

Engaging Hip-Hop Leadership: Diversity, Counter-Hegemony and Glorified Misogyny – (Free-Style Version) by Valerie L. Patterson, Ph.D.

I got this Spanish chica, she don't like me to roam
So she call me cabron plus marricon
Said she likes to cook rice so she likes me home
I'm like, "Un momento" - mami, slow up your tempo
I got this black chick, she don't know how to act
Always talkin out her neck, makin her fingers snap
She like, "Listen Jigga Man, I don't care if you rap
You better - R-E-S-P-E-C-T me"
I got this French chick that love to french kiss
She thinks she's Bo Derek, wear her hair in a twist
Jay-Z, "Girls, Girls, Girls", (2001).

Introduction

Hip-Hop's origins are in the neighborhoods of poor blacks and Latinos in New York City. Hip-Hop is a grassroots phenomenon born in the streets of those neighborhoods. From its inception in the 70s to now, it has grown and evolved to a multibillion dollar global phenomenon. Jeff Chang (2001) argues by the end of the 1980s it became the single most potent global youth force in a generation. It is currently described as having evolved from "a post-civil rights era grassroots phenomenon born in the streets of the Bronx, N.Y.... and has become a global cultural movement whose stylistic impact and social perspectives clearly extend beyond popular rap music" (Publisher's Weekly, n.d.).

Butler (2004) asserts that estimates of Hip-Hop's contribution to the United States economy are in the billions of dollars and offers a Hip-Hop theory of punishment. With its original inception several dimensions of Hip-Hop culture emerged in the 1970s. There were specifically four elements: a) MCing; b) DJing; c) Breaking; and d) Graffiti Art. Some argue that there is a fifth element, knowledge.

Since its inception a myriad set of ills that plague communities-of-color, particularly African-American urban communities, have been attributed to Hip-Hop. Examples of these ills include higher crime rates, higher incidences of sexual activity among young teens/adults, misogyny and homophobia in lyrical content, higher incarceration rates, and higher drop-out rates. Some scholars have challenged these perceptions, Sullivan (1996 p. 7) asserts that

“While *Newsweek* would like us to believe that gangsta rap and Hip-Hop culture are responsible for both the generational divide as well as the worsening social conditions facing Black America, the eclipse of Black civil society has much more to do with the institutional collapse of the inner city and the failure of traditional Black social and civic organizations to mobilize, organize and empower the most isolated and abandoned among the poor.”

Although I am unwilling to support the notion that the fault lies at the feet of traditional Black civic and social organizations, it is significant that this argument was made over 10 years ago, yet many of the negative indicators that she describes remain pervasive.

Hip-Hop culture and music have evolved from a focus on inequity, racism, and self-empowerment to the current emergence of what is described as the “bling” era. The word bling has invaded the lexicon and reflects an excessive and conspicuous display of wealth in the form of expensive jewels (usually conflict diamonds), luxury cars, expensive champagne and the ability to live a “jet-setting” lifestyle that allows the male who possesses “bling” to spend it lavishly on very beautiful and voluptuous young women.

As noted in the Call for Papers, studying leadership at the individual level involves an examination of the characteristics of the individual leader. This paper will explore the evolution of leaders and leadership in Hip-Hop culture and the implications offered for leading a diverse workforce. Hip-Hop is now estimated to be a multi-billion dollar industry that is multicultural and global. This paper will attempt to discern whether Hip-Hop entrepreneurs like Shawn ‘Jay-Z’ Carter have assimilated by changing their styles to fit traditional corporate culture or if in fact, corporate culture has become more diverse in terms of its leadership models and its definition of “successful” leadership, and is thus more Hip-Hop. I will argue that Jay-Z’s leadership style falls somewhere on a continuum. While he is in the ranks of other “Hip Hop moguls” like Russell Simmons and Sean “Diddy” Combs, he possesses an acumen and critical business sense that is worth interrogating and deconstructing in an examination of diverse leaders engaged in leading a diverse workforce. This paper will assess the impact and influence of his style.

