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How Does Social Capital Affect Women? Guilds and Communities in Early Modern Germany

SHEILAGH OGILVIE

IN 1626, AN INDEPENDENT UNMARRIED “LASS” in the tiny Black Forest town of Wildberg left service, took independent lodgings, and began to earn her bread by “spinning perpetually at the wheel,” attracting complaints at the community assembly.¹ In 1663, the widowed Anna Barbara Haugin in the nearby village of Gültlingen supported her young family by cultivating crops and selling calves, despite attempts by the community to “deny her the village privileges.”² In 1697, Georg Ernst’s widow in Gültlingen lived from her baking, despite being fined by the guild when she “sold a 4-pound loaf for 2½ *Kreuzer* even though the legal price was 3 *Kreuzer*.”³ In 1734, Michel Kuch’s wife in the proto-industrial village of Ebhausen sought to maximize her profits from yarn selling by attending nocturnal spinning bees “to cover her lighting costs,” in the teeth of penalties from the community church court.⁴ In 1742, the maidservant Christina Gauß was dismissed from her job at the Ebhausen mill when her mistress suspected her of fornicating with her master, got temporary work as a harvest cutter but then failed to find another job, could not go home to her father in Rohrdorf “because he himself has nothing,” was ordered out of Ebhausen several times, but repeated dully to the community court that “she knew of nowhere to go.”⁵ In 1745, a Wildberg maidservant was fined by the local weavers’ guild because she engaged in wool combing, “as though she were a journeyman, contrary to the guild ordinance.”⁶ In 1764, a village woman known as “die Schmalzin” (“the lard-woman”) was “buying up grain here and there, and

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¹ Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart (hereafter, HSAS), A573 Bü. 86, fol. 58r, October 30, 1626: “spinne Immertz am radt.”

² Pfarrarchiv Wildberg, Kirchenkonventsprotokolle (hereafter, PAW KKP), Vol. 3, p. 299, February 18, 1670: “Fleckhens privilegia laße man Sie nicht genießen.”

³ HSAS, A573 Bü. 981 (1697–98), unpag.: “den vier pfündigen laib brodt umb 2½ da er doch 3 x gegolten, verkaufft.”

⁴ Pfarrarchiv Ebhausen, Kirchenkonventsprotokolle (hereafter, PAE KKP), Vol. 3, fol. 178r, February 28, 1734.

⁵ PAE KKP, Vol. 4, fols. 4v–5r, October 8, 1742: “weil er selber nichts hab” (fol. 5r); “Sie hab nirgend hin gewußt” (fol. 4v).

⁶ HSAS, A573 Bü. 896 (1744–45), unpag., rubric “Strafen”: “um willen Er seine Magd der Ordnung zuwider gesellenweiß kammern laßen.”



FIGURE 1: Women work alongside men as agricultural laborers mowing with sickles. Francisci Philippi Florini, *Æconomus prudens et legalis, oder allgemeiner klug- und rechts-verständige Haus-Vatter* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1702), 515. Reproduced with the kind permission of the Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart, Germany.

selling it again at a higher price on offer to the citizens, through which *commercium* she harms the bakers here,” provoking a member of the Wildberg bakers’ guild to report her to the community assembly, which forbade her to trade.⁷ In 1796, the forty-five-year-old spinster Friderika Mohlin moved into lodgings as an independent seamstress but was compelled to “betake herself back into her father’s house,” by community order.⁸

Such women—daughters, maidservants, wives, widows, and independent spinsters—appear again and again in local documents working independently even when they had the opportunity to be, or actually were, members of male-headed households. Such women worked not just at housework but, as these cases illustrate, at commercial spinning, farming, traditional crafts, agricultural labor, proto-industrial wool combing, petty commerce, and seamstressing. They operated not just in the family economy but within a much more complex framework of social institutions—the market, the community, the guild, the church, the state—whose relative impact on women’s well-being continues to evoke lively debate. Initially, many historians were strongly attracted by a “pessimist” school of thought, which regarded women’s economic position as being systematically damaged by the growth of the market.⁹ Subsequent empirical findings, however, have given rise to a more differentiated approach, which emphasizes the role of the state,¹⁰ the church,¹¹ the guild,¹² and the community,¹³ as social institutions that imposed at least equal constraints on preindustrial women. Still others contend that “patriarchy” is so strong and universal that women’s situation is historically invariant with respect to the prevailing institutional structure.¹⁴ The impact of different social and

⁷ HSAS, A573 Bü. 95, fol. 28v, December 17, 1764: “hin und wider fruchten auf, verkauffe solche wider in einem höhern Pretio auf beutt an die hiesige burgere und verursache durch dises Commercium . . . denen hiesigen becken einem Schaden.”

⁸ HSAS, A573 Bü. 62, fol. 24r–v, January 18, 1796: “Sich wider in ihres vatters Hauße zu begeben.”

⁹ For a classic expression of this view, see, for instance, Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*, 2d edn. (London, 1982), 13, 43–63, 92, 150–52, 183, 196–97, 234–35, 300–01. For recent surveys, see Janet Thomas, “Women and Capitalism: Oppression or Emancipation? A Review Article,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30 (1988): 534–49, here esp. 534–37; and Sheilagh Ogilvie, *A Bitter Living: Women, Markets, and Social Capital in Early Modern Germany* (Oxford, 2003), 12–13, 326–29, 334–38.

¹⁰ Renate Dürr, *Mägde in der Stadt: das Beispiel Schwäbisch Hall in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt, 1995), esp. 266–73; Isabel Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society in Germany, 1700–1815* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1996), esp. 53–106.

¹¹ Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford, 1989), esp. 3, 15; Hull, *Sexuality*, 10–28; Ulinka Rublack, *The Crimes of Women in Early Modern Germany* (Oxford, 1999), 4, 7–8, 29–33, 38–39, 74, 218, 234.

¹² Jean H. Quataert, “The Shaping of Women’s Work in Manufacturing: Guilds, Households, and the State in Central Europe, 1648–1870,” *AHR* 90 (December 1985): 1122–48; Sheilagh Ogilvie, “Women and Proto-Industrialisation in a Corporate Society: Württemberg Woollen Weaving 1590–1760,” in P. Hudson and W. R. Lee, eds., *Women’s Work and the Family Economy in Historical Perspective* (Manchester, 1990), 76–103.

¹³ Claudia Ulbrich, *Shulamit und Margarete: Macht, Geschlecht und Religion in einer ländlichen Gesellschaft des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 1999), esp. 35, 138, 306; Sheilagh Ogilvie, *State Corporatism and Proto-Industry: The Württemberg Black Forest, 1580–1797* (Cambridge, 1997), 63–64; Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 20, 134–38, 249–58, 309–17, 332–34.

¹⁴ See Olwen H. Hufton, “Women, Work and Marriage in Eighteenth-Century France,” in R. B. Outhwaite, ed., *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage* (London, 1981), 186–203; Judith M. Bennett, “‘History That Stands Still’: Women’s Work in the European Past,” *Feminist Studies* 14 (1988): 269–83, here 271, 274, 277–79; Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside: Gender and Household in Brigstock before the Plague* (Oxford, 1987), 4–9, 177–98; Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A

institutional arrangements on women's economic position is thus still an open question, and one aim of this article is to investigate whether the concept of "social capital" can help shed new light on it.¹⁵

This is the more urgent because the recent explosion of interest in "social capital" has caused social scientists to seek historical examples of its benefits, directing particularly eager attention to preindustrial European social institutions. "Social capital" is the name given to a store of value generated when a group of individuals invests resources in fostering a body of relationships with each other (a "social network").¹⁶ These relationships, it is argued, create trust by fostering shared norms, improve contract enforcement by easing information flows, and enhance sanctions against deviant behavior by facilitating collective action. This is held to benefit the entire society.¹⁷ Policymakers in organizations such as the World Bank have begun advocating investment in social capital and social networks to solve problems of social exclusion and regional disparities in the rich West, economic transition in Eastern Europe, and development challenges in the Third World.¹⁸ From the beginning, social capital theorists have sought to mobilize history in support of their views, portraying past societies as having possessed more and better social capital than modern ones, and mining them for examples of the closely knit and multi-stranded social networks thought to generate especially rich stocks of social capital. In particular, social scientists have focused on two historical institutions as exemplars of social capital at work: the guild and the local community.¹⁹ Yet, while many social science studies mention historical examples of social capital and social networks in passing, few subject them to rigorous analysis, or investigate their net effect on the whole society in which they were embedded.

This article seeks to address the concerns of both historians and social scientists by bringing together gender and the theory of social capital. Social capital, it will

Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *AHR* 91 (December 1986): 1053–75, here 1059–60; Sandy Bardsley, "Women's Work Reconsidered: Gender and Wage Differentiation in Late Medieval England," *Past and Present*, no. 165 (1999): 3–29, here 3–5, 29.

¹⁵ For recent surveys of this debate, see Thomas, "Women and Capitalism," 542–43, 545–47; Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 7–15, 326–38.

¹⁶ For the basic propositions behind the theory of social capital, see James S. Coleman, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," *American Journal of Sociology* 94 (1989): S95–S120; Robert D. Putnam, with Robert Leonardi and Rafaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, N.J., 1993); Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York, 2000); Putnam and Lewis M. Feldstein, with Don Cohen, *Better Together: Restoring the American Community* (New York, 2003). For a representative selection of recent work making use of the concept, see Partha Dasgupta and Ismail Serageldin, eds., *Social Capital: A Multifaceted Perspective* (Washington, D.C., 2000).

¹⁷ See Coleman, "Social Capital," esp. S101–S102; Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work*; Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (New York, 1995); Partha Dasgupta, "Economic Progress and the Idea of Social Capital," in Dasgupta and Serageldin, *Social Capital*, 325–424; Putnam, *Bowling Alone*; Putnam, Feldstein, and Cohen, *Better Together*.

¹⁸ On the rich West, see Coleman, "Social Capital"; Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work*; Putnam, *Bowling Alone*. On "transition economies," see Martin Raiser, "Informal Institutions, Social Capital and Economic Transition," in Giovanni Andrea Cornia and Vladimir Popov, eds., *Transition and Institutions: The Experience of Gradual and Late Reformers* (Oxford, 2001), 218–39. On modern developing economies, see the essays in Dasgupta and Serageldin, *Social Capital*.

¹⁹ Coleman, "Social Capital," S117–S119; Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work*, 163–85; Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, for example 292; Fukuyama, *Trust*, 1–57, 345–53; Dasgupta, "Economic Progress," 327–28, 332, 337–38, 351–52, 380.

argue, has important implications for thinking about gender—but gender also has important implications for thinking about social capital. Social capital can help us think about gender because it provides a conceptual framework for analyzing the precise characteristics of certain institutions that, it will be argued, facilitate gender discrimination. Patriarchal attitudes were universal in preindustrial Europe, but they were put into effect to a widely differing extent in different European societies. Analyzing gender discrimination in terms of social capital, I will argue, can help us understand why.²⁰

Conversely, taking account of gender can help social scientists think more clearly about social capital. This is because gender compels us to examine the effects of any social network not just on members of that network but on network outsiders and the whole society. It forces us to ask whether the economically vulnerable and socially marginal can enjoy the benefits of social capital. As we shall see, they often cannot, and there are systematic reasons why this is the case.

HARD AND DETAILED EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE is essential for dealing with such general issues as gender and social capital. To obtain such evidence, this study selected a particular preindustrial society—early modern Germany—and compiled a detailed data set on gender-specific economic activities within a region of that society—the Württemberg Black Forest—over a period of two centuries (1600–1800). The data set included statistical sources such as tax lists, parish registers, censuses, and “soul-tables,” which yielded information on women’s household headship, wealth, demographic behavior, schooling, and sources of livelihood. But the vast mass of females—particularly those who did not head households or pay taxes—is invisible to such statistical documents. So the data set also included narrative sources such as court records, petitions, and account books, which describe the kinds of work women did and the legal and practical constraints on it. Narrative sources, however, cannot show what is typical or enable systematic comparisons by gender or other social categories. To transcend the limitations of both statistical and narrative sources, this study adopted the exceptionally labor-intensive and time-consuming research strategy of selecting a particularly detailed and systematic set of sources—the extraordinary church-court minutes kept by Württemberg communities from 1646 on—and extracting all references to observed work by women and men in two communities over a period of 150 years, generating out of a qualitative source a quantitative database containing 2,828 separate observations of working activity, broken down according to the worker’s gender and other characteristics. Taken together, these sources provide a rich and detailed empirical basis for analyzing the economic position of women in a preindustrial society and the relative impact on it of different social institutions.²¹

The southwest German territory of Württemberg is well suited for exploring

²⁰ For detailed examples of how particular patriarchal attitudes (for example, disapproval of independent residence and work by unmarried women and of participation in guilded activities by females) were enforced under some institutional regimes in early modern Europe but less so (or not at all) in others, see, for instance, Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 11, 290–93, 319, 338–40.

²¹ For a detailed description of this data set, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, esp. 22–36, 320–22.

theories about how women's economic position is affected by different social institutions. By 1600, it possessed a variegated economy, with farms productive enough to feed growing groups of land-poor and landless people, lively textile proto-industries in the Black Forest and Swabian Jura, and specialized retailers and merchants supplying both domestic and export markets.²² In all these sectors, women were active participants, not just working with male relatives within the family economy but—as we have seen—producing independently as farmers, craft mistresses, spinners, seamstresses, grain sellers, wool combers, and at an almost numberless array of other livelihoods.²³ But in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Württemberg was slow in adopting many of the new forms of agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce that were transforming the more dynamic Atlantic economies. By 1800, its economy was stagnating relative to the Low Countries, England, France, Switzerland, and even some parts of Germany. Denied access to livelihoods at home, Württembergers were emigrating en masse to America and Eastern Europe. To some extent at least, this was due to a system of social institutions that, as this article will show, prevented important groups of the country's inhabitants—among them women—from making a full contribution to its economy.²⁴

A first institutional feature that circumscribed both the development of the Württemberg economy and the opportunities of women within it was the state, which began in the later sixteenth century to expand taxation, warfare, bureaucracy, and its capacity to regulate local economic and social life.²⁵ Württemberg was a "German territory of the second rank"—the sort in which the vast majority of early modern Germans lived—and this gave its state three key features.²⁶ First, German territories experienced the growth of the early modern state in a particularly extreme form, partly because of the competition between territorial and imperial levels of sovereignty, and partly because of the nearly constant warfare—notably the Thirty Years' War—to which this competition greatly contributed.²⁷ Second, however, second-rank German territorial states could only expand taxation and conscription by granting privileges to local corporative elites and institutions: rulers allied with local communities and guilds to impose an intense regulation of

²² For detailed micro-studies documenting these characteristics of the early modern Württemberg economy, see David Sabean, *Property, Production and Family in Neckarhausen, 1700–1870* (Cambridge, 1990); Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*; Hans Medick, *Weben und Überleben in Laichingen, 1650–1900* (Göttingen, 1996).

