

Dis/Embodied Leadership: Intersections of Leadership and Social Class

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This dissertation is dedicated to the 21 hard working individuals who allowed me to listen to their personal stories about leadership and share their stories in this study. It is also dedicated to my partner and best friend, Dani, and my amazing daughter, Addie. Words can barely express my gratitude for helping and motivating me to reach the finish line.

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ABSTRACT

One weakness with the discursive leadership to date is the failure to explore ways in which material conditions also shape leadership (Fairhurst, 2009). Further, Dougherty (2011) argued that discursive constructionism without a consideration of material conditions is middle class privilege. By privileging the discursive over the material, discursive leadership could be reproducing social inequalities, which relates to issues of social class. The purpose of this dissertation is to understand how leadership and social class become mutually constructed through the interplay between discourse and materiality. The concepts of *text work* and *body work* are used to understand how social class is linked with the types of work an individual does. Similar to white-collar/blue-collar distinctions, text work refers to jobs that emphasize the use of communication, and body work refers to jobs that emphasize more physical labor (Dougherty, 2011). A thematic narrative analysis was applied to stories about leadership that were told during interviews with a total of 21 participants (10 body workers and 11 text workers), and observations added context and thick description to participants' narratives about leadership. The theory of Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence provided a lens for understanding how meanings for leadership diverge based on different material experiences in day-to-day work. Findings indicate that discursive and material conditions of work interact to construct different meanings for leadership. Text workers emphasized communication in their constructions of leadership, while body workers constructed leadership more as an embodied practice. Additionally, compared to text workers, body workers demonstrated a more nuanced understanding of leadership that integrated a concern for discursive processes in addition to emphasizing material conditions.

Chapter One: Rationale

Recent work in organizational studies highlights a growing concern for the interplay of discourse and materiality in organizational processes (Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009; Dougherty, 2011). The interest in materiality follows what some scholars consider to be an overemphasis on the power of discourse in organizational communication research (e.g., Cloud, 2005). For instance, Fairhurst (2007) uses the concept of *discursive leadership* to describe leadership broadly as a social construction, which leaves materiality untheorized in organizational leadership processes. Fairhurst (2009) also recognized the limitation of discursive leadership and called for more consideration of the material conditions—in addition to discursive processes—that are involved in the construction of leadership. Without considering the interplay of both discourse and materiality, leadership researchers could overlook new ways of understanding leadership (Pullen & Vachhani, 2011; Sinclair, 2005). Further, Dougherty (2011) argues that discursive constructionism without a consideration of material conditions is middle class privilege. In other words, by privileging the discursive over the material, discursive leadership could be reproducing social inequalities, which are intimately tied to issues of social class. Therefore, social class and leadership are two potential intersecting avenues for examining the interplay of discourse and materiality.

The broad focus of this dissertation is to explore the relationship between leadership and social class. I argue that dominant assumptions about leadership derive from white-collar premises that may not suit the needs or experiences of individuals who engage in other kinds of work. Ultimately, this study shows how leadership and social class are communicative phenomena that are bound together by a combination of

discursive and material conditions. Specifically, I draw on a narrative approach to understand how discourse and materiality might mutually influence personal stories about leadership told by individuals doing different kinds of work. Broadly speaking, narrative methodology is useful for this study because it is a way of analyzing stories to understand how people construct meanings for their experiences (Riessman, 2008). A more detailed review of narrative methods will be discussed in the third chapter.

Past research has highlighted that different social class groups do not have the same options when it comes to being considered for leadership positions in organizations. Those from higher social classes are more likely to occupy formal leadership roles in organizations, even though there is no evidence that individuals from higher social classes are any more effective at demonstrating leadership than those from lower social class backgrounds (Martin, Innis, & Ward, 2017). Further, Lucas and Buzzanell (2004) explained that blue-collar work is typically not associated with career advancement and upward social mobility, making blue-collar workers less likely to occupy management positions in organizations. Processes of social reproduction also limit formal leadership opportunities for those from lower social classes. Individuals from higher social classes have greater access to financial, social, and cultural resources, making it easier for them to gain entry into prestigious universities and high-status jobs (Lucas, 2011b). In contrast, members of the working class have a tendency to be socialized into physical labor jobs that offer less opportunity for career advancement or social mobility (Lucas, 2011b; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). There are important material benefits to being considered for leadership roles in organizations. Occupational advancement comes with higher salaries, fewer work hours, personal paid time off, educational assistance, and benefits like

medical insurance (Lucas, 2011b; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004; Mishel, Bernstein, & Schmitt, 2001). Therefore, one goal of this study is to show how body workers—typically associated with the working class—demonstrate an understanding of leadership that merits greater consideration for formal leadership roles in organizations.

To expand my argument, I need to lay the groundwork for this study. To begin, I will discuss the communication Theory of Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence as a way to become more open to multiple meanings that people might discursively construct for the same concept, like leadership. Then, I will draw on communication research to better understand connections between leadership and social class, along with discourse and materiality. Finally, I will provide a summary of this chapter and discuss expected contributions of this dissertation. The second chapter will provide a deeper review of the literature, followed by a discussion of methods in chapter three.

Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence

At its core, the Theory of Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence (LC/MD) is a meaning-centered theory that explores how meaning systems diverge while converging on the same set of symbols (Dougherty, Kramer, Klatzke, & Rogers, 2009). In other words, the theory helps researchers understand how different meanings for a phenomenon can be masked by the use of common language and words. For example, people may use the same language or symbols to talk about an organization's culture, but they may have different ideas for what culture means based on their own experiences (Dixon & Dougherty, 2010; Dougherty, Mobley, & Smith, 2010). Similarly, organizational members may use common language and words like *gender* or *sexual harassment* to describe some of their workplace experiences, but the words can take on

very different meanings from one person or social group to another because there are different ways of experiencing the same phenomenon (Dougherty, 2006). However, the purpose of LC/MD is not simply to explore different meanings, but to understand some of the complex social conditions that shape diverse perceptions of meaning and reality.

For the present study, LC/MD is particularly useful because it provides a lens for understanding how contextual social conditions like work and social class might influence individuals' assumptions about leadership. The theory is also useful because it focuses on understanding processes of meaning construction, which is a major goal of the narrative methodology being applied in this dissertation (Dougherty, 2011; Riessman, 2008). Finally, the critical-interpretive assumptions of LC/MD are in line with more recent critical-interpretive leadership research that views leadership primarily as a communicative process that is influenced by taken-for-granted dominant social structures (Alvesson & Spicer, 20012; Fairhurst, 2007; Petriglieri, & Stein, 2012).

A more detailed discussion of LC/MD and its application to this study will be provided in the following chapter. However, at this point, I would like to shift gears. Specifically, a general understanding for the concepts of leadership and social class could help to support the relevance of LC/MD for my dissertation. Therefore, the next section will briefly review the discursive approach to leadership that I draw on for this dissertation, followed by a brief discussion of social class.

Discursive Leadership

The relatively recent discursive approach to organizational and leadership studies has drawn attention to the ways that communication—in the form of language and social interaction—constructs social realities (Fairhurst, 2008; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Putnam

& Nicotera, 2009, 2010). Drawing on Fairhurst's (2007) concept of *discursive leadership*, this study defines leadership as a form of communicating that is "exercised when ideas expressed in talk or action are recognized by others as capable of progressing tasks or problems which are important to them" (Robinson, 2001, p. 93). This definition is preferred because it avoids essentializing—and thus limiting—leadership in terms of any specific traits, styles, situations, or individuals, and it recognizes the task oriented and socially constructed nature of leadership (Fairhurst, 2007). Further, Robinson's (2001) definition of leadership implies that both discursive and material conditions are involved with processes of leadership by emphasizing both "talk" and "action."

Discursive leadership describes leadership as a process of communication rather than a set of individual traits, styles, or contingencies (Fairhurst, 2007). Similarly, Kelly (2008) takes a social constructionist view of leadership by describing it as a series of *language games* that share a common family resemblance. The focus on discourse helps critical organizational scholars understand relationships among power and discourse and give social actors a chance to transform oppressive societal discourses (Hall, 2011; Mumby, 2005; Sinclair, 2005).

However, some critical researchers caution against a utopian faith in the ability of discourse to construct reality and transform social inequalities (i.e. Cloud, 2005; Dougherty, 2011; Mumby, 2004; Spicer, et al., 2009; Weeks, 2011). In line with Sinclair (2005) and Fairhurst (2009), one of the main arguments in this dissertation is that we have not learned enough about the material conditions that might influence meanings that people construct for leadership. Fairhurst (2009) explained that "there are many things we do not know (about leadership); chief among them involves a greater emphasis on the

ways in which discourse interacts with the body and the material world, historically overlooked by leadership researchers” (p. 1623).

A central concern of this study is that researchers drawing on discursive leadership might privilege those who understand leadership as a discursive construction over those who understand leadership based on material conditions. In other words, by privileging the discursive over the material, discursive leadership could be reproducing social inequalities, which is related to issues of social class (Dougherty, 2011). Therefore, the following section explains the concept of social class in order to better understand how it might be tied up with assumptions about leadership. Following the discussion of social class, I will briefly highlight some of the recent scholarship concerning the relationship between discourse and materiality.

Social Class

Like leadership, there is very little consensus on a definition for social class. However, there are a few assumptions that are usually associated with discussions of social class. At the most basic level, social class is thought of as a system of social stratification. In other words, it is a way of partitioning people into a social hierarchy, usually based on economic factors like income (Stuber, 2006).

Distinguishing between and among social classes often highlights social inequalities (Stuber, 2006). Certainly, the difference in income, education level, culture, and access to organizational advancement opportunities highlights some of the inequalities associated with different social classes. However, the aforementioned differences in social class are better at describing outcomes of social class than at explaining what social class means. Social class may be a common social phenomenon,

but it is not experienced the same way for different social groups. In other words, interpretations of social class vary from one person and social context to another because different social class groups experience social class in different ways.

Further, as a social construction, Dougherty (2011) says meanings for social class can shift and change with time. In other words, social class is better understood as a complex communicative process that produces different outcomes that become conflated with what social class means. Therefore, understanding social class means paying attention to the ways that meanings are constructed through our communication.

Of particular interest to this study is Dougherty's (2011) call for researchers to explore the dialectic of discursive and material conditions of everyday life that influence the ways people talk about social class. Material resources, such as capital, clothing, food, and the body are an important part of how social class is experienced and maintained. Different types of work associated with social class help to show the ways material and discursive conditions can shape meanings of social class. For example, lower classes are associated with physical labor while higher classes are associated with office work and management (Lucas, 2011a; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004).

