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#BLACKQUEERLIVESMATTER: Understanding the Lived Experiences of Black Gay

Male Leaders in Los Angeles

A Dissertation by

Christopher Richard Edward Jackson

Chapman University

Orange, CA

Donna Ford Attallah College of Educational Studies

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

May 2019

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Melina Abdullah, Ph.D.

March 2019

#BLACKQUEERLIVESMATTER: Understanding the Lived Experiences of Black Gay

Male Leaders in Los Angeles

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First, I give honor to God, who is the head of my life. Without Him, I do not know where I would be today. The Lord has kept me and continues to watch over me while I go through trials and tribulations. I take these tests as ways to learn and grow in my relationship with Jesus.

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ABSTRACT

#BLACKQUEERLIVESMATTER: Understanding the Lived Experiences of Black Gay

Male Leaders in Los Angeles

by Christopher Richard Edward Jackson

The Black community and the gay community have historically experienced marginalization from society, public and private institutions, federal government agencies, and law enforcement. Black gay male leadership is not a conversation within leadership academia. This phenomenological study focuses on understanding the lived experiences and leadership among Black gay men who are leaders in Los Angeles County. This study found that the lived experiences such as oppression, mentorship, community involvement, and advocacy have influenced their leadership development and leadership identity. This study identifies how Black gay men define leadership, based off their lived experiences. It also identifies themes of leadership development for Black gay men. The results have implications for future research and leadership development among Black gay men. Understanding lived experiences of Black gay male leaders and their leadership development can help identify what core foundations/topics could be included in professional development aimed at building leadership development among young Black gay men.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

My Leadership Identity Journey

New to California and new to my high school, during my freshman year of high school at El Cajon Valley High School, the Associated Student Body (ASB) went to each freshman class and passed out interest slips to recruit the Freshmen Class President. Two days later, a counselor and the ASB President pulled me out of my second period class and told me my class schedule was changing. I asked them about their reasons for this change, and they told me I was the only person who signed up to be Freshman Class President. As a result, I now had to take the ASB/Leadership class the school offered. I was immediately afraid and excited at the same time. I had no clue what it meant to be the class president, let alone if I had what it took to complete the job, but I knew I was going to do it. That was the first time I realized I had to do something that called for leadership. By the time I entered my sophomore year, I decided there was a need for a Gay Straight Student Alliance (GSA). Although I encountered a lot of push back from the administration, I had two advisors and many students who wanted to see this happen, therefore I made it happen and founded the GSA at my high school. It is still there today.

As a young, 16-year-old, Black gay man living in San Diego, I started going to a community-based organization that emphasized safe sex among men of color who have sex with men. I loved working with my fellow gay men of color and talking to them about safe sex. I eventually became one of the co-chairs for their community advisory board. In this position I helped program events, schedule volunteers, and help make decisions about the future of the community-based-organization. Participating in this organization sparked my awareness and understanding of the struggle of gay, bisexual,

pansexual, queer, and same gender loving men. This community involvement not only helped me grow as a leader; it also gave me a purpose while I was high school. The opportunity provided me an outlet to understand who I was as a Black queer male.

This is when I began to understand my gay identity and started to develop an understanding of leadership. It was also the time I met my first mentor: a Black gay man who was very active in my personal, academic, professional, and leadership development. He was like the father I never had. He was the first real example of a Black gay man that I could identify as a leader. He was the example of how to be the best Black gay man I could be. I have never forgotten how he stood up for me, always challenged me to grow, and never allowed me to disrespect myself, my community, and my peers.

I moved away to attend college at California State University, Los Angeles. Due to financial restrictions, I knew I had to get a job. I quickly hired as the major events and community service programmer at the University Student Union. This introduced me to many campus leaders, including the Director of the Cross Cultural Centers (CCC) and the Vice President of Student Affairs. After meeting the Director of the CCC, he began molding me to become the leader the LGBTQ organization on campus called The Queer Connection (TQC). By the end of my freshman year, I was the President of TQC. That was also around the time I found out I was HIV-positive. Although I was hurting at the time, I wanted to continue to lead. At the first TQC meeting, which were students who were predominately gay men of color, I decided to talk about HIV prevention and awareness. From there we started to speak about programming and engaging in the campus community to speak for the needs of the LGBTQ community and also be a welcoming face to new LGBTQ students.

While attending a Pan-African Studies course in college, I received a B+ grade on a paper. I looked at the student's paper next to me and was upset. I knew I did better on my paper than this other student. Filled with frustration, I went to my professor and asked, "How did I get a B+, when this other student got an A. I know my paper was correct and overall better than the other student." The professor looked at me and said, "Yes, your paper was good, but I expect more out of you. I want you to understand that because you are Black, the world is going to expect more out of you. I know your work can be better." At that point I did not understand what she meant. I was still upset and thought I deserved an A on my paper. It was not until years later that I truly understood what she was trying to get me to understand about how society sees my Blackness and the perceived expectations of Black men in society. For me, this was truly a learning moment that took time to sink in and make sense.

After graduating college, I began working in the Black gay community doing HIV prevention, education, counseling, advocacy, and capacity building. I was surrounded by Black gay men who were leaders in the community who helped me understand how to develop my own leadership capabilities. I began to work with these Black gay men and implemented their leadership styles into my own leadership style. The most important thing I learned while working in this community was how to be an authentic person and leader. Being a leader is something I have always had inside of me, but these Black gay men affirmed the purpose of being authentic. These leaders also helped me navigate my authenticity through the bureaucracy without losing my voice and purpose. Working with this community allowed me to further understand my own identities and how to become an advocate.

Current Research on Black Gay Men and Leadership

A review of research reveals that there is little to no scholarly work that examines leadership development of young Black gay men. In addition, leadership development among gay Black men in organizations is almost nonexistent. While there is scholarly work that examines the lived experiences of Black students and LGBTQIA+ students in educational systems, none of these studies' objectives are specific to the leadership development of Black gay men. In addition, there is much research about the experience of leadership in the Black community, the LGBTQIA+ communities, and youth overall, however, it should be noted that researchers so far have viewed these groups and social identities in separate spheres. It is noticeable that research in leadership has neglected the intersectionality and development Black gay men.

Hence, this study aims to address the gap in scholarly work of leadership development among Black gay men. In order to bridge that gap, this study will examine the lived experiences of Black gay men and their connections with their leadership development. Another objective of this study is to utilize the findings to establish a foundation for a leadership development curriculum for young Black gay men. This curriculum on leadership development can assist with building a better quality of life for young Black gay men and the community as a whole. As seen later in Chapter 6, this research identifies four main themes connected to the leadership development of Black gay men determined by their lived experiences.

Definition of Important Terms

To better understand this study, there are a few terms that need to be identified. These terms will be used throughout the dissertation. They are words and phrases are

commonly language used in either the LGBT community, the Black community, or specifically among Black gay men. Some of these words are not identified in any scholarly work but are defined by participants.

- Cisgender: A person who identifies their gender with the sex given to them at birth.
- Queer: An umbrella term that for individuals within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual Plus (LGBTQIA+) community.
- Blackness: The lived experience of Pan-African individuals in the United States of America.
- Black Gay Men: Pan-African cisgender men who have sex with men and/or have an intimate relationship with other men.
- Intersectionality: An individual that has two, or more, systematic and institutionally oppressed identities (Crenshaw, 1995a; Richardson & Loubier, 2008; Poynter & Washington, 2005; Pastrana, 2006; Loiacano, 1989; hooks, 1992; hooks, 1981; Collins, 2002).
- The Sauce: A derogatory slang termed used by gay men of color that identifies someone living with HIV.
- MSM: Stands for Men who have Sex with Men. These men may or may not identify as gay. It speaks to the type of sex they may have, not their sexual identity.

- Leadership: The combined efforts of a community working towards a common goal by motivating everyone to utilize their talents and strengths (Burns, 1978; Gill, 2011).

Statement of Problem

Historically, the Black Liberation Movement has been focused on Black, middle to upper class, heterosexual cisgender men. Although this has historically been beneficial to one segment of the community, it is missing the involvement and acknowledgment of sub-communities within the Black Community. Although Black women and Black queer people were involved in the Black Liberation movement, their contributions, experiences, and issues have not always been a priority of the Black liberation movement.

Black Lives Matter! Black Lives Matter! Black Lives Matter! Black Lives Matter! This is a chant that is being currently sung within the Black community. The Black Lives Matter Movement is now part of the Black Liberation Movement within the United States of America. Black Lives Matter has shifted the focus of the Black Liberation Movement to one that is more inclusive of the entire Black community (Chatelain & Asoka, 2015; Abdullah, 2017). The Black Lives Matter Movement fights for the equality, equity, and quality of all Black Lives regardless of ability, religion, age, sex, legal documentation, gender identity and express, and sexual orientation (Chatelain & Asoka, 2015; Abdullah, 2017).

Black Queer Lives

Black Queer Lives Matter! Black Queer Lives Matter! Black Queer Lives Matter! More specifically the lives of Black queer cisgender men are being faced with inequality, discrimination, low quality of life, and even premature death. For example, Human

Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a serious issue disproportionately impacting Black gay men. According to Foster et. al, (2011), “Young Black men who have sex with men account for 48% of 13–29-year-old HIV positive men who have sex with men in the USA” (p. 1103). With Black gay men being disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS, discourse about HIV/AIDS, STDS, healthy sex, condom usage, communication, behavioral change, and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is urgent.

In many respects, the advocacy of Black gay men has almost become invisible in the Black community (Black gay men, group interview, March 28, 2016). Across the USA, there have been multiple cases where Black gay men have experienced various levels of discrimination, stigma, and hate crimes at work, school, health care organizations, and religious establishments (Black gay men, group interview, March 28, 2016). These exclusionary experiences can affect the quality of life and leadership development of young Black gay men. There are multiple aspects of life that can improve the quality of life for young Black queer cisgender men; such as education, employment, physical and mental health, and a safe home (Black gay men, group interview, March 28, 2016).

Significance of the Problem

Our present commitment to the development of leadership among young Black gay men is essential to the continuous development and advancement of the Black gay community for generations to come. Understanding the lived experiences of Black gay men can help address issues of leadership among young Black gay men. Having a better understanding of their lived experiences can help improve leadership development in the

community as well as and understand how to apply leadership in everyday life, educational environments, social change, and professional atmospheres. When Black gay men experience intersectional oppressions, they have a unique understanding of leadership. This is resonant with past research and theory, which has stated that our social identities impact how we view, define, and operationalize our leadership in organizational and community settings (Richardson and Loubier, 2008).

Marginalized communities often resist the pattern that historically white heterosexual men have defined curriculum and history, especially when it speaks to the experiences of minorities, specifically Black gay men. The explanation of experience and historical context of marginalized communities are often controlled by those who have historically oppressed them (Smith, 1999). For example, new textbooks in the state of Texas are presently teaching about Black slavery in the United States in a very alarming context. A passage from a K-12 textbook, published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt suggested that Black American slaves were treated kindly by their masters and were given food and clothing. The text continues stating that being beaten, whipped, tortured, and branded was just all part of American slavery, as if it was acceptable and not dehumanizing (Rockmore, 2015).

In addition, in a geography textbook by McGraw-Hill Education, references were made that Africans were brought to America as “workers” rather than slaves. The authors called the social phenomenon immigration rather than people being stolen from their homelands and forcibly put into slavery. When minorities are brought to the table to speak and correct the miseducation of present issues and provide true community historical context, it no longer perpetuates the cycle of colonization and dehumanization

(Smith, 1999). As Black gay men, we specifically must begin to decolonize our minds by the way we educate the future leaders, scientist, educators, and researchers on the truths of history. I argue that there needs to be a correction of the intentional misconstrued education being force fed to the world's leaders and children. This study contributes to an agenda steeped in decolonization and the beginning of developing leadership for Black gay men.

Dominant Definitions of Leadership

There is a large body of research concerning the definitions of leadership. For example, Gill and Burns are, for instance, two widely cited scholars in leadership studies. Gill (2011) explained leadership as “showing the way and helping or inducing others to pursue it” (p. 9). Burns (1978) deduced leadership as “Leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations-the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations-of both leaders and followers” (p.19). In addition, Burns coined the term transformational leadership, which looks closely at the relationship a leader builds with those they are working with (Burns, 1968). Burns (1978) believed that the relationship between a leader and those he is guiding should be developed in a way where the leader is understanding who the person is as well as guiding them to a common goal. It is not only a transactional experience where the common goal is the only important aspect to the relationship (Burns, 1968).

While these definitions inform how organizations lead in various contexts, it should be noted they are not inclusive of the lived experiences of Black gay men. Focused on the leadership experiences of white, cisgender, heterosexual men, these

frameworks fail to acknowledge the particular lived experiences of black gay men, and their development as leaders in a racist and homophobic society.

Research Questions

Taking into account the gaps in research and practice, this study addresses these theoretical and empirical gaps and is driven by three research questions:

1. How do Black gay men define leadership in their communities?
2. How have the lived experiences of Black gay men influenced their leadership development?
3. What are the lived experiences of Black gay men as leaders?

These three questions have been carefully thought out to ensure the most authentic development of leadership understanding among Black gay men. These questions raise the awareness and validation of Black gay male leaders in our society. It can provide context as to how to develop future generations of Black gay men. Lastly, they make sure that Black gay men are participants in creating an understanding for Black gay men in the general society.

Organization of the Dissertation

In this study, Chapter Two is a comprehensive review of literature that examines leadership. Chapter Two assesses leadership development theories that historically overlap with the Black community and the gay community. It also describes how critical race theory is a theoretical foundation for understanding leadership and the lived experiences for Black gay men. The next sections of Chapter two identify how the impact of identity and intersectionality have on leadership development of the Black community and the Gay Community. Next, it seeks to understand how the lived experiences of

marginalization impacts leadership development among Black gay men. It will also discuss each community's road to advocacy and how advocacy has been an important role to the leadership development for young Black gay men. Lastly, Chapter two will explain gaps in research and disclose the research questions this study pursues to answers.

Chapter Three is the methodology chapter. This chapter will open by outlining the research questions proposed for this study. It will then begin to discuss the reason for using Quare theory as a theoretical frame work for this study, not Queer theory. Chapter Three will also explain how Critical Responsive Methodology will be utilized as an ethical methodology to conducting research. Next, this study will be using Phenomenology Methodology as the research methodology and Chapter Three will explain how this research methodology could be used when conducting research with Black gay men. This chapter will also include my positionality as the researcher, explain the methods of data collection and analysis, and review the trustworthiness of this research study.

The purpose of Chapter Four is to provide basic demographics and each participants' journey to leadership. The basic demographics includes the participants pseudonym, age, educational level, career field, position title, location of interview, and how they self-identify (Black gay man or gay Black man). The description of each participants' journey to leadership will be a brief account of how they have gotten to their current position provided by the participants themselves.

Chapter Five provides the data analysis procedure and explains the first and second coding processes used to identify the themes and thematic categories in Chapter 6.

There were two coding processes used for first cycle coding, Descriptive coding and Values coding. For second cycle coding, Axial coding was used to identify the actual themes in Chapter 6 based off data gathered from the first cycle coding. Lastly, Chapter 5 also provides an outline of questions the participants contributed for the second interview.

Next, Chapter 6 outlines the findings of the research study. It identifies four themes and thematic categories that correspond with each theme. These four themes aim to answers the three research questions proposed in this study. The four themes identified are: Lived Experiences of Black Gay Men as Leaders; How Lived Experiences Inspired Leadership Development; The Role of Mentorship in Leadership Development among Black Gay Men; and Defining Leadership for Black Gay Men.

Lastly Chapter 7 is the discussion chapter. This chapter will deliberate further into the findings by identifying the value to Black gay male leadership development, discuss the answers to the research questions, and provide an insight to possible implications to future research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Introduction

The Black community and the Gay community have historically experienced mistreatment and oppression from society, public and private institutions, federal government agencies, and law enforcement. These two communities have been fighting for equality, equity, and freedom within the United States of America. More specifically, young Black gay men disproportionately face life challenges such as health disparities, lack of education, homelessness, homophobia, racism, and abandonment (Means & Jaeger, 2013). They have experienced hate crimes because of their sexual orientation and skin color. Black and Gay communities by far have more challenges to overcome in order to move toward equality and acceptance in the United States of America.

One way these two communities have overcome such issues are by developing movements and resisting societal norms through the voices and actions of community leaders. It was Isaac Newton who stated, “If I have seen further it is only by standing on the shoulders of giants”. A main issue for young Black gay men is a lack of leadership development available that speaks to their particular needs. Leadership development among young Black gay men is practically absent in mainstream society.

There must an examination of issues in the Black gay community and explore what dialogs need to take place to ensure young Black gay men ages 18 to 29 are being taught Leadership development. The age range of 18 to 29 comes from the emerging adulthood development theory (Arnett, 2000). From a five-year study of youth between the ages of 18 and 29, the emerging adulthood theory of development addressed five

features: Age of identity exploration, Age of instability, Age of self-focus, Age of feeling in-between, and Age of possibilities (Arnett, 2000).

Culture, community, and identity play a role in leadership development (Collins, 2012; Richardson & Loubier, 2008). This is important because a person's identities can influence their leadership style and why they may lead a particular way (Abdullah 2003; Collins 2012). For young Black gay men, developing one's own leadership skills can mean empowering others and future young Black gay men to become successful personally, professionally, and academically (Nye, 2010). The phenomenon of Black gay men's experience in leadership can help understand and guide young Black gay men's leadership development.

When working with Black gay men to understand the needs of young Black gay men when it pertains to leadership, there requires a level of trust and understanding of what leadership is for Black gay men. One part of being a leader and assisting individual growth is being authentic and understanding a person's identities (Jones, 2016). Authentic leadership is allowing personal transparency with other individuals; trust is a key part of leadership with Black men and gay men (Fassinger et al., 2010; Cornileus, 2012; Jones, 2016). Being genuine and displaying authenticity among young Black gay men is a key part of earning their trust.

The morals and ethics of society can change often when identities differ from person to person and humans have the tendency to evolve and transform our beliefs over time due to the experiences of our identities. Richardson and Loubier (2008) explained that leaders and leadership is not dependent on one identity or experience but a combination of all (i.e. race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, age,

gender identity, etc.). With this knowledge, it is necessary to explore, and address, multiple identities within the context of leadership to better understand the gaps in literature

This review of literature will consider what major theories and empirical studies are relevant to young gay Black men and leadership, it focuses on four specific areas of research: Leadership Development Models, Critical Race Theory, The Impact Identity and Intersectionality have on Leadership Development, How Lived Experiences of Marginalization Impact Leadership Development, and the Road to Advocacy. This will help develop a better understanding of theoretical frameworks, trending themes, and issues that are congruent with the leadership development of young Black gay men.

Leadership Development Models

There are two leadership theories this study will use as a framework for young Black gay men. Servant leadership and transformational leadership are important for young Black men to understand and began to develop. These two leadership theories are saturated with the intent of working with others to build a community of trust and development.

Servant Leadership.

Gill (2011) explained that Servant Leadership is working with people, or within communities, to assess and address issues with in that community. This type of leadership has been displayed with the Black community over time with such leaders as Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Fred Hampton. This specific leadership is different from others because individuals in leadership roles are catering to the needs of their community. A servant leader's main goal is to assist individuals and groups of

people in developing and achieving their goals and in order for a servant leader to be effective they need to be authentic and build trust within their community (Gill, 2011). Service leadership is similar to the African Proverb, “It takes a village to raise child.” These values and traits in a person that serve a community are vital to success in leadership for young Black gay men. Trust is fundamental in the Black gay community. Young Black gay men have been ostracized by their families, churches, and the Black community because of their sexual orientation. Hence the reason why servant leadership and authenticity is needed to build community trust.

Transformational Leadership.

The second leadership theory to discuss is transformational leadership. According to Burns (1978) transformational leadership is not only a leader guiding a follower, but it is actually the follower and leader working together to motivate each other. Although this definition is seen from a business stance, it can be related to the leadership development of young Black gay men. It is a theory that is based on confronting change and developing leadership based on strengths and interpersonal relationships (Burns, 1978; Gill 2011). Change is inevitably going to happen in any community and has been consistent in the Black gay community.

Most leadership theories have been developed by white heterosexual men including transformational leadership and servant leadership. These two theories of leadership have been found consistently throughout the Black Liberation Movement and the Gay Rights Movement. With Critical Race Theory as a framework, transformational leadership and servant leadership can be used as a strong leadership theory foundation for the leadership development of young Black gay men.

Critical Race Theory

W. E. B. Du Bois (1903) explained the concept of double consciousness. Simply put, it looks at an individual who has two conflicting selves, or identities, within their Blackness. Due to years of institutional racism, discrimination, and hate towards Black people, Critical Race Theory (CRT) was developed from scholars that focus race and the understanding of Du Bois (1903) “the problem of the color line.” CRT consciously analyzes racism and focuses on institutional systems of white privilege and white supremacy from a legal lens (Yosso, 2005; Delgado, 2001; Crenshaw, 1995b). CRT has been adapted in other disciplines of learning and social understanding because CRT acknowledges how racism has been entrenched in our society (Yosso, 2005; Delgado, 2001). Scholars and activist use CRT to understand the relationship between power, race, and racism; CRT is used to advocate for marginalized individuals and communities (Yosso, 2005; Delgado, 2001; Crenshaw, 1988; Crenshaw, 1995b). It was the combination of the Civil rights movement, Black Liberation Movement, and ethnic studies discourses that influenced the foundation and development of CRT (Yosso, 2005; Delgado, 2001; Crenshaw, 1995b; Bell, 1988).