²³ For detailed evidence on the activities of women throughout the early modern Württemberg economy, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 115–27, 141–46, 207–17, 272–79.

²⁴ On the relative stagnation of many German economies between 1600 and 1800, and the institutional reasons for it, see Heide Wunder, "Agriculture and Agrarian Society," in Sheilagh Ogilvie, ed., *Germany: A New Social and Economic History*, Vol. 2: 1630–1800 (London, 1996), 63–99, here esp. 84–91; Peter Kriedte, "Trade," in Ogilvie, *Germany*, 100–33, here esp. 107–10, 123–25; and Sheilagh Ogilvie, "The Beginnings of Industrialization," in Ogilvie, *Germany*, 263–308, here esp. 281–97.

²⁵ See J. A. Vann, *The Making of a State: Württemberg, 1593–1793* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1984); Peter H. Wilson, *War, State and Society in Württemberg, 1677–1793* (Cambridge, 1995), 5, 12–13, 26–73; Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 79–85; Sheilagh Ogilvie, "The German State: A Non-Prussian View," in John Brewer and Eckhart Hellmuth, eds., *Rethinking Leviathan: The Eighteenth-Century State in Britain and Germany* (Oxford, 1998), 167–202, here esp. 174–75, 182–99.

²⁶ Vann, *Making of a State*, 36; on the typicality of such second-rank states in Germany, see Ogilvie, "German State," 169–73.

²⁷ Sheilagh Ogilvie, "Germany and the Crisis of the Seventeenth Century," *Historical Journal* 35 (1992): 417–41, here 429–31.

individual economic, social, and demographic behavior, which was seen as beneficial by respectable male citizens and guild masters but which weighed particularly heavily on females.²⁸ Such intensity of regulation was not observed in societies—such as England and the Low Countries—where the state was secure enough largely to dispense with pandering to local interest groups.²⁹ The third characteristic of Württemberg, in which it resembled many other German territories, was that its state did not become strong enough to free itself from symbiotic reliance on corporative local interest groups until well into the nineteenth century. This gave rise to a sort of legal and institutional paralysis during which most of the sexual and economic legislation affecting women remained virtually unchanged, in both letter and execution, until after 1800.³⁰

One of the most important of the corporative local interest groups that enjoyed state support was the guild. In Württemberg, as in many other parts of early modern Central and Southern Europe, guilds were not restricted to urban crafts but governed rural workshops as well.³¹ They regulated not just traditional handicrafts but export-oriented proto-industries, primary-sector activities such as fishing and wine growing, and a wide array of service-sector activities such as shopkeeping and merchant trading.³² In addition, guild-like merchant associations monopolized most sectors of commerce and manufacturing, including the important worsted proto-industry of the Black Forest and the linen proto-industry of the Swabian Jura.³³ As late as 1793, one north German traveler through Württemberg remarked disapprovingly that “the greatest share of trade and manufactures is in the hands of closed and for the most part privileged associations.”³⁴ Guilds regulated who could set up a workshop, who could be employed, how much they could be paid, what techniques could be used, and what products could be made in many sectors of the Württemberg economy well into the nineteenth century. It was 1864 before the Württemberg state felt secure in abolishing guilds.³⁵

A second corporative interest group that regulated the Württemberg economy and women’s participation in it was the local community. In Württemberg, as in many other parts of early modern Germany, people held citizenship (*Bürgerrecht*)

²⁸ Hull, *Sexuality*, 10, 29–30, 36–52; Ogilvie, “German State,” 182–99; A. Maisch, *Notdürftiger Unterhalt und gehörige Schranken: Lebenbedingungen und Lebensstile in württembergischen Dörfern der frühen Neuzeit* (Stuttgart, 1992), 68–75.

²⁹ Ogilvie, “German State,” 167–73, 199–202; John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688–1783* (London, 1989), 3–24, 64–73; Jan De Vries and Ad Van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500–1815* (Cambridge, 1997), 81–158; Hull, *Sexuality*, 107–53; Merry E. Wiesner, “Guilds, Male Bonding and Women’s Work in Early Modern Germany,” in Simonetta Cavaciocchi, ed., *La donna nell’economia secc. XIII–XVIII* (Prato, 1990), 655–69, here 667–68.

³⁰ On this, see Hull, *Sexuality*, for example 41, 128.

³¹ On the prevalence of such rural and regional guilds in Europe, see Sheilagh Ogilvie, “Social Institutions and Proto-Industrialization,” in Ogilvie and Markus Cerman, eds., *European Proto-Industrialization* (Cambridge, 1996), 23–37, here 30–33.

³² See Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 72–79.

³³ Walter Troeltsch, *Die Calwer Zeughandlungskompagnie und ihre Arbeiter* (Jena, 1897); Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 77–79, 106–11; Medick, *Weben*, esp. 65–140.

³⁴ Christoph Meiners, “Bemerkungen auf einer Herbstreise nach Schwaben: Geschrieben im November 1793,” in Meiners, ed., *Kleiner Länder- und Reisebeschreibungen*, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1794), 2: 235–380, here 292: “Handel und Fabriken sind dem größten Teil noch in Händen von geschlossenen, und meistens privilegierten Gesellschaften.”

³⁵ Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 72–79, 419–37; Hull, *Sexuality*, 41–42.

or settlement rights (*Beisitzrecht*) in their community first and foremost, and in the nation only by virtue of their community membership.³⁶ The villages and tiny towns of rural Württemberg operated their own autonomous community courts, appointed a myriad of community officials (about one-fifth of male household heads held some communal office), and met in regular face-to-face community assemblies. Local studies reveal that communities exercised intense surveillance and control over crop choice, farming techniques, agricultural and industrial markets, citizenship, settlement, marriage, mobility, inheritance, residential arrangements, sexuality, education, diligence, leisure, and consumption.³⁷ This gave rise to a dense network of multi-stranded interactions among community members. Communities, too, remained strong in Württemberg well into the nineteenth century, and helped underpin many of the regulations that affected women's economic position, particularly the notorious political restriction of marriage permits (*politische Ehekonsens*) and the persistent exclusion of females from many economic activities.³⁸

Early modern Württemberg was thus characterized by a very stable, interlocking system of social institutions—state, guild, and local community—that can be observed in operation, manifesting only the most glacial change, over a period of centuries. This equilibrium only began to break down in the nineteenth century, after the period under analysis in this article—and even then very slowly. Consequently, Württemberg is not well suited to analyzing great legal and institutional transformations such as the transition from “absolutism” to “civil society,” at least not until long after 1800.³⁹ It is ideally suited, however, by virtue

³⁶ The meanings contemporaries attached to these concepts are illustrated in the Württemberg citizenship law of 1833, which stated, “The communities are the foundation of the state. Every citizen of the state must, insofar as this law . . . does not justify an exception for him, belong to a community as *Bürger* or *Beisitzer* . . . No citizen of the state . . . can marry, hold public office, practice any occupation on his own account or with his own household, or even keep an independent dwelling, before he possesses the right of citizenship or *Beisitz* in a community.” “Revidirtes Gesetz über das Gemeinde- Bürger- und Beisitzrecht” (December 4, 1833), in A. L. Reyscher, ed., *Vollständige, historisch und kritisch bearbeitete Sammlung der württembergische Gesetze*, 19 vols. (Stuttgart, 1828–51), vol. 15.2: 1064–90, here 1064. For a detailed analysis of how *Bürgerrecht* and *Beisitzrecht* worked in practice, see Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 45–57.

³⁷ Sheilagh Ogilvie, “Coming of Age in a Corporate Society: Capitalism, Pietism and Family Authority in Rural Württemberg 1590–1740,” *Continuity and Change* 1 (1986): 279–331; Ogilvie, “German State,” 193–99; Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 42–72; Sabeian, *Property*, 106, 109, 148, 160–61; Paul Warde, “Law, the ‘Commune,’ and the Distribution of Resources in Early Modern German State Formation,” *Continuity and Change* 17 (2002): 1–28, esp. 22.

³⁸ The political control of marriages became state law in the early nineteenth century but had already been being enforced by local communities in many German territories for centuries. See Josef Ehmer, *Heiratsverhalten, Sozialstruktur und ökonomischer Wandel: England und Mitteleuropa in der Formationsperiode des Kapitalismus* (Göttingen, 1991); Rainer Beck, “Frauen in Krise: Eheleben und Ehescheidung in der ländlichen Gesellschaft Bayerns während des Ancien Régime,” in Richard Van Dülmen, ed., *Dynamik der Tradition: Studien zur historischen Kulturforschung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992), 137–212, here 210–11 and n. 196; John E. Knodel, “Law, Marriage and Illegitimacy in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” *Population Studies* 20 (1967): 279–94, here 279–80; Elizabeth Mantl, *Heirat als Privileg: Obrigkeitliche Heiratsbeschränkungen in Tirol und Vorarlberg 1820 bis 1920* (Vienna, 1997); Hull, *Sexuality*, 30–31; Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 61–63.

³⁹ Even in the more “advanced” German territories, this transition was very gradual and hardly visible except among the literate, urban bourgeoisie until the very late eighteenth century, and in many German territories of the second rank, including Württemberg, there was little observable change in legal or institutional treatment of women before 1800. On this, see, for example, Hull, *Sexuality*, 6, 9, 128, 357, 408–09.

of its particularly strong and cohesive social networks, to assessing the impact of a very stable and long-lived historical equilibrium in which social capital played a major role.

LET US START BY LOOKING AT what light a social capital approach to Württemberg's rural-urban guilds sheds on women's position—and what light guilds' treatment of women sheds on social capital. As already mentioned, social capital theorists explicitly adduce preindustrial European guilds as exemplars of social networks generating beneficial social capital. Thus Robert Putnam holds that northern Italy's strong guilds created a social capital of information transmission, norm enforcement, and collective action that benefited the entire economy and society; by contrast, lack of this strong guild framework is supposed to be what led to governmental and economic failure in the Italian south.⁴⁰ Francis Fukuyama argues that present-day Germany manifests unusually high levels of trust and social capital, as a result of its historical heritage, in which guilds played an important role.⁴¹ Likewise, economists working on present-day developing and transition economies adduce the preindustrial European guild as an example of a social network generating a beneficial social capital for society at large.⁴² In a recent speech, for instance, the chief economist of the World Bank listed "guilds" among those institutions that, by generating social capital, could "support entrepreneurial efforts" in East European transition economies.⁴³

Early modern German guilds certainly manifested the two features that social capital theorists have identified as helping social networks generate social capital—"closure" and "multiplex relationships." "Closure" means that network membership is clearly and finitely defined, increasing the density of interactions between members and thereby intensifying the quality and reliability of the information sharing and third-party monitoring needed to enforce cooperation.⁴⁴ Guilds in Württemberg, as in most of preindustrial Europe, clearly defined membership through limiting admission to apprenticeship, journeymanship, and mastership, and monitoring who was allowed to participate in activities reserved for guild members.⁴⁵ As we shall see, "closure" did help guilds generate social capital that benefited their members, but it also helped them generate social capital that harmed outsiders—such as women—with damaging repercussions on the entire economy and society.

Guilds were also characterized by "multiplex relationships," the other key

⁴⁰ Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work*, 125–37, 162, 229 n. 20.

⁴¹ Fukuyama, *Trust*, 345–53, 336.

⁴² Dasgupta, "Economic Progress," 351–52; Raiser, "Informal Institutions," 231.

⁴³ Joseph Stiglitz, "New Bridges across the Chasm: Institutional Strategies for the Transition Economies" (speech delivered to the World Bank, December 8, 1999), <http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf/0/0ac8adc7b03aca0885256847004e2b82?OpenDocument>.

⁴⁴ For the original insight, see Coleman, "Social Capital," S104–S110. For a more rigorous development, see Joel Sobel, "Can We Trust Social Capital?" *Journal of Economic Literature* 40 (2002): 139–54, here esp. 151.

⁴⁵ Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 72–79, 127–80; Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 21–22, 329–31; Sheilagh Ogilvie, "Guilds, Efficiency, and Social Capital: Evidence from German Proto-Industry," *CESifo Working Papers*, no. 820 (2002): 23–24; Hull, *Sexuality*, 42–43.



FIGURE 2: Master baker and wife do core guild tasks while unmarried female carries burdens. Florini, *Æconomus prudens et legalis*, 1191. Reproduced with the kind permission of the Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart.

feature theorists view as helping to create social capital. Interacting in multiple spheres—economic, religious, social, political—ensures that members of a social network have multiple means of getting information about, punishing deviance in, and urging collective action on one another.⁴⁶ Guilds in Württemberg, as in other parts of early modern Europe, were indeed characterized by such multi-stranded internal ties. Members of the worsted weavers' guild in the Württemberg district of

⁴⁶ Coleman, "Social Capital," S104–S110.

Wildberg, for instance, transacted in the same markets, socialized over wine at their regular tavern, held frequent face-to-face assemblies of the entire membership, collaborated on petitions to the government, marched to Stuttgart to hold political demonstrations, and attended each other's weddings and funerals.⁴⁷

Early modern German guilds therefore possessed the closure and multiplex relationships generally regarded as helping networks create social capital. But how did this social capital affect women, and what does it tell us about the broader impact of social capital on vulnerable groups and society as a whole? Guilds directly influenced the economic position of women in four main ways. First, they controlled vocational training. Second, they defined which households could engage in certain occupations and which household members could do certain tasks. Third, guilds regulated the transmission of professional licenses from male masters to their widows. Finally, guilds influenced the wages paid within the economic sectors they controlled.