Text Work and Body Work

This study uses the concepts of *text work* and *body work* to understand ways that social class might be linked with the types of work an individual does (Dougherty, 2011). *Text work* is similar to white-collar work in that it involves jobs that center on the use of language and the construction of knowledge (Dougherty, 2011; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). On the other hand, *body work* is similar to blue-collar work in that it is associated with physical labor (Dougherty, 2011; Lucas, 2011a). *Body work* can also be similar to

blue-collar work in that it is usually associated with subordinate organizational positions; however, body work is not necessarily tied to subordinate social class positions or subordinate positions in organizational hierarchies. For example, the physical body is intimately tied to the work processes of surgeons, but surgeons are not associated with subordinate social class positions. Rather than using blue-collar/white-collar distinctions of social class, the concepts of text work and body work are preferred for two reasons.

First, as a communication study, text and body work are useful concepts because they highlight ways that communication is de/centered as a way of doing work. In text work, communication is central to work processes. In contrast, communication is deemphasized in body work. Second, the concepts of text and body work are preferred because they help emphasize a dialectic of discourse and materiality that characterizes the different types of work experiences that become associated with social class (Dougherty, 2011). In other words, body work highlights the material conditions that are typically associated with physical labor and lower social class groups (Dougherty, 2011). In contrast, text work highlights discursive processes that are distanced from physical labor and typically associated with the work of higher social class groups (Dougherty, 2011).

Part of the argument in this dissertation is that dominant assumptions about leadership reinforce social class divisions that have traditionally marginalized working class individuals. Blue-collar workers may contribute to their own subordination by drawing mainly on dominant words and symbols to talk about leadership. The marginalization is perpetuated by white-collar/text workers who might fail to consider the different meanings that blue-collar/body workers have for leadership. In addition, we do not know how diverse working conditions might contribute to different meanings for the

same phenomenon. Therefore, this study applies the communication theory of Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence (LC/MD) in order to better understand how the work experiences of different social class groups influence their interpretations of leadership.

Understanding differences in material experiences of different social groups is crucial for using LC/MD as an analytical tool in this study. Recent organizational communication research has also called for a closer examination of the material—in addition to the discursive—conditions that influence meaning construction (Ashcraft, et al., 2009; Dougherty, 2011). Therefore, the following section briefly discusses the ideas of discourse and materiality that have been mentioned throughout this chapter, and they will be covered in more detail in the second chapter.

Discourse & Materiality

On the surface, the concepts of discourse and materiality seem simple enough. Discourse essentially refers to human processes of communication, and materiality refers to physical or tangible conditions that influence everyday lived experiences (Ashcraft, et al., 2009). Discourse is particularly important for organizational communication researchers because they are interested in how realities become discursively constructed through communication (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). However, materiality has largely been untheorized in discourse-centered organizational communication research (Ashcraft, et al., 2009). The gap in a discourse-centered approach is that it overlooks ways that materiality can influence discourse, and also how materiality can be influenced by discourse (Dougherty, 2011).

Critical organizational communication scholars have been the target of criticism for privileging a discourse-centered approach. Critical organizational communication

scholars are interested in learning about relationships among power and discourse in order to give social actors a chance to transform oppressive societal discourses (Mumby, 2004). However, discourse alone may not be enough to transform social inequality. Cloud's (2005) study of a two-year labor strike at a manufacturing plant provides an example of the limits of discourse. Based on her analysis of workers' narratives, no amount of passionate communication from the union was enough to persuade the company to change physical working conditions or wages of employees, nor were they able to prevent the company from replacing the workers. As a result, Cloud (2005) argued that materiality must also be considered—along with discourse—as means and outcome of social change.

Although it is helpful to distinguish between discourse and materiality for analytical purposes, I argue that it is more productive to view them as intertwined and mutually constitutive. I am interested in how discursive and material conditions work together in shaping perceptions and meanings for reality (Dougherty, 2011). Paying closer attention to materiality also fits with the theoretical foundations guiding this dissertation. Specifically, a major tenant of LC/MD is that material experiences play an important role in the social construction of reality (Ashcraft, 2005; Dougherty, et al., 2009; Parker, 2001, 2002; Wood, 2005). Material differences in the experiences of marginalized and privileged groups influence their discursive constructions of reality in different ways, which is tied to issues of social class (Dougherty, 2011). Finally, by considering the interplay of discourse and materiality, this dissertation answers Fairhurst's (2009) call for understanding more about the material conditions that influence discursive leadership processes.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to understand how leadership and social class become mutually constructed through the interplay between discourse and materiality. When viewed alongside the discussion of text work and body work, the concept of discursive leadership—or leadership as sets of language games—could be privileging text-class assumptions about leadership and overlooking material conditions. Specifically, discursive leadership views leadership as a process of communication (Fairhurst, 2007), which is part of the job description for text workers (Dougherty, 2011; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). As a result, there may be an underlying assumption that leadership is more suited for upper-class text workers who work primarily with their words, have more education, and who often have management positions.

Further, body/text workers who embrace text-class assumptions about leadership may be unwittingly participating in the reproduction of unequal class relations. To understand what leadership means in different types of work experiences, this study applies the communication theory of Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence to examine stories about leadership that are told by text and body workers. Stories about leadership from body workers could provide other ways of understanding leadership that have not been explored. Further, this study aims to understand how stories about leadership could contribute to the marginalization of blue-collar, working class individuals. Finally, to understand relationships between material and discursive processes of organizing, this study will explore leadership as classed in both material and discursive ways.

