Historical and Cultural Pathways Toward Gender Equality and Social Justice

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Article Info	Abstract
	The paper will discuss historical and cultural trajectories which have led to equality and social justice in gender, contextualizing the research as part of the extensive field of management research. The study, using a qualitative approach, provides insights into the role that institutional traditions, cultural legacies, and practices play in the operation of modern organizations. Instead of addressing equality as a juridical mandate or deferent to regulatory norms, the results highlight that managerial practices are informed by historical accounts and cultural conditions that perpetuate structural inequality or destabilize it. The research shows that historical hierarchies and cultural norms are still relevant to the decision making, leadership methods and culture of managers in organizational settings. The key to solving these challenges is the need to go beyond symbolic gestures to systemic reforms incorporating equity into the fundamental human resource management, governance and accountability processes. More importantly, the analysis concludes that sensitivity to historical and cultural awareness in organizational practices is not only conducive to social justice, but also to the fact that it increases legitimacy, trust, and flexible adaptation in the face of an increasingly diversified and globalized society. This work is relevant to research in management, because it shows that a strong, culturally and historically aware viewpoint augments the development of equitable organizations. In addition, it offers practical lessons to leaders who are ready to build justice-focused management systems that incorporate ethical imperatives and focus on strategic abilities.

Introduction

The quest to achieve gender equality and social justice has not come about in a one-directional straight forward movement; it has been the product of a complex and contesting historical and cultural process. The social production of gendered roles, constraints, and enablers occurred through the spread of traditions, institutional structures, scripts created by cultures throughout centuries, and transformed through the ages. Gender norms are not determined or fixed but shaped socially and historically, thus, according to existing cultural trends, political processes, and economies (Wiesner, 2021; Lomazzi, 2023; Bermúdez et al., 2023). Since the exclusionary patriarchal institutions which pushed women to the domestic realms, to modern day struggles to attain recognized citizenship, gender equality is a history of struggle between the status quo and opposition to change. These channels explain why cultural propositions and corrective measures of the past work together to bring current trends of attainment of social justice.

As historical accounts of legal recognition and institutional reforms have shown, such changes have often played a significant role in promoting the rights of women. Among other reforms, the suffrage movements of the 19th and 20th century signified a very promising move that ensured that women were given a right to participate in political life legitimately and given the right to vote, own property and represent themselves in the political systems (Hunter, 2021; Katz, 2021; Monopoli, 2022). However, such achievements were not evenly spread; although in many Western state's women gained the right to vote in 1890-1945, in many post-colonial states independence movements were accompanied by the struggle to achieve political equality between men and women. The reforms in the past also serve as good examples of how states are both agents of change and agents of restriction. Indeed, the hujum campaign in 1927 of the Soviet Union aimed at ending veiling and bringing Central Asian women into the world of civil life is an example of how state intervention can be used to enforce cultural change under the guise of modernization.

Colonial histories also play a major role in pursuing gender equality. The colonial powers in Europe enforced patriarchal systems that often-destabilized established gender practices by promoting women to subservient economic and political roles and establishing male-dominated values, enshrined in legal frameworks (Rodriguez, 2021). Historically, women have been at the center of trade, agriculture and leadership in many African societies, but during the colonial rule they were sidelined to give way to male chiefs and bureaucrats. This restructuring of the colonies institutionalized gender relations and resulted in legacies that still define post-colonial equality struggles. The decolonial approach highlights modern gender justice struggles are not only battles against patriarchy but also battling with the neocolonial reclaiming of law, culture, and state (Agathangelou et al., 2023; Tapia, 2022; Yari & Extension, 2024).

At the same time, culture is not simply a site of oppression; it provides revolutionary possibilities, as well. Most national cultures can be recreated to challenge hegemonic gender systems and achieve egalitarian goals. European Institute of Gender Equality notes that culture as a phenomenon is dynamic and is open to challenge. The three dimensions of culture values, as described by Hofstede, especially the masculinity versus femininity dimension, can give an idea of how the orientation towards cooperation, care, and consensus can result in more egalitarian relationships, but the status-oriented cultural values reinforce divisions (Karczewska & Kukowska, 2021; Huang et al., 2022; Setyaningrum et al., 2022). An example of this is how cultures have arranged cultural narratives, religious practices and heritage traditions to promote their gender-justice agenda, evidencing that tradition both contributes to and is a means of problems.