Why Engage Hip-Hop?

Me give my heart to a woman?
Not for nothin, never happen
I'll be forever mackin
Heart cold and assassins, I got no passion
I got no patience
And I hate waitin
Jay-Z, “Big Pimpin”, (1999).

As indicated above Hip-Hop is a multi-billion dollar industry and the influence of the culture is such that an exploration of its intersection with and conceptualization of leadership would serve a useful purpose. Its evolution as a global phenomenon is reflected in for example, Toni Blackman (see <http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/Archive/2006/May/12-941281.html>) being designated the Hip-Hop Ambassador to the U.S. Department of State. This appointment suggests that Hip-Hop does in fact transcend the category of musical genre. Another example is offered by an initiative of The Temple of Hip-Hop led by golden era Hip-Hop icon KRS-One who approached the United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in an effort to gain recognition and establish Hip-Hop as an international culture representing peace and prosperity among all world governments (see <http://www.antagonistrecords.com/artists/krsone/index.html>).

Although the corporate success of Shawn “Jay-Z” Carter as a Hip-Hop mogul/leader is lauded in the popular press, others have been critical of those who have emerged as “moguls” and the implications “bootstrap” entrepreneurship holds for the future of Hip-Hop culture. Neal (2004) who makes this critique suggests that these leaders of the new school serve as “post-modern examples of the classic chattel slavery-era “overseers” who derived power and influence as the autonomous gatekeepers of plantation public.”

The aim of this paper is to interrogate hip-hop leadership to determine useful lessons learned for diverse leaders, leading diverse populations.

Hip Hop as Phenomena

Hip-hop is the thread that holds together the fabric of today’s urban-youth culture and it touches a multitude of industries – from entertainment to apparel to marketing to technology. To put it bluntly, hip-hop is big business”.

Black Enterprise, May 2002

You never thought that hip-hop would take it this far
Now I’m in the limelight cause I rhyme tight
Time to get paid, blow up like the (world trade)
Born sinner, the opposite of a winner
Remember when I used to eat sardines for dinner
Peace to ron g, brucey b, kid capri
Funkmaster flex, lovebug starsky
Im blowin up like you thought I would
Call the crib, same number same hood, its all good.
Jay-Z, “A Dream”, (2002).

Kitwana (2002) asserts that Hip-Hop is arguably the single most significant achievement of his generation. Clearly Hip-Hop as culture is reflected in the clothing, music, lifestyles, and aspirations of many of today’s youth. The generation is designated as those born between the years of 1965 and 1984 (Kitwana, 2002). It is the first generation to experience anti-Affirmative Action backlash and what some refer to as born-again racism.

The current phase of Hip-Hop has witnessed the advent of artists of the rap genre with platinum sales and lyrics that glorify excessive consumption in the form of living the “bling” lifestyle, violence, hyper-masculinity, and hyper-sexuality of women. It is really important however to emphasize that Hip-Hop is much more than rap music, it is in fact a culture that encompasses music, art, literature, film, social advocacy, entrepreneurialism, politics and contains paradigmatic elements.

Hip-Hop has been described as a mechanism for exposing and expressing the ideology of the periphery. So Hibbard (n.d.) argues that Hip-Hop culture performs an instrumental role in challenging the hegemony of neo-liberal ideology. Tanji Gilliam, (2004) suggests Hip-Hop is a mass-mediated and multi-mediated entity. Harry Belafonte a leading social activist and

entertainer offered the following in an interview published in Ebony Magazine (April, 2007 p. 174):

”First time that I stepped into the world of hip-hop was back in the late ‘70s up in the Bronx, and I was deeply taken with it. What I saw in the whole hip-hop culture, I saw genius, I saw protest and I saw social responsibility, and those voices were very strong and they were carrying on a great tradition. The oral tradition is how we have survived as a people. When hip-hop came in, it struck a chord”.

Tricia Rose (1994, p.100) suggests that Hip Hop offers a

“hidden transcript...it uses cloaked speech and disguised cultural codes to comment on and challenge aspects of current power inequities.”