Throughout Europe, guilds were central to vocational training, and in Württemberg they monopolized it: non-guild apprenticeships were not permitted.⁴⁸ Wholly female guilds were extremely rare in Europe (only five are recorded for German-speaking Central Europe and none for England); they were found only in large cities (four of the German ones were in Cologne); and they were restricted to certain sectors (especially seamstressing, gold working, and silk making).⁴⁹ In the majority of guilds, female apprentices and hence female masters (other than masters' widows) were an extremely unusual phenomenon: they are observed in a handful of medieval European societies, and in England, Scotland, and France in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Even in these exceptionally liberal guilds, females generally formed a tiny minority.⁵⁰ In most parts of Europe, including

⁴⁷ Ogilvie, "Guilds," 23–24.

⁴⁸ Unlike in England, where they were quite widespread in the eighteenth century; see K. D. M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660–1900* (Cambridge, 1985), 228–29, 278, 312–13.

⁴⁹ Clare Haru Crowston, *Fabricating Women: The Seamstresses of Old Regime France, 1675–1791* (Durham, N.C., 2001); Martha C. Howell, *Women, Production, and Patriarchy in Late Medieval Cities* (Chicago, 1986), esp. 124–27; Merry E. Wiesner, *Working Women in Renaissance Germany* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1986), 170; Roper, *Holy Household*, 47; Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1993), 83–84, 102–03; Michael Mitterauer, "'Als Adam grub und Eva spann . . . ' Geschlechtsspezifische Arbeitsteilung in vorindustrieller Zeit," in Birgit Bolognese-Leuchtenmüller and Mitterauer, eds., *Frauen-Arbeitswelten* (Vienna, 1993), 17–42, here 33–34; Quataert, "Shaping," 1132–33.

⁵⁰ Crowston, *Fabricating*; Cynthia Truant, "La maîtrise d'une identité? Corporations féminines à Paris aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles," *Clio* 3 (1996), <http://clio.revues.org/document462.html>, 1–19, here 3, 6–7; Judith M. Bennett, "Medieval Women, Modern Women: Across the Great Divide," in David Aers, ed., *Culture and History 1350–1600* (Hemel Hempstead, 1992), 147–76, here 160; Andrea Kammeier-Nebel, "Frauenbildung im Kaufmannsmilieu spätmittelalterlicher Städte," in Elke Kleinau and Claudia Opitz, eds., *Geschichte der Mädchen- und Frauenbildung*, Vol. 1: *Vom Mittelalter bis zur Aufklärung* (Frankfurt, 1996), 78–90, here 85; Erika Uitz, "Zur wirtschaftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Situation von Frauen in ausgewählten spätmittelalterlichen Hansestädten," in Barbara Vogel and Ulrike Weckel, eds., *Frauen in der Ständegesellschaft* (Hamburg, 1991), 89–116; Daryl M. Hafter, "Women in the Underground Business of Eighteenth-Century Lyon," *Enterprise and Society* 2 (2001): 11–40, here 48; Howell, *Women*, 74, 168; Wiesner, *Women and Gender*, 95, 103; Katharina Simon-Muscheid, "Frauenarbeit und Männerere: der Geschlechterdiskurs im Handwerk," in Simon-Muscheid, ed., "Was nützt die Schusterin dem Schmied?" *Frauen und Handwerk vor der Industrialisierung* (Frankfurt, 1998), 13–34, here 31 with n. 36; Liliane Mottu-Weber, "L'évolution des activités professionnelles des femmes à Genève du XVI^e au XVIII^e siècle," in Cavaciocchi, *La donna*, 345–57, here 349–50; E. William Monter, "Women in Calvinist Geneva," *Signs* 6 (1980): 189–209, here 200,

Württemberg, girls could not be apprentices even to this limited extent. As the Jena jurist Adrian Beier put it in 1685, "Masculine sex is one of the indispensable basic preconditions for admission to a guild. The entire social order . . . is based upon each sex taking on those tasks which are most fitting to its nature."⁵¹ Or, as Johann Friderich Christoph Weisser wrote in his 1783 treatise on Württemberg industrial legislation, "Anyone who wants to learn a craft has to possess particular qualities, which are necessary because without them no one can be accepted as an apprentice and registered with a guild. Among these qualities is . . . masculine sex, since no female may properly practice a craft, even if she understands it just as well as a male person."⁵²

Local documentary sources show that these regulations were sedulously enforced. Guilds in Württemberg penalized anyone who sought to learn or practice a craft or proto-industry without being formally apprenticed to it, and carefully registered all incoming and outgoing apprentices by name. Of the 1,258 apprentices admitted by the proto-industrial worsted weavers' guild in the ten communities of the district of Wildberg between 1598 and 1760, none was female.⁵³ The same was true of other rural-urban guilds whose records survive, such as woollen broadcloth weavers, butchers, and bakers.⁵⁴ Of the fifty pauper apprenticeships arranged by the church courts of Ebhausen and Wildberg between 1646 and 1800, none was for a girl.⁵⁵ Guilds thus effectively excluded girls from the main form of formal vocational training in the Württemberg economy.

It might be argued, as some economic historians have recently sought to do, that guilds' exclusion of females simply reflected the natural order. It was natural and understandable that guilds should exclude females: "women were mostly restricted to activities learned informally at home" and hence had no demand for guild training.⁵⁶ This echoes arguments used by guild masters at the time, concerned to defend their privileges against female competition.⁵⁷

Empirical findings cast doubt on such arguments. First, in Württemberg as in

202–04; Natalie Zemon Davis, "Women in the Crafts in Sixteenth-Century Lyon," *Feminist Studies* 8 (Spring 1982): 47–80, here 50; Maxine Berg, "Women's Work, Mechanisation and the Early Phase of Industrialisation in England," in Patrick Joyce, ed., *The Historical Meanings of Work* (Cambridge, 1987), 64–98, here 73–75; Snell, *Annals*, 279–94, 310; E. C. Sanderson, *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh* (Basingstoke, 1996), 12–13; Hafter, "Women in the Underground," 14–15.

⁵¹ Adrian Beier, *Der Lehrjunge*, 5th edn. (Jena, 1717), 35.

⁵² Johann Friderich Christoph Weisser, *Das Recht der Handwerker nach allgemeinen Grundsätzen und insbesondere nach dem herzoglichen Württembergischen Gesezen entworfen* (Stuttgart, 1780), 99–100: "Von einem Jeden, der ein Handwerk erlernen will, werden gewisse Eigenschaften erfordert, welche insgesamt dergestalten notwendig sind, daß ohne sie keiner zum Lehrjungen angenommen, und bei der Zunft eingeschrieben wird. Unter diese Eigenschaften gehört . . . Das männliche Geschlecht; denn ordentlicher Weise darf kein Weibsbild ein Handwerk treiben, ob sie es gleich eben so gut, als eine Mansperson, verstünde."

⁵³ HSAS, A573 Bü. 777–911 (1598–1762); for the details of the quantitative analysis, see Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 139–79.

⁵⁴ HSAS, A573 Bü. 912–48 (woollen broadcloth weavers), Bü. 949–1018 (bakers), Bü. 1019 (butchers).

⁵⁵ PAW KKP, Vols. 1–8 (1646–1800); PAE KKP, Vols. 1–8 (1674–1800); and Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 99.

⁵⁶ S. R. Epstein, "Craft Guilds, Apprenticeship, and Technological Change in Preindustrial Europe," *Journal of Economic History* 58 (1998): 684–713, here 687 n. 10.

⁵⁷ Roper, *Holy Household*, 46; Kathy Stuart, *Defiled Trades and Social Outcasts: Honor and Ritual Pollution in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 2000), 214; Hafter, "Women in the Underground,"

many other Western European societies, women married in their late twenties, 15–20 percent of them never married at all, and at any one time more than half of all females of prime working age were not married. These demographic realities gave women a strong incentive to learn vocational skills.⁵⁸ Second, the wives and widows of masters were permitted to do guilded work, under a husband's guild license. Thus between 1641 and 1760, 11–14 percent of active worsted weavers in the ten communities of the district of Wildberg were masters' widows, practicing under their husbands' guild licenses. In the database described earlier, consisting of 2,828 cases of observed work extracted from church-court records, 6 percent of the observed work of married women and 8 percent of the observed work of widows was in guilded activities.⁵⁹ Such women, too, had a demand for vocational training.⁶⁰ Finally, as we shall see, unmarried females were regarded as dangerous competitors by male journeymen and masters, and were persecuted when they encroached on tasks (such as wool combing or cloth weaving) reserved for male guild members. That is, women were not mostly restricted to domestic activities but had the desire and ability to work in guilded sectors.⁶¹ By excluding girls from apprenticeship, therefore, guilds were not simply reflecting the natural order but were deliberately enforcing what modern economists term "pre-market" gender discrimination in the labor market.⁶²

A second way guilds affected women's position was by defining and enforcing occupational demarcations. No one could legitimately work at a particular guilded activity without being a member of a master's household, and even within masters' households guilds reserved certain tasks for males. It might be thought that this was natural and reasonable, since all production took place within the household, and women could work under the guild licenses of their husbands, fathers, or masters. But the evidence shows that not all production took place within households, and not all women desirous of doing craft work enjoyed kinship ties to men with the appropriate guild licenses. These guild rules prevented women of all marital statuses from making a full contribution to the economy.

Thus, for instance, guild privileges prevented a married woman from practicing a different occupation from her husband, as in 1711, when the Bottwar shopkeepers' guild demanded that a village widow's shop be closed and her wares confiscated

esp. 16–18, 30–32; John Rule, "The Property of Skill in the Period of Manufacture," in Joyce, *Historical Meanings*, 99–118, here 107.

⁵⁸ Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 40–49, 127–28; Maryanne Kowaleski, "Singlewomen in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: The Demographic Perspective," in Judith M. Bennett and Amy M. Froide, eds., *Singlewomen in the European Past, 1250–1800* (Philadelphia, 1999), 38–81, 325–44, here esp. 325–44; Judith M. Bennett and Amy M. Froide, "Singular Past," in Bennett and Froide, *Singlewomen*, 1–37, here 2, 4–5.

⁵⁹ Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 153–59, 230–36.

⁶⁰ See also Howell, *Women*, 2–4, 10, 74; Hafter, "Women in the Underground," 16.

⁶¹ Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 130–34, 296–98, 305–08; Howell, *Women*, 2; Mottu-Weber, "L'évolution," 347–48; Hafter, "Women in the Underground," esp. 16–18, 30–32.

⁶² See the evidence presented in Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 130–34, 295–98. On England, John Hatcher, "Women's Work Reconsidered: Gender and Wage Differentiation in Late Medieval England," *Past and Present*, no. 173 (2001): 191–98, here 195–96, 198; and Joyce Burnette, "An Investigation of the Female-Male Wage Gap during the Industrial Revolution in Britain," *Economic History Review*, 2d ser., 50 (1997): 257–81, here 261–62, 272–73.



FIGURE 3: Married woman engages in guilded basketmaking alongside husband while unmarried female does housework. Florini, *Economus prudens et legalis*, 528. Reproduced with the kind permission of the Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart.

because she had married a dyer,⁶³ or in 1742, when an Effringen soldier's wife was jailed after a nailsmith reported her to the community assembly for encroaching on his guild privileges.⁶⁴ This might not seem to matter, until we recognize that many women were married to men who were economically incapable or abusive.⁶⁵ A database of 313 marital conflict cases in two Württemberg communities between 1646 and 1800 reveals that one-quarter involved economic failings on the part of the husband, one-quarter involved regular drunkenness by the husband, nearly half involved physical abuse by the husband, and more than one-tenth involved the husband depriving the wife of food.⁶⁶ Guild demarcations meant that an abused or deprived wife could not conduct a craft, proto-industry, or small shop of her own, but rather was forced, like one Wildberg weaver's battered wife in 1661, to "earn her food bitterly with spinning."⁶⁷

Guild demarcations also prevented widows from moving into occupations that better suited their capacities after their husbands died. Widows who did so were reported by guild members and punished by the guild, as in 1636, when a woollen weaver's widow was fined more than a week's average earnings by the worsted weavers' guild because "she took it upon herself to practice the craft, even though her deceased husband had never been apprenticed to worsted-making,"⁶⁸ or in 1764, when a village widow was punished for violating the bakers' guild privileges by trading in grain.⁶⁹ Catharina Fuchs, a poor day laborer's widow, was only granted a princely dispensation to open a tiny shop in 1652 on the grounds that she and her crippled son "will be able to sell nothing other than the ribbons they themselves make, matches, and such poor things, so [the shopkeepers' guild] will suffer no injury or encroachment."⁷⁰

But guild demarcations weighed most heavily on never-married women, who made up 40 percent of all females of prime working age (fifteen to sixty-four years), but were only allowed to do guilded work under the guild licenses of fathers or masters, and even then were excluded from many tasks. The proto-industrial worsted weavers, for instance, outlawed the numerous unmarried female weft-makers in 1611, ordering that "such daughters be kept to other and necessary domestic tasks and business, or caused to enter into honorable service."⁷¹ From

⁶³ HSAS, A228 Bü. 713, no. 7, fol. 4r, September 29, 1711.

⁶⁴ HSAS, A573 Bü. 95, fol. 6v, January 25, 1742.

⁶⁵ On the inadequacies and dangers of a "unitary" approach to the household that assumes the interests of wives to be faithfully represented by the decisions of husbands, see the stimulating historical analysis in Martha Howell, *The Marriage Exchange: Property, Social Place and Gender in Cities of the Low Countries, 1300–1550* (Chicago, 1998), esp. 233–37; and the economic arguments in Nancy Birdsall, "Analytical Approaches to Population Growth," in H. Chenery and T. N. Srinivasan, eds., *Handbook of Development Economics*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 1988), 1: 477–542, here 511–12; Debraj Ray, *Development Economics* (Princeton, N.J., 1998), 279–88; and Partha Dasgupta, *An Inquiry into Well-Being and Destitution* (Oxford, 1993), 333–36.