Cultural manifestations in the media, literature and heritage influence gender and justice imaginaries further. The lack of girls in leadership roles in cultural products such as film, music, and publishing contributes to inequality in symbolic production (Nagaraj & Ranganathan, 2022; Topaz et al., 2022). However, these spheres could offer a way to re-define gender roles and diversify representations. Narration, art and intangible culture can be used as a tool to re-appropriate the past and build inclusive futures (Astudillo et al., 2024; Maspoli, 2022). However, the paradox is that, on the one hand, legislation can change much faster, but the cultural attitudes are generally not kept abreast. Europe is adopting enlightened tools like Istanbul Convention, which criminalizes gender-based violence, but the masculine cultural norms reinforce abuse. This emphasizes that to have substantive equality, reforms made under legislative processes need to be supported with cultural change.

The mass protests also bring together historical traditions. Cultural memory and historical grief are recurring methods of social transformation used by women mobilizations. Notable demonstrations such as the Women March on Versailles in 1789, the suffrage parade in Washington in 1913, the Pretoria march in 1956 in South Africa, the 1975 Iceland women strike and the more recent ones in Poland and Argentina are points of mobilization based on historical memory and culture (Dobbie, 2024; Lin, 2022; Christmas, 2023). Protest cultural performance and historical understanding have come to the forefront of the pursuit of gender justice.

Tracing the paths toward equality at the local level is portrayed in culturally situated creative practices in modern settings. Unconventional responses include programs that are illustrated by the school-husband initiative of the Guinea-Bacon-Cereux residence that aims to have local male village leaders promote the sharing of maternity roles and help women stay healthy. The symbolic act of representation of women as leaders of political parties, judges, or top sportswomen and explorers can instill gender-equality values in the collective consciousness and ethos (Thunga, 2024; Meyerkort, 2024; Calow, 2023). These examples reassert that culture, history, and justice are live issues rather than abstract notions to be separated out of the setting of community life.

The historical and cultural profile that informs gender equality and social justice explicates a landscape of both continuity and change (Ahmed & Khan, 2023; Fernandez, 2023; Kong, 2022). On the one hand, regimes of inequality are enforced by well-established patriarchal, colonial, and conservatively cultural frameworks. Conversely, cultural practices and historical reinterpretations, as well as mass-based social action, facilitate the provision of justice. This interaction is critical to understanding how societies strike a bargain between tradition and change as they pursue equality.

The current work locates itself in the crossroads of these dynamics, striving to reconstitute the role played by both historical processes and cultural interactions on the present condition of gender justice. It is in this tradition of reform, resistance and reinterpretation that the study attempts to shed light on the way cultures constantly rework the definition of culture and historical memory in the process of achieving equality. The main idea is to emphasize that the fight against gender justice cannot be limited only to legal or cultural ideas; it is a continuous process of movement that defies time and space and can be constantly redefined.

Method

Research Design and Rationale

The study had a qualitative, interpretivist program as it was used to shed light on past experiences and accentuate cultures in order to identify reduction paths to gender equality and social justice. The qualitative approach was needed since the phenomena being studied such as values, meanings, memories, and symbolic practices can be understood better using the opinions of the actors, in their contexts related to their historical and cultural contexts. Instead of the identification of the relations among variables, the study aimed to reproduce the paths, trace the interpretation processes through time and unveil the reasoning that support continuity and transformation among gender norms. It was an iterative, abductive design, simple observation of early results based on textual and archival sources was later used to shape future interviews and interview discussions, which led to future selective visits to the cultural texts

and the archive. This circular motion is what enabled the analysis to be well based at empirical material yet being open to emerging interpretive possibilities.

Setting, Scope, and Case Logic

The investigation was articulated into the context of the socio-historical complexity in which the political issue of gender and fairness has remained relevant in sociological memory, educational structures, and ordinary existence. The range of macrosystemic upward changes including legal reforms, social movements and institutional milestones, were counterbalanced with meso- and micro-systemic cultural practices that encompass family norms, religious explanations, ritual in community detailing and media depiction. Case logic operated in a pathway sense, developing themes of continuity as well as disjuncture in terms of time, and text, and community that encompass the historical-cultural itinerary of gender equality in the context of interest. This method made it possible to focus not only on conjunctural turning points but also on longer change arcs, but still be aware of local specifics and voices of actors.

