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Leadership Practices of Black Male Leaders in the Nation of Islam: A Qualitative Descriptive Study

Abstract

The leadership field is evolving beyond a focus on one central leader to include leadership as the capability of the collective to change reality. The process of building Black male leadership is besieged by hurdles with little scholarly attention to the leadership development of Black males. The Nation of Islam (NOI) has exhibited success in developing Black male leaders. This qualitative descriptive study explores the leadership practices of five NOI leaders of Muhammad Mosques in cities within the northeastern United States. Using a purposive sampling methodology, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews, which were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed. The findings revealed four major categories, including (a) de/reconstructing knowledge, (b) launching pad for leadership, (c) labor of love, and (d) men-touring. By identifying and analyzing the meaning, nature, successes, and challenges associated with male leadership in the Nation of Islam, leadership development practitioners, educators, political leaders, community leaders, and social workers who assist Black males would benefit from knowing practices that may be transferable to Black male leadership outside of the Nation of Islam. In addition, this study lifts the voices of two underrepresented groups (Black males and members in the Nation of Islam), which helps to address the social justice issue of the contribution of these groups being ignored and marginalized/otherized.

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Leadership Practices of Black Male Leaders in the Nation of Islam:

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By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by

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Loretta Quigley, Ed.D.

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education

St. John Fisher College

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Dedication

“Had it been a near gain and a short journey, they would certainly have followed thee, but the hard journey was too long for them. And they will swear by Allah: If we had been able, we would have gone forth with you. They cause their own souls to perish; and Allah knows that they are liars.” Holy Quran 9:42, Maulana Muhammad Ali translation

In the name of Allah (God), the beneficent, the merciful. This dissertation is dedicated to those who have followed and assisted me on this hard journey: To Master Fard Muhammad, the Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad, and the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, my spiritual leaders and mentors for over three decades, who are excellent examples of free, independent, Black leaders. To the followers of these great men, in Syracuse, the Eastern Region, nationally, and internationally for your sacrifice and upon whose shoulders I stand.

To my wife, Sharon, my ride and die. To our two children, Marquith and Shadiyah, and to my guardian angel/mother, Donnie L. Herring. To my father, Laymon Herring (rest in peace/r.i.p.). To my maternal grandmother, Estelle Miller (r.i.p.), her sister, Jeanette Mitchell (r.i.p.), my aunts, uncles, and cousins. To my siblings, Linda, Jeremiah (r.i.p.), Ernestine, Keith, Floretta (r.i.p.), Phyllis, James, Sean, and Scott, and their children; may you inspire in your children a love of self, a love of education, and a passion to continue our legacy as advocates for truth and justice for generations to come.

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For everything good in this dissertation, all praise is due to Allah! All errors are mine alone.

Biographical Sketch

Mark D. Muhammad is currently an associate professor in the Department of English/Integrated Learning Strategies/Communication Studies at Onondaga Community College. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Cornell University's renowned The New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations in 1987 and a Master of Arts degree in Speech Communication from Syracuse University in 1999. He received an Associate of Applied Science degree in Business Technology from Onondaga Community College in 2006.

Mr. Muhammad is also a part-time instructor in Syracuse University's College of Arts and Sciences, where he teaches a Renee Crown University Honors Program seminar entitled, *Leadership: Prisms, Principles, and Practices*. In addition, he has served on the Syracuse City School District's Board of Education since 2015. Mr. Muhammad began his doctoral studies in the Ed.D Program in Executive Leadership at St. John Fisher College in May of 2016. He pursued his research on Black male leadership practices in the Nation of Islam under the guidance of Dr. C. Michael Robinson and Dr. Loretta Quigley and received his Ed.D degree in 2019.

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Abstract

The leadership field is evolving beyond a focus on one central leader to include leadership as the capability of the collective to change reality. The process of building Black male leadership is besieged by hurdles with little scholarly attention to the leadership development of Black males. The Nation of Islam (NOI) has exhibited success in developing Black male leaders. This qualitative descriptive study explores the leadership practices of five NOI leaders of Muhammad Mosques in cities within the northeastern United States. Using a purposive sampling methodology, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews, which were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed. The findings revealed four major categories, including (a) de/reconstructing knowledge, (b) launching pad for leadership, (c) labor of love, and (d) men-touring.

By identifying and analyzing the meaning, nature, successes, and challenges associated with male leadership in the Nation of Islam, leadership development practitioners, educators, political leaders, community leaders, and social workers who assist Black males would benefit from knowing practices that may be transferable to Black male leadership outside of the Nation of Islam. In addition, this study lifts the voice of two underrepresented groups (Black males and members in the Nation of Islam), which helps to address the social justice issue of the contribution of these groups being ignored and marginalized/otherized.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Leadership is getting more attention now than it has in the past 100 years (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009) and continues to be important in America in uncertain political and economic times (Keating & Gasteyer, 2012). Despite the volumes of literature published and the training dollars allocated, a definitive definition of leadership remains elusive (Bass, 1985). The term leadership is defined in a myriad of ways in academic, political, and social settings. It has been defined as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2016, p.16). Popper and Lipshitz (1993) asserted that leadership requires using non-coercive means to motivate people to act. Adizes (1988) contended that leadership entails motivating people not by a formal position or professional authority, but rather by personality and behavior. Reddy and Srinivasan (2015) defined leadership as a process of influence, that can happen at any level of an organization. In addition, Reddy posited that all leadership is about self-leadership. Each person must learn to manage himself and improve at the level of thinking, feeling, and doing. If one can change one’s self at these deeper levels, then he will be effective as a leader (Reddy and Srinivasan, 2015). Still, the focus on leader development is about strengthening individual capacity to influence others.

Although leadership is still commonly viewed in terms of the influential action of one person on another, or a group of people, Avolio et al. (2009) noted the field of leadership has been evolving beyond a focus on one central leader. Reddy and Srinivasan

(2015) made the distinction between leader influence and the collective influence of leaders; particularly in the organizational context. While no individual “on a leadership team has the capacity to make change happen alone, collectively these leaders have the capability needed to make transformative change” (Reddy and Srinivasan, 2015, p. 49). Thus, leadership is also about the capability of the collective to change reality.

Black leadership has been forged in America in the crucible of oppressive forces, namely physical bondage, miseducation, Jim Crow laws, social segregation, second-class citizenship, poverty, and the abuse of authority by police (Drakeford, 2016). One context for Black leadership continues to be religious institutions and bodies. The Black church was the foundation that upheld the Black community during its journey through slavery and post-emancipation segregation to the 21st century in the Americas. The church helped Black people to “meet the challenges that they faced as oppressed and dispossessed people . . . during a time when they were not respected [nor] treated as humans in the larger society” (Denard, 1998, p. 82). It was in the church that Black people sought solace and asylum. The Black preacher inspired, uplifted, and delivered hope through his exegesis of the word of God. In addition, it was in the church where Black people had the opportunity to exercise a degree of authority and leadership as deacons, stewards, and trustees. Since there are diverse sites of oppression, resistance, and activism in the Black community, it would be more inclusive to talk of the Black church tradition in terms of the Black religious or faith tradition (Dyson, 1998). Islam is a lesser-known part of the Black faith tradition.

The presence of Islam among Black people in America can be traced prior to the enslavement of Africans and the Transatlantic Slave Trade: “the areas in West Africa that

were raped for slaves were in fact predominantly Muslim” (McCloud, 1995, p. 1).

McCloud (1995) discussed many of the African American Islamic communities that were formed between 1900 to the mid-1990s. Approximately one million African Americans converted to the religion of Islam in the late 20th century. Walker (1998) referred to the growth of ‘Black Islam’ during this period as “the greatest mass movement ever mounted by African Americans” (p. 369). Estimates just after the turn of the twenty-first century placed the number of Muslims in America at approximately six million, of which approximately 42%, or more than 2.5 million, were Black Americans. However, Allen (1996) credited most of the influence for the phenomenal growth of Islam in the last two decades of the twentieth century to the Nation of Islam (NOI, also referred to as the Nation), which he described as an example of a “religious-oriented nationalist movement” (p. 2). Since its founding in the 1930s, the NOI has been characterized as many different things, to include: cult, separatist group, millenarian movement, Black supremacist organization (Lee, 1996; Saeed, 2002; Starrett, 2011). However, Curtis (2006) argued that the NOI is, and should be considered, a religious organization.

As with the Black church, the Nation of Islam provides training and opportunities for Black people to be leaders. Its mission is to “teach the downtrodden and defenseless Black people a thorough knowledge of God and themselves, and to put them on the road to self-independence with a superior culture and higher civilization than they had previously experienced” under White domination in American society (Muhammad, 1996, Nation of Islam in America, para. 1). For Black people to lead themselves as an independent nation, the entire family must be involved in the development process – men, women, and children. Each group is taught and trained separately: the men are

taught in Fruit of Islam (FOI) class; the women are taught in Muslim Girls Training and General Civilization Class (MGT & GCC); and the children, starting in pre-K, are taught in the Muhammad University of Islam. Malcolm X claimed it was neither slavery nor lynching that was the worst crime against the Black man, but that America taught him “to wear a mask of self-hate and self-doubt” (Terry, 1996, p. 21). Elijah Muhammad asserted that if Black people were taught a thorough knowledge of themselves, a love for themselves, and a belief in themselves, they could accomplish what they will as a people, in a nation of their own. Muhammad worked for more than 44 years to reform Black people in America and develop their communities so that they can learn to do for themselves (Hakim, 1993). Muhammad taught Black people that they did not have to depend on the beneficence or leadership of their former slave owners in order to enjoy freedom, justice, and equality. Separation was an intentional strategy for Black survival.

West (1993) was also concerned about Black survival. He articulated the problem of survival as, "the major enemy of Black survival in America has been and is, neither oppression nor exploitation, but rather the nihilistic threat—that is, loss of hope and absence of meaning" (p. 15). This nihilism is about the psychological depression, personal worthlessness, and social despair that Black Americans feel. It is “the lived experience of coping with a life of horrifying meaninglessness, hopelessness, and most importantly [*sic*], lovelessness” (p. 14).

West (1993) offered three objectives for a solution. First, there needs to be new models of collective Black leadership that promote “a politics of conversion” or “a chance for people to believe that there is hope for the future and a meaning to struggle” (p. 18). At the core of a politics of conversion is a universal love ethic. Collective Black

leadership comes from the institutions in civil society that promote self-worth and self-affirmation. Collective Black leadership also consists of followers and leaders from those various institutions and organizations working together to make an impact on the nihilistic threat. Second, the collective Black leadership must emerge from grassroots democratic organizations, as well as be loved and respected by, and accountable to, these grassroots organizations. Finally, advocates of a politics of conversion must keep in mind the “structural conditions that shape the sufferings and lives of people” (p. 19) while openly confronting the self-destructive and inhumane actions of Black people, which are situated within inhumane circumstances.

Under the current leadership of Minister Louis Farrakhan, the National Representative of Elijah Muhammad and convener of the historic Million Man March, the Nation of Islam strives to demonstrate in its work the collective Black leadership that West advanced. With Farrakhan’s establishment of The National Council of Laborers (Nation of Islam, 1998), the Nation of Islam continues to move toward what Marable (1998) described as a need in Black American leadership, group-centered leaders and grassroots empowerment. Black leaders in the Nation of Islam are focused, not on self, but on the larger group; they look beyond I to us and from me to we (Farrakhan, 2011). In addition, the Nation of Islam seeks to empower people at all levels of the organization and society. Maton (2008) defined empowerment:

A group-based, participatory, developmental process through which marginalized or oppressed individuals and groups gain greater control over their lives and environment, acquire valued resources and basic rights, and achieve important life goals and reduced societal marginalization (p. 5).

The Nation of Islam (NOI), through the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, empowered Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, and many young people. More than 50 years after the untimely death of Malcolm X, the Nation of Islam continues to be relevant under the leadership of Louis Farrakhan. Muwakkil (2015) stated that the NOI is “the only group seen to be utterly devoted to Black America’s survival” (p. 17). This, he concluded, is why the Nation of Islam and, by extension, Louis Farrakhan, still matter. On October 16, 1995, over 1 million Black men converged in Washington, DC for the Million Man March; it was billed as a Day of Atonement, Reconciliation, and Responsibility. Muwakkil (2015) acknowledged, it would be difficult to name a current Black leader, other than Farrakhan, capable of convening these massive gatherings. Sullivan (1997) claimed that the success of the event demonstrates that its organizers understand the social capital that exists in urban Black communities.

Despite its success, the Nation of Islam remains understudied. Akom (2003) claimed that most studies on the NOI, with a few notable exceptions, have been based mainly on secondary sources. He blamed this partly on the NOI’s unwillingness to be the object of inquiry. Yet, Farrakhan (1993) declared otherwise: “We believe that it is time for America to closely examine the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, his message and the people who have come to follow his teachings” (p. v). Farrakhan proclaimed the NOI is a community that is “relatively free” from the problems plaguing the larger Black community and the broader society, i.e., drug addiction and crime, and therefore, has a contribution to make in improving America. Lee (2010) noted that although McCloud (1995) and Turner (1997) have written about “African American Islam,” there are not many studies about Islam within contemporary African American communities. Akom

(2007) added that the few studies on the NOI “suggest the power of the Black Muslim community to build social assets in impoverished and under-resourced communities.” One of the assets that the NOI has been successful in building are Black men and their positions as leaders in their families, communities, work environments, houses of worship, and the broader society.

Sullivan (1997) stated that it is generally agreed that the abundance of social capital has a strong impact on the civic health of a community. She defined social capital as “both the informal and formal networks and associations of ordinary citizens who have the capacity to facilitate, coordinate, and cooperate in efforts that benefit the entire community.” In a speech to a non-NOI audience entitled *Challenging the Genius in Us All*, Farrakhan (2005) stated that the NOI is trying to create a movement to address the critical needs of the Black community by connecting the learned Black people with the masses, so “we can solve the many problems of our people that can never be solved by just one organization, or one leader.” Thus, in its leadership work, the Nation of Islam stresses the importance of believing in one’s own abilities, gifts, talents, and value, recognizing these characteristics in others, and respecting what each person brings to the table. However, these individual beliefs and actions are intricately connected to being agents of change (leaders) for the betterment of the greater Black community and broader society. This connection between the individual leader and the greater leadership collective provides the meaning, hope, and love that West (1993) said is missing from the lived experience of Black people.

The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam from the perspective of five of its contemporary leaders and to

uncover male leadership practices that may be transferable to successive generations of Black male leadership in/outside of the Nation of Islam.

Problem Statement

The process of building male leadership in the Black community is besieged by a wide variety of social (Cross & Slater, 2000), criminal justice (Roberts 2004), political (Cohen & Dawson, 1993; Marable, 2000; Roberts, 2004), and economic (Browne & Misra, 2003; Hill, 2000) hurdles. Considering these hurdles, Boyd (2007) maintained that “Black leadership is always key to our predicament” (p. 8). Over the past three decades, scholarship has focused on Black liberation as a movement (Isaacs, 2008), the historical marginalization of the Black community (Anderson, 1999), civil rights (Isaacs, 2008), the Black family (Staples, 1985), and African American or Black Studies broadly (Rojas, 2006). However, little attention has been given to leadership development of African American males, as it relates to the hurdles mentioned above (Boyd, 2007). Current approaches to the disparities outlined above have been heavily focused on education and criminal justice interventions, with little abatement of the disproportionality that Black males experience in life outcomes (Eckholm, 2006).

