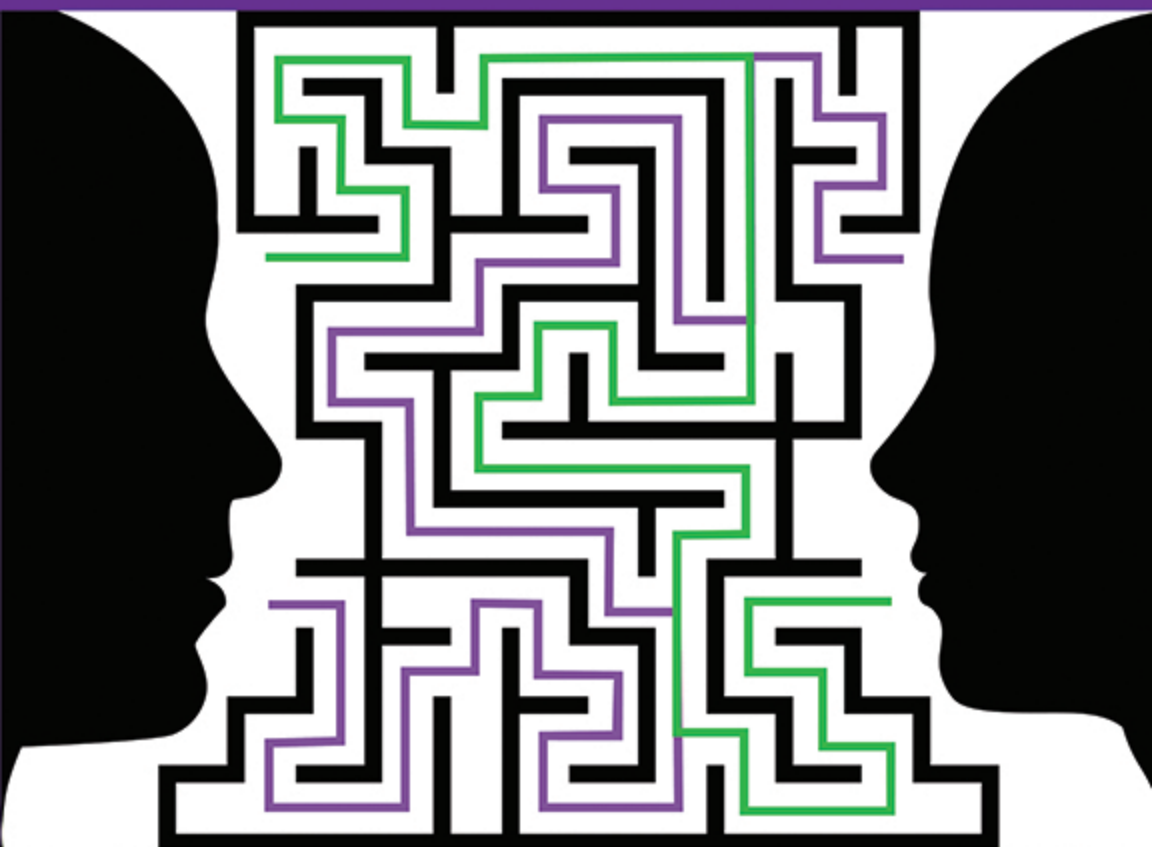


A Volume in the International Leadership Association Series

**Women and Leadership:  
Research, Theory, and Practice**



**Gender,  
Communication,  
and the  
Leadership Gap**

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Carolyn M. Cunningham, Heather M. Crandall,  
Alexa M. Dare, Editors

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# **Gender, Communication, and the Leadership Gap**

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A volume in  
*Women and Leadership: Research, Theory, and Practice*  
Susan R. Madsen, Karen A. Longman,  
and Faith Wambura Ngunjiri, *Series Editors*

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# **Gender, Communication, and the Leadership Gap**

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*edited by*

**Carolyn M. Cunningham**

*Gonzaga University*

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## FOREWORD

A distressing incident early in my leadership journey came to mind when I was reading an early draft of this book. In 1992, shortly after my first election as state representative in Spokane, Washington, I was introduced to a representative from a neighboring district. I was a relatively young White woman from a working-class background, the single mother of an infant, and an assistant professor of economics. Though I was a feminist and an activist in the community, I was insecure about my qualifications, both as an academic and an elected official. Like the women of color interviewed by Annemarie Vaccaro and Melissa J. Camba-Kelsay in “*I Am versus I Will Be a Great Leader*” (see this volume, Chapter 14), I did not identify as a leader yet and reacted sensitively when a friend described me as “ambitious” because I viewed that as a negative trait in a woman. Furthermore, I was unsure as to how I would be able to pull off “work–life balance” as mother–professor–legislator.

