

Theories Bridging Ethnography and Evaluation

The fusion of ethnography and evaluation addresses a long-standing need to integrate issues of culture in a systematic way into evaluation theory and practice. This fusion strengthens evaluators' potential to contribute to the transformation of education programs, systems, and policies toward increased justice and cultural responsiveness. The focus on intersectionality, international, and national understandings of ethnography's contribution to a more culturally responsive approach to evaluation provides the reader with an expansive opportunity to uncover oppressive cultural beliefs and norms, challenge asymmetric power structures, and address issues of discrimination and injustice in pursuit of positive changes in schools. The contributing authors share their personal and professional experiences in ways that make the cost of failure to transform educational systems more tangible and heartrending.

—*Donna M Mertens, Professor Emeritus,*
Gallaudet University

This collection of empirical and methodological challenges to ethnography and evaluation will push researchers and systems of evaluation to rethink harmful, generalized, and overly static modes of evaluation. This volume shows the importance of centering community knowledge, local expertise, and more nuanced approaches to evaluation and ethnography. This is a must-read for critical ethnographers and those committed to community-rooted, sustainable, and critical evaluation practices in education.

—*Professor Jennifer Keys Adair,*
The University of Texas at Austin, USA

Studies in Educational Ethnography

Series Editor: Professor Rodney Hopson, American University, USA

Studies in Educational Ethnography presents original research monographs and edited volumes based on ethnographic perspectives, theories, and methodologies. Such research will advance the development of theory, practice, policy, and praxis for improving schooling and education in neighborhood, community, and global contexts.

In complex neighborhood, community, and global contexts, educational ethnographies should situate themselves beyond isolated classrooms or single sites and concern themselves with more than narrow methodological pursuits. Rather, the ethnographic research, perspectives, and methodologies featured in this series extend our understandings of sociocultural educational phenomena and their global and local meanings.

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Theories Bridging Ethnography and Evaluation: Making Transformative, Intersectional, and Comparative Connections

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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About the Editors

Melissa Rae Goodnight, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign with appointments in Global Studies and the Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership. Additionally, Goodnight is a faculty affiliate of the Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment (CREA). Her transnational scholarship and teaching explore the synthesis of three areas: (1) research, monitoring, and evaluation, (2) education for communities who are stigmatized, underserved, or historically marginalized, and (3) social justice theorizing that draws on feminist, culturally responsive, anti-racist, and postcolonial concepts. Goodnight is particularly interested in qualitative methodologies and issues of equity, validity, and representation social inquiry. Her publications include a 2023 article in the *American Journal of Evaluation* on researching the influence of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in India's education system; a 2022 article in the *International Journal of Educational Development* on the origins, goals, and political implications of India's Annual Status of Education Report, a groundbreaking citizen-engaged M&E effort; and, a 2017 article on the translation of critical race theory for analyzing inequity and discrimination in the Indian school system. Goodnight currently serves as Associate Editor for the *American Journal of Evaluation*. In 2014, she conducted dissertation fieldwork in India as a Fulbright-Nehru student researcher funded by the governments of India and the United States. Previously, Goodnight served as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer in Kingston, Jamaica where she was an HIV/AIDS and sexual health educator and counselor. She received a Master's in Social and Cultural Foundations of Education from DePaul University and a doctorate in education from the University of California Los Angeles with concentrations in comparative education and evaluation.

Rodney Hopson, PhD, is an accomplished scholar, academic leader and thought partner who serves as a Senior Associate Dean and Professor, School of Education. Prior to his dean roles at American University, Hopson served as a Professor of Evaluation in the Department of Educational Psychology, College of Education, with appointments in the Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership and the Center of African Studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Hopson received his doctorate from the Curry School of Education, University of Virginia, with major concentrations in educational evaluation, anthropology, and policy, and sociolinguistics. He was

