

AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS PAST:  
THE FAIR HIRING OF QUALIFIED WOMEN AS SUPERINTENDENTS  
IN SUBURBAN SCHOOLS

By

James Lesley Campbell, Jr.

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Investigation Advisor

The Graduate School  
University of Wisconsin-Stout  
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The Graduate School  
University of Wisconsin-Stout  
Menomonie, WI 54751

ABSTRACT

Campbell, Jr.	James	L.	
(Name)	(First Name)	(Initial)	
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*Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this research was to determine, through a comprehensive study of the literature, why Blacks and women are not given the same opportunities to become leaders in suburban majority communities, or urban cities with a majority of Caucasian population.

It explores through a literature review Black and female superintendents who have been successful in these settings and tried to determine the possible relationship of skills, education, and training that led them to these opportunities. The study also sought to find the best practices in sharing power. It examined what the best strategies were in reducing racism, and sexism. The best opportunities for people of color and women

to move into positions of power in suburban, educational settings is discussed. Lastly, a set of recommendations are provided so that individuals who are seeking to emulate those who came before them (Blacks and women) as superintendents in suburban, educational settings will have a conceptual framework to begin their educational leadership journey.

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I would like to thank my father, for not allowing me to walk the road most people walk. He demanded of me what I did not want to give, challenged my beliefs on every turn and questioned my behavior. He has never given me a break, and in retrospect, it has been the best direction [painful at times] for my life.

To my mother, who has always believed in me and has provided the faith I lacked, and who has always supported me with her love and encouragement when all else could or would have failed. What a Mother...

To my wife and daughter, my reason for living, for breathing and for loving life to the fullest.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### *Introduction*

Despite what researchers and laypersons already know about the disparity and inequality between women and men, and white and Black administrators in education, remedies to address these problems have had little or no effect on increasing the numbers of the underrepresented in suburban majority communities, or urban cities with a majority population of Caucasians. Empirical data suggests that promotion for females and Blacks compared to that of Caucasians is not happening at equal rates.

Even more disturbing is the fact that educators believe the reasons for so little improvement in addressing these problems are the lack of properly prepared and qualified women and Black administrators. This assumption is a false one when one notes that women and Black principals in urban cities are over-represented and are highly effective in their work (Sergiovanni, Burlingame, Coombs & Thurston, 1992).

What the data does suggest is that placement or hiring of school superintendents is not based on credentials, experience, past failure or success alone. The evidence suggests that the most common tendency for hiring a Caucasian superintendent over a female or a Black is as simple as Caucasians prefer Caucasians to supervise them and that Caucasians are more comfortable with people (Caucasians) who share their values, beliefs and worldviews. On the surface this sounds reasonable when an impressionistic observation indicates there is a tendency to place Black and female administrators in schools where the student majority reflects their color or social idealism. Whereas,

Caucasian administrators tend to be placed where the majority of the students are Caucasians and the majority of the population in that district is Caucasian.

Today, superintendents are male, Caucasian, middle aged, raised in rural and small towns, began as teachers, assumed an administrative position around age 30 and became a superintendent by age 36 (Guthrie & Reed, 1992). All of these males have a college degree and more than 80% have a master's or a doctoral degree. Fifty-five percent (55%) of them majored in English, social science, science, humanities or business administration at the undergraduate level. Another 22% have majored in education or physical education (Guthrie & Reed, 1992).

According to the latest research, women constitute 51% of the population and 51% of the school population and 63% of the teachers. National statistics document that 26% of the principalships are women, and only 7% of all the superintendents in the United States are women (Shakeshaft, 1999). Shakeshaft (1999) also notes, according to the United States Census Data, 1996, that only 15.9% of the population is non-Caucasian (Hispanic or African descent). In public schools, the non-Caucasian make up 28% of the population and only 10.9% are teachers, 12.3% principals and 2.8% of Blacks are superintendents.

These facts lead one to believe that Caucasian males must be better trained or educated in a way different from those who are non-Caucasian or women. Was it their work experience that provided them a leg-up on their competition? Was it their ability to understand and work in complex and highly organized bureaucratic organizations that provided them the opportunities needed and what school boards sought in hiring the best

superintendents? Could it be that school boards wanted CEO's who were less democratic; who possessed no value-oriented leadership skills and needed leaders who would serve the organizational purposes more than the need of the schools? Or could it be that there is really no difference in the way Caucasians and Blacks, male and female, manage and supervise school systems when the end results are successfully achieved? Perhaps there is a thornier set of questions that needs to be asked regarding the personal preferences of the school boards, local communities, city governments and business leaders who are at work behind the scenes and are deciding who does or does not become the next superintendent.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

This study seeks to determine the relationship between hiring Caucasian male superintendents in suburban communities, and/or urban cities made up of a majority of Caucasians, and the hiring of Black and women superintendents in urban, poor, over-populated and/or financially distressed school systems. The Review of Literature and research provides reasons as to why women and Blacks have not made inroads into Caucasian suburban school systems.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this research was to determine through a comprehensive study of the literature, why Blacks and women are not given the same opportunities to become leaders in suburban majority communities, or urban cities with a majority of Caucasian population.

It also explores through a literature review Black and female superintendents who have been successful in these settings and try to determine the possible relationship of skills, education, and training that led them to these opportunities. The study also seeks to find the best practices in sharing power. It examines what the best strategies are in reducing racism and sexism. The best opportunities for people of color and women to move into positions of power in suburban, educational settings will also be discussed. Lastly, a set of recommendations are provided so that individuals who are seeking to emulate those who came before them (Blacks and women) as superintendents in suburban, educational settings will have a conceptual framework to begin their educational leadership journey.

#### *Research Questions*

The following research questions assist in assessing the factors that lead to improving diversity and positions of minority leaderships in a suburban educational setting.

1. Has the dominant culture's social and role theories about minorities led to their under-representation?
2. Has cultural assumptions and unreal world of societal norms and values blocked minorities and women upward mobility?
3. What are the problems associated with school boards, communities and local governments hiring policies?
4. What are the problems associated with integrating diversity and cultural-sensitive leadership paradigms in suburban school systems?

5. Do parents, employees and local community governments believe that it is in their best interest to only hire Caucasian, male administrators?
6. Do school boards believe that Caucasian, male administrators, make a better contribution to higher education and societal norms and goals? Could not women or a Black achieve these same goals?

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Review of Literature*

#### *Performance of Blacks and Caucasian Leaders*

The problem with trying to compare Blacks, women or people of color with Caucasian males is the fact that little attention has been paid to them in leadership literature. Little is understood about their experiences, their professional development or career laddering. With little or no chance to make money by writing books or articles about Black leadership, the needs of people of color, Blacks, or women are, in most cases, are left un-addressed with researchers studying only Caucasian males (Pollard, 1997). However, what we know is that researchers note that Blacks, women and people of color, who work in smaller urban settings, are very successful (Pollard, 1997). When all of societies' problems are forced on large, urban schools that are under-funded, large numbers of Caucasian teachers leave the system and central office doesn't care, leaving one to conclude that it is difficult for those who are left to succeed (Pollard, 1997).

Blacks and women have not had the same opportunity to have the same prestigious positions as Caucasian males. This alone makes it difficult to compare the performance of Blacks, women and Caucasian administrators. Secondly, Blacks, women and people of color have had few opportunities to work in highly funded suburban school systems. Blacks are placed into poor, urban schools (where few Caucasian males seek jobs) that are undergoing major social changes, such as mediation between students and teachers. It is difficult or impossible to provide quick solutions and administrators face little or no support from central office: They are isolated, marginalized, must handle

conflicting pressures and never have enough support to address the overall problems in the school's community. Most leaders' burn out, change careers, or develop their own share of personal problems (Franklin, 1990).