The man I was meeting was White, middle-aged, experienced, and known as one of the most conservative legislators in the state. He smiled broadly, shook my hand vigorously, and said, “You’re going to have to work on that weak handshake. You shake hands like a Democrat!” Of course, he knew I was a Democrat, one of the few in eastern Washington. I still recall feelings of embarrassment and, later, indignation. It seemed to me to be a sexist remark, though it was couched as a political jab. Had I the benefit of reading Kelly Lynch McKenzie and Tammy J. Halstead’s chapter in this book, I might have classified it as a “microaggressive” communication act

and possibly already learned rhetorical strategies to address it, rather than feeling speechless and smiling nervously.

Or better yet, coached by one of these authors, I might have reframed the remark as an awkward attempt to use humor to defuse the somewhat tense situation of meeting a potential political rival. Rather than letting the remark play on my insecurities, I could have seen it as an indication that he took me seriously enough as a colleague to joke with me, which, as I later learned, was part of his reputation.

Fast forward nearly ten years and I was shaking hands with the same man again. We were both state senators by then. I was chair of the Ways and Means Committee, and he was agreeing to buck his leadership “cross the aisle” and cast a critical vote for the \$22.8 billion budget bill I was bringing to the Senate floor. His handshake was a sign that I could count on his vote, that he was “a man of his word.” Although we seldom voted the same after that, we shared a teasing comradery until his passing a few years ago. For example, when I was charged with appointing someone to the redistricting commission that would redraw the boundaries of congressional and legislative districts, I told him I had directed my appointment to redistrict him to Idaho!

This book resonates with me because my personal life and my professional life in politics and higher education now seem in retrospect to have been a daily tutorial in the concepts covered in this book. Implicit and benevolent biases, critical race feminism and intersectionality, and authentic and courageous leadership are among phenomena I have repeatedly experienced and observed, even when I did not have a name for them.

The editors of this volume have done a great service by bringing into one volume frameworks, concepts, and practical advice from gender studies, communication studies, and leadership studies. The result is a resounding reinforcement of the significance of creating strategies for women from diverse backgrounds to give birth to their own voices, to hear and learn from each other, and to learn how to be heard by all, including by co-workers to those in the seats of power, who might not be listening.

A second notable contribution of this volume is achieved because of the global diversity of the scholars, and the women leaders and the nascent leaders they studied. In national and cultural differences, paradoxically, we can more clearly see the universality of the gendered leadership gap. Whether it is navigating conversational power dynamics in European conference calls, leading from the foreground and the background in the Liberian peace movement, or running for the presidency of the United States, women commonly experience a double bind that goes by many names and takes many forms.

Rather than fall into another false dualism like the ones that create and re-create the leadership gap itself, in these chapters we learn of barriers *and* levers to rising as a leader, of ways that emerging women leaders both

conform to traditional gender norms *and* subvert them. We learn communication strategies for fitting in *and* standing out, or in a contemporary vernacular, for leaning in *and* pushing back.

Finally, it must be underscored that women in the United States are left with a tougher leadership hill to climb due to lack of paid family leave policies common in other countries and low accessibility of affordable quality childcare. One of my biggest disappointments in my legislative service was working with activists and fellow legislators to get a modest paid family leave fund passed twice in the state Senate, but not being able to get it enacted into law.

I have hope that all the barriers to women's leadership discussed here will eventually become as weak as my handshake was said to be in 1992. That hope is grounded in the intellectual clarity, passion, and solidarity of the women represented in this collection as research subjects and authors, as well as by the unprecedented women's marches that occurred around the world just yesterday as I was preparing these words.