The Nation of Islam (NOI) has evidenced a history of transforming people who join the organization (Akom, 2003; X & Haley, 1965). Three of the most notable figures include, Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, and Louis Farrakhan; who are considered exceptional, internationally recognized, African American leaders (Farrakhan, 1999; Gennari, 1999; Kelley, 1999). Although their backgrounds are very different (one an ex-convict, another a professional athlete, and the third a professional musician and college drop-out), each joined the Nation of Islam in their twenties and was transformed into a

strong leader. While internal fortitude was a necessary component of the successful transformation of these individuals, the Nation of Islam played a key role in their transformation and the impact that they had on their respective communities (Farrakhan, 1999; Gennari, 1999; Kelley, 1999; X & Haley, 1965). Clegg (1997) stated that the male members of the Nation of Islam are called the Fruit of Islam (FOI). While several authors have described the Fruit of Islam as the security or military arm of the Nation of Islam, Elijah Muhammad (Hakim, 1993) stated the mental and physical training of the FOI is for discipline, health, and personal self-defense more than anything else. Elijah Muhammad (1965) elaborated:

The Fruit of Islam means the first converts to Islam here in America and the first people to be cleaned and made fit to be called Muslims . . . [They] must put into practice the principles of Islam and serve as an example for others . . . They are to clean up a people who are not clean, morally as well as spiritually, in America and make them fit to become good members of the society. (p. 321)

As individuals in the Nation of Islam are being transformed, which is an ongoing process, they are expected to participate in the effort of helping others transform all aspects of their lives. Personal-/self-improvement is the basis for collective/community development (Farrakhan, 1986). Thus, leader development (individual) is subsequently tied to leadership development (collective). Moreover, as Akom (2007) explained, the Nation of Islam has played a leadership role in improving Black communities through its members' involvement in extra-religious civic, economic, and political activities (Lee, 1996; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Except for the education field, there is a dearth of research on Black males in the leadership literature. Additionally, there is less research

on the leadership work embedded in the Nation of Islam. Gibson (2016) stated that there is virtually no research from scholars that have used information from the contemporary members of the NOI.

Eckholm (2006) noted the disconnection of Black males from mainstream society is bad and getting worse, more than employment and education statistics show; leadership opportunities, skill development, and sustainable financial practices of Black males are minimal and ineffective. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam from the perspective of five of its contemporary leaders and to uncover leadership practices that may be transferable to successive generations of Black male leadership in/outside of the Nation of Islam.

Theoretical Rationale

This research of leaders in the NOI was guided by transformative leadership theory (Shields, 2010b). There is a major divergence between transformational and transformative leadership theories. Transformational leadership theory focuses primarily on what happens within an organization. However, Shields (2010b) defined transformative leadership theory as leadership grounded in an activist agenda, one that combines activism with a rights-based concept that every individual is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. The theory prioritizes social justice and ethical treatment of all individuals, such that these rights are then elevated to a societal level. Central to the theory is the need to address issues of power and privilege. Shields (2014) stated that the starting point for transformative leadership theory is “an examination of the wider society and the material realities (including disparities and inequities)” that impede individuals’

ability to succeed within the organization (family, community, or nation) and on the organization's (family, community, or nation's) ability to attain its goals.

Shields' transformative theory noted the essential work of the leader in creating communities in which social, political, and cultural capital is enhanced. Although the theory has been applied primarily within educational contexts, its premises are applicable to leaders in other contexts, such as in the NOI and/or the Black community generally. Transformative leadership begins with a drastic rethinking of the who, what, where, when, and how of leadership (Montuori & Fahim, 2010).

It is widely reported that Frederick Douglass noted "it is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men" (Kristof, 2012). The NOI has taken on the difficult task of repairing and developing the men (and women) who have been broken by the heavy weight of 400+ years of chattel slavery, Jim Crow, segregation; disillusioned by the unrealized hope of equality through integration and the unfulfilled promises of American Democracy (Akom, 2003; Akom, 2007; Lomax, 1963). In addition, the NOI has accepted the challenge to rebuild the wasted cities by making a clarion call to participate in leadership all who sit undeveloped and underutilized to expend human capital, cultivate social capital, and make their own neighborhood a decent place to live (Akom, 2007).

The practice of transformative leadership can be a tool for emancipation, a lever for justice, an instrument of organizational improvement, and most importantly, the impetus for true societal transformation (Shields, 2010b). Transformative leadership theory served as a conceptual lens through which this study's data was viewed. Shields developed eight tenets of transformative leadership, which form the foundation and social

justice orientation of leadership. The tenets are (a) the mandate to effect deep and equitable change; (b) the need to deconstruct knowledge frameworks that perpetuate inequity and injustice and to reconstruct them; (c) a focus on emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice; (d) the need to address the inequitable distribution of power; (e) an emphasis on both private and public (individual and collective) good; (f) an emphasis on interdependence, interconnectedness, and global awareness; (g) the necessity of balancing critique with promise; and (h) the call to exhibit moral courage (Shields, 2011, 2013, 2014). Tenets two, three, four, five, and eight were particularly useful in informing this research.

Statement of Purpose and Potential Significance

The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam from the perspective of five of its contemporary leaders and to uncover leadership practices that might be transferable to successive generations of Black male leadership in/outside of the Nation of Islam.

Developing male leaders in the Black community is impeded by a disproportionately high occurrence of social, economic, criminal justice, educational, political, and even health hurdles. Limited attention has been given to the leadership development of Black male leaders as a counter to the observable disproportionate outcomes they face. For over 80 years the Nation of Islam has been a driving force for equality, civil rights, community empowerment, and self-sufficiency (Akom, 2007; Pitre, 2008) and is dedicated to empowering Black people to overcome the varied issues present in their communities, work environments, houses of worship, and the broader

society. Moreover, the Nation of Islam has exhibited success in developing Black male leaders.

Lee (2010) noted “Understanding the experiences and perspectives of African American Muslims and the roles played by mosques in Black communities has the potential to tell us much about how people in today’s American inner city respond to the myriad everyday challenges they face” (p. 161). By identifying and analyzing the meaning, nature, successes, and challenges associated with male leadership in the Nation of Islam, leadership development practitioners, educators, political leaders, community leaders, and social workers who assist Black males would benefit from knowing practices that may be transferable to Black male leadership outside of the Nation of Islam.

McCloud (2007) stated there is an emerging intellectual tradition in African American Islam that seeks to transform African American Muslim communities and the Muslim world. That intellectual tradition is impacting the broader communities in which they’re situated as well. This study adds to the pool of research knowledge available on the topic of leadership generally and adds to the understanding of the contemporary practices of leaders in the Nation of Islam.

The experiences of African American Muslims and their intellectual contributions have been invisible in most scholarly texts (McCloud, 2007). African American Muslim intellectuals aim to inform others about both the African American Muslim communities and the Muslim “world on its own terms and with its own voice” (McCloud, 2007, p. 181). This study adds to that effort. In doing so, it lifts the voice of two underrepresented groups (Black males and members in the Nation of Islam), which helps to address the

social justice issue of the contribution of these groups being ignored and marginalized/otherized.

Research Questions

To better understand the lived experience of the participants, the following questions drove this study:

1. From the perspective of five contemporary leaders in the Nation of Islam, what are the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam?
2. What male leadership practices in the Nation of Islam may be transferrable to successive generations of Black male leadership in/outside the Nation of Islam?

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

African (n) — 1. Native of Africa. 2. Person of African descent. (adj.) Of Africa.

(Muhammad and Muhammad, 2009, p. 18)

Black/African American (n) — A member of a dark-skinned people, especially one of Aboriginal ancestry. (adj) — 1. Of the very darkest color; the opposite of white; original. 2. Of any human group having dark-colored skin, esp. of aboriginal ancestry.

(Muhammad and Muhammad, 2009, p. 25)

Captain (n) — A person in command over a group, organization, etc.; leader.

(Muhammad and Muhammad, 2009, p. 30)

Community (n) — A group of people living in the same place or having characteristics, attitudes, interests, and goals in common.

Enacting social justice — Centers on ideas of disrupting and subverting arrangements that promote marginalization and exclusion through advocacy, leadership practice, and vision.

Fruit of Islam (n) — The name given to the military training of men who belong to Islam in North America. (Nation of Islam, 1995, p. 14)

Islam (n) — The true nature of Allah (God) that He shares with the Original Man, which is the peace through total submission to Allah's will. Although Islam has been offered to man in the form of religion, it is actually the perfect mathematical nature of Allah that he intends for humanity to re-attain through practice and submission. (Muhammad and Muhammad, 2009, p. 101)

Minister (n) — 1. A member of the clergy. 2. A person who attends to the needs of others, especially in religious matters. 3. A person who acts as an agent or servant of a person or thing. (Muhammad and Muhammad, 2009, p. 122)

Nation (n) — 1. An aggregation of people or peoples of one or more cultures, races, etc., organized into a single state. 2. A community of persons not constituting a state but bound by a common descent, language, history, etc. (Muhammad and Muhammad, 2009, p. 128)

Resistance (n) — The attempt to prevent something by action or argument.

Self (n) — 1. The distinct individuality or identity of a person or thing. 2. A person's make-up or personal characteristics. 3. One's own welfare or interests. 4. An individual's consciousness of his own identity or being. 5. That which is essential to an individual, esp. the mind or soul in Cartesian metaphysics; the ego. (Muhammad and Muhammad, 2009, p. 173)

Temple/mosque (n) — 1. A building or place dedicated to the worship of a deity or deities. 2. Any place or object regarded as a shrine where God makes himself present. 3. A building regarded as the focus of activities, interest, or practice. (Muhammad and Muhammad, 2009, p. 198)

Chapter Summary

The format of this paper has been developed in order to best provide context and detail about the practices of Black male leadership in the Nation of Islam. Chapter 1 included the problem statement, a description of the theoretical rationale, the statement of purpose and potential significance of the study, the research questions, and a list of key terms. Chapter 2 summarizes the relevant literature pertaining to the state of Black males in America, Black male leadership in America, Black male leadership in the Nation of Islam, and transformative leadership theory. Chapter 3 describes the research design, including a description of the methodology, research context, research participants, data collection instruments, and data analysis instruments used in this study. Chapter 4 discusses the findings of the study in detail. Chapter 5 discusses the implications of the study, including recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

Little attention has been given to the leadership development of African American males as a counter to the observable social, educational, economic outcomes, and correlated deficit of political capital they face locally, as well as nationally (Boyd, 2007). The approaches to these disparities have been heavily focused on education and criminal justice interventions with little abatement of the disproportionality that Black males experience in life outcomes (Eckholm, 2006). The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam from the perspective of five of its contemporary leaders and to uncover male leadership practices that may be transferable to successive generations of Black male leadership in/outside of the Nation of Islam. A review of literature was completed to provide an understanding of the research topic and research problem. An analysis and synthesis of the research is provided below as the foundation for understanding the need for further research on the problem.

Review of Literature

The literature review is organized into four sections. The first section begins with a discussion of the state of Black males in America and the hurdles they encounter and overcome. The second section discusses the literature on Black male leadership and effective leadership approaches in a variety of contexts. The third section briefly

discusses the literature on the Nation of Islam's work in developing community leaders. The final section concludes with a discussion on transformative leadership theory.

State of Black males in America. In order to situate and understand the dimensions of outcome disparity for African American males and related impacts, this section examines scholarly works related to social, educational, economic outcomes, and a correlated deficit of political capital.

Social. In the social domain, Hurt (2013) highlighted that in looking at family status and life expectancy as indicators of well-being, the percentages of Black men who are married and who have never been married are almost the exact opposite of those percentages for all men in America. Research revealed that levels of supervision of children are lower in single-parent households (Sampson, 1987). For both Blacks and Whites, being raised in a single-parent home is the key determinant of increased risk of juvenile delinquency and participation in violent crime (Sampson, 1987). Moreover, compared with children raised by two parents, those raised by single parents are more likely to grow up poor, drop out of high school, and be idle during their late teens and less likely to enroll in college (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994).

Education. In the education domain, the biggest disparity in educational achievement between Black men and all men in America is with those who have a bachelor's degree. Only 17% of Black men have a bachelor's degree compared to 30% of all men. The second largest disparity is the number of Black men who finished high school but did not pursue higher education at 35% compared to 28% of all men (American Community Survey 2013).

Davis (2003) examined the diverse and lifelong impacts of educational underachievement and asserted that the single most important challenge in education is the increasing disparity in the educational achievement of African American males relative to their peers and that the implications for achievement differentials are far-reaching. Davis stated that the potential loss of resources across intellectual, cultural, and economic spheres, resulting from lower achievement, reduces the capacity of African American males to be productive, integral, and contributing members of their communities.

McLoyd and Lozoff (2001) indicated that through the 1980s and 90s, increases in African American male violence coincided with increases in unemployment, the percentage of young African American male high school dropouts with no reported earnings, the selling and use of crack cocaine, and declines in the real earnings of young Black males. All of this occurred in areas of concentrated poverty that were created by larger societal policies, while federal drug policy shifted and federal spending on drug treatment declined (McLoyd & Lozoff, 2001; Williams & Collins, 2001). Furthermore, as Kennedy (2001) noted, aggressive and discriminatory mandatory sentencing of African American males for drug crimes removes a high proportion of them from the community, which keeps them from providing economically for their families and children and socially supporting them. Additionally, chances for future employment are reduced by a criminal record.

Economic. The economic domain looks specifically at employment and earnings. The Center for Economic and Policy Research reported that African American males ages 16 to 64 had a lower participation rate in the labor force at 67%, compared to all males at 80% (as cited in “Black Male Statistics,” 2013). Moreover, the analysis

highlighted that 37% of African American males who worked full time all year in 2013 had median earnings of \$37,290 in 2013 compared to \$48,099 for all men. Additionally, a larger percentage of Black males 16 to 64 were unemployed at 11.2% compared to all men at 7.3% and a larger percentage were living below the poverty level at 26% compared to all men at 15% (“Black Male Statistics,” 2013). The President’s Initiative on Race (1998) found that since the late 1940s, the unemployment rate has been twice as high for Black men as for their White counterparts. Additionally, the unemployment rate for African Americans and Hispanics tends to rise more during economic recessions (President’s Initiative on Race, 1998). For the last 50 years, labor force participation rates (employed or actively seeking work) declined in general for men and decidedly for Black men (President’s Initiative on Race, 1998). Among men aged 16 to 24, African Americans are 2.4 times as likely, and Hispanics are 1.8 times as likely, as Whites to be neither employed nor in school (President’s Initiative on Race, 1998). Research from the Bureau of Census revealed that elevated rates of stress, illness, disability, and mortality are associated with unemployment and job insecurity (Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2001).

Autor (2010) stated that limited higher education investment, by any population, can have a real economic impact. However, highlighting an additionally exacerbating factor, he found that the rising demand for, and lagging supply of, highly educated workers contributes to higher levels of inequality in earnings.

Research revealed that the economic marginalization of African American males (high unemployment and low wage rates) is the central determinant of the high rates of female-headed households among African Americans (Bishop, 1980; Sampson, 1987;

Testa, Astone, Krogh, & Neckerman, 1993; Wilson & Neckerman, 1986). In 1960, two thirds of African American children were living with both parents, compared with 38% in 1999 (Tucker, 2000). In contrast, 82% of Asian children, 78% of non-Hispanic White children, 63% of American-born Hispanic children, 73% of foreign-born Hispanic children, and 55% of American Indian children lived with both parents in 1999 (Farley, 2000). Male labor market earnings are the largest source of household income in the United States (President's Initiative on Race, 1998). Thus, the combination of low earnings for African American males with low pay for African American women leads to high rates of poverty for African American children.

Political. Finally, the political domain considers barriers to political participation. Criminal justice statistics found that though people of color make up about 30% of the United States' population, they account for 60% of those imprisoned (Center of American Progress, 2012). Further analysis by americanprogress.org reported that the prison population grew by 700% from 1970 to 2005, which disproportionately impacts men of color (Kerby, 2012). The Pew Center on the States (2008) reported that 1 in every 15 African American men is incarcerated. The U.S. Department of Justice reported that the lifetime chances of a person going to prison are higher for Blacks (16.2%) than for Whites (2.5%) (Bonczar & Beck, 1997). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, one in three Black men can expect to go to prison in their lifetime (Lyons & Pettit, 2011). Generally, an estimated 6.1 million Americans are denied the right to vote based on a past felony conviction. Felony disenfranchisement is exaggerated by racial disparities in the criminal-justice system, ultimately denying 13% of African American men the right to vote (Uggen, Larson, & Shannon, 2016).

Cohen and Dawson (1993) explored whether neighborhoods that seem to indicate significant social isolation also foster political isolation. They examined the effects of neighborhood poverty on African American public opinion and political participation. The authors concluded that neighborhood poverty does affect African American politics and has consequences for the theory and practice of American democracy.