### *Aspirations and Expectations*

In the early history of the United States, women only played two roles, that of caretaker of the home and bearer of children. As for African Americans, their role was slave with no other options. Women got their first break in the educational profession when there was a shortage of men as teachers. During the 1820 and 1830s, America became a leader in business and industry via the sea, trading with other countries of the world. A leader in selling corn, wheat, cotton, and tobacco as cash crops, men began to move into higher paying jobs in the private sector and away from lower paying teacher jobs (Stern, 1973). Finding men who were willing to teach became harder and harder as America moved closer to the beginning of the industrial revolution. This shortage led to problems for local school systems, because they wanted men to be their teachers. Finally, local school systems created a double standard for men and women.

Men moved in and out of teaching, but they usually left for positions that offered higher pay or status or both; thus, they were seen as professionals, even if transitory. Women, on the other hand, usually left for marriage. They were branded unprofessionals, despite laws in many communities that forbade married women, but not married men, from continuing to teach (Shakeshaft, 1999, p.106).

Local systems would have to begin hiring women if education was to continue and these systems were not happy with this new development. Clearly one thing did

come out of the discomfort the community leaders were feeling, that is the ability to pay women teachers half of what they paid their counterparts, thus saving money for the district (Shakeshaft, 1999).

Blacks got their break during the 1830s as abolitionists pressed for their freedom from slavery. Many northern states provided grossly inferior education for Blacks, but it was better than nothing, which the South provided. Educational opportunities varied from state to state. Blacks were generally accepted into classes with Caucasians in New England and Maine. But in cities where there was a larger population of Blacks, (Boston, Providence, New York, Buffalo, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh), separate systems were established, and Black teachers were needed (Sorin, 1973).

Abolitionists believed that education of the people of color...[was] a most important means of bringing about the abolition of slavery and the removal of prejudice. Where they could, abolitionists invited Blacks into White schools, or used petitions, court suits, and boycotts to end segregation, or create new schools that would accept blacks (Sorin, 1973, p. 65-66).

Soon the Abolitionists and some pro-slavery proponents began funding post secondary education for Black colleges such as Hampton, Howard, Oberlin, Bethune-Cookmen and Morehouse. Out of these schools came new leadership in education, health, science, business and industry. When Jim Crow laws came into effect all over America after the Civil War and Reconstruction, Black teachers were needed at a greater level than at any time in the first 50 years of the Twentieth century. Separate but equal laws created a Black sub-culture, within a Caucasian affluent American society. Blacks could

not go to Caucasian hospitals, schools, or churches, nor jobs, where there were White unions in power and receive any established help from Caucasian city, state or federal government offices. Obtaining a loan from a Caucasian bank was totally unrealistic and Black teachers needed to train their own people to keep their community going within a larger society. With the goal of uplifting the next generation to a higher status, Black teachers trained men to become medical doctors, lawyers and ministers to provide the only social services available to their local community. Women became nurses, office clerks and local school teachers.

The newfound freedom to become independent and receive pay for work led to a curriculum built on resistance (Crocco, Munro & Weiler, 1999). By the 1880s, women and minority educators began a social mission to educate their race and gender, leading to a period of separatism, social activism and the suffrage movement of the early 1900s (Crocco, Munro & Weiler, 1999). From this opportunity, women educators/activists, such as African Americans Ida B. Wells, Marion Thompson-Wright, and Caucasian women such as Jane Addams, Margaret Haley, Catherine Goggin and Ella Flagg Young began to demand women rights (equal pay for equal work), pensions, tenure for women teachers, maternity leave and the right to vote (Crocco, Munro & Weiler, 1999). After women won the right to vote in the 1920s, many women leaders believed being able to vote would provide them equality and mobility in all professions. In 1954, with the Supreme Court ruling to end segregation and provide equal educational access and service to all by integration, Blacks for the first time believed they would have an equal opportunity for

the American dream. In both cases, history documents these single events alone did not bring the utopia these groups were looking for in the Twentieth century.

Today, things have changed little for women and people of color. Their expectations are no different today than they were 50 years ago. They seek the same positions of leadership, but must work through the same gender and sexual stereotypes, racism and sexism from all quarters. From all indications school boards and state educational certifying agencies favor men over women or minority (Glass, Bjork & Brunner, 2000). Times have changed, leadership has changed, but the same old rules and lack of opportunities for fair play have stayed the same.

#### *Lack of Opportunities for Educational Advancement*

Studies completed by Morrison in 1987 and 1990; U.S. Department of Labor (1991); Catalyst (1990) and others, document the lack of opportunities women and people of color have. Lack of opportunities fall into at least six categories called barriers to opportunities (Morrison, 1991). The categories are: “Prejudice, poor career planning, poor working environments, lack of organizational savvy, comfort dealing with one’s own kind and balancing career and family life” (Morrison, 1991, p. 295). Being Black, a person of color or female has its own inherit problems in a Caucasian, male-run society. Few Caucasian men grew up with or knew people of color. Many had a stay-at-home mother (home-leader). These corporate leaders’ worldview of people of color and women “comes from secondary sources, such as, books, television, and from individuals who are not members of their primary groups” (Banks, 1995, p. 67). Banks (1995) continues:

As a result, it is not uncommon for all members of a group to be reduced to one-dimension representatives of their phenotype. These representations are codified images that are presented in media, text, and other communicative elements in society that fore-front racism as an important element in race socialization (p.65).

Morrison notes the largest number of responses from a survey of 196 top managers described how the “perception of differences as weaknesses limited advancement opportunities for Caucasian women and people of color” (Morrison, 1996, p. 34). In another survey completed by the University of Chicago’s National Research Center (Smith, 1990), the prevalent stereotypes and assumptions of top managers based their facts that supported their belief that women were indecisive, non-analytical, too pushy or butch, while other ethnic groups “are less intelligent, less hardworking, less likely to be self-supporting, more violence prone, and less patriotic than Caucasian” whereas “Blacks were lazy, uneducated, and incompetent” (Morrison, 1996, p. 35). Oral language, an accent or a hairstyle that doesn’t represent the status quo, led to barriers for Blacks and people of color. This outward expression of individualism is viewed negatively and as flaws of character, which threaten all of society (Morrison, 1996). Women, on the other hand, face another type of barrier related to opportunities, travel and/or relocation, if the person is married and has a family. Educational districts are unlikely to send women to training, seminars, or out of state workshops (Bass, 1990). These same districts are also unlikely to promote or hire a woman who is married because of the conflict women have with marriage and work. Men who were married to these female leaders were more likely not to relocate with their wives and were more likely to end up in a commuter marriage

(Bass, 1990). Women who understand the work environment and the barriers facing their gender as leaders, were more likely to be “reluctant to assert themselves for fear of being seen as aggressive” or typed casted as career-minded, happy opportunists (Heller, 1982, p. 42).