Five tenets of CRT were developed as a foundation and guideline (Yosso et al., 2001). The first is the Centrality of Race and Racism in Society, which declares that racism is a permanent social construct of American society (Yosso et al., 2001). For example, this is acknowledging there is racism in the United States of America that will not just go away, regardless of the fact that we have had a Black President of the United States of America.

The second tenet of CRT is the Challenge to Dominate (white privilege) Ideology. This challenges society not to take a neutral stance when facing white privilege (Yosso et al., 2001). For example, this could be intentionally, or unintentionally, not hiring a Black person knowing they have higher credentials than their white counterparts applying for the same position. One would challenge dominant ideology by making sure people of color (Black folks specifically) are treated fairly. Institutions could also analyze their hiring practices and examine current staff demographics.

The third is the Centrality of Experiential Knowledge. This tenet validates the experience of people of color and sees these experiences as knowledge and an important part of understanding and examining inequality (Yosso et al., 2001; Harper, 2009). For example, this would be deliberately understanding the experience of a first-generation Mexican immigrant in the United States working to obtain a higher education. By understanding their experiences, society will have a better understanding of how we can better work with Mexican immigrants to provide better services as educators and student affairs professionals.

The fourth tenet is the Interdisciplinary Perspective. This tenet recognizes that CRT is developed from, and part of, multiple disciplines and epistemologies; such as: education, sociology, storytelling, and experiences (Yosso et al., 2001; Harper, 2009). For examples researchers in each of these fields can use CRT as a framework when doing research on people of color.

The Commitment to Social Justice is the last tenet to be discussed within CRT. This tenet in CRT calls for social justice to be an obligation, not a choice, to disassemble white supremacy (Yosso et al., 2001). For example, the creation of the Black lives matter

movement; this new Black Liberation Movement focuses on the advancement of all Black lives regardless of religion, gender identity and expression, sex, socioeconomic status, ability, and sexual orientation.

Sub-disciplines have also developed within CRT that fall outside the Black-white paradigm of CRT. Some of these groups are Critical Race Feminism (CRF) and Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit); which specifically focus on the issues of women and the issues of Latinos, Chicanos, and Chicanas (Delgado & Stefancic, 1998; Yosso, 2006). These theories take Critical Race theory and add an additional lens in order to focus on a particular population within race. Therefore, as a conceptual theoretical framework, CRT can take the identities of a Black gay men and examine how their Blackness intersects with their gay identity (Somerville, 2000; Johnson, 2001; Yosso, 2006; Allen 2014).

According to the Movement, Advancement, Project (MAP) (2017), there are 45 states that recognize statutes criminalizing bias-motivated violence (hate crime) towards a person or group of people based on race, religion, and ethnicity. Of these 45 states, only 30 of them recognize sexual orientation, and only 17 of them cover transgender/gender-identity as a hate crime (MAP, 2017). Historically Black gay men face discrimination and hate for being Black and being gay. The discrimination comes from white society, the Black community, and other communities of color (Black gay men, group interview, March 28, 2016). Through a group interview of Black gay men, it was revealed that they as Black gay men have experienced discrimination at home, in their communities, at work, in church, and in school (high school and college) because of these identities. Many of them believed they have lost jobs, or did not gain employment, because of the

sexual identity or race and even a combination of both identities (Black gay men, group interview, March 28, 2016).

There was also some conversation about how young Black gay men are victims of society but are doing great things regardless of their situation (homelessness, unemployment, or uneducated). Another point that was brought to the attention of the group was that changing who they are is not an option because their experiences have made them who they are today (Black gay men, group interview, March 28, 2016). This last point speaks to one of the tenets of CRT, the Centrality of Experiential Knowledge and how the experiences of people of color, more specifically Black gay men, are not heard (Harper, 2009; Yosso et al., 2001).

The Impact Identity and Intersectionality have on Leadership Development

Gay Community.

Leadership development, styles, and effectiveness can be jeopardized if there are internalized issues of masculinity or external issues of femininity. There are many hurdles that gay men in leadership positions face. Sexual orientation is an important part of their identity that should be considered and analyzed (Collins, 2012). Open gay men still fear being in leadership roles because of what might happen to them physically, or psychologically and because how others may view them as sexual minorities (Baker & Greene, 2007; Fassinger et al., 2010). Not only do gay men have to process their own identities when it comes to their leadership, they also have to consider how society views them as leaders. For example, they could lose their family, their employment, or be cast out by family and friends (Baker & Greene, 2007). This internal process could create

some internalized homophobia and make gay men continue to be closeted (deLeon and Brunner 2013).

Discrimination due to sexual identity is not something that starts during adulthood, but it is something that people experience at a young age. Many lesbians, gay, bisexuals, transgender, and queer identified (LGBTQ) youth face discrimination and marginalization fostered by the social systems that serve them and this can cause them to experience low self-efficacy when pursuing given leadership roles (Fassinger et al., 2010; Wagaman, 2016). These social systems that facilitate discrimination and stigma include, but are not limited to, schools, churches, families, and friends (Wagaman, 2016). Stigma allows those with privilege to disempower marginalized communities and causes a negative impact on their leadership development (Fassinger et al., 2010). Historically openly gay men have been prevented from obtaining leadership responsibilities because of how others have viewed their sexual orientation as undeserving of the responsibility (Fassinger et al., 2010).

Leadership development is influenced by a person's identity and the lived experiences associated with that identity. In the deLeon and Brunner (2013) study, the participants explained that they could not speak freely like their heterosexual counterparts because they were afraid of the discrimination they would experience because they are gay, of their sexual orientation; it is there heterosexual privilege. Being open about their gay identity could affect their leadership development or them in their leadership roles. If the identity of gay men is actually used and viewed as a positive quality, it could change their acceptance of leadership by others (deLeon & Brunner, 2013; Collins, 2012). Gay identities can bring a unique perspective to one's leadership development and leadership

style. If the gay identity of an individual was accepted, gay men have a unique ability to use their lived experiences as a tool for leadership. Gay men's leadership capability is often judged by others due to their sexual orientation (Collins 2012).

Collins (2012) also acknowledges that the experiences of a gay white man is going to differ from the experiences of people of color who are also gay. We cannot overlook that some gay men have multiple identities of oppression, (such as race, class, and gender, ability and family dynamics), or intersectionality (Hoover 2009; Collins 2012). These other experiences tied to other oppressed identities are just as important because life experiences can impact their leadership development (Hoover 2009; Collins 2012). It is important to understand that all parts of gay men's identity are a vital part of leadership development.

Leadership is shaped by our identities and lived experiences; some of these experiences are negative but others may have a positive outcome because of the learning experience a person may take from the negative experience. Leadership can, and will, change due to identity development and lived experiences of leaders, but this is not necessarily a negative consequence of an individual's identities and experiences (Allen, 2014; Hoover, 2009; Collins, 2012; Abdullah, 2003; and Jean-Marie et al., 2009).

Leadership is shaped by our identities and lived experiences; some of these experiences are negative but can have a positive outcome because of the learning experience a person may take from the negative experience. Understanding one's authentic self, and who they are within their social identities, will help provide a deeper meaning and practice of their leadership skills and development (Jones, 2016).

Black Community.

Many scholars have noted that while in position of leadership and within their leadership development, Black folks have encountered racism in various ways (Harper and Quaye, 2007; Smith, and Roysircar, 2010; Loiacano, 1989; Cornileus, 2012; Allen, 2105; Gooden, 2012; Harper, 2009; and Harper et al., 2011). While leadership theory is historically white focused, CRT can be used to examine how experiences of race and racism intersect with other identities that create systematic oppressions such as homophobia, sexism, and classism (Allen, 2014; Gooden, 2012; Byrd 2009; and Jean-Marie et al., 2009). CRT also uncovers and promotes social reconstruction of higher education for Black men and women in leadership (Byrd 2009; Jean-Marie et al., 2009). It has been recognized that identity is a social construct generated by experiences of individuals, which can include gender, race, student status, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation (Preston, 2014; Allen 2015, Golden, 2012, Harper, 2009; Harper et al.,, 2011; Loiacano, 1989; and Cornileus, 2012). Socially constructed identities (sexual orientation, ethnicity/race, and, and gender) that bring unique lived experiences have impacted Black individuals leadership development, opportunities, and the capacity to lead.

Black men's lived experiences can positively influence leadership development, leadership style, and leadership delivery. Black male identity is not given to Black men, there are stages of understanding when Black males develop their identity (Harper and Quaye 2007; Cornileus, 2012). Understanding one's authentic self, and who they are within their social identities will help provide a deeper meaning and practice of their leadership skills and development (Jones, 2016). Cultural identity is also an important

part of who a person is and the communities/organizations they are a part of; if practitioners focus on their strengths, there can be better develop leadership development among Black men (Harper and Quaye, 2007; Harper, 2009).

The Black community, but specifically Black women, use storytelling to convey leadership with the Black community and how they identify with community (Walker, 2009). Black Women also use storytelling to explain how their identities and lived experiences have affected their leadership. Storytelling allows Black women to tell their own story and how experiences of intersectionality play a role in their leadership (Lloyd-Jones, 2009). Black women are continuously engaging in leadership by their continuous fights against racism, sexism and intersectional oppression (Abdullah, 2003). This continuous activism and advocacy is an important part of leadership development for Black women, especially womanists; this is demonstrated in such movements as Black Lives Matter, founded by women, not men.

Leadership development has been slow moving in the Black community and the gay community because there is such a complexity in which the effects from different forms of discrimination combine and intersect. While many refer to intersectionality as a lens for understanding how individuals experience oppression and privilege, many scholars look at intersectionality as a lived experience and not just a theory (Bowleg, 2008; Bowleg, 2013; Lewis, 2013; Shields, 2008; Valentine, 2007). Black women are resilient due to the experiences of intersectionality; by overcoming specific trials and tribulation that have to do with their held identities, while simultaneously strengthening the Black community (Abdullah, 2003). Black women can be successful in leadership if they are empowered to overcome institutional racism, power, and privilege by

understanding how to invoke resistance and eliminate these barriers (Collins, 2002; Lloyd-Jones, 2009). Black women at predominately white institutions have to find support outside of their organization because it is often hard to find support from their place of employment (Walker, 2009, p. 652). Black women have been using their experiences to develop their leadership; these understandings of self-identities have been beneficial to the success of Black women.

Historically Black women and Black gay men share similarities in their experiences when it comes to multiple identities and leadership. The experiences of Black women are not the same as Black gay men but their experiences of intersectionality are similar. Leadership development for Black women can assist in the understanding of Black gay leadership due to intersectionality and the understanding of the communities they have in common. The Black identity of a young Black gay man is just as important as the gay identity. Historically Black women could not be both Black and a woman because they were forced to choose one salient identity (hooks, 1981; Crenshaw, 1995a). Although they identified as both Black and woman, they were forced to identify as only Black because at times being Black was more important than being a woman. They had to choose their Blackness over being a woman or their womanhood over their Blackness (hooks, 1981). This relates to understanding the Black gay men experience because oftentimes Black gay men are forced to choose between their Black identity and their gay identity.

There are times when Black gay men are expected to shed their gay identity and only attend to the issues of the Black community. Especially as of late when the Black community is at war with local police officers who are supposed to protect them. Black

gay men often face issues that may include how masculine and feminine they are. Black gay men are often viewed by their Black heterosexual counterparts being less than men, or as women, especially if they are flamboyant (Black Gay Men. March 28, 2016; Harris 2010). Often times Black gay men put on a façade of masculinity because femininity is not widely accepted among the entire Black community.

Black gay men are sexual minorities in the Black community. Fassinger et al., (2010) proposed there are three intersecting dimensions significant to leadership roles of sexual minorities: a) sexual orientation: which observes if the person has disclosed their sexuality or not; b) gender identity: this observes whether the person identifies as male/masculine or female/feminine; and c) the situation: asks to understand the groups, or communities, a person falls within and how they affect their worldview. These three dimensions affect leaders in the process of leadership development because their gay identity, or Black identity, or the combination of both identities, influences one's leadership development (Fassinger et al., 2010). These communities could be LGBT community, heterosexual/mixed community, Black community, and people of color and their community experiences affect a person's leadership develop and leadership style (Fassinger et al., 2010). Marginalized groups (race, gender, gender, and sexual orientation) have similar leadership development and style due to their similar positions of power within the dominant group (Fassinger et al., 2010).

How Lived Experiences of Marginalization Impact Leadership Development

Gay Community.

Experiences of marginalization can have an impact on a person's leadership development. For example, for gay men, the education system can be a place of personal

growth and awareness, and/or a place that facilitates homophobia and intolerance. Gay students experience more hostile environments due to their sexual orientation than their heterosexual counterparts (Renn 2005, Renn 2007, and Komives et al., 2005). Higher education can encourage a gay man's leadership development by their participation in campus activities and student organizations (Renn, 2007). These experiences in higher education can develop gay men's sexual identities and cultivate their leadership by their involvement in campus life. LGBT groups on campus can provide a venue where students can actively develop their leadership skills and style by taking leadership positions in student ran organization (Renn 2005, Renn 2007, and Komives et al., 2005).

Higher education is not just for students to develop their leadership and understand their gay identity; professional staff also use their positions to further develop their gay identity and leadership capabilities. It is harder for openly gay men to advance in leadership positions because they are discriminated against due to their sexual orientation (deLeon and Brunner, 2013). Being in the closet can be a social norm for many gay professionals because they may be afraid of what could happen if others knew of their sexual identity (deLeon and Brunner, 2013). Leaders in the educational system have an opportunity to use their oppressed identities to help educate students, and other professional staff, by drawing from their own experiences and using them as teachable moments for leadership development (deLeon and Brunner, 2013).

Black Community.

From slavery to Jim Crow laws to the habitual killing of Black men and women by law enforcement, through these lived experiences of marginalization, the Black community has always been united by its leaders. Black people have experienced

institutional racism by United States government, society, employers, and universities. Often times Black gay male students do not feel included in conversations about social justice because of their multiple identities (Vaccaro and Mean, 2011). Although LGBT students of color hold leadership positions in campus organizations, they still feel the need to create other organizations that included all of their identities, especially their subordinated identities (Pastrana, 2006; Vaccaro and Mean, 2011).

In a study of Black male students, Harris (2010) found that students experienced anxiety because they were afraid other students perceived them as gay, therefore, their hyper-masculinity intensified. The preference of masculinity, or what counts as masculine, in the Black gay community is growing. This focus on masculinity is declaring war on anyone, or anything, who is feminine and declares femininity as a weakness, or weak quality to have (Brown, 2005). This is an attack on the identity of Black gay men and their leadership development because it attacks their authentic selves as Black gay men; which can alter their lived experience and development of leadership.

The educational system is a place where a Black male should be able to explore his identity development and leadership development through their involvement with campus organizations (Museus, 2008). Black men and women build community on university campuses by participating in student organization and taking roles in leadership roles. Black male students created a space for their community on campus; Black student leaders created a student organization that focused on the betterment of Black students by creating a supportive academic atmosphere (Harper and Quaye, 2007). Black students also participate in their Black community by being leaders and active members in a historically African American fraternity in Greek life (Sutton and Terrell,

1997). Leadership position at universities such as Resident Assistants also help develop the leadership skills of young Black gay men but there are still issues of racism that occur when they are at predominantly white institutions (PWI) (Harper et al., 2011).

Black male RA's encounter racism and issues of race while in this leadership position and gives three themes as examples: racist stereotypes and racial insults, leadership in the context of racial underrepresentation, and white supervisors including undue scrutiny and internalized pressure (Harper et al., 2011). Although Black men students experience racism in leadership positions; those who participate in leadership positions gain more from college (Harper, 2006). This is where Black students can begin to develop their Black identity, unapologetic Blackness, and advocacy work in the Black community.

Black women in the education system have experienced challenges when it comes to leadership development and growth at PWIs. These challenges include racism, sexism, and homophobia interaction (Patitu & Hinton, 2003). Black women in high administrative roles and leadership positions are exceptionally intellectual, passionate, and strategic but they experience high rates of discrimination, racism, and sexism (Jean-Marie et al., 2009). Although Black women struggle in PWIs, they use these trials and tribulations as learning opportunities to develop their leadership that ultimately leads to success (Jean-Marie et al., 2009). These experiences help facilitate change because it motivates universities to create courses that address issues that Black women encounter, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and classism (Byrd, 2009). As much as Black women strive for equity and change by displaying their ability to provide quality

leadership, it is still the institutions responsibility to enact change and a positive working environment conducive to the success of Black women (Patitu & Hinton, 2003).

Black students tend to explore and become leaders in campus organizations because they have experienced marginalization and discrimination (Museus, 2008). Black male students like to put themselves in an atmosphere where they are comfortable and feel included (Harper and Quaye, 2007). This kind of action, where students create change and leadership development due to experiences of marginalization, is the foundation of advocacy.

Road to Advocacy

Gay Advocacy.

Advocacy starts with an individual's desire to facilitate change. Gay men strive to facilitate change (become advocates) within their communities when they make meaning of their experiences (Fassinger et al., 2010). By analyzing and understanding the meaning of their experiences, they are able to impart wisdom and advocacy to their followers (Fassinger et al., 2010). This encourages gay men to lead by example; it allows them to advocate by teaching others to do the same. Advocacy has played a vital role in the advancement of the gay community.

One issue that has demanded leadership and advocacy within the LGBT community is gay marriage in the United States of America. It was not until 2010 that the United States Supreme Court overturned the Defense of Marriage Act allowing same sex couples federal recognition (Beck, 2015). Consistent leadership within the LGBT community plays an important role in the societal change of marriage and advocacy within the LGBT community. Leadership and advocacy go hand in hand, it is impossible

for a gay man to be an advocate without being a leader (Renn, 2007). Separating leadership from activism would be like taking queer identity out of the LGBT community; it is imperative that gay men create change through a leadership lens (Renn, 2007).

Black Male Advocacy.

The old African proverb, “It takes a village to raise a child,” is not just referring to raising children; it can refer to leadership development and advocacy. This proverb proclaims that a community works together for the betterment of everyone. Currently, the Black community is standing against the mistreatment and genocide of the Black community by local law enforcement regardless of age, class, gender, ability, sexual orientation, and educational level. Black Lives Matter was founded because of the increase of Black men and women being killed by the local white law enforcement. This is nothing that is new to the Black community but because of technology with cameras, these issues are more accessible. It was quickly realized that not only do the lives of young Black men matter, but also all Black lives matter regardless of religion, socioeconomic status, gender identity, and sexual orientation. This has brought a rise in the participation of advocacy in many subcultures of the Black community.

Black Leaders can serve as good advocates when they examine their own lived experiences and actively work to understand the experiences of others in their community (Golden, 2012). Holding a leadership position while obtaining a higher education allows Black male students to understand their responsibility as advocates in the Black community. Black male students felt it was their obligation to uplift the Black community, both on campus and off, by devoting themselves to ending stereotypes

placed on them by those with privilege (Harper and Quaye, 2007). It was important to enact change that could remove barriers and allow equity for other African American students (Harper and Quaye, 2007). Embracing and reaching out to Black students is a common way to continue leadership development within the campus life (Harper, 2005). Active engagement on campus allows Black male students to develop a sense of unapologetic Blackness that encouraged political and social change at predominantly white institutions (Harper et al., 2011). Advocacy is not only for students; administration and faculty also have a strong voice that can facilitate change in education (Gooden, 2012). The experiences of professional staff are vital for the advancement of campus climate but also in the guidance of Black students on campus (Gooden, 2012).

Black Women's Advocacy.

Black women have always been part of the Black liberation movement, but their work often goes unnoticed and unnoted because they worked behind the scenes and out of the spotlight. They have been fighting alongside men since Harriet Tubman began freeing slaves. Abdullah (2003) explained that Black women have always participated in the fight to overcome adversities in the Black community. Women have always been in positions of leadership in the Black liberation movement and helped advance the betterment of the Black community (Abdullah 2003). It is important to note that the Black Lives Matter movement was started with three Black women that were not pleased with the justice system, and one of them identified as a queer Black woman. These women rejuvenated the Black liberation movement that is intentionally inclusive of all Black people regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, religion, and class.

Black Gay Men's Advocacy.

When it comes to advocacy for leadership of young Black gay men, it is almost invisible. It is mostly seen in the HIV prevention community. According to Means & Jaeger (2013), there are nonprofit programs that have programs that help develop leadership skills but do not focus solely on leadership. For Black gay men, it is done in either the Black community or in the gay community; combining the two rarely happens (Means & Jaeger, 2013). Black gay men are caught in a state of limbo where they are forced to choose which community they are advocating for and with.

Historically, when they do advocate for the community, it only surrounds HIV/AIDS in the Black community. It is as if leadership of Black gay men may only focus on this topic. They are shunned by the Black community when they are open about their sexual orientation and treated as if they should have never spoken about issues affecting the Black community because they are gay.

