

**RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY
DIVERSE WOMEN LEADING
EDUCATION: A WORLDVIEW**

ADVANCES IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

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FOREWORD

Racially and Ethnically Diverse Women Leading Education: A Worldview edited by Drs. Terri N. Watson and Anthony “Tony” H. Normore represents a significant contribution to the literature and to our thinking about women in leadership, and particularly women of color. Discussions about race and gender have traditionally been framed in a Black-white paradigm and usually result in narrow interpretations of the term “women in leadership.” The publication of this book, however, challenges the existing Black-white paradigm and offers a broader interpretation, a paradigm shift if you will, in how we think about “women in leadership.” The paradigm shift includes a global perspective, the voices of racially and ethnically diverse women across the spectrum of leadership in education, and chapters co-authored by female and male scholars who are in leadership positions and who study leadership. These as well as other aspects of this book represent a unique approach to investigating and revealing the lived experiences of racially and ethnically diverse women from the United States and abroad who practice, theorize, and write about leadership. An undertaking such as this is much needed in the field of educational leadership/school administration as well as leadership in other areas of education. This volume allows us to begin to more fully explore the varied dimensions of “leadership” and how these varied dimensions intersect with the sometimes complex issues of race and gender.

Men, and particularly white men, have been privileged to be selected for leadership positions in many instances solely because of their gender. Their assumed credentials, leadership characteristics, abilities, and work ethic is rarely questioned. Rather, the prevailing theory has been that because *they are men* they should be in positions of leadership, no matter the profession. Rarely do the experiences of men in leadership match those of women, and particularly women of color who are more often questioned, criticized, doubted, dismissed, and viewed as alternative choices when it comes to how leadership is conceptualized and operationalized. Contributors to this book provide us with a body of scholarship that challenges the notions that leadership in education *should* be a male dominated field, and that women are “alternative” sources of leadership. Collectively, the contributors remind us that women of all races and ethnicities are quite capable of

managing and leading in K-12 schools, higher education, and education organizations in the United States and in the various contexts of education from Israel to New Zealand. Supported by rigorous research and thoughtful theoretical frameworks, this book is a testament to women of color who are assets to education leadership specifically and leadership generally.

The uniqueness of this work is the pairing of women with men as co-authors on each chapter. The result is that female scholars, working with male scholars, have produced an informative and much needed body of scholarship that will move our thinking forward as we continue to shift and expand traditional paradigms based on leadership, race, and gender. Male scholars who contributed to this work have helped to frame the arguments and added their unique perspectives as “insiders” – those who are often more likely than women to be in decision-making positions. The conversations between female and male scholars add to the richness of the chapters in this book.

Collectively, the chapters in this book also challenge prevailing notions that categorize women and minorities as a singular group, rather than attending to the distinct differences between majority women and women of color as well as the differences among “minorities” in general. As [Coursen, Mazzarella, Jeffress, and Hadderman \(1989\)](#) note, “what is true for blacks is not necessarily true for members of other racial minorities and may have nothing to do with women” (p. 87). Thus, in this book, women who are members of specific racial and ethnic groups conceptualize their work, tell their stories, and put their distinct imprint on what it means to be a female and a leader in education.

The book begins with a retrospective historical look at the research on U.S. women in educational leadership/school administration from 1980 to 2004 (the chapter by [Watson, Hodgins, & Brooks](#) in this volume). This chapter essentially sets the tone for the book and provides a framework for thinking about the ways in which patterns of under-representation and marginalization in positions of education leadership with respect to women have been conceptualized and maintained. Throughout the remainder of the book, authors weave the themes of marginalization and under-representation into their particular, self-defined narratives and present examples of marginalization as women and as members of specific racial groups. Placing the experiences of racially and ethnically diverse women in particular contexts is also an important aspect of the work in this book. From the United States to the United Arab Emirates, from Israel to New Zealand, and from the Philippines to Malawi, scholars discuss how women leaders in a specific racial, cultural, economic, political, and social contexts

negotiate race and gender in the workplace, how women in leadership bridge theory and practice, work for the ideals of social justice, and use feminist leadership theories for the empowerment of women and to promote change.

The combination of a global perspective of leadership in education and female and male perspectives come together to make this volume an exceptional model of intellectual, cross-racial, and cross-cultural scholarship.

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