to innate moral superiority or biological pacifism. Natural experiments with electoral quotas show that women consistently allocate state resources toward public goods, health, and infrastructure that benefit women and children, resulting in massive, causally verified reductions in neonatal and maternal mortality. Furthermore, female legislators frequently outperform male peers in local economic growth, driven by lower rates of criminality and political opportunism. In democratic systems with high electoral accountability, female representation sharply reduces corruption, driven by statistical risk-aversion and the reality that voters punish female politicians more harshly for ethical breaches. However, the essentialist notion that women are inherently peaceful is false; historical data shows female monarchs were vastly more likely to wage war than kings when state capacity allowed. Ultimately, women in power shift state priorities, but their behavioral expression is deeply constrained by institutional rules and cultural incentives.

## Contested or open questions

- **The Durability of the Corruption Gap:** It remains contested whether the gender gap in corruption will persist as female politicians become fully integrated into historically male-dominated, entrenched political networks, or if the current gap is a temporary artifact of women operating as political "outsiders."
- **Essentialism vs. Socialization:** While experimental economics highlights female risk-aversion, it is heavily debated how much of this is driven by intrinsic physiological baselines (e.g., oxytocin/stress pathways) versus culturally conditioned socialization that heavily penalizes female risk-taking.
- **The "Female Sensitivity Hypothesis":** Early behavioral literature suggested women's social preferences are highly malleable, but recent large-scale replications have failed to find evidence supporting this, leaving the true nature of female social preferences actively debated.
- **Long-Term Quota Effects:** While temporary quotas have been shown to dismantle voter bias in local Indian elections, it remains an open question whether national-level

parliamentary quotas permanently alter political pipelines if the quotas are subsequently revoked.

- **Peacemaking Causality:** While female influence in peace processes correlates with durable agreements, isolating the exact causal mechanism is difficult, as belligerents willing to allow independent women's groups to mediate may already be more committed to finding a peaceful resolution.

## The 5 to 10 most important sources to read in full

1. **Chattopadhyay, R., & Duflo, E. (2004).** "Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India." *Econometrica*. (The foundational randomized evaluation of political quotas).
2. **Bhalotra, S., Clarke, D., Gomes, J. F., & Venkataramani, A. (2023).** "Maternal Mortality and Women's Political Power." *Journal of the European Economic Association*. (Definitive global evidence on quotas saving lives).
3. **Esarey, J., & Schwindt-Bayer, L. A. (2018).** "Women's Representation, Accountability and Corruption in Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science*. (Resolves the corruption debate via institutional accountability).
4. **Dube, O., & Harish, S. P. (2020).** "Queens." *Journal of Political Economy*. (Groundbreaking historical causal evidence dismantling the female pacifism myth).
5. **Baskaran, T., Bhalotra, S., Min, B., & Uppal, Y. (2023).** "Women legislators and economic performance." *Journal of Economic Growth*. (Rigorous RDD proving female leaders drive economic growth and reduce criminality).
6. **Croson, R., & Gneezy, U. (2009).** "Gender Differences in Preferences." *Journal of Economic Literature*. (Essential summary of behavioral economics regarding risk and competition).
7. **Nelson, J. A. (2015).** "Are Women Really More Risk-Averse than Men? A Re-Analysis of the Literature Using Expanded Methods." *Feminist Economics*. (Crucial statistical corrective on overlapping distributions and publication bias).
8. **Paffenholz, T. (2014).** "Broadening Participation in Peace Processes: Dilemmas & Options for Mediators." *Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue*. (The definitive empirical look at how women influence peace negotiations).

## Implications for living together

When translating these macro-political and empirical findings to the micro-level of couples, families, and organizations, one must consciously avoid the naturalistic fallacy—the assumption that because a trait is biologically or statistically "natural," it is inherently "good" or deterministic. The evidence suggests that men and women bring overlapping but statistically distinct risk profiles, social preferences, and stress responses to shared enterprises. For organizations and families, this implies that diversity in decision-making is not merely a moral imperative, but a functional one. Because women, on average, allocate resources differently (prioritizing long-term health, education, and child welfare) and respond to institutional risks more conservatively, mixed-gender leadership mitigates extreme tail-risks (such as catastrophic corruption or financial ruin) and promotes baseline welfare.

However, because behavioural distributions heavily overlap, institutions and families must not

pigeonhole individuals based on statistical averages. The revelation that queens waged more war than kings, or that matrilineal women are more competitive than patriarchal men, proves that behavior is highly elastic. The ultimate implication for living together is that institutional design, shared accountability, and cultural expectations matter vastly more than biological sex in determining moral and successful outcomes. To optimize human flourishing, societies and organizations must design rules that hold all individuals equally accountable, while ensuring that the distinct, statistically verified priorities of both sexes share equal weight in the allocation of collective resources.

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