Gaps in Research

There is a lack of conversation about Black gay men who are obtaining a college degree, and for Black gay men that have gone further--those who have their own businesses, those who are executive members of non-profit organizations, those who are executive members of large corporation, and those who are in political office, and those who are in leadership positions (such as: Deans, Directors, Executive Directors, Vice President, and Presidents) at college and university. Because the literature on Black gay men and leadership development is fundamentally nonexistent, it actually leaves provides more questions than answers. Is it because they are not there? Is it because they are not allowed to be open about their sexuality?

This lack of research done on black gay men and leadership development allows for more question than answer: what are the leadership experiences of Black gay men and how can they be transferred to the leadership development of young Black gay men? What topics could help shape and promote leadership development of young Black gay men between the ages of 18 to 29? How would Black gay men describe effective leadership for young Black gay men (YBGM) ages 18 to 29 based on their own leadership experiences? What impact does advocacy have within leadership development among YBGM? How do lived experiences help define leadership for YBGM ages 18 to 29?" These questions have been narrowed down to three specific research questions. These research questions are:

1. How do Black gay men define leadership in their communities?
2. How have the lived experiences of Black gay men influenced their leadership development?
3. What are the lived experiences of Black gay men as leaders?

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this Phenomenological study is to understand the relationship between lived experiences and leadership among Black gay men who are leaders in Los Angeles. Understanding lived experiences of Black gay male leaders and their leadership development can help in identifying what core foundations/topics could be included in a leadership development program for young Black gay men. It is assumed what when the truth comes to light, our justice system will rectify all wrong doings (Smith, 1999). Unfortunately, that is not the experiences of marginalized communities in the United States, more specifically the Black gay community. For example, historically, our society has witnessed over and over again the appalling behavior of police officers when it comes to the treatment of Black men, versus the treatment of their white counterparts. The level of respect, humanity, and care of life is not the same for all people in our society. Even when there are video recordings that clear up misconceptions of what took place (history), there is still doubt put towards the person that was killed by police officers, although it could have been avoided.

Throughout history, and even now, Black women have been forced to put their issues of race before their issues experienced as a woman, and vice versa. The experiences of Black women have been manipulated by Black men and white women because Black women are constantly being told they have to choose their womanhood or their Blackness (Crenshaw, 1991). Black women cannot observe only their race or only their gender. It is impossible to capture only one identity because their experience of racism and sexism intertwine. (Crenshaw, 1991). This process of choosing a specific marginalized identity is very similar to the experience of Black gay men. Black gay men

are often expected to choose between their gay identity and their Black identity. They often have to choose between the Black Community and the Gay Community (Black Gay Men, 2016). In order to understand a person's leadership, we must understand their experiences that tie into race, gender, and sexual orientation. As researchers, it is important to understand the culture of a marginalized group before conducting research with those people.

Queer Theory vs Quare Theory

Queer theory was developed out of queer studies and women's studies in order to challenge society's heteronormativity in reference to sexual orientation and gender norms (Jagose, 1996). Queer theory rejects heteronormativity and social norms of sexuality and gender roles (Jagose, 1996). According to Jagose (1996), queer theory challenges society to participate in gay liberation by dismantling societal norms of heterosexuality. In the queer theory scholarly context, there has been a lack of consideration about a queer people of color and racial identity. There is an issue with queer theory when it comes to researching the Black queer community; it historically focuses on sexual orientation and does not include other identities that are oppressed, such as: race, socioeconomic status, and gender (Johnson, 2001).

Therefore, one theoretical framework being used to guide this study is Quare theory because Quare theory focuses on the intersectionality of Black gay men and their experiences. (Johnson, 2001). Quare studies examines and critiques Queer theory because of how it has historically been focused on white LGBTQ community (Johnson, 2001; Means & Jaeger, 2013; Eguchi & Asante, 2016;). Quare theory understands the importance of how sexuality intersects with race, gender, and socioeconomic status

(Johnson, 2001). Quare studies specifically analyzes the relationship between people of color and impact of their queer identity (Johnson, 2001). Quare studies also examines how queer people of color become marginalized within the LGBTQ community (Johnson, 2001; Means & Jaeger, 2013; Eguchi & Asante, 2016).

Quare theory takes queer theory to the next level by including Critical Race Theory as part of its core foundation; it focuses on people of color when considering the LGBT community. Quare theory specifically recognizes the intersectionality of Black queer men; it can be used as a theoretical lens of understanding the participant's experiences (Means & Jaeger, 2015). A Quare theory lens can be used to questions white privilege and heterosexual privilege to understand Black gay men (Means & Jaeger, 2015).

Phenomenology Methodology

According to Husserl (1970), Ahmed (2006), and Moustakas (1994), phenomenology research is defined as investigating experiences that relates to a specific situation with a specific population. Moustakas (1994) examined the work phenomenology and described it as the absolute understanding of self within the recalled experience by acknowledging and describing perceptions, understanding, and awareness of the lived experiences. It is consciously understanding thought, feelings, and what the individual perceives during the recalling of the experience. It is a reflection that the person now understands better and brings all thoughts, feelings, emotions, and consciousness to light. Moustakas (1994) believed that phenomenology research requires researchers to detach from their preconceived notions and start fresh when analyzing and examining the experiences of a specific population. When researchers use qualitative

research, such as Phenomenology methodology, they are asking for information about a community, or person, that could be very personal, invasive, and private. Therefore, a great amount of trust and rapport is required when conducting Phenomenology research. As a Black gay man that has been in the community, there is some inherent trust because of our shared identities and existing professional network. Rapport still needs to be built because I am a researcher.

Phenomenology can be used with Black gay men because it calls for the authentic truth of a person's experience. Historically Black gay men have not had the opportunity to tell their story, as their stories have often been told for them by others. Phenomenology methodology captures their lived experiences as they see them with an understanding of queer/quare theory (Ahmed, 2006). The participants in this study were able to dictate their starting points and bring researchers to the table with regard to their Black gay male identity and lived experiences (Ahmed, 2006).

Culturally Responsive Methodology: An Ethical Framework

Because the research being conducted is with a marginalized community, I used Culturally Responsive Methodology (CRM) as an ethical framework. Can a qualitative researcher conduct research in a disenfranchised community without having humility, and receive authentic data from participants? Scholars in CRM would say this could not be done (Berryman et al., 2013). Humility and self-assurance play a defining role for researchers when working with marginalized participants (Berryman et al., 2013). Berryman et al., (2013) suggested that if a researcher is not humble with their approach to conducting research, the results they may be unauthentic, or the community will not

allow the researcher to conduct research. CRM is conducting research with the best intents in mind for the community being researched.

The reason why CRM is important to use as an ethical framework, in conjunction with Phenomenology, is because the participants are part of a disenfranchised community and CRM provides ethical guidelines for doing research with this kind of community (Berryman et al., 2013. Black gay men are part of multiple communities who experience intersectional oppressions. They experience intersectionality because of their ethnicity, sexual orientation, masculinity or femininity, and even HIV Status (Johnson, 2001). When discussing leadership development within this group, CRM is a guideline of how researchers should conduct themselves during the process of obtaining participants, while integrating into the community, during the data collection process, and after the research is complete. As seen in the Table 1, there are multiple examples of how CRM could be used when conducting research with Black gay men.

Table 1. CRM for Marginalized Communities

Cultural Responsive is:	Cultural Responsive is not:
Listening to their experiences.	Assuming you already know everything
Validating their experiences.	Discrediting their experience
Meeting them in a physical space they feel comfortable.	Demanding they meet you in your space
Being with them in the moment.	Rushing the process
Developing trust.	Forcing a rapport

Allowing them to invite you in their environment	Coercing yourself into the community
Being humble and empathetic towards participants	Being Fake

Positionality

A researcher's positionality acknowledges the similar and different identities they have with the community they are researching. There are two different positionalities; the insider positionality and the outsider positionality. Insider positionality analyzes the common identities the researcher has with the community, or culture, of the participants. Whereas outsider positionality observes the difference in identities between the researcher and the participants. Outsider positionality also observes the power and privilege of the researcher's identity.

At times, it is challenging to explain my insider and outsider positions as a researcher in this study. My research topic is developing the foundational themes of a leadership program focusing on the leadership development of young Black gay men ages 18 to 29. My research participants are Black gay male leaders in Los Angeles County.

Outsider Positionality.

When I examine my position as an outsider, I realize there are some things that do put me on the outside of my research, whether I like it or not. First, I am the researcher in this study and my main role is to authentically gather information.

This role could also co-inside with my outsider position as a Ph.D. student. These roles could automatically put me in a position of power. Berryman et al., (2013)

explained the importance of not superimposing a predetermined agenda on the participants. As I observe my educational outsider positionality, I must meet the participants where they are in their educational journeys and respect their views. This dynamic might vary with each of the participant depending on their level of education.

Another outsider position that I have is my physical location. Although I lived in Los Angeles County for over eight years, currently I live in Riverside County. The population are leaders who reside in Los Angeles County. My experiences could also be called into questions because of my location. The experiences of Black gay men in Riverside, CA may be extremely different than those that live in Los Angeles County.

Lastly, when it comes to age, I am outside the bracket of ages of those in which my research is actually focused on. My research is focusing on the leadership development of Black gay men in the emerging adulthood stage (, ages 18 to 29), but the participants in the study are 18 and over. (Arnett, 2000). Although my research topic focuses on Black gay men in the emerging adulthood age range, not all participants are in the emerging adulthood age range. I address my positionality with the participants later in this section.

Although I was in that age group at one point, experiences are going to be different because of the changes in society and my lived experiences since I've been out of that age group. Now that I am in my 30s, I am an outsider to those who fall in the emerging adulthood age range. For example, since aging out of the emerging adulthood age, I have experiences that have changed my opinions when it comes to my professional career, academic experiences, and how I view interpersonal relationships.

Insider Positionality.

The first insider position I have is my ethnicity, Black. I pick to discuss this first because it is the most apparent. I often hear from people that one's ethnicity does not matter, an indicator of color-blind ideology; I do not agree with this belief. When our political leaders endorse racism, xenophobia, sexism, and institutions (e.g. police officers) that kill Black people by the hundreds each year, these ideas impact communities through our society. My skin color and sexual orientation is a factor in any kind of research I plan to conduct.

With me being Black, it puts me in a position where I already know some of the issues that already exist. This is also known as tacit knowledge, which is knowing more information about a community than what the researcher can actually say (Polanyi, 1958). I can go into an interview ready to react to what is being told to me because I may already have an insight (Polanyi, 1958). It also puts me in a position where I am able to relate to my community easily. If I am told an experience that I'm unaware of the existence in my community, I may be surprised by this information, but epoche requires that I refrain from dismissing the experience (Moustakas, 1994). I have to take in the new information/data and report it regardless of my community knowledge. At times researchers with an insider position, such as mine, may want to reject new information because they think they already know everything about their community.

As a gay male, I am part of that community as well. My experiences are going to differ then some of my participants because we come from different family, religious and other social contexts. One could generalize about the Black gay community, but each experience is different. For instance, some participants could have lived with their

families and gained (or are in the process of gaining) a higher education. On the other hand, other participants may have been rejected from their family at a young age, have been homeless, experienced substance abuse, lived in transitional housing, may or may not have obtained any kind of education, and may or may not have a job or career. These things could also lead to differences of health status (physical or mental) due to their personal experiences. One size doesn't fit all but because I am in this community, I understand what can, or could, happen to a gay male; I must be open to all possibilities (Moustakas, 1994). This positionality has also made me become more aware of the issues already present in the community.

Methods

Part of CRM and Phenomenology is understanding the lived experiences of a marginalized community and working with them in order to assist in facilitating change. In this study, empirical data of lived experiences is collected from leaders in various subgroups in the Black gay community. Dewey (1916) explained a democratic society is continually changing—sometimes toward democracy and equity, and at other times, away from these ideals—and it requires citizens who are willing to participate and competent enough to distinguish between the better and the worse. Although I am a part of this community, it is important that I re-engage with the community. I have moved out of Los Angeles, and I have not been seen in the community as much as before. I reestablished my connections by going to different community groups, meetings, social events, and fundraisers in the Black gay community and gain as much trust and rapport as possible.

Study Sample

In this study, ten Black queer men who have been deemed as community leaders within the Black gay community who live in Los Angeles County to participate in the study. Although some of the participants may be out of the emerging adulthood age range; they have lived experiences during their emerging adulthood development that can be valuable. These Black gay male leaders work closely with young Black gay men between the ages of 18 to 29. The reason I've chosen these participants is because they are stakeholders in the community and have more accurate information about the community than an outsider or others. They understand the community the most and are able to provide multiple perspectives of the community. The participants' demographics ranged in age, educational level, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, careers, and HIV Status, and even within different sub communities of the Black gay community (Johnson, 2001). These participants are individuals who work to empower young Black gay men to be active members in their communities and they themselves are within the spectrum of Black gay men. The community leaders included directors, associate directors, assistant directors, coordinators, outreach workers, and managers of community based organizations and universities who work with young Black gay men.

Moustakas (1994) explained phenomenology research as investigating experiences that may relate to a specific situation with a specific population. By asking a person to relive their experiences, we as researchers are asking for them to explain the meaning of the lived experience while providing us with detailed description (Moustakas, 1994). According to Moustakas (1994) there are two levels of getting data: One is

gathering experiences through open-ended questions and the second level is asking participants about their experiences and their interpretation of the experience.

With each participant, I was very direct with my study purpose and explained to them the reason for the research and discussed the importance of leadership development for young Black gay men. It is important to gain trust and rapport in order to conduct research about the leadership development for young Black gay men. One way to do this is to understand the concerns the Black gay community has with research and inquire how they think research with them should be engineered. It is important that each participant feels they are in control and are able to be authentic.

Data Collection in Phenomenological Research

The purpose of qualitative research is to understand the why and how questions of research by understanding a participant's relevant experience (Creswell, 2009).

Moustakas (1994) explained that phenomenology research requires the participants to reflect deeply on their lived experiences, while the major aim of the researcher is to understand the lived experiences from the perspective of participants.

In this study, I asked each participant to complete a total of three interviews. I met with each participant individually at a place of their choosing. From a CRM perspective, it was important for interviews to take place where participants felt most comfortable and able to speak freely (Berryman et al., 2013; Moustakas, 1994). I conducted in-depth interview of about (talk about the interview times, i.e. ranging from 60-180 minutes) to be more of a conversation around leadership development for young Black gay men based off the experiences they have encountered throughout life. One sentence about the number of hours of the interviews.

The bracketing process, or Epoche, is important because it creates an environment of trust when doing phenomenology research (Moustakas, 1994). As I mentioned above, my identities matched my population, therefore, I practiced epoche to make sure the data collected is not swayed by my personal biases and assumptions (Moustakas, 1994). Epoche provided a space free of preconceived notions and judgments where I could focus more on their expressed lived experience (Moustakas, 1994).

The first interview consists of questions that aimed to understand the participants lived experiences and how those experiences have impacted their leadership style and leadership development. Moustakas (1994) emphasized that these questions must be open-ended and thought provoking. It encouraged the participants to recall situations and experiences that have influenced their leadership develop and leadership identity with relationship to their sexual orientation and racial identity. Pre-developed questions were formed before the interview, but this study also allowed participants to guide the conversations in the direction they wish it to go as well. All interviews took between one hour and two hours to complete. At the end of the interview, I inquire what questions the participants think I should have asked or questions they think are relevant to leadership development for young Black gay men. Appendix A lists my interview questions.

The questions in the second interview started by checking in with the participant and asked any clarification questions I had. This member check provided clarity for me as a researcher and assures I have the details of the lived experiences correct (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Berryman et al., 2013). Next, I asked the questions that each participant contributed to the study from the first interview. I also inquired if there were any

additional experiences they recalled after the first interview that they would like to share. This interview took between an hour and an hour and a half to complete.

The third and final interview occurred after I analyzed the data from the first two interviews. I take my findings to each individual to make sure they know what I plan to write, also known as member checking (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The research results should capture the authentic truth that each individual was trying to convey. If participants are uncomfortable with the way the data is presented or need to clarify a mistake in the understanding of the data, we can make any corrections needed. It is important for phenomenology and CRM that participants are involved in the research development (Moustakas, 1994; Berryman, SooHoo, & Nevin, 2013; & Creswell, 2009). This interview took about an hour to complete.

Data Analysis in Phenomenological Research

Phenomenology research is going to be filled with data that is very descriptive (Moustakas, 1994). Analyzing this data took some time because of the way epoche is required when doing phenomenology research. Moustakas (1994) explained that phenomenology takes a holistic approach to evaluate every aspect of the lived experience to understand the meaning and purpose. By using Open Coding, the process of examining data, categorizing data, and comparing data (Kleiman, 2004), I was able to understand the data collected.

Moustakas (1994) suggested a “modification of Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of analysis of phenomenological data” (p. 121). This modification is what was used to analysis the phenomenological data. Below Moustakas (1994) outlines the analysis process step-by-step:

- “1 - Using a phenomenological approach, obtain a full description of your own experience of the phenomenon.
- 2 - From the verbatim transcript of your experience complete the following steps:
- a. Consider each statement with respect to significance for description of the experience.
  - b. Record all relevant statements.
  - c. List each nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statement. These are the invariant horizons or meaning units of the experience.
  - d. Relate and cluster the invariant meaning units into themes.
  - e. Synthesize the invariant meaning units and themes into a description of the textures of the experience. Include verbatim examples.
  - f. Reflect on your own textural description. Through imaginative variation, construct a description of the structures of your experience.
  - g. Construct a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of your experience.
- 3 - From the verbatim transcript of the experience of each of the other co-researchers, complete the above steps, a through g.
- 4 - From the individual textural-structural descriptions of all co-researchers' experiences, construct a composite textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience, integrating all individual textural structural descriptions into a universal description of the experience representing the group as a whole” (p. 122).

I was able to construct the understanding and descriptions of the meanings and core principles of the experiences, separately and combined. By creating universal descriptions or categories of the experiences, I was able to explain the importance of each theme and how it relates to leadership development of young Black gay men. This helped clarify the meaning of the data presented by the participants. After completing that for each of the participants, I was able to identify similarities to form themes and categories between the participants. Using open coding also allowed me to detect the core themes that should be discussed within the leadership program for young Black gay men. I was able to understand these themes by understanding and analyzing participants lived experiences of leadership.

Trustworthiness

There are three pieces to trustworthiness: truth value; the relationship between researcher and participant; and utility and relevance of research (Ferguson & Ferguson, 2000). Ferguson & Ferguson (2000) explained that the truth value of trustworthiness is demonstrated by explaining the way in which data will be collected and by gathering data from numerous sources. This study collected data from various leaders in the Black community who worked at different agencies within and across career fields. The research as collected data from leaders with different levels of education who work with different and similar populations.

Ferguson & Ferguson (2000) explained that having a strong, healthy, meaningful, and genuine relationship between the researcher and participant is imperative to trustworthiness within qualitative research. There are many ways this can occur; this research accomplished this by using contacts of known leaders in the Black gay male

community. Before meeting, the researcher went to different community events and reintroduced themselves to the community leaders and discussed their research topic. The researcher had multiple in person conversations, phone conversations, and conversations via social media leading up to interviews. All interviews occurred at places where the participants felt most comfortable.

Lastly, the relevance of the research qualifications really asks, how will the research improve the quality of life and call to social justice and change for the community you are researching (Ferguson & Ferguson, 2000)? First, this is the first research study of its kind. There is no research that focuses on the leadership development of Black gay men and how it could assist the development of young Black gay men 18 to 29 years old. This research could help build an understanding of leadership among Black gay men and how to continue to help develop our young Black gay male leaders. It also provides a place where Black gay men can have their experiences heard and used for the betterment of their community. I believe to understand who each participant is and how they can contribute, we must understand their journey of leadership.

Research Trustworthiness.

The other part of Trustworthiness pertains to the actual research process. It questions how data was gathered, who gathered the data, how much time was spent gathering data, and the questions asked used to gather data. Qualitative research is very different from quantitative research. Therefore, the rubric for qualitative research is not and should not be the same as quantitative research. According to Ferguson & Ferguson (2000) interpretivist research should analyze data differently and acknowledge difference

stances on any given situation. Qualitative researchers must design their research a little differently than quantitative research because they have to design the research based on the community they are researching

While using CRM as an ethical guideline, researchers must continue to ask themselves about how they are conducting research, especially if they are outsiders to the community they are researching. Ferguson & Ferguson (2000) encourages interpretivist researchers to internally question the results of their data and ask about its authenticity. Qualitative researchers must go above and beyond the norm when interacting and researching marginalized communities. Berryman et al., (2013) explained that researchers must abandon the notion that they know everything and strip themselves of power, privilege, and not embrace the white savior superiority complex that may have been taught in educational institutions. This is how CRM functions within research of minority groups, even if a researcher identifies with the population they are researching.

Community Trust.

There is a lack of trust among the Black community with research institutions and researchers. Trust going to be a concern in research because minorities are born into a world where they must approach life with caution. There is an inconceivable notion that marginalized communities should do what they are told to do because they do not hold power and privilege. This thought process further perpetuates that if someone is different than the majority (i.e. hair, clothing, speech, or culture) then what happens to them, it is inherently their fault (Berryman et al., 2013). The killing of innocent gay people, communities of color, gender non-conforming individuals, and women is not the fault of

the predator but those of the victims/survivors because they did not fit the ideology of what is correct? How does that make sense?