There should be no surprise to readers of business and educational leadership journals, when these groups complain that they are viewed as tokens, or are relegated to powerless leadership positions in low-level management. This is also magnified at a higher level when job descriptions place a major emphasis on progressive responsibility, job skills, and experiences. These progressive skills are not offered to African-Americans, women and other racial minorities, but are given instead to their corresponding Caucasian male co-workers. In many cases, people of color and women see a direct correlation when reading these job descriptions, between those who write them and those who give their fellow Caucasian co-workers the direct job and mentoring experiences. This is not the only problem. If an individual has these experiences, skills and education, shouldn't they have a chance for promotion? In many cases, because of cultural racism, sexism and corporate socialization, their skills and education go unseen. The only thing that can be seen is gender, race, or the fact that few from their cultural background have ever been put in a position higher than a teacher or a worker with children. Heilman, Block and Martell (1995) concluded that “...these prejudices are passed on as prevalent stereotypes, implying that women and people of color are unsuited for senior management” compared to the characterized images of Caucasian men who possess more competent skills, are pro-active, potent, emotionally stable, independent

and rational (p. 34). Case studies uncovered the basic vocabulary used by these Caucasian corporate executives and the reasons why women and people of color don't get a chance for promotion or career advancement. They don't have the ability to perform, lack adequate leadership skills, are distrustful, hostile and always divert attention away from real issues in the workplace (Banks, 2000). This leads to a no-win condition where women who exhibit afro-centric or male behaviors, reinforces a forgone conclusion that their behavior is antithetical to effective leadership (Banks, 2000). On the other side of the argument, women and minorities can behave within the prescribed norms of the educational system, and Caucasian males then think they are pushy, outspoken, a loose cannon, out of place in their current position, and the end result is that they are just as likely to be passed over for promotions as those who demonstrate womanly or afro-centric behaviors (Banks, 2000).

#### *Not a Part of Social Activities*

People of color have had more difficulty with social activities in the workplace than their Caucasian women counter-parts. Even though both groups are considered minority groups, the reason falls into two categories. First, women are not a minority when it comes to the sheer numbers of women compared to men. There are more women, but women lack power and access. What makes Caucasian women different from their Black counterparts is the fact that they enjoy a privileged status that Black women or people of color do not possess, nor will they ever have this fortune in the United States (Banks, 1995). There is more to be considered if people of color and Black Women do not grow up with nor interact with their Caucasian counterparts as children. Their

secondary schooling is devoid of the essential socialization skills needed to be able to operate in the workplace, after work or personal/social-time events (Banks, 1995). This becomes a major handicap in the future and is used by the dominant group in power as a reason to exclude these individuals. Whereas Caucasian women grow up with their Caucasian brothers, date their brothers' friends and marry their father's business associate's son, they can easily walk into the privilege organizations of Caucasian socialized society (Banks, 1995).

#### *Lack of Mentors*

Women and people of color, over the last three decades, have had trouble finding mentors who would assist them in career laddering and the ins and outs of corporate life. Men are very reluctant to become a woman's or person of color's mentor, for many reasons. This will be covered in greater depth later in the paper. Making it even more difficult is the fact that there are very few women or minorities at the top of senior management. Consequently, there are very small windows of opportunity for women or people of color to learn the secrets of upward mobility or have direct access to key information about the true goals and objectives valued by upper management. This was not always the case in the early 1900s when women and minority educators used clubs as a means to teach future women and Black leaders the skills needed to be successful. For example, in Chicago the Federation of Labor (ran by a woman), the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs, the Political Equality League and the Young Women's Alliance cultivated and provided women mentors from the upper middle-class. These women taught fellow women the political ways of the world of men (Crocco, Munro & Weiler,

1999). These direct relationships provided the mentees contact persons to talk to, provide employment opportunities, show them how to manage their money, provide counseling services, low-cost housing, and skill development workshops. These new mentoring relationships paid off quickly and led to the first woman superintendent in the Chicago Public School System (Crocco, Munro & Weiler, 1999).

This was also true for Black women and men educators, who had their own clubs, that addressed their unique problems. Blacks suffered from cultural deprivation, lacked educational opportunities and a central voice to argue for political and social changes in the Black communities. At one point, women educators in the Caucasian and Black community in Chicago united forces to fight issues that were important to both groups and future advancement of women in the work and political world (Crocco, Munro & Weiler, 1999). These clubs, which were the central force of networking, soon disappeared as Caucasian women got the right to vote and Black women no longer had lateral relationships with Caucasian women organizations. Jim Crow laws finished off this popular means of mentoring among the races and support systems that helped Caucasian and Black women and Black men gain ground in educational and political leadership. This single action led to future studies that documented the suffering that women and people of color would go through for the next 50 to 60 years due to the lack of information sharing and mentoring. Only in the world of music is there any true success in mentoring, where cross-cultural sharing and personal relationships help Caucasian and Black musicians break the cultural divide in arranging, soloing, improvising and playing together. This new brotherhood and sisterhood led to the end of racism in music groups

and orchestras, and helped all types of musicians learn from each other, creating new types of music that represented the best ideas of all races, genders, cultures, and sexes.

Enomoto (2000) in his case studies on minority women noted what most interviewees said, women need a good support system, a good mentor who is willing to take the time to show them the ropes, and listen and give advice. These same women also needed their mentors to challenge them and help them limit the self-doubts that accompany a new position in the Caucasian male's world (Enomoto, 2000). Schmuck's study on sex and race provides the reasons why women and people of color have difficulty developing mentoring experiences with Caucasian males. Women and people of color were excluded from the cold beer after a meeting, the coffee break during the day, and the friendship that often developed among people who had similar interests (Schmuck, 1975). Another study found that women teachers "are excluded from various buddy systems based on clubs, old boy associations and informal drinking spots" (Clarke, 1985, p. 45). Others noted that women were filtered out of "explicit experiences including recommendation for awards, scholarships and publications" (Ehrich, 1994, p. 14). Sampson concluded that these filtering out activities lead women away from administrative and leadership tasks to working with children or developing curriculum (Ehrich, 1994).

Byrne notes few companies offered women or people of color a professional mentorship process (Byrne, 1989). Fewer women or minorities ever became a part of the Caucasian man's inner circle process of mentoring which leads to promotions or to the corporate mainstream of senior management (Ehrich, 1994). If women and people of

color are to get a chance to grab the brass ring, Caucasian men will need to value the diverse and community perspective that these individuals can provide. If there is to be a change, Caucasian men will have to gain insight and take the pulse of their educational community. These two groups can provide a unique understanding of why people react to or feel the way they do, providing invaluable connection to their community (Enomoto, 2000). There has been little or no need, up to this time, for present leaders to seek this information, when it is easier to overlook the problems and marginalize women and people of color.

*Blacks and Women: A Subculture, a Barrier For Exclusion*

In the earlier history of America, women were excused from any career that was considered men's work. As noted earlier, this changed as men's work/employment opportunities changed and evolved in conjunction with the industrial revolution. Work for men evolved into categories of importance, power and prestige. What was left over was given to those who did not meet the "strong man theory of leadership" (Lipman-Blumen, 1996). Women and people of color found it difficult or even dangerous to put on the pants of the established, higher order of Caucasian society. When women or Blacks tried to move into higher positions of responsibility (because each group must conform to the cultural patterns of the majority) they have found it almost impossible to know what the correct behaviors patterns are since Caucasian men have no clear boundaries themselves to determine success or failure in performing their work. Each action created by these groups led to a racial/sexist-awareness that is perceived by Caucasian males as negative more than as positive (Bass, 1990).

In a study of 315 managers' responses to a racial-awareness questionnaire, many agreed the system is biased against Blacks and that Blacks are excluded from the mainstream (Bass, Cascio, McPherson & Tragash, 1976). Pinkney (1969) noted in his study that the Black middle-classes' conformity to Caucasian middle class behaviors was excessive, and despite this excessive behavior, Caucasian men's viewpoint of them was still low.