Expected Contributions

There are at least three main reasons for conducting this study. The first is to build on the demand for organizational communication research that addresses the role of material conditions in social constructions of reality. To meet the demand, this study aims to understand how personal stories of leadership might be constructed by people doing different types of work. Specifically, this study adds a deeper consideration for how material conditions of everyday life might shape the ways people talk about leadership.

The second goal is to understand how stories of leadership might reinforce a hegemonic system of social class that marginalizes those perceived to be in lower social classes. Further, this study could provide evidence that blue collar workers are drawing upon and reinforcing the same dominant assumptions about leadership that contribute to their own marginalization from leadership roles.

Third, the relatively recent theory of LC/MD should also be advanced through the results of this study. Ultimately, this dissertation could develop the theory by highlighting the ways people use the concept of “leadership” to mean very different things. A better understanding of divergent meanings for leadership could help researchers and leadership practitioners better adapt to the diverse expectations for leadership that emerge in different working conditions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The main purpose of this dissertation is to explore how leadership is classed in both material and discursive ways. Recent organizational leadership research focuses mainly on discursive processes involved with the construction of leadership, which leaves materiality untheorized and privileges higher class assumptions about what leadership means. Higher social class are associated with work that primarily involves the use of discourse, while lower social class can be tied to work that centers on engaging with material reality through physical labor (Dougherty, 2011). As a result, experiences of individuals engaging in work associated with lower social class could be overlooked and marginalized from dominant assumptions about leadership. Therefore, one way to achieve the purpose of this dissertation is to examine the perceptions of leadership from individuals who engage with different types of day-to-day working conditions.

A deeper review of literature is necessary to understand the need for studying the interactions of leadership and social class. This chapter is structured around four main areas of literature. In particular, this review will cover literature on the topics of Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence (LC/MD), organizational leadership, social class, and the interaction of discourse and materiality.

The review starts by outlining the core assumptions that influence LC/MD. The foundations of LC/MD will be organized around (a) the linguistic turn in organizational communication, (b) sensemaking theory, and (b) feminist standpoint theory. Following the discussion of LC/MD, I will summarize the three major approaches to organizational leadership, which are (a) functionalist, (b) interpretive, and (c) critical. I will also highlight some of the more recent leadership research of communication scholars.

After the review of organizational leadership, there will be a discussion of social class. I will consider how social class can be defined as a (a) variable, (b) culture, or (c) social structure. The concepts of text work and body work will also be discussed at the end of the section on social class. In the final section, I will review the relatively recent literature addressing the interaction of discourse and materiality. To do so, I will explain how discourse and materiality can interact through (a) objects, (b) sites, and (c) bodies.

Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence

The theory of Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence is a communication theory that explores how meanings can diverge while maintaining the illusion of shared meaning. The main idea is that different meanings can be masked by the use of common language and words. In other words, “although individuals often reach agreement on the language and symbols used to describe a concept or situation, they often assign markedly different meanings to those symbols” (Dougherty, et al., 2009, p. 23). As I will explain, people may reach agreement on the use of the term “leadership” to describe a situation, yet they could have divergent interpretations for what leadership means.

There are a few main components involved with LC/MD. First, language convergence (LC) occurs when people use shared language to describe a phenomenon or situation. It is impractical to define every word in an interaction; therefore, the application of shared language is useful because it helps people quickly make sense of their experiences (Dixon & Dougherty, 2014). However, agreeing on a common language or symbol to describe a situation does not necessarily imply that there will be agreement on the meaning for the same situation, which could lead to the development of a false consensus, which is “inaccurate perception that people agree on a common meaning of a

term” (Dixon & Dougherty, 2014, p. 3). Meaning divergence and false consensus are important for this dissertation because I am interested in how different social class groups might use the term “leadership” to imply different expectations for what leadership means. For example, organizational members might agree that they need “leadership;” however, organizational members from different social groups might also have divergent expectations for leadership behaviors (Eagly & Chin, 2010).

To understand how meanings can diverge, Dougherty, et al. (2009) described the core concepts of *meaning clusters* and *meaning fragments*. Meaning clusters are a person or group’s holistic interpretation of the meaning for a given concept or phenomenon (Dougherty, et al., 2009). Describing leadership as the ability to inspire others and enable others to act would be an example of a meaning cluster. This particular meaning cluster aligns with what Bass (2008) describes as transformational leadership. In other words, the meaning cluster for transformational leadership would involve the combination of concepts such as “inspiring others” and “enabling others to act.” *Meaning fragments* are the smaller bits of meanings that combine to make up a holistic meaning cluster (Dougherty, Mobley, & Smith, 2010). If inspiring and enabling others to act is a meaning cluster, then a meaning fragment would be “inspiring,” “enabling,” or any other single unit for conceptualizing leadership (Dixon & Dougherty, 2014). By identifying key meaning fragments that tend to cluster together, researchers can begin to study the meaning clusters that a person or group associates with a concept or phenomenon. Analyzing meaning clusters provides a more in depth understanding of meaning divergence (Dougherty, et al., 2009). Further, core ideas behind LC/MD—particularly those related to Feminist Standpoint Theory—highlight ways that divergent meanings

and perspectives can become *othered* and subordinated in relation to more dominant and privileged perceptions of reality (Bach, 2005; Buzzanell, 1994; Dougherty, 2011). Thus, using LC/MD in this study will help me uncover how, if at all, divergent meanings of leadership might be *othered* in ways that privilege some social class groups over others.