Each of these outcome disparities have attracted large amounts of study and policy intervention individually. However, by all accounts the dial has not moved sufficiently in the direction of improved outcomes for African American males. In fact, evidence indicates that in the domains already identified, life outcomes for African American males continue to be a highly visible social justice issue with few strategies coordinated across issue-areas and limited success (Browne & Misra, 2003; Cohen & Dawson, 1993; Cross & Slater, 2000; Hill 2000; Marable, 2000; Roberts, 2004). Thus, racial differences in crime, unemployment, and single-parent households are not driven by differences in family values, but by lifelong interactions of coping responses with restricted access to good neighborhoods, schools, and employment opportunities (Williams, 2008).

Black male leadership in America. Even after the historic election of Barack Obama, and two terms occupying the highest elected leadership position in the United States, the lived experience of many Black men remains unchanged and challenging. Something is necessary to assist them in overcoming the obstacles that they continue to face in occupying leadership positions.

Goss (2015) and Pollard (2016) found that cultural heritage and race can influence an individual and their organization's work in a positive way. Allen & Bagozzi (2012),

who interviewed 551 African Americans in Detroit, showed how an individual's sense of self can positively affect several important social and political orientations. Conversely, through information collected from searches of NFL team and news media guides and other archival sources, and cross-checked with coaching rosters, Braddock, Smith, and Dawkins (2012) discovered that race had a significant direct negative effect on the assigning, appointing, and hiring of Blacks to certain high-level positions in the NFL.

Flores and Matkin (2014) suggested that one of the ways that racial and ethnic minority leaders can encounter and overcome barriers is to know and understand how other, similar leaders have done it. Through interviews with three executive leaders of cultural community centers, Flores and Matkin observed six themes that emerged to help these leaders to persist through the difficulties that they faced: finding inspiration, developing thick skin, stereotypes, damage from within, taking your own path, and hope. From these findings, they developed three recommendations to assist others. It is important for leaders to have mentors to help steer them through the potential pitfalls of leading a not-for-profit organization. In addition, it is vital that minority leaders reach out to network with leaders of the dominant culture so that they will be accepted as peers. Lastly, since problems can arise within one's own community, recognizing bias from within is necessary.

Sutton and Terrell (1997), on the other hand, assessed African American men's perceptions of leadership and the availability of leadership opportunities at predominantly White campuses. They found that Black men feel a need for leadership development but feel unprepared to lead campus wide organizations. Consequently, they choose to have their leadership experiences within Black fraternities and minority support organizations.

Harper (2009) pointed out that there are Black males on campuses who are achievers and student leaders who thrive inside and outside the classroom. These leaders have developed strategies to navigate successfully through the system. However, Sutton and Terrell (1997) put the onus on the campus administration to reach out to the Black leaders to include them in the life of the broader campus, as well as providing greater fiscal and moral support for the activities sponsored by the Black organizations. This interaction will also promote positive communication and an appreciation for diverse styles of leadership.

Except for Allen & Bagozzi (2012) and Harper (2009), the sample sizes of most of these studies were small, which can be a limitation. Nevertheless, through extensive interviews, they gleaned rich information about the lived experiences of Black men and the leadership challenges they face in a variety of organizations. Armed with the themes that were discovered, additional quantitative studies may show how applicable these experiences are to Black men generally.

Leadership approaches. This section discusses leadership approaches and styles in a variety of contexts. Another challenge faced by Black leadership is determining which leadership approach is most effective in each context or with a population.

Several studies compared the empirical results from looking at the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational outcomes, while also looking at the relationship between transactional leadership and organizational outcomes (e.g., Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996; Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002; Fisher, 2013; Hargis, Watt, & Piotrowski, 2011; Komives, Mainella, Owen, Osteen, & Longersbeam, 2005; Rowold, 2006; and Rowold, 2008).

From these studies one can easily see the importance of leadership approaches or styles. This comparison of styles is supported in a meta-analysis by Lowe et al. (1996), where transactional leadership was found to be weak in predicting both subjective and objective indicators (e.g., followers' satisfaction and profit, respectively) of leaders' effectiveness across a range of organizational settings. In contrast, these relationships were strong for transformational leadership.

The positive impact of transformational leadership on many facets of performance and on followers' satisfaction augments the impact of transactional leadership on these criteria. Rowold (2008) stated, statistically, transformational leadership explains a unique variance for predicting outcome criteria beyond that of transactional leadership. This augmentation effect has been confirmed in various, for-profit settings and is the key component of the external validity of transformational leadership. Rowold, 2006 tested the augmentation effect by applying hierarchical regression analysis. First, he tested the impact of transactional and non-leadership scales on the dependent measure. Then he included the transformational leadership scales in the regression equation. The augmentation effect was confirmed because the transformational leadership scales explained the additional variance in the outcome measure. Confirmation of the augmentation effect could potentially help religious leaders to determine which leadership style they would prefer to use.

Several studies used the MLQ Form 5X to look at the impact of transformational leadership, enhanced by training, on follower development, including Carter (2009), Doherty & Danylchuk (1996), Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir (2002), Fisher, (2013), Groves and LaRocca (2011), and Rowold (2006). Fisher (2013) stated the MLQ5X is a

tool commonly used to examine leadership styles. It has been “included in over 75 studies, and its construct validity and reliability of the questionnaire were tested and confirmed by assessing 14 independent samples that included 3786 respondents” (p. 296; Lowe et al., 1996).

Other studies dealt with leadership approaches and styles differently. Pinnington (2011) examined leadership development in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors and assessed the extent that they constitute distinctive contexts for leadership approaches and practices. Megheirkouni (2016) sought to understand the nature of leadership development (LD) methods adopted by companies operating in Syria. Conger, Kanungo, and Menon (2000) hypothesized that followers of charismatic leaders could be distinguished by their greater reverence, trust, and satisfaction with their leader and by a heightened sense of collective identity, perceived group task performance, and feelings of empowerment. Groves and LaRocca (2011) examined specific ethical values as important antecedents to leadership style, which in turn impacts follower beliefs in the importance and value of corporate social responsibility.

There is a plethora of resources to draw on when attempting to determine the best leadership approaches for Black male community leaders. The Nation of Islam has been studied as a religious organization. There is a considerable amount of conceptual research on the organization, particularly Malcolm X, a well-known student of Elijah Muhammad. However, very little empirical research exists about its leadership practices. The next section briefly discusses the community impact of the Nation of Islam (NOI).

Black male leadership in the Nation of Islam. This section draws on a few of the empirical studies that have been conducted on the NOI. The Nation of Islam has

played a leadership role in improving Black communities through its members' involvement in extra-religious civic, economic, and political activities (Akom, 2007; Lee, 1996; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Akom (2007) incorporated a more dynamic conceptualization of cultural production into social (dis)organization theory by investigating the impact of religious culture on civic engagement. For more than 2 years, he conducted qualitative research in Bridgeview, a neighborhood in San Francisco. He found that the Nation of Islam often replaces important public institutions that normally should be responsible for providing social services in low-income communities. These services include police protection, community welfare, and education.

Lee (2010) explored the role that Islam plays in an inner-city neighborhood in the northeastern part of the United States. During 6 months of fieldwork in the mosque and surrounding community, she conversed with male and female leaders, as well as African American members of the organization to get their accounts of why they were drawn to Islam. She discovered that their reasons for turning to Islam are complex. However, they expressed how Islam offered them an opportunity for rebirth and provides them with solutions to their concerns about an array of social problems.

Akom (2003) conducted a 2-year ethnographic study of seven female high school students who were in the Nation of Islam. He demonstrated that involuntary minorities, in this case, Blacks, do not have to choose between performing well in school and maintaining their racial-ethnic identities. Through recorded interviews with students, teachers, school administrators, staff, and community members, he documented the transformation that these young girls went through after they became members of the Nation of Islam.

Theory – transformative leadership.

History. While transformational leadership and transformative leadership are very similar in name, the aim of both is obviously to change or modify something, they are quite different. Although the term transformational did not begin with James MacGregor Burns, Northouse (2016) stated that transformational leadership grew as an approach to leadership with Burns' book, *Leadership*. Burns (1978) attempted to go beyond looking at an individual leader's traits and characteristics. It is there that he discusses the concepts of transformational and transactional leadership.

Transactional leadership focuses on the exchanges that occur between leaders and their followers. The emphasis is on the means, that is, values, to achieve mutually beneficial goals. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, focuses on the organization with the goal being organizational change and effectiveness. By contrast, Shields (2010b) stated transformative leadership emphasizes deep and equitable change in social conditions with the goal being individual, organizational, and societal transformation. Weiner (2003) defined transformative leadership as "an exercise of power and authority that begins with questions of justice, democracy, and the dialectic between individual accountability and social responsibility" (p. 89).

Development. Shields explained that the theory of transformative leadership has evolved in ways that are congruent with the uses of transformational and transformative learning, and with Burns' ideas of social change, moral leadership, etc. However, in the mid-to-late 1980s, a divergence began to emerge in the writings of Aronowicz and Giroux (1985), Capper (1989), and Foster (1986). Although the terms were still being used interchangeably, during the 1990s the distinction was getting clearer. Transformational leadership referred primarily to the internal aspects of organizations

while transformative leadership theories also looked at the broader social and political domains.

Currently, scholars writing on the concept of transformative leadership continue to emphasize it as a theory of critique and possibility, as well as its individual and collective nature, which is demonstrated in Weiner's definition of transformative leadership as an exercise of power and authority that begins with questions of justice, democracy, and the dialectic between individual accountability and social responsibility. Many other scholars have discussed transformative educational leadership (Anderson, 2004; Dantley, 2003; Tillman, 2005).

By 2011, Shields had developed eight tenets of transformative leadership, which she credits Quantz, Rogers, and Dantley (1991) with outlining many of them. She explained the ways in which these tenets form the foundation and social justice orientation that can guide and ground an educator. The tenets are the mandate to effect deep and equitable change; the need to deconstruct knowledge frameworks that perpetuate inequity and injustice and to reconstruct them, a focus on emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice; the need to address the inequitable distribution of power; an emphasis on both private and public (individual and collective) good; an emphasis on interdependence, interconnectedness, and global awareness; the necessity of balancing critique with promise; and the call to exhibit moral courage (Shields, 2011, 2013, 2014).

The work of Astin and Astin (2000) also elucidates the researcher's interest in the topic of this paper, the Leadership Practices of Black Male Leaders in the Nation of Islam. In their writings, the authors associated societal change and transformative leadership, saying

We believe that the value ends of leadership should be to enhance equity, social justice, and the quality of life; to expand access and opportunity; to encourage respect for difference and diversity; to strengthen democracy, civic life, and civic responsibility; and to promote cultural enrichment, creative expression, intellectual honesty, the advancement of knowledge, and personal freedom coupled with responsibility (p. 11).

Application. In discussing the evolution of transformative leadership, Shields (2010) cited many scholars in other social sciences. For example, the theory informs the education of healthcare professionals, in human service organizations, and in nursing administration and healthcare. In addition, she cited several more scholars in the field of education who focus on concepts such as, transformative teaching, transformative curriculum, transformative material activity, and transformative learning. She credited much of the ideals in transformative theory to Paulo Freire’s work in education in Brazil.

In an edited work, Shields (2011) included a section with original research using the lens of transformative leadership. Some of the articles reanalyzed existing studies through that lens, too. Included in the volume were studies conducted throughout the world in various contexts.

Although the theory has been applied primarily within educational contexts, its premises are applicable to leaders in other contexts, such as in the NOI. The mission and work of the Nation of Islam speak to these very goals and ideals. The NOI’s “Muslim Program” – a statement of its philosophy that guides its work – included a 10-item list of What the Muslims Want:

1. We want freedom. We want a full and complete freedom.
2. We want justice. Equal justice under the law. We want justice applied equally to all, regardless of creed or class or color.
3. We want equality of opportunity. We want equal member in society with the best in civilized society” (Nation of Islam, 1998, p. 4).

In fact, it is this work that brings meaning to the lives of many of its members and gives them a purpose beyond themselves for which to strive.

Criticism. Shields (2010a) is aware that some believe that transformative leadership theory is too idealistic, too demanding, and too much responsibility to put on educators and educational leaders. Shields stated that while there is much conceptual work on transformative leadership theory, the only significant critique seems to be “the ‘lack’ of empirical evidence for transformative leadership” (C. M. Shields, personal communication, February 24, 2017). Especially in contrast to its sister theory, transformational leadership, there is still little empirical research.

Chapter Summary

There is a recognized need and effort for leadership development of males in the Black community. As the research shows the process of building effective male leadership in the Black community is besieged by a wide variety of hurdles. In the face of these challenges, there is a need for Black male leadership in all aspects of community life. A review of the literature provided empirical support that leadership development for Black males is recognized as important. However, little attention has been given to the leadership development of African American males as a counter to the observable social, educational, economic outcomes, and correlated deficit of political capital they face. The

approaches to these disparities have been heavily focused on education and criminal justice interventions with little abatement of the disproportionality that Black males experience in life outcomes (Eckholm, 2006). In addition, there is a dearth of research on the Nation of Islam that demonstrates its successful leadership practices. A synthesis of the research was provided as the foundation for understanding the need for further research. Chapter 3 describes the research design, including a description of the methodology, research context, research participants, data collection instruments, and data analysis instruments used in this study.

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

Developing male leaders in the Black Community is impeded by a disproportionately high occurrence of social (Cross & Slater 2000), economic (Browne & Misra 2003; Hill 2000), criminal justice (Roberts 2004), and political (Cohen & Dawson 1993; Marable 2000; Roberts 2004) hurdles. Limited attention has been given to the leadership development of Black male leaders as a counter to the observable disproportionate outcomes they face (Boyd, 2007; Eckholm, 2006). For over 80 years the Nation of Islam, as an organization dedicated to empowering Black people to overcome the varied issues present in their communities, work environments, houses of worship, and the broader society, has exhibited success in developing Black male leaders (Farrakhan, 1999; Gennari, 1999; Kelley, 1999; X and Haley, 1965). The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam and to uncover leadership practices that may be transferable to successive generations of Black male leadership. This study sought to answer the questions: From the perspective of five contemporary leaders in the Nation of Islam, what are the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam? What practices of male leadership in the Nation of Islam may be transferrable to successive generations of Black male leadership in/outside the Nation of Islam?

To approach these specific questions a qualitative descriptive research design was employed. Qualitative research is from a naturalistic paradigm where the research is

conducted in a natural setting and typically involves detailed and rich descriptions of human opinions, perceptions or behaviors (Creswell, 2007). As an approach, it can be exploratory and useful when the research has not been addressed with a certain sample or group of people (Morse, 1991). Studies on the Nation of Islam's leadership exist. However, little has been written about its contemporary leaders. Moreover, the phenomenon of leadership practices in the NOI has not been explored or described in ways that may inform the development of male leaders. In qualitative descriptive studies, data collection attempts to discover "the who, what and where of events" or experiences (Sandelowski, 2000, p.339).

Research Context

The research context for this study was Muhammad Mosques in cities located in the northeastern United States. This context is important because it is primarily in the cities or urban areas of America where the Nation of Islam has operated historically to address the social challenges faced by the Black community: poverty, public health, crime, political advocacy, etc., and, consequently, the cities are the places where the leadership activities occur (Akom, 2007).

Each Muhammad Mosque is operated by an administrative team of leaders or laborers. Since the laborers are expected to be constantly studying and practicing their labor until they are qualified for the positions that they hold, the term *student* is used in all of the titles. The top five leadership or laboring positions are student minister, student captain of the Fruit of Islam (FOI), student captain of the Muslim Girls Training and General Civilization Class (MGT&GCC), student secretary, and student protocol

director. In order to maintain confidentiality, the cities and participant names are not used.

Research Participants

Qualitative researchers select participants that best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question (Creswell, 2007). This study solicited the engagement of leaders in the Nation of Islam who, by virtue of their position in the organization, are recognized as leaders by members of the organization and their local community and are responsible for leadership activities. These male leaders served as participants in an interview process which sought to glean not only leadership practice, but awareness and deliberateness of those practices. The detailed structure of the interview methodology is provided in a subsequent section.