Bowman (1964) noted that exclusion from the mainstream is a direct result of cultural deprivation, lack of educational opportunities and having a lesser chance to get direct skills training, and higher level mentoring by senior managers. According to an article in the November 15, 1993, *News Week Magazine*, those minorities with all the necessary credentials still faced the same slights and prejudices of three to four decades ago. They are still excluded from the true mainstream.

Many senior Caucasian leaders have difficulty understanding anything outside their own upbringing and cultural backgrounds and have provided them a very narrow world view, outside of their race (Allport, 1954). How Blacks live and where they live, what they eat, the music they listen to and their abrupt loud talking sends a cold chill of fear down the backs of the persons who are in charge of keeping order. Blacks and women, on the other hand, have difficulty knowing what are the limits in a world that is closed to them. When minorities don't know the real rules, they face being penalized for doing things that don't meet the needs of the organization, nor match the norms or values of the system. If they are not fast on the uptake once employed, they are marginalized or fired for not conforming to the socialization code of the corporate society. The

responsibility to decode these secrets is put on those who seek to stay employed in this society, and those who wish to move up into the inner circle face additional stress. The subculture gap that is placed on these nonconformists, for reasons of racism, sexism, prejudice and past discrimination practices cause them to jump through the right hoops to have a chance to prove that they are capable individuals.

### *Male and Female Differences*

Women scholars in the field of education and educational leadership note that educational administration has become the Caucasian males bastion (Owens, 1995).

Owens (1995) goes on to state that over the last century,

Americans held the belief that the true solution to the problems in education could only be addressed by coercion and top down management process. It was also believed that women do not have these inornate qualities to perform as leaders as well as men perform (p. 314).

Because these perceptions of sexism, racism and stereotypes, are held so closely by American society, it makes it difficult for women and minorities to be considered as effective administrators in a school setting (Owens, 1995). The history of educational research has documented (Brown & Irby, 1993; Bruegmen, 1995; Heller, 1982; Papalewis, 1995; Russell, 1988; Schaef, 1985; Shakeshaft, 1986; 1987; 1995) that leadership and men are so closely linked, that women, Blacks and other people of color have been virtually ignored.

Shakeshaft (1989) adds most convincingly that:

The systemic development of knowledge in educational administration and organizational behavior may be viewed as effectively describing the world as men have understood it, a description of the world as viewed through a male prism or a male lens (p.150).

Shakeshaft talks about her hierarchical four stages, questions, approaches, and outcomes regarding research on women in education. Her stages were described as absences of: “(a) women documented, (b) women who have been or were administrators, (c) women as disadvantaged or subordinate, (d) women studied on their own terms, (e) women who challenged the theory, (f) women who transform the theory” (Shakeshaft, 1987, p. 6). Even more important is the fact women are not given the opportunity to express their understanding of leadership, perspective, experience or life in educational leadership (Dorn, O’Rourke & Papalewis, 2000). Clearly there should be a difference between men and women, people of color and Caucasian men in this important world view.

Women, Blacks and other people of color could say studies completed in the last 15 years on their groups were done by men researchers who generalized their results from the perspectives what made males successful was also true for women and people of color (Owens, 1995).

All documented results concluded that women were overly committed to teaching and were, in many cases, not looking for career advancement (Meshkin, 1974). Meshkin also noted that “women instructors who became instructional leaders demonstrated a

higher degree of ability to administer programs because of their deep commitment and understanding of the art of teaching and knowing the ins and outs of their profession” (p. 336-337). Women who were not seeking promotion and had no desire for leadership were promoted only after a man discovered their talent; and they moved-up to a middle school principalship or to the district headquarters as a leader in curriculum or supervision (Meshkin, 1974).

The behavioral traits that are attuned to good educational administration are more feminine than masculine. According to Grown (2000) “female’s attributes of nurturing, being sensitive, empathetic, intuitive, compromising, care, cooperative, and accommodative are increasingly associated with effective administration” (p. 6).

#### *Conformity & Socialization Does Not Guarantee Advancement*

As Thomas and Gabarro (1999) noted in their book *Breaking Through: The Making of Minority Executive in Corporate American*, minorities must prove themselves worthy of every position just to get noticed, whereas Caucasians do little to prove their capabilities in mid-management until they reach senior level management. It takes a Caucasian male three to five years to reach senior management compared to 10-15 years of dedication for a minority (Thomas & Gabarro, 1999). In truth, there is no guarantee that this total dedication and success will land a minority into the world of senior management. In many cases, minorities and women take side steps or lesser positions of responsibility, even after being successful because their current boss doesn’t see them moving to a position of more responsibility (Thomas & Gabarro, 1999). In fact, unless a person of color or women know a Caucasian manager who has access to key information

and the senior management's ear, their successful climb to the top will be completely impeded (Thomas & Gabarro, 1999).

Marginalization is the next barrier to slow or stop minorities' career climb in our current educational marketplace. A person who asks too many sincere questions and raises doubts about a plan that is near and dear to the superintendent could be removed from their current position, sent to another department or fired (the direct method) (Heifetz & Linsky, 2001). For others, their viewpoints on key content areas are not considered relevant, because of their race, sex, or religious orientation (the indirect method). Those who are a part of the inner-circle and know the silent and unspoken rules of the organizations are the individuals used to marginalize people who do not conform to or follow the unspoken laws of the establishment. Many minorities find their colleagues don't listen to them unless what they're talking about relates to areas where they are considered a specialist. They are, of course, called on to address Black issues "because you are Black," and "female issues because you are a woman." Minorities and women know then they have been relegated into a world of tokenism (Heifetz & Linsky, 2001). When tokenism occurs where people are employed, a person of color or a female really has little chance to move up. Leaders in their institutions are not looking to address the true issues of these individuals, but are looking for cosmetic, short-term solutions to the real problem (Heifetz & Linsky, 2001). Since these minorities are important to the educational system only as tokens, in reality they are a part of their problem too. Marginalization occurs because the people, or services provided do not fit into the inner

circles, values or cultural norms. Until these values or norms change, there is really little one can do in a system filled with unethical individuals.

At an American Educational Research Association meeting in 1982, seven categories were noted by Jones (1983), as reasons why people of color and women do not get opportunities to become superintendents or administrators. They were:

(1) Dwindling job opportunities and federal funds; (2) a scarcity of role models and mentors; (3) negative responses from subordinates; (4) conflicting expectations about [people of color and women] administrator's loyalties; (5) misunderstanding of the dynamics of educational administration; (6) widespread resistance to the employment of minorities; and (7) unreasonable expectations that black administrators [and women] can quickly solve difficult economic, social, and racial problems (Jones, 1983, p. 2).

### *Prejudice and Discrimination*

School systems all over America, are a microcosm of American society, which minorities and women clearly understand. They know that prejudice and discrimination play a major role in their inability to pursue and acquire senior leadership positions. As noted in Chapter One, women and people of color are under represented as educational leaders and superintendents.