This is why minority groups do not trust being researched, especially by outsiders. Disenfranchised population have to worry about what a researcher's true intentions, how is this actually going to help their community, or what will be the aftermath of them speaking out about the truth without out quality of life taken into consideration. Minorities must be careful how they present themselves for fear that they could be unjustly killed by oppressors. After they are killed, they will be blamed because they should have done things differently. They are made into a villain because they, after all, were born into this social construct of "the problem" (Berryman et al., 2013).

When doing research within minority communities, researchers cannot personalize the information they receive, especially those with an outsider stance. Researchers must be able to humble themselves and bring a sense of humanity and empathy to conducting research (Berryman et al., 2013). Researchers lose trust of the community when they personalize data, take offense to the data gathered from participants, ignore their privilege while collecting data, and/or uses the information for self-interest only. When researchers bring a Western way of thinking into their research, they must learn to acknowledge their presumptions of privilege and power they may portray to the participants (Berryman et al., 2013). One way of making sure there is trust is by directly quoting what has been said in the interviews and asking for participants to review what will be published before being submitted. By doing this, the participants can correct any mistakes or misunderstanding the researcher may have written. This also

continues to allow participants (in a marginalized community) to have control, ownership, and power of what information is being released (Berryman et al., 2013).

Too regularly researchers complete their work in the community they were invited into, leave, get published, and then never give back to that community. Minority communities have been used so often and thrown away like trash. A good example of this is the Tuskegee Experiment. This was a 40-year (1932 to 1972) study conducted by the United States Government and Tuskegee University on 600 Black men (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016). The CDC explained that of the men in a study, 399 of them had already contracted syphilis and 201 did not have it. The men in the study were told they were being treated for bad blood, but they were never told they had syphilis. In 1947, penicillin was discovered as the cure for syphilis but was never given to these patients. Of these 399 men, 28 had died of syphilis and 100 were dead of complications related to syphilis. This not only affected the men in the study but also their families. The Tuskegee Experiment is just one example that has created mistrust for research, doctors, educators, the United States government, and researchers among disenfranchised communities.

Research is important in our society, but researchers must build trust within the communities they are researching. Just because you have identities that may be congruent with the population you are researching, does not mean you come in knowing everything. Having a doctorate degree may be the thing that makes a community not trust you. I feel like this is an internal reflection of what I am afraid could happen with my dissertation research. I didn't want to go into my community to do research thinking I have all the answers or understand all the issues. I couldn't go into this next journey of

my education with a self-centered, know it all attitude, and a preconceived agenda asking what do I get out of doing this research (Moustakas, 1994).

Conclusion

Overall, Phenomenology Methodology, Culturally Responsive Methodology, and Quare Theory work well together to provide the necessary tools to have a successful culturally competent research study. CRM makes researchers ask: How can I be culturally responsive and responsible? (Berryman et al., 2013). It is by educating yourself, being culturally competent, being authentic, open to re-educating yourself, and listening to experiences of participants. Learning about the cultural understanding of a community can help researchers understand the lived experiences of participants (Tilman, 2002). Quare Theory brings the African American identity into the conversation when considering sexuality and gender roles; it makes researchers consider an individual's intersectionality, unlike Queer Theory (Johnson, 2001). If researchers working with disenfranchised communities, such as young Black gay men, they must be authentic and transparent throughout the process. Researchers should involve themselves in a community before attempting to research them (Berryman et al., 2013; Tilman, 2002; Berryman et al., 2013; & Johnson, 2001).

Trust is going to be a major concern in my research because minorities are born into a world where they must approach life with caution. They must be careful how they present themselves in fear that they could be unjustly killed by oppressors (Berryman et al., 2013). It is important to explain the difference between being labeled the problem and experiencing oppression. When someone experiences oppression, it is due to the

identities they hold that are different than those with power and privilege (Crenshaw, 1991).

Although I am a part of this community, I must continue to be humble and make sure not to make any assumptions when in the data collection process (Berryman et al., 2013). For example, when I hear this inconceivable notation that minorities, or natives, should do what they are told, it makes me very angry. It tells me that if my hair, clothing, speech, or culture is different than that of the majority then what happens to me is my fault. The killing of innocent gay people, communities of color, or women is not the fault of the predator but those of the victims/survivors because they did not fit the ideology of what is correct? In phenomenology research I must stop and humble myself and think of their experiences and reflect on the meaning of the experiences that are shared by the participants. (Moustakas, 1994). It is important that while collecting data, researchers should respect the experiences of their participants and humble themselves (Berryman et al., 2013). I had to take my thought process out during the data collection and allow me to feel what they are feeling during the experiences they are describing. The study participants are the experts and I am there to learn.

Chapter 4: Understanding Participants Journey

In this study, I began each interview by asking the participants to tell me about who they are and their leadership journey to their current positions. CRM encourages researchers to use the words and stories of the participants as a main source of understanding their background and lived experiences (Berryman et al. 2013). By using participants' direct quotes, there is no misconception of meaning, or understanding, of their journey. Therefore, each participant provided a background about who they are and their journey in leadership.

There was a total of 10 participants for this study. The participants' age ranged between 23 and 60. All the participants are Black identified, and Queer identified, cisgender men. They hold various management titles in various career fields such as Health Care, Student Affairs/Services, and Performing Arts, or Social Services. These men have mentored the lives of many young Black gay men because they provide services to young Black gay men or have done advocacy work and community building within the Black gay community. Their educational levels vary from some college to doctorate degrees. Below in Table 2: Participants Demographics, outlines the participants' age, education level, career field, position title, location of interview, and identity. These categories were chosen to display the various backgrounds of the participants within this study.

Table 2. Participants' Demographics

Participant	Age	Education Level	Career Field	Position Title	Location of Interview	Self-Identify
Mike	35	AA Degree	Health Care	Senior Manager	House	Black Gay Man

Phil	39	Ed. Doctorate	Student Affairs	Director	Office	Black Gay Man
Tom	36	Master's Degree	Student Affairs	Director	Office	Gay Black Man
Coco	46	Master's Degree	Health Care Social Services	Senior Manager	Office	Black Gay Man
Wayne	54	Master's Degree	Health Care Social Services	Director	Office	Black Gay Man
Rose	54	Some college	Health Care Social Services	Program Coordinator	Office	Black Gay Man
Ben	60	Master's Degree	Visual Arts	Art Instructor	Home	Black Gay Man
Wes	31	Bachelor's Degree	Social Services	Program Coordinator	Home	Black Gay Man
Jeff	34	Some College	Health Care Social Services	Program Coordinator	Office	Black Gay Man
Richard	23	Bachelor's Degree	Student Services	Assistant Counselor	Office	Black Gay Man

Mike, 35 years old, Senior Manager

“I will say this. I will say that I came into being a part of this field based on my own life experiences. I’m not that person that has all these degrees. I’m not that person that’s been in school all my life. I only have a high school diploma and then I’ve done some years in college. I have an AA Degree. No Bachelors. No Masters. None of that. But my life experience is what qualified me to do this work that I’ve been doing now. I call it social work but at the same time, I also call it

community service. I also call it public health. I've been working in a non-profit where I've been helping people through counseling and linkage into healthcare services. I've been doing life coaching, counseling, and HIV testing. Pretty much all the things that help people get to where they're trying to go in life. So, I call myself a bridge in the community and I say Bridge because I'm that person that helps you get to that destination. So, I'm the person that someone sits down with, say, "Hey. This is what I'm trying to do." And if I can't do it for them, I can tell them who can. So, I've been bridging people for over 15 years in working in this field. And I started – believe it or not, I started at the agency I currently work at and I was there for two years but then I left and now, I'm back there and I've been there for about a year now again. Black, gay men primarily. Young, Black, gay men, Latino, gay men. I say youth, but I really will say youth really qualifies for people that are 35 years old and under. I call them youth because a lot of times, it's about mindsets. It's about quality of life. It's about independence and it's beyond just the age. Because some people think that if you're a certain age, you already have reached that place where you're an adult. That's not always true. So, I think it took for me to not only live my own experiences and see other people going through the same things for me to realize how big it – how important it is for me to help assist with people getting to where I somehow found my way to navigate through, if that makes any sense."

Phil, 39 years old, Director

"At that time in my career when it came time to graduate, I had a decision between following what was my major, which was TV, News, Journalism or

follow my passion which I was really excited about working with students. And you know you never know this career until you're actually in college so it's kind of like a privileged career where you don't know that you can work out of college until you're in college. And so it was at that point I made a decision. I'm going to forego TV news even though, to this day, I still kinda wanna be on TV and stuff like that. But I went to graduate school to pursue higher education and student affairs. And it was really at Loyola, although Missouri had some really interesting racial dynamics as they did two years ago with the concern 1950 and the walkouts and stuff. But it was really in my grad school where my consciousness around ethnicity, inequities, really came to fruition in my life and that's where my passion for cultural centers, multicultural centers, working with equity really came to be and that was just because of being around so many privileged and white and heterosexual people with so much privilege that they were just so oblivious to. And part of it made me kinda feel bad about myself and part of it kinda made me feel like we gotta do something about this because these people can't be walking around being oblivious to everything they have. And so after that, I got my first professional job when I graduated. For a year I was a hall director and half of the assignment was working with the Office of Multicultural Affairs. And after doing that, I'm like, "Oh, no. Res life is not where I wanna be at all." Yeah. Res life wasn't where I wanted to be but I loved the work that we did with the multicultural affairs office because we had theme floors that related to diversity, equity and I saw the power of creating community. That happens when you really tap into people's stories and narratives and identities and who

they are and everything. And so a year into that job, a random email popped up in my email box that said, “Cross Cultural Programs Coordinator.” And as soon as I got the email, I said, “That’s my next job and I’m going.” I didn’t know anyone down here. Didn’t – I didn’t have any connections. I was like, “That’s my next job.” And so I submitted. I applied. I got it. It wasn’t that easy though but it all just happened. And the ironic part is that the person who picked me up at the airport for my interview was our former executive director. So it’s all coming full circle now that I finished my dissertation. But anyway, the job here started out entry level as a program coordinator and then a couple years later, was – no. A year later was promoted to assistant director. And then two or three years after that when our director, who I loved, left to go to another university, I got promoted to interim director and then director. I have also been on the board of a non-profit that works with Black gay men and Latino gay men. That experience was interesting.”

Tom, 36 years old, Director

“I’ve been in this position for three years. I came into this position because I kind of got lucky. I’ll be real honest. I was in the right place at the right time. The vice president was looking to create a new department. She was looking for somebody to come in and kind of run with it a little bit, and so she actually tapped Jay, who you remember, to come and be the director of the office, and the two of them together decided to tap me to come over and be the assistant director of the office. What actually ended up happening was Jay and I couldn’t both leave the department at same time. So, I left first to come over to this position, and she was

supposed to come over shortly thereafter. We were gonna run the department together, but what ended up happening was I came over here and ended up basically running the department on my own for ten months; so most of the year. Reporting directly to the vice president, kind our out here making it up as I went along.

So, afraid at any moment that I was gonna get totally fired because I'm just like, "I don't know what I'm doing." This is the first time I'm in a management position. I'm just like, and I don't really have anybody supervising me really. So, I'm just kind of doing whatever I wanted to do. Then, of course, eventually Jay came over, like I said, about ten months later, and her positions changed a little bit too. So, instead of just overseeing this department, she is actually now overseeing three different departments. I was still the main person in charge of the department. So, now three years later, here I am the assistant director, but kind of the director of this office and this department. So, that's kind of the short of how I got here. The long version of how I got here, I think part of the reason why I got tapped in the first place is because this is dealing with orientation and dealing with first-year students and parents and families and attendees like that. Before I left, I was already starting to kind of rebrand my programming to more of a first-year programming focus. I had gone to – we were doing accreditation. We were doing university accreditation, and I had gone to one of the meetings and had this epiphany.”

But basically, we were in there, and we were talking about graduation rates for the university, and they were like, "Yes, six-year graduation rate is like 25 percent." I

was just like, "I'm sorry, what? Like what?" I was floored by this statistic. I had never heard it before. I had never looked it up. They were just like, "Yeah, our graduation is – so we're working to increase our graduate rates. Our four-year is this, and our six-year is this." Both of them were just horridly low, and I was just like, "How?" That kind of inspired me. So, after I heard that, I was like, "I need to be doing something to contribute to this." We were working in student activities so it's not like I was gonna go fix the problem, but I was like, "The least I can do is start trying to craft what we do to support retention and graduation." So, from that moment, I was starting to kind of look for ways to do that, and I think that kind of set me up for this job."

Coco, 46 years old, Senior Manager

"How I came to be where I'm at, well HIV had a lot to do with it, my HIV diagnosis. If I was not diagnosed positive I more than likely would not be in this field. I'm like 100 percent certain I would not be in this field because I had no interest in working in anything HIV-related or in direct connection with the gay community. I was working in corporate America. After being diagnosed I saw the need to share the information about HIV and get more people the prevention training so I just kind of evolved into it and that's where I ended up, that's where I landed, and from that, it became a career and it's a passion work now. I do anything with prevention, education, I do safer sex talks and workshops primarily with young, gay men of color, I do workshops with youth and children within the faith-based sector, I do trainings for pastors to make them more culturally sensitive about the LGBTQ community, I lobby on certain issues so I go to

Sacramento and I lobby on certain issues that focus on budget concerns around HIV prevention strategies. Additionally, I do mentorship for a lot of young, gay men of color – well actually some straight men too but I do a lot of mentorships and connect them with resources that can better their lives to take them out of that "I'm just a gay boy" mindset to show them they are a man first; that gay part is secondary. I oversee 3 family-funded programs that target young men of color when it comes to HIV and substance abuse in youth from a prevention standpoint to try and make sure they're making better decisions about themselves, and I'm actively involved in the Black church. Right, I host a podcast. I host a weekly podcast show that talks about a myriad of issues, social justice, LGBTQ, faith, politics, pop culture; it's just a hodgepodge of stuff that I talk about. It's very well liked. I do one on Monday night on Blog Talk Radio and I do 1 on Thursday evenings on Facebook Live where I interview various people throughout LA about what they do, their jobs, what they bring to the table. I also host an open mic on the 3rd Sunday of every month. I do that to give people – to give singers, performers, spoken word artists, all that kind of stuff a platform to share their talent. I think that's it. I sang with a gospel group so I've done that before. I have 2 books, I've written 2 books, I'm working on a play right now, and I act, and I sing and I do a lot. Oh, and I oversee the youth ministry at my church, so I am over – yeah, I'm over the youth ministry so I do stuff with the kids at church to make sure their lives are staying on track and on point and they're staying focused on their goals. Yeah, I think that – I'm a member of a fraternity, a military fraternity, so it's a fraternity for members of the armed forces, either veterans, currently

enlisted, whatever the case may be, so I'm a member of that and I am – with that one I'm over the social media for my detachment as well as the chaplain.”

Wayne 54 years old, Director

“My background is in social services. I have an undergraduate degree in psychology. I started out working in – as a substance abuse counselor that was working with people – it was an in-home substance abuse recovery treatment program. I quickly discovered that wasn't what I wanted to do and initially thought that I wanted to be kind of like a psychologist, very kind of traditional psychologist with a wife and 2 kids and then the gay thing said, "Oh no, we've got a different plan for you." And so that job in substance abuse wasn't really what I wanted to do; I didn't want to do therapy with people once I realized I probably needed my own therapy. Then I got a job as a job developer for people who had disabilities and it was at that job that I was working for a woman who was head to the organization who really saw some leadership potential in me and really kind of helped grow me and kind of mentor me and although at the time I didn't appreciate it or fully recognize it really kind of awoke the leadership desire for me to lead things and run things and all that. And so that just kind of started my trajectory in leadership capacity. I then left that organization and starting run a bunch of HIV prevention programs targeting Latinos, which is interesting enough, targeting Latinos, and then I just kind of kept to the HIV field and eventually ended up here. I mean there were some twists and turns but I eventually ended up here where I came in as associate director of education working with another guy who was really kind of a mentor to me, really kind of helped me understand my

voice and my place in the work as well as kind of my passion and really kind of helped me wrap my brain around things as a Black gay man who is HIV positive who also had 2 separate lives going on and he really kind of helped me be a little bit more authentic and real in my work and my life and all that other stuff. And so, I worked as associate director up till about 2 years ago when I got promoted to a director.”

Rose, 54 years old, Program Coordinator

“I was working in a clinic in the Valley, and then I was also working at another agency in our mobile unit, and there was a gentleman in the community who was also doing a similar work and he talked about the position here and so I applied for it. Because it was working with Black gay men, that’s interesting and it was a management position or coordinator position where I had the opportunity to kind of come up and expand a little bit and use some more abilities or skills that I have. You know whereas when I was at the clinic, even though it was a wonderful, safe place to be and you know I had been there since 1998 it was a good decision, a hard decision to leave but you know the financial part kicked in too. So it made it a little more easier to go.”

Ben, 60 years old, Art Instructor

“I’m 60 years old. Most of my life I’ve taken a leadership role on. The position that I’m in today, I don’t think of as a leadership role. I think more of myself as a team player. I’m classified as an art instructor, so I work with teams of people on art projects. For the majority of my adult life, I’ve taken a leadership role. I’ve launched my own theater companies, started businesses, and self-produced myself

in projects because of my desire to run things. I've been a project manager of projects that dealt with the Black gay community. My major focus was young men of color, 18 to 24. In the early '90s, I was the program director of the Men of Color AIDS Prevention Project. There I was truly the leader, making the decisions about how that particular program would run. That was funded by the United Council on Black Mayors, and that was a program specifically dedicated to men of color in the Baltimore/D.C. community. I identify as a Black gay man.”

Wes, 31 years old, Program Coordinator

“I started working in this field about 12 or 13 years ago now and I just kind of wanted to work with LGBT folks specifically and that kind of thing. So, I started at the LGBT Center as a Youth Advocate and kind of just worked my way up. I’ve done housing, done case management, done testing and counseling. I’ve done outreach work, recruitment then, of course, program management. I worked with GSA and now what I do is Capacity Building.”

Jeff, 34 years old, Program Coordinator

“I’ve worked at public health for about the last five-and-a-half to six years. I didn't really necessarily have a plan or a trajectory to come into public health. I was working at health care doing billing and coding and via volunteer work in the community. I started noticing how HIV affected the Black community, so specifically young Black men like myself and I wanted my volunteer work to then turn into a career. So, I used my volunteer work, as well as some community connections to help me to understand like what public health was and like how to go about like kind of like phasing from my billing and coding experience into

public health spaces. I started out as a health education specialist and from there I really did my research on like what kind of growth in the public health sector looked like, specifically in direct services. So, from a health education specialist I moved into the outreach specialist and then from the outreach specialist based on my coordination of events and my engagement with the community I was offered a promotion as a program coordination. Then as a program coordinator I used that experience to then dictate and understand like how programs are implemented, how policy was infused into those programs. Then from that space I went into Linkage Care because my first program that I oversaw as a coordinator was a Prevention for Positive program and then from the Prevention for Positive spaces I went into doing Linkage to Care. So, understanding how to link people with HIV to services in Los Angeles County via their insurance programs or private insurance. Specifically, 18-to-29 years old, young MSM, Latino and/or Black and some older population. When I worked in Positive Images the Prevention for Positive program at the LGBT Center a lot of my clients there were over 50, so they were MSM, over 50 that were kind of like slotted to that. So like they had contracted HIV like at the beginning of that and then medications and things changed and they were on disability and now all of a sudden it's like 20 years later and it's like, "Oh well I'm still here now," so like you know trying to re-acclimate to the world that was telling them that they was not going to be here."

Richard, 23 years old, Assistant Counselor

"When I was 16 years old I started volunteering at a non-profit who focused on HIV presentation for young men of color who have sex with men. It was fun. I

learned about safe sex, sex positivity, and started to develop my leadership. I was working with a lot of Black gay men teaching them what I learned and helping plan events. After a while people saw me and asked me about sex and how to use a condom. Like, I started to understand me as a Black gay male. Like it was hella new to me, my family didn't even know I was going to this organization. But after a while I was comfortable in my skin and became the co-chair of their Community Advisory Board. Then I went to college and started to work on campus. I was an event programmer there and I spent a lot of money. I organized all kinds of events. I guess I didn't see myself as a leader then, I just saw myself as doing the job I was hired to do. It wasn't till later when I was also an RA when I was like wow I am a leader. People were asking my advice on things. They were asking me to do presentations, be President and VP of different campus orgs. I even started some. I was doing my thing, you know. When I graduated I started to work in the Black gay community more. I was doing counseling groups, HIV testing and counseling, outreach and planning events. All in the gay community. It was something I saw as fun. Again, I didn't think or know I was really like leading. I struck me that I was a leader in the Black gay community and someone told me that I was a leader. I was like, "Uh? What? Leader?" I don't take that responsibility. I was just enjoying myself and doing what I thought was right. I have been to meetings where I have had to stand up for young Black gay men. I have had to tell the stories of Black gay men and their struggle. I have had to tell my struggle about being homeless, going to school, getting a higher education, finding out I am HIV positive and how do I work around that. I have presented at

national conferences about the experiences of being Black, gay, and HIV positive.