⁶⁶ For a detailed analysis of this database, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 179–94, esp. tables 4.8–4.10.

⁶⁷ PAW KKP, Vol. 2, fol. 43v, October 25, 1661: "Ihrer speiß [die] Sie mit spinnen Saur v.diennen."

⁶⁸ HSAS, A573 Bü. 810 (1635–36), unpag., rubric "Strafen": "hatt sich vnderstanden daß handtwerckh zutreiben, angesehen doch ihr mann see: daß engelsait machen nie erlehrt."

⁶⁹ HSAS, A573 Bü. 95, fol. 28v, December 17, 1764.

⁷⁰ HSAS, A573 Bü. 1149, fol. 32v–33v, July 16, 1652: "Sintemahlen Sie nichts Alß selbstmachende bändlen schwevelhölzlen vnd derogleich. schlechte Sach faihl zue haben v.mag, Kein schad [od.] eingriff gethan würde."

⁷¹ "Engelsattweberordnung in A. 1608 [actually 1611] vfgerichtet," rpt. in Troeltsch, *Die Calwer*

then onward, the guild fined any master who employed an unmarried woman to do anything other than spin or run errands, as in 1669, when Hannß Schrotter was fined three weeks' average earnings for "setting his servant girl behind the loom and having her weave"—a strong deterrent to others thinking of letting unmarried women do prohibited guild work.⁷² Unmarried women who wished to weave cloth, make wefts, or comb wool were forced into the black market, where they risked heavy fines, as in 1754, when Juliana Schweickertin, a fifty-year-old independent unmarried woman, was fined nearly a third of a maidservant's annual wage for "weaving and combing, counter to the guild ordinance."⁷³ Even without perfect enforcement, the level of fines imposed cannot but have deterred the marginal black-market worker. This is borne out by the church-court database of 2,828 cases of observed work that has already been mentioned: it records many other illegal work activities but only three cases of black-market guilded work by unmarried females.⁷⁴ This contrasts with the situation in more dynamic early modern economies, where by the eighteenth century many guilds had either already largely given up the struggle to exclude female workers (as in England and the Low Countries) or were in the process of doing so (as in Scotland or France).⁷⁵

Guilds' use of their social capital of shared norms, information, and collective sanctions to enforce their monopoly undoubtedly benefited guild masters. But it forced many women into marginal activities such as spinning, begging, and the exploitive black-market "informal sector." Thus in a 1736 "soul-table" for ten Württemberg communities, 86 percent of never-married females depended wholly or partly on spinning for a livelihood, and 18 percent wholly or partly on charity. Even widows depended 60 percent on spinning and 12 percent on charity. The equivalent figures for men were 1 percent dependent on spinning, 2 percent on charity.⁷⁶ Furthermore, by excluding women from *guilded* sectors, guilds increased the supply of female workers in *unguilded* sectors, thereby lowering their wages—a form of "pre-market" labor discrimination that economists term "occupational crowding."⁷⁷

Guilds also affected women in a third way, by regulating widows' rights to continue family workshops. Some, such as the guild-like merchant-dyers' association that enjoyed a legal monopoly over dyeing and exporting Württemberg worsteds, simply prohibited any widow from continuing to trade after her husband's

Zeughandlungskompanie, 435–53, here article 20, 446: "dergleichen Töchtern zue andern vnd nohtwendigen hauss Arbeiten vnd geschäften Anzuehalten, oder sich In Ehrliche Dienst einzuelassen verursacht werden."

⁷² HSAS, A573 Bü. 92, fol. 5v, November 1, 1669: "Sein dienst mägdtlin . . . hindern Stuehl zue sez. vnd weeben zuelaß."

⁷³ HSAS, A573 Bü. 904 (1752–53), unpag., rubric "Strafen": "wider die Ordnung weeben und kämmen."

⁷⁴ For a detailed discussion of the compilation, representativeness, and reliability of this database, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 22–36.

⁷⁵ See, for example, Berg, "Women's Work," 73–75; Snell, *Annals*, 279–94, 310; Howell, *Women*, 124–27; Sanderson, *Women and Work*, 12–13; Hafter, "Women in the Underground," 14–15.

⁷⁶ HSAS, A573 Bü. 6967 (1736); for a detailed breakdown of women's livelihood sources as revealed in this source, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, esp. 214–15 (table 5.4).

⁷⁷ On this, see Joyce Burnette, "Testing for Occupational Crowding in Eighteenth-Century British Agriculture," *Explorations in Economic History* 33 (1996): 319–45.

death.⁷⁸ But most guild members wanted to make some provision for their own widows in the future, without permitting too much competition against themselves now. So most guilds allowed a master's widow to continue the workshop but imposed restrictions that limited her viability as a competitor.

Their main strategy was to make it hard for widows to replace lost spousal labor. Thus guilds cancelled widows' (but not widowers') guild licenses if they remarried,⁷⁹ as in 1711, when the Stammheim shopkeepers' guild demanded that a widow close her small shop when she remarried, "in order to maintain us by our just rights."⁸⁰ Guilds forbade the use of daughters for many guilded tasks, yet demographic realities meant that half of all widows lacked resident sons of any age.⁸¹ This left widows dependent on hired labor, but here guild rules were strict. Even for male masters, guilds prohibited hiring cheap female labor and limited the number of (relatively costly) apprentices and journeymen each master could employ. For widows, guild rules were much stricter and increased their costs above those of male guild members.⁸² The cheapest guilded labor was an apprentice, but nearly all guilds prohibited widows from employing one. Many deprived a widow even of existing apprentices, transferring them immediately to other (male) employers. Others let a widow keep existing apprentices, but imposed conditions: the apprentice must be the widow's own son, or nearly finished with his contract, or supervised by a (costly) journeyman. Many guilds only let widows practice at all if they employed journeymen, who were so expensive that few masters of either sex could afford them, especially in rural areas.⁸³ Others limited the kinds of work widows could do, even with journeymen, as in 1598, when Michel Zeller's widow was heavily fined for employing a journeyman to comb wool in her attic—although no guild article forbade this.⁸⁴ Quantitative analysis of local censuses, account books, and guild registers show that these regulations were strictly implemented: guilds carefully regulated how often a master could take on an apprentice, the number and background of boys admitted to apprenticeship (and thus ultimately journeymanship), the length of journeymanship, and the hiring of non-guild (especially female) labor.⁸⁵ As a result, no widows kept apprentices, few kept journeymen, and many were forced to give up the workshop altogether, faced with the discriminatory costs the guilds imposed on them.⁸⁶

Guilds also discriminated against widows in other ways. Many made a widow's

⁷⁸ Troeltsch, *Die Calwer Zeughandlungskompagnie*, 67.

⁷⁹ Weisser, *Recht*, 184; Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 258–63.

⁸⁰ HSAS, A228 Bü. 713, no. 7, fol. 4r, September 29, 1711: "Unß bey gleichem recht zu manuteniren."

⁸¹ HSAS, A573 Bü. 6965 (1717); A573 Bü. 6966 (1722); A573 Bü. 6967 (1736); A572 Bü. 68 (1736); Stadtarchiv Bietigheim, A1952 (1736).

⁸² For a detailed analysis of the guild legislation underlying this discussion, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 258–63.

⁸³ On this, see Troeltsch, *Die Calwer Zeughandlungskompagnie*, 209–10; Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 260–61; Claus-Peter Clasen, *Die Augsburger Weber: Leistungen und Krisen des Textilgewerbes um 1600* (Augsburg, 1981), 23, 59; Annemarie Steidl, "Probleme und Möglichkeiten über Frauenarbeit im ländlichen Handwerk zu sprechen," in Simon-Muschel, *Was nützt*, 117–30, here 119.

⁸⁴ HSAS, A573 Bü. 777 (1598–99), unpag., heading "Strafen."

⁸⁵ Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 127–80.

⁸⁶ Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 258–63.

license to practice conditional on her behaving “honorably,” a catchall discretionary clause blatantly open to abuse by local guild officials and male masters concerned to limit competition, here as elsewhere in preindustrial Europe.⁸⁷ No guild permitted widows any say in the collective decisionmaking of the guild, the election of guild officers, or the formulation of guild regulations.⁸⁸ And Württemberg guilds were not even the most restrictive: in many other European societies, guilds altogether denied a widow the right to continue the workshop, restricted her to indoor work only, limited the time period for which she could practice after her husband’s death, made it conditional on her having a son to take over, limited the size of her workshop, permitted her to make only certain products, or assigned her a lower rate of pay than male masters.⁸⁹ Guilds thus used their social capital of common norms, shared information, and collective action to protect their male members from competition even by fellow members’ widows.

A fourth and final way in which guilds affected women was by legally capping their earnings in the few tasks they were allowed to do. The tailors’ guilds, for example, permitted women to work as seamstresses but restricted them to certain tasks,⁹⁰ and artificially capped the day-wage of an experienced seamstress at a level lower than that of an apprentice lad, less than half that of a journeyman, and less than a third that of a master.⁹¹ Likewise, the weavers’ guilds permitted unmarried women to spin but imposed piece-rate ceilings lower than the market rate, as in 1654, when they secured a charter stating that “spinning a pound [of yarn] shall be paid at as high a wage as the [weavers’] guild agrees among its members, the dyers as well as the worsted weavers shall support this in all ways, and each master shall then infallibly stick to the agreed wage.”⁹²

Local court records show that guild members who offered higher rates to spinners suffered formal and informal sanctions, as in 1623, when Hans Pfeiffer was suspected of having paid “Röbelin’s wife” 10 *Kreuzer* above the guild rate ceiling: he immediately found his fellow guild masters “spreading rumors about him,” interrogating the spinner, and “seeking to bring him to punishment before the

⁸⁷ Weisser, *Recht*, 184; Erika Uitz, “Frauenarbeit im Handwerk: Methodenfragen und inhaltlichen Probleme,” in Simon-Muscheid, *Was nützt*, 89–116, here 89; Elfie-Marita Eibl, “Frauen als ‘Karriermittel’ im Zunfthandwerk der Frühen Neuzeit,” *Jahrbuch für Regionalgeschichte und Landeskunde* 20 (1995–96): 51–70, here 65; Wiesner, *Working Women*, 152–53, 158; Elizabeth Musgrave, “Women and the Craft Guilds in Eighteenth-Century Nantes,” in G. Crossick, ed., *The Artisan and the European Town, 1500–1900* (Aldershot, 1997), 151–71, here 157.

⁸⁸ This was the case even in the comparatively liberal French guilds, as shown in Truant, “La maîtrise,” 1, 5–7. For additional German examples, see Weisser, *Recht*, 183; Roper, *Holy Household*, 40, 49.

⁸⁹ For an array of examples, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 262–63, esp. n. 324; Howell, *Women*, 133; Wiesner, *Working Women*, 195; Roper, *Holy Household*, 50–53.

⁹⁰ On Württemberg, see HSAS, A573 Bü. 4383 (1635–44), booklet no. 2, fol. 13v; HSAS, A573 Bü. 4396, booklet no. 1 (1636–44), unpag.; Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 307. On other parts of Europe, see Howell, *Women*, 134; Wiesner, *Working Women*, 178–80; Quataert, “Shaping,” 1135–38; Roper, *Holy Household*, 48–49; Crowston, *Fabricating*.

⁹¹ HSAS, A573 Bü. 5279 (1642); A573 Bü. 5280 (1654); A573 Bü. 5281 (1669).

⁹² Emendations dated 1654 to “Engelsattweberordnung in A. 1608 [actually 1611] vferichtet,” rpt. in Troeltsch, *Die Calwer Zeughandlungskompagnie*, 435–53, here article 21 (446 n. 2): “solle vom Pfundt . . . Zuespinnen, so vihl alss sich ein handwerckh mit einander vergleichen würdt zuelohn geraicht werden, vnd die Färber sowohl allss die Knappen hierzue alle guete befürderung erweisen, bey welchem vereinbarten Lohn alssdann Ein Jeder Maister . . . würdt ohnfehlbar verpleiben solle.”

guild”; ultimately, Pfeiffer went to court “to rescue his honor.”⁹³ Guilds actively enforced the piece-rate ceilings, fining individual weavers who dishonorably betrayed their fellow guild masters by paying spinners “too much,” and confiscating raw wool and spun yarn from village spinners working for “outsiders” willing to pay them a market rate.⁹⁴ Undoubtedly, some spinners earned a little more by black-market work, but the regulations still harmed them: evading rules cost time, penalties were substantial, and breaking the law laid spinners open to confiscation, exploitation, and blackmail. There were also wider effects: the piece-rate ceilings created disincentives for spinners to produce the finer wool and adopt the technological innovations required to increase yarn—and hence cloth—quality.⁹⁵ By using their social capital to create a shared norm that paying spinners a market wage was “dishonorable,” to publicize information about violations of this norm, and to ensure that violators were punished, guilds harmed not just the female spinners but the wider economy. One must surely ask whether the cost of this social capital, which was disproportionately paid by women, did not outweigh any benefits enjoyed by guild members.

It might be argued that guilds did not matter, since the women they excluded simply worked illegally in the black market or “informal sector.” This argument has recently been adduced by economic historians concerned to rehabilitate guilds from criticisms that they inflicted harm on non-members whom they prevented from earning a living.⁹⁶ But, as studies of the “informal sector” in modern poor economies show, forcing people to work on the black market instead of in open and regulated formal markets not only reduces contract enforcement and worker protection (thereby harming the weakest economic agents) but also increases costs and risks and distorts incentives (thereby inflicting deadweight losses on the whole economy). Formal-sector social networks such as guilds, by using their social capital to force non-members into the “informal sector,” harm not just the outsiders who are prevented from earning a legal living but also the economy as a whole.⁹⁷ Those early modern European societies that ceased to force women (and other excluded groups) into the informal sector were also, and not coincidentally, those whose economies flourished.⁹⁸

⁹³ HSAS, A573 Bü. 15, fol. 618r, February 20, 1623: “hette ihn . . . gleich verschreien”; “hette ihn vor dem handtwerckh, begehren in ein straff zupringen”; “zu rettung seiner ehren.”

