

# LETTER FROM THE EDITORS



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According to Catalyst, there were only two female CEOs leading Fortune 500 companies (0.4%) in 2000 (Catalyst, 2000). By 2019, this number had only increased to 24 (4.8%) (Catalyst, 2019). Historically, there have been only 73 female Fortune 500 CEOs. Similar low numbers are found around the world, and the World Economic Forum concluded that at the current rate, it will take 170 years to reach global gender equality in health, education, economics, and politics (Schwab et al., 2016). Such slow progress is especially puzzling because women are earning more educational degrees (e.g., Gonzales et al., 2013) and women in senior positions have enhanced organizational performance and positively impact their environments (e.g., Zhang & Hou, 2012).

Despite longstanding disparity, relatively few studies examine gender effects in international business. This lack of research is surprising, given that culture is typically derived from two bases: sociality and sexuality (e.g., Stevens, 2015), and a culture's gender roles are among the first that children are taught (Saewyc, 2017). Therefore, gender roles would be a top interest for organizations operating internationally. While the research on the subject remains limited, existing findings on gender in international business may provide a foundation for future investigations. For example, recent culture research found that in-group collectivism influenced women's entrepreneurial decisions, while institutional collectivism essentially did not (Bullough et al., 2017). Additionally, perceived company international proactiveness was an important variable influencing attitudes towards women's career advancement in Latin America (Herman et al., 2017).

Women in the Academy of International Business (WAIB) (<https://waib.aib.world/>) has long championed gender equality and *AIB Insights* worked with WAIB, in particular Guest Co-Editor and WAIB President Amanda Budde-Sung, to produce this special issue. We hope these articles help uncover best practices that may help reduce longstanding gender disparities.

We start the issue with the article "Yes We Can, but How? Women's Representation in Global Business" by Amanda Budde-Sung, Amanda Bullough, Tugba Kalafatoglu, and Fiona Moore. This article recommends policies across four key areas where greater gender diversity can offer benefits to firms: namely corporate governance, leadership, entrepreneurship and innovation. As such, it offers a broad overview of advantages of gender diversity, making it an excellent introduction to this issue.

Our second article, by Sonja Franzke and Fabian Jintae Froese, is titled "Stay Hungry, Stay Foolish? Inertia in Female Entrepreneurship across Countries." Relying on a comparison of China, Germany, and the United Kingdom, this article discusses gender diversity in the area of entrepreneurship. The authors examine cross-country differences of female entrepreneurs, arriving at the counterintuitive conclusion that a more challenging business environment and stricter role expectations fosters rather than hinders female entrepreneurship.

In the article "Let Women Take the Lead: Insights from the UK Defense Industry," Andri Georgiadou, Beverly Dawn Metcalfe and Claire Rimington examine workplace gender diversity within a more non-traditional context, the UK defense industry. The authors argue that both conscious and unconscious biases remain embedded in corporate culture, limiting female advancement. The authors also identify diverse ways of addressing gender inequality, including through legislation and gender quotas, and emphasizing the importance of achieving and safeguarding gender equality in non-traditional industries.

Amir Shoham's article, "Grammatical Gender Marking: The Gender Roles Mirror," emphasizes how quantitative dimensions of language could help us better understand gender roles at the individual and society levels. This article overviews a tool based on four grammatical language structures and demonstrates its usefulness to multinationals, expatriates, and foreigners in a country in general.

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