I am really just doing what I think is right for me and people that share my experiences. I am not speaking for anyone; I am speaking with them. I am getting my masters and one day hope to get my Ph.D.”

Chapter 5: Data Analysis

This chapter outlines the data analysis process. It explains how data was validated and how first cycle and second cycle coding was completed. Lastly, this chapter shares how participants were able to contribute to the research.

Member Checking

I employed strategies such as member checking to validate the findings of this study. CRM requires member checking to be done in order to validate the finding with the participants, this is also a form of data triangulation (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Berryman et al., 2013). By completing member checking and verifying different themes by the participants' data, data triangulation was completed to validity this study. Member checking was conducted by emailing participants the parts of the research and having phone conversations with participants about the findings of the study. Each participant had the opportunity to read and comment on the parts of this study chapters where they were specifically mentioned. There were no requests to change any part of their statements or any conclusions that were drawn by the collected data. Another reason for member checking was to test the themes and categories from the participants' results. When discussing their representation in the findings, participants were also notified of themes and categories identified in the findings chapter. There were no afflictions of themes or categories brought up by data collected from the participants. Participants felt the themes were appropriate to their interviews and their lived experiences as Black gay men in leadership positions.

Bracketing (or epoche) was used during the process of data collection and data analyses because phenomenological researchers should clear themselves from any

personal perception that would influence the interpretation of the data collected (Moustakas, 1994). There are multiple ways to intentionally bracket one's thoughts on the data collected and analyzed. In this study, bracketing was practiced by noting and then monitoring my personal thoughts and beliefs that could influence how I interpreted the data collected.

Throughout the process of collecting data I intentionally thought about the interviews and deconstructed my own preconceived thoughts about leadership of Black gay men. It is important to note that as a Black gay male, I have to be conscious of my own beliefs because of how my own identities are similar to the participants. After all the data was collected, I intentionally listened to and read each interview several times in order to bracket any presumptions and avoid any impulsive interpretation of the data. For example, one idea that was bracketed throughout the process was about the role of mentorship and intimate relationships. I personally would never think that sexual contact would happen between a mentor and mentee. It was important that I bracketed my assumptions that the relationship between a mentor and mentee would never go beyond that of a learning and guidance type of relationship because of my own lived experiences.

Coding Process

Before I started coding, I listened to each interview twice. In the first round of listening, I listened as if it was the first time I ever heard the interview. When listening, I underwent a bracketing process and then listened without preconceived thoughts. The second round of listening to interviews, I also read the transcript to check for typos. Next, I used NVivo Software to upload all of the transcripts to organize the data for data analysis. I first organized the data by the predetermined questions I asked participants in

order to start my coding process. In order to organize data, each participant's response to each question was organized in a folder labeled with the question title. Separating the questions with the given responses helped me identify topics for descriptive coding.

In order to decide the best approach for coding phenomenology research, I used approaches outlined by Saldana (2016), who defined the coding methods used in this study. I used two different types of coding in my first cycle of coding. First, I performed descriptive coding, and then did values coding. After coding conducting descriptive and values coding, I performed my second cycle of coding called axial Coding. Table 3. below provides a short description of the coding methods used to code the data collected, including how I organized questions with responses.

Table 3. Summarization of Coding Methods

1st Cycle: Descriptive Coding	This coding approach was used to summarize the data by a word or short phrase. These words or phrases should identify recurring themes or categories from the interview (Saldana, 2016).
1st Cycle: Values Coding	This coding approach helped generate the values, attitudes, and beliefs of participants. Values help understand what the participant deems as important attributes due to life's experiences. Attitudes observe the way a person thinks about a particular situation, concept, or person. Beliefs embody values, knowledge, morals, ideology, and lived experiences as the framework the makes up oneself (Saldana, 2016).

2 nd Cycle: Axial Coding	“A Technique that involves relating data together in order to reveal codes, categories, and subcategories ground within participants’ voices within one’s collected data. In other words, axial coding is one way to construct linkages between data” (Benaquisto & Given, 2008, p. 80)

First Cycle: Descriptive Coding.

The first cycle of coding, descriptive coding, was utilized to process data by using words or short phrases to categorize important information (Saldana, 2016). Going through all of the data by questions, I was able to categorize themes due to the content gathered by the questions.

This was continued throughout all interview transcripts. There were times I realized that one unit of data could have one code, while other passages could be coded multiple times. It was important to hear what each response was trying to convey based off of their lived experiences. Below, Table 4. provides an alphabetized list the different codes identified by using descriptive coding as a way to analyze data.

Table 4. Descriptive Codes: 27 Different Codes

Advocacy	Health	Professional
Being Authentic	Homophobia	Racism
Being Mentee	Homophobia in Black Community	Racism in Gay
Black Identity	Internalized Homophobia	Community
Brokenness	Internalized Racism	Relationships
Community	Lead by Example	Resilience

Black Gay Leadership	Leadership Development	Self-Care
Definition of Leadership	Legacy	Spirituality/Religion
Gay Identity	Mentoring	Strength
		Takes a Village

First Cycle: Values Coding.

For my second cycle of coding, I chose values coding because it matches well with the phenomenological research methodology, which emphasizes participants' lived experiences (Saldana, 2016). In the values coding process, researchers aim to analyze data by coding participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs from their lived experiences. (Saldana, 2016). Participants' values are not necessarily based off what the participants' say they are. Saldana (2016) explained that participants may state what their values, attitudes and beliefs are, but they may not always be congruent with the lived experiences they convey in their stories. I believe by understanding each participants' values, I was able to dig deeper into their unique connections with leadership, particularly from their vantage point as Black gay men. Overall, values coding tends to reflect the needs and wants of a participant (Saldana, 2016). As seen in Figure 1, I show the Values codes that were constructed during the data analysis process.

Values	Attitudes	Beliefs
• Authenticity • Honesty • Mutual Respect • Black Identity • Queer Identity • Religion/Spirituality	• Oppression is real and ongoing • Be Strong • There isn't just one way	• Education is important • It takes a village • Leading by example

Figure 1. Values Coding by Type

Second Cycle: Axial Coding.

In order to develop the themes for this study, I completed Axial coding for my second cycle of coding. Saldana (2016) defines axial coding as a process that generates thematic categories and core themes proceeding the descriptive coding process. The categories in this study were developed by relating data and codes together in order to identify themes.

Below in Figure 2, I identified the themes developed from axial coding as well as the categories with in the themes. The themes developed from the codes are: Lived Experiences of Black Gay Men as Leaders, How Lived Experiences Inspired Their Leadership Development, The Role of Mentorship in Leadership Development among Black Gay Men, and Defining Leadership. Each of these themes were comprised and informed by categories that represent the phenomenon of Black gay male leadership.

Figure 2. Demonstration of themes using Axial coding

In the appendix section, there are four tables that help explain how axial coding was used. It explained that quotes were analyzed to develop codes, then codes were combined to develop categories, and then themes were developed based off the categories.

Participants Research Contribution

With Cultural Response Methodology (CRM) being the ethical framework driving this study, I made sure it was used in every aspect of my research. CRM encourages researchers to consider their participants as partners in their research (Berryman et al., 2013). Not only did CRM influence my researcher stance during the interviews, it also allowed me to justify including my participants in the development of questions. At the beginning of the first interview with each participant, I informed the participants that they could make meaningful contributions in the study. I explained to

them that the second interview would include questions that each participant wanted to add to the study, but they were not required to add any questions if they did not see them as fit. At the end of the first interview I asked each participant: What questions did you want me to ask that I did not ask? What questions do you think I should have asked that I did not? What questions would you like to add to this interview that I have not covered? Almost every participant added at least one question. Below in Table 5. Questions Participants Contributed for the Second Interview, there is an outline of each participant's contribution to the study.

Table 5. Questions Participants Contributed for the Second Interview.

Participant	Questions
Mike	What is your leadership role? Do you feel you are primarily a leader or seeking to be led? What does the next stage of leadership look like?
Phil	Can Black Gay leaders have it all? Who does leadership change with different relationship? How does leadership manifest itself outside the workplace?
Tom	What specific role models have influenced you? Tell me a story about how they influenced your leadership.
Coco	What kind of experiences have you had that were discriminatory in the Black community that affects your leadership? How does spirituality affect leadership? Are you a different kind of leadership because you are a relationship?
Wayne	What is your leadership legacy going to be?

	Can you tell me a story that has influenced your leadership style?
Rose	Did not add questions.
Ben	Did not add questions.
Wes	Who has been your greatest influence? Can you tell me a story about that influence?
Jeff	When did you realize that love was not enough with in leadership to mentor someone? How do you maintain/process leadership's baggage until your next intervention?
Richard	Did not add questions.

Chapter 6: Findings

As seen in the literature review advanced in Chapter 2, there is a paucity of research and theoretical frameworks about leadership development among black gay men. While there are separate research areas that have examined leadership among Black men, Black women, and the LGBT community, current leadership research lacks a focus on leadership among Black gay men. Hence, the purpose of this research was to understand the lived experiences of Black gay men in leaders. The study was centered on black gay male leaders in Los Angeles County who provide services, or work with, young Black gay men. One overarching aim of this study was to understand the lived experiences of the participants in order to have a better understanding of how to build a foundation in developing leadership among young Black gay men for a curriculum in community-based organizations. This chapter will present data collected to answer the research questions that guided this study. My research questions are:

1. How do Black gay men define leadership in their communities?
2. How have the lived experiences of Black gay men influenced their leadership development?
3. What are the lived experiences of Black gay men as leaders?

There was not one specific common definition that participants presented to define leadership for Black gay men. This chapter presents four core themes that lend meaning to the overall phenomenon of leadership development among Black gay men. These four themes are comprised of multiple categories that examine negative and positive lived experiences that have been a factor in their leadership development. These participants

have described multiple experiences that portray their involvement with leadership and the communities they are a part of.

Theme #1: Lived Experiences of Black Gay Men as Leaders

The first theme is the lived experiences of Black Gay men as Leaders. The participants lived experiences informed how they define leadership. The dimensions of this theme that will be discussed is how systems of oppression have played a role in the leadership development of our participants. The two forms of oppression that emerged from all participants were their lived experiences of homophobia and racism. Overall, participants explained how they struggled with experiences of homophobia in society and specifically with in their own Black community. The participants also explained that racism was contributing factor of their leadership development, not only in society but also within the gay community. Lastly, there was a conversation that explained how the intersectionality of Black gay men has influenced our participants' leadership development.

Homophobia.

When it comes to experiences of homophobia, nine out of the ten participants spoke about how they have had negative experiences with homophobic individuals. Participants explained how these experiences shifted, changed, and reinvigorated their perspective on leadership (Baker & Greene, 2007; Fassinger et al., 2010). Some participants took these interactions and used them as a learning opportunity, so they would be able to overcome obstacles set before them. In essence, these experiences compelled them to grow and really develop themselves as better leaders. For instance, Coco explained how he has been treated by the church due to his sexual orientation and

how he has now overcome homophobia in order to become the leader he knows he is and can be (Collins, 2012). Coco stated:

“Granted you don't have to accept me as a homosexual. That's fine. Everybody's got their own beliefs, their own things; I'm over that part. I'm not seeking acceptance. I'm seeking respect, just respect me for what I have worked to achieve, what I have worked to accomplish, and what I have gone through the necessary trainings to acquire. I acquired a license in ministry. I got that. It is mine. It's like a degree. I got that. You cannot take that from me just because you don't like me, so I felt disrespected.”

Another participant, Wayne, also described his experiences with homophobia in the Black church. As seen in the quote below, he discussed the lack of connection Black gay men may have in the Black church. He explained how there is disconnect that Black gay leaders may have with the Black church and religious and spiritual leaders. Health issues, such as HIV/AIDS, affect the Black gay community and Black gay men are present in the Black church (Foster et. al, 2011; Means & Jaeger, 2013). Wayne explained:

“At a Black Church, we had this event when we were talking about prep in the early days. They had assembled five or six pastors at this church and we did this prep presentation and I just over viewed the HIV Aids epidemic in the Black community. And then you hear the statistics, you see whose number one in all this, and there are clear things that we can do, and talking to your population. These men were generally struggling with, “if I talk about gay stuff in the pool pit or if I talk about condoms for the pool pit or sex, half my church is going to leave.” That was a very big conflict, and that's why I'm not interested in working

with the church, but I think the majority of churches are not interested in talking about sex and how they support people who are not straight.”

Some participants also recalled their experiences of homophobia outside of the Black community in other social institutions, which is also noted in the research literature (Wagaman, 2016). For example, Tom shared an experience of homophobia while working at predominantly white institution. These experiences of homophobia made Tom realize his own manifestation of internalized homophobia and how internalized homophobia could attributed to his lack of authentic and holistic leadership identity development because he has had to hide his sexual identity (Baker & Greene, 2007; Fassinger et al., 2010). Tom explained how hiding sexual orientation is no longer an issue because he has been able to understand his queer identity, and how it can now be part of his leadership identity (Collins, 2012). Tom stated:

“I was just starting to question my sexuality, and as I'm questioning it internally, all of the outside messaging is, "Gay is bad, gay is bad, gay is bad." So, now I'm like, "Oh shit, I'm becoming gay, but I'm becoming this thing that's bad. One of the years I remember the bridge got tagged, "God hates fags," or some shit like that. I was definitely not being my true self. Always only bringing half myself to the conversation. Now, I feel now I step into a situation, or I step into a group or a setting or whatever, I'm able to bring my full self. I'm not holding back. Because I'm not expanding all that energy hiding.”

As I have discussed how the experiences of homophobia have impacted the leadership development and identity of Black gay men, I must continue the conversation by exploring racism. The identity of Blackness comes first to most of our participants; Nine

of ten participant identified as Black gay men, whereas one participant identified as a gay Black man.

Racism.

Every participant spoke about how racism has influenced their life experiences. They spoke about how skin color is the first thing people notice about them and then their other identities (e.g. being gay) were seen as second. Jeff painfully shared a story about how he was wrongly treated and terminated from a job because of racism. He expressed the hurt that occurred while being a victim of racist practices at a previous institution (Yosso, 2005; Delgado, 2001). Jeff described his experience of racism by a white supervisor.

“White supervisor kept saying, "You're aggressive. You're very domineering how you fill in the space." It's just like a bull in a china shop. I'm like, "Well what are you talking about?" Again, not understanding what these red flags meant in a professional atmosphere. They called me in the office and said "Well you're not working here. We've decided to let you go." But how it really hit home for me as a Black man is that when I turned to leave my supervisor's office there were seven security guards waiting for me. The way they escorted me out had made me feel like I had stole something. That was the first time I realized like what it meant to be like Black in America in a corporate space.”

Mike told a story about his experience of racism when he was homeless and how he was mistreated by those with power and privilege. This finding connects with past research that explored how Black gay men continuously encounter racism even when they are growing into their leadership identity (Harper and Quaye, 2007; Smith, and Roysircar,

2010; Loiacano, 1989; Cornileus, 2012; Allen, 2105; Gooden, 2012; Harper, 2009; Harper et al., 2011; Wagaman, 2016). In addition, Mike expressed how that experience now requires him to have empathy for others and their struggles. Mike stated:

“When I was homeless. I would say when I was homeless. I lived in a shelter. Believe it or not, agency I ended up working at one day later in the future. But I lived in a shelter and I remember being told pretty much that I couldn’t go in there and that was probably because they had a quota of Black people that they would allow in that place. I’m not going to do that. I don’t wanna lie to nobody. I don’t wanna pretend. If something’s not right, I’m going to say it’s not right. I’m not going to say, “Oh, yes. Just go there. They’ll take care of you,” when I know they won’t. Fuck that. I’m not going to say that shit to you. I’m going to say, “Listen. I don’t know what they’re going to do for you so if they don’t help you, you call me back.” It helped me with my leadership because I’m not going to let someone to think that I’m a part of contributing to their damage.”

Blackness is one of the most salient identities of Black gay men because it is what society sees first (W. E. B. Du Bois, 1903). In addition, the gay identity of Black gay men is still important because it can intersect with the Black identity influencing leadership development (Somerville, 2000; Johnson, 2001; Yosso, 2006; Allen 2014). The participants have explained how they may not feel like they can be involved in leadership because of their gay identity or their Black identity (Vaccaro and Mean, 2011). In addition, the participants in this study have explained how their lived experiences of racism and homophobia have made them want to become more in touch with their Black Identity or queer identity or both identities.

Intersectionality.

When thinking about how the Black community is oppressed and the Gay community is oppressed, there were conversations about intersectionality. It was hard for participants not to speak about how their Black identity and gay identity have been attacked at the same time. Richard shared his experience as being a Black gay man and how he has been attacked because he holds two marginalized identities that are constantly oppressed (Hoover 2009; Collins 2012). His experiences of intersectionality have provided him a way to grow regardless of the negative aspect of the lived experiences when he has encountered oppression by continuing to fight (Abdullah, 2003). Richard stated:

“As a Black male it’s hard enough because I’m constantly judged by my skin color. When you add in my sexuality, it’s a double whammy. I’m not the most masculine person. I experience racism from gay white folk and homophobia from my Black community. I can’t win for losing. I was in a meeting once with co-workers and I was told that I am “sassy/katty/aggressive” because I am really direct and speak my mind and stand up for what I believe to be true or right. But when my white counterparts do the same thing, its passion. What the fuck!?!? When this shit happens, I call it out. I ask, is it because I’m Black and gay? At one point in time I didn’t want to be a troublemaker, so I didn’t say anything. Now, there are new minorities in the department, I’ve had enough, and I can’t just silent anymore. For my development and theirs. I call out those microaggressions.”

In sum, all the participants addressed the issues of homophobia and racism; including the different ways they have been oppressed and discriminated against in their leadership roles. Reflecting on the lived experiences of Black gay men in this study, racism and homophobia definitely play a role in the formation of their leadership identity and leadership development (Abdullah, 2003; Collins 2012; Harper and Quaye, 2007; Smith, and Roysircar, 2010; Loiacano, 1989; Cornileus, 2012; Allen, 2105; Harper, 2009; and Harper et al., 2011). Every participant spoke about how homophobia and racism has affected their leadership development. From their perspective, the most important conversation that came out of these experiences is how they overcame these experiences of oppression. They then used these lived experiences as tools that inspired them to combat future experiences of microaggressions and blatant acts of racism as leaders in the Black gay community.

Theme #2: How Lived Experiences Inspired Leadership Development

Each participant in this study is a leader in the Black gay community in Los Angeles; they work with the community in various ways and in various career fields. The lived experiences of these leaders bring multiple viewpoints to understanding leadership development among Black gay men due to their various backgrounds. Participants have demonstrated their commitment to developing the Black gay community and in turn have been identified as leaders in that community. Participants expounded on lived experiences with the community that ultimately inspired how they lead and the purpose for their leadership style. There are two categories discussed within this theme. One observes the lived experiences of interacting with the community and being an advocate for and with young Black gay men. The second category discusses how personal

relationships such as family, significant partners, and friends influenced their leadership development.

Commitment to Community and Advocacy.

All the participants explained how advocacy plays a role in their leadership. In particular, the participants spoke about not only how they advocate of others, but also how they advocate for themselves. They spoke about the interactions they have had with community members and participants in their organizations and institutions. In his experiences as a social services leader, Wes described how he worked with clients in the Black gay community to get their health needs met (Collins, 2012; Richardson & Loubier, 2008). He explained how combatting bureaucratic powers of oppression just to make sure his clients and the Black gay community are able to obtain basic life necessities to better their quality of life is a difficult task (Fassinger et al., 2010). Wes described his experience in advocating for the rights and needs of his clients who are Black gay men, which in turn, is his leadership (Renn, 2007). Wes explained:

“Well, before when I worked with clients directly, I would also make sure they had access to services and make and work with the powers that be to make sure those services were available to them. Now I advocate for all Black gay men because I work with Black men everywhere. I make sure it supports not only education but job sustainability and life sustainability. One of my recommendations is that all staff get professional development that they want. Also develop, having 3-month plans, 6-month plans, and yearly plans that really look into Theory of Possible Selves. My advocacy shows up by making sure that those people have support systems in place that set them up for success.”

In addition, Tom described his experience in student affairs and seeing the numbers of Black students at his university decrease. He explained how much he had to fight administration in order to start a program that focused on the experiences and struggle of Black student and Black identity (Abdullah, 2003). This program provided a space for Black students to improve their educational experience and ultimately improve their retention rate. This experience allowed Tom to understand others' experiences while simultaneously developing his own leadership and advocacy (Golden, 2012). Tom explained:

“We have a peer mentoring program called RISE, Retention through Interpersonal Student Engagement, but really, I just wanted the word "Rise". It's a peer mentoring program for Black students here on campus. It's literally taking the students who are getting through the struggle because it's struggle, right? It's a struggle to be here on this campus as Black students. It's a struggle. That's just real talk. So, taking those students and kind of being, "Okay, let's take your experience. Let's take what's happening with you and what you've had to go through and let's match you up with a student who is coming up behind you." But, I had to push to make that happen. When I proposed the idea, it wasn't like, "Oh yeah, that's great. Do it." It was kind of like, "Eh, is it just for Black students? Is it exclusive? Dah, nah, nah, nah." I had to bypass or get through multiple levels of folks having questions and being kind of wary about it. Even right now, I'm still facing and fighting some of that stuff, but no, I mean, having this program is really important to me because, again, like I said, I was kind of inspired by those retention numbers so many years ago.”