—**Lisa J. Brown**

Washington State University  
Chancellor of Washington State University, Spokane  
Former State Senator

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# INTRODUCTION

**Carolyn M. Cunningham**  
*Gonzaga University*

**Heather M. Crandall**  
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## EDITORS' STORIES

### Heather's Story

I am one of six people who gather for a meeting to solve a problem; there are three other women and two men, which should not matter but becomes important. The formal leader begins by explaining the goal of the meeting is to brainstorm solutions. I offer one. It is quiet as people make notes and think. The next person to talk, a man, repeats my solution. Suddenly, people around the table are nodding and endorsing the potential of “his” idea. I feel myself becoming angry. I fumble for a way to re-claim the idea without sounding like a jerk. I ask: “What was his idea?” and a woman restates it for me as his face expresses pity for my inability to follow. The situation is not going well, and I wonder whether the time is right to propose implicit bias training. Then I ask myself why I care. My idea is now free

as a bird and taking flight. It is catching wind and will perhaps bring about a positive change.

I care because my understanding is that I do not think I can become a leader without being perceived as bringing something to the proverbial table. What leader is not heard? My attention snaps back to the meeting when I hear the same individual volunteering to do the work of implementation; having worked with him for quite some time, I know he will not do the work. I then look back to the woman who spoke up, wondering why she did not hear the idea come from my mouth rather than his. I then glance toward the leader. We were to share ideas, but in our ten minutes we have heard one idea twice, yet we seem to have moved to the implementation stage. This process is not taking advantage of collective wisdom that would allow for quality decision-making. Communication choices have consequences. What are my choices? I can disrupt the meeting and risk seeming hostile or difficult. But is there something to be gained by being liked? Is the willingness not to be “heard” required in order to be perceived as nice? There is a personal toll to taking a stand or pushing back in situations such as this. If my ideas are rarely recognized as mine (or heard), it is likely that my own identity and morale suffer. In meetings with communication climates such as these, it takes strength to communicate intrapersonally about my own potential.

### **Carolyn’s Story**

As chair of an academic committee, it was my job to ensure that new curriculum proposals contained proper paperwork and signatures and were vetted through the proper committees. However, during my leadership, I was questioned about my bias of favoring certain proposals over others. This questioning came from a department chair who refused to follow and understand the proper flow of work. Rather than talking directly with me in order to challenge my commitment, the department chair decided to send emails to me with my supervisors cc’d to raise awareness about his concerns. In response to his concerns, I composed long emails, apologizing that the systems were difficult to navigate. I found that these feminine speech patterns, which I thought were intended to build rapport with him, did not work. Instead, I resorted to more direct communication, listing the exact steps he needed to take to have his proposal move through my committee. In the end, this form of communication was more effective. However, hours of work were lost in addressing the situation by trying to explain how the process should work through lengthy emails. Throughout this process, I could not help but wonder how these gendered forms of communication would change in a face-to-face context or how they would change based on my immediately adopting a more masculine form of communication.

## Alexa's Story

I was six months pregnant and my male supervisor was escorting me to our male boss's office to have a meeting in which I would be negotiating the terms of my hoped-for maternity leave. Upon opening his door, my boss exclaimed, "I haven't seen you in forever." My first reaction was shame. My thoughts raced, "I haven't been working hard enough. I should have figured out a way to go to the faculty social last week (inconveniently scheduled during my once-a-week class). He thinks I'm lazy." But as I awkwardly sank my oversized body down into the plush couch in his office, I could not ignore the irony of his statement: As a pregnant, untenured faculty member, I felt excessively visible. In addition to my regular teaching and research load, I was also sitting on a hiring committee, mentoring our department's Honor Society, and I had just returned from escorting six students to a professional research conference in Washington State. These are all "voluntary" tasks that I "choose" to do for a variety of reasons related to my own preferences and the kind of work that energizes my soul. But these choices, and my professional leadership, apparently did not look like leadership nearly as much as they looked like appropriately feminine ways of being. I "care" for students. I "help" out my colleagues. I "support" my research assistants. And yet, when the shame lifted, I found myself frustrated that what looked and felt to me like leadership was invisible to those who continued to equate leadership with a particular organizational position, or a particular gender, or a particular kind of body.

I find myself drawn to theories and stories about a kind of leadership that is relational rather than positional. I yearn for a vision of leadership that disrupts those myriad cultural notions of leadership that remain stubbornly masculine and that equate leadership with individuality. One of the most beautiful and unexpected effects of being a pregnant academic (and now an academic parent) is that it is an undeniable reminder of the way that we humans are always growing and changing. We miss important pieces of the leadership story when we forget that we are *dynamic* selves and that we exist and lead and communicate in *dynamic* organizations. How might we better account for the embodied and communicative dimensions of leadership? What strategies can we use to lead collaboratively and to build capacities together?