The participants and the Sampling Strategy

Purposive selection of participants was done in order to meet interpretive diversity and knowledge that are historically embedded. Such an advocacy consists of people like policy actors and legal practitioners, educators and cultural producers, and community leaders that have lived or work-related experiences that overlap gender issues and social justice. To determine who would be included in the interview, the focus was on being a participant or aware of gender-oriented programmers, historical narration or cultural re- signification of gender roles, that allowed the interview to contribute meaningfully to a legacy of inequality and the cultural re-significance of gender roles. Snowball methods were useful additions to primary purposive selection, as they found more informative participants in stakeholder groups. The purpose of sampling was to reach an information power and conceptual adequacy instead of numerical saturation; recruitment was stopped when adding new accounts did not produce any changes in the interpretive map of the reconstructing pathways. Relevant basic demographic attributes (e.g., position, length of involvement, community membership) were captured so as to put those interpretations into context, without seeking a statistical representative sample.

Data Sources

The blueprint was based on three synthesized information flows. To start with, archives and documentary sources have been sought in order to follow the birth of genealogies of reform and opposition such as historical newspapers, pamphlets of movements, government legislative debates, organization reports and policy documents. Second, semi-structured interviews were carried out in the form of in-depth/semi-structured interviews in order to extract narrative expressions about change, contestation, and cultural reinterpretation experiences among individuals who were directly involved or applicable of observing the said processes. Third the nature of how gender meanings are way of coded, circulated, immersed within the wider symbolic environment was measured by the analysis of cultural texts including speeches, sermons, retellings of folklore, school textbooks, press features, artifacts of film and digital media. This three-way hectoring gave a chance to the study to contrast hard formal historical records with living narratives and cultural signifiers and thus bolster interpretive coherence.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected in phases and this was done to maintain the analytic momentum and reflexivity. A pilot scoping activity outlined major historical moments, policy landmarks as well as cultural locations of meaning-making. Based on this map, interview guides were designed to undertake the experiences of change among participate, how they recognize the enabling traditions as well as the constraining ones, an evaluation of how historical recollections are used in current struggles. The interviews were held in an environment, where the participants felt comfortable and not disturbed, and audio taped with consent and then transcribed in verbatim. Systematic search strings and citation trails were applied to the archival and documentary sources and imparted to be sure that competing accounts were covered and the official and counter-public voices were incorporated. Discursively salient and reachable cultural texts were sampled with an eye directed at instances where already known narratives were repledged in order to affirm or refute gendered expectations. The fieldnotes included contents obtained contextually, expressive leanings, and the thoughts of the researcher as the process went on.

Data Organization and Data Management.

The privacy of the participants was secured by the use of online data which were limited to encrypted folders by role and pseudonymous names. The qualitative analysis details were performed by familiarizing oneself to various texts in form of transcripts and documentary to allow coding, annotation and using memos of pertinent elements of the analysis to be taken into account. In the conversion of a descriptive towards a more analytic code, a version-managed codebook store was recorded which cataloged the definitions, anchor quotation, and decision notes of the codes using the code versioning. The analytic memos were dated, and related to excerpts as evidence in order to have the ability to track a trail of raw-data to interpretive claims. The cross-source matrices were adhered to, in order to make the lines of interest read in conjunction, so that the events in the narrative of interviews could synchronize with the archival events and cultures discourses.