In this next passage, Rose described how he advocated for the Black gay community to the public health department by making sure their voices were truly heard. In this work, he explained how he affected public health policy for the betterment of the community by leading a resistance against change that could negatively affect the Black gay community (Renn, 2007). This is an example of how a leader in the Black gay community can notify the community of changes that may negatively affect them and become a community activist (Renn, 2007, Abdullah, 2003). Rose used their experience with queer identity and Black identity by encouraging community members to be resilient and take action (Fassinger et al., 2010). Rose stated:

“In the community, doing specific little events, letting them know you can come here to get certain things for Black gay men, whether it be positive or negative, you know, and even if you don’t come here we can. We are also here to assist for the betterment of the community. For example, at the HIV commission meeting and the priorities and planning committee, somebody wanted to reallocate our money. They wanted to use a whole bunch of it somewhere else (in a different community). So, we had to go to the community to tell them that this is what they wanted to do with your money. Do you want them to do that? Well, we don’t want them to do that, so write us a letter, come to this meeting, sign this so that we can go there, and have it shift it back. So, what happened basically was the money didn’t get shifted and then we restructured it, so it actually kinda came to an area where folks felt it was more needed for the Black community, and the Black gay community.”

These findings explained that in order to be an advocate in the Black queer community, positive relationships must be developed. There must be an understanding of the needs of the community and an understanding of how to be an effective advocate. In the context of this study, building these trusting relationships in order to motivate positive change is the key to be a successful leader and advocate among Black gay men (Burns, 1978; Gill, 2011).

Personal Relationships' Influence on Leadership.

One experience that was brought up by my initial interview questions but also added as a question by the participants inquired how different kinds of personal relationships influence leadership and leadership development. Many participants talked about their personal relationship with friends and loved ones. They described how the relationships with family have influenced and helped them develop as leaders because they are always called upon by family members to lead in challenging situations. They are often seen as the person who can fix a problem, help with financial misfortune, and be that voice of reason in a crisis. Phil, for instance, explained how his interactions and experiences with his family have shaped his leadership because his family depends on him to be a leader. His family trusts that he is strong enough to make decisions on behalf of the family. Phil stated,

“One thing I've noticed when it comes to families and Black gay men, I feel like a lot of us are looked upon to be the leader in the family. And to be the fixer whether we want to be in that role or not. I think that's an imposed sense of leadership that's put on a lot of us. "Hey, I got to call you. Talk to you about your baby brother. Your grand momma needs some help. Can you send some money?"

Things like that, that I think a lot of us are called upon to be within the family whether we're out or not out. People just look to where we're perceived to be the Black gay man, they're just going to be the family fixer. The family leader, the one that pulled everything together."

Intimate partners may also play a role in shaping leadership. For instance, Ben begins to describe how his relationship with his intimate partner continues to influence who he is as a leader. They not only love each other but they have a mutual understanding of respect for they may lead and their leadership strengths. He explained how working with someone you care about will help positively transform leadership development and identify personal growth. Ben explained:

"Every day with my partner is a learning experience. We have this level of, I don't know whether it's even calling, its, experiment, but at the end of every conflict, we have this evaluation process of our communication skills, and it's what I've always tried to do as a leader in work relationships, and never realized that you can apply that in romantic relationships. Just being able to build a communication style and technique that you can evaluate the same way you can evaluate a work program. You walk away from it like, damn, that was a good argument."

Another participant, Richard, spoke about how he is always asked to make decisions when it comes to his family and how he is expected to be the voice of reason. He knows there is not just one way to actually solve a problem, but his family trust his decisions and preferred him to make important judgment calls when it comes to family matters. He reflects on being the youngest sibling in his family; they often leaned towards him to make important decision. Richard explained:

“I love my family, I really do but they can really test me. I know that everything happens for a reason but there are times I ask God to explain it to me a little bit more. Let me give you an example. My grandmother passed away a while ago and I live out of state. When I got back to my hometown nothing was done. I had to come in and make all the decisions. My mother and father were very little help. I had to decide the music, who was going to speak, what order people were going to speak in, I had to provide financial support. Like WTF. I am not the only child. I have 3 brothers that could help with something. I feel like the family sees me as the responsible one but also the one with money because I don't have any children. I don't have extra money, but I do have my life together. Is that the reason why they always ask for me to make decision? I don't know; that could be it.”

In conclusion, the lived experiences of leadership were not only developed due to experiences at work, or in the community, they arise in various places such as university and personal interactions. Leadership development can be found with the experiences of family, friends, and intimate partner interactions.

Theme #3: The Role of Mentorship in Leadership Development among Black Gay Men

When understanding leadership in the Black gay community, mentorship emerged as an important theme. Most of the participants have had mentors in their lives to help them understand who they are as Black gay men. Some of the experiences have been positive and some of them have been negative. Nevertheless, they have helped transform the participants' leadership development. The participants in this sample feel that

mentorship is a necessary component of leadership based off the lack of leadership within in community. These experiences show how and why mentorship is important as a leader but also the importance of it for Black gay men.

Mentoring Others.

When participants talked about their experiences mentoring others, they expressed the dos and don'ts of mentoring Black gay men. First, Wayne described the line that mentors should never cross when it comes to mentoring others: sexual encountering. Then, he explained the 'lead by example' kind of mentor he believes himself to be. He identifies his intersectionality and uses the experiences that comes with those identities (Black identity and Queer identity) as a way to demonstrate his leadership style to his mentees. He described an interaction with one of his mentees as a way to explain how his mentoring style. He defined it as leading by example. He believed that leading by example as a mentor encourages specific leadership attributes among young Black gay men: the development of personal growth and the discovery of their purpose. Wayne explained:

"A lot of times I see those programs as a way for older Black men to exploit younger Black men, fucking them. So, when people talk about mentorship the mentorship that I've experienced has never been someone saying, "Okay, this is how you do this boo". I just try to live my life in such a way that if someone looks at me that there is something they say, "If I kind of follow some similar paths I'll get to where he's going," but it's not just me using an internal terminology. In a 1-on-1 with my staff he talked about he has this core group, and he was talking about he starts the meeting off asking like why are they here. I know that that

came from just our interaction and staff meetings, his interaction within our team and that made me feel really good because I think we need to figure out why we're here. Why are we on this planet? Why are we sitting here right now? What are we – why are we working on what we're working on? What are we trying to do?"

Other participants noted that a good mentor in the community does not give up easily on their mentee, especially when they make mistakes. Coco felt that mentors should help provide ways for their mentees to succeed even when the mentee is unsure of their goals. He explained that mentors should continue to meet mentees where they are in life and work with them throughout their journey and help them understand their place in the community. Coco commented that a mentee is going to have ups and downs throughout their mentor-mentee relationship; but what's important is how mentors deal with those ups and downs. Coco explained an experience with a mentee that he never gave up on. Coco stated:

"I had a young person that came to me that wanted to work in this field and I said, "Okay, well to work in this field it requires this, this, this, and this." And the person said, "I'm serious. I want to do it," and the person started the whole volunteer process and then the person disappeared. And then the person came back six months later and said, "I'm sorry I disappeared but I'm back now and I want to be a part." And I'm like, "Okay, well you've got to really commit this time because I kept getting you halfway there and then you disappear on me. The person started back on the trail again, three months later they disappeared. The person came back a year later and said, "I'm back. I'm sorry. Things got rough.

Yada, yada, yada," "Okay, so let me know when you're ready to start again," and they started again and the third time they actually stuck with it and now this individual is like a phlebotomist working in this field and making things happen, but had I been like, "No, fuck it. You're wasting my fucking time. I tried the first time you disappeared. Kick rocks. Go." There's no telling what would've happened to that young person or who would've gotten that young person's ear or the leadership they may have fallen under that would've been all wrong for that individual."

Other black gay leaders noted that mentorship is rewarding for the mentor. Ben, for example, shared an experience he had with a youth he continuously encountered at work and in the Black gay community. He explained how one event can leave a positive everlasting and life changing impression on someone's personal development and identity development (Queer identity and Black identity). Ben explained:

"Kay was a horrible drunk, and Kay would get in trouble all the time. He would show up hung over. I remember one time, Kay was hung over, showed up at the center, and he took a woman's bottle of water as she was going to the bathroom. I said, "You are going with me right now, and you're going to apologize to that white woman for taking her water." He looked at me and he told me he wasn't going anywhere. I said, "I will let this motherfucker out. You will never set foot on the lawn of the Center if you don't take your ass with me right now." Like a broken child, he just went down there and then he said – he told the woman, "I'm sorry for taking the water." She was shocked. I remember the night of my last day

at the Center, all the kids videotaped a goodbye. Kay said to me, "Thank you for calling me out that day. Thank you for making me a better man."

In this section Mike, spoke about how it was important to be a mentor to individuals who are already leading, mentoring others, and working within the Black gay community. He believed it is important to give back to the community by honestly engaging with other leaders at other agencies, in different fields, by coaching them in developing how they advocate for the community, how they develop other leaders, and understanding the importance of education. He described the importance of leaders mentoring other leaders. Mike explained:

"I'm the person that is in place to not only lead but lead the leader. And I say that in the sense of where I help leaders develop the strategies, approaches, and also their tactics, or whatever the case is, so they can understand how their learning style, or their teaching style is, their leading style is, and help them learn how to build it and support that a little bit. So, I kind of help people fine tune what their strengths are so they can be the leaders that transcend on. For example: When it came down to doing events, I made them sit down and do budgets, and understand okay, so this is all we got, how we gonna make this work for all these things you all planned, how we gonna make this work and this time kind of budget. And I think that with what I've learned is for me to teach others that aren't, whether you are gonna take place, or their leading the next way, it's not meant for me to hold on to information and not share it."

Other participants noted the importance of helping mentees define their goals for the future. For instance, Phil discussed his experience he had with one of his mentees where

he asks him questions about his future. He talks about how asking questions and engaging with mentees can help develop their success and coach them to make healthy decisions regarding education, health, honesty, and identity development. It also in turn helped him become a better leader because he realized there had to be a sense of mutual respect and overall honesty. He described how his own identities of queerness and Blackness developed within his own leadership identity. Phil explained:

“One of the first questions I think I used to ask Chad, and Chad gets mad at it, I used to ask: “So you plan on graduating?” “You plan on graduating in four years? Five years?” And I remember – and I know Chad looks back and he often says, “Oh, that offended me so much because of course, I was going to graduate.” But I was like, “I have to ask because I know the stats on this campus for Black men.” 9 percent, maybe 20 percent within six years. And so, I’m like, “That’s a very pointed question that I felt like I had to ask and still have to ask these days.” I do relish hearing from people is that after the fact, when they look back at whether they worked here, or they were heavily involved here with the CCC, they say that this was one of the best places that really shaped who they are. That taught me that I don’t have to subscribe to white, male, cis, heteronormative ways of leading.”

Mentorship is an important way to develop other leaders and advocates; but it is also a way to continuously development one’s own leadership. The participants not only explained how mentoring others have helped them grow but they also described how they grew when they were mentees.

Mentee Experiences.

All of the participants spoke about experiences they had with mentors. They described many experiences and what they got out of those experiences. In some cases, participants used past experiences with mentors to inform how they mentor, since they viewed these strategies as useful. They also discussed negative experiences as a guide of what not to do in the future as a mentor and leader. Edward shared his understanding of a mentee and mentor relationship based off his relationship with a mentor that had the most impact on him. He explained that this mentor went above and beyond the call of duty making sure he was taken care of and helped him stay accountable for his actions. Edward explained how his reputation and relationship was the foundation of his leadership. Edward stated,

“I have had many mentors. Some I still see as mentors, some I don’t see as mentors anymore. The good part is none of them have tried to have sex with me. When I was younger, I met the older Black gay man from a nonprofit for young gay men of color. He took me under his wing. He made sure I ate. He made sure I went to school. He went to my track meets, he loved me as a son. He would call me out on my bullshit. He would not let me be in the streets acting a mess, dressed any kind of way, he supported me in going to school, doing drag, he helped me get jobs, and he was there for me in so many aspects of my life. He made sure I went to college and made sure I graduated college. He was one of those people I called on whenever I needed advice or someone to hold me accountable. Once he went off on the older white gay man for talking to me in a nasty disrespectful way. He said, “You, will not treat this one that way. You will

respect him, or you'll deal with me". That old white man never came at me wrong again after that."

Jeff believed that the most valuable experience with his mentor was when he realized his mentor was also human. He realized that everyone, regardless of their positions, title, power, role, or influence has had life struggles like everyone else. This experience made Jeff reflect on his own interactions with people he comes in contact with. Jeff explained,

"I found out my mentors were human. My mentor was mentoring me, and I kept getting down like, "The girls; got the sauce" and dah, dah, dah, not even realizing that he was positive, because I'd never go into his space. He wanted to fight me. He was like, "Bitch, say somebody got the sauce one more time", my natural reaction was like, "Bitch do you know who I am? I don't give a fuck what you got." Like you have to understand like these people are doing this work have lost you know in this work. Like they continue to do this work because it is personal to them. I always tell people like, "People don't do fucking HIV work and social work and all these fucking backbreaking mental, laboring things because they just, 'Oh that's just what I want to do,' no something has drawn them to that."

Other participants explained the importance of having a mentor. For instance, Wes reminisced on how mentors for Black gay men don't have to be Black gay men; they can also be other men of color who share similar experiences of racism. Although they have different racial identities, he can still learn from his mentor. Wes stated,

"Miguel, he's definitely someone that I definitely wanted to be like; to watch him as my boss. There were a lot of things about him that I really do love. Outside of that, only thing I wouldn't take is that he's non-confrontational, which makes it

hard when you manage 30 people. I would say just his caring, his brain, of course the way he processes, but the way that I think that he spoke to men of color, because he's a Latino man, and empowered them and provided opportunities like that to me was life changing. Which is probably why that's the longest job I've ever had."

Part of being a leader is reflecting on experiences with mentors and learning from those interactions. For example, Rose recalled an experience that changed his perspective of how to mentor others and help them become leaders. He remembered how his mentor demanded that his actions align with his promises. Rose recalled an interaction with his mentor that left a life changing imprint on him. Rose explained,

"It was the beginning of my recovery, or changing, and he (Stacey) was a Black gay man and he led me into a lot of places to help me build strength. I wanted to be comfortable like him. He walked in a brand of dignity, a brand of respect, whereas he walked into a place and people you know just respected him. For example, I needed a watch at the time. He said, "I'm gonna let you use this and when you get your money, you can buy you one." So, I went out shopping one day and I was showing him I bought these shorts, and I'm wearing some gray shirt and purple shorts. He politely said, "Oh, that's really nice; did you buy a watch?" I said, "No" and he took his watch right off my arm and says, "You'll buy one now, right?" That taught me to be diligent in what you say you're gonna do and how you have to do what you're gonna do if you're responsible, and how that moves you through and builds trust and accountability for your word and stuff like that."

Lastly, Tom provided the study with insight on how he approached someone that was his mentor because he believed this wasn't your typical mentorship relationship. Tom understood that someone could be a mentor to you without knowing they are mentoring you. He explained that someone could see a peer with similar interest and use their lived experiences as a way to develop their leadership understanding and identity. Tom explained,

“I was asking him about his process, like, "How do you sort of manage your time between working here and still being able to write and all that kind of stuff?" We shared a lot of stuff about the whole writing process, like, you've gotta write every day. You've gotta write every day, whatever. Then we started to talk a little bit about the politics of working at a university, and how that sometimes was distracting for him, and how it could conceivably also be distracting for me as I tried to kind of move forward and move up in the ranks. Led us to a conversation that was sort of foreshadowing a little bit of some of the stuff that I might run into.”

Overall, the participants explained how leadership involves a network of relationships with mentees and mentors and the process of giving and receiving in these relationships. These relationships can advance their leadership development, their personal growth, and the growth of the community. When the identities of young Black gay men are continuously being developed, held accountable for their actions, encouraged to think about their leadership development and advocacy involvement, and asked to reflect on how they are positively impacting their community; leadership can begin and continue to cultivate throughout the Black gay community.

Theme #4: Defining Leadership for Black Gay Men

When it comes to defining leadership, participants shared multiple understandings and views. The participants' definitions of leadership were based on their lived experiences while being in a leadership position and the experiences they have had interacting and working with those they saw in leadership positions. Below in Table 6 are the participants' definitions of leadership. This table explains how each participant responded to the questions of how one would define leadership based on their lived experiences.

Table 6. Participants' Definition of Leadership

Participant	Definition of Leadership
Tom	"I would define it as being able to sort of blaze new trails, kind of being able to be a trendsetter, to look at things differently and try to come up with new and different approaches. Especially in the context of being Black gay man, being a leader means doing all that while navigating spaces that are hostile towards you, can be hostile towards you"
Wes	"I would define leadership as someone kind of guiding either a person or a team to kind of the next step, but understanding that its teamwork and it's not really a hierarchy."
Ben	"I think leadership is defined by who believes in you to follow you. If a group of people see that you're saying their message and they relate to your message, and you inspire them, then you can lead them."
Rose	"Black gay men who took me under their wings and just kinda walked me along the path and showed me things that I should or could do as a

	Black gay man that's gonna help me sustain and be okay with myself, taught me those things and showed me those things while doing them themselves. Leadership is leading by example and then put the information out there and making a route for that to happen for others"
Coco	"I define leadership like being someone who is able to listen to the people they are leading and then share with them why we're going in the direction that we are, so they can have an understanding. I don't believe in dictatorship. I'm not going to dictate anybody. You have the option to follow because a leader without anyone following is just a man taking a walk by himself."
Phil	"We're all leaders. We just all manifested in different ways, in the ways that best fit our own talents and everything. We all have skills and talents that can be tapped into and it makes us leaders."
Mike	"I would say leadership isn't really meant to be defined but expressed. I think leadership is evolving and it's never ending. I think it's forever growing. Leadership is when a person is really accessible as a resource for a person that is under them or coming up under them that they can share their experiences with, so they don't have to go make the same mistakes."
Jeff	"Leadership needs to be a communal thing and not standard and traditionally leadership where they think of one person at the top and these tiers coming down. I think specifically for African American

	communities it will be better when we have these circular groups working amongst us.”
Wayne	“It's really about getting my own house in order and really understanding who I am, what makes me tick, wrestling with my demons, making peace with my past, planning for a future, all that stuff. And so, it's just really about me leading me kind of out of the darkness if you will. Helping people discover their own leadership capabilities so it's not about getting a bunch of followers but it's really about you are helping kind of awaken the giant within so that they can then begin to then do something similar for themselves and they can inspire other people. I think leadership is about inspiring other people to be their best.”
Richard	“Leaderships is working with others towards a common goal. Understanding who they are as a person, their skills, their wants, and how they lead. Helping everyone or a group of people, including self, be their real best selves. It's a village.”

In all, the participants shared that their lived experiences affected their leadership. There are three categories that emerged from the data: It Takes a Village, Leading by Example, and Being Authentic. The categories are described in the subsequent sections.

It Takes a Village.

The leadership concept of ‘It Takes a Village’ is something that most participants grew up understanding from family and/or one that they have experienced in the community of Black Gay Men. All of the participants discussed how they have been

influenced by more than one person and how that has affected their definition of leadership. For example, Jeff explained that as a village he looked to different people for advice about different professional and personal situations. He discussed the need to have multiple people working together for the betterment of the community (Burns, 1978; Gill, 2011). He explained that we (Black gay men) have to bring our different strengths together in order to successful complete goals and strengthen the community as a whole (Burns, 1978). He explained:

“If we have like three people working on this, three people working on that, three people working on that. I've seen in programming and as well as working with other people, other organizations with the African American community just like liaison, like coalition building works better.”

Wes discussed how there are multiple leaders in different fields in the Black gay community. He explained how one community can bring different aspects of leadership, which are informed by their individual lived experiences. By working together, Black gay men can effectively develop interpersonal relationships while being transparent about their abilities and overcome obstacles together, which is also cited in the research literature (Jones, 2016; Cornileus, 2012; Abdallah, 2003; Nye, 2010). Wes spoke about understanding others and self:

“There are a lot of Black, gay leaders, but we don't really work in the same field. You have folks who work in public health, folks who work in TV or media or law and everybody's a leader in their own right. We all must help each other and understanding what you bring to the table and what's your kryptonite and figuring out things together.”

Richard talked about his “panel,” a group of people he seeks advice from in the church. This “panel” has impacted his growth as a leader. For many Black gay men, leadership starts by understanding their religious and spiritual identity and being of service to the Black church. He talks about holding himself accountable when making decisions because it affects not only him but also an entire community; this approach to leadership is resonant within service leadership (Gills, 2011). Richard said:

“I was the choir director when I younger in church, I was never just told by one person what to do because I had so many people watching me. No one wanted me to mess up and I take that same thought process to what I do now. I currently have a panel of people I go to when I want to make sure I am not trippin and they tell me the truth about whatever I ask them. They work in different jobs, different positions, and everything. They keep me grounded. It's that it takes a village aspect of leadership. We are all in this together, so why not we all put a hand in and help if we can.”