⁹⁴ For a detailed discussion of these regulations and their impact on the industry, see Troeltsch, *Die Calwer Zeughandlungskompagnie*, 125–31; Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 353–55; Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 307–08.

⁹⁵ Troeltsch, *Die Calwer Zeughandlungskompagnie*, 125–31; Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 352–60; Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 307–08.

⁹⁶ See, for example, Charles R. Hickson and Earl A. Thompson, “A New Theory of Guilds and European Economic Development,” *Explorations in Economic History* 28 (1991): 127–68, here 128–31; Reinhold Reith, “Technische Innovation im Handwerk der frühen Neuzeit? Traditionen, Probleme und Perspektiven der Forschung,” in Karl Heinrich Kaufhold and Wilfried Reininghaus, eds., *Stadt und Handwerk in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Cologne, 2000), 21–60, here 45–49; Epstein, “Craft Guilds,” 689–91.

⁹⁷ On the effects of the “informal sector” in modern developing societies, see Ray, *Development Economics*, 261, 346–48, 395–96; on the risks and penalties it involved in a preindustrial European context, see Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 71, 399, 415, 420, 435–37, 444–45, 449; Hafter, “Women in the Underground,” 12, 19, 31–32. For a detailed discussion of the wider economic repercussions of forcing women into the informal sector, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 347–48.

⁹⁸ For additional evidence and arguments to this effect, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 344–52.

IT MIGHT NOT SEEM SURPRISING THAT the social capital generated by guilds was used in ways that harmed women. Most historians of women's work have in recent years come to a clear-sighted recognition that there was no "pre-capitalist" golden age within the guild framework, although economic historians are taking much longer to face up to the same empirical findings.⁹⁹ But the effect of *community* institutions on women has hitherto hardly been examined, and there is still a very widespread tendency to accept communitarian rhetoric at face value.¹⁰⁰ Only gradually are historians bringing into the light of day what communities actually did to women and incorporating these findings into our understanding of what "community" means in practice.¹⁰¹

The acceptance of communitarian rhetoric at face value is exemplified in much of the social capital literature, which explicitly adduces preindustrial European communities as exemplars of social networks generating a social capital that benefited the entire society.¹⁰² Thus Robert Putnam has argued that the strong urban communities of medieval and early modern northern Italy facilitated social capital in ways denied to southern Italy, where communities were weaker.¹⁰³ James Coleman and many others have argued that closely knit village communities such as those of preindustrial Switzerland generated social capital that improved the efficiency of resource management and contract enforcement, thereby benefiting the entire society.¹⁰⁴

Certainly, it seems justified to view preindustrial communities as examples of social capital in action. For one thing, they satisfy in full measure social capital

⁹⁹ On the constraints placed on females by early modern guilds, see, for example, Howell, *Women*, 70–94, 124–58, 167; Roper, *Holy Household*, 48–49; Judith C. Brown, "A Woman's Place Was in the Home: Women's Work in Renaissance Tuscany," in Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers, eds., *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago, 1986), 206–24, here 212–13; Clasen, *Die Augsburger*, 130–33, 323–25; Musgrave, "Women and the Craft Guilds," 167; Helga Schultz, "Handwerkerrecht und Zünfte auf dem Land im Spätmittelalter," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte des Feudalismus* 7 (1983): 326–50, here 330; Wiesner, *Working Women*, 150–51; Monter, "Women in Calvinist Geneva," 202–03; Rudolf Michel Dekker, "Women in Revolt: Collective Protest and Its Social Basis in Holland," *Theory and Society* 16 (1987): 337–62, here 347; Quataert, "Shaping," 1126–27, 1147–48.

¹⁰⁰ Peter Blickle, *Kommunalismus: Skizzen einer gesellschaftlichen Organisationsform* (Munich, 2000); Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (Oxford, 1990), 1–4, 27–28; Barbara Alpern Engel, *Between the Fields and the City: Women, Work, and Family in Russia, 1861–1914* (Cambridge, 1996), 239, 241; Christine Worobec, *Peasant Russia: Family and Community in the Post-Emancipation Period* (Princeton, N.J., 1991), 13, 145, 204; Jane McDermid, "Women in Urban Employment and the Shaping of the Russian Working Class," in Hudson and Lee, *Women's Work*, 204–19, here 205–07, 212–15.

¹⁰¹ For outstanding recent examples, see the sensitive and innovative study of Jewish and Catholic women in a confessionally mixed community in eighteenth-century Lorraine by Ulbrich, *Shulamit*, esp. 35, 138, 306; and the wide-ranging survey of sexual regulation in eighteenth-century Germany by Hull, *Sexuality*, 36–41. On the concepts of community, fraternity, and citizenship as fundamentally and inevitably male-dominated, see Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory* (Cambridge, 1989), esp. 33, 41, 49–50.

¹⁰² Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work*, 121–48, 163–85; Coleman, "Social Capital," S101–S103; Dasgupta, "Economic Progress," 337–38; Narayan and Pritchett, "Social Capital," 283–84.

¹⁰³ Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work*, 123–37, 162.

¹⁰⁴ Coleman, "Social Capital," S101–S103; Dasgupta, "Economic Progress," 337–38; Narayan and Pritchett, "Social Capital," 283–84; Robert Wade, "Why Some Indian Villages Cooperate," *Economic and Political Weekly* 33 (1988): 773–76; M. McKean, "Success on the Commons: A Comparative Examination of Institutions for Common Property Resource Management," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 4 (1992): 247–81.

theorists' two criteria of "closure" and "multiplex relationships."¹⁰⁵ Thus in Württemberg, as in Switzerland and other societies characterized by strong communities, villages and small towns achieved "closure" by regulating citizenship, settlement, migration, marriage, and household formation.¹⁰⁶ Until well into the nineteenth century, many German communities regulated precisely which inhabitants could become full community members, by deliberately granting marriage permits only to "economically and morally strong persons," thereby ensuring "closure" for themselves as social networks.¹⁰⁷

Preindustrial communities also manifested a high density of "multiplex relationships." Members of Württemberg communities transacted with one another in the marketplace, attended the same church (non-Lutherans were generally denied citizenship, and church attendance was closely monitored), and met regularly in face-to-face community assemblies where each citizen was asked if he had anything to report.¹⁰⁸ These multi-stranded relationships among community members allowed "the resources of one relationship to be appropriated for use in others," making it more possible to generate a social capital of common norms, shared information, and collective sanctions.¹⁰⁹

But how did this social capital actually work? In particular, pursuing our theme, how did it affect the position of weaker economic agents such as females? The local community was so central to Württemberg society that it influenced the position of women in a wide variety of ways. Here I single out six for special attention. First, communities decided whether an individual could live locally at all. Second, they administered the system of gender tutelage governing who was regarded as a legal adult. Third, they regulated the sale, exchange, and inheritance of land. Fourth, they regulated the wages that could be paid in labor markets. Fifth, they controlled access to common resources. And finally, they regulated consumption.

The first thing to understand is that communities did not recognize females as full members.¹¹⁰ The son of an existing community citizen automatically inherited full citizenship rights, including the right to bring in a wife from outside. But a citizen's daughter was only endowed with right of residence until she married. She could not endow her husband with citizenship, and if she failed to marry (as 15–20 percent of Württemberg women did), even her residence was conditional on good behavior.¹¹¹

It might be argued that such regulations were both necessary and natural—

¹⁰⁵ Coleman, "Social Capital," S104–S110; Sobel, "Can We Trust," 151.

¹⁰⁶ Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 45–57.

¹⁰⁷ Ehmer, *Heiratsverhalten*; Beck, "Frauen in Krise," 210–11 and n. 196; Knodel, "Law, Marriage," 279–80; Mantl, *Heirat*; Hull, *Sexuality*, 30–31, 37–38; Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 61–63.

¹⁰⁸ Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 57–72; Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 20, 332–34.

¹⁰⁹ Coleman, "Social Capital," S104–S110 (quotation); Hull, *Sexuality*, 37; C. J. Calhoun, "Community: Toward a Variable Conceptualization for Comparative Research," *Social History* 5 (1980): 105–26, here esp. 120.

¹¹⁰ Hull, *Sexuality*, 31, 37; Thomas Robisheaux, *Rural Society and the Search for Order in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 1989), esp. 106–07; John Theibault, "Community and *Herrschaft* in the Seventeenth-Century German Village," *Journal of Modern History* 64 (1992): 1–21, here esp. 12.

¹¹¹ On women's lack of full community membership in other parts of preindustrial Germany and Europe, see Merry E. Wiesner, "Nuns, Wives, and Mothers: Women and the Reformation in Germany," in Sherrin Marshall, ed., *Women in Reformation and Counter-Reformation Europe* (Bloomington, Ind., 1989), 8–28, here 19; Hull, *Sexuality*, 31; Maria Bogucka, "Women and Economic Life in the Polish Cities during the 16th–17th Centuries," in Cavaciocchi, *La donna*, 185–94, here 186; P. J. P.

necessary because otherwise communities could not achieve the “closure” required to generate social capital, and natural because females enjoyed community membership by being the daughters or wives of citizens. But the empirical findings show otherwise. Local women whose husbands lacked community citizenship were hindered from making a living, as in 1793, when inhabitants of Gültlingen were ordered to deny further shelter to a non-citizen’s wife who was “roaming around under the pretext of collecting rags, equipped with a slip of paper from [the paper-miller], but without any official permit.”¹¹² Community councils routinely ordered citizens’ unmarried daughters to leave the community, for allegedly causing conflict, being idle, arousing neighbors’ complaints, or threatening imprudent marriages, as in 1767, when a Wildberg widow’s daughter was “warned in the highest terms against her intended marriage with the night watchman and instructed that instead of hurling herself into misfortune she shall immediately betake herself into service elsewhere.”¹¹³ Communities ejected maidservants who allegedly caused conflict in households, created sexual temptations for local men, were reported as promiscuous, absconded from abusive masters, tried to set up in business independently, or even simply brought poor reputations from other communities, as in 1718, when Josua Reulin’s Catholic maidservant was thrown out of Pfrondorf on the grounds that she had already been “ordered away by other localities in the neighborhood.”¹¹⁴

Above all, unmarried women living in lodgings independently rather than as members of households were pejoratively labeled *Eigenbrötlerinnen* (“own-breaders”) and continually harassed by community councils, even though they made up nearly 10 percent of the female population and headed 6 percent of those units regarded as responsible for earning their own livelihoods.¹¹⁵ A complaint by a male citizen was usually enough to ensure that an *Eigenbrötlerin* was ejected, as in 1717, when the Ebhausen council responded to citizen complaints by ordering three local *Eigenbrötlerinnen* to “move away within eight days,”¹¹⁶ in 1752, when Barbara Kleiner was reported by her Wildberg landlord and promptly ordered “to refrain from *Eigenbröten*, and instead enter into a proper job as a servant, otherwise she shall be driven out of town by order of the authorities,”¹¹⁷ or in 1787, when a

Goldberg, “Female Labour, Service and Marriage in the Late Medieval Urban North,” *Northern History* 22 (1986): 18–38, here 32.

¹¹² HSAS, A573 Bü. 100, fol. 28r–v, 1793: “und das Weib durchstreife mit einem Zettel von Rivinius versehen, jedoch ohn Patent, unter dem Vorwand des Lumpensammelns.”

¹¹³ For the latter example, see PAW KKP, Vol. 6, fol. 124r–v, March 18, 1763: “ire vorhabende Mariage mit dem Nachwächter Günthner äußerstens abgerath. und die weisung gegeben worden, daß sie, statt sich in ein Unglück zu stürzen, sich nechstens in einen aus wärtigen dienst begeben.” For further examples of ejection of citizens’ daughters, and more detailed analysis, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 135–36.

¹¹⁴ For the latter example, see PAE KKP, Vol. 3, p. 52, May 8, 1718: “an andern orten in der nachbarschaft weggebotten worden ist.” For additional examples of ejections of maidservants, and more detailed analysis, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 309–17.

¹¹⁵ Proportions calculated from HSAS, A573 Bü. 6965 (1717), 6966 (1722), and 6967 (1736). On high proportions of independent unmarried “singlewomen” in other preindustrial European societies, see Kowaleski, “Singlewomen,” 325–44; Truant, “La maîtrise,” 8–9; Merry E. Wiesner, “Having Her Own Smoke: Employment and Independence for Singlewomen in Germany, 1400–1750,” in Bennett and Froide, *Singlewomen*, 192–216, here esp. 192–94.

¹¹⁶ PAE KKP, Vol. 3, p. 16, April 16, 1717: “innerhalb 8 tagen wegZiehen.”

¹¹⁷ HSAS, A573 Bü. 95, fol. 31v, December 14, 1752: “sich deß Eigebrötlens zu bemüßigen,

Pfrondorf weaver was ordered “not to anger the community by giving any further shelter” to the independent spinster Magdalena Braun.¹¹⁸

These attitudes toward independent females can be observed in most parts of preindustrial Europe.¹¹⁹ But they were effectively enforced in some societies—notably in German-speaking Central Europe—and much less thoroughly in others.¹²⁰ What made the difference was the availability of institutional mechanisms to put them into action—or, to put it in the terms of modern social scientists, the existence of social networks able to generate and sustain a social capital of shared norms about such women, efficient information transfer about their activities, and collective sanctions against them. Substantial male citizens naturally welcomed the existence of community social capital that enabled them to eject any female who threatened their interests. But many women’s revealed preferences suggest that it was not best for the women themselves. Nor is it clear that it was most productive for the economy at large.

Communities affected women’s position in a second way by subjecting those females who *were* permitted to dwell in the community to a system of gender tutelage (*Geschlechtsvormundschaft*) under which they were not legal adults. Gender tutelage was imposed on Württemberg women in the 1555 national law code, but local court records suggest that it was widely ignored until around 1600, when community councils began to enforce it.¹²¹ From then on, women were increasingly denied access to justice and contract enforcement unless accompanied by male guardians—an unmarried woman had to be supported by her *Pfleger*, a wife or widow by her *Kriegsvogt*.