Analytic Strategy

Reflexive thematic analysis was analyzed using methods of historical assumption and discourse. Thematic work consisted of close reading to establish patterned significance with reference to authority, legitimacy, morality, care and rights. Descriptive codes reflected common thoughts concerning tradition, reform as well as resistance; axial moves tracked contingencies how the transformation in institutions re and remade the cultural roles, and how the cultural re-reading created political possibilities. Discourse analysis pursued some patterns of vocabularies, metaphors, and narrative tropes that described gendered subject positions and argued or opposed distribution of power over time. All along, the analysis posed, in what ways is it being warped, the way aspirators have to bring back the past, to carve out culturally plausible demands to equality, and how do these demands come to sediment or come to mess across periods of time? Alternative interpretations with emphasis on either institutional path-dependency or cultural entrepreneurship were purposely sought by re-reading writings to demonstrate the stasis of new meanings. The narrative template that links episodes, actors and symbols was polished internally with four visual analytic devices (timelines, pathway diagrams and mimed storylines).

Result and Discussion

Building upon the interpretive framework and methodological rigor outlined earlier, the following section presents the empirical findings that trace the interconnection between history, culture, and gender justice. The analysis is organized thematically to demonstrate how historical trajectories and cultural configurations shape the present understanding of gender equality and social justice. Each subsection captures the nuanced voices of participants, archival evidence, and cultural texts to reveal how power, memory, and meaning are negotiated across time. This presentation of results aims to connect the broader theoretical assumptions of the study with lived realities, thereby offering a grounded interpretation of how historical consciousness and cultural practices jointly influence pathways toward equality.

Historical Pathways

Gender equality is not historically a straight-line movement; it has its ups and downs, waves and turns, making no straight line. This discussion shows that every development of women rights was a result of dialectal struggle against the patriarch system and that these improvements were often incomplete, weak, and could be easily undone. Archival materials, past records, and first-hand accounts provide women with not only literacy but also the intellectual capital to imagine other possible futures and demand equality. Education is remembered as a turning point in the very lives of many participants in the stories, who point out that the first structural interventions that encouraged gender equality were connected to education as an opportunity. Formal structures. One respondent shared:

> *"When my grandmother learned to read, she became the one people in the village asked to write letters. That respect gave her a kind of authority that women usually did not have."*

The above accounts show that education helped women to get out of the shadowy realm to become seen in the private and the public arenas. The breakthrough in education also set in place pathways to professional careers that restructured the gender hierarchy in subtle ways. Female descendants who selected the work of teaching, midwifery, or journalism were able not only to gain an independent income but also to influence younger generations and the community at large. More importantly, the data show that these occupations were not the sole depositories of individual empowerment; they also promoted emergent types of collective consciousness. As an example, female teachers often became the leaders of communities, arranging literacy classes to mothers, thus spreading the scope of formal education into the informal realm. Education therefore served simultaneously as both a personal asset and a collective way of empowerment. Of equal importance was the political rights campaigns that included suffrage movements and fledgling women organizations. These campaigns were not only landmarks on the legal front but also turning points which changed the way society viewed the civic involvement of women. These episodes, as described by participants, were denoted as "gateway events that verified the presence of women in the deliberation and policy decision making. However, the results reveal that there is a chronic gap between legislation and community. Even after suffrage, women continued to face scorn or concealed animosity when seeking elective office, and their voices were disregarded in political meetings. As one activist recalled:

> *"My aunt was among the first women to vote, but she said it felt symbolic because men still made the decisions in the council."*

This disjuncture between law and lived experience underscores the limits of legal reforms in dismantling deeply embedded patriarchal power. Colonial histories added another complex layer to these pathways. In many societies, colonial administrations disrupted precolonial gender systems that had afforded women significant economic and social roles. By imposing Western patriarchal structures, colonial authorities often erased or minimized women's traditional contributions in agriculture, trade, and communal governance. Oral testimonies gathered in this study reflected a common theme of "historical narrowing." As one participant noted:

> *"My grandmother used to tell us that before colonial rule, women were the ones selling and deciding prices in the market. After colonization, those decisions moved to men, and women were told their place was at home."*

Such reflections highlight the paradox that colonial modernization often meant the diminution of women's agency rather than its expansion. At the same time, decolonization movements, while progressive in terms of national identity, frequently neglected gender justice. Male leaders framed independence as a struggle for collective liberation but did not necessarily extend that liberation to women. Several participants emphasized that while women fought side by side with men in liberation struggles, they were often pushed back into domestic roles once independence was achieved. This historical pattern illustrates the dual burdens women faced: resisting external domination while simultaneously negotiating internal patriarchal resistance.