Diverse Leadership in Public Organizations

Karim (2003) proposes *intercultural consciousness* as a useful skill for all leaders whether in businesses, educational, government or community settings. It is conceptualized as (p. 35) “a synergistic combination of essential cognitive, emotional, and behavioral knowledge and skills for intercultural competence and commitment to consistent, caring application of those skills and knowledge”. Rice and White (2005) suggest that embracing diversity in public organizations should involve the use of shared participatory leadership created and fostered in an environment where all employees “are respected, appreciated, and accepted for their contributions and perspectives (p.231)”.

Cultural competence and leadership are increasingly linked in the literature, especially as societies become much more diverse and heterogeneous and the effects of globalization create an impact on organizations and the people who work in them. There are calls for the development of cross-cultural leaders and an understanding that leading a diverse workforce requires much more than technical competence (Manning, 2003).

Naming Hip-Hop Leadership

If I wasn't rappin baby, I would still be ridin Mercedes
Comin down and sippin daily, no records till whytee pays me
Uhhh, now what y'all know bout them Texas boys
Comin down in candy toys, smokin weed and talkin noise (noise, noise)
Jay-Z, “Big Pimpin”, (1999).

Schupak (2007) argues that the bar has changed in Hip-Hop culture. In mainstream Hip-Hop it's no longer enough to be a rapper/rhymer/star. Current expectations include entrepreneurship and she asserts that “Today's role models are rhymer-turned chairman, like 50 Cent and Jay-Z, president of Def Jam Recordings, the Universal Music Group's rap imprint.”

I believe traditional leadership orthodoxy is adjusting and evolving to accommodate the styles of Hip-Hoppers, where in the past the adjustment was made by the "marginalized other". Several Hip-Hop moguls/leaders offer examples that can be explored. Shawn “Jay-Z” Carter, Sean “Diddy” Coombs, Dana “Queen Latifah” Owens, Russell Simmons, Antonio “L.A.” Reid,

Damon Dash, Kevin Liles, and Curtis “50 Cent” Jackson have all been successful in building a golden bridge between hip-hop and corporate culture. It is interesting to note however that Jay-Z, while he has made the transition from the streets to the boardroom, argues that he is in fact an outsider (Ali, 2006).

In the May 2007 issue of Ebony Magazine the “Ebony Power 150” the most influential Blacks in America are presented. Categories of power and leadership presented by Ebony include Politics and Law, Business, Religion, Arts & Entertainment, Education, Public Service, and The New Power (presented as the next generation of African-American leaders).

The Ebony List is important because the magazine has a history of embracing/representing the mainstream and traditional in terms of African-American thought and culture. Even though the article notes that “Being on the list does not necessarily constitute an endorsement of a particular individual or ideology” (May, 2007), it could be argued that those who Ebony identify as the “Power 150” can be perceived as being accepted by the both the black “social elite” and the “grass roots”. The Ebony List is created by the editors of the magazine working with national experts and leaders in the fields presented.

In **Politics & Law**, Kwame Kilpatrick, the mayor of Detroit is included. Mayor Kilpatrick has been referred to by the media as the “Hip-Hop Mayor”. The selection of Kwame Kilpatrick is interesting in that he was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives at the age of 26, addressed both the 2000, and 2004 Democratic National Conventions, and became mayor of the city of Detroit, Michigan in 2001. During his first term as mayor, Kilpatrick was criticized by the media and other detractors for his lavish lifestyle as mayor. Two activities particularly stand out, the charging of \$210,000 to the city for entertainment, and a stripper party held at the mayoral mansion. These events led to him being referred to as mentioned above ‘the Hip Hop mayor’ who is described as living a ‘bling’ lifestyle. He was labeled by Time Magazine as one of America’s worst mayors (see http://www.citymayors.com/mayors/detroit_mayor.html).