To better explain the application of LC/MD in the present study, it is helpful to outline some of the major ideas that influenced the theory's inception. Therefore, I will first make note of how LC/MD is influenced by core assumptions from the linguistic turn in organizational communication studies. Then, I will explain the two major theoretical foundations of LC/MD: (a) Sensemaking Theory and (b) Feminist Standpoint Theory.

LC/MD and the Linguistic Turn. LC/MD follows the linguistic turn in organizational communication studies. The linguistic turn in organizational communication studies basically means that researchers have become interested in the ways that communication constitutes reality (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Putnam & Nicotera, 2009, 2010). Researchers following the linguistic turn argue that language should not be studied as though it is a mirror for an objective, preexisting reality. Rather, taking a linguistic approach means studying organizations and other social realities as discursive constructions (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). Following the linguistic approach, LC/MD explores how language is used to construct multiple versions of social realities, which could more broadly fit within a social constructionist approach.

Social constructionists are interested in understanding how knowledge, truth, and reality are constructed through language (May & Mumby, 2005). As such, organizational communication researchers view communication not as a process of transmission, but as the very means by which people construct meanings for their realities (Allen, 2005;

Czarniawska, 2008; Dougherty, 2011; Fairhurst, 2007; Mumby & Stohl, 1996).

Therefore, organizational communication researchers are interested in how multiple “realities are constructed through social processes in which meanings are negotiated, consensus formed, and contestation is possible” (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010, p. 174).

As an outgrowth of the linguistic turn, LC/MD provides a theoretical lens for understanding communicative processes that individuals use when constructing meanings. In other words, LC/MD can be used as an analytical tool for understanding how language is an ongoing process of (re)constructing different versions of social reality. However, LC/MD does not just highlight multiple meanings that individuals communicatively construct for their realities. Rather, LC/MD is particularly useful because it also seeks to understand underlying and often overlooked contextual factors—such as social class—that influence individuals’ processes of meaning construction.

In addition to understanding the broad influence of the linguistic turn towards a social constructionist approach, there are two specific theoretical perspectives that help explain the foundations of LC/MD. First, part of the inspiration for LC/MD is derived from Weick’s (1995) theory of sensemaking.

LC/MD and Sensemaking. As its name implies, sensemaking is an individual’s ongoing process of making sense of their lived experiences. The goal of sensemaking is to reduce equivocality, which is the existence of multiple possible meanings that might be interpreted from an experience (Weick, 1995). The main focus of sensemaking theory is to understand how people use common language and words in social interaction to construct shared meanings for their experiences (Dougherty, et al., 2009). However, Weick (1995) also recognized that the meanings that are socially constructed may not

always overlap. Instead of converging on a shared meaning, it is possible for dissimilar meanings to be constructed for the same experience.

There are at least seven different properties of sensemaking theory (Weick, 1995). These properties help to explain how divergent meanings for leadership might be obscured in the sensemaking process. First, *identity* is tied to sensemaking because organizational members come to see themselves through day-to-day interactions with others (Dougherty & Smythe, 2004). The ways people interact about leadership influences how they see themselves. Second, sensemaking is *retrospective*; people make sense of experiences after they occur. Evaluation and choice does not occur in the moment; rather, the first moments of an unfamiliar experience are characterized by action and interpretation (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). However, sensemaking can also be prospective because it can help predict and make sense of future events (Dougherty & Smythe, 2004). Therefore, individuals and groups make sense of leadership retrospectively, which also creates expectations for leadership in future experiences.

Third, sensemaking is understood as an *ongoing* process that occurs in day-to-day lived experiences. Considering sensemaking as an ongoing process means paying attention to how history and context might influence current and prospective assumptions about a given phenomenon (Dougherty & Smythe, 2004). For example, highlighting the ongoing nature of sensemaking means considering how the history and context of leadership processes might influence current and future interpretations of leadership in a given organizational context (Pye, 2005). Fourth, sensemaking involves *enactment*, which is focused on the actions of organizational actors (Weick, et al., 2005). Organizational actors are part of the environment within which they act. By extension,

leadership does not just happen within an organization; rather, it is a part of an organization's context. The fifth property of sensemaking involves bracketing *extracted cues* (Weick, 1995). Extracted cues are the signs that something varies from what is normal or expected in day-to-day experiences. When something unexpected happens, organizational members notice cues that are different from their typical experiences.

The sixth property of sensemaking focuses on the role of discourse and interaction. Specifically, sensemaking is a *social* process that occurs with other people (Weick, 1995). Further, just as sensemaking can help organizational members develop expectations and predictions for future events, sensemaking can also influence expected interactions with others (Dougherty & Smythe, 2004). The last major property of Weick's (1995) theory of sensemaking is that it is based on *plausibility*. A meaning is plausible when it seems reasonable and believable within the context of the organization. The main idea is that "sensemaking is not about truth and getting it right" (Weick, et al., 2005, p. 415). Rather, sensemaking involves a continuous drafting and redrafting of a story so that it becomes more comprehensive and explanatory of a particular social phenomenon (Weick, et al., 2005). Further, Weick, et al. (2005) explained that what seems plausible for one person or group may not be plausible for others. As I will demonstrate throughout this chapter, the concept of plausibility could be problematic for leadership researchers who strive to uncover the essential qualities of leadership that transcend different societies throughout history. By striving for plausibility instead of accuracy, leadership and social class researchers can become more open to the diverse meanings that are constructed in different organizational contexts, which is a major goal of this dissertation.