Prejudice and discrimination is not an individual action learned in a vacuum. The methods used to get groups of people, races and/or countries to conform are a shared learning process, learned in groups where values and norms are adopted as the main anchor in regulating behavior in society (Allport, 1958). Allport (1958) adds "Conformity

is demanded within any system of group norms” and persons who deviate from these norms can expect severe repercussions (p. 39). Individuals, who give up their individualism for group conformity do so to meet a personal need, or habit due to the influence of in-group memberships. Felix le Dantec, a French scientist, noted in his research that, “every social unit from the family to the nation could exist only by virtue of having a common enemy” (Allport, 1958, p. 39). Machiavellian trickery and outright lies create an imaginary enemy for the sole purpose of creating a cement in-group who would follow his orders. Hitler used this same method to create a unified Germany when he blamed the social ills of German society on the Jews. It was all right (according to German society norms) to take their frustrations out on the Jewish troublemakers. People in Germany found it easy to marginalize Jews as belonging to a sub-human culture, treated them with disrespect, burned down their temples, beat them in the streets and gassed and exterminated them, as the final solutions. The fact that many Germans could not admit that these events were occurring around them, saying they never saw atrocities or at least did nothing to stop these atrocities, showed the overall effect of conformity on the “in-group” philosophy. The shame many Germans felt after the end of the war was a direct result of being a part of Hitler’s in-group and the world condemned them as the out-group of evil (Allport, 1958). Many late 1980s war movies sought to understand the fall of the Berlin Wall and the new role America was to play in the larger world where there was now no one to hate and enemies became friends; It is hard to love your enemies when you have been told for 50 years that they are the epitome of evil. The real question they faced was “Who now will become our enemies?” or “We need someone to hate.”

Many educational groups in power create an internal enemy, a shared norm that is valued by the membership, which they consider a threat to their existence. Women and people of color, in many cases, fall into these categories.

Allport (1958) also notes that people who are tolerant and people who are persistently prejudice have a different cognitive process of thinking and living in the world. He states, “A person’s prejudice is unlikely to be merely a specific attitude toward a specific group; it is more likely to be a reflection of his whole habit of thinking about the world he lives in” (p. 170-171). A prejudiced person possesses a two-valued judgments (Allport, 1958). When thinking of women, ethnic groups, values, morals, and laws or of nature itself, this person dichotomizes for the sole purpose to eliminate differentiating categories, ambiguities, and the ability to admit to their own personal ignorance by creating a habitual skepticism about anything outside of his world (Allport, 1958). In short, whenever prejudice occurs, “it is unlikely to stand isolated from the process of cognition in general, or from the dynamics of the person’s whole life style” (Allport, 1958, p. 171). For women and people of color to have a chance in a system where the prevailing belief is that they are not a part of the majority’s lifestyle, the system has to change because the “in-group” possesses all the power.

#### *Educational Racism and Sexism*

Educational racism and sexism is alive and well in many school systems throughout the United States. According to a number of authorities (Franklin, 1993; West, 1993; Freeman, 1984) the method used to internalize and transmit prejudice, discrimination, values and norms associated with the Caucasian majority. Therefore, for

who are not a part of the majority it becomes difficult to identify, implement and use effective strategies to address “unconscious ideologies that have been apart of the American male identity. Sleeter (1993) notes that Caucasians’ socialization picks winners from losers who demonstrate behaviors within the majority values. Minorities who fail are marginalized and are associated with the dark side of most inner city ghettos, to be feared, thought untrustworthy, violent and uncultured (Sleeter, 1993). It is not surprising Scott (1983) found in his research that “selective perception and reinforcement and other such processes are used to deny variability among people of color in areas such as intellect and accomplishment” (p. 141). The real outcomes of such selective perception create a barrier for women and people of color to gaining access to power and privileges, preventing rewards for successful completion of work performed within the social context of the job (Scott, 1983). For this to change and women and people of color to get a chance, future leaders of color who are successful in getting to the top must create a culture where the in-group puts value in embracing good people who put the welfare of educated students first over the majority who do not want to share power. This change can only occur as society’s norms or values change. Racism and sexism is a group-leant activity, reinforced by the majority. It will take the majority to change this way of cognition, if anything, of a pluralistic democracy is to exist in education or society as a whole.

### *Sex Roles and Stereotypes*

Women and minorities have been forced to identify with employment opportunities that the majority offers, not with the ones they secretly wish for or want.

Employment roles and stereotypes used to reinforce the majorities' will have to be researched extensively (Fernberger, 1948; Komarovsky, 1973). Attitudes held by the majority have changed little in the last 50 years and these hard-to-die values are still pervasive in education and society.

O'Leary (1974), notes, "The career aspirations of women are influenced by societal sex-roles stereotypes and attitudes about their competency" (p. 807). Bem and Bem (1975) found in their study that women were employed in seven categories of employment; "secretaries, retail sales clerks, household workers, elementary school teachers, waitresses, and nurses" (p. 12).

The stereotyping and sex-role identification created by the majority leads to putting value in male (masculine) job categories and behaviors as compared to female (feminine) employment types or behaviors (White, 1950). Men are paid more, given more progressive job responsibility and are valued more than any other groups in the educational system. The end result is women and people of color are confined to roles defined by the majority as losers. Behaviors contrary to the Caucasian masculine type lead only to being passed over for promotions. Women and people of color therefore, have limited access to power and positions because the majority consider their management style as ineffective (Brown & Klein, 1982).

### *The Glass Ceiling*

The glass ceiling is an internal barrier, a secret curriculum used by senior management and the corporate culture to keep women and minorities from moving beyond a certain level in the corporate hierarchy (Sharpe, 1994). This barrier constitutes

an insinuated methodology that uses negative attitudes, reinforces behaviors and prejudices, which supports the status quo of a Caucasian, male-run society (Sharpe, 1994). Factors known about this barrier are well documented; 1) women and minorities are only allowed to participate in certain types of jobs that are relegated to them based on societal norms and/or expectations; 2) where there are a sizable number of women or minorities in these professions, the highest levels they can achieve are middle level managers that supervise front line staff. 3) In the upper levels of senior management, where critical planning, budget preparation, career training and advancement, lead to direct control of the total organization, few or no women and/or minorities are found (Crampton & Mishra, 1999). Ann Gregory (1990), in her article entitled, *Are Women Different and why are Women Thought to be Different?* notes that the glass ceiling is made up of a person-centered view. This view puts blame on women based on traits, behaviors, or actions that are internal to females (Gregory, 1990). One female trait that is considered the most negative to males, and thought of in repulsive terms is female communication, whether non-verbal or verbal. These feminine behaviors make it difficult for a female to operate in a Caucasian male-run society. Men are used to and expect to receive powerful commands and authoritarian directives from persons who speak for the senior boss on critical issues that mean life or death. Women and minorities' non-verbal or verbal actions create a world where they are thought to be less empowering and authoritative as a Caucasian-male supervisor (Gilbert, 1990). They find themselves out of sync when they are in a top corporate position, because they are forced to adopt behaviors that reinforce existing sex-race-role stereotypes (Crampton & Mishra, 1999). Another

barrier to advancement is the good-old-boys' network. These corporate hierarchies are geared to the success of Caucasian-males and rewards them with senior management positions, while women and minorities are ignored or encouraged to leave if they don't like what they get out of their work environment (Crampton & Mishra, 1999).

Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) note that women and minorities have been successful in moving into senior management positions when radical rhetoric and legal action were used to drive out overt discrimination. In many cases, the gender and racial discrimination was so embedded in the organizational culture that what was moral and ethical was considered offensive, or could lead to legal actions that could hurt the businesses bottom line, people in general could not tell the differences.

#### *Job Stress and Conflict*

Clearly, stress and conflict that women and people of color feel on the job and in administrative positions are created by the multiple roles that these individuals must play in a Caucasian-run society. Expectations for the Caucasian male is clearly understood, but for a woman or minority, they never truly know where they stand until the faculty, parents of students or the board threatens to topple them. This stress and conflict is created by the inconsistency that the role demands and who the leader is as to their race, sex or gender (Goode, 1960; Merton, 1957; Parsons, 1951; Popenoe, 1971).

