

Guidelines for Feminist Leadership Studies

1. Examines the connection between feminisms and leadership and social justice. It strives to bring a feminist lens to the study of leaders in order to bring new models of leadership into focus.
2. Interrogates the ways gender biases affect capacities for developing leadership and the ways conscious and unconscious biases and workplace practices constrain women's leadership opportunities and performance.
3. Considers and critiques current leadership research and practice, while drawing on the rich literature in women's and gender studies to engage with ideas of intersectionality. It keeps issues of gender, race, social class, sexual orientation, age, and ability at the forefront.
4. Examines the fundamental concepts and dynamics of power. Takes into account culture, context, perceptions, policies, scientific explanations, familial, social and organizational structures and practices in considering barriers and supports for women's advancement to leadership and the exercise of power.
5. Includes an ethos of accountability. It advocates for more diverse leadership, especially more women and people of color, in decision-making positions who understand and practice feminist approaches. It challenges the notion that leadership is male/masculine. It is inclusive and considers strategies to make leadership more diverse. It strives to bring marginalized voices to the center of the conversation.
6. Recognizes and promotes young women's innovative leadership and activism. Fosters and creates spaces for intergenerational exchanges.
7. Examines the practices and contexts within established structures where leaders act to transform, both from the inside out and from the outside in.
8. Uses a gendered lens to consider the ways that leadership is constructed and experienced by those most disadvantaged economically, socially, and politically. It investigates various sites of leadership, including the family, the community, the state, the private sector, social movements, and cultural and religious organizations, always with attention to systems which privilege certain groups over others.
9. Takes account of global perspectives and advocates for research that breaks down current dominant assumptions about leadership qualities, methods, and definitions. It challenges individual-focused approaches and asks, what can we learn from other countries, especially those where there is much less space between individual and collective leadership?

10. Considers all women, including transgender women. It asks what happens when women gain power, but remembers that no one is a leader out of context. It aims to study women who exercise power, with an eye to illuminate race, gender, and power hierarchies. It includes research on the ways conservative and anti-feminist women and men gain, keep, use, and represent their power.
11. Is multidisciplinary and draws on methods and content from such areas as: psychology, history, sociology, women's and gender studies, media studies, social work, political science, the arts, sciences, business and management, among others.

These guidelines are the product of three years of conversations between the Institute for Women's Leadership Consortium at Rutgers University, Barnard College's Athena Center for Leadership Studies, and Spelman College's Women's Resource and Research Center.

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