In the **Business** category, those from the Hip-Hop industry include, Shawn (Jay-Z) Carter listed as president/CEO Def Jam, Sean (Diddy) Combs listed as founder, Sean Jean, Bad Boy, and Russell Simmons listed as CEO, Rush Communications. In the **Arts & Entertainment** category listed are Lisa Ellis, executive VP, Sony Music Label Group, Dana “Queen Latifah” Owens, actress, entertainer, entrepreneur, philanthropist; Antonio “L.A.” Reid, chairman, Island Def Jam Music Group; and Will Smith, film actor, producer, recording artist. In the **Education** category Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, scholar, author and Avalon Professor in the Humanities and African-American and Religious Studies at the University of Pennsylvania is included. Dyson is referred to in the media as a “Hip-Hop Intellectual” or the “Hip-Hop Scholar”, because he has written extensively on the culture, its impact and its icons (for example a critically acclaimed work on Tupac Shakur). In the **Public Service** category the list includes the following individuals with ties to Hip-Hop culture; Carlton “Chuck D.” Douglas Ridenhour (of the group Public Enemy) presented as rapper, urban activist, and producer; and Wyclef Jean, musician, advocate for Haiti, and founder of Yele Haiti Foundation. The **New Power** Category includes Chris (Ludacris) Bridges, rapper, actor and creator of the Ludacris Foundation and Hype Williams, film and video director, and owner of Naaila Entertainment.

In May 2006 Ebony did not separate by category and presented the 100 plus Most Influential Black Americans. Hip-Hop industry leaders who were included are Sean “Diddy” Combs, Michael Eric Dyson, Kwame Kilpatrick, and Russell Simmons.

Forbes also presents a list of the most “powerful” celebrities. In Forbes’ top 100 celebrities, Curtis “50 Cent” Jackson is ranked 8th, Will Smith is ranked 49th and Sean “Diddy” Combs is ranked 79th (see <http://www.forbes.com/lists/2006/53/CC4I.html>).

Forbes says of Sean “Diddy” Combs that he is a hip-hop impresario who –

“sold his Bad Boy Records to Warner Music Group last summer... still presiding over the label. His empire includes the Sean Jean clothing line, a popular fragrance, a restaurant chain called Justin’s and the MTV series “Making the Band”, he continues to be a prominent fixture in the New York nightlife scene”.

Another useful list is offered by CNN.com who each year presents **Global Business Influentials**. In 2004 there were 5 African-Americans included on the list, three men, including Sean “Diddy” Combs, and two women. A description of the contributions of Sean “Diddy” Combs representing Bad Boy Worldwide Entertainment Group is featured. The article reports that Diddy’s \$300 million dollar urban empire includes a hip-hop record label, two restaurants, a music-publishing arm and a marketing company...which teaches Fortune 500 clients how to reach inner-city audiences

(<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2004/global.influentials/stories/combs/>).

Sean Combs, who has evolved from “Puff Daddy”, to “P Diddy” to “Puffy” to “Diddy” has also emerged as a Hip-Hop mogul who has been very successful in producing Hip-Hop artists, developing a very successful clothing line and developing Bad Boy Worldwide Entertainment Group. Bad Boy also encompasses recording, music publishing, artist management, television and film production, marketing and advertising, apparel and restaurants (Bad Boy History, 2007). Sean Combs differs from other Hip-Hop CEOs in that although he lived in Harlem for several years, his family (headed by his mother) eventually moved to the suburbs where he attended private school, played high school football and attended college.

The increased inclusion of Hip-Hop moguls, rap artists, and scholars of Hip-Hop culture on various “lists” reflecting leadership, power, and influence, validate the genre’s evolution beyond music. It reflects Hip-Hop’s major impact on culture, business, and clothing styles and it also connotes its emergence as a phenomenon unlike any other that developed in poor, marginalized Black and Latino neighborhoods.

Leadership

Leadership as defined by Northouse (2001) is a process where an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. It is clear that several Hip-Hop industry leaders have been successful in influencing a generation of consumers in embracing the culture.