It is important to understand that for Black gay men, multiple role models, multiple leaders, and having community members who positively influence them can lead to their understanding of leadership and leadership development. These multiple leaders often lead by example.

Leading by example.

All ten of the participants also spoke about how they lead by example or an experience about how they at one time followed someone’s example. For example, Ben explained his experiences with leadership in both the black community and the gay community, and how these experiences have informed his understanding of “good

leaders.” He suggested that leadership should be a continuous educational process in which you are holding yourself and others accountable. This includes the experience of mentoring other young Black Gay men. Ben clarified:

“A good leader never stops reaching for how to make himself better... You do that by making yourself accountable, connecting to mentors that you respect and admire, because you're always trying to improve your skills. You're always trying to broaden your scope. Part of that is through mentoring is finding a person whose skills or ability that you want to mimic or grow from and spend time with them. Connect to them, learn from them, ask them questions... It's about being able to go in a room and say, Hey, come on. Let's go this way, and the group follows you this way. To me that's what a leader does.”

In the context of recovery, Rose defined leadership as a journey. As seen in the research literature, leadership has been defined as a journey of understanding one's self and relying on others to guide them in the right direction (Burns, 1978; Abdullah, 2003; Allen, 2015). These experiences allowed him to continue the journey of his new life of soberness and realize how he can in turn use these same tools in the future when leading other young Black gay men and Queer men of color. Rose specified:

“In my recovery life there were Black gay men who were recovering, that were leaders that had cleaned up their lives so to speak, and were moving in a direction, changing a whole bunch of things; having a solid relationship with other Black men, going to school, working and being a part of the community in a positive way. You know, and they took me in and grabbed my hand and brought me along. You know so I held onto their hand and they showed me this is what you do, this

is how you do it, and so they said do this, like you know whatever it was, and you will achieve this if you do it.”

As a leader in student affairs at a university, Tom described his experiences of leadership as informed by his interaction with his students. He believed that a leader should role model how a leader should be in every aspect of their life, including personal, professional, and academic aspects of life. Tom explained:

“I don't wanna ever have to tell people what to do. I like to be able to set the example. That's always been important to me, to be able to know whatever it is that needs to be done so I can show you. I can kind of model it for you, and then you can pick it up and go. I don't like to sit down and be like, okay now do this, then do this, then do this. I don't like to do that. So, I think that experience very much informs how I lead in most of my different avenues, which is let me model it. Let me show you what it looks like by doing it myself, and then you can pick it up, or pick up some piece of it, some aspect of it or whatever the case may be.”

In addition, Phil explained his understanding of leadership and how leadership can and should be adaptable across oppressed groups. This is resonant in the research literature on Black women and activism. Multiple scholars have noted that Black women have been essential in the leadership of the Black community (Abdallah, 2003; Byrd 2009; Jean-Marie et al., 2009). According to Phil, Black gay men can not only take experiences of Black men into consideration when developing their leadership skills, but they should also include a womanist lens as well (Abdallah, 2003; Byrd 2009; Jean-Marie et al., 2009). Phil explained that there cannot be a discussion around developing leadership of

your Black gay men without dismantling white supremacy and hegemonic hyper-masculinity. Phil believed:

“We (Black gay men) can learn from Black women’s work and Black women’s collective identities and organizing that really is based on, “We’re all here together trying to make things great for our constituents, for our community and everything, and not just subscribing to white, traditional leadership just so I can continue to get another grant from this white focused or government focused organization and everything, just to make numbers, to write a good report and everything.”

The leadership roles everyone contributes to the Black community is important to the leadership development of young Black gay men. Silent leaders in the back ground are just as important as those leaders who in the public eye because someone is always observing. Black women played a critical role in deconstructing heteronormativity and gender norms; which can lead to the asthenic development of Black gay men and provide inside on how to better develop the leadership young Black gay men.

Being Authentic.

All the participants in this study addressed and stressed the importance about being real and true to one’s self. They described their lived experiences around being true to who they are inside. They shared experiences of hurt, pain, and growth in their and other leaders’ Black and gay identities. These experiences have helped mold the participants to be who they are and better understand who they are as Black gay men. For example, Wayne explained how being authentic related to his experiences in leadership because he has to accept who he is as a Black gay man in order to help lead others (Jones,

2016; Cornileus, 2012). He explained that the power in being honest and authentic is the ability to assist young Black gay men in being resilient and happy while understanding their Black and Queer identities. Wayne explained:

“Once you begin to kind of accept yourself and know yourself then I think the natural leadership that exists within you would arise and it would come from a place of authenticity so you would not feel the need to kind of compel or control people but you would be able to lean into the power of your influence because you're operating from a point of joy.”

Similarly, Coco spoke about being an authentic leader, which is informed by being authentic to one's self. He believed that by understanding his own Black and gay identities, he was able to navigate the professional world with more passion and understanding (Jones, 2016). Coco explained that not being authentic with one's self and understanding one's identities can lead to internalized homophobia. In addition, he discussed his experiences with teaching young Black gay men about navigating their identities and advocating for themselves. Coco reflected:

“So how do you navigate all these different facets of who you are effectively without losing yourself to one because you can easily become so immersed in being a Black man that you're now an asshole to other gay men or you're looking down at gay men? You develop internalized homophobia, that can happen, or vice versa you become so immersed in the Black gay community you forget that you are also at risk for racism and all this kind of stuff because you're so immersed in this community. And I think creating good Black gay leaders is teaching them

(young Black gay men) how to navigate through all these different facets of who they are while still remaining true to themselves.”

In the context of health services, Mike spoke about how he has interacted with his clients and those who are seeking services from his organization. He spoke about the importance of being true to oneself and to others, regardless of who is around and the type of people they are leading, which is resonant in the literature on authentic leadership (Jones, 2016; Jean-Marie et al., 2009). Mike stated:

“I’m not going to contribute to someone’s damage... This confidence came from the fact that I went from one point of being ashamed of who I was sexuality wise to then being coming rebellious, saying, “Hey. This is me,” and going all out saying, “I don’t care what people think.” I treat everybody fairly. I don’t give a fuck what color you are, what race you are, what sexuality, how you identify yourself, your gender pronouns, none of that shit. I don’t care. If you are a person that sincerely and genuine needs help, I will make sure you find that help. If I can’t provide it for you, I will tell you who can. And I think it’s really important for people to know that they’re equal because the reality is we wanna believe that we’re in this equal country. We wanna believe that people are all going to be treated the same and that’s not the reality.”

In all, the participants encouraged Black gay men to be strong and strive to understand their Queer identity and their Black identity. By doing this, they felt that there can be a true understanding how their own leadership development and leadership identity.

Conclusion

As seen in this Chapter, there were lived experiences that have influenced the participants' leadership development as Black gay male leaders. Although this is not a complete view of every single topic brought to light, it is a great representation of what Black gay leaders could focus on when it comes to leadership development. This chapter outlines a holistic view of commonality discussed by the participants and it helped provide an understanding of leadership development for Black gay men. These themes outline the lived experiences of Black gay men. They demonstrate how leadership could be defined for Black gay men based off their lived experiences with leadership intersecting with oppression, community, personal relationship, mentor and mentee experiences, and educational advancement.

The next chapter, Chapter 7, will be a discussion on the answers to the research questions. It will also provide some understanding as to what legacy of leadership the percipients see for themselves. The next chapter will touch on some implications for future research around the Black gay community and leadership development. Lastly the next chapter speaks to the benefits of the research in the scholarly area of leadership studies but also the benefits this research can have in the Black gay community.

Chapter 7: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of Black gay men living in Los Angeles County as it pertains to their leadership development. In this chapter, I address the research questions of the study: How do Black gay men define leadership in their communities? How have the lived experiences of Black gay men influenced their leadership development? What are the lived experiences of Black gay men as leaders? This chapter also addresses the value of leadership development for Black gay men. I then discuss possibilities for future research and the study limitations. Last, I conclude with the voices of the participants themselves.

Research Question 1: How do Black gay men define leadership in their communities?

Based off this group of participants and their lived experiences, I would conclude that these Black gay male leaders would define leadership as: the village authentically working together to achieve goals while understanding each other's capabilities; sharing knowledge and experiences; developing others' skills; and transparently taking action. This is done by inspiring others to continuously develop their passions, welcome personal growth, listen to others, share responsibility, and strive to understand one's own identity.

As participants began to share their lived experiences as leaders and practice leadership, their lived experiences resonated with current scholarship on servant leadership and transformational leadership. The findings suggested that Black gay men practice servant leadership because the participants lived experiences of leadership have focused on providing services to others in their community and even those outside their community (Gill, 2011). Participants have described their lived experiences as being

ostracized by the gay community and the Black community because of their identities but their leadership experiences still focused on providing services to others. This kind of leadership has worked to their advantage when leading the community because servant leaders are trusted by the communities they serve (Gill, 2011).

Transformational leadership has been demonstrated by the participants lived experiences. The participants continuously spoke about caring about the person just as much as caring about the goals they are striving to reach, which resonates with principles of transformational leadership (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership also requires leaders to motivate and assist individuals in finding a sense of purpose; participants shared this a goal in their leadership development. Participants shared stories of helping clients, students, and community members find a purpose in their life and purpose in their leadership. Participants explained that leaders do not reject change; they embrace it and look for ways to motivate their team members by understanding who they are on a personal and unique level, which is transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985). These things help make up and define leadership among Black gay men.

So what does this really mean? The participants argue the point of understanding who they are as gay men, who they are as Black men, and who they are as leaders. They think it is important to understand these identities separately and together. In the gay community they are seen as Black but in the Black community they are seen as gay. The challenge is navigating these spaces and still staying true to their identity as Black gay men. They all lead in many different ways within the Black gay community and it is impacted by these intersectional experiences.

Research Question 2: How have the lived experiences of Black gay men influenced their leadership development?

The participants' shared many common experiences within their leadership journey. They explained that their development as leaders advanced the way it did because of the situations and people they have encountered. These experiences developed from experiences with mentors and mentees. Some participants described positive experiences that helped them grow and experience that allow them to become humble. Whereas, other participants shared lived experiences where they thought they knew who their mentor was, but quickly realized their mentor did not live up to their initial expectations. Participants expressed that these negative experiences are just as valuable as the positive experiences of mentorship because now they are able to determine what is acceptable as a mentor and as a leader. These negative experiences have made them critically evaluate how they would respond differently and more positively in those negative situations. Negative lived experiences do not equate to negative outcomes.

The findings in this study pointed at advocacy as being a necessity for leadership development among Black gay men. The findings made participants pose the questions of: How can a leader truly provide direction for a community without advocating for their beliefs and needs? The participants shared that one must know the community they are leading and listen to their needs. In his scholarship on advocacy leadership, Anderson (2009) argued that individuals should be weary of people in leadership position that only provide answers to problems but never ask questions. Participants believed that the only way one can truly understand one's community needs and desires is by asking questions.

The Black community and Gay community have endured the chains of bondage, both physically and mentally. Both communities have been at war with our government because of the government's disrespectful practices and unwillingness to treat them as equals to the majority (Black Gay Men, 2016). Anderson (2009) explained that the way an issue is presented and/or comprehended could decide how a solution is found. The participants believe there are solutions to the community's issues, but they need more leaders who are avid about furthering the message and seeking change that will present a resolution. According to the findings, asking questions advocates for a community's advancement because it allows their voices to be heard and includes them in the problem solving. For young Black gay men, advocacy equates to teaching individuals how to stand up for everyone's rights and positively represent their community.

Blackburn (2002) also explained that we as humans expect too much out of others based on our moral beliefs. The findings also draw a conclusion that there is not only one right way to be an advocate or a leader. The findings suggest, young Black gay men have to listen and serve the needs of their community in the way that the community believes it should be done. The participants expressed that their community could be divided on a cause and it is up to that leader to advocate for both sides and present a solution, or multiple solution, that can be led to compromising solutions.

Research Question 3: What are the lived experiences of Black gay men as leaders?

The lived experiences of Black gay men as leaders have been those of pain, hurt, lifelong lessons, struggle, perseverance, willpower, kindness, love, hate, and resilience. The findings from this study equate to being part of a continuous 440 hurdles track race. In this race the runner has to go around the track one time but while leaping hurdles.

Some runners do this perfectly without issues, while others may hit their feet, mess up their strides and are even thrown off balance while they are running. For some runners, they may hit the hurdle and completely fall. Metaphorically, what is the most important thing about this race is that runners that hit the hurdle can trip, be thrown off balance, or even fall, but they can always recover.

The participants in this study understand what is like to be different and not give up regardless of the circumstances. These participants shared their lived experiences of racism from white people and discrimination from other people of color but those experiences did not hold them back. They have been told that they are “less than” from society, including their own Black community, because their sexual orientation differs from what society has deemed as normal. These participants not only shared their own experiences but they shared stories of other Black gay men they have encountered in their community who have also combat systems of oppression. They have explained how they have met people who have been outright disrespected, publicly shamed, and even fired due to their identities. The participants of this study have not allowed those hurtful experiences tower over them and shadow how they view life. They have taken these experiences and used them as another tool in their arsenal to combat systems of oppression that they face daily.

Simply Resist

Black gay men are no longer simply existing, they are resisting. Black gay men have publicly joined the Black Liberation Movement by actively participating in the #BlackLivesMatter Movement. The Black Lives Matter movement gives a voice and includes all of the Black community and is a moment that is made to simply resist all

forms of oppression. The majority of the participants in this study considered themselves to be part of the Black Lives Matter movement. Resistance coincides with the values of Black gay male leadership development.

This study finds that building community and being an advocate in the Black gay community are forms of resistance because leaders who are trying to build up their community are also being advocates for the needs of the community. The role of resistance provides activist with a strong sense of purpose and agency. It is also understood that the struggle to fight systematic oppression is not done by part of the community but making sure all voices in the community are heard. Lastly, our participants have identified that obtaining higher education is also a form of resistance against white supremacy, classism, and homophobia because with more education comes more power and opportunities to dismantle oppression.

The Value of Black Gay Male Leadership Development

Developing leadership among Black gay men is important because even as our younger generation is becoming more in tune with their sexual orientation, our young Black gay males are still hiding their identities in the Black community. As young Black gay men are understanding their sexuality, they are also forming their leadership development. There are supporting themes that have come up in this understanding of leadership identity and Black gay male identity. Identity is the foremost important construct brought up in this study. The Black and gay identities of these participants are salient, as seen in almost every aspect of the interviews. Another supporting theme that has emerged as important and constant is building community connections. This theme was emerged in various ways that connected with leadership development. Lastly,

obtaining higher education has been an undertone of success when it comes to leadership development. These supporting themes will be discussed in this next section.

Identity and Intersectionality

The participants in this study value their identity as Black gay men. The findings revealed that both identities, Black and gay, are held close to who they are as people but also how they lead. These identities make up who they are and the experiences that intertwine with these identities have made them the kind of leaders they are. They have learned and grew into the leaders they are because of the lived experiences that come along with these two identities separately and the intersectionality of the two identities. W. E. B. Du Bois (1903) explained the concept of double consciousness when it comes to understand Blackness and Black identity in society. As Black gay men, this same concept applies because they are dealing with the Black identity and their Gay Identity. It is more than just a double consciousness that Black gay men have to encounter subconsciously. Intersectionality is more than just a theoretical framework for Black gay men, it is an everyday experience.

According to the findings of the study, understanding the multiple identities of Black gay men is perhaps the most important step in supporting the leadership development of young Black gay men. The goal is not to stop young Black gay men from having similar experiences, if they did not have similar experiences they would be robbed of the opportunity to learn and grow as leaders themselves. Mentors can support young Black gay men by assisting them in navigating these experiences and using them as teachable learning moments. Participants explained that support can be found in many ways and from almost anyone but is most effective when it comes from those who shares

the same identities as they do. The findings also suggest that when Black gay men commune with other individuals who share similar identities; it provides healthy ways to cope with the effects of privileges that Black gay men lack. By coping with these oppressions, they are able to continuously develop their leadership skills. Participants suggested that by encouraging young Black gay men to make connections and relationships within the Black LGBTQ community, they will strengthen and affirm their leadership skills as they move forward.

Critical Race Theory has a huge value with the lens of intersectionality and understanding leadership development. This value comes from understanding the role of Quare Theory. Quare Theory demands a foundation that focuses on intersectionality and CRT; couple this understanding with leadership development and it can provide a road map for practitioners. If we use CRT and demand individuals to intentionally analyze systematic racism and dismantle white supremacy while understanding the lived experiences of Black gay men's queer identity; that could be the beginning of a new leadership theory called Quare Leadership Development Theory.

Quare Leadership Development Theory would dismantle the current understanding of leadership that has been historically saturated in ideology that promotes heteronormative white supremacy. Leaders and practitioners would have to understand and partake cultural competency in order to truly be open to learning and understanding marginalized individuals and communities. This would be done by truly taking the time to understand the lived experiences of Black gay men (or queer people of color) and how those experiences have effected their leadership development. Leaders and practitioners would have to understand their power and privilege, while reducing the negative affects it

has on these communities. This theory would combine transformational leadership and servant leadership with quare theory in a way that is would accurately practice leadership development.

Building Community

The next form of support that was reflected in the participants' lived experiences was building community connections. According to the participants in the study, getting to know the Black Gay male community allows for each other to work together in harmony. The findings explained that as young Black gay men, the participants were able to develop peer relationships that have been beneficial. The participants explained that the reason they have been able to succeed as leaders, and in life, is because they have found other Black gay men that share their identities and experiences. These new families have made them happy, increased their quality of life, and have motivated them to do better. They have been able to support the community at large collectively. They explained that they attended events, provided advice, and supported each other when leadership opportunities arose in the community. According to the findings, just supporting a peer's passion was enough to build positive relationships that could last a lifetime.

Many of the participants described advocacy in two ways. According to the findings, the first step in advocacy is learning how to advocate for oneself. The participants spoke to learning who you are as a person, finding out what it is that you need to be successful, then identifying avenues to obtain those needs. Leaders must first start to stand up for themselves by not allowing other people to silence their voice.

The second way to be an advocate is by helping the community as whole, according to the participants' lived experiences. Participants spoke about advocating in the Black gay community by speaking out against HIV-related stigma to advising each other on how to use the system to their advantage. Some of the participants spoke about lived experiences of being homeless and going through the system not knowing how to manage the bureaucracy as Black gay men because of the way they were treated due to their multiple identities. The findings explained that health, especially HIV/AIDS, has been an ongoing conversation among Black gay men and that leadership mostly resides in this aspect of the community. After understanding how to navigate those systems, they were able to assist their peers by providing insider knowledge of programs and allies to young Black gay men. Immersing in the community's culture and experiences is a level of advocacy that requires a street-smart type of education. The findings suggest that often leaders and advocates in a community become comfortable with not really understanding the experience of others because it may be different than their own. Even young Black gay men will experience culture, oppression, and privilege differently. Advocates need to embrace other experiences that they would not normally identify with.

Out of these encounters with the community, the study findings explain that mentorship is a must when it comes to leadership development. All the participants spoke about how their mentors have helped them grow in a positive way. They explained that when they were young, they did not have mentors and/or role models on television, in music, or in their immediate Black communities who were out about their sexual identity. Being gay was not spoken about in a positive light, so how did they find their mentors? According to participants, they did not find them until they were adults or introduced to

the gay community as a whole. But then they did find mentors, they learned a lot based off their mentor's experiences, advice given to them, and networking by having mentors. Hence the reason why the Black gay men in this study believe that part of leadership is knowing that it takes a village, but they also understand that street education is not the only way to develop leadership.

Higher Education and Lifelong Learning

The last form of support that needs to be discussed is obtaining higher education and lifelong learning. Each participant in this study has some kind of higher education. They have all obtained higher education but completed their degrees at different phases in their life. Some sought higher education right after high school, while others sought education years after graduating high school. According to the findings, education is important but there is no rule to an absolute requirement as to what level of education is needed for leadership. Each participant described their educational journey very differently. Some of the participants felt that obtaining an associate degree was efficient; while others felt that their journey would not be complete until they received their doctorate degree.

While in college, many of the participants spoke about how engaging in extracurricular activities have prepared them for leadership. They spoke to how their activities taught them how to lead a group of people and work with people on multiple projects. It taught them how to develop a community and advocate for, and within, that community. They described how holding leadership positions through campus organizations prepared them to work with other campus leaders and how to address issues within their organizations. According to the findings of this study, while at a

higher education institution, participants were able to learn just as much about critical thinking and leadership development outside of the classroom setting.

It would be dismissive to believe that leaders only get their leadership development in a classroom, or on a campus. The participants described a lot of their leadership growth happened in the community, not in higher education. Fassinger, Shullman, and Stevenson (2010) stated, “it is critically important to understand how LGBT leaders make meaning of their own experiences and impart that meaning-making process to their followers in ways that perhaps change organizations in profound ways” (p. 213). Young Black gay men could use their daily lived experiences as a foundation to develop their leadership identity; according to Dewey (1916) “everyday intelligence is constantly underestimated, and even deliberately depreciated” (p. 411). They understood the benefit of higher education but also observed they gained leadership development by interacting in a community and with community members who share the similar identities and similar goals.