Interviews were conducted with five leaders of the Nation of Islam who were selected using a purposive sampling methodology. As was the pursuit of this study, purposive sampling methods have high utility and allowed the researcher to select information-rich participants who elucidated the study's research questions. (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 1990; Seidman, 2006). Purposefully limiting the study made it both manageable and focused so that the researcher could understand the problem and the research questions (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the criteria for a Black male leader in the Nation of Islam to participate were the following:

1. current student laborer who has been in a position for a minimum of one year, or a former student laborer who had previously been in a position for a minimum of one year, but has been out of the position for less than 5 years,

2. holds/held the position of student minister or student captain in a Muhammad Mosque in a city located in the northeastern United States, and
3. over 18 years of age.

This criteria for research participants also allowed for representation of leaders who serve different size groups and different cities. Using his personal network, the researcher phoned the minister and captain of each mosque to gauge their interest in the study. If interested, an invitation letter was sent to the potential participants, via email, officially requesting their participation in the study. The letter and an accompanying consent form provided an outline of the study, the participants' role in the study, and information about confidentiality and the freedom to not answer a question or to leave the study with no repercussions. The records of this study will be kept private. All interview transcriptions, audio recordings, field notes, and results are stored on the researcher's personal computer that is password protected. All paper transcripts, field notes, and data collection tools will be kept in a locked container and will be destroyed after 5 years. Participant names were not used in any documents; a pseudonym was used, and no identifying information will be used in any publications. In any sort of public report, to further protect confidentiality, the participants will be labeled with a pseudonym to avoid any possible identification.

The sample size of five to seven leaders was selected as a reasonable number of participants to interview in depth over a restricted period. Orcher (2005) found that for qualitative studies, the range of sample sizes were from 1 to 35, with "the average (i.e., median) sample size was found to be 14. For the quantitative research, the average was 431" (p. 106). In contrast to quantitative inquiry, qualitative study does not seek to

generalize about a larger population. Some scholars (Fusch and Ness, 2015; Lincoln and Guba, 1985) recommended sample selection to the point of redundancy or saturation; the minimum sample size allowed for the development of contextually rich information that deepened an understanding of the practices of the leaders in the study. A second consideration in limiting the sample size was the potentially relative difficulty in locating leaders who meet the study criteria and were willing to discuss the inner workings of the Nation of Islam. To further manage the potential pool of subjects, the study recruited both current and former ministers and captains.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

This study used a semi-structured interview protocol to gather information from the participants about the leadership practices of contemporary ministers and captains in the Nation of Islam. Initial questions were pilot tested and refined. The following protocol was field tested and further refined as well. In qualitative research, the researcher starts with general research questions, but remains open that the data may lead in unanticipated or new directions as it emerges (Charmaz, 2004). The questions were divided into two main sections: a set of introductory questions to fill the gap between the interviewer and the interviewee (Musselwhite et al., 2006) and a set of six open-ended questions, which allowed the participants to express their feelings, perceptions, and experiences surrounding issues of leadership practices (see Appendix A).

Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

In qualitative descriptive studies, data collection attempts to discover “the who, what, and where of events” or experiences (Sandelowski, 2000, p.339). Data collection included individual interviews and the examination of documents. The researcher used

two procedures to capture the data from the semi-structured interviews. Two digital recorders were used. If there were technical problems with one recorder during an interview, then the second recorder would have provided a backup of the data. In addition, the researcher took field notes during each interview to capture participants' nonverbal gestures. Both the digital recorder and the field notes will be stored in a locked container in the researcher's home for a period of 5 years.

A transcription service was used to produce verbatim transcripts, which were then reviewed for accuracy. Transcripts were shared with interview participants for confirmation of accuracy. Analysis of qualitative interview data occurred as the transcription was being reviewed.

The researcher entered the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews into a qualitative software program, NVivo, to analyze the data. Data analysis was a three-stage process. In Stage 1 the researcher read and reread the interview transcripts to become familiar with the data. The researcher then used a descriptive coding method, which means the researcher closely studied and compared the data for similarities and differences. The intention of the initial descriptive coding was to provide the researcher codes or themes for further investigation (Saldaña, 2016). Similarly, Colorafi and Evans (2016) suggested that data be collected from open-ended questions, read word for word, and coded. From there, notes were made, and codes were categorized.

In Stage 2 the researcher used pattern codes, which are explanations or codes that make inferences from emerging themes. Pattern coding was useful as a secondary coding process to assist the researcher in identifying major themes, examining explanations in

the data, and identifying patterns. Thus, in Stage 2 the researcher developed patterns or themes identified in Stage 1 (Saldaña, 2016).

Lastly, in Stage 3 the researcher used the code-weaving method, which was used to interpret how various components of the study weaved together by integrating key code words and phrases into a narrative form (Saldaña, 2016). In this final stage, the goal was to identify major themes in the study and look for themes in the data that addressed the research questions.

Analytic memos were referenced as a source in the coding process as well and assisted in keeping track of coding choices, as well as possible categories, themes, and essences. Writing these memos helped the researcher to capture his personal feelings, as a member and leader in the Nation of Islam, as they came up during and after the interviews.

Colorafi and Evans (2016) provided the five standards (confirmability, dependability, credibility, transferability, and application) that are typically used in qualitative descriptive studies to assess quality and legitimacy (trustworthiness and authenticity) of the conclusions.

Summary

This qualitative descriptive study used semi-structured interviews to collect data to discover “the who, what, and where of events” or experiences of Black male leaders in the Nation of Islam. Using a purposive sampling methodology, the researcher selected five participants from cities with mosques in the northeastern region of the United States. The participants were interviewed, and the interviews were transcribed. The interview transcripts were coded and analyzed in three stages.

In Chapter 4, the findings of the study are discussed in detail. The implications of the study are discussed in Chapter 5, including recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam and to uncover leadership practices that might be transferable to successive generations of Black male leadership in/outside of the Nation of Islam. A purposive sampling methodology was used, and five leaders participated in the study. Data were collected from these leaders who reside in major cities in three states in the northeastern United States. A semi-structured interview protocol was employed to gather information from the participants. The researcher engaged in an individual, recorded interview with each participant. The interview included open-ended questions that allowed each participant to talk about their experience in the Nation of Islam. During the meetings, each shared information about their personal leadership practices.

Research Questions

Chapter 4 reports the findings of the study, which were derived from the guiding research questions:

1. From the perspective of five contemporary leaders in the Nation of Islam, what are the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam?
2. What male leadership practices in the Nation of Islam may be transferrable to successive generations of Black male leadership in/outside the Nation of Islam?

Data Analysis and Findings

Data analysis was a three-stage process using descriptive coding, pattern coding, and code-weaving. The initial descriptive coding intended to provide the researcher codes or themes for further investigation (Saldaña, 2016). The researcher used a descriptive coding method to compare the data for similarities and differences. The researcher then used pattern codes to make inferences from emerging themes. Pattern coding was useful as a secondary coding process to assist the researcher in identifying major categories, examining explanations in the data, and identifying patterns. Lastly, the researcher used the code-weaving method, which was used to interpret how various components of the study weaved together by integrating key code words and phrases into a narrative form (Saldaña, 2016). In this final stage, the goal was to identify major categories in the study and look for themes in the data that addressed the research questions.

This chapter is organized into two sections to address each research question. Each section divides into categories and themes. The first section addresses research question 1; the second section addresses research question 2.

Research Question 1

This section is organized into four categories and eight themes that emerged from the first research question: From the perspective of five contemporary leaders in the Nation of Islam, what are the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam? The first category, *de/reconstructing knowledge*, incorporates the three themes: (a) *spreading the truth*, (b) *resurrecting the dead*, and (c) *transforming people*. The second category, *launching pad for leadership*, incorporates the two themes: (a) *leading-learners*, and (b) *learning-leaders*. The third category, *labor of love*, includes one theme:

prioritizing people. The fourth and final category, *men-touring*, incorporates the two themes: (a) *hands-on helping*, and (b) *modeling*. Table 4.1 illustrates a summary of the categories and themes for research question 1.

Table 4.1

Summary of Categories, Themes, and Descriptions: Research Question 1

Categories	Themes	Description
De/Reconstructing knowledge	Spreading the Truth Resurrecting the Dead Transforming People	Disseminating Information Raising consciousness Changing behaviors
Launching Pad for Leadership	Leading-learners Learning-leaders	Leading while learning Learning while leading
Labor of Love	Prioritizing People	Making people the #1 priority of the work
Men-touring	Hands-on Helping Modeling	Personal attention to the men’s needs Being an example

Category 1: De/Reconstructing knowledge. The first category, de/reconstruction of knowledge, emerged as a broad category when participants described their work or mission as leaders in the Nation of Islam, which is to establish a society or nation governed by the principles of freedom, justice, and equality for all. Elijah Muhammad (1965) stated the Fruit of Islam, the men in the Nation of Islam, are the first to be cleaned and made fit to be called Muslims in America. [The FOI] “must put into practice the principles of Islam . . . They are to clean up a people who are not clean, morally as well as spiritually, in America and make them fit to become good members of the society” (p. 321). Consequently, as one participant, Cris, put it, “everyone is a leader”

in this effort. The three themes identified under this category include (a) *spreading the truth*, (b) *resurrecting the dead*, and (c) *transforming people*.

Spreading the truth. Getting knowledge to the people is seen as a vital step in the effort to improve their condition. Cris stated:

Our people need to be re-educated and retrained. This is 2019. The earliest recorded slaves in recorded history, that we know of, that this country recognizes is 1619, exactly 400 years ago. But a closer look at history, we know that the first slaves actually touched down in 1555. That 64-year period of time represents the retraining and reconditioning of a free Black man and woman into a slave. So, our work, our mission is to do that in reverse. In order to do that, people need information and truth. We have to be proficient in the distribution of truth and be unapologetic with imparting the truth to our people because if they know better, then they will do better.

The knowledge disseminated doesn't have to be about the religion of Islam to be useful; it can also be about the culture and history of Black people in America and all over the world. Another participant, Rasta, stated that it's

important to teach them that which they had been robbed of, which is essentially the knowledge of self which is the prerequisite knowledge . . . Knowledge of the history, who we were before we were captured and kidnapped and enslaved.

Those things that would make us whole again.

Rasta bore witness that the knowledge of his history guided his behavior:

I just always knew instinctively that there was something greater than what I had always seen as it relates to the Black community, Black people. The behaviors

that I saw us engaging in, something innately just told me we were better. But as I think, what was guiding me, I believe, was my 6th grade social studies teacher. Seeds that he had planted in terms of African history and Mansa Musa, great kings that he introduced me to, and Malcolm X.

Sharing the “teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad,” or spreading the “truth,” as it is referred to at various times, happens in many ways – through live lectures, books, audiotapes, CDs, and DVDs. It was hearing a CD that attracted Rasta to the Nation of Islam as an adult. He reported,

I just happened to one day be downtown, and I ran into a brother [who] was out, and he was playing The Lost Sheep, by the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan with music behind it, and I heard it. I said, "Oh, man. What's that?" I got the CD, and from there, I was on my journey to self-discovery.

Cris, on the other hand, was exposed to the NOI teachings over a period and through various means, including the Final Call newspaper, the weekly official news organ of the Nation of Islam. At 11 years old, Cris was captivated when he heard Minister Farrakhan speak live to an audience of 20,000 Black people at the civic center in Atlanta. "I'd never heard or seen or been a part of or witnessed anything associated with Black people or Black excellence quite like that outside of the entertainment and sports arena. I was hooked," Cris recalled. Seven years later, as a freshman in college, he attended the historic Million Man March. Cris continues, “If there was any doubt, if there was any question in my head, it was all erased that day.” Eight months later, a brother in New Jersey sold him “the Final Call and invited me out to the mosque, that started it. It was like June or July 1996. By August, I was registered.”

For Jamail, the enlightenment came via a lecture that Minister Farrakhan gave at the Jacob Javits Center in December 1993. Although he missed the live event, the videotape of the speech was circulating at his job. The owner of the tape let Jamail borrow it when he got off work on a Friday at 10:00 p.m. He went straight home and played it. Jamail stated “that videotape just summarized and clarified a lot of things. And just put things in perspective. From that videotape, brought it back, and just became inquisitive.” When Minister Farrakhan returned to New York City for a Men-only meeting at the 369th Street Armory the following year, Jamail took half of a personal day and went to see him. Jamail said, “that definitely changed my life.” Although he didn’t immediately join the Nation of Islam, it started him on a journey of discovery. Eventually, he attended manhood training that the Nation was offering, “and immediately after that I start attending the Mosque, accepted and, you know, as they say, the rest is history.”

Spreading the truth is an essential practice that all believing men must participate in, but the purpose is not information for information’s sake. The Final Call Newspaper has the Muslim Program printed on the back of every issue and is considered the number one tool to reach Black people. Rasta said,

there are specific things that we ought to do [to reach Black people]. We have the Final Call newspaper, which is the number one tool of the number one work, which is the resurrection of the dead. We have to make sure we get that out to our people.

Resurrecting the dead. Resurrecting the dead means raising the consciousness of Black people, mentally and spiritually, to change their thinking and make them agents of

change in their lives and is the main work of the Nation of Islam as the first step in its effort to build a society or Nation of their own. Khalid concurred with Rasta,

The main work, brother, is to go out and get our people, you know, the resurrection of our people. And it's a lot of means, and it's a lot of different avenues, and different things that we do to try to accomplish that goal. But the main goal, if it's not leading up to help in the resurrection of our people, then you have to reevaluate.

Jamail stated, “the basic foundation is to give us a moral and a spiritual base and out of that moral and spiritual base springs everything else which makes us efficient and effective in other areas of our lives.”

Reginald reiterated:

Our work is the resurrection of the dead. We are here and commissioned by God and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Honorable Louis Farrakhan to build people's lives. I can't give and talk about services here and there, though I will talk about that. However, that's not our purpose. Our purpose is the building of people, the remaking of a human being from what this world has made them into something acceptable by God and His Christ. So that's [our] first work, the resurrection of the dead.

Resurrecting the dead occurs through the divine guidance that the Nation of Islam offers. Reginald stated the members of the NOI “walk the streets . . . the highways and the byways, inviting people out to hear the word, sharing the good word with them giving divine guidance.” The success in resurrecting the dead manifests itself in the actions of

the resurrected people and in their ability to effect change in their own lives and the lives of others. Reginald continued:

The Book of Psalms says, "Ye are gods, children of the most high God." Brother, that's power. Who is the original man? The original man is the Asiatic Black man, the maker, the owner, the cream of the planet Earth, god of the universe. That's power. That's power. That just changes you when you know you need to be changed. It uplifts you [knowing] that there's nothing you can't take up and put down. See? That's power. That's the transformative process. Going back to those two words, divine guidance. Other people use services.

Transforming people. The participants reported that it is God who transforms people through the word, teaching and training that the participants deliver. Reginald said it's God that causes all transformation . . . God works through human beings. So ultimately, it's the Supreme Being that transforms any human being into a new creature. The Supreme Being has those who incline to his will and his way, and when they submit to it, they become examples.

People think, speak, and behave differently than they did before being exposed to the teachings of Elijah Muhammad. Jamail stated:

I would say the work is taking an individual from where that person is currently at, broken, have lost all confidence in self, no self-esteem or very low self-esteem, doesn't see self-worth, doesn't see himself as now being a family person, handling his responsibility, may have not been able to hold a job over a protracted period of time or any meaningful job . . . And the beauty that I like in what I do was when I approach a person who has that type of mindset and able to just take that person

and able to now have them see that they do have worth. They do have self-esteem. They can bring value to themselves, their family, and their community . . . changing their life drastically around.

Jamail confessed that not everyone he has worked with had successfully transformed, but he has seen many attain and sustain success, including himself. He reported that he started on his journey with nothing in front of him and he's "acquired many things." When he joined the Nation of Islam, he was "a single man, like most of our brothers in the community. But the Nation has a strong value towards family—you have to be married. At 6 months after joining the Nation, I got married. I've been blessed, and we've been blessed. We celebrated 24 years, December 2018." Although he was young and inexperienced when he got married, Jamail feels that his "leadership role and responsibility have helped me tremendously manage the complexity of marriage and children rearing." Both marriage and management have helped him to learn "when to push, when to pull, when to, you know, motivate. When to sit back, when to listen."