Some have portrayed gender tutelage as a beneficent arrangement that protected women from exploitation by their husbands.¹²² However, careful examination of local-level documentary sources tells a rather different tale. *Pfleger* and *Kriegsvögte* were appointed by community councils, were often themselves council members, and—in Württemberg as in other parts of Europe—were used by communities to exercise surveillance and control over women, particularly spinsters or widows.¹²³ Community councils imposed guardians on women accused of conflictual or sexually suspicious behavior, forbade women to litigate without guardians, permitted male transaction partners to refuse to deal with women

hingegen in einer ordenlichen dinst zugehen, widerigen falls sie aus der Stadt von obrigkeits wegen getriben werden solle.”

¹¹⁸ PAE KKP, Vol. 7, fol. 65r, August 15, 1787.

¹¹⁹ See, for instance, the censorious attitudes toward “singlewomen” discussed in Bennett and Froide, “Singular Past,” esp. 14–15.

¹²⁰ Wiesner, “Having,” esp. 194–97; Rublack, *Crimes*, 139, 149, 152–58, 162–63, 256.

¹²¹ Antonie Kraut, *Die Stellung der Frau im württembergischen Privatrecht: Eine Untersuchung über Geschlechtsvormundschaft und Interzessionsfrage* (Tübingen, 1934); “Erstes Landrecht” (May 6, 1555), in Reyscher, *Vollständige Sammlung*, 4: 95, referring to “Zweites Landrecht” (July 1, 1567), 171–420, where differences between the 1555 and the 1567 version are recorded in the footnotes, here esp. 231; David Sabeau, “Allianzen und Listen: Die Geschlechtsvormundschaft im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert,” in Ute Gerhard, ed., *Frauen in der Geschichte des Rechts: Von der Frühen Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 1997), 460–79; Sabeau, *Property*, 208–14; Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 249–52.

¹²² Sabeau, “Allianzen,” 461.

¹²³ Annamarie Ryter, “Die Geschlechtsvormundschaft in der Schweiz: das Beispiel der Kanton Basel-Landschaft und Basel-Stadt,” in Ute Gerhard, ed., *Frauen in der Geschichte des Rechts: von der Frühen Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 1997), 494–506, here 498–502.

without guardians present, compelled women to involve guardians in economic transactions, and pressed women to submit to unwelcome economic decisions taken by guardians, as in 1621, when a deserted wife in Oberjettingen was pressed by her *Kriegsvogt* to sell her property against her will.¹²⁴ There even appears to have been an expectation that a widow obtain the consent of her guardians before remarrying, as in 1674, when an Altbulach widow became betrothed to a man on condition that “he become a community citizen and her *Kriegsvogt* give his agreement.”¹²⁵ Unmarried women found it hard to rid themselves of careless or abusive guardians. Thus in 1784, the Wildberg council only permitted the forty-eight-year-old Maria Barbara Wildeisin to wrest her small inheritance from two negligent, community-appointed guardians because she was “known to be mature enough to do this at her present age and to be of an economical way of life,” and because another male citizen had “offered to supervise her, as guardian.”¹²⁶

In Württemberg, as in other parts of Europe, gender tutelage enabled communities to prevent women from making decisions of which they disapproved. But men, though equally likely to threaten communal welfare, were subjected to no such tutelage. Furthermore, gender tutelage laid a woman open to abuse by negligent or fraudulent guardians, and prevented her from making decisions of which her guardian disapproved, even when—as with remarrying or disposing of her property—she saw it as her best choice.¹²⁷

A third way in which communities affected women was through the discretion community councils enjoyed in regulating local property markets.¹²⁸ Court records show that Württemberg community councils frequently used this discretion to transfer property from the hands of widows (whom they regarded as unreliable) into those of adult males. Thus in 1592, Georg Lodholz’s widow in Ebhausen complained that her married son had simply taken possession of one of her fields, but her son prevailed on a large number of village council members to testify in his favor, and she lost the field.¹²⁹ In 1624, Jauß Roller’s widow in Liebelsberg complained that her offspring had “got together behind her back and sold [her] meadow to the village bailiff, without her knowledge and against her will”; challenged, the bailiff admitted that “yes, he had bought it and paid for it, whereupon she asked why she hadn’t been informed, to which he responded, what harm would it do if such an old animal [as she] should die of hunger?”¹³⁰ In 1664,

¹²⁴ For the latter example, see HSAS, A573 Bü. 15, fol. 545v, August 25, 1621. For all other examples, and analogous cases from other parts of early modern Europe, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 249–52.

¹²⁵ PAW KKP, Vol. 3, p. 624, February 16, 1674: “wann Er burger werde vnd . . . Ihr Kriegsvogt Seinen willen darein gebe.”

¹²⁶ HSAS, A573 Bü. 49, fol. 112r–v, June 10, 1784: “weil bekant, daß Sie zumal bey ihrem gegenwärtigen Alter hierzu selbst gewachsen und eine haushälterische Lebens-Art habe”; “erbotten, daß er als Curator über dieselbe Aufsicht haben.”

¹²⁷ For a detailed discussion, see Ryter, “Geschlechtsvormundschaft,” 498–502; Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 249–52.

¹²⁸ For examples of this pattern in other parts of German-speaking Central Europe, see Robisheaux, *Rural Society*, 106–07; Theibault, “Community,” 12; Sheilagh Ogilvie and Jeremy Edwards, “Women and the ‘Second Serfdom’: Evidence from Early Modern Bohemia,” *Journal of Economic History* 60 (2000): 961–94.

¹²⁹ HSAS, A573 Bü. 12, fol. 46v, March 9, 1592; A573 Bü. 12, fol. 55v–57v, March 13, 1592.

¹³⁰ HSAS, A573 Bü. 16, fol. 64r–v, June 3, 1624: “hetten hinderrucks ihren solch mad, gegen dem schulltheüssen . . . v.kaufft, welches also, ohn ihr wissen vndt willen, gefertigt worden”; “ja, er habs

the widowed Anna Stenglin in Liebelsberg complained that her sons-in-law had sold off her property against her will, and that the village council had ratified the sale in the teeth of her written objections because “all the members of the community council who were at the ratification were close kin of the purchaser and therefore looked to his utility.”¹³¹ Community councils preferred to transfer land to married men, whom they explicitly regarded as more important citizens than widows: as the bailiff put it, who would care if such old animals should die of hunger?

Communities acted similarly with industrial enterprises. In 1668, for instance, the Wildberg community council dispossessed the widowed miller Ursula Haaf in favor of her son-in-law Hannß Jacob Bueb on the grounds that Ursula was “nearly 80 years old” (in fact she was sixty-seven) and owed tax arrears. But other local documents reveal not only that the community council exaggerated Ursula’s age to justify its action but that all local mills were facing economic difficulties, and dispossessing the widow did not solve the underlying problem. Quite the opposite: over the next three years, Hannß Jacob battered and starved his mother-in-law and children, abused the servants until they quit their jobs, operated the mill without diligence or expertise, defrauded the customers, failed to pay rents or taxes, and ultimately bankrupted the whole enterprise. As one customer trenchantly remarked, “Bueb simply doesn’t understand a thing about milling, and nevertheless wants to be a miller.” This case illustrates the basic flaw in community decision-making: what was needed to manage this complex craft was not male gender, physical strength, or youth but the ability to retain employees, satisfy customers, husband resources, and “understand . . . about milling.” These were all qualities a female might possess in greater abundance than a male, as shown by the many local mills operated for long periods by widows: in 1736, for instance, no fewer than 20 percent of all mills in the Württemberg district of Wildberg were being operated by widows.¹³²

The preference of community councils for transferring property from females to males, therefore, did not necessarily benefit either the individual agricultural or industrial enterprise or the wider economy. But it did benefit male citizens, who gained preferential access to basic economic inputs.

Communities affected the position of some of their most vulnerable female inhabitants in a fourth way, by regulating markets in another basic economic input, labor. Wage ceilings for servants and laborers were legislated in state ordinances but specified and enforced by community councils—that is, by social networks of male employers.¹³³ The explicit purpose was to ensure that “no one shall entice or improperly tempt away another person’s servant, whether male or female, either in the towns or in the countryside, nor pay a higher wage than set down in this wage

kaufft, undt auch bezahlt, darüber sie vermeldt, warumb mans ihro nicht auch gesagt, schulltheuß außgeschlagen, waß es schaden solt, wann schon ein solch alltz thier, hunger stirb.”

¹³¹ HSAS, A573 Bü. 129c, fol. 25r–v, May 14, 1664: “die sambtliche richtere so bej der vörttigung geweßen, dem käuffer nahe verwandt und also vff seinen nutzen gesehen.”

¹³² PAW KKP, Vol. 3, p. 190, January 24, 1668; p. 278, December 11, 1669; pp. 312–14, March 19, 1670; pp. 340–49, October 28, 1670: “daß Er bueb sich eben vmb daß mühl weeßen nichts v.stehe vnd doch ein Müller sein wolle”; also pp. 396–99, July 7, 1671.

¹³³ On community influence over wage regulations, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 111–15, 134–35, 287–93.

ordinance, on pain of jailing or a money fine.”¹³⁴ It is sometimes argued that wage ordinances were widely evaded. But a 1631 list of actual servants’ wages in the district of Wildberg shows absolute wage levels and female-male wage ratios consistent with those laid down in the 1642 wage ordinance.¹³⁵ The social capital of dense and multi-stranded relationships that characterized Württemberg communities helped ensure that employers who deviated from the low-wage norm were penalized. Thus, for instance, in 1619, informal rumors within the community ultimately gave rise to a case before the community court in which Hans Drescher demanded that Burckhard Schlaiffer’s wife be punished because she “enticed away a servant whom Drescher had had at his place for several years.”¹³⁶ In the current state of research, we cannot say whether Württemberg communities capped female wages more strictly than male, but suggestive evidence is provided by the fact that the female-male wage ratio in these Württemberg communities lay around 0.3–0.4, considerably lower than the 0.6–0.7 common at the same period in England, where communities lacked cohesion, making it harder for male employers to collude.¹³⁷ We cannot exclude the possibility that, as other studies have found, females who violated the official wage ceilings were reported and punished more frequently than males.¹³⁸

Württemberg communities also helped enforce the legal piece-rate ceilings the male weavers’ guilds imposed on female spinners. In the 1670s, for instance, Wildberg community officials assisted guild officers in confiscating yarn from village spinners working at higher than legal rates.¹³⁹ As late as 1799, when the representative of a newly established cotton manufactory sought to recruit spinners in Wildberg at an attractive wage, the community council was only willing to let him hire paupers, on the grounds that “the persons here capable of [such work] can earn their livings from wool-spinning, which cannot be diminished without disadvantaging the worsted weavers’ guild.”¹⁴⁰ Informal rumor mechanisms within the community were backed up by formal penalties imposed by the community court on those

¹³⁴ HSAS, A573 Bü. 5279 (1642), handwritten insert for district of Wildberg, beside fol. 39: “solle keiner dem andern seine Ehehalten Knecht oder Mägd in den Stätten noch über Land abspannen vnd vngebührlich abpracticieren noch über disem Tax ein mehrern Lohn geben bey befahrender Thurn: oder Geltstraff.” On wage ceilings as the central aim of such ordinances, see Renate Dürr, “‘Der Dienstbothe ist kein Tagelöhner . . . ‘ Zum Gesinderecht (16. bis 19. Jahrhundert),” in Gerhard, *Frauen*, 115–39, here 125–29.

¹³⁵ HSAS, A573 Bü. 5279 (1642); A573 Bü. 5597 (1631). For detailed discussion, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 111–15, 134–35, 287–93.

¹³⁶ HSAS, A573 Bü. 15, fol. 436r, December 2, 1619: “ain ehehalten, so er drescher . . . etlich jarlang bey sich gehabt, ein ehehalten entfiehrt.” For additional examples, see HSAS, A573 Bü. 17, fol. 404r–v, September 3, 1640; PAW KKP, Vol. 3, p. 524, September 13, 1672.

¹³⁷ See the arguments advanced for England in Hatcher, “Women’s Work Reconsidered,” 195–96; and Burnette, “Investigation,” 260–62, 267, 277–78. On early modern Europe more widely, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 111–15, 134–35, 287–93.

¹³⁸ Thus, for instance, Simon A. C. Penn, “Female Wage Earners in Late Fourteenth-Century England,” *Agricultural History Review* 35 (1987): 1–14, here 4–5, 7, 9, 13, suggests that enforcement of the English Statute of Labourers after the Black Death showed “anti-female prejudice.”

¹³⁹ HSAS, A573 Bü. 824 (1668–69), Zettel 9; Bü. 826 (1670–71), Zettel 15; Bü. 827 (1671–72), fol. 46, Zettel 1–2.

¹⁴⁰ PAW KKP, Vol. 8, fol. 106v, January 17, 1799: “hier die hiez zu taugliche Personen sich [gstr. auch] durch Wollenspinnerey nähren können, welche ohne Nachteil der Zeugmacher Profeßion nicht eingeschränkt werden könnte.”

who behaved “dishonorably” by paying their spinners “too much.”¹⁴¹ The social capital of dense and multi-stranded relationships that characterized Württemberg communities created formal and informal enforcement mechanisms deterring individual employers from deviating from the norm that one did not pay one’s employees above the guild or community wage ceiling.¹⁴² Community institutions sustained norms, conveyed information, and took collective action that benefited its members, who were mainly male employers, at the expense of non-members such as servants, laborers, and spinners, among whom women and the poor were disproportionately represented.

A fifth way in which communities affected women was by regulating access to common resources such as pastures, woods, and waters, which were central to agricultural production in early modern Württemberg.¹⁴³ Women could not hold community office, sit on community councils, or speak at community assemblies.¹⁴⁴ Unsurprisingly, such community institutions allocated common resources in ways that discriminated against females as a visible minority.