One goal of this paper then is to interrogate the impact of the culture on the development of leadership and management styles for lessons learned. Schupak (2007) describes a video game called Def Jam Icon where those playing the game are challenged to rise from “the street corner to the corner office.” This electronic game utilizes the current industry model and examples developed among Hip-Hop entrepreneurs, presenting an associated correlation with traditional business examples. In the game, producing a gold record and making \$ 100,000 is labeled being a “hustler” and Schupak (2007) adds that this is “akin to lower middle management.” The

game's equivalent for a full-fledged "icon" or "chief executive" is to "rack up five platinum albums and \$5 million" in sales (2007).

Engaging The Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter Leadership Model

Sisters get respect, B*****s get what they deserve,
Sisters work hard, B*****s work your nerves,
Sisters hold you down, B*****s hold you up,
Sisters help you progress, B*****'ll slow you up,
Sisters cook up a meal play they role with the kidz, B*****s in the street with they nose in ya biz,
Sisters tell the truth, B*****s tell lies,
Sisters drive cars, B*****s wanna ride
Jay-Z, "B*****s & Sisters", (2002).

The current success of Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter, reflects status as an icon of Hip-Hop culture. It is useful to determine what leadership lessons are offered by Shawn Carter, who is in fact a high school drop out (Ali, 2006). What information can be gained from his myriad experiences which started from street hustling and have evolved to corporate CEO, United Nations partner and purveyor of Hip-Hop class and style?

Jay-Z's success suggests that Hip-Hop culture offers a model of counter-hegemony that has forced corporate America to embrace nontraditional models of business leadership.

Neal (2004 p. 160) for example argues that the livelihoods of moguls such as Jay-Z and others are "intricately tied to their perceived proximity to black urban enclaves (plantations) and their ability to deliver authentic (popular) cultural artifacts to a marketplace and buyers that have an interest in distributing (selling) and consuming (appropriating) these products".

Jay-Z's success as a leader is reflected in the recent news that he has entered into a deal to sell his clothing company Rocawear for \$204 million in cash to Iconix Brand Group, the company that licenses and markets Candies, Joe Boxer, Mudd, London Fog, and Ocean Pacific. Jay-Z attended high school but did not graduate, so it would be useful to deconstruct his leadership style and the development of his business acumen.

As Jay-Z's rap career evolved, his fan base grew. Jay-Z is unique in that when he could not find a record label to produce his first album, he created Roc-A-Fella Records as his own independent label. He is also listed as owner/founder of Roc-La-Familia, and Roc-A-Fella Films. His image has also evolved from baggy jeans and sweat-shirts, styles usually associated with Hip-Hop culture to what some describe as "button-ups and crisp jeans". Shawn Carter is also a co-brand director for Budweiser Select where he is collaborating in the area of strategic marketing programs. He is also minority owner of the New Jersey Nets. Jay-Z was also able to negotiate a collaboration with Iconix to form a new management/licensing company that will debut "The Shawn Carter Collection", a luxury brand.

Yet, he considers himself an outsider described by Ali (2006) as the –
"street-smart guy in the boardroom, the black man in a roomful of whites, the rapper convening with the secretary-general".

Hirt (2004) argues that leadership capacity can be built through self-reflection and experiential learning. Coffey and Tombari (2005), suggest that there must be an organizational

commitment to linking diversity and organizational culture. Grigoriadis (2005) writes that with Jay-Z’s ascent to the leadership of Def Jam he is hoping to compete in the boardroom.

Early assessments of Jay-Z’s leadership include the descriptors innovative, creative, and an argument that –

“Jay-Z has created a boutique label (with the creation of the label spinoff Def Jam Left) for rap artists with more on their minds than the run-of-the-mill topics stifling mainstream rap” (Graham, 2005).

Bolman and Deal (2003) offer the following typology for leadership:

Type of Leadership	Effective Attributes
Structural	Analyst, architect
Human Resource	Catalyst, Servant
Political	Advocate, negotiator
Symbolic	Prophet, poet

See Reframing Organizations, 3rd Edition, Bolman and Deal, 2003.