Reginald pointed to Minister Farrakhan's transformation as exemplary of the power of the teachings of Elijah Muhammad. Although Minister Farrakhan is a world-renowned leader, he wasn't always at that level and "didn't see where God was leading him, through the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, to be where he is today and to do what he does and the millions of people's lives that he affects and has changed and has transformed." Reginald acknowledged Farrakhan's work of transforming the lives of many and offered his own life as a testimony. "I'm a witness bearer of [Farrakhan] in the transformative process of the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad under his leadership, tutelage, and guidance. I'm a transformed man. I'm not the person that I was."

Cris said that transformation happens by engaging, charismatic, leadership . . . working towards a goal, eliminating excuses by getting rid of self-defeating thoughts in the head, in the minds of the believers, based on the teachings of the Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad. [That's] how we got things done.

Rasta reported that the Nation of Islam is trying to attract our people to try to live a better life . . . via the information we give them, but, also, trying to get them to become a part of the Nation of Islam because our primary objective is to build a nation, to build schools, to build businesses . . . We want our people to adopt the teachings and be active participants in that assignment.

Category 2: Launching pad for leadership. The second category, launching pad for leadership, emerged from the data. The launching pad is the mosque – it is the place where learners get to practice their leadership and leaders get to refine and master what they're learning. Rasta said he was “so inspired by what [he] heard from the Hon. Minister Farrakhan that I just wanted to learn all that I could. So, I began to frequent the mosque. I was always at the mosque, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday.”

The leaders go from the mosque into the streets to get the people, but the goal is to bring the people back to the mosque to be trained and developed into believing leaders. Rasta said,

90% of our work is out in the street, [but] the mosque is our base. The mosque is a place where people can come out of a world that represents death and inhale a spirit of life in an atmosphere of peace, harmony, freedom, justice, and equality.

And it gives us the prototype of the kingdom of God on earth. But it's not the end all and be all, the mosque is to be a launching pad, where we get trained to go out and do the greater work, which is to clean up our communities, make our communities a safe and decent place to live.

Reginald came to the Nation of Islam through a group called the Five Percenters. According to Reginald, this group is an offshoot that received the Supreme Wisdom lessons of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad from one of its members who was out of the temple. That member, Reginald continued,

brought it to the streets and set up what is called Street Academies . . . One day my enlightener, as they were called, gave me knowledge of self, exposed me to the lessons. I then took them and began to study them, thus making me now a Five Percenter.

Later Reginald was directed to go to the mosque by

one of the older Five-Percent brothers, who knew the founder and teacher of the Five-Percent. [He] said. . .He wanted us to all return to the mosque. I said, "How do you know that?" He said, "Where do the lessons come from?" I said, "From the mosque." He said, "Well, that's your root. Return to it."

Reginald went to the mosque to continue his studies. The mosque is the place where learners lead, and leaders continue to learn.

Leading-learners. The theme, leading-learners, means that although one is unskilled and ignorant about leadership, one will still have a chance to lead, if open to learning. A few of the participants readily admitted that, except for the little they had heard about Malcolm X, they came to the Nation of Islam with little to no knowledge of

the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and knew even less about leading others. Nevertheless, they got the chance to lead. Jamail received the responsibility of being over a squad of 10-15 men within 6 months of joining the Nation, “never having had leadership responsibility before or even understanding what it entails.” He stated, “whenever you're asked to take on any type of leadership responsibility it was, ‘Can you follow instruction?’ Wasn't necessarily do you have the skillset, or do you have prior training? ‘Can you follow instructions?’ I said, Yes, sir!”

Rasta said,

the Supreme Wisdom Lessons that we were given by Master Fard Muhammad, said in the Second Original Rule of Instruction, each student could practice his or her labor while under study if they were sincere. It's not always about the skill, but it's about the sincerity and the willingness to learn. The willingness to be humble, which is one of the greatest characteristics.

Jamail said,

Most organizations do not offer the common person, who never has . . . who may have come from a background or station of life that you have not had the opportunity to actually now . . . take a position and learn to grow and become proficient in leadership.

The participants stressed that their development came from OJT, on the job training, in the Nation of Islam. Both participants attributed their success to their willingness to take instructions, to “hear and obey” which allowed them to lead while learning. Reginald said,

I served in every post in the Nation of Islam in leadership positions before I became a student minister . . . the training prepared you for that, hearing and obeying, simply stated. Hearing and obeying. Listening to those who were here before you, who are your teachers. Hearing and obeying. Allah says in the Quran when you are invited to Islam by Allah and the Messenger all you have to do is say you hear and obey, and that's it. That's a simple process. Hear and obey.

Reginald used scripture to reinforce his point. “In order to hear, God says in the Quran, only those who listen accept the truth. So, then you have to listen when you hear. Take the intake and then carry it out.” Khalid agreed,

Working in the field of security, I was always security minded, very well organized. So, becoming a Lieutenant, those types of things helped me, so I kind of had a good foundation coming in. But in terms of formal training, to be a Lieutenant in the Nation, truthfully, I really didn't have it. Without formal training, it's kind of like everything that you do as it relates to the mosque and the Nation, is on the job training. Like the Minister [Farrakhan] once said, if you know how to take instructions, then you could be a lieutenant.

The opportunities to lead were vast and varied. Some of the leadership positions in the captaincy discipline are squad leader, drill instructor, first officer, second officer, first and second lieutenant, newspaper captain, assistant captain, and captain. Each carries duties and responsibilities that help to develop a variety of skills or practices. These positions helped Cris to develop his leadership. Cris said “Coming out of the world, I graduated from college. I was educated, but I was still rough around the edges emotionally.” The training that he received “really had me kind of hone-in on a

leadership philosophy.” The things he learned, “accommodating the men, managing the affairs of the men, understanding different personality types that comes along with the territory of being a squad leader, a lieutenant, and then eventually the first officer,” shaped the type of leader he has become. Also, he said, there were “security details, there was speaking publicly in front of the men, and just getting to know and befriending and getting behind the personality types and what motivates men.” All of which allowed him to be a leading-learner within the structure of the Nation of Islam. Rasta said,

When you come into the FOI, you're already being equipped with the skills to lead. With the Fruit code: being tolerant, obedient, militant, humble. These are characteristics that it takes to be a leader, to be an effective leader. So, you are already being trained to lead. You don't come in looking to want to lead. But if you take the guidance, the tutelage, the information seriously, when you dedicate yourself, and you obey those who are in authority over you, and you follow the restrictive laws, and you do what is necessary, then it's evident that you will be selected to lead . . . we're always looking for help in a local mosque, in the Nation.

A mosque is also a place for the more seasoned, mosque leaders to continue their education in the mosque and the broader community.

Learning-leaders. The next theme, learning-leaders, means that although you are in a position of leadership, you still have a lot to learn.

Jamail said,

being in leadership is being a lifetime student. Understanding that there is so much more to learn and, you know, to humble yourself to know that everything

that you think you know, there's always something else that you don't know. I would say I'm the ultimate learner. I'm always studying and learning different ways to make me efficient and effective in terms of what I'm doing. Whether it's in my leadership position, whether it's just a husband, whether it's a father, but understanding that there's still so much to learn.

Rasta said,

you're always given these life lessons as it relates to leadership, whether it's leading your household, leading the mosque, leading at your job. We're always taught that we have to cover down, that we have to fill the void or close the gap. So, I think the Nation, in and of itself, prepares one for leadership on all levels and different spectrums.

Rasta said, “the Nation helps one in your everyday life, not just in the mosque or as a minister, but in your family life, domestically, how to handle yourself in the world in general. [That training] applies to various settings and circumstances.” Jamail described the diverse challenges that the [men] bring to the equation as very complex. He stated, “I don't even think there's any university or any school or discipline that teaches one coming into the post that these are the things that are necessary for you to undertake a leadership position.” He continued, “theory will help to a certain degree, but certain things it's just not in the book. It's not in the classroom. It just gonna come with you working with people over a protracted period to learn to deal with people.”

The participants stressed that making mistakes as a leader is a part of the learning process. Khalid said, “things will slip through the cracks, you forget to cover different assignments, then you just learn through trial and error, to just come back and do it better

the next time.” Cris also described the learning process as trial and error or “trial by fire.” He said, “messaging up, rubbing individuals the wrong way and saying the wrong thing or misunderstanding when somebody says one thing or the other” is an integral part of the training. He concluded, “there’s no formal training; it was just OJT!”

Leading in the Nation provides an on-going opportunity to learn and grow. Reginald offered the lieutenant’s position as an example of the importance of learning while also continuing to lead. “The lieutenant's duty is to teach and train the soldier. That's simple, teaching and training. In order to teach, you gotta be a student. In order to train, you gotta be in the class.” Rasta said, “I don't think there's a training like we've been given anywhere else on the planet.”

Category 3: Labor of love. A labor of love comes from a task that is done for pleasure, not for material gain. It can be done for the sake of one’s enjoyment or the benefit of others. The participants expressed love as the foundation of their labor.

Khalid said,

this is not a paid job. So, a lot of it is out of love, and it's out of spirit. I was once told, man what you have to have, in order to be successful in leadership in the Nation, you have to love the God. You have to love the Christ. You have to love the Minister [Farrakhan]. And lastly, and one of the most important things, is that you have to have the love for the people.

Jamail said,

You have to have love, whether it's on the private side or the faith-based side, to excel and just from a long-lasting perspective. Whatever that position entails,

whatever that responsibility entails, love has to be the underlying principle that governs what you do.

If someone is forced to take a leadership position or they are doing it for “monetary gain only, you will learn that the compensation, along with the responsibility and the frustration, will soon wear itself out.” Ultimately, Jamail said, the person will conclude, “the money’s not worth it.”

Reginald said,

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad said, “The meaning of love is freedom, justice, and equality.” Anything you love, you give it freedom, a full and complete freedom. Anything you love, you give justice, justice applied equally to all, regardless of creed or class or color. Anything you love you give equality, equal membership in society with the best in civilized society. That's love. Love is the determining factor. When you work with the principle of love, from the aspect of freedom, justice, and equality, then it guides all of the leadership principles that you work with.

Prioritizing people. Although a lot of what the participants described doing were activities, people were the priority in their work. Every action was in support of the well-being of the people in their organization and their city.

Khalid stated that leadership, collectively, is responsible for the day-to-day well-being and security of all the believers, and really all of our people in the city. That's one thing that the Minister [Farrakhan] tells us, that we're not sent to a mosque, we're sent, and we're put over a city. Therefore, Rasta said,

we go out in the community. We feel like that's the most effective platform because most of our people are in the streets; they are not coming to a mosque or a building. So, our most effective platform to reach our people is in the street. And then ultimately, we want to bring them to the mosque.”

As stated earlier, the mosque is a place of transformation and serves as the launching pad for the leadership work that the Nation is preparing people to do.

Cris said,

This is all a work of love and out of a passion for helping people, to really filter and recalibrate. What do I need to do to get something done through other people, but at the same time, understand that everybody needs somebody to truly lean on and get things to kind of help organize and get things accomplished? As you accomplish and acquire different levels of performance, you're going to be rewarded, but so is the team because everybody's doing the same thing.

Jamail said,

you can't be a leader and, you're not over people, you're not grooming, you're not training, you're not leading, you're not working [with people]. Leadership is not for an individual-based individual. It's for a person who wants to work with people, who wants to work with a team. And it can be very frustrating and very challenging at times. Just dealing with the complexity of dealing with individuals, but it gets better, you know, if you have patience. If you are sincere and you approach your assignment in trying to help others, I think you will see . . . you will be amazed at, you know, working with individuals who you see change, and

gravitate to seeing the benefits and reward in working as a team versus working as an individual.

Rasta said, “Leadership is not having people carry your bags. As he teaches us from the Bible, Jesus said, ‘He who is chief among you, let him be your servant.’ So, we are to serve the people.” Reginald said the principle of love has helped him “to be able to serve people because leadership is serving. Leadership is getting beneath the weight and lifting it, instead of you being lifted by others.”

Cris agreed,

Our people don't need bosses, they don't need overseers, they need servants. So, the Nation of Islam's leadership is a servant leadership platform base. We get under the weight and push it up instead of standing over the weight and yanking it up. You have to be servant leaders. Our leadership structure has to be based on service. What can I do, what can I impart, what can I say, what can I help with to empower the people?

Rasta said it similarly,

those who are over you, they're always watching, ‘Now . . . who we can help? Who can be a little bit more effective, a little bit more impactful, so we can get this job done?’ They always give brothers a chance as they were given a chance.

Reginald said,

As a squad leader, you have to look out for the soldier and their needs, making sure that their mental is in order; that they have the things that they need in life. That's what you learn in the Nation of Islam, that the soldier matters. The soldier

matters as much as the instruction does. But the instruction is only going to be as good as the soldier is.

Khalid said, “we love our people. We have a concern and a love that says, no matter how high I rise in this world, if the rest of us are still struggling and catching hell, what does it really matter?”

Category 4: Men-touring. The fourth category, men-touring, looks at the role that mentoring played in the participants’ development and leadership practices. The term men-touring conveys the way the participants (men) were guided (toured) on their leadership or life journey. Based on the example, encouragement, and guidance that their mentors acquired on their personal journey, they were able to then model, encourage, and guide others. The mentors took the experience they gained and paid-it-forward by working with those coming behind them. Cris described the brotherhood that he has developed as

a kind of self-fueling mechanism . . . There are brothers around me that do things on the level of expertise that I might struggle with. That's who I'm working arm-in-arm with. Then we create a group dynamic that the brothers can look to and lean on for assistance, advice, help, direction, and training.

Hands-on helping. The participants’ experience involved mentors and supporters who were intimately involved in their lives and their development, leaders who were up close and personal with them. The participants emulated that behavior with the people that they now lead.

Khalid said historically the captains in his city have been “very hands on. They get down in the trenches with you.” He called them “blue collar captains.” He stated the

brotherhood in the mosque was also “very instrumental in helping me stay focused.” When Khalid was a young believer, his father was traveling a lot, so one brother “really took me under his wing. He made sure I was able to get to the mosque, made sure that I got home from the mosque. And a lot of times personally he did this.” In addition, that brother assisted him with “all the prerequisite things that it takes to strive to be a believer in the Nation.”

Cris described his mentors as patient and perceptive. One of his mentors was really instrumental in calming me down as a hothead. I had this alter ego that I created as a basketball player that was no longer necessary for me to carry as much as I was. Through his personal experience and journey, he was able to pick up on that and really walk me off the ledge of being emotional and using emotion to motivate and get things done when I could be just way more strategic, calm and proactive.

Jamail said that he’s worked with many men who were incarcerated for 15, 20, or 30 years. When they come home, they wonder where they are going to go or what they are going to do next. He works with them, “instilling what I have learned, what I’ve been afforded myself . . . Spending countless nights on the phone. Giving consultation when they feel like just throwing in the towel.” Sometimes, he said, “it’s just taking time out of my busy schedule, having a cup of coffee. Whether it’s for 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 hours just listening, talking, working it through.”

Rasta described two brothers who “had a very profound impact” on him. One brother, who was the captain in the city,

took a liking to me, and picked me up, dropped me off, took me under his wing, guided me, helped me, introduced me to his family, gave me various tapes and certain things about the Nation. He played a very important role as it relates to my growth and development in Islam.

The other brother, he said, “showed me the importance of soldiering, and how pivotal that was and is as it relates to being in the Nation of Islam, and why we should always be out in the streets.”

Modeling. Sometimes actions speak louder than words and it’s best to be an example of what you’re attempting to teach.

Reginald points to Minister Farrakhan as his role model.

I follow the example of the Minister. The Minister looks well. I ask people, "What's my age?" They tell me I'm 45 when I'm really 10 to 12 years older than that; I like that. The Minister practices how to eat to live, so I'm trying my best to practice how to eat to live.

For Rasta, the Minister has been exemplary in his guidance, life lessons, and the decisions he has had to make. Rasta said “the greatest impact as it relates to my life and what true leadership is” has been from Minister Farrakhan modeling, “going through trials and [showing us] how we should handle those things. And not allowing what you're going through personally as an individual to affect your ability to lead.”