awarded a National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIH) postdoctoral fellowship at the Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University. Hopson is an American Educational Research Association (AERA) Fellow and has been affiliated previously in the Faculty of Education, University of Namibia as a JW Fulbright Scholar and the Centre of African Studies, Cambridge University (UK). Currently, he is affiliated with the School of Health, Victoria University-Wellington (Aotearoa New Zealand), is the Editor of the *Studies in Educational Ethnography* Book Series, Emerald Publishers, and Co-Editor of *Educational Policy aslin Practice: Critical Cultural Studies*, Information Age Book Series. Additionally, he serves as the co-Editor of *American Journal of Evaluation*. Central to Hopson's research agenda over the last 25 years are questions that (1) analyze and address the differential impact of education and schooling on marginalized and underrepresented groups in diverse global nation states and (2) seek solutions to social and educational conditions in the form of alternative paradigms, epistemologies, and methods for the way the oppressed and marginalized succeed and thrive despite circumstances and opportunities that suggest otherwise. He has coauthored and coedited 10 books, including *Culturally Responsive Inquiry in Education: Improving Research, Evaluation, and Assessment* (Harvard Education Press, 2022), *Tackling Wicked Problems in Complex Ecologies: The Role of Evaluation* (Stanford University Press, 2018), *New Directions in Educational Ethnography: Shifts, Problems, Reconstruction* (Emerald, 2016), *Power, Voice, and the Public Good: Schooling and Education in Global Societies* (Elsevier, 2008), and others.

About the Contributors

Sharon Brisolara, PhD, is an evaluator, educator, writer, organizational coach, and Chief Executive of Inquiry That Matters. She has engaged as program evaluator with primarily rural-serving community-based organizations in the United States, Latin America, and Africa, building organizational capacity to gather and use data for improvement and in service of equitable outcomes and to design for inclusion, belonging, and equity. She has, with others, developed Feminist Evaluation as an evaluation model (*Feminist Evaluation and Research Theory and Practice*, 2014) and written on participatory and collaborative forms of inquiry. She earned her doctorate from Cornell University in Program Evaluation and Planning with concentrations in Rural Sociology and City and Regional Planning. She currently lives in Far Northern California.

Cory A. Buckband, PhD, is a 2024 graduate of the Educational Policy and Evaluation program in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University. His research interests bring together critical interdisciplinary perspectives on language, race, class, identity, and education, applied to study multilingual education and multilingualism, educational language policy, and parent/family engagement. Cory is also multilingual, and his political stance toward heritage language education has led him to relearn Yiddish, his family's minoritized heritage language. For his dissertation, Cory conducted a critical ethnographic study in collaboration with a suburban charter elementary school in Arizona that uses a trilingual immersion model with Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, and English as languages of instruction. Findings from this yearlong study meaningfully and vividly illuminate the impacts of education and language policies on the school's creation and implementation, as well as the multilingual identity development of students and teachers from racially and linguistically minoritized backgrounds. Cory frequently writes about critical ethnography and ethnographic research methodologies from anthropological and critical educational standpoints, and he has published research on the application of critical ethnography in virtual schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. At Arizona State University, Cory taught undergraduate and graduate-level courses on family/community engagement and educational language policy to preservice and in-service bilingual elementary teachers and school administrators. Raised in Van Nuys, Los Angeles, California by a single mother, Cory firmly grounds his anti-racist and anti-colonial orientation to research and evaluation within the Jewish principles of Tzedek (Justice) and Tikkun Olam (Healing the world).

Tatiana E. Bustos, PhD, MA, MS, is a community psychologist, researcher, and evaluator in the Transformative Research Unit for Equity (TRUE) at RTI International. Dr. Bustos applies participatory and equitable research and evaluation methodologies to design and implement projects that promote the inherent strengths, capacities, and opportunities of communities for social change. In TRUE, she is also an instructor for professional development trainings in RTI's Equity Centered Methodology Framework, Participatory Methods, and Establishing Authentic Community Partnerships. In her capacity as a researcher, her work aims to bridge science with practice for the benefit of enhancing the engagement of communities throughout research and evaluation projects, programs, and initiatives. She has authored several blogs and peer reviewed publications on community partnerships, new directions for partnership engagement in evaluation, and practical ways to conduct equity-centered evaluations in service of racial equity. These publications include: "Evaluation Engagement: Historical Perspectives and New Directions with Community-Based Participatory Research Principles," "Good Solid Relationships Make Programs Work': A Mixed Methods Assessment of Determinants to Community Academic Partnerships in Flint, MI," and "We Bounce Back From the Worst of the Worst': Assets of Flint-Area Women Identified in the Flint Women's Study." She was a University Enrichment Fellow at Michigan State University, and her research has been awarded through the Society for Community Research and Action. Most recently, she was selected for the National Network of Public Health Institute's Next Generation Rising Leader Award for her commitment to advancing equity.