## BACKGROUND

We begin this volume with these stories, individual examples of the everyday confounding entanglements at the intersection of gender, communication, and leadership. To look at numbers broadly is to get a glimpse of how



interpersonal and organizational biases add up to larger systemic gender inequality. For example, only 5% of Fortune 500 companies are led by women Corporate Executive Officers (CEOs; Long 2016). Globally, women hold 23% of parliamentary seats (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016). Similar levels of inequality extend beyond the corporate and political world into the realm of entertainment, an important outlet for constructing representations of reality. Women make up 9% of filmmakers in Hollywood (Buckley, 2016). Although Geena Davis, in a 2016 letter to Hollywood, has expressed the opinion that “gender inequality in entertainment could be fixed overnight” and that we can easily “create worlds where women are half of the characters and do half of the interesting things” (para. 8), who is motivated to apply this pressure? Who wants to experience something different?

Why is the gendered leadership gap so persistent? Is it that women have to fix themselves in order to climb ladders to economic success and influence? Or are women really making different personal choices about how to spend their lives, choosing instead to opt out of leadership positions? This debate has been renewed with the publication of Sheryl Sandberg’s (2013) widely acclaimed book, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. As the chief operating officer (COO) at Facebook, Sandberg draws from her experiences at the top to offer career advice for women seeking leadership roles in business. In general, the advice centers on individual solutions to the gender gap in leadership, such as increasing women’s confidence, addressing the insecurities that hold them back, and negotiating equality with their partners at home. The popularity of *Lean In* (Sandberg, 2013) is important, but so is broadening these individual solutions to address cultural barriers and structural inequalities. Accordingly, we argue that women can overhaul themselves if they want, but we also need a much larger overhaul of some unexamined problematic practices in workplaces and in systems—as well as in the broader culture.

Much of the gap in leadership is due to a “double bind” in communication differences between men and women (Catalyst, 2007, p. 1). Some of the common gender differences in communication lie in feminine versus masculine speech patterns that are learned through socialization. These gendered socialization processes can be seen on a continuum with masculine at one end and feminine at the other. As Wood (2015) describes, “masculine speech communities tend to regard talk as a way to accomplish concrete goals, exert control, preserve independence, entertain, and enhance status” (p. 131), while feminine speech communities regard talk as a means to gain understanding, to build and maintain relationships with others, to establish equality, and to provide support. Both men and women interrupt each other, yet for different end goals. Whereas men more typically interrupt to gain control and power over the conversation, women more often interrupt to show support for others’ ideas (Sandberg & Grant,

2015). Additionally, feminine speech patterns often establish powerlessness through tentative language use such as hedges, intonations, and introducing phrases such as, “This may not be important, but . . .” These differences often limit women’s ability to lead groups effectively.

Even as the gender gap in leadership continues, research has repeatedly documented that the most effective leadership includes a blend of both masculine and feminine traits (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Holden & Raffo, 2014). Women in leadership positions are expected to be both feminine and masculine, yet perceptions of their leadership styles show that they cannot achieve either ideal. Although some research findings suggest that women may have an advantage in leadership positions because they tend to use a collaborative leadership style (Paustain-Underdahl, Walker, & Woehr, 2014), a problem referred to by Williams and Dempsy (2014) as the “tightrope” persists. Women who use more “masculine” communication are often respected but not considered to be nice, and women who use more “feminine” communication are considered to be nice but are not respected (Catalyst, 2007). Who wants influence without respect? Who wants to be respected but alone? We are all social creatures who like to be in community.

Beyond language use, perceptions people hold about leadership and gender remain an important consideration. Naschberger, Quental, and Legrand (Chapter 9 of this volume) asked male and female managers in France questions about their career barriers and career levers or advantages. “Being a woman” was ranked first as a career barrier for women aged 36–40, whereas no male claimed that “being a man” was an obstacle for career progress. Christo-Baker and Wilbur (Chapter 7 of this volume) review the theory and literature on authentic leadership and argue that this style, when enacted by female leaders, may not have the same engaging, productive effects due to the perceptions held by followers.