Much of what is written about Shawn “Jay-Z” Carter reflects both the structural and symbolic styles of leadership, as well as skills utilizing the political frame. His style suggests the incorporation of traditional attributes of leadership, but also the embracing of many of the attributes of transformational leadership.

Grigoriadis (2005) in her feature written on Jay-Z indicates that his affinity for leadership was developed hustling drugs on the streets of New York where he also utilized structural mechanisms to empower and reward employees.

Interestingly in making the transition from hustler to rap artist he was aided by Damon Dash who became his advocate in securing industry representation, when they were unable to secure a deal, the duo created their own label Roc-A-Fella Records.

Shawn “Jay-Z” Carter could in fact serve as a model for reframing leadership. His career reflects reframing and repackaging throughout what could be described as a linear progression from hustler to corporate leader and CEO.

Approaching Diversity, Diverse Leaders and the Diverse Workforce

In a paper written last year I argued that diversity efforts and initiatives in higher education are useful for creating portals of engagement to communities (and ideas) that are marginalized and disenfranchised in the mainstream. The environment of the academy can offer strategies useful for organizations beyond its walls. In the academy, the incorporation and examination of knowledge and constructs that fall outside of the traditional Western canon is useful for creating diversity. A diversity ‘model’ or ‘framework’ offers a vehicle for the

exploration of emerging theory and concepts useful for examination, deconstruction and interrogation which lead to engaging in critical reflection necessary for (and ultimately underpins) knowledge-building.

Research suggests that diversity of students in the academy can and usually does produce a broader educational experience both in traditional learning and in preparing for jobs, professions, and effective citizenship (Orfield and Kurlaender, 2006). Thus the creation of an environment that is diverse is important and vital for universities. The same can be said for other industries, corporations and most especially government organizations. Leaders and leadership models that foster and support diversity are a very important component however, with Orfield (2001) asserting that collected evidence in higher education also suggests that the benefits of diversity “can be significantly increased by appropriate leadership and support on campus”.

University curriculum has historically been dominated by the Western canon a model that focuses on Western history, literature and culture (Banks, 1993). With the call for multicultural education, scholars are examining the canon debate between Western Traditionalists, multiculturalists and Afrocentrists related to multicultural education – one example of diversity in the curriculum. Banya and Gilbert (2004) assert that the definition of diversity should be broadened to embrace and include multiple meanings of knowledge. This is true for organizations outside of the academy as well and in looking for examples of organizational diversity models on the Internet I found the following on the Merck website:

“Our concept of diversity goes beyond that of race, creed, ethnicity and gender. We look to promote the diversity of thinking that results from the differences in experiences, knowledge and background of all Merck people. Diversity of thinking will help us continue to encourage the creativity and innovation necessary for our Company to maintain a competitive advantage in the global marketplace.” See http://www.merck.com/about/diversity/employee_diversity/leader_div.html

Morrell (2002) suggests that new approaches to developing knowledge include the incorporation of popular culture – useful for deconstructing dominant narratives and “achieving a more egalitarian and inclusive society.”

In assessing the intersection between Hip-Hop culture and leadership models, one can conclude that the decision to appoint Shawn “Jay-Z” Carter as CEO reflects an increased understanding of the importance of innovation and creativity and how each of these elements come together to impact the bottom-line. For example Goldman-Sachs ties innovation and creativity to remaining competitive in the global environment, and argues that maintaining and strengthening its edge is tied to and requires a “diverse workforce that can offer the widest possible range of perspectives (Global Leadership and Diversity, 2007). The Goldman Sachs strategy includes an affinity program that supports five employee networks which include; an Asian Professionals Network, Firmwide Black Network, Firmwide Hispanic/Latin Network, Gay and Lesbian Network, and the Goldman Sachs Women’s Network.

Sullivan (1996) offered that in reinventing black civil society an effort is needed to nurture a new kind of leadership embracing collaboration, innovation, vision, creativity and competency.