Cultural Pathways

The findings show that cultural practices function as a double-edged force in shaping the trajectory toward gender equality. On one side, they perpetuate norms of subordination, while on the other, they provide cultural resources that women and communities can reinterpret for empowerment. This paradox is evident in both daily life and symbolic practices. Traditional patrilineal inheritance systems, for instance, consistently emerged in participant narratives as a key mechanism of exclusion. Women were denied direct access to land and property, which not only limited their economic autonomy but also reinforced dependency on male relatives. Several respondents emphasized the generational consequences of this exclusion. One participant reflected:

> *"My mother never had land in her name, so she could not decide what to plant or how to use the harvest. It was always my father or uncles who decided. That pattern kept repeating."*

Such accounts illustrate how gender inequality is reproduced through cultural institutions that appear "natural" but in practice restrict women's agency. Religious texts and rituals were also found to be frequently interpreted in ways that buttress male authority. Women described feeling silenced in religious gatherings or excluded from ritual leadership positions. At the same time, many participants stressed that these interpretations were not fixed. Some recalled women elders who had played central roles in healing rituals or moral guidance within their communities, suggesting that religious and cultural authority was not inherently patriarchal but became so through selective readings and institutional reinforcement. The tension between

"restrictive" and "liberating" interpretations underscores the dynamic nature of cultural symbols. Proverbs, myths, and oral traditions emerged as another domain where inequality was reinforced. Many proverbs cited by participants portrayed women as weak, dependent, or in need of male protection. One informant recalled a local saying:

> *"A woman is like water she follows the vessel she is placed in," which she explained was often invoked to discourage women from pursuing leadership roles. However, alongside these restrictive sayings, participants also shared counter-stories: myths of warrior queens, healer women, and village founders whose power was remembered but rarely highlighted in formal education or public discourse. Such stories provided important "cultural counter-memories" that activists and educators now mobilize to challenge dominant gender narratives.*

Indeed, one of the most striking findings was the strategic reinterpretation of tradition by women activists, community leaders, and educators. Rather than rejecting culture as inherently oppressive, many sought to work within it, reactivating symbols and practices to validate women's leadership. For example, in one community, the revival of a cooperative rice-harvesting ritual traditionally organized by women was reframed as evidence of women's natural capacity for organization and fairness. As one participant explained:

> *"When we remind people that our grandmothers led these rituals, it becomes harder to say that women cannot lead today."*

Such strategies demonstrate how cultural legitimacy can be used to carve out new spaces for equality without alienating communities attached to tradition. Another pathway of cultural empowerment was observed in the sphere of folklore and storytelling. In several cases, women educators incorporated local legends of powerful women into school curricula, thereby normalizing female authority figures for younger generations. These narratives, while not always dominant in collective memory, provided what participants described as "seeds of equality" small but powerful stories that contradicted the larger patriarchal discourse. Importantly, children exposed to these alternative narratives were said to question gendered divisions of labor at home, indicating that the reinterpretation of culture has intergenerational effects. Finally, contemporary cultural activism is not limited to rural traditions but extends to urban spaces and modern art forms. Theater performances, poetry readings, and cultural festivals are increasingly used to highlight women's voices and reinterpret historical and cultural narratives. One young activist recounted:

> *"We use dance and poetry based on old myths but tell them from women's perspectives. The audience recognizes the story but also sees it in a new light. That makes change less threatening."*

This creative reappropriation shows that culture is not a static obstacle but a living, contested terrain where new meanings of justice and equality can be negotiated.

Intersections of History and Culture

The most critical finding of this study is that historical and cultural pathways are not parallel lines but deeply interwoven trajectories. Gender equality and social justice did not advance solely because of progressive laws, nor solely because of cultural reinterpretations, but rather through the constant dialogue between the two domains. Legal reforms shaped cultural

imaginations of what was possible, while cultural narratives provided legitimacy for reforms and sustained them in daily practice. The right to education for girls was not universally accepted simply because it was written into law. In several communities, participants explained that the success of this reform depended on aligning it with pre-existing cultural values. In one area where ancestral proverbs praised wisdom as a communal treasure "knowledge is the light that guides the village" families were more receptive to sending girls to school. As one elder reflected:

> *"When we were told that girls should also go to school, it was easy to accept because our ancestors already said that wisdom belongs to all."*

This illustrates how laws gained traction when embedded in cultural frameworks that resonated with collective memory. Suffrage movements gained legitimacy when they were framed not as foreign imports but as extensions of cultural traditions emphasizing collective responsibility. Women activists deliberately invoked stories of foremothers who had acted as mediators or leaders in village rituals, suggesting that voting rights were a modern continuation of their ancestral roles. As one activist emphasized:

> *"If we only talk about women's rights in terms of law, people dismiss it as Western. But when we connect it with stories of our grandmothers, people listen differently."*

Such strategies transformed potential resistance into receptivity by reframing reforms as rooted in cultural heritage rather than alien impositions. At the same time, the intersection of history and culture was fraught with tension. Historical reforms often clashed with entrenched cultural expectations. Inheritance reforms provide a striking example. Although laws guaranteed equal inheritance for daughters, participants from patrilineal communities described persistent resistance. Families continued to prioritize sons, rationalizing it as cultural duty. Women facing such exclusion often responded not by outright rejecting tradition but by reframing it. They argued that fairness and reciprocity were themselves cultural values long practiced in rituals of exchange and communal labor. One participant explained:

> *"We say we are not changing culture; we are only returning to its spirit, which is fairness."*

This shows how women actively negotiated between legal entitlement and cultural legitimacy, framing equality not as cultural rupture but as restoration of moral balance. Another finding highlights how cultural reinterpretation often preceded or accompanied legal reform. In some communities, oral traditions of powerful women queens, healers, or founders were revived by activists before reforms gained traction. These cultural stories created what participants described as a "moral readiness" for legal change. When equal labor rights were introduced, for instance, communities already familiar with legends of hardworking, respected women found it easier to accept women entering new professions. In this way, culture not only adapted to historical reform but prepared the ground for it.

The findings also reveal how cultural narratives have been strategically mobilized to mediate conflicts between law and custom. In cases where new laws were perceived as threatening to tradition, activists reframed them using cultural idioms. For example, women advocating for reproductive health rights drew parallels with traditional midwives' roles in safeguarding community well-being, thus presenting modern health initiatives as cultural continuity rather

than rupture. Such creative negotiation highlights that progress in gender equality depends on a flexible interplay between past and present, where cultural narratives provide the emotional and symbolic anchor for historical reforms.

Historical and Cultural Foundations of Gender Equality in Managerial Practices

The conclusions of this paper affirm that historical and cultural legacies are not just artifacts of the past but living things of organizational life and practice of management in modern realities. In management scholarship, the implication is clear that gender equality and social justice cannot be pursued effectively when leadership, strategy, and governance structures do not recognize the historical structures that still underlie workplace hierarchies. Empirical studies have continually shown that institutionalization of inequality is not only a sociological fact, but also a management issue that negatively affects productivity, employee involvement and innovation ability (Albzour et al., 2023; Paasi, 2022; Brockmann & Garrett, 2022). Therefore, the notion of gender equality could be approached as strategic adjustment of the management approach whereby leaders have to identify and defy those established norms that perpetuate organizational inequalities.

The paper has addressed a long-standing debate about whether management initiatives should focus on adherence to legal frameworks or seek to change culture in organizations. The above evidence indicates that compliance is not enough since organizations that use gender equality as a checklist only practice symbolic change as opposed to substantive change (Piatak et al., 2022; Dhir et al., 2022; García et al., 2022). On the managerial perspective, there is a strong push to transcend transactional equality policies to transformational leadership practices that incorporate inclusivity into organizational mission. As a matter of fact, organizations that have integrated diversity in their strategic fabric display greater creativity and competitiveness in the market, thus highlighting the economic and business applicability of cultural inclusivity.

History and management are also interwoven in leadership succession and decision making. The patriarchal traditions, with their strong foundations on the historical courses, are the reasons why the perception of authority remains harder to accept to females (Cremer, 2021; Jablonka, 2022; Oloba & Blankenship, 2024). The continuation of the think manager, think male paradigm gets in the way of women progressing even with the formal equality structures in place. In the managerial setting, this bias leads to the underuse of talent pools and impairs an organization's ability to adapt to changing conditions. This has a critical implication that the onus should not be on managers to implement diversity strategies but also work at building counter-narratives to redefine the competencies of leadership that are not male-as-usual (Köllen, 2021; Aguinis et al., 2022; Vishwanath & Vaddepalli, 2023).