In addition to gender differences in communication, we know that some of the gendered leadership gap is related to unequal access to the more important business functions in organizations. Some of the gap is attributed to differential treatment in mentoring and performance reviews. Some of the gap is explained by work–life balance demands. Perceptions and stereotypes of women that people in society hold are problematic and explain why women do not experience the same considerations for top leadership positions (Hackman & Johnson, 2013). Many of these reasons, when viewed from a communication perspective, are addressed by different authors in this volume.

Eagly’s (1987) social role theory is often cited in the leadership and gender literature as a useful lens for understanding gender differences. Social role theory explains that people behave in ways consistent with the gendered expectations society has of them because these behaviors attract

more praise than blame. Women leaders, therefore, are more likely to be more nurturing and male leaders more competitive. Social role theory is reminiscent of a theory often used in the communication discipline, Bandura's (1978) social learning theory, which holds that people learn to do what is socially rewarded and avoid what is socially punished. Thus, when women leaders take on more masculine traits, either through verbal or nonverbal communication, they do not achieve success in the same way that men do.

Why is it important to pay attention to these real and perceived gender differences and how they impact leadership? Sally Helgesen (this volume, Chapter 1) observes that leaders who have good communication can articulate a strong vision. Because vision is about storytelling and bringing one's audience into the story to work for needed change, vision is key to effective leadership. Helgesen argues that women may have strong vision yet lack a sense of who is comprehending that vision. Failing to communicate generally, and to communicate vision particularly, can limit women's leadership effectiveness.

When Heather and Carolyn began teaching a graduate-level class on women, communication, and leadership in the MA program in Communication and Leadership Studies at Gonzaga University, another problem became clear. There are hundreds of books on leadership, and many books that have focused on gender differences in communication. Yet more writing and more research on the intersection of these areas is needed. We found the work of Julia Wood, who writes about gender and communication as socially constructed, to be particularly helpful to us. As communication scholars teaching leadership, we struggled to find practical, useful, and insightful readings for our students about the intersections of gender and leadership. Recognizing this gap in the literature was the impetus for gathering authors to prepare *Gender, Communication, and the Leadership Gap*.

From our perspective, we understand leadership to be primarily enacted through communication. However, the leadership literature tends to focus on individual traits and leadership styles, rather than looking closely at how men and women are socialized into masculine and feminine speech and behavior patterns. These speech patterns influence leadership styles and how leaders are perceived. Similarly, research in the field of leadership studies offers preliminary guidance on addressing the problem of gender inequality in leadership. Leadership scholars Jackson and Parry (2008) contend, "there is no consensus in the literature about gender differences in leadership styles" (p. 25). However, behavioral differences that do emerge are likely related to, as Burke and McKeen explain, the different ways women and men see the world (as cited in Jackson & Parry, 2008). Jackson and Parry argue that research on gender and leadership should be cautious of biological perspectives and call for future inquiry to move to a social

identity perspective. They believe such a perspective sheds more light on how the experiences of different contexts, different support at home, and the different gender ratios in different industries influence how leadership styles and positions are enacted by gender.

This volume, then, is designed to bridge the gaps between the bodies of literature in communication and leadership and to broaden and update the current academic discussion of gender and leadership. Second, despite the gains women have made in obtaining leadership positions, there continues to be a gendered leadership gap in the workforce. *Gender, Communication, and the Leadership Gap* offers insight into the communication challenges women leaders experience, such as their use of powerless speech patterns and experience of microaggressions, as they navigate their professional lives. This volume helps clarify the contradictory communication dynamics women in leadership positions navigate in organizational contexts. Additionally, this volume offers insight into contemporary issues, such as the role of social media and digital leadership and the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

These chapters offer practical, useful, and insightful perspectives and practices. *Gender, Communication, and the Leadership Gap* is designed to offer a number of workable solutions—from the perspective of communication and leadership studies—that all genders can employ and endorse in the work toward equality. We argue that the social construction of gender has resulted in different leadership styles ascribed for men and women, which limits everyone. The fact that understandings of leadership have been socially constructed also means we can construct something better.

In the chapters that follow, the authors speak to the many ways that communication influences leadership, and the chapters are designed to offer practical solutions to enduring problems. In our view, increasing diversity is not necessarily about women fitting into masculine organizations, but instead we support the nascent idea that diversity done well through inclusion makes organizations—and the lives of those working within them—better.