Unfortunately, Weick's (1995) theory does not explain how sensemaking can occur when meanings are not necessarily agreed upon. Indeed, Weick (1995) argued that shared meanings are unlikely because individuals have different past experiences. Instead of shared meanings, Weick (1995) said that it is shared experiences with processes of sensemaking that shape organizational coherence. However, sensemaking theory does not explore situations where common language is used to assign different meanings to shared experiences. As a result, LC/MD adds to sensemaking theory by helping researchers understand how divergent meaning systems can be constructed through the use of shared language and symbols (Dougherty, et al., 2009). The emphasis on divergent meaning systems highlights the critical edge that forms another part of the foundation of LC/MD. Specifically, LC/MD draws on critical assumptions of Feminist Standpoint Theory.

LC/MD and Feminist Standpoint Theory. The second perspective that provides theoretical grounding for the development of LC/MD comes from a critical/feminist tradition, and it is particularly relevant to the goals of this dissertation. Drawing on research from feminist standpoint scholars, Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence is interested in how people from different social groups—particularly those that are marginalized—construct meanings for reality that are different from the meanings constructed by members of privileged groups (Dougherty, et al., 2009; Dixon & Dougherty, 2014). Broadly, the main idea of feminist standpoint theory that helps explain meaning divergence is that knowledge is relative to a situated context and perspective (Cirksena & Cuklanz, 1992; Wood, 2005).

There is no need for a comprehensive review of Feminist Standpoint Theory here. However, there are at least three key arguments that are central to understanding Feminist

Standpoint Theory and its influence on LC/MD. First, feminist standpoint theory—and LC/MD—assumes that unequal power relations in society work to privilege some groups and marginalize others. The marginalization of subordinate groups is known to feminist scholars as a process of *othering*. The *other* is a person or group who is treated as different and inferior in relation to the norms and practices of the dominant culture (Bach, 2005; Buzzanell, 1994; Dougherty, et al., 2010). For feminist standpoint theory, the main focus is on men being the dominant and privileged group while women are marginalized as the *other*, more subordinate social group (Buzzanell, 1994; Dougherty & Krone, 2000; Wood, 2005). With particular relevance to this dissertation’s focus on leadership, dominant assumptions about leadership operate to *other* females and normalize alpha males as senior leaders in organizations (Fairhurst, 2007). For example, Baxter (2011) argued that “because leadership is strongly associated with masculinity, women in leadership positions are marked as ‘the other’ in relation to the male norm and therefore judged to be less ‘fit’ or competent for the role” (p. 234). After a series of interviews with male and female executives, she found that women spent more time and energy regulating their language than men do when practicing leadership, in part because they were aware that their actions may be viewed with greater scrutiny due to their minority status. Ultimately, Baxter (2011) posited that differences in language use among men and women might explain the persistent lack of women in leadership positions at the executive level. Baxter’s work suggests that the concept of *leadership* could involve different perceptions and experiences that create divergent meanings for dominant (men) and marginalized (women) groups, which lends support to the central premise of LC/MD.

While this brief review of Feminist Standpoint Theory has focused on gendered standpoints, it is important to note that “an individual can have multiple standpoints that are shaped by sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, economic class, etc.” (Wood, 2005, p. 62). The central idea that I am drawing from Feminist Standpoint Theory is that a person or group who is *othered* will have a different view of reality than more dominant and privileged social groups. In a basic sense, a standpoint could be understood as an individual’s perception of reality that comes from an understanding of both their experiences and their social location (Buzzanell, 1994). However, standpoints are not automatically given based on one’s position in a marginalized group. Understanding and articulating a standpoint is an intellectual achievement earned through recognition and resistance to a dominant worldview (Wood, 2005). In other words, it takes effort and social interaction to articulate and make sense of one’s standpoint. The main idea is that marginalized groups and privileged groups have different material experiences with reality, and those experiences influence sensemaking processes that shape what people know and how they understand reality (Dougherty, et al., 2009).

A second central argument of both Feminist Standpoint Theory and LC/MD is that subordinate groups generate knowledge that is different than privileged groups (Wood, 2005). The divergent perspective of subordinate groups comes from what Wood (2005) calls “double consciousness,” which means marginalized groups can better perceive both their own social position and the position of more dominant social groups. For example, Baxter (2011) found that men virtually never compared their language use with women in equivalent positions of authority, while women consistently and deliberately adapted their language to suit the norms of practicing leadership in a male-

dominated context. In another particularly relevant example, Lubrano (2004) highlighted double-consciousness and othering from a marginalized social class standpoint. He spoke with a 47-year-old psychotherapist named Signe who was raised in a blue-collar family, and she explained what it was like to interact with people from more dominant social class backgrounds. She said,

You didn't want to brand yourself as having a blue-collar background because it didn't feel safe. You feel like you'll be rejected or looked down upon. When I talked to other people like me, the word 'chameleon' comes to mind (Lubrano, 2004, p. 85).

Signe's use of the word "chameleon" seems to imply that she is acutely aware of her marginalized social class background when she is in the presence of more dominant social class groups, and that awareness helps her adapt and fit in with the more dominant group. The view from the margins is assumed to give oppressed groups a more complete perspective because members of privileged groups are often too immersed within dominant institutions to recognize patterns of oppression and privilege (Allen, 1998).