Paula Caffer, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Dreeben School of Education at the University of the Incarnate Word, Texas. Her research focuses on career and leadership development, the impact of biases on decisions, and culturally responsive collaborative processes and communication strategies. A Brazilian native, Paula worked extensively as a multilingual/multicultural global business partner at Brown-Forman Corp. leading the design, implementation, and evaluation of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategies and initiatives in Latin America, Africa, APAC Region, Ukraine, and the United States. These initiatives aimed to support underrepresented talent advocacy and develop leadership programs for young professionals, emergent female leaders, and historically marginalized individuals. During her tenure at B-F Global Division, Paula received the "Spirited People of the Present" International Award. Paula has considerable experience collaborating with women's grassroots organizations in the Global South, where she worked tirelessly to forge alliances with national and international organizations to establish capacity-building programs to enhance small-business startups, computer literacy, and leadership development for girls. Paula holds a Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences and a Master's in Political Sociology from the Federal University of Sao Carlos (*Universidade Federal de Sao Carlos, UFSCar*) in Sao Paulo. Paula subsequently earned a Juris Doctor, a Specialization in Consumer Law and Class Action from the Escola Superior de Advocacia Nacional, Brazilian Bar Association, and a doctorate in International Education and Entrepreneurship from the University of the Incarnate Word,

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Amaarah DeCuir, EdD, is an educator, researcher, inclusive Pedagogy Fellow, a faculty member at American University in the School of Education, and an affiliate faculty member of its Antiracist Research and Policy Center, and an Executive Board member at the Center for Islam in the Contemporary World at Shenandoah University. Her scholarship spans the areas of antiracist pedagogy, Muslim student experiences, Prophetic pedagogy, faith erasure, equity, antiracism and social justice, education leadership, teacher education, and faculty development. Dr. DeCuir has been selected as a member for the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Division A Leadership for Social Justice Action Committee. She has published peer-reviewed articles and chapters; coedited a book in the Routledge series, *Educational Leadership for an Equitable, Resilient and Sustainable Future*; and had her public scholarship appear in news and media outlets. A highly regarded educator and facilitator, Dr. DeCuir teaches Education Studies and Social Justice, Education Leadership, and an Antiracist Research Methods course that she codesigned. She brings over 25 years of teaching and leadership experiences from public and private K-12 schools to inform her current work in higher education. Dr. DeCuir holds a BA in History and a minor in African American studies from the University of California, Berkeley; an MEd in Curriculum and Instruction from Howard University; and an EdD in Education Leadership, Administration, and Policy Studies from the George Washington University.

Ariana Guillermo Dimagiba, MA, is a PhD candidate in the Higher Education and Organizational Change division in the School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. She earned her BA in Political Science and MA in Higher Education and Organizational Change from University of California, Los Angeles. Her broad research interests focus on first-generation college students of color access and transitions to college. As a graduate student researcher, she is a research partner for a research-practice partnership (RPP) with the UCLA Center for Community Schooling and the UCLA Community School. Her work with the RPP centers on research on the UCLA Community School's college-going culture and the postsecondary pathways of their alumni. Her current project aims to design and implement a culturally relevant and sustaining college knowledge curriculum to support first-generation college students of color in the transition from high school to college. She also developed a community-engaged research internship for undergraduates to codevelop and teach the college knowledge curriculum to current high school senior students, who will be the first in their families to attend college in the United States. Her positionality as a daughter of middle-class Filipino immigrants, a first-generation college student, and a college advising practitioner informs and inspires her research. Prior to attending graduate school,

she worked as a college advising practitioner for 11th and 12th grade students and their families in Chula Vista and San Diego, California. Ariana is committed to college-going research and practice that can better support marginalized students to and through college.