## **PART I: FOUNDATIONS: COMMUNICATION IN PRACTICE**

Part I provides perspectives from two well-known authors in the fields of leadership and communication. Sally Helgesen's chapter draws on neuroscience to argue that women and men are different noticers. Helgesen describes women as being "broad-spectrum noticers," (this volume, p. 7) whereas the perspective men typically bring is more laser focused; these differences in vision and leadership can result in miscommunication. Helgesen's chapter concludes by offering several strategies for helping women translate their vision in a way that can be effective in reaching a laser-focused

audience. Brenda J. Allen's chapter on intersectional identities and six inclusive leadership practices (commitment, courage, cognizance of bias, curiosity, cultural intelligence, and collaboration) provide practical strategies for conceptualizing and implementing "an intersectional ethic to inclusive leadership" (this volume, p. 17). Because Allen's contribution to the book is so important to our work, it appears near the beginning in order to inform the chapters that follow.

## **PART II: ON THE GROUND: EVERYDAY COMMUNICATION**

Part II focuses on interpersonal challenges women face in different organizational contexts. These challenges include responding to microaggressions effectively, confronting implicit and benevolent biases in teams, identifying the way power is negotiated in workplace conversations, acquiring the power (or not) of communicating through roles, and realizing the importance of workplace cultures to that process; finally, questions of gender are applied to the emerging leadership style known as authentic leadership.

In Chapter 3, "Narrowing the Leadership Gap: Communication Strategies to Combat Microaggressions," Kelly Lynch Mackenzie and Tammy J. Halstead explain what microaggressions are and offer insight into how women can address them in the workplace. Microaggressions are slights and insults targeted at individuals who are not accepted as part of the dominant male group. Among some examples are verbal assaults like telling sexual jokes or nonverbal insults such as ignoring women. The authors' goal is to show how women can constructively respond to microaggressions in the workplace (e.g., being intentional in enacting assertive accommodation, using inclusive communication, and utilizing humor). The chapter also offers insight into communication strategies that can be used to shift the focus away from those who receive microaggressions to those who are the aggressors.

In Chapter 4, "Confronting Implicit and Benevolent Bias in Teams: Concepts and Communication Strategies for Women in Leadership," Steve Mortenson argues that women have to be prepared to confront subtle bias and sexism where it occurs, in everyday interactions. Mortensen's chapter details the problems of gender bias and how an understanding of facework and interpersonal projection can be an effective means for confronting and reducing gender bias. Facework is a process for managing one's self-image during conflict. Interpersonal projection is when personal emotions color perceptions of present interactions. This chapter also provides specific emotional and behavioral strategies for de-escalating both internal and interpersonal tensions when confronting and correcting biased behavior in order to build collaboration.

In Chapter 5, “Talking Power: Women’s Experiences of Workplace Conversations,” Anne Murphy uses data gathered during a series of short, women-only leadership development programs that addressed the expression of power in corporate settings to examine the relationship between women’s leadership and the micro-detail of ways in which power is “talked” into place in everyday interactions. Murphy draws on feminist organizational theory to reveal dialectic tensions in the ways participants interpret and articulate their experiences. The result is a contribution to understanding these women’s experience of agency in professional settings and ways in which theoretic insights can translate into leadership development practices.

In Chapter 6, “Embracing and Contesting Gender Roles: Communication Strategies of Women in Engineering Leadership Roles,” Sarah E. Rifforgiate and Emily M. Ruder examine the verbal and nonverbal communication practices of women in leadership roles in a national engineering professional organization to explore how communication creates both opportunities and challenges for women’s participation in STEM fields. This chapter, which presents the findings of an ethnographic study of women’s participation in a professional STEM organization, provides close analysis of the ways women navigate the organization and provide support systems for each other.

In Chapter 7, “Gender, Authentic Leadership, and Communication,” E. Anne Christo-Baker and Daniel Stuart Wilbur describe the relatively new and celebrated features of authentic leadership. Given the prevalence of gendered expectations of leadership commonly found in organizations, these authors explore the extent to which women can effectively practice authentic leadership. The chapter concludes by providing several organizational and individual-level solutions aimed at reducing the difficulties women encounter when they try to practice authentic leadership in contemporary organizations.

### **PART III: AROUND THE GLOBE: CULTURE, COMMUNICATION, AND LEADERSHIP**

Part III includes cases that highlight specific ways in which different areas of the world face a variety of pressures and leadership contexts. The chapters in this section imagine constructive ways of responding to the need for more women in leadership positions. The authors in this section offer insight into how people outside the United States have developed and implemented strategies for gender equity.