Implications for Future Research

Self-care for Black Gay Men

There were several issues discussed by participants that are worthy of future research. One topic that was brought up by participants was self-care. Although not all participants talked about self-care in the same way, or at all; it is something that could and should be looked into further. There was some common ground that physical, emotional, and psychological health are important to the leadership development of Black gay men. Mental Health is a common issue among the Black gay community. O'Donnell, Meyer, & Schwartz (2011) explained that if we follow the minority stress theory, bias,

stigma, and discrimination (all things experienced by young Black gay men) can lead to mental health issues among Black gay men (including depression, suicidal ideation, stress, and anxiety). Participants in this study spoke about how conversations about how to manage these mental health issues is beneficial for leadership development among Black gay men, especially younger Black gay men. Participants shared lived experiences about how becoming overwhelmed, stressed, and depressed has led to burnout.

Some participants stated that Black gay men often do not pay close enough attention to their health. Physical health relates to healthy sexual practices, staying in shape, and going to the doctor regularly. Emotional health related to Black gay men's emotional intelligence includes, but not limited to, dealing with homophobia, racism, unhealthy relationships, and understanding personal identities. In addition, psychological health really refers to mental health of an individual and seeking treatment or counseling. Physical, emotional, and psychological health are important for leaders because they each can contribute to the leadership development and leadership identity of Black gay men. If leaders are taking on too many responsibilities, not coping with stress, and not dealing with physical illnesses, they can quickly experience burnout. The participants highlighted that Black gay men should learn their limitations to prevent burnout. Future research and leadership programs can investigate healthy practices and provide guidance on how to prevent burnout, including motivational strategies of how to overcome burnout if it occurs.

Generational Leadership Development

Another area of future research, evaluation, and practice is the intergenerational development of curriculum for young Black gay men ages 18 to 29 years old. This study

helps inform the foundation for a leadership development curriculum for Black gay men, to be conducted in the community with community leaders. This could focus on multidimensional aspects of leadership for young Black gay men. To start, the curricular could have participants' discussion their understanding of Black gay male identity. This can inspire them to understand their best selves as Black gay men. They can discover ways to combat homophobia, racism, and other forms of discrimination they may encounter.

The conversation can evolve to recognizing and then dismantling internalized homophobia and internalized racism. The curricular could have them start to understand advocacy and how to be an advocate by having a call-to-action event for a cause that speaks to issues among Black gay men. It can encourage them to challenge others to be leaders in their community and break down the walls of mistrust and misunderstanding in the community

Classes and sessions can introduce them to role-modeling. It can have them question how to be a role model to peers and encourage them to take action in their community and in their own lives. Young Black gay men can use their unique, and often, shared experiences as functional tool to develop their leadership abilities. Richardson and Loubier (2008) explained, "Leadership style and identity develops from a combination of surface level, deep level, psychological, and social factors" (p. 154). This study's participants spoke to these very same ideals and explained how advocating for others but also advocating for self is indispensable to leadership development for Black gay men. A curricular could include all elements of advocacy, including learning how to advocate for yourself by never giving up on the goals.

A critical part of this study was mentorship. While there are positive mentors and negative mentors, the crucial learning is that mentorship is an important aspect of leadership development. A curriculum could start conversations that focus on understanding the role of mentorship within leadership development. It could help navigate the do's and don't's of mentoring and setting guide lines for mentorship. Lastly, a session could be understanding the purpose of having a mentor and identify what they need in a relationship with a mentorship.

Lastly, participants engaging with the curriculum could contribute to conversations around leadership history in the Black and gay communities could be beneficial as motivation in becoming a leader, talk about important leaders in these communities and their journeys in overcoming adversity. Facilitators could focus on helping participants understand the different ways to communicate and how to develop positive leadership within themselves. Education has been a key conversation within participants' stories. They have discussed how obtaining some kind of higher education has helped further their leadership capabilities, leadership style, and even leadership opportunities.

Research Limitations

The first limitation of this study revolves around understanding the term *gay*. Although this term is defined for this study as a man who has sex with a man, it does not take into account the experiences of men who have sex with men, women, and transgender individuals. This is a limitation because sexuality is fluid and ever changing for some individuals. The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of Black gay men; not those who identified as bisexual and/or pansexual. This study also

only sought out cisgender men; by doing this it excluded the experiences of transgender individuals.

Another limitation of this study is that there were only 10 participants. Although qualitative research, specifically the phenomenology methodology, does not require a set number of participants, more participants in any study would be valuable to legitimize the research findings. More participants could also provide richer data to the research findings. This limitation could be addressed if there were more participants in the study and have Black gay men participate around the country.

Finally, the participants of this study lived in Los Angeles County. This is a limitation because this research can only provide context to those Black gay men who live in Los Angeles County. Black gay men are going to have different lived experiences depending on the region of the country they live in. They may share similar lived experiences when it comes to their leadership development, but they could change drastically depending on their regional location. Having more Black gay men from around the country could enrich and add depth to the understanding of leadership among Black gay men living in the United States.

Conclusion

This study is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to researching and understanding leadership of Black gay men. This study is only the beginning of the discussion of how to establish professional development aimed at leadership among young Black gay men. Black gay men have been historically ignored and invisible in their communities when it comes to leadership development and understanding. I recommend more academic studies and community programs that encourage leadership

development and leadership identity among Black gay men. This study only touches on a few themes identified by the lived experiences of Black gay male leaders. These overarching themes contained sub-themes that really addressed the issues of leadership development for Black gay men. Systems of oppression, like racism and homophobia, should no longer be ignored when understanding the leadership development of Black gay men. These are not opinions of Black gay men, these are their lived experiences.

The participants explained how they have been treated by society, by the communities they belong to, the communities they are supposed to trust. They explained betrayals they never thought would happen by friends, mentors, other leaders, supervisors, and law enforcement. These participants opened their hearts and minds to me to share lived experiences that have affected them personally, spiritually, academically, professionally and as a leader. Some of these experiences caused unspeakable pain, anger, hurt, sadness, disappointment, an even PTSD. While other lived experiences of leadership development brought forth moments of joy, laughter, excitement, and trust. The participants took all these experiences, good and bad, and used them as learning opportunities they would take advantage of.

As I consider CRM, I want to close this study out with quotes from the participants. I want their voices, their lived experiences, and how they see leadership development for young Black gay men to be last words remembered in this study. The last question I asked every participant was: Knowing what you know now, what would you go back to tell your younger (18, 24, or 28 year-old) self about leadership development? Their responses were:

Ben, 60 years old, Art Instructor

“Baby, take better care of your body. That's all I could do is like eat better, drink more water, exercise more. If I could have told my younger person be more consistent with that. I did those things, but I was inconsistent with them. I think if there was a message I could've told myself – because everything else, you should learn. I just want to have the strongest body to be able to deal with it. Because as you get older, you realize how important this temple is to be able to deal with the racism, the homophobia, and the anxieties and the pressures of it. The message I would tell my younger self would just be to take care of your body much better than what you did then.”

Coco, 46 years old, Senior Manager

“Yeah. Some people are ill-equipped leaders, but they have a following because of a social presence, not because they have authentic leadership skills. And I mean a leader can come in many forms, you know they're a leader because they can get the club lit so they can lead the club. You know you're following people based upon their social presence or because you want to be in the popular crowd, so you start following this person not really realizing this person, they ain't about shit and they're taking you down this tunnel to darkness. So, I would tell my younger self to learn more about who I'm following and who I am trusting myself with as far as guidance and getting advice from and all that kind of stuff.”

Jeff, 34 years old, Program Coordinator

“At 19, I would have told myself that it's alright to hurt, it's alright to live in that pain. And understand that you won't know happiness if you don't pack all this

shit, you can't box it up. At 24, I would have told myself your journey is your journey. Stop trying to compare yourself to other people, stop trying to make up for time you lost, because there ain't no way you can do it. You know like ain't no way you can, ain't no way you know? At 28, stop living for other people. If they ain't satisfied by now, they ain't never going to be satisfied. Live for yourself!"

Rose, 54 years old, Program Coordinator

"Stand strong in who you are. You are who you are. Don't change. Don't wear a mask to please other folks. Be authentic, be who you are. You're charming. You're witty. You are a leader. You're smart, you know. All those things that are wonderful and positive and build on that. Let no one stand in your way; be respectful but don't let nobody stand in your way. I think if we can get young people to hold their truths at a very young age, and just nurture that, you know and then we can have a great, wonderful Black, gay society."

Tom, 36 years old, Director

"I would tell myself to be bold and be authentic, and I would tell myself the more authentic you are, the more people will get on board with you. You're gonna have to take a risk being 100 percent of yourself. But if you want to lead, if you want people to actually take you seriously as a leader and to follow you and consider you and not make this face like, "You?" then you have to be all in. The energy it takes to hide and pretend to not be something, I think people can pick up that, even if they don't know what it is that you're hiding. They can tell you're hiding something, and that rings fake. "

Phil, 39 years old, Director

“Do the best work you can for your community. Do the most you can for your community because that makes major impact and you could be gone tomorrow. And the other thing I would say is I don’t subscribe to whiteness, maleness, white males, cisgender, heterosexual understanding of leadership. Stopping trying to be accepted by who we think is privileged and powerful and things and just being ourselves can save so much internal mental health angst and can also just help people, again, be their authentic self and do the best work they can for and with the people they are with and everything. I think I’ve learned not to lose who I am to be accepted by those who really don’t care anyway.”

Wes, 31 years old, Program Coordinator

“First, find a mentor. You don’t have to do it alone, but if you are going to be a copycat, make sure you are copying the right cat. You don’t have to be the best, you just have to outlast the rest. Find a leadership style you like and try to find someone who mimics that and latch onto them. The other thing I would tell my 17-year-old self is when you go to school, stay in school. Don’t take a break. I would tell myself to stay in school. It’s hard going back.”

Richard, 23 years old, Assistant Counselor

“Love yourself. You need to love who you are because you can’t even think about helping someone else. Take those experiences you have learned and use them in fights that are to come. Take your becoming HIV-positive as a tool to help others and to show them all things can be done. Do not allow your family to hold you

back because they are not always going to be there when you need them. Love the Lord, continue to learn onto his understanding even when it seems all hope is lost. Its okay that people don't agree with you, use those disagreements as ways to grow into a better leader but steadfast in what you believe is true and right. Stand for what's right! Even if you are standing alone."

Wayne, 54 years old, Director

"Relax. It's going to be oaky. Get to know you. I've always been more introverted than I've been extroverted. I think in my introspective space I always thought there was something wrong with me because I wasn't more extroverted. But I realized that if I had allowed my head to get in touch with my spirit, I would've been much more at peace with myself. Just to relax and breathe and enjoy life a lot more. Once you begin to kind of accept yourself and know yourself then I think the natural leadership that exists within you would arise and it would come from a place of authenticity. People are following you because they want to and then you recognize they're following and so then you're turning back to them and saying, "Look, you can do what I'm doing and do even better."

Mike, 35 years old, Senior Manager

"At 19, I would say, well, the journey, you have to trust, but don't be afraid to ask people along the way for direction. Ask people for direction. Not everybody's going to guide you in the right way, but you have to listen to different perspectives and see which one sounds the best. To the 24-year-old, when I first was dealing with the HIV stuff, I would really say live life now and just be the best you possible and not let something else determine when you should start

living and start loving and start being. And my 27-year-old self, Love yourself and let others love you. When it comes to the love aspect, it's like you are deserving to be loved. You deserve love and I think when it comes to leadership and leading someone; you have to lead from some place. Why not lead from love?"

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Appendix A

Interview 1 Research Questions

1. Can you tell me about yourself and how you came into the leadership position you are currently in?
2. What have you done to develop your leadership skills?
3. Based off your experiences, what does leadership development for Black men look like?
4. Based off your experiences, how would you define leadership among Black gay men? Example?
5. Can you tell me about the first time you felt you were a leader?
6. Can you tell me about a time your identities (Black and gay) have influenced your leadership development?
7. You've been in _____ field for _____ years, can you tell me about a challenge (racism, homophobia, or discrimination) you have encountered that you believe affected your leadership development.
8. Can you tell me about a time you felt you were treated differently because of your identities? How has have affected your leadership style or development?
9. Based off your personal experiences, if you could give advice about on how to succeed to young Black gay men about their leadership style or leadership development, what would you tell them?

Promoting Questions:

Can you tell me about an experience that you believe impacted your leadership development?

Can you tell me about a time a person significantly impacted you as a leader, what did you take away from this experience?

Can you tell me about a time you felt you were an advocate in your community? How is this important to your community or you as a leader?

What are the unique qualities or perspectives you feel you bring to your leadership style because of your race and sexual orientation?

Closing Questions:

1. Is there a question(s) you felt I should have asked and want to answer?
2. Is there anything you want to share about your experiences in leadership but you did not have the opportunity to share?
3. What would you go back and tell your younger (18, 24, 29 year old) self about leadership development, knowing what you know now?

Appendix B

Please note is that these are descriptive codes and values codes. Both coding methods were used when discovering themes.

Coding Theme #1: Lived Experiences of Black Gay Men as Leaders

Categories	Code	Example Quotes
Homophobia	Oppression is real and one going Religion/Spirituality Internalized Homophobia Homophobia Broken Queer Identity Community Overcoming homophobia	“It really hurts when you see some many people I interact with as student, who feel like they can't be their full selves because they're doing with a lot of internal homophobia, and internalized misogyny and things like that. I think that part of our leadership as Black gay men is to help, is to help other young Black gay men be the best of who they can be. And who they are by challenging some of those societal norms. And coming into a place of their own.” – Phil
Racism	Oppression is real and one going Resilience Black Identity Racism/Internalized Racism Racism in the Gay community Community	“As a Black gay man, I have experienced blatant racism and microaggressions on both fronts. But my Blackness comes first because that's what people see most. I have been told I'm too loud, too Black, or I'm ghetto. I thinks it's one of most interesting things to be told that I have to change who I am because people won't understand me because of my skin color. It hurts to hear you have to code switch because of racism, or racist systems that oppression Black folk and people of color. I feel that's what makes people hate themselves and that

		internalized racism begins to take over their ideology. I have used these experiences as growing moments and as a way to help other Black gay men succeed.” - Richard
Intersectionality	Oppression is real and one going Black Identity Gay Identity/Queer Identity Black gay Leadership Resilience Be Strong Internalized Homophobia Internalized Racism	“Microaggressions, whether they’re subtle or outright are daily things that happen and that’s kinda one of the interesting parts about being a leader. So being a Black, gay, leader, not only do you have to kinda lead with integrity. It’s almost you have to be superhuman, super perfect in some ways. I feel like even though I know some people would say you don’t have to do that, you gotta be authentic, but I think the other thing is that you always have to be vigilant about not only what you’re doing but then what are the things coming at you all the time and everything. So it’s almost like work after work after work. Almost like cultural taxation.” - Phil

Coding Theme #2: How Lived Experiences Inspired Leadership Development

Categories	Code	Example Quotes
Commitment to Community and Advocacy	Advocacy Community Legacy Mentoring Queer Identity Black Identity	“On one level I think advocacy comes from – or how it shows up in a community specifically from the lens I’m thinking about or looking through is like promoting testing, promoting housing, job services, trying to make or create safe spaces for Black gay men that could be – yeah, I think that’s most of what’s happening.” – Wes “It’s really important, advocacy, to be out there helping them moving toward a bigger picture kind of thing for a

		group of folks; Black men, gay men, so that they have a voice, so that they can be a part of something... In the community, doing specific little events, letting them know you can come here to get certain things for Black gay men, whether it be positive or negative, you know, and even if you don't come here we can – there's other places that are similar, you know or whatever for Black gay men specifically that you can visit, and if that's what you desire and want to do, then that's a cool thing so to speak." - Rose
Personal Relationship Influences on Leadership	Mutual Respect Relationships There isn't just one way Queer Identity Strength	"The thing that makes me think about leadership in this realm that I walk away with, that makes me reflect upon that, is the skill of patience. My partner is a strong leader, and I'm a strong leader. One of the things that happens in a relationship when you have two leaders is when you let go and let the other lead, and then wait your turn so that you can lead, and for us because the emotions are so intense and we're both such headstrong leaders, our fiery moments are when one partner needs the other partner to let go and let them lead. Because it's real hard to be a two-person leader. You have to let the other person lead, and you gotta follow for a minute." - Ben

Coding Theme #3: The Role of Mentorship in Leadership Development among Black Gay Men

Categories	Code	Example Quotes
Mentoring Others	Honesty Mutual Respect Leading by example Health/Self-care Leadership Development Mutual Respect Education is important	"I think my primary role is a leader, that I lead a group of people. I feel my role as a leader is to identify the best and the brightest, bring them together and then create an environment in which they can thrive and do what they have to do. To provide the resources, to support, to coach, and all

	Coach Black Identity Queer Identity	of that so people can do what they came here to do.” – Wayne “I do mentorship for a lot of young, gay men of color – well actually some straight men too but I do a lot of mentorship and connect them with resources that can better their lives to take them out of that "I'm just a gay boy" mindset to show them they are a man first; that gay part is secondary. I oversee 3 family-funded programs that target young men of color when it comes to HIV and substance abuse in youth from a prevention standpoint to try and make sure they're making better decisions about themselves.” - Coco
Mentee Experiences	Leadership Development Being a mentee There isn't just one way Mutual Respect	“I have different role models for different segments of life. So, I might have a role model that teach me about the gay life, honey. Okay, so you tell me who to stay away from and how to deal with the gay folks. And I might have a person that professionally will kind of guide me and say, "Okay, so let's keep that creativity going. How do you use your creativity and bring it into what you're doing?" And I might have another person that might talk to me a little bit more about self-esteem and spiritual stuff. So, I have different mentors for different things and different people that lead me based on the different categories that I feel I need influence or assistance with.” – Mike “One of the first things I learned from Anthony G was he said, "I would rather apologize for doing than to ask for permission. If you're passionate about it and you think that someone might shoot you down, go for it. Then you can always say you're sorry. Then to go in and ask permission, and

		somebody tell you no, and you don't get to try it at all, go for your gut. I would rather ask for forgiveness than to beg for permission." That for me was power. For me it was like he said to me, "I've hired you because I know you're a leader. There are times that you're gonna make a decision that I may shoot down, but you feel strong about it. If you do it, come to me and say I'm sorry if it fucked up than to ask for permission." - Ben

Coding Theme #4: Defining Leadership

Categories	Code	Example Quotes
It takes a Village	Takes a village Strength Community Black Identity Education is important Queer Identity	"I have different role models for different segments of life. So, I might have a role model that teach me about the gay life, honey. Okay, so you tell me who to stay away from and how to deal with the gay folks. And I might have a person that professionally will kind of guide me and say, "Okay, so let's keep that creativity going. How do you use your creativity and bring it into what you're doing?" And I might have another person that might talk to me a little bit more about self-esteem and spiritual stuff. So, I have different mentors for different things and different people that lead me based on the different categories that I feel I need influence or assistance with." – Mike "Black gay men and Black straight men working together. That bridge is finally built and crossed. You know, right now we're still trying to build bridges between the gay and straight communities but I'm hoping that very soon that bridge will be built and everybody's on it for the same cause. I think that the Black gay struggle also ties in with the struggle of Black men and I think it gets overlooked and overshadowed. I think a lot of Black gay men are Black men first." - Coco

Leading by Example	Lead by Example Definition of Leadership Mentoring Professional Honesty There isn't just one way Education is important	“It is more of a lead by example kind of style. I don't really like to tell ... I really try not to tell people what to do. I don't wanna ever have to tell people what to do. I like to be able to set the example. That's always been important to me, to be able to know whatever it is that needs to be done so I can show you. I can kind of model it for you, and then you can pick it up and go...I think that experience very much informs how I lead in most of my different avenues, which is let me model it. Let me show you what it looks like by doing it myself, and then you can pick it up” – Tom “Leadership looks different because in terms of relationships, whether they're romantic, whether they're professional, whether they're social, in some of them we give 50/50, others we give 60/40, you know, it's based on the environment... A good leader understands that he's not going to have all of the elements needed to make whatever the project is a success, whether it's a relationship or whether it's building a building. A good leader is going to have to know that, I'm going to need the skills of another person, and that person is going to be able to take the lead on this and I'm going to have to follow him there, but I can lead them because I can organize the whole thing.” – Ben
Authenticity	Being Authentic Authentic Honesty Resilience Black Gay Leadership Gay Identity Black Identity	“The next stage for leadership of Black gay man. Wow. I don't know what that looks like. I think that some element of embracing Black feminists and Black thought would be part of that. I think that challenging our own misogyny, and our own internal homophobia will be part of that. If we're talking about leadership with or among Black gay men, really doing our part to help liberate Black gay men and be all that they can be. And be all of who they can be. I say that because even right now in my role, I interact with some Black gay men who are students, who may not

		necessarily embrace all of their identities. Especially on the sexuality part.” – Phil “I think it's an invaluable skill to teach anyone leadership skills, right. Because as you teach leadership skills, you learn how to self-assess, you learn how to understand yourself in the context of your community. You learn how to be better and the bigger person. You learn how to then unpack your shit (your identities). I think that will help a lot of Black folks because we got a lot of shit stored up. - Jeff