Finally, a third argument that LC/MD borrows from Feminist Standpoint Theory is that research should be aimed at uncovering taken-for-granted social systems of norms that marginalize meanings and experiences of subordinate groups. Prevailing knowledge about reality is often derived from dominant social groups, with little consideration for knowledge that emanates from different experiences of subordinate social groups (Dixon & Dougherty, 2014). For example, Parker (2001, 2002) argued that definitions of leadership are grounded in studies that mainly focus on experiences of dominant race and gender groups (i.e., White middle-class men). In contrast, studies that apply feminist

standpoint theory are aimed at surfacing knowledge of oppressed groups in order to highlight versions of social reality that have not been previously exposed (Allen, 1998).

To recap, sensemaking is accomplished through social interaction; however, meanings that are constructed may or may not be shared. Using shared language and words to describe a concept or situation can create the illusion of shared meaning (Dougherty, et al., 2009). Different experiences with material reality provide marginalized groups with standpoints that diverge from dominant views of reality (Wood, 2005). As a result, marginalized groups may construct meanings for reality that are divergent from the meanings constructed by dominant social groups.

The concepts of *leader* or *leadership* are examples of common language that could potentially create the illusion of shared meaning. However, communication researchers do not know enough about how meanings for leadership might diverge, which means leadership researchers could be overlooking new ways of understanding leadership (Pullen & Vachhani, 2011). Therefore, this study applies LC/MD to examine how social class standpoints might influence workplace experiences with leadership, and therefore how meanings for *leader* or *leadership* can be othered in ways that diverge from the meanings of more dominant social class groups. To better understand how divergent meanings of leadership have been overlooked, the next section reviews a range of organizational leadership research, as well as some of the gaps in the literature.

Organizational Leadership

The purpose of reviewing past—and more recent—leadership theories is to highlight some of the dominant and persistent leadership assumptions that continue to restrict the meanings of subordinate social groups. Highlighting dominant assumptions

about leadership will also help explain some of my participants' stories about leadership, and understanding different approaches to leadership helps demonstrate why leadership should be examined through the theoretical lens of LC/MD. Notably, Alvesson and Spicer (2012) argued that "increasing popularity of using the idea of leadership has reinforced conceptual confusion" (p. 64). LC/MD could help make sense of conceptual confusion by uncovering the marginalized experiences and perspectives that contribute to diverse meanings for leadership. Finally, my review will highlight a concern for communication and materiality runs throughout the literature on leadership.

Before going into the review, it would be helpful to provide a conceptual definition of leadership, so I will start with a brief discussion of how leadership can be defined. I will then describe three major approaches that have emerged from leadership studies: (a) functionalist, (b) interpretive, and (c) critical. The review of leadership ends by highlighting the need for more research on how materiality and issues of social class might be involved with the ways people experience and make sense of leadership.

Defining leadership. Defining leadership is a major challenge in many leadership studies. The challenge is particularly difficult for interpretive and critical approaches because they tend to be more open to the multiple meanings that people construct for leadership. However, a common theme across different approaches to leadership is that it has something to do with influencing others. For example, Clifton (2012) defined leadership as "influencing the process of managing meaning so that certain organizational meanings are privileged over others" (p. 150). Clifton (2012) draws attention to management of meanings, which relates to an interpretive approach, but is unclear on

how meanings are managed. I prefer a definition that draws more attention to discursive and material conditions that are central to understanding how leadership works.

This study defines leadership as a process of communicating that is “exercised when ideas expressed in talk or action are recognized by others as capable of progressing tasks or problems which are important to them” (Robinson, 2001, p. 93). Robinson’s (2001) definition is preferred because it avoids privileging a single individual as a designated leader, and it recognizes the task oriented and socially constructed nature of leadership (Fairhurst, 2007, 2008). Further, Robinson’s (2001) definition implies that both discursive and material conditions are involved with processes of leadership by emphasizing both “talk” and “action.” In other words, physical actions perceived by others can influence their discursive constructions of leadership. Similarly, Sinclair (2005) argued that “leadership is a bodily practice, a physical performance in addition to a triumph of mental or motivational mastery” (p. 387).

Before my review of past leadership literature, I want to be clear on what the review adds to this dissertation. As I will explain in my discussion of the Functionalist Approach, most leadership research tends to prescribe the essential variables that correlate with effective leadership. There is no denying the utility of prescriptive lists; they can provide neat and organized instructions for achieving a desired outcome (Ziegler, 2007). However, prescriptions also make it easier overlook more critical ways of thinking, and they can obscure the social processes that make lists meaningful (Ziegler, 2007). Therefore, interpretive and critical approaches are central to this dissertation because they highlight the role of communication in constructing meanings for leadership, and because they are more explicitly open to diverse ways of

understanding leadership (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). At the same time, a review of the functional approach is also valuable to this study because it highlights some of the physical traits, styles, and situations traditionally associated with meanings for leadership, so it could provide insights into some of the meanings that my participants construct for leadership, which will be helpful during my analysis. Physical traits, styles, and situations could also be tied to material conditions that have been overlooked by interpretive and critical researchers who privilege a discursive approach.

The vast library of literature on leadership might be impossible to condense into a single article. However, it is necessary to understand the progression of leadership research in order to build on existing concepts. Drawing on Alvesson and Spicer (2012), this review of leadership is organized into three broad themes that describe the major approaches that have emerged from leadership studies: (a) functionalist, (b) interpretive, and (c) critical. Each approach to leadership is useful for understanding leadership in different ways, and they all have their limitations. After a brief explanation of the approaches to leadership, this review will move into the more recent calls being made for understanding both the material and discursive conditions that construct leadership.