In Chapter 8, “The Efficacy of Strategies to Elevate Gender Equality in Leadership: Assessing the Netherlands,” Wilma Henderikse, Annemieke van Meek, and Babette Pouwels offer insights from their detailed, multi-year assessment

of a Dutch initiative designed to increase the number of women in corporate leadership roles. Arguing that efforts that focus on leadership development are only part of the solution to bridging the gender-leadership gap, the authors turn their attention to assessing which strategies and programs are most effective in increasing the number of women “at the top.” Their findings demonstrate the success of a particular gender equality program, and they identify strategies that organizations worldwide can adopt when there is a commitment to elevate women and encourage diverse leadership.

Chapter 9, “The Leaky Leadership Pipeline in France: A Study of Career Levers and Barriers to Foster Women’s Leadership Development,” by Christine Naschberger, Camilla Quental, and Céline Legrand, offers a fascinating analysis of the barriers and levers (advantages) of career development perceived and communicated by French female managers in comparison to their male counterparts. This chapter offers a more accurate understanding of where women leaders tend to drop out, or leak, and not pursue top positions in their organizations. The analysis takes into account gender and age in suggesting career policies. The authors offer recommendations concerning managerial implications for human resource professionals and practitioners to boost female managers’ careers as well as for women to manage their careers more effectively.

In Chapter 10, “Emergent Yet Contested: Interrogating the Relationship Between Leadership and Gender in Organizing for Peace,” Stacey L. Connaughton and Jasmine R. Linabary present an enthralling case of grassroots peacebuilding organizing in Ghana and Liberia. The authors advance a notion of courageous leadership, wherein leadership is neither solitary nor masculine, but is instead a collective co-creation that values interconnectedness and context. From this perspective, one need not wait until reaching a position of power to “do leadership,” and, relatedly, the courage needed to make change is not simply a trait, but can be co-constructed and nurtured in collaborative contexts.

Chapter 11, “Transcending Self: An African Girl’s Journey,” provides a comprehensive look at Rosemary Muriungi’s own leadership development. She was influenced by the elder women in her community, as well as her father, who encouraged her to gain an education. Her chapter, an autobiographical account of her own leadership journey, shows that mentoring should occur before girls and women enter the professional world as a way to support their holistic development.

## **PART IV: INTERSECTIONS AND CONUNDRUMS**

Part IV focuses on the different kinds of confusions faced by those who lead from intersectional positions that are raced, classed, and gendered.

This section begins with Diane A. Forbes's chapter, "Intersectionality and Feminist Praxis: An Interdisciplinary Framework to Examine Assets and Advantages in Women's Leadership." In this chapter, Forbes draws from intersectional feminist theory to develop a praxis-fueled approach to leadership. She argues that leadership theories that treat "woman" as a singular and unified category are unable to fully account for the ways in which other identities such as race, class, nationality, disability, and others intersect with gender in organizational contexts. Forbes proposes an intersectional model of leadership that is urgently needed in diverse organizations and societies. Awareness of privilege and oppression as it operates within individuals makes us cognizant of the unexamined challenges of inclusive leadership.

In Chapter 13, "She Just Doesn't Seem Like a Leader: African American Women College Presidents and Rhetorical Leadership," Dorine L. Lawrence-Hughes found that an African American woman leader was not perceived as a leader to her students, who were all women. She conducted a rhetorical analysis of inaugural speeches made by four newly appointed African American women college presidents at predominantly White colleges and universities with the goal of understanding how these women leaders selected language to legitimize their leadership. She approached her study with the idea that these strategies could be of use to other leaders who want to increase their leadership credibility in certain contexts. The study reveals conventional and unconventional rhetorical choices in the inaugural addresses of these presidents that were used to communicate vision, employ metaphor, claim leadership identity, and frame diversity goals. With its focus on underrepresented leaders, her study contributes to the scholarship about African American women leaders.

In the fourteenth chapter, "*I Am* versus *I Will Be* a Great Leader: Using Critical Race Feminism to Explore Gender Differences Among College Students of Color," Annemarie Vaccaro and Melissa J. Camba-Kelsay provide an overview of their Sister Stories leadership course and use critical race theory and feminist theory to analyze the differing ways that male and female students understood leadership during and after taking the course. Focusing on questions of voice, silence, power, and confidence, Vaccaro and Camba-Kelsay examine leadership narratives from men and women of color, highlighting both the successes and the challenges of the course. The chapter concludes with suggestions for ways to work with college student leaders.