While Minister Farrakhan serves as the “premier” or “ideal” leader and is a “stellar” example of “character, integrity, and love” for his followers, and for many Black people outside of the Nation of Islam, there are other NOI leaders who have more daily contact with the believers and serve as examples for them. For Rasta, one brother was a

model for “how you should look, how we should dress, being militant, the importance of study, integrity, and being able to be dependable.” Khalid said his mentor’s example influenced him “to reciprocate that to the young brothers that are coming up in the mosque.” Although his mentor had his own family to look out for, it was powerful for his mentor “just to show enough love and concern that he would take me under his wing, and help me, and help me develop as a young child, and bring me up that way. It helped me to be able to have that same concern” for those that he now leads. The mentor’s modeling reminds Khalid to “never get too busy that we can't remember to take the time to help and develop our younger brothers and sisters.”

Jamail cited three individuals that he has patterned himself after. From the first brother he learned style, class, dress, and articulation. That brother “had that type of swag about him.” The second person was “probably one of the most brilliant men” he’s ever met. This mentor demonstrated “insight into the lessons, the teachings, and went into the root of a lot of the things that we just took for granted.” From the third person, he

learned work ethic, commitment, loyalty, dedication, military decorum, and how to be highly effective, organized, and just execute on a plan . . . to work right through every obstacle until you actually see your desired result or that which you had hoped to accomplish.

Cris gleaned different things from the examples of each of his mentors. From one mentor he learned a strong “work ethic”; another showed him how to be “no-nonsense and loving at the same time”; and a third one gave him a “true spirit of wanting for your brother what you want for yourself.”

Research Question 2

This section consists of three of the original four categories and five new themes that emerged from the second research question: What male leadership practices in the Nation of Islam may be transferrable to successive generations of Black male leadership in/outside the Nation of Islam? At the end of each interview, the participants were asked if they had any suggestions for others thinking about leadership inside or outside of the Nation of Islam. It was not surprising to find that the themes derived from the second research question were congruent with the categories derived from the first research question. The first category, *de/reconstructing knowledge*, incorporates one additional theme: *character and integrity*. The second category, *launching pad for leadership*, includes one other theme: *work-life integration*. The third category, *labor of love*, incorporates three new themes: (a) *paying the price*, (b) *loving leader*, and (c) *understanding people*.

Table 4.2

Summary of Categories, Themes, and Descriptions: Research Question 2

Categories	Themes	Description
De/Reconstructing knowledge	Character and Integrity	Necessary behaviors
Launching Pad for Leadership	Work-Life Integration	Leading with balance
Labor of Love	Paying the Price Loving Leader Understanding People	Sacrificing for the Cause Loving Self/God/People Working effectively with people

Category 1: De/Reconstructing knowledge. The first category, *de/reconstruction of knowledge*, emerged as a broad category when participants described their work or mission as leaders in the Nation of Islam, which is to establish a

society or nation governed by the principles of freedom, justice, and equality for all. As Elijah Muhammad (1965) stated, the Fruit of Islam's work is to clean up the people morally as well as spiritually and make them fit to become useful members of society. Therefore, as a leader, it is vital to possess and demonstrate good character, integrity, honesty, and morality in all areas of one's life, and to develop it in the lives of others.

Character and integrity. Rasta said he couldn't "stress enough the importance of character and integrity and having a love for those you desire to lead." He sees them as fundamental characteristics for leaders to possess because "when you're in leadership, you're given power, you're given authority over people. It's a very sacred trust and a sacred responsibility." Leaders must always remember that

power is not from us. We are the authority, but we are not the author of it. God, ultimately, is the author of authority and power. So, we gotta govern as he would govern. Or maybe one doesn't believe in God, but you believe in principles of equity, justice, and fairness, then we should always try to guide and do unto others as we would have done unto ourselves.

Reginald echoed the point about character and integrity.

If you have a skill and a talent, it must be tempered with good character, good integrity, and good morality. When you have a skill and talent, and your morals are right, your character is intact, and your integrity is up to par, that's good leadership.

Rasta said, he encountered some great brothers and sisters, who guided him and showed him "the importance of those characteristics of a fruit that we're given –

character, integrity, love, being some of the foremost qualities that you must possess in order to lead and guide Black folks.”

Category 2: Launching pad for leadership. The second category launching pad for leadership emerged from the data. The mosque is the launching pad for leadership. Once people come into the Nation of Islam, they are expected to get involved with mosque activities, which can be all-consuming and overwhelming. The same is true of any organization that is involved with the work of developing people or building communities. Consequently, it is crucial to be aware of this and careful to have a balanced life whether you’re in leadership inside or outside of the Nation of Islam.

Work-Life integration. The participants consider Islam as a way of life that cannot be separated and divided up into precise areas of work, home, school, recreation, economics, and politics. Cris offered:

work-life integration” and balance are important practices to learn. One has to develop” the ability to not compartmentalize the things that pertain to the Nation and the things that pertain to your personal life. It is all one; it is all integrated. It's easier to do this job if one goes hand-in-hand with the other, versus you separating one from the other.

However, he continued, “since everything is integrated, you could have the tendency of one overshadowing the other at different times, so it's very key to have balance.”

Category 3: Labor of love. The third category labor of love comes from a task that is done for pleasure, not for material gain. It can be done for the sake of one’s enjoyment or the benefit of others. The participants expressed love as the foundation of

their work but advise future leaders that they must pay the price, have a love for people, and an understanding of people that must be learned when you are involved in this work.

Paying the price. If one wants to be in leadership in the Nation of Islam or anywhere else, Khalid said

you have to be willing to make the sacrifices. And you've got to be willing to pay the price that it takes. One of the major sacrifices is your time. A lot of time.

You've got to sacrifice doing different things with your family. You've got sometimes to sacrifice time away from your job, your sources of income. Time in the Nation of Islam, truthfully, should be more important than even money.

Loving leader. Khalid also said to be a successful leader you must have the right spirit and the proper love. “If you don't have the right love and spirit as a leader in the Nation, then you are not going to last. [You’re] going to burn out.” Besides, “you're not going to be as effective as you can be if you don't have a real love and concern for the people that you are leading.”

Reginald agreed. “You gotta have love. If you don't love the people that you're trying to serve, you're not going to strive or thrive in leadership.” He added that the love must start with a love of self and God, “Because the love of self is the love of God.” You can't do anything for others “unless you do it for yourself first.” To bolster his point, Reginald paraphrased the Million Man March Pledge that was taken by one-million-plus Black men in Washington, DC on October 16, 1995:

I will strive to improve myself spiritually, mentally, physically, politically, economically, emotionally, for the benefit of myself, my family, and my people. I will strive to build schools, hospitals, housing, businesses, buy farmland, [enter

into] international trade and commerce for the benefit of myself, my family, and my people.

Understanding people. Cris said

We are in the people business. You may understand money, and you may even understand the teachings. You can understand how to get things done, how to organize, but with all of that, you have to understand people from a psychological standpoint. People are our number one and highest commodity. You could be great in leadership inside or outside of the Nation, but you can never be as good as you could be if you don't understand how our people work and understand people in general.

Jamail said “Leadership mastery has a lot to do with personal mastery...to learn about people is learning about yourself.” Developing proficiency in “working with people is understanding yourself to some degree.” Within the Nation, people “get the opportunity to work in a leadership position and are given the opportunity to now work out these nuances and to become proficient at it.” Jamail believes that there’s “no school that he could have attended to summarize his experience and the skill set he has gotten from working with people, working with diverse individuals, whether they’re the young or old, or ethnic background.” The key is getting in and start learning to work with people.

Summary of Results

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam and to uncover leadership practices that might be transferable to successive generations of Black male leadership in/outside of the

Nation of Islam. In the first section of this chapter, four categories and eight themes emerged and were discussed from the first research question: From the perspective of five contemporary leaders in the Nation of Islam, what are the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam? The first category, *de/reconstructing knowledge*, incorporates the three themes: (a) *spreading the truth*, (b) *resurrecting the dead*, and (c) *transforming people*. The second category, *launching pad for leadership*, integrates the two themes: (a) *leading-learners*, and (b) *learning-leaders*. The third category, *labor of love*, includes one theme: *prioritizing people*. The fourth and final category, *men-touring*, incorporates the two themes: (a) *hands-on helping*, and (b) *modeling*.

In the second section of this chapter, three of the original four categories and five additional themes emerged and were discussed from the second research question: What male leadership practices in the Nation of Islam may be transferrable to successive generations of Black male leadership in/outside the Nation of Islam? The first category, *de/reconstructing knowledge*, incorporates one additional theme: *character and integrity*. The second category, *launching pad for leadership*, incorporates one additional theme: *work-life integration*. The third and final category, *labor of love*, incorporates three additional themes: (a) *paying the price*, (b) *loving leader*, and (c) *understanding people*. All of the categories and themes were relevant to the lived experiences of the Black males in the Nation of Islam in the northeastern United States who participated in this qualitative descriptive study.

Chapter 5 will discuss the potential implications of the findings, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam from the perspective of five of its contemporary leaders and to uncover leadership practices that might be transferable to successive generations of Black male leadership in/outside of the Nation of Islam. This research adds to the pool of research knowledge available on the topic of leadership generally and adds to the understanding of the contemporary practices of leaders in the Nation of Islam.

The Institutional Review Board of St. John Fisher College approved the study. Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained (see Appendix B). Data were collected during interviews with the five study participants, representing major cities in three states in the northeastern United States. The researcher took measures to protect the participants' identities and ensure the confidentiality of the data; pseudonyms are used in this report. Demographic data were not collected as ethical research conduct was essential as the issues could have been sensitive.

The researcher used semi-structured, open-ended questions that addressed the guiding research questions:

1. From the perspective of five to seven contemporary leaders in the NOI, what are the leadership practices of Black males in the NOI?
2. What male leadership practices in the NOI may be transferrable to successive generations of Black male leadership in/outside the NOI?

Before conducting any interviews, initial questions were pilot tested and refined. A protocol was field tested and further refined as well. The protocol questions were divided into two main sections: a set of introductory questions to fill the gap between the interviewer and the interviewee (Musselwhite et al., 2006) and a set of six open-ended questions, which allowed the participants to express their feelings, perceptions, and experiences surrounding issues of leadership practices.

The researcher entered the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews into a qualitative software program, NVivo, to analyze the data. Data analysis was a three-stage process. In Stage 1 the researcher read and reread the interview transcripts to become familiar with the data. The researcher then used a descriptive coding method to provide codes or themes for further investigation (Saldaña, 2016). In Stage 2 the researcher used pattern codes, which are explanations or codes that make inferences from emerging themes (Saldaña, 2016). Lastly, in Stage 3 the researcher used the code-weaving method, which was used to interpret how various components of the study weaved together by integrating key code words and phrases into a narrative form (Saldaña, 2016).

From the analysis in Chapter 4, four categories and eight themes emerged that addressed Research Question 1 (RQ1). Categories and themes for Research Question 1 are depicted in Figure 5.1, which represent the current Nation of Islam leaders. In this figure, the four categories are depicted in the head, feet, body, and hands of the leaders.

1. De/Reconstructing Knowledge - Head
 - a. spreading the truth (RQ1)
 - b. resurrecting the dead (RQ1)
 - c. transforming people (RQ1)

2. Launching Pad for Leadership - Feet
 - a. leading-learners (RQ1)
 - b. learning-leaders (RQ1)
3. Labor of Love - Body
 - a. prioritizing people (RQ1)
4. Men-touring - Hands
 - a. hands-on helping (RQ1)
 - b. modeling (RQ1)

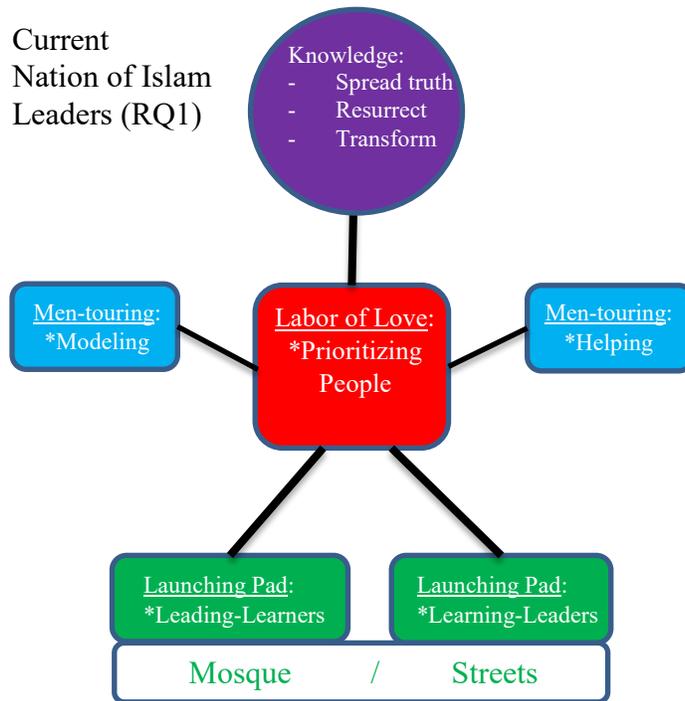


Figure 5.1. Categories and Themes: Research Question 1.

Additionally, from the analysis in Chapter 4, three of the four initial categories and five other themes emerged that addressed Research Question 2 (RQ2). Categories and themes for Research Question 2 are depicted in Figure 5.2, which represents future generations

of leaders. In this figure, three of the four categories are depicted in the head, feet, and body of the future leaders.

1. De/Reconstructing Knowledge - Head
 - a. character and integrity (RQ2)
2. Launching Pad for Leadership - Feet
 - a. work-life integration (RQ2)
3. Labor of Love - Body
 - a. paying the price (RQ2)
 - b. loving leader (RQ2)
 - c. understanding people (RQ2)

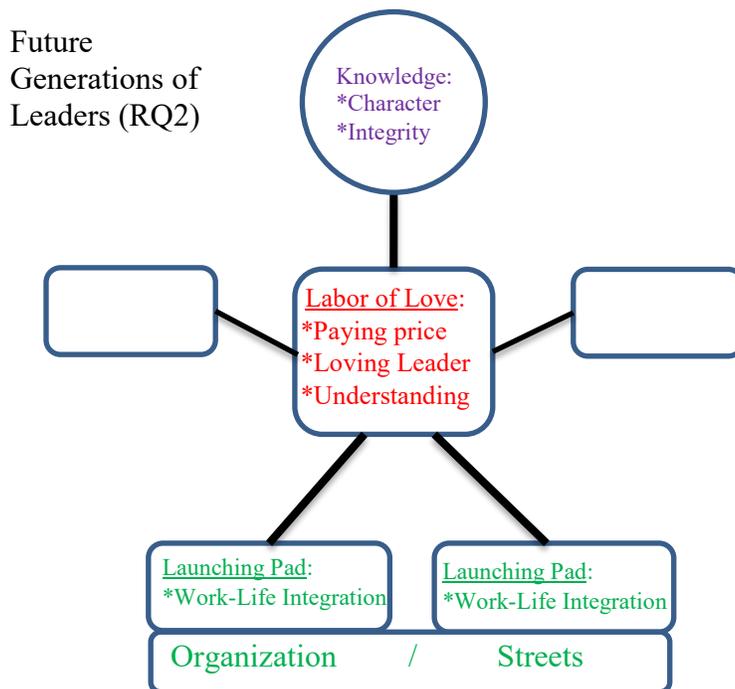


Figure 5.2. Categories and Themes: Research Question 2.

The objectives of this qualitative descriptive study were met. The contemporary NOI leaders' perspectives on the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of

Islam and the leadership practices that might be transferrable are represented in the results that emerged from the individual interviews with each participant. Also, the study lifts the voice of two underrepresented groups (Black males and members in the Nation of Islam), which helps to address the social justice issue of the contribution of these groups being ignored and marginalized/otherized.

This chapter summarizes the research process that explored the leadership practices of Black males in the NOI and uncovered the practices that might be transferable to Black males in/outside the NOI. In the remaining parts of Chapter 5, implications of the findings for each research question are discussed, limitations of the study are listed, recommendations for future research are offered, and a conclusion is presented.

Implications of Findings

This qualitative descriptive study identified the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam in the northeastern United States. The findings were derived from the development of four categories and several themes that emerged from analysis of the data. These categories and themes represent the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam and the leadership practices that might be transferrable to future generations of leaders inside the NOI and the broader community.

In transformative leadership theory, Shields (2014) noted the essential work of the leader in creating communities in which social, political, and cultural capital is enhanced. As previously reported, the theory and its premises apply to leaders in many contexts, such as the Nation of Islam. Montuori and Fahim (2010) stated transformative leadership begins with a radical rethinking of the who, what, where, when, and how of leadership.

