



Education and the Reverse Gender Divide in the Gulf States: Embracing the Global, Ignoring the Local (International Perspectives in Educational Reform)

Natasha Ridge

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In this groundbreaking work, the author provides a close examination of the relationship between gender and education in the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) and reveals that women's participation and achievement in education is rapidly outpacing that of men's. Ridge refers to this situation as a "reverse gender divide" and examines the roots and causes of this imbalance, as well as implications for the future. Based on timely material that is largely unavailable to other scholars, the book further describes how GCC countries, in their desire to be perceived as modern nation states, have enacted and embraced education policies that leave no space for local policymakers to acknowledge boys' deficits and challenges. In addition to the important implications for educational policy and practice, the author also explores wider social and political issues, such as the impact on the workforce and future sustainable development in the region.

"This book offers a refreshing perspective on education in the Gulf States. Reframing the conversation about gender equity in education, Natasha Ridge studies how teachers and schools contribute to the growing educational marginalization of young boys in the Middle East. This book should be required reading for anyone interested in the region and in deeply understanding the centrality of gender equity as a goal of modern education."

—**Fernando M. Reimers**, Ford Foundation Professor of International Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education

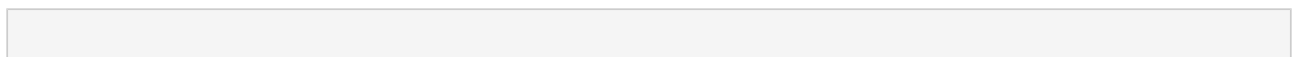
"Focusing on the resource-rich monarchy states of the Arabian Gulf, Natasha Ridge makes a compelling and nuanced case that the international discourse on gender and education has overlooked the growing academic marginalization of boys. Analyzing relevant political, economic, and social factors, she provides a critically important study that dispels myths, examines the impacts of gender-related educational disparity, and offers thought-provoking suggestions relevant in the Gulf countries and beyond."

—**Ann Austin**, professor, Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education, Michigan State University

"This volume provides a well-researched and insightful examination of gender differences in school achievement and retention in the Gulf States. It makes a timely and important contribution as it debunks widely held misconceptions and adds nuance to our understanding of the dynamics of education and employment in the region. This volume is a 'must-read' both for those concerned with gender issues in education and those interested in the social and economic development of the Middle East."

—**David W. Chapman**, professor, University of Minnesota

Natasha Ridge is the executive director of the Sheikh Saud Bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research based in Ras Al Khaimah (RAK), UAE. She has also been an educational consultant for the World Bank, UNICEF, and USAID in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.



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