#### *Leadership Constraints*

As noted earlier in this paper, being unable to learn the ropes and understand the total system keep women and minorities out of senior management positions. Many times they are moved up too soon, lacking the experience or support system needed to succeed,

so they fail. Their failure then supports the myth that women and minorities are not capable of handling a job of such importance (Crampton & Mishra, 1999). The importance of mentoring:

A mentor can be many things—teacher, ally, protector, and confidante. Research indicates that mentoring functions can be divided into two broad categories: (1) Career Functions that enhance career advancement, such as sponsorship, exposure, visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments; and (2) Psychosocial Functions that enhance the protégé’s sense of competence which includes role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship. Mentors can offer behavioral advice, help women to get promoted, and instill confidence. The lack of mentors for women can result in the inability for females to advance (Crampton & Mishra, 1999, p. 90).

A very important issue that limits women and people of color from moving into senior management, is that senior management prefer to work with people who share their background, life experiences, education, mentors and social activities. These common bonds lead to share alliances on the golf course; after work bar room visits or shared sports outings that reduce the chances of competition, infighting and misunderstandings (Maume, 1999). While these bonding relationships strengthen the impact of these inner-circles, there is little or no progressive job training or upward mobility for minorities’ hence shorter ladders of promotion and fewer rewards for success. Being on the outside believed untrustworthy, promotions go to those who have the inside track (Maume, 1999). Also troubling is the new revelation that some Caucasian

males understand the existence of the glass ceiling and take advantage of it because competition is so strong in Caucasian male job types. These men opted for careers in female or people of color-dominated occupations for the sole purpose of quick and steady moment into senior management (Williams, 1992, 1995).

Another way to ensure less competition for Caucasian males' bastion is to put Black women and men into racialized jobs (Wilson, 1980). These positions are not jobs that most Caucasian males want or consider jobs because they don't lead to promotions. They are dead-ends and do not ensure progression to prestigious positions. When the labor market gets tough, even these jobs welcome Caucasian males applicants over women or people of color.

Lastly, the impact of segregation is magnified within the corporate structure when more visible jobs which produce the largest revenue (sales, marketing, product development) is reserved for Caucasian males. Meanwhile, minorities and women are put into neglected or devalued positions. Persons who hold these positions are considered tokens and losers (Maume, 1999).

It is felt that women, Blacks and people of color must be more submissive, taking orders from their Caucasian co-laborers and higher-ups, if they expect to keep their job (Bass, 1996). Those who resist the system find their careers stalled and run into petty indignities which they must endure or lose their jobs.

*Gaining Access to Boards: Headhunter and Executive Searches:*

*Failing the Educational Community*

As noted in Chapter One, few women, minorities and people of color in education make it to the top jobs in educational leadership positions. Women, minorities and people of color have to face a sizable number of barriers just to be included in the beginning process of interviews, let alone make it to the final selections as a candidate to be interviewed by school board members.

One of the major problems that keeps women, minorities and people of color out of top educational leadership positions is the role that headhunters and executive search and selection firms play in determining the requirements needed for the position (Tallerico, 2000). Research studies completed by (Magowan, 1979; Swart, 1990) discovered that “a increasing numbers of consultants are usually retired superintendents, principals, university professors or central office bureaucrats offering services to school boards, most of these persons were Caucasian (95%), and male” (p. 142). Complicating matters further, is the lack of experience and education that most board members have when it comes to making major decisions for top positions in the educational system. More than 76% of all board members were made up of people who possessed no more than a high school diploma. Board presidents had less than five years of board member experience and were Caucasian males (Perersen & Short, 2002). Exacerbating the problem further is the fact that most board presidents’ leadership styles were based on of a top-down hierarchy models. They used code words for their type of leader, one who had the ability to be a “warrior,” ran the system as a “military general,” and had a

business mentality like a CFO businessman from the top Fortune 500 company's. These ideas alone fostered misconceptions of the role of the superintendency and lead to major disadvantages for women, minorities or people of color getting an opportunity to make the first cut for the top jobs (Grogan & Henry, 1995; Bjork & Lindle, 2001).

Another factor that hinders women, minorities and people of color from interviews is the filters of higher responsibilities. Many board members, because of the lack of experience or because of headhunter who do job selection for board members the only candidates to be considered are, persons who have high school principalships, assistant superintendency or superintendency experiences, (Glass, 1992; Hodgkinson & Montenegro, 1999). Research done by (Montenegro, 1993; Shakeshaft, 1989; Tallerico, 1997) documents that women, minorities and people of color in most cases don't have direct-line or building-based administrative roles of promotions, leading to their exclusion from the screening process before any interviews have been done (Tallerico, 2000). Most women, minorities and people of color get principalship jobs in elementary schools, move to coordinators or directorships thus not meeting the headhunter/board bias criteria. In many cases, headhunters are given the power to come up with a grading system that cuts back the total number of applicants to a manageable number of persons who fit their definition of academic, political, and overall superman-superintendent (Tallerico, 2000). Grogan and Henry (1995) report that the final selection gates do not favor women, minorities or people of color as the most qualified and are never allowed to move to the final gate of interviewing or selection process as superintendent. The reasoning behind this major development can be directly related to the boards' heavy

dependence on headhunters “abbreviated summaries rather than immersing themselves in applicants’ files first-hand” which limited their opportunities in finding the best candidates for the job (Tallerico, 2000, p. 32).

Another factor for those women, minorities, and people of color who do make the final selection process for interviews are board members who view these candidates as “are not-discipline, can’t do budgets, can’t address the local community wars and if selected the board wondered if they do have to paid them as much as the past Caucasian male superintendent” (Tallerico, 2000, p. 32).

In some cases, headhunters admitted their bias about women, minorities and people of color. “I won’t put minorities into the finalist pool. I’m going to bring the best candidates forward for this job...I will not bring somebody up because they are female or because they are Black or because they’re Hispanic” (Tallerico, 2000, p. 33). The question to be raised here is who determines the “best qualified?” Again, as noted earlier in this paper, opportunities for the position of superintendent are open wide to their peers, who define quality as candidates, and who have prior experience as superintendents, assistant superintendents, or high school principals. Who is defining the best qualified headhunters who are past superintendents, deans or high level bureaucrats who are predominate Caucasian males? If we believe that these individuals are the best qualified, then one could ask why school systems all over America are failing? Are not high numbers of the type of leaders favored by headhunters, (95% of Caucasians males) running almost all the high school principalships, assistant superintendent and

superintendent jobs in America? It could easily be concluded that the relationship of headhunters' "best qualified" equals failure in American's education.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations*

#### *Introduction*

This research investigation will determine the relationship between the hiring of Caucasian male superintendents in suburban communities, and/or urban cities with a majority population made up of Caucasians, and the hiring of Black and women superintendents in urban, poor, over-populated, financially distressed school systems. A comprehensive study of the available literature provided reasons why women and Blacks have not made inroads into Caucasian, suburban school systems. Why Blacks and women are not given the same opportunities to become leaders in suburban majority communities, or urban cities with a majority of Caucasian population is discussed.

#### *Summary*

*Research Question 1:* Has the dominant culture's social and role theories about minorities led to their under-representation?

*Research Question 2:* Has cultural assumptions and the unreal world of societal norms and values blocked minorities and women's upward mobility?