The essential work noted by Shields and the radical rethinking stated by Montuori and Fahim are represented in the research findings in Chapter 4 regarding the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam. Of the following six implications, the first five are derived from research question one; the sixth implication is derived from research question two. The implications are: (a) everyone can be a leader, (b) leadership practices are about developing an individual and the collective, (c) organizational and community leadership are contextual, (d) OJT (on-the-job training) or trial and error are valuable learning processes, (e) people should be prepared to take the lead in small efforts, and (f) commitment to moral, mental, and emotional practices are vital to successful leadership.

Everyone can be a leader. Despite the historic election of Barack Obama as the first Black president, the lived experience of many Black men in America remains unchanged and challenging. In the minds of many, Black males and leadership seem to be incompatible ideas. Something is necessary to assist Black males in overcoming the obstacles that they continue to face in occupying leadership positions in this society. Too many Black people think they do not have the power or the agency to change the condition in which they live. The Nation of Islam's work is to awaken them to the possibility and their destiny to do so. The men in the NOI serve as examples of that possibility. The participants in this study identified leadership practices that were created to change the current thinking of, and about, Black males regarding leadership. These practices included: spreading the truth about the history and culture of Black people before slavery to give them a *knowledge of self and others*, resurrecting the dead with the life-giving word of God, and transforming people's behaviors so that they are active

participants in their improvement. These leadership practices have empowered or equipped the participants in this study to overcome obstacles that they encountered. The practices have impacted the men's choices, thinking, and persistence. There is power in the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and his student, Minister Farrakhan, to get people to stop gang-banging, using drugs, and drinking. Their lessons are imparted to all Black people regardless of their status in life through various modes to awaken the spirit to change and take up the task, mission, or work of resurrection. This study is in line with the findings of Goss (2015) and Pollard (2016) that cultural heritage and race can influence an individual and their organization's work positively. The first implication of this study is that everyone can lead. Black males can be successfully engaged in leadership when given culturally-relevant knowledge, teaching, and training.

Leadership practices are about developing an individual and the collective.

Donald McGannon, the former Westinghouse Broadcasting Corporation executive, is reported to have said, "Leadership is Action, Not Position." For McGannon, no one can declare you the *leader*; you must earn it. I argue that a leader, whether it is a position earned or declared, is one individual. Leadership, on the other hand, is the collective action of a group of individual leaders. Individual leaders are standing together, collaboratively doing something of consequence; this is leadership. If you want to develop the community, family, organization, or society into a "decent" place, the focus must be on the individual, self, leader's improvement. However, leadership is not about just developing an individual, but also about actions that improve and add to the collective, which is the second implication of this study.

Sullivan (1997) states it is generally agreed that the abundance of social capital has a substantial impact on the civic health of a community. She defines social capital as “both the informal and formal networks and associations of ordinary citizens who have the capacity to facilitate, coordinate, and cooperate in efforts that benefit the entire community.”

Leader development builds human capital; leadership development builds social capital. The NOI is concerned with both. It starts with the individual to strengthen his capacity to influence others, regardless of one’s formal position or lack thereof. The traditional leadership theories only consider the great man as the leader, which is very Eurocentric. There are other ways or lenses through which to view leadership. Leadership looks more at the collective than only at the “great man.”

Minister Farrakhan introduced the Self-improvement Study Guides to the Nation of Islam through a lecture he delivered in 1986 entitled, “Self-Improvement: The Basis for Community Development.” There are currently 21 study guides to support the idea that the development of the individual is the key to developing society. The entire NOI effort is about the development of the individual leader so that he or she can develop the greater Black community, which in turn is an effort to improve the broader society to reflect the will or vision of God. The NOI’s vision appears on the inside back page of every Final Call newspaper: Allah (God) “...will bring about a universal government of peace wherein we all can live in peace together.” The development of the individual (leader) and the development of the community (leadership) go together. Pigg (1999) defined community development as “a process of building the capacity of community residents to create, maintain, and enhance generalized structures” (p. 199).

To understand how a collectivity of actors should work, Montuori and Donnelly (2018) used the metaphor of the improvising jazz musician. A jazz musician's performance "occurs in the context of a specific song" with a form or structure, but the improviser has "a great deal of discretion." Nevertheless, they said, it requires "alignment between the individual musician and the group and the ability to create collaboratively in context" (p. 12). Similarly, men who practice leadership in the mosque or community context are provided structure to guide them, but they are also given the personal space to add their flavor. Inevitably leaders will make mistakes, bad decisions, or ill-affect others at times, but they embrace these as opportunities to learn and improve their performance, as well as their relationships.

Pigg (1999) stated, "community leaders frame their behavior in the context of the social institution we know as *community*, not in formal organizations" where they have formal authority and positional power. Consequently, to get things accomplished, they must "rely on networks and influence, with relationships developed through extensive interactions with community residents usually representing many different points of view or interests" (p. 196).

Organizational and community leadership are contextual. The third implication of this study explains that organizational leadership and community leadership are contextual. NOI leadership occurs in the context of an organization, but the leadership also acts in the community context. Most often leadership is studied in the literature as a practice within the organization or business. However, the study of leadership and the practice of leadership must not be confined to an organization, whether it is a for-profit or not-for-profit entity. Although the Nation of Islam is an organization,

limiting the study of its leadership practices to the physical context of the organization limits the work of the Nation. The organization works with, and within, what Pigg (1999) refers to as the “context of the social institution we know as *community*” (p. 196). Both contexts are essential contexts for leadership practice. To better understand it, it might be useful to think about the metaphor of a house, which has many rooms or settings. Food is cooked in the kitchen, laundry is washed and dried in the basement, and people sleep in the bedroom. Although different activities occur in designated places, those individual activities are not isolated from the broader business of living. Likewise, specific actions occur in the mosque or a neighborhood, but they are simultaneously occurring/operating in the broader context of the community. For the Nation, the mosque is the spiritual center, a leadership school, and the launching pad for its activities, but the city is the field in which they work-out. Therefore, leadership is practiced in the mosque *and* the community. Regardless of where or when it is practiced, the contexts must be places where people are free to learn, grow, and fail safely. They must be safe places and safe spaces.

OJT or trial and error are valuable processes. As noted earlier, leaders make mistakes, bad decisions, and ill-affect others at times. However, for the participants in this study, these mistakes were embraced as opportunities to learn and improve their performance. The participants’ experience involved mentors and supporters who were intimately involved in their lives and their development, leaders who were up close and personal with them to nurture them through these difficult moments. The participants, in turn, emulated that behavior with people that they now lead. Seeing someone modeling the desired behavior helps to shorten the learning curve. This type of on-the-job-training,

(OJT) or trial and error are valuable experiences when the trainee is given the proper environment (context) and support. This fourth implication impacts on-the-job-training and on-boarding procedures across disciplines and in a variety of industries. We know there are apprenticeship programs in blue-collar jobs and onboarding procedures for many white-collar positions. Assuming leadership is no different; there's a learning curve. Leaders need support through their transition.

Prepare people to take the lead in small efforts. This study's findings have a fifth implication for people who want to empower themselves and others to be change agents in their own lives and the world. The data from this study show that leadership practice in the Nation of Islam is to give everyone a chance to learn and earn a leadership position. It provides people the proper environment and training opportunities to be successful. These individuals collaborate in the mosque and the streets to actively engage others in the same development process. However, an important point that should not be overlooked is that individuals are being prepared to take the lead in small efforts to change their selves, their family, their neighborhood, and their communities, as well as their organizations, whether it is a neighborhood-watch group, a work committee, a club, a fraternal organization, or a Little League team. A critical leadership practice in the Nation of Islam is to be a leader everywhere you are. The members are encouraged to lead exemplary lives and to share their experiences to help guide their peers as well as those coming behind them. Mentoring is about the preparation of future leaders in all aspects of one's life. A nurturing and positive experience creates a ripple effect.

Commitment to ethical, mental, and emotional practices is key. The sixth and final implication, which is derived from the findings for the second research question,

indicates that there are prerequisite practices for future generations of leaders. The prerequisites concern an individual's preparation for leadership. Although leadership is an on-going work in progress, these prerequisites are essential to anyone's leadership success. The future leaders must develop good character and integrity (ethical practice); establish a work-life balance (mental practice); and love genuinely (emotional practice).

In the Nation of Islam, the leadership journey is a spiritual journey. The NOI develops people to be different and to live differently than they had previously. People are transformed by the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, which actively encourages leading or living a righteous life; it is the foundation for ethical, moral, values-based leadership.

In the business-oriented, industrialized world, leaders are good at building cities, but in the words of Minister Farrakhan, society is "not doing very well in building human potential or building people." The Nation of Islam's focus is building marginalized people, and it is an act of social justice. There are so many problems in all areas of our society that being a leader in this type of work can become all-consuming. Therefore, it is crucial for future leaders to establish a work-life balance. Balance is critical in maximizing one's leadership potential.

Leadership in volunteer organizations is very different than it is in for-profit organizations and not-for-profit organizations with paid staff. Volunteer work is unpaid, and sometimes a thankless job, so it is essential that you love what you're doing and the people for whom you're doing it. A labor of love comes from a task that is done for pleasure, not for material gain. There must be genuine love and concern for the people that you are serving or assisting. Future leaders need to learn how to be of service to their

communities. In the Nation of Islam, the training emphasizes being brothers first and treating one another with brotherly love, which is leadership in action, not leadership from a position. The participants expressed love as the cornerstone of their labor.

The Nation of Islam is one of the oldest Black organizations in America. It is involved with many aspects of Black life and trying to make a change in it. Their leadership practices happen in the mosque but also in, and for, the broader community. There is no difference between the Muslim community and the broader, Black community. The work of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and Minister Louis Farrakhan is holistic; it provides a full range of leadership, across many realms: economic (international trade, small, neighborhood businesses, including restaurants and stores); social (gambling, drug, and alcohol rehabilitation, stable family structure and defined roles); political (human rights advocacy and diplomacy); criminal justice (prison rights); and educational (Muhammad Universities of Islam and adult education). There is no division or delineation between these realms. Islam is a way of life. The Nation of Islam teaches that all Black people are Muslim, which means that it is their nature to submit their will to do God's will, but some of them do not know that they are Muslim. Consequently, the registered members of the Nation of Islam have taken on the responsibility to help themselves and lead the others to the knowledge of themselves and to their collective destiny to lead their families, their communities, their nation, and the world.

Limitations

This study has limitations concerning sample size, participant selection, researcher positionality, and data collection method.

Sample size. Five participants were selected and volunteered for this study. It is a small sample size and limits the transferability of the study. Also, the study took place in only one region of the United States, which limits the perspectives of the participants. Since there are a limited number of laborers/leaders in each mosque and there are mosques all over the country, collecting data using focus groups during the Nation of Islam's national convention would expand the number of participants.

Further research is needed to uncover the extent to which the practices in the Nation of Islam are generalizable. Nonetheless, I do not feel the limitations of the study undermine the implications of this work.

Participant selection. All participants selected for the study were males. Their gender afforded each participant experience and perspective about leadership practices in the Nation of Islam. However, it is plausible, if participants had been female leaders, they might have viewed the leadership practices differently. Also, all the participants were from the same region and held the same two laboring positions, student minister and student captain. Therefore, generalization should proceed with caution.

Although the organization trains everyone for leadership, only the leaders in official positions were interviewed, rather than the general members, thus limiting the researchers' perspective of the data to that of the current leaders.

Positionality of the researcher. The researcher is a member of the Nation of Islam. The researcher's position was disclosed to the participants in the study before the semi-structured interviews occurred. Although the researcher explained the study to the participants and differentiated the role of the researcher from the position of Nation of

Islam member, the participants may have viewed the researcher as an authority figure and withheld their true perspectives.

Also, the researcher's status as a member and leader in the Nation of Islam may have had an impact on the design of the study, the interview questions, the analysis of data, and the interpretation of the findings.

The method of data collection. The interviews were semi-structured, which may have led some participants to focus only on questions asked rather than discuss everything relevant to their leadership practices. Plus, some of the interviews were mediated, face-to-face interviews, which may have caused participants to hide their actual thoughts and feelings. Since there are a limited number of laborers and they are spread all over the country, perhaps it would be beneficial to conduct focus groups during the Nation of Islam's annual convention to expand perspectives.

Recommendations

Practice. The researcher underscores the advice of Flores and Matkin (2014) who suggested that one of the ways that racial and ethnic minority leaders can encounter and overcome barriers is to know and understand how other, similar leaders have done it. The findings of this current study reveal that it's essential to have mentors and supporters intimately involved to nurture aspiring leaders through difficult moments and having someone modeling the desired behavior helps to shorten the learning curve. In addition, the participants in this study report that they emulate the mentoring behavior with people that they now lead. Consequently, it is a practice that is reciprocated, replicated, and continued with future benefits.

A second recommendation for people who want to empower themselves and others to be change agents in their own lives and the world is to get involved in their community and volunteer to lead in small efforts. Seizing small leadership opportunities within their family, neighborhood, communities, and organizations can pay big dividends in terms of leadership experience. Neighborhood-watch groups, work groups at places of employment, fraternal organizations in colleges, and Little League teams are always in need of strong leadership to successfully meet their goals. A critical leadership practice in the Nation of Islam and the researcher's recommendation for practice is to be a leader everywhere you are.

Policy. Given the positive impact of mentoring, the researcher recommends that school districts and government-funded programs make it a policy to include mentoring as a vital component of any leadership development plans that they have. However, to be effective, the mentors must commit the time and energy to be up close and personal with their mentees. They must pay attention and be responsive to their needs.

The second policy recommendation is for the leadership in the Nation of Islam. With a few notable exceptions, Akom (2003) claimed that most studies on the NOI had been based mainly on secondary sources and partly blamed it on the NOI's unwillingness to be the object of inquiry. On the contrary, Farrakhan (1993) stated that it is time to examine the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, his message and the people who have come to follow his teachings. The Nation of Islam should make a concerted effort to create a policy to share its leadership practices more widely. If researchers were aware of the availability and willingness of NOI members/leaders to participate in research about the

Nation of Islam, they could build on this study. Much of the literature on the Nation of Islam comes from secondary sources and is dated.

Future research. Based on the findings and limitations of this study, as well as the literature, I have five recommendations for future research. One recommendation would be expanding the population from the eastern region of the United States to other areas of the country. A second recommendation would be expanding the population from male leaders to other male members of the organization. A third recommendation would be to change the population to look at the women leaders within the organization. A fourth recommendation would be to look at specific aspects of their leadership practices and experiences. For example, what are the day-to-day activities, teaching, and training that the Nation engages in to give its leaders those experiences? Although this study described them, these topics could be explored more deeply. A fifth and final recommendation would be to look more closely at the Nation of Islam in terms of its activities in the community leadership context compared to the organizational leadership context.

Conclusion

In conclusion, developing male leaders in the Black community is impeded by a disproportionately high occurrence of social, economic, criminal justice, educational, political, and even health hurdles. Limited attention has been given to the leadership development of Black male leaders as a counter to the observable disproportionate outcomes they face. For over 80 years the Nation of Islam (the Nation) has been a driving force for equality, civil rights, community empowerment, and self-sufficiency (Akom, 2007; Pitre, 2008) and is dedicated to empowering Black people to overcome the varied

issues present in their communities, work environments, houses of worship, and the broader society. Moreover, the Nation of Islam has exhibited success in developing Black male leaders. The goal of this study was to explore the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam and to uncover leadership practices that might be transferable to successive generations of Black male leadership in/outside of the Nation of Islam in order to add to the pool of research knowledge available on the topic of leadership generally and add to the understanding of the contemporary practices of leaders in the Nation of Islam. Additionally, the study helps to address a social justice issue by lifting the voices of two underrepresented groups (Black males and members in the Nation of Islam) whose contributions are being ignored and marginalized/otherized.

The research design for this study to explore and uncover leadership practices of male leaders in the Nation of Islam is a qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative research is from a naturalistic paradigm where the research is conducted in a natural setting and typically involves detailed and rich descriptions of human opinions, perceptions or behaviors (Creswell, 2007). As an approach, it can be exploratory and useful when the research has not been addressed with a certain sample or group of people (Morse, 1991). In qualitative descriptive studies, data collection attempts to discover “the who, what and where of events” or experiences (Sandelowski, 2000, p.339).