Unmarried women had no right to the commons, and even widows suffered discrimination by community councils. During the 1660s, for instance, Anna Barbara Haugin sought to continue operating the family farm in Gültlingen on the same basis as her deceased husband, who as a pastor had enjoyed freedom from *corvée*. Although this freedom was confirmed by a series of court decisions, the village council “forbade her meadow and water, excluded her from village pastures and the tithe, and also deprived her of two [common-land] cabbage fields.”¹⁴⁵ Ignoring a legal decision that ordered the community to “let her prosper and enjoy the conveniences and everything that the citizens are given to enjoy in common, equally with any other inhabitant,” the village council targeted her in its regulation of agricultural output markets by failing to inform her of relevant legislation,¹⁴⁶ manipulated community assemblies to deprive her of access to commons,¹⁴⁷ and continued to deny her “the village privileges.”¹⁴⁸

Other widows also had to struggle for their share of common resources against male citizens who calculated that females’ visible differences (and lack of voice in communal institutions) meant their entitlements could be challenged. In 1708, for instance, a Pfrondorf widow complained that “she was being denied her share of wild fruit on the pastures outside the village” through physical violence by several male citizens.¹⁴⁹ In 1787, a young male citizen complained at the Wildberg

¹⁴¹ See, for instance, the case recorded in HSAS, A573 Bü. 15, fol. 618r, February 20, 1623.

¹⁴² For a suggestive characterization of the impact of similar forms of social capital in the American South during the Jim Crow era, see Steven N. Durlauf, “The Case ‘Against’ Social Capital,” *Focus* 20 (1999): 1–6, here 2.

¹⁴³ Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 66–69; W. von Hippel, *Die Bauernbefreiung im Königreich Württemberg*, 2 vols. (Boppard am Rhein, 1977), 1: 66; Sabean, *Property*, 6; Warde, “Law,” esp. 22.

¹⁴⁴ Hull, *Sexuality*, 31, 37; Robisheaux, *Rural Society*, 106–07; Theibault, “Community,” 12.

¹⁴⁵ PAW KKP, Vol. 2, fol. 92r–v, December 11, 1663: “habe man Ihro waid vnd wasßer v.botten, So werden Sie auch von deß Fleckhen wisen, vnd dem Zehend. vßgeschlossen, auch seyen Ihro zwey Krauttländ. entzogen worden.”

¹⁴⁶ PAW KKP, Vol. 2, fol. 154v, October 20, 1665.

¹⁴⁷ PAW KKP, Vol. 3, p. 300, February 18, 1670.

¹⁴⁸ PAW KKP, Vol. 3, pp. 298–301, February 18, 1670: “Fleckhens privilegia” (299).

¹⁴⁹ PAE KKP, Vol. 2, fol. 48r, December 21, 1708: “daß man sie nicht habe zu einem theil holtz bühren habe kommen wollen lassen.”

community assembly that “there are citizens and widows here who are permitted to be free from the citizens’ tax on account of their poverty . . . and nevertheless they enjoy citizens’ commons; as an example he instances Gottfried Niemann’s widow who has already been in service for a long time in Sulz and probably does not pay citizen’s tax.” He then revealed his own personal interest: “he believes that the younger [male] citizens, who have all the burdens of citizens upon them and do not yet enjoy any common lands, would have a better right to the common lands than these persons.”¹⁵⁰ Although state officials initially defended the widows’ rights, by 1793 the community assembly—at which women had no voice—decided that a widow (but not a widower) who remarried should lose any commons plot.¹⁵¹

The village elite of landowning males used their dominance of community institutions to obstruct any threat to their own privileged position—whether adopting agricultural innovations or opening access to females and outsiders.¹⁵² Until long after 1800, Württemberg’s agricultural sector was thoroughly regulated by a social network that sought above all things to maintain the status quo, excluded females from decisionmaking, and discriminated against them in its decisions. This limited agricultural growth as well as women’s ability to contribute to it.

Communities affected women in a sixth way, by using communal social capital to regulate consumption behavior. Sumptuary legislation was promulgated by the state but interpreted and enforced mainly by local communities.¹⁵³ Communities appointed “censors” to monitor “the excessive sartorial display that has got out of hand,” and penalized individuals—most of them females—who purchased and wore proscribed garments.¹⁵⁴ One surviving register records 110 sumptuary offenses fined over a twelve-month period (1713–1714) in Wildberg, a community of only 300 households.¹⁵⁵ Of those fined, 91 percent were female, a pattern widely

¹⁵⁰ HSAS, A573 Bü. 99, fol. 30v–31r, probable date April 1787: “Es seyen burger und Wittfrauen hier, welche von der burgersteuer wegen ihrer Armuth frey gelassen . . . und dem ungeachtet burger-Allmanden geniesen. Als Ein beyspiel führe er des Gottfried Niemanns Wittib an welche schon lange in Sulz in diensten seye u. wahrscheinlich keinen burgersteuer reiche”; “Er glaubte, daß die jüngere bürger, welche alle burgerl.: Onera auf sich [gstr. hab laiden] [haben] und noch keine Allmanden genießen, ein vorzüglicheres Recht zu den Allmanden jener Personen hätten.”

¹⁵¹ HSAS, A573 Bü. 100, fol. 15r, 1793.

¹⁵² For examples of how Württemberg community institutions blocked the adoption of new crops and agricultural techniques, see, for example, Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 66–69.

¹⁵³ On the extent and limitations of such legislation, and its disproportionate enforcement against females, see A. Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (Houndmills, 1996), 214–72; Carlo Marco Belfanti and Fabio Giusberti, “Clothing and Social Inequality in Early Modern Europe: Introductory Remarks,” *Continuity and Change* 15 (2000): 359–65, here 359–61; Cissie Fairchild, “Fashion and Freedom in the French Revolution,” *Continuity and Change* 15 (2000): 419–33, here esp. 420–21. On the Württemberg legislation, see, for example, “Zweite Polizeiordnung” (October 28, 1644), in Reyscher, *Vollständige Sammlung*, 13: 41–44; “Dritte Polizeiordnung” (October 8, 1660), in Reyscher, 13: 423–35, here esp. article 3 (428–32); “Vierte Polizeiordnung” (December 17, 1681), in Reyscher, 13: 577 (summary in n. 635); “Fünfte Polizeiordnung” (December 6, 1712), in Reyscher, 13: 921–26; HSAS, A21 Bü. 224 (Kleiderordnung 1712); “Erläuterung der Polizei-Ordnung” (May 2, 1713), in Reyscher, 13: 759 (summarized in n. 1002); “General-Ausschreiben: Erinnert an die genaue Beobachtung der Polizei-Ordnung” (July 17, 1714), in Reyscher, 13: 1023; “General-Rescript in Betreff der Unbefugten Nachahmung von Uniform-Kleidern und Farben” (September 6, 1731), in Reyscher, 14: 91–93; “Generalrescript, betreffend die Beförderung der Religiosität und Sittlichkeit” (January 13, 1739), in Reyscher, 14: 220–31, esp. article 16 (230); “Vierte Trauer- und Leichentax-Ordnung” (April 24, 1784), in Reyscher, 14: 997–1015, here esp. articles 4–8 (1000–02).

¹⁵⁴ See, for example, PAW KKP, Vol. 2, fol. 18r, December 14, 1660: “daß überhand genommene . . . Klaid. Pracht.”

¹⁵⁵ HSAS, A573 Bü. 6712, fol. 3r–6v, 1713–14.

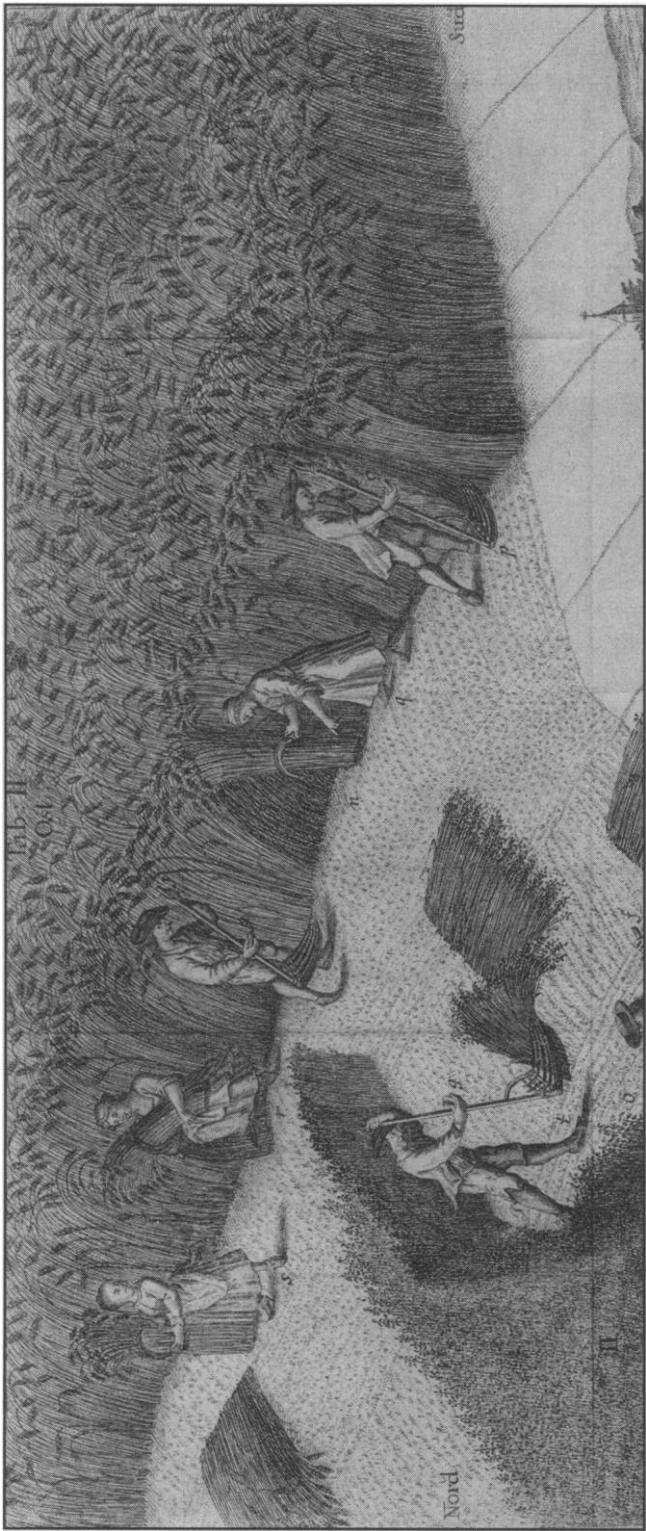


FIGURE 4: Women work alongside men as agricultural laborers harvesting grain. Johann Friedrich Mayer, *Fortsetzung der Beyträge und Abhandlungen zur Aufnahme der Land- und Hauswirthschaft* (Frankfurt am Main, 1770), facing 247. Reproduced with the kind permission of the Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart.

observed in sumptuary enforcement throughout preindustrial Europe.¹⁵⁶ The average fine inflicted was over 6 *Kreuzer*, nearly an average day's earnings for a local proto-industrial weaver and six days' wages for a maidservant.¹⁵⁷ A fine of this size did not make it impossible to indulge in new forms of consumption, but it could not fail to deter the marginal consumer.¹⁵⁸

Community councils also imposed other penalties on female consumption, exhorting communal officeholders' wives to refrain from sartorial display "in order to set a good example to others,"¹⁵⁹ imposing public shaming on women who dressed above their station,¹⁶⁰ inquiring severely into a wife's alleged "disloyalty in the domestic economy" when she bought a new skirt without her (alcoholic) husband's permission,¹⁶¹ and even denying poor relief to an old woman whose children "let themselves be observed in clothes above what is fitting."¹⁶² Often, communities combined this concern about women's excessive consumption with an equal concern about women's excessive working practices, as in 1703, when the Ebhausen community council ordered widows to "refrain from the shameful misbehavior they have been engaging in, especially at spinning bees, and their uppishness in dress,"¹⁶³ or in 1684, when it sentenced the *Eigenbrötlerin* Barbara Müller to three days and nights in jail because "she remained in the tavern past closing-time and spoke very impudently, saying that she could earn 3 *Batzen* in a quarter of an hour, so what did it matter if she consumed something? . . . Unlike this tankard, she didn't have a lid."¹⁶⁴

This combination of intense work and enhanced consumption by women, which so worried community councils, is strongly reminiscent of Jan De Vries's "industrious revolution," during which early modern individuals—particularly women—are thought to have shifted their time-allocation from leisure and household production into income-earning work, supplying the economy with more labor and using their earnings to consume more market goods, both of which encouraged economic growth.¹⁶⁵ But in societies such as Württemberg, entrenched elites such as guild masters and community elders used their institutional powers as members

¹⁵⁶ Hunt, *Governance*, 251–54.

¹⁵⁷ Troeltsch, *Die Calwer Zeughandlungskompagnie*, 221–25, calculates the average daily earnings of a worsted weaver in this region as 8 *Kreuzer*. On maidservants' wages, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 111–14.

¹⁵⁸ The impact of community-level sumptuary regulation in delaying and dampening changes in female consumption patterns in rural Württemberg to the end of the eighteenth century is confirmed by the gender-specific analyses of marriage inventories in Medick, *Weben*, 384–87, 398–406, 414, 427.

¹⁵⁹ PAW KKP, Vol. 4, fol. 252r, January 18, 1684: "ändern mit einem Exempel vorzuegehen."

¹⁶⁰ PAW KKP, Vol. 4, fol. 220r–222v, June 7, 1682; PAW KKP, Vol. 5, fol. 100v–103v, April 19, 1691; PAE KKP, Vol. 2, fol. 46r, July 15, 1708.

¹⁶¹ PAE KKP, Vol. 5, pp. 218–19, January 30, 1767.

¹⁶² PAW KKP, Vol. 5, fol. 64v, February 4, 1687: "sich in Klaiden über gebihr sehen laßen."

¹⁶³ PAE KKP, Vol. 2, fol. 19r, May 1, 1703: "ernstl. Verweißung gethan, daß sie des . . . schändlichen Vnwesens, so bißher bey v. Vnter ihnen, v. sonderlich in Liechtgäng Vorgelauff, auch Übermuths in Kleidern bemüssig. soll."