In Chapter 15, "Mexican American Women Leaders: Filling a Gap in the Study of Gender, Communication, and Leadership," Yolanda Chávez Leyva and Patricia Dennis Witherspoon report on the findings of a study involving interviews with 10 Mexican American women leaders. This chapter contributes to the literature about Mexican American women's leadership in presenting major themes that emerged from the analysis of data. These



Mexican-American women leaders were from different leadership contexts. Some lead in communities, some lead in organizations, some lead locally, and some lead nationally, yet they reported similar communication behaviors as being central to enacting leadership from their own perspectives. These behaviors include serving others first, recognizing the importance of family and community, listening, and using narrative strategies. The authors discuss how their findings inform the field of women and leadership by focusing specifically on Mexican American women and offer suggested future research.

## **PART V: IN THE ETHER: DIGITAL LEADERSHIP**

Part V focuses on gender dynamics and communication strategies available on the digital platforms on which we conduct more and more of our organizational and personal lives. These chapters offer strategies for navigating online environments for more effective leadership.

In her chapter, “Theorizing and Researching Gender and Digital Leadership in ‘Tech Cities,’” Mariann Hardey analyzes the experiences of women working in three tech cities and areas, including London, Silicon Valley (San Francisco, California, and surrounding towns), and New York City. Her chapter is part of a larger project on women working in technology fields. Using narrative research, Hardey interviewed three women working in high tech to understand how they navigated workplace experiences such as toxic masculinity, sexism, and trolling behaviors. In addition to noting these challenges, Hardey also highlights the positive aspects of working in tech fields, such as networking opportunities and work environments that encourage flexibility and sociality. These dynamics lead to a different dilemma for women working in tech companies, which typically have a pervasive culture of masculinity with men in the majority of leadership positions combined with male-dominated control of investment. In the end, Hardey argues that tech cities, such as London, can be venues for looking constructively at new structures of work and organizational communication.

In Chapter 17, “The Links of LinkedIn: Impression Management of Professional Social Media,” Evelyn H. Thrasher reports on research involving LinkedIn, a social media site that provides online professional portfolios. Thrasher highlights the nuances of impression management related to the performance of gender using LinkedIn. LinkedIn, which also has the capability of sharing of business and industry news, can offer women opportunities to build their professional presence, yet only when they do so effectively. The chapter offers practical suggestions for an effective LinkedIn profile that can assist in reducing gender bias and support positive impression management.

In Chapter 18, Newly Paul and Gregory Perreault in “Leader or Lady? The Visual Rhetoric of Hillary Clinton’s Twitter Images” use the lens of symbolic convergence theory and fantasy theme analysis to evaluate the most popular images from the 2016 presidential campaign. While situating their study within the larger research related to gender and political campaigns, the authors identified fantasy themes from the most retweeted images on Clinton’s Twitter account. Their findings provide helpful insights for understanding how visual rhetoric employs images for emotional appeals. Twitter images reportedly become effective as they are spread through being retweeted.

Finally, in Chapter 19, “Her Gospel Truth: Bloggers Rewriting Grand Narratives of Women of Faith in Church Leadership,” Karen Sorensen-Lang describes and analyzes the movement of women Christian egalitarian and intersectionality bloggers who are addressing gendered church leadership norms and male-authority narratives through online, digital leadership. She found that women bloggers were able to circumvent patriarchal church leadership through their blogs. However, she cautions against being too celebratory of this medium, since intersectionality bloggers, who are more critical of sexism, racism, and classism in churches, offer a different perspective on how women can participate in church leadership.

## **CONCLUSION**

Taken together, these chapters offer insight and perspective on the intersectionality of gender, communication, and leadership. Many examples illustrate why and how women’s communication styles are critiqued as not measuring up to men’s and how these styles prevent women from obtaining leadership positions. Each chapter includes practical solutions from a communication and leadership perspective that all genders can employ to advance the work of equality. Some solutions will be of use in organizational contexts, such as leadership development and training initiatives. Some solutions will be of use to individuals, such as the guidance provided regarding how to identify and respond productively to micro-aggressions or how to be cautious rather than optimistic about practicing authentic leadership. Implementing organizational and individual solutions may help us narrow gender-based leadership gaps and have more fulfilling, empowered lives.

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