
Foreword

*Rosalie L. Tung**

This edited book of readings entitled, *Research Handbook on Women in International Management* by Hutchings and Michailova, is both timely and topical. In most industrialized and emerging markets, women typically account for one-half of the working population. In addition, in the recent past, in the U.S. more women than men have been awarded Ph.Ds. In short, the pervasive myth that women do not possess the competencies and skills to undertake managerial and professional positions is no longer valid. Despite this new reality, women continue to be under-represented at the senior levels of management around the world, including the most gender-equal countries. Furthermore, women are infrequently deployed on international assignments, thus denying them an important venue for advancement to the top, since international experience is increasingly viewed as a requisite for promotion to senior management (Tung, 2004).

To compound the aforementioned situation, there appears to have been a regression toward the mean in terms of gender inequality in socialist and former socialist countries – for example, the ranking of the Czech Republic in the gender equality index fell from eighth in 1990 just before the Velvet Revolution to 33rd place in 1998 (Pollert, 2003). Similarly, in China, where femininity was de-emphasized during the height of communism, there is an increased emphasis on the need for women to be beautiful.

The chapters contained in this *Handbook* cover a broad spectrum of research, both theoretical and applied, that pertain to the current status of working women in many regions of the world. Collectively, they represent a comprehensive examination of the organizational and socio-cultural issues confronting women as professionals and managers in diverse countries around the world. Work-life balance considerations continue to plague working women worldwide – despite the fact that men are assuming greater responsibility in parenting, the reality remains that women continue to shoulder the primary burden in this regard. Research, for example, has shown that while the career of male history professors tends to benefit from being married, the reverse is true for women (Coe, 2013).

* Simon Fraser University.

The chapters in this *Handbook* provide a useful starting point to further examine the challenges and opportunities pertaining to women's participation in professional and managerial ranks. More research on these topics will enhance our understanding of these issues and, hopefully, redress the situation.

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