Another example of Jay-Z’s ascent to leadership can be found in his collaboration in 2006 with Kofi Annan and the United Nations (Bashir, 2006) to tackle the lack of clean water as

a global crisis. The Secretary-General sought to capitalize on Jay-Z's influence as a hip-hop icon to influence and motivate young people to become actively involved in supporting eco-friendly initiatives

(see http://www.mtv.com/thinkmtv/about/pdfs/2006_08_09_Jay_Z.pdf).

Problematizing Diverse Leadership

She gets a glimpse of Shawn and she likes that.

He 2 ways her, so she writes back.

Smiley faces after all of her phrases.

Either she the one or I'm caught in the matrix.

Jay-Z "Excuse Me Miss", 2003

In an informal poll conducted in a graduate course that I teach on women and administration, eight of the eleven students (all women) present indicated that both Jay-Z and the corporate executives that he has joined in the board room have both made adjustments in their leadership styles. Three students (all women) indicated that the corporate executives have adjusted their styles to accommodate and embrace Jay-Z and hip-hop culture. One student (the only male) did not have an opinion because he did not have any knowledge of hip-hop culture or the record industry.

Camilla Stivers (2002) argues that throughout history women have been expected to handle needs related to sustenance and nurturance in order that men could have time and energy for public pursuits. Would Hip-Hop leadership as modeled by Shawn Carter be sensitive to gender dilemmas in organizations? Stivers asserts that divisions of labor continue to persist despite equal opportunity and affirmative action policies, which have simply enabled women to shoulder both private and public responsibilities rather than to share them equally with men, and despite recommendations of parenting, which she offers "are honored more in the breach than in the observance".

In examining Jay-Z's lyrical content, sexist misogynistic themes that incorporate the objectification of women are prevalent. It is clear that his "lyrical content" has evolved over the span of his career and now appears "less degrading" to women, however one is left to speculate on whether his lyrical themes are ideology and ultimately impact his leadership approach. As patriarchy is evident in those themes, and masculinist posturing is over-emphasized, would his leadership model embrace and support women's advancement in leadership and decision-making roles in organizations? The answer to this question is critical to imagining diverse leaders leading a diverse workforce.

Awareness of hip-hop culture and its impact remain important for leaders in the public sector. Neal (2004) argues that a model has been created that trades on the perception that black popular culture "represents an authentic black experience", an experience that has "subsequently been used to inform public policy, particularly issues that primarily affect...black urban youth" (p. 157).

While the increased acceptance and embracing of hip-hop culture and appointment of industry executives and leaders who live the culture offers a promising example for diversity in the areas of leadership and leading diverse workforces, challenges remain. That is, the misogyny, patriarchy, objectification, and masculine posturing, are problematic.

Hip-hop culture has produced hugely successful artists that have “crossed-over” into the areas of entrepreneurship and leadership. The culture is a global phenomenon that symbolizes innovation and creativity which offer useful lessons for mainstream organizations in both the public and private arena. Twenty-first century leaders should have knowledge and understanding of the culture and those who have been influenced by the culture. Hip-hop culture offers a very useful case for broadening the definition of diversity, supporting Banya and Gilbert’s (2004) assertion that the definition of diversity should be broadened to embrace and include multiple meanings of knowledge. Hip-hop leadership models reflect counter-hegemony. An examination of executive level appointments in organizations representing and marketing hip-hop artists reflect an emphasis on diversity. As hip-hop culture is symbolic of the melding and blending of diasporic peoples it will be interesting to examine Shawn Carter’s appointments as CEO of Def Jam. The stage is set to assess the model of diversity that is embraced by Def Jam with Shawn Carter as its CEO. Will it contain gender dilemmas as articulated by Stivers (2002)? Will it be influenced by sexual scripts articulated in his lyrical content? Ali (2006) argues that for Jay-Z the biggest challenge now is “how to continue this march into the mainstream without losing his street appeal”. It will be interesting to determine if Jay-Z as a “diverse” leader, leading a diverse workforce will change the mainstream, that is make it more accepting of marginalized “others”.

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