Functionalist approach to leadership. Functionalist approaches to leadership are those that seek to find the right combination of variables that correlate with “effective” leadership (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). Functionalist approaches are characterized by traditional scientific methods which assume leadership is something that can be objectively observed, measured, and quantified (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007). For example, traditional leadership studies usually make assumptions that leadership is based on sets of traits, styles, or psychological characteristics that an individual possesses.

Researchers have argued that intelligence, assertiveness, dominance, masculinity, and good communication skills are traits that are usually associated with leadership (Lord, Vader, & Alliger, 1986; Zorn & Violanti, 1996). Other functionalist researchers contend that certain styles such as being more masculine or more feminine are more or less effective for leadership—usually implying that masculine styles are more effective than feminine styles (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Still other functionalist researchers argue that effectiveness of certain leadership traits and styles depends on the situation (Hersey & Blanchard, 2008). However, rather than identifying the variables involved with *what it means* to practice effective leadership, the outcomes of functionalist approaches tend to be more useful in identifying how someone might become perceived as a leader by others (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2011). The studies reviewed here imply that if someone can enact certain traits and styles associated with leadership, then other organizational members are likely to see that person as a leader. Unfortunately, this type of research promotes the assumption that effective leadership simply means creating the perception of effective leadership. It says little about the various meanings that people create for leadership.

Functionalist research has also associated leadership with the charismatic ability to inspire others to share a vision of success for the organization, which has been coined as transformational leadership (Bass, 2008). *Transformational leadership* describes leaders as change masters and saviors who control and influence relatively passive followers (Tourish, 2008). Transformational leadership is hugely popular among managers and continues to enjoy wide acceptance in competitive academic journals (e.g., Dóci & Hofmans, 2015; Nübold, Stefan, & Günter, 2015; Stempel, Rigotti, & Mohr,

2015). However, Fairhurst (2007) explained that transformational leadership theories suffer from the same limitations as traits and styles theories; they essentialize certain behaviors and actions as key to achieving effective leadership.

The functionalist approach is criticized by interpretive and/or critical leadership research. Tourish (2008) summarized some of the main critiques of functionalist leadership research. First, functionalist research views leadership as naturally occurring rather than as socially constructed and influenced by power, status, force, and intrigue. Second, they infantilize the notion of followers by portraying them as in need of inspiring leaders in order to accomplish tasks. Third, they teach causal models of leadership that are presented too uncritically. Fourth, they tend to assume that leaders are always positive and ethical influences in organizations. Fifth, they promote the idea of an objective and stable “authentic” self that leaders can align with to become more effective.

Summary of functionalist approach. Despite its limitations, any discussion of leadership would be incomplete without recognizing the functionalist underpinnings that permeate most popular assumptions about leadership. The functionalist approach attempts to standardize what it means to be an “effective” leader (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). Scholars who take a functionalist approach to leadership generally seek to define leadership in terms of specific traits, styles, or other physical and psychological characteristics associated with leadership (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). However, a major limitation of functionalist leadership research is that it tends to start with a priori assumptions about what leadership means, which limits their ability to study other—potentially more useful—ways of understanding and practicing leadership (Alvesson, 1996; Fairhurst, 2008; Tourish, 2008). Further, discursive processes that construct

leadership are overlooked by overemphasizing the physical traits, styles, and behaviors that relate to preconceived definitions of effective leadership.

While many researchers continue to embrace the functionalist approach to leadership, interpretivist and critical approaches have followed the linguistic turn in organizational studies. The linguistic turn challenges the traditional assumption that language represents a preexisting and objective social reality (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). Rather, the interpretivist and critical approaches to leadership argue for studying organizations, leadership, and other social realities as discursive constructions.

Interpretivist approach to leadership. Unlike functionalist research, interpretive scholars take a more discursive approach to leadership and argue that starting with a priori assumptions about what leadership is can obscure different ways that people understand leadership in diverse day-to-day experiences (Fairhurst, 2008). The interpretive approach is important for this dissertation because I am interested in understanding the diverse leadership experiences of different social class groups. The interpretive approach is also important for this dissertation because it highlights the role of communication that is central to constructing meanings for leadership.

An interpretive approach to leadership came about as a critique of traditional functionalist leadership research that reified leadership as an objective and stable reality that could be observed, measured, and defined (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). In contrast to the functionalist approach, the interpretivist approach is more interested in understanding diverse ways that leadership is constructed by different people in different contexts (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Fairhurst, 2008).

Interpretive researchers generally adhere to social constructionist assumptions about language and reality. Broadly, a social constructionist approach to leadership is interested in the ways that language constitutes reality (Fairhurst, 2007). Fairhurst and Grant (2010) discussed two major tenants of a social constructionist lens. First, leadership is seen as a co-constructed reality brought about through communicative practices. Social constructionists do not assume leadership is made real by the traits, styles, personality, or behaviors of individuals. Rather, they are interested in the ways that leadership is constructed as a social reality through interactions among organizational members. Second, social constructionist approaches avoid taking a leader-centric approach to understanding leadership. They challenge traditional leadership research that portrays leaders as the defining influence over followers. Instead of dichotomizing leaders and followers, a social constructionist approach is more interested in how *leadership actors* make sense of leadership practices (Fairhurst, 2008; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010).

The interpretive approach to leadership also challenges the traditional assumption that language represents social reality (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). In other words, language should not be studied as though it is a mirror for an objective, preexisting reality. Thinking of language as representational conceals questions of how it serves to construct social reality—what it actually accomplishes (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). Therefore, interpretive researchers are more interested in how organizational realities are discursively created through communicative processes.

The communicative constitution