Using a purposive sampling methodology five contemporary leaders in the Nation of Islam, who reside in major cities in three states in the northeastern United States, were selected. Purposive sampling methods allowed the researcher to select information-rich participants who elucidated the study’s research questions. (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 1990; Seidman, 2006). Participation in the study was voluntary and informed consent was

obtained (see Appendix B). Data was gathered using semi-structured interviews and analyzed through a three-stage process. The findings of the study were derived from the guiding research questions:

1. From the perspective of five contemporary leaders in the Nation of Islam, what are the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam?
2. What male leadership practices in the Nation of Islam may be transferrable to successive generations of Black male leadership in/outside the Nation of Islam?

Many categories and themes emerged from the data that addressed the research questions. Four categories and eight themes emerged from the first research question. Three of the original four categories and five additional themes emerged from the second research question. The first category, *de/reconstructing knowledge*, emerged as a broad category when participants described their work or mission as leaders in the Nation of Islam. In addressing the first research question, this category incorporates three themes: (a) *spreading the truth*, (b) *resurrecting the dead*, and (c) *transforming people*. In addressing the second research question, one additional theme is incorporated: *character and integrity*. The second category, *launching pad for leadership*, describes the mosque as the place where learners get to practice their leadership and leaders get to refine and master what they're learning. In addressing the first research question, this category incorporates two themes: (a) *leading-learners*, and (b) *learning-leaders*. In addressing the second research question, one additional theme is incorporated: *work-life integration*. The third category, *labor of love*, emerged as a category in which the participants expressed love as the foundation and motivating force of their work. In addressing the first research

question, this category incorporates one theme: *prioritizing people*. In addressing the second research question, three additional themes are incorporated: (a) *paying the price*, (b) *loving leader*, and (c) *understanding people*. The fourth and final category, *mentoring*, looks at the role that mentoring played in the participants' journey and their leadership practices. In addressing the first research question, this category incorporates two themes: (a) *hands-on helping*, and (b) *modeling*. No themes emerged in this category for the second research question.

All the categories and themes are relevant to the lived experiences of the Black males in the Nation of Islam in the northeastern United States who participated in this qualitative descriptive study. The findings from this study indicate that the Nation of Islam has been successful in building Black men and improving their positions as leaders in their families, communities, work environments, houses of worship, and the broader society. Furthermore, evidence from this study supports the literature surrounding how Islam offers people an opportunity for rebirth and provides them with solutions to their concerns about the problems they face. For the participants of this study, benefits of the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, such as eliminating excuses and self-defeating thoughts, were evident from the data. Figure 5.3 depicts Elijah Muhammad guiding a Black man to a changed life. Moreover, the on-the-job training in the mosque and on the streets were found to be influential in strengthening their leadership practices.

On the surface, the action of *hearing and obeying* or following instructions is not a key element of leadership practice, as evidenced by the fact that leadership is seen as a binary of leaders and followers. However, when exploring deeper into the phenomenon of leadership there seems to be an unacknowledged value in following as preparation for

leading. In their discussion of leading while one is learning, the participants were unanimous in their views that having a growth mind-set allows one to take a position and learn to grow in leadership.

What is evident is despite their own lack of belief in themselves, many of the leaders embraced the opportunity to lead because someone reached out to them and believed in them. Studies and articles have indicated that leadership opportunities, skill development, and sustainable financial practices of Black males are minimal and ineffective. This study focused on how Black male leaders in the NOI have been prepared in their everyday lives to become successful leaders and achieve in different fields of endeavor and at all levels.

Rather than more and higher education leading to better jobs and higher positions, their upward mobility was the result of numerous factors that were critical to their development. The ability to deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge, having a place to develop and launch their leadership practices, possessing enough love to take up the hard task of changing their personal and collective realities, and being *men-toured* inspired and prepared these individuals to use those same leadership practices to prepare those coming behind them.

The limitations of the study related to: (a) sample size, (b) participant selection, (c) researcher positionality, and (d) data collection method. The recommendations are based on incorporating diverse perspectives into the research on leadership practices in the Nation of Islam. Opportunities for future research include more studies that expand the pools of participants to include the rank-and-file believer, men from other geographical locations of the country, men from other disciplines within the Nation of

Islam, and women from all the pools previously mentioned. Recommendations are also made for changes in policy and professional practice for organizational leaders and community activists.

The Nation of Islam has been successful in developing its members to be leaders inside the organization, but it has also influenced the leadership development and practices of those people outside of the organization. For example, in terms of my own personal development, I have served as a student minister for over 25 of my 30 years in the Nation of Islam. I have learned and developed my leadership practices there. However, those leadership practices have transferred to my leadership roles outside of the Nation. I am an associate professor in a community college, a publicly-elected commissioner of education for a city school district, a communication consultant, and an adjunct professor at a private university. I've served on the board of directors for several not-for-profit and for-profit entities. My development in the Nation has prepared me for these various roles. The leadership development that I received in the Nation has made me more effective in my professional capacities and as a volunteer who is involved in a myriad of issues in the community, including police-community relations, poverty, health, education, etc. The Nation has given me a perspective and a way of operating that I take with me into the community. Because of my exposure to the Nation, I don't perceive a separation between the Nation of Islam, the broader Black community, and the greater community. Just as the research participants said, they're really one. For me and for the other members, the Nation of Islam and the broader Black community are pieces of a unified cloth called life.

Although historically the Nation has been, and continues to be, viewed by mainstream society as a marginal, radical group, it has been successful with a population that mainstream society has failed – Black males. Despite the FBI’s successful infiltration and destruction of nearly all the Black, civil rights organizations, the Nation of Islam remains alive, active, and committed to improving the lives of Black and marginalized people. Because of this history, the Nation of Islam has been very insular or protective about its membership and inner workings. However, in *A Torchlight for America*, Minister Farrakhan (1993) said, “... it is time for America to closely examine the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, his message and the people who have come to follow his teachings” (p. v). Farrakhan proclaimed the NOI has a contribution to make in improving America. So, he is now receptive to having people come and see what is happening in the Nation of Islam. Given the success of the Nation of Islam with Black males, as described in this research study, how can its work be replicated and broadened to help a greater number of Black males? As a researcher and scholar, I’ve picked up that mantle to spread this study’s findings beyond the Nation. My work over the last 30 years has been connecting with diverse communities.

In addition, while the Nation of Islam is an organization, it is more than an organization. Limiting the work of the Nation of Islam to the status of an organization does it a disservice. We need to expand beyond looking at it as an organization. The focus in the study of leadership, particularly as it pertains to business and industry, is the organization. However, there’s so much more to see. There are a lot of researchers expanding and developing leadership studies beyond the great man theory of leadership or the focus on the organization as the primary context for leadership. The Nation bridges

the gap between the organization itself and what happens with leadership beyond the organization – in the streets.

Within mainstream organizations and society, leadership for Black males is promoted in athletics, but except for the Nation of Islam and a few others, it is not promoted elsewhere. Since very few, if any, leadership development opportunities are provided in our schools, young people find other outlets and avenues, such as street gangs. That's where they go to develop their leadership skills, and that's one of the places where the Nation of Islam has historically found them. Fortunately, more recently, more have been exposed to the Nation of Islam in other ways, but far too few. When and where is it going to be acceptable to develop the Black male leadership skills within city school districts, community colleges, or universities, for example? The challenge for me, other scholars, and practitioners is to discover or develop successful delivery models to share this research. What will be the development vehicles for the NOI leadership practices to be infused and used in other contexts?

While the Nation of Islam has a moral obligation to continue to outreach and touch the Black men that mainstream society has deemed irretrievable, irredeemable, and lost, the mainstream society has a moral imperative to do the same. It should embrace and support the Nation of Islam as a partner in this critical work. Despite rejection, Louis Farrakhan continues to outreach to the broader community to access people who could benefit from the teachings and training of the Nation of Islam.

Although the participants in this study have developed successful leadership practices, there remain many Black males who still face dire life circumstances, which raised the question of what the leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam

are, but also, what leadership practices might be transferrable to future generations of Black male leaders. West (1993) described the nihilistic threat as “the lived experience of coping with a life of horrifying meaninglessness, hopelessness, and... lovelessness” (p. 14). The leadership practices of Black males in the Nation of Islam might hold a key to the process of building male leadership in the Black community to effectively counter it. This researcher will utilize his personal and professional networks, as well as formal gatherings, to disseminate the findings and implications of his research.

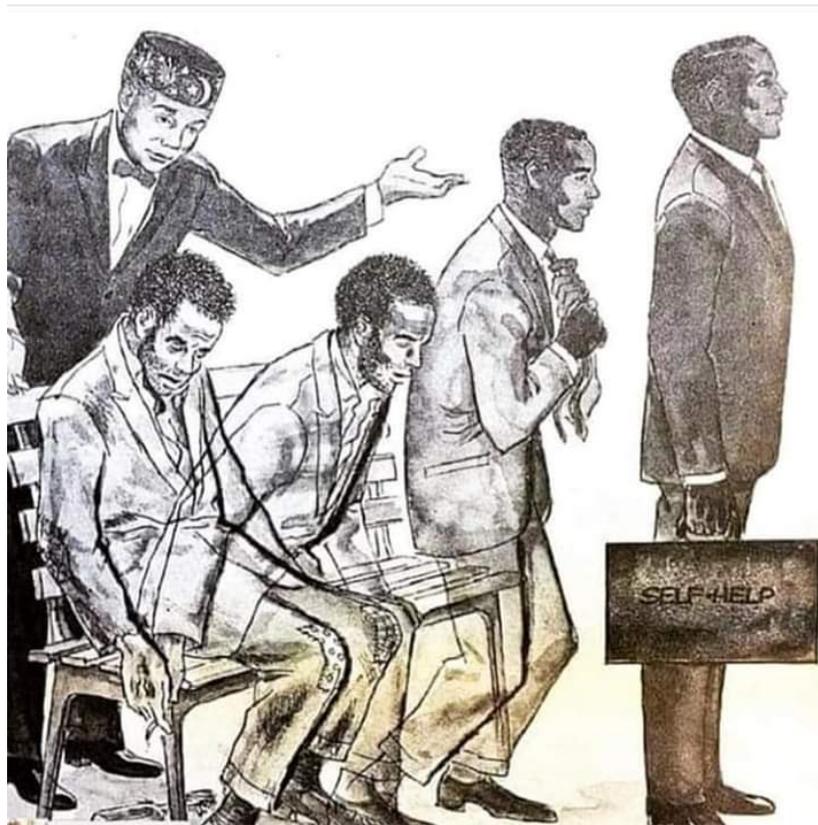


Figure 5.3. Elijah Muhammad changes the lives of Black Men. Adapted from https://issuu.com/muhammadspeaks/docs/elijah_muhammad_january_15_1965

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Study Title: “Leadership Practices of Black Male Leaders in the Nation of Islam:
A Qualitative Descriptive Study”

Date/Time of Interview: _____

Interviewer: Mark D. Muhammad

Participant Pseudonym: _____

Introduction:

Thank you for participating in this study. I am going to ask you a series of open-ended questions focused on your past experiences with leadership. This interview will be recorded to allow me to later transcribe your responses to the interview questions. The information that you share will be confidential and, unless you agree to include it, your name will not appear on any of the documents used in this study.

Overview of Study:

This purpose of this study is to examine the development and practices of male leaders who currently hold or have held leadership positions within the Nation of Islam. This information will be useful to leaders and will allow for a deeper understanding of leadership experiences of males in urban communities in the northeastern United States.

Confirmation of Consent:

Before we get started, I want to be sure that you have reviewed the consent form. Please indicate your consent to participate in this study.

Interview Questions:

I am now going to ask you a series of open-ended questions focused on your experience or past experience as a leader in the Nation of Islam. If you need me to clarify any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Question 1: Tell me a little bit about your background.

- A. Personal – family history, marital status, children?
- B. Professional – occupation(s), positions, companies, businesses?
- C. Educational – schools attended; degrees attained?

Question 2: Tell me about your journey to join the Nation of Islam.

Question 3: Tell me about your leadership journey in the Nation of Islam.

Follow up Probes/ Sub Questions:

Question 4: Describe your current/past responsibilities and activities as a leader of this organization.

Follow up Probes/ Sub Questions:

- A. When do/did these take place?
- B. Describe the social setting where this takes/took place.

Question 5: Who and what in your organization have impacted your leadership the most?

Follow up Probes/ Sub Questions:

- A. Describe the social setting where this took place.
- B. What opportunities for leadership did you receive?
- C. How were the lessons of leadership disseminated to you? Did you attend classes? Lectures? Readings? Hands-on activities? If so, what lectures, and by whom? What readings? What activities?
- D. How did this knowledge affect you?

E. What thoughts stand out for you?

Question 6: How have your experiences in the Nation of Islam influenced your approach to leadership outside of the organization? Describe a situation that exemplifies it? (Provide scenarios? As suggested by Stake, 2010).

Follow up Probes/ Sub Questions:

A. Describe the social setting where this took place.

B. How did these experiences affect you, personally and professionally?

C. What thoughts stand out for you?

Question 7: Discuss any recommendations you have for others thinking about leadership inside or outside of the Nation of Islam.

Question 8: Is there any other information about your leadership experiences that was not addressed in the above questions that you would like to discuss?

Appendix B

St. John Fisher College

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of study:	Leadership Practices of Black Male Leaders in the Nation of Islam: A Qualitative Descriptive Study
Name of researcher:	Mark D. Muhammad, (315) 476-6175, Ed. D Candidate, SJFC
Faculty Supervisor:	C. Michael Robinson, Ed. D (crobinson@sjfc.edu), 315-498-7237
Purpose of study:	To explore Black male leadership practices in the Nation of Islam from the perspective of five to seven of its contemporary leaders.
Place of study:	Mosques in the northeastern region of the United States.
Length of participation:	Depending on the extent of your answers, the interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes to complete.
Method of data collection:	Interviews
Risks and benefits:	I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. The results from the study will contribute to the research available in the area of leadership and to practices that may be transferable to successive generations of Black male leadership in/outside of the Nation of Islam.
Method for protecting confidentiality/privacy:	The records of this study will be kept private. All interview transcriptions, audio recordings, field notes, and results will be stored on the researcher's personal computer that is password protected. All paper transcripts, field notes, and data collection tools will be kept in a locked container and will be destroyed after 5 years. Participant names will not be used in any documents, and no identifying information will be used in any publications. In any sort of report, we

make public, to further protect confidentiality, the participants will be labeled with a pseudonym to avoid any possible identification.

Your rights: As a research participant, you have the right to:

1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to participate.
2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
3. Refuse to answer a question without penalty.
4. Be informed of the results of the study.

I have read the above, received a copy of this form, and I agree to participate in the above-named study.

Print name (Participant)

Signature

Date

Audio Tape Release Form

I voluntarily agree to be audio taped during the interview.

Print name (Participant)

Signature

Date

Print name (Investigator)

Signature

Date

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher listed above. If you experience emotional or physical discomfort due to participation in this study, please contact your personal healthcare provider for appropriate referrals or contact a local crisis intervention program.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of St. John Fisher College has reviewed this project. For any concerns regarding this study/or if you feel that your rights as a participant (or the rights of another participant) have been violated or caused you undue distress (physical or emotional distress), please contact Jill Rathbun by phone during normal business hours at (585) 385-8012 or irb@sjfc.edu. She will contact a supervisory IRB official to assist you.

Addendum

All digital audio recordings and transcriptions of interviews will be maintained using a private, locked, and password-protected file and password-protected computer stored securely in the private home of the principal researcher. Electronic files will include assigned identity codes and pseudonyms; they will not include actual names or any information that could personally identify or connect participants to this study. Other materials, including notes or paper files related to data collection and analysis, will be stored securely in unmarked boxes, locked inside a cabinet in the private home of the principal researcher. Only the researcher will have access to electronic or paper records. The digitally recorded audio data will be kept by this researcher for a period of 5 years following publication of the dissertation. Signed informed consent documents will be kept for 5 years after publication. All paper records will be cross-cut shredded and professionally delivered for incineration. Electronic records will be cleared, purged, and destroyed from the hard drive and all devices such that restoring data is not possible.