¹⁶⁴ PAE KKP, Vol. 1, fol. 16r, September 28, 1684: "daß sie . . . über Zeit im wirths hauß gebliben vnd damal. sich frecher weiß vernehmen laßen, sie Konn in einer Virtel stund 3 batz. verdienen, wann sie schon etwz verzehre"; also November 7, 1684: "sie hab auch kein deckhel, wie dz Käntlin."

¹⁶⁵ Jan De Vries, "Between Purchasing Power and the World of Goods: Understanding the Household Economy in Early Modern Europe," in John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, 1992), 85–132, here esp. 106, 110, 112–14, 118–19; De Vries, "The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution," *Journal of Economic History* 54 (1994): 249–71, esp. 257, 261; Berg, "Women's Work," 93–95; Snell, *Annals*, 309–10 with n. 87.

of recognized social networks not only to restrict women's production decisions, thereby affecting their incentives to intensify work, but also to limit the extent to which they could transform their production decisions into new consumption choices.¹⁶⁶ Again, we must ask whether the social capital generated by Württemberg's communities might not have come at too high a price, in terms not only of women's welfare but also of limiting the wider economic growth that the "industrious revolution" brought to other eighteenth-century European economies.¹⁶⁷

But perhaps women, though excluded from the male-dominated social capital of community and guild, formed their *own*, female-dominated social capital that sustained women's well-being in an otherwise hostile institutional environment? Interestingly, there is an example of such network formation among women in the preindustrial Württemberg countryside—the spinning bee. Spinning bees were gatherings organized by women of all marital and household statuses to share lighting and heating costs, alleviate tedium, transmit information through gossip, and (for the unmarried) meet courting males in a neutral environment. But this example of female social capital is the exception that proves the rule, for spinning bees and the women who attended them were subject to continual harassment by male-dominated community institutions. Community councils, assemblies, and church courts issued repeated prohibitions against spinning bees and punished the women who attended them through sentencing them to money fines, imprisonment, and even ejection from the community.¹⁶⁸ Communities' main formal concern was that spinning bees encouraged unregulated contact between unmarried women and men, leading to illegitimate pregnancies. But community institutions' objections to spinning bees ranged much more widely than this, as shown by their objection to *married* women participating in such gatherings, even with good economic justification. Thus in 1734, Michel Kuch's wife was fined by the Ebhausen community church court for attending a spinning bee organized by another married woman, despite her careful explanation that "[working] alone she does not earn her lighting costs."¹⁶⁹

One aspect of communities' wider dislike for spinning bees appears to have related precisely to their tendency to create a social capital of information transmission and collective (albeit informal) sanctions. In a typical complaint, a male citizen of Wildberg claimed in 1745 that these constant, irritating gatherings of female spinners "led to nothing but the passing of judgments on the authorities

¹⁶⁶ On disapproval of "excessive" consumption by women in other societies of German-speaking Central Europe, see Wiesner, "Having," 197, 199, 201; Dürr, *Mägde*, 159, 182–83; Dürr, "Die Dienstbothe," 119. On the persistence of institutional restrictions on consumption in France until after circa 1750, see Fairchilds, "Fashion and Freedom," 420.

¹⁶⁷ On the importance of the "industrious revolution" for eighteenth-century European economic growth, see esp. De Vries, "Between Purchasing Power," 85–92; and De Vries, "Industrial Revolution," 249–56. On the extent and causes of differences in its distribution across different European societies, see Sheilagh Ogilvie, "The European Economy in the Eighteenth Century," in T. W. C. Blanning, ed., *The Short Oxford History of Europe*, Vol. 12: *The Eighteenth Century: Europe 1688–1815* (Oxford, 2000), 91–130, here 111–13, 128–30.

¹⁶⁸ For a detailed survey of the ordinances against spinning bees in early modern Württemberg, see Hans Medick, "Village Spinning-Bees: Sexual Culture and Free Time among Rural Youths in Early Modern Germany," in Medick and David W. Sabean, eds., *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and History* (Cambridge, 1984), 317–39; for a discussion of local-level enforcement, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 284–85.

¹⁶⁹ PAE KKP, Vol. 3, fol. 178r, February 28, 1734: "weil sie alleine das liecht nicht verdiene."



FIGURE 5: Woman spins while men chop wood and hunt. Florini, *Æconomus prudens et legalis*, 495. Reproduced with the kind permission of the Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart.

and other people.”¹⁷⁰ Community institutions expressed the concerns of their male members about the rival social network represented by the spinning bee in which women not only created their own norms—“the passing of judgments”—but shared this information and informally sanctioned “the authorities and other people”—that is, the respectable *Ehrbarkeit* of male citizens who dominated community courts and community assemblies.

Female social networks existed, therefore, but had features that prevented them from generating significant social capital. For one thing, they lacked the admission criteria and hence the “closure” that, by intensifying the quality and reliability of the information sharing and third-party monitoring required to enforce cooperation, rendered the formally constituted male social networks so formidable.¹⁷¹ For another, they were networks of the powerless, with no effective defense against the cohesive guilds and communities of powerful males, whose social capital was so efficiently mobilized against them. As a result, male social networks were largely successful in manipulating their own social capital so as to turn female networks into informal, illegal, and irregular gatherings whose potential to generate and benefit from social capital was stifled.

SOCIAL CAPITAL HAS IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS for thinking about gender—but gender has even more important implications for thinking about social capital. As this article has sought to demonstrate, social capital provides a conceptual framework useful for identifying and analyzing the precise characteristics of those social institutions that facilitate gender discrimination. Patriarchal attitudes were universal in preindustrial Europe, but they were put into effect to a widely varying extent in different European societies. They could be enforced most effectively where there were social institutions manifesting “closure” and “multiplex relations”—that is, social networks such as strong and closely knit guilds and communities. Such institutions created the “social capital” that enabled individual men to coordinate their actions to create and disseminate shared norms about female behavior, convey information efficiently about violations of these norms, and organize collective action to impose sanctions on those who deviated from these norms. Societies with strong social networks, such as Württemberg, were much better able to impose and enforce norms regulating the training, work, marriage, residence, and consumption behavior of females than was the case, for instance, in the Low Countries, England, France, Scotland, or even (increasingly) Prussia in the same period.¹⁷² While patriarchal norms meant that women faced very serious restrictions in all preindustrial European societies, social capital made it easier to *enforce* these norms in societies with strong and closely knit guilds and communities.

But if social capital is helpful in thinking about gender, gender is even more

¹⁷⁰ HSAS, A573 Bü. 95, fol. 14r, May 10, 1745: “nichts als ausrichten der Obrigkeit und anderer leüthe ausgeübet werde.” For a detailed discussion of the regulation of spinning bees, see Medick, “Village Spinning Bees” (on the legislative framework); and Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 29, 166, 184–86, 208, 241, 313 (on local-level realities).

¹⁷¹ For the original insight, see Coleman, “Social Capital,” S104–S110; for a more rigorous development, see Sobel, “Can We Trust,” esp. 151.

¹⁷² For a comparative perspective, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, 344–52.

helpful in thinking about social capital. As theoretical concepts, social capital and social networks have hitherto been warmly embraced by social scientists, who regard them as being uniformly beneficial, not just for network members but for the whole society.¹⁷³ But empirical and theoretical considerations such as those presented in this article suggest that social capital should be considered in a cooler and more skeptical light.

The guilds and local communities of rural Württemberg did function as social networks. They satisfied the political scientists' criteria of "closure" and "multiplex relationships" required for the effective creation of social capital, and they used this social capital to sustain norms, share information, punish deviants, and organize collective action. But the norms they enforced, the information they shared, the forms of deviancy they punished, and the collective action they organized were deeply implicated in the exclusion of women from many sectors of the preindustrial economy and the exploitation of women in many others. Guilds excluded girls from vocational training, prevented married women and widows from pursuing different occupations from their husbands, forbade unmarried women to do many guilded tasks altogether, limited widows' ability to carry on the family workshop, and forced thousands of spinners and seamstresses to work at starvation wages. Communities denied females full citizenship, ejected unmarried women when male citizens complained, enforced a form of gender tutelage that prevented women from pursuing their own utility, discriminated against widows in property markets, forced maidservants and female laborers to work at wage rates less than one-third that of males and below their market level, restricted widows' entitlements to common resources, and penalized women's consumption choices. In short, these social networks used their social capital to protect the norms and privileges of their own male membership, but by so doing reduced many women's well-being and limited their contribution to the wider economy.

How can the social networks of preindustrial Germany help us think more clearly about social capital now? These historical findings suggest three important lines of inquiry.

First, they suggest that early theorists such as James Coleman were right to argue that effectiveness in generating social capital may be a positive function of a network's "closure," the care with which it defines membership. Only closure can create the dense network of interactions among the same people, enabling coherent formulation of collective norms, universal sharing of information, rapid detection of violators, and effective imposition of sanctions.¹⁷⁴ But closure has its costs. Gender, ethnicity, religion, and race offer visible criteria for achieving network closure, and empirically social networks have often excluded females as well as members of other easily identifiable groups such as Jews or people of different skin colors.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ See, for instance, the original contributions by Coleman, "Social Capital"; and Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work*; and, from a burgeoning recent literature, the almost uniformly optimistic assessments of social networks by the essays in Dasgupta and Stiglitz, *Social Capital*.

¹⁷⁴ Coleman, "Social Capital," S104–S110.

¹⁷⁵ On the exclusion of Jewish and female household-heads from community membership and community assemblies in German Lorraine, see Ulbrich, *Shulamit*, 153–54, 289–302. On guilds' particularly strong enmity to Jews, see Ulbrich, *Shulamit*, 257; and Patricia Behre, "Raphael Levy—'A Criminal in the Mouth of the People,'" *Religion* 23 (1993): 19–44, here 19 with n. 2, 27 with n. 27, 29

More recently, social capital theorists such as Robert Putnam have claimed that this problem can be solved by replacing the “bonding” social capital created by closure with so-called “bridging” social capital, which forms ties with other groups. But this does not deal with the problem that—as comparisons between male and female social networks in preindustrial Germany strongly suggest—network closure may be *essential* for effectively formulating norms, conveying information, detecting deviants, and undertaking collective action. That is, it may be *theoretically inevitable* as well as *empirically widespread* for strong social capital to be associated with strong gender and ethnic discrimination. If so, the claim that all members of society can gain from social capital is untenable.

Second, the historical findings for preindustrial Europe suggest that social networks not only *exclude* outsiders but use their social capital to reap benefits at the *expense* of outsiders. This article has illustrated how a social capital of shared norms, efficient information transmission, and collective sanctions was manipulated to benefit male guild masters and male community citizens at the expense of women. It also harmed other outsiders, such as Jews, foreigners, bastards, non-Lutherans, and members of “dishonorable” occupations.¹⁷⁶ These tactics were not merely an incidental expression of patriarchal social attitudes but a deliberate and essential component of the strategy pursued by social networks to sustain and defend their own norms and privileges. That is, historical findings suggest that the benefits of social capital are commonly secured at the expense of network outsiders, who are often particularly vulnerable members of society. A group with members necessarily implies the existence of non-members, and it is not clear what—if anything—can encourage social capital to exist while preventing it from being used by insiders against outsiders.

Third, history suggests that social capital does not always benefit society as a whole. The social capital created by preindustrial German guilds and communities protected monopolists from competition, prevented occupational and geographical mobility, reduced human capital investment, helped employers exploit workers, encouraged social exclusion, and stifled innovation in production and consumption. One might argue that the social networks of preindustrial Württemberg were exceptional, “bad” social networks as opposed to the many “good” social networks described by political scientists in such glowing terms. But research from a vast array of other preindustrial European societies reveals that their guilds and local communities behaved in very similar ways, and that where they did not—as in France, the Netherlands, England, or Scotland—it was because their strength and cohesion were breaking down.¹⁷⁷ Many modern social networks—Mafias, cartels,

with n. 36, 39. On requirements by German community councils that Jews and prostitutes wear distinguishing clothes, see Roper, *Holy Household*, 98. On guilds’ discrimination against women, bastards, and members of “dishonorable” occupations, see Roper, *Holy Household*, 36–55; Ogilvie, *State Corporatism*, 336–38; Stuart, *Defiled Trades*, 189–221. On the role played by social capital in helping to enforce racial segregation in the American South, see Durlauf, “Case,” 2.

¹⁷⁶ See the discussion in Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, chap. 7; Ogilvie, “Guilds,” 14–17, 24–25; and Stuart, *Defiled Trades*.

¹⁷⁷ Thus, for instance, Crowston, *Fabricating*, discusses how the all-female seamstresses’ guild of eighteenth-century Paris exhibited much less “closure” than the traditional male guilds and much less frequently sought to enforce its monopoly. On the relative strength of guilds and communities in

lobbying organizations, political parties, even religious clubs—also generate social capital that redistributes resources to their members rather than increasing the welfare of society as a whole.¹⁷⁸ The historical findings suggest that a network may as easily coordinate on bad norms as good norms. Furthermore, as James Coleman himself acknowledged, “effective norms in an area can reduce innovativeness in an area, not only deviant actions that harm others but also deviant actions that can benefit everyone.”¹⁷⁹

The historical findings on gender presented in this article have important implications for how social scientists think about social capital. They illustrate the significance of network “closure,” the harm social capital can inflict on network outsiders, and the questionable nature of claims that social capital benefits the wider society rather than special-interest groups that are already powerful. When we ask which institutional framework is best—whether for women or for the economy more widely—history suggests that we scrutinize social networks and social capital with caution.

different early modern European societies, and their treatment of women, see Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, chap. 7.

¹⁷⁸ This possibility is acknowledged but unfortunately not pursued in Fukuyama, *Trust*, esp. 156–59; and Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 350–63. For a prescient discussion of these problems with social capital, long before the term became fashionable, see Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation, and Social Rigidities* (New Haven, Conn., 1982), esp. 125, where he explicitly refers to the abuses practiced by guilds.

¹⁷⁹ Coleman, “Social Capital,” S105.

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