Another implication is regarding the management of organizational culture. Structural inequalities are reproduced in cultures that praise competition, stratified domination and individualistic promotion through rewarding behaviors historically linked with male-coded leadership (Woods, 2024; Daniels, 2024). In contrast cultures that value cooperation, sympathy and collective responsibility provide a more equitable participation. Based on this, the cultural results of the current research support the stance that inclusive organizational cultures are not accidental; they have to be proactively developed through managerial initiatives that include participatory decision making, mentoring programmers and balanced performance evaluation mechanisms.

The awareness of history also has an impact on international management and cross-cultural situations. Gender relations in multinational organizations cannot be efficiently addressed in a manner that does not recognize that the colonial past, religious orientation and local cultural codes influence workplace practices differently in different regions (Wiesner, 2021). What might be seen as a progressive approach in one sense, might be opposed or neutralized in another, as it runs counter to historical accounts of gender and power. In this respect, global diversity management should be based on what Merry (2024) defines context-sensitive inclusion in which managers will adjust contextual approaches to equality strategies to local cultural and historical context and maintain the principles of justice and fairness that are universal.

There are significant consequences to the field of human resource management. Recruitment, promotion and performance-evaluation are areas where historical and cultural prejudices can be reproduced unconsciously (Tobiska, 2022). Empirical research indicates that even so-called meritocratic systems, unless well-constructed, can recreate inequality by masking privilege as performance (Fowler, 2023; Kemp, 2022; Kovács, 2021). Hence, managers need to introduce accountability measures, transparency in decision making and data monitoring of outcomes to avoid replication of systemic exclusions in organizational processes. Such managerial actions require a shift in paradigm: equality is not a support issue of human resource management, but a strategic requirement that defines organizational legitimacy and sustainability.

On a more abstract level, this research paper will compel management scholars to rethink the time aspect of organizational inequality. Management studies understand diversity as a contemporary phenomenon that has no links with history (Post et al., 2021; Nkomo, 2021; Filatotchev et al., 2022). This paper has provided reasons as to why a historical turn is needed in the study of management by showing the continuities between the past and the present organizational practices. Such a twist pushes us to perceive organizations not as rational economic participants but as cultural and historical institutions, in which historical injustice echoes in contemporary action. This historical sensibility offers more explanatory value as to why diversity policies can work in certain settings and fail in others.

The management implication of this study goes beyond the performance aspect of the organization to the moral grounds of leadership and governance. Achieving gender equality and social justice is not just functional but normative; it is a statement as to what types of organizations we should construct in the 21st century. Management cannot risk losing efficiency and responsibility, or profitability and accountability. Those organizations that include gender justice into their organizational DNA and do not see it as a fringe activity but as the source of legitimacy, trust, and sustainability will be most innovative organizations of the future.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that gender equality and social justice in organizational settings cannot be comprehensively understood without having regard to the historical and cultural paths that still influence modern day managerial practices. Empirical data demonstrates that organizational structures, which are usually viewed as neutral, are firmly rooted in a history of exclusion and hierarchy that continuously affect leadership, decision-making, and cultural

traditions. In the case of management scholarship, the findings suggest the relevance of a historical turn that views organizations as cultural and temporal institutions whereby injustices of the past feed into the present. To practitioners, the implication is no less apparent: the issue of equality cannot be diluted into compliance-based policies or token gestures. Rather, it should be tactically incorporated into leadership behaviors, human resource management and organizational culture. Open systems of accountability, participatory models and context sensitivity to diversity are critical to break down inherited inequities and open up the full potential of diverse workforces. Finally, the agenda of gender justice is not only an ethical requirement but also a strategic one. Firms that incorporate equity in their governance models achieve legitimacy, trust and adaptive capacity in the globalized environment. Research in management in the future should therefore aim at examining the history-culture-organizational practice interplay so as to shape just and sustainable work places.

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