According to Gosetti (1992) and Rusch (1991), and quoted from Dunlap and Schmuck (1995) "educational administration borrows its theories of leadership from many other disciplines such as business, management, organizational development, and social psychology" (p.12). What researchers find in these borrowed administrative theories is an embedded privileged perspective where sex, gender, race and the way these issues are taught in higher educational institutions are ignored. Insidious viewpoints are

used to discourage equity, hinder democratic reforms and limit equity (Gosetti, 1992; Rusch, Gosetti, & Mohoric, 1991). Smith (1987) says about this embedded privileged perspective process:

The concerns, interests, and experiences forming our culture are those of men in positions of dominance whose perspectives are built on the silence of women (and of others). As a result, the perspectives, concerns, interests of only one sex and one class are represented as general...[and] a one-sided standpoint comes to be seen as natural [and] obvious (p. 19-20).

The underlying result of these privileged few has become what one now observes as theories that are obscure, and practices that are now taken for granted. Any persons who challenge these theories, which are now considered daily practices, will be marginalized (Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995).

Other researchers note that those who hold the power because of privilege and social theories rarely bring up issues related to feminist perspectives, address gender, race or multi-cultural needs. With rare exceptions, Feminist perspectives, gender, race or multi-cultural needs is rarely brought up in formal educational or professional development settings (Bates, 1980).

Another leadership research Kempner (1991) notes that:

Administrators and university programs that accept, uncritically, the metaphors of business, the military, and the athletic contests are subscribing to myths that are antithetical to the ideas of democracy....We should question how well university

certification programs are educating administrators to be democratic leaders who are aware of their moral responsibilities to the citizens they serve (p. 120).

The traditional model held by many upper administrators and school boards are the Caucasian models [based on myths] related to males as the only people who know how to use power, be efficiency, do budget management and discipline a world out of control (Kemper, 1991). These myths [models] are the major reasons why women and people of color are under representation in leadership roles. Another of the leading theories [that lead to under-representation] believed and valued above all others by headhunters, is the Caucasian leadership style and the outstanding ability to communicate effectively over other genders or races. Researchers, Haslett, Geis, and Carter (1992) found that communication skills and leadership styles of Caucasian males are highly valued by school boards over every other known style. A large number of boards use these standards [social systems of privilege] in measuring future successors thus making it possible for women or people of color to get past the first cut of possible candidates, let alone get an interview for a highly prized leadership position (Haslett, Geis, & Carter, 1992). Researchers document that school systems do their part in reinforcing the status of minorities quo [supporting social systems that confer virtue on the privileged few] by failing to see the supportive qualities of female or cross-cultural experiences, values, and styles, by not evaluating these skills on an equal level with their male counterparts (Papalewis & Brown, 1989). Burns (1978) adds:

The male bias is reflected in the false conception of leadership as command or control. As leadership come properly to be seen as process of leaders engaging

and mobilizing the human needs and aspirations of followers, women will be more readily recognized as leaders and men will change their own leadership styles (p. 50).

In fact, researchers document that women worked harder than most men, use equalitarian practices that support true teaching and learning, took on more responsibility, and noted good as well as bad themes accruing in the learning environment where steps were taken to address the currently reality (Owen, 1996). These perceived differences [value systems] lead boards members and school system to see women and people of color as excellent teachers, curriculum leaders or persons to run human resources or affirmative actions areas, but not as high school principals, assistant superintendents or upper level administrators or superintendents (Strauss, 1987; Constas, 1992; Owen, 1992). What boards and school administration believe is that “caring and nurturing is the work women and people of color, not as positions leaders, working in administrative central office. Burns (1978) notes in his book, *Leadership*, writes about transformational leadership, “persons engage with one another in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (p. 20). And yet when one looks carefully at Burns’ books, one sees that privilege is a form of transformational leadership. Of the 462 pages of *Leadership*, one cannot help but see the “discriminatory behaviors by men is less disturbing to women than the women’s personal sense of outsider status” (Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995, p. 21).

Clearly, these discriminatory behaviors can be documented in *The Study of the American School Superintendent for 2000*, where 2,262 superintendents were surveyed;

only 297 of that number were women superintendent (Brunner, 2000). In fact, the number of women superintendents has stayed flat over the last 20 years. Women and people of color are dramatically underrepresented in comparison to the number of women who are teachers [over 80%]. Men hold 91.6% of all the superintendencies, in the United States, while those women who are superintendents hold positions in small, rural settings (Brunner, 2000).

According to Charol Shakeshaft (1989), "... status has been defined by males and is organized hierarchically so that language mirrors a value system that describes administration as more important than teaching" (p. 88).

*Research Question 3:* What are the problems associated with school boards, communities and local governments' hiring policies?

*Research Question 4:* What are the problems associated with integrating diversity and cultural-sensitive leadership paradigms in suburban school systems?

*Research Question 5:* Do parents, employees and local community governments believe that it is in their best interest to only hire Caucasian, male administrators?

*Research Question 6:* Do school boards believe that Caucasian, male administrators, make a better contribution to higher education and societal norms and goals? Could not women or Blacks achieve these same goals?

Researchers have found that school boards hiring practices and the belief that Caucasian males make better superintendents, comes from the same socio-cultural values that limit the access ability of women and people of color (Alston, 1999; Grogan & Henry, 1995; Moody, 1983; Ortiz, 1999; Radich, 1992; Tallerico, 2000). Studies

completed by Lewin, (1947, 1951) and Shoemaker (1991) clearly identifies a process that uses a framework or a variety of channels of gate keeping methods to decrease the flow of applicants. Some of the gates used to restrict the flow of applicants are “impartial rules” or “persons who possess differing degrees of power” put constraints on key aspects of the hiring process (Tallerico, 2000). Shoemaker (1991) emphasizes that the “organization hire[s] the gatekeepers and [the board] make the rules” (p. 53). Tallerico (2000) puts it this way, “[from the] school boards perspective, a quality search consultant is the person who best captures and represents its interests in the gatekeeping process” (p. 20). If this assumption is believed, this could explain why less than 7 percent of the superintendents in the United States are women or people of color (Glass, Bjork & Brunner, 2000).

Studies on headhunters or executive search firms reveals, that most of “placement barons” are retired, Caucasian males superintendents, college deans and high-level administrators (Tyack & Hansot, 1982; Magowan, 1979; Swart, 1990). Tallerico (2000) and others have noted that these search firms have a minimum of oversight, unless “board members choose to rigorously monitor headhunters’ actions or become closely involved in the initial application reviews” (p. 20). Shoemaker (1991) and Lewin (1951) note that the headhunter becomes an equal with “the social locomotion of individuals in many organization” (p. 187). Many board members believe that men are more capable than women or people of color to handle the complex jobs involved with being a superintendent. In the Study of the American School Superintendency 2000: A look at the Superintendent of education in the New Millennium, reveals that “local board members

[believe] that superintendents of color are unqualified to handle budgeting and finance” (Glass, Bjork & Brunner, 2000). In fact, these same findings/factors were noted the single noted most reason why people of color or women seldom advanced into the superintendency (Glass, Bjork & Brunner, 2000). The same study concludes that women “allow emotions” to guide their decision-making (Glass, Bjork & Brunner, 2000). Headhunters believe that the only major way to become qualified as a future superintendent is by becoming a high school assistant principal, a principal, then assistant superintendent (Tallerico, 2000). This belief is used as a means to keep out others [women and minorities] out of the pool of applicants, and those who don’t take this traditional route of promotion are left out in the cold (Riehl & Byrd, 1997). Glass, Bjork and Brunner (2000), documents that “80% of white superintendents began their careers as an assistant principal or principal...(Bjork & Keedy, 2001). They added,

“The greatest difference between the career paths of persons of color in the superintendency and their white counterparts occur in the path that moves from teacher to principle to superintendent. [Only about] 22% of superintendents of color follow this career path [compare with] more than 52% following the path of teacher, principal, central office and then superintendent (p. 415).