Rose Ann E. Gutierrez, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Equity and Diversity in Education in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Nevada, Reno. She obtained her PhD from the University of California, Los Angeles, in Social Sciences and Comparative Education with a specialization in Race and Ethnic Studies. Her educational background consists of obtaining a Master's from Seattle University in Student Development Administration and a Bachelor's from the University of Richmond with a major in sociology. Her research is informed by a Pinay epistemology and positionality as a 1.5-generation immigrant from the Philippines, first-generation college student, and only daughter of working-class Pilipino immigrants. Her lens as a race scholar in education undergirds her resolve to improve the conditions and opportunities of historically oppressed communities across the lifespan through educational research and practice. Her broader research agenda examines the relationship between knowledge, race, and social transformation in higher education contexts and is anchored by critical theories and critical qualitative methodologies. She seeks to understand how racial inequities in education are preserved at the intersection of and in relationship with other systems of oppression, how students navigate these systems using embodied epistemologies, and what role higher education institutions play in shaping student pathways and outcomes across P-20. She focuses on low-income, immigrant, immigrant-origin, undocumented, and first-generation Students of Color, and more specifically, Asian American and Pacific Islander students. She has published in *Educational Researcher*, *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, and *Community College Review*. She has also worked as a middle school teacher and student affairs professional. She has been involved with community organizations such as the Filipino American National Historical Society-Hampton Roads; Pilipino American Unity for Progress, Inc.; and the Southern California Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Educators.

Arthur E. Hernández, PhD, is a Professor at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio Texas with graduate and professional training in Clinical and Educational Psychology, Measurement and Evaluation, and Curriculum and Instruction. His scholarship is wide-ranging but recently, focused on Program Evaluation; Culturally Responsive and Equitable Evaluation; Community Based and Participatory Research; and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Dr. Hernandez is an active contributor to scholarly and professional communities as well as to community-based organizations through research, evaluation, consultation, professional and pre-professional development, and community service. Some examples of this from his recent work include contributing to and coediting a special issue of the *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation* (Volume 19, Issue 43), contributing to and coediting *Qualitative Research With Diverse and Underserved Communities* (Information Age Publishing), multiple presentations at scholarly

meetings, presenting at a webinar entitled “DEI Conversations: Applying Equity-Minded Practices in Analyzing Data” (American Association for Learning in Higher Education), and working in support of an effort funded by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focusing on and exploring the dynamics of community power and domestic and international community power groups seeking to address health access and outcomes disparities, among other work. Throughout his career, Dr. Hernandez has been committed to learning from the perspective of the traditional triad of higher education: teaching, research, and service. Although he has contributed to other areas, he has focused his work primarily on developing and advancing conceptual knowledge and professional and informed practice in the fields of evaluation, education, public health, and psychology, in all his efforts seeking diligently to foster and advance a culture of collaboration and inclusiveness based on social justice.

Anna Jefferson, PhD, has spent her career in policy research creatively and rigorously applying ethnographic, participatory, and community-based methods to make policy research more person-centered. She is a subject matter expert in guaranteed income, inequality, consumer finance, and US housing policy, and a fluent Spanish speaker. She currently coleads a portfolio of guaranteed income evaluations and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD’s) first participatory research with participants in housing assistance programs. In addition, she has worked extensively with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, New York City Mayor’s Office of Economic Opportunity, and a range of philanthropic clients, some of whom she has had the privilege to partner with on their first community-based participatory research projects. She provides professional development coaching on qualitative methods and community-engaged and participatory research internally at Abt Global, where she is a Principal Associate, and through external conferences and writing. She holds a PhD in Anthropology from Michigan State University and Bachelor’s degrees in Anthropology and Latin American Studies from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She lives in North Carolina with her family.

Christine Abagat Liboon, MA, is a PhD candidate in Social Research Methodology at UCLA’s School of Education and Information Studies. Her research interests are focused broadly on program evaluation, culturally responsive evaluation (CRE), and continuous improvement in education related to newcomers, immigrants, refugees, and other historically minoritized populations. Christine studied the integration of the Immigrant Family Legal Clinic, the development of i-MTSS (Integrated Multi-Tiered System of Supports) at UCLA Community School at RFK, and continues to support research and improvement efforts at the UCLA Lab School. Christine’s work is shaped by her identity as a second-generation child of Pilipino working-class immigrants, first-generation graduate student, her experiences teaching and working abroad, and in non-formal educational programs in refugee resettlement in San Diego, California. Currently, Christine’s dissertation research is dedicated to further understanding the concept of reciprocity in evaluation and research practice to heal systems where injustice and inequity exist. She is currently a Program Co-Chair for the Graduate Student and New Evaluators