With this gate open to Caucasian males early in their career and in most cases, only to them, headhunters put more stock in seeking to integrate the cultural forces of the community and the ideas of the board members than on the aspirations, qualifications or experience of the applicant (Riehl & Byrd, 1997). They concluded (quoting Tallerico) that, “the positive effects of personal and socialization factors such as aspirations,

qualifications, or experiences do not assure women [or people of color] equity with men...” (p. 21). Tallerico’s 2000 study on headhunters notes that board members searches and selection processes limit the advancement of women and people of color: “These include (a) how best qualified is defined, (b) stereotyping and other cultural dynamics that come into play, and (c) the role of good chemistry [the gut feeling] in determining interview success” (p. 29).

Tallerico (2000) finds that headhunters and board members use a “narrow construction” of the term “best qualified” and “prior job experience” (p. 29). In most cases, boards empower consultants to close the gates on people who do not fit these narrow definitions or who lack the headhunters’ [most were past superintendents] defined process of promotions, [“high school principals, to assistant superintendents to superintendent”] (Tallerico, 2000; Grogan & Henry, 1995; Riehl & Byrd, 1997; Carter, Glass, & Hord, 1993). Tallerico notes, in interviews with consultants, that they “emphasize the importance of a combination of building-level and central office positions to ensure speedy advancement” for applicants to move to the next level of interviewee (p. 30). Grogan and Henry, (1995) notes in their research that headhunters talk about superintendents as male-centered “warriors,” a military officers, or a person who possess a touch of business mentality (p. 172). One headhunter said:

There’s a big difference between serving as a high school principal and serving as an elementary principal...It’s almost like you’ve been to Vietnam and back again if you’re been a high school principal. And you were only exposed to the Korean

War in the elementary principalship. That's the board's bias. And guess what? I tend to agree (Tallerico, 2000, p. 30).

When it comes to the narrow definitions of job skills, prior experience and quality, another headhunter notes that for the best person to receive consideration one should be:

A teacher 3 to 5 years...a secondary principal for 3 to 4 years...a superintendency in a small district...then...a larger district for [a] second superintendency...Not that you have to go through the chairs. That's not necessary. But that's the quickest way (Tallerico, 2000, p. 29).

This method of screening [by insiders of the business] for new educational leaders is called the hierarchies of prior job titles. Riehl and Byrd (1997) notes that the boards and headhunters limit mobility for women and people of color because of the way they are promoted. This leads to one conclusion, board members value non-instructional skills, men with very strong ideologies when it comes to discipline and budgets; superman hero's who indirectly use prejudice and gender stereotype to limit the field of candidates.

If women or people of color are lucky enough to make it to the final of interviews with board members, they must show them that they can pass the good chemistry or gut feeling test (Taller co, 2000). Many candidates neither won nor lost by his or her ability to charm the decision-makers into believing that they were the best candidates. Similarly have the culture, physical and social standing of those doing the interview and the one seeking the job, play deciding role. This puts most women and people of color at a major disadvantage (Taller co, 2000).

### *Conclusions*

The most important point is that boards and school systems must see the value of women and people of color's work. Boards, school-systems and community leaders must understand that even if people of color and women are promoted differently within the school system, their work and ability to do the work of a superintendent is just as valuable as that of the Caucasian males even though the way they are promotion is different.

Minority superintendents must break their silence and demonstrate their unwillingness to address the sexist or discriminatory practices that their silence allows to continue before and during their reign as the chief executive officer of the school system (Belensky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Bernard, 1973; Brunner, 2000; Chase, 1995; Collins, 1991; Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995). This silence reinforces the idea that women and people of color are unable to do the job and past practices that are negative, inappropriate, or culturally insensitive are ok to continue because the leader does not say anything.

Lastly, more educational training at the university and college level needs to address the pathways of promotions, barriers that women and people of color face, the critical need for future leaders to find mentors who can assist them in maneuvering within a very complex and highly private society. This new educational training which should occur at the college and university levels, need to work its way down to those who provide certification workshops for renewing leaders, board members and community leaders who are a vital part of the process of hiring CEOs.

Past and current women and people of color superintendents must play a greater role in providing advice to school systems, provide letters of recommendation for new and up future leaders. They should start their own headhunter firms and most important, support and mentor, those who will make great leaders from their own ranks. These unselfish actions alone will lay the groundwork for new leaders ready to take steps into vacancies when leadership positions become available.

Finally, for boards and school systems to get beyond the traditional search and hiring paradigm, boards need training it is important for them to understand as to what makes a good academic leader, principal, or superintendent. Clear objectives must be used in determining the success and failure of an academic leader other than race, sex and gender. Research needs to play a greater role in defining a good leader. Different leadership styles should be taught and understood by board members and community people to help start a shift away from headhunters' and bureaucracies' understanding of effective leadership.

Shakeshaft (1989) states that women leaders should be judged based on the following criteria: "achievement, instructional strategies, orderly atmosphere, student progress, coordinated instructional programs, as well as supporting and communicating effectively with teachers". When this becomes the process for determining the most effect leader, women and people of color will have a greater chance at being selected as a future assistant superintendent or superintendent. This cannot become a reality unless women and people of color are not placed on the sidelines when leadership positions and are available. Those in charge should address overt sexual, racial and secret

discrimination under their leadership. Action is critical for barriers to be removed and a clear pathway of discovery developed.

Even more critical, women and minority people who work in schools of education, businesses and other areas where leadership and ethics are taught, must to begin teaching the democratic responsibilities which comes with leadership and that a pluralist society demands the inclusion of all people. One can no long afford to eliminate people because of sex, race or belief. It is important to understand the uniqueness of all problems encountered when filling leadership positions in education. It will take more than those who create the problem to solve it.

#### *Recommendations*

As noted early in this review, for changes to occur for women and people of color, one must address:

either directly or indirectly—an androcentric society. To eliminate the barriers, one must change the androcentric nature of the culture in which they flourish. To do this, behavioral changes in men and women, structural and legal changes in schools and society, attitudinal changes in everyone must be achieved

(Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 126).

The following are recommendations that may be used to help support the improvement of recruitment and hiring practices of women and people of color in non-traditional systems where women and people of color are not the majority to administrative leadership positions.

1. Provide mentoring opportunities for women and people of color, showing them the ropes and methods which lead to promotions and hiring as educational leaders and administrators;
2. Hire more women and people of color as instructors in education, business and teaching positions, where they can contribute information about the true world that women and people of color must face. They should assist in helping the majority understand why it is important to build a pluralist society within the educational system where they work;
3. Boards members should become more reliant on their own hiring judgments rather than letting the headhunters provide the final candidates list;
4. Provide women and people of color the where-with-all to face and make a stand in an educational system where their leadership is underrated likely not understood;
5. Women and minorities who are successful as academic leaders, must advocate and train their own replacements who will, in turn, do the same;
6. Women and people of color must challenge and face the ugly behaviors of men and women who would keep democratic beliefs and values out of the school systems structure where it is so necessary.

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