Topical Interest Group (TIG) and a Member-at-Large for the Research on Evaluation TIG at the American Evaluation Association. She sustains her spirit as a volunteer for the Education and Cultural Center and Museum at the Kuruvungna Village Springs in West Los Angeles and the Filipino American National Historical Society-Orange County/Inland Empire. She has presented at conferences such as the American Educational Research Association (AERA), Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment (CREA), the World Congress on Comparative Education Societies (WCCES), and the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA). She holds a BA in Ethnic Studies from UCR and an MA in Social Research Methodology from UCLA. She has published in *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* and in collaboration with other scholars for *The Journal of Educational Change* and *AERA Open*.

William N. Thomas IV, EdD, has been an educational leader for the past 20 years in urban public and public charter schools located in Washington, DC, Philadelphia, PA, and Camden, NJ. Dr. Thomas is currently on the faculty at American University's School of Education (SOE) as a Professorial Lecturer and Director of their Policy and Leadership Doctoral (EdD) program where he teaches courses centered on antiracism in education, humanizing methodologies for practitioner action research, and the influence of popular culture on educators. Dr. Thomas was named an American University Experience (AUx) Faculty Fellow in 2022 where he performed monthly antiracist professional development for the program's instructional team while conducting action research related to antiracist pedagogy and mindsets. In addition, he was named to the American University's President's Council of Diversity and Inclusion (PCDI) as a result of his equity initiatives in the SOE and the AUx program. His research interests focus on the application of self-determination theory (SDT) through an African epistemological lens to better understand how marginalized stakeholders can gain equitable access, logical opportunities, and authentic empowerment in public schools and university settings. In addition, Dr. Thomas is a former middle school science teacher, elementary school principal, central office director of science, and high school director for an international studies program. He holds a BA in English from Morehouse College, a Master's of Professional Studies from George Washington University in Middle Grade Science, and a doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania.

Yamanda Wright, PhD, is a developmental psychologist and researcher, formerly in the Transformative Research Unit for Equity (TRUE) at RTI International. She examines root social, economic, and environmental causes of racial disparities in criminal legal and public health systems. Specifically, she has studied topics such as school district policies that push Black youth toward juvenile incarceration as well as how policymakers and system professionals are beginning to share decision-making power with historically marginalized communities. She also enjoys writing and non-academic discourse about children's effortless understanding of race and gender as social constructs. In her current role as Director of Equitable Learning and Measurement for a community foundation, she is exploring ethnographic approaches to evaluation for the philanthropy

sector toward more equitable, holistic support for community-based organizations. Her works have been published in peer-reviewed journals, technical reports, and books, including *Child Development Perspectives*, *Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, and *Racial Stereotyping and Child Development*.

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Preface

The edited book by Melissa Goodnight and Rodney Hopson, *Theories Bridging Ethnography and Evaluation: Making Transformative, Intersectional and Comparative Connections*, is Volume 20 in the *Studies in Educational Ethnography's* book series. It promises to be an important contribution for scholars and students of ethnography and evaluation, and who seek to interrupt, transform, and facilitate educational and social change. As the first of two volumes integrating and bridging concepts and cases in ethnography and evaluation, this volume builds on the theoretical ties of these two transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary historical and current connections to weave evaluation practice with conceptual roots in ethnographic methods.

By initially weaving a timeline of selected ethnography and evaluation publications over four decades of scholarship and practice, this volume represents the current generation of those of us bridging theories in and between ethnography and evaluation, comparatively, intersectionally, and transformatively. The contributions of the authors, who highlight their own experiential learning in doing transformative scholarship in the US, Palestine-Israel, and India, reveal important philosophical, relational, and ethical dimensions of the interconnected practice of ethnography and evaluation related to notions of positionality, criticality, authenticity, and reciprocity.

The Goodnight and Hopson volume begins the relocation of the book series to the mid-Atlantic/eastern coast of the United States to the School of Education at American University in Washington, DC from the College of Education at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where it has been from 2018–2023. Founded in the mid-2000s by Prof. Geoffrey Walford (Oxford University), the volume has been a catalyst for ethnographic research, perspectives and methodologies featured that would extend our understandings of sociocultural educational phenomena and their global and local meanings. In our new home, the series continues to welcome the opportunity to engage colleagues who have ideas that may contribute to our series!

The primary objective of *Studies in Educational Ethnography* is to present original research monographs or edited volumes based on ethnographic perspectives, theories, and methodologies. Such research will advance the development of theory, practice, policy, and praxis for improving schooling and education in neighborhood, community, and global contexts. In complex neighborhood, community, and global contexts, educational ethnographies should situate themselves beyond isolated classrooms or single sites and concern

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themselves with more than narrow methodological pursuits. Studying classrooms and educational communities without concomitant understanding of the dynamics of broader structural forces renders ethnographic analyses potentially incomplete.

Rodney Hopson
Series Editor

Acknowledgments

Books are large projects that require many minds, hearts, and hands. Our first thanks as editors go to the contributing authors of this book who trusted us with their scholarship. We also acknowledge their community and educational collaborators who shared their knowledge and experiences with us. May the book that follows be of benefit.

Melissa would like to acknowledge several colleagues and collaborators who contributed ideas, advice, and labor to this work recently and in the past: Cecilia Vaughn-Guy, Hui Xie, Rebecca Taylor, Cherie Avent, Osly Flores, Ananya Tiwari, Ramya Kumaran, Mariana Barragan Torres, Taiko Yusa, Karen Kirkhart, Nick Smith, Jennifer Greene, Stafford Hood, Melvin Hall, Jose-Felipe Martinez, Akhil Gupta, Katie Anderson-Levitt, Mike Rose, Karen Monkman, Edith Mukudi Omwami, and Tina Christie. Also, the book was possible only because of the friendship and generosity of Nandita Banerjee and family, Karthika Anthony and family, Surbhi Batra and family, Ashok Mutum and family, Ketan Verma, and Savitri Bobde. Special thanks to Suman Bhattacharjea, Wilima Wadhwa, Rukmini Banerji, Madhav Chavan, Gunjan Sharma, Venita Kaul, and Ajit George. Also, much appreciation goes to ASER Centre and Pratham staff, partners, and volunteers who shared so much of their work, wisdom, and themselves during the fieldwork contributing to this book. The staff of the United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF) and the Fulbright-Nehru program facilitated fieldwork via funding, housing, logistical support, professional development, and guidance. Finally, Melissa's family – Amol Naik, Ashok Naik, Elaine Goodnight, Michael Goodnight, Minal Naik, Bharat Naik, Philip Goodnight, Nancy Goodnight, Savannah Goodnight, Joshua Goodnight, Haley Naik, Aneesh Raman, Isha Raman, Maha Raman, Ami Naik, Sushil Jacob, Sathyan Jacob, Suhani Jacob, Chris Burroughs, Christine Burroughs, and Jessie Thompson – have been consistent champions of her work and sources of support, humor, and love through its challenges and milestones.

Rodney invokes the first stanza of the poem, *The Invitation*, by Oriah Mountain Dreamer, as an expression of the fulfillment of this book volume on the journey that this first volume represents:

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living.

I want to know what you ache for and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

As described in Chapter 7 (Sankofa Reflections on Bridging Ethnography and Evaluation), much of what he thought he was doing over 25 years ago was finding ways to bridge theories and practice in his emerging academic career, between finishing doctoral work, postdoctoral training, and new faculty member in the late 1990s. In many ways, this is a dream imagined and fulfilled.

Thank you, Melissa (Goodnight), for co-partnering and realizing a dream deferred, for your grace and compassion in lifting up ideas to explode! To Kirsty (Woods) and the incredible Emerald Team for the encouragement, direction for seeing how to make our dreams real, and the belief in what we imagined could occur in print.

Rodney dedicates this book to the late greats: Dell H. Hymes (1927–2009), Michael H. Agar (1945–2017), and Stafford L. Hood (1952–2023), all who nurtured and modeled the passion and commitment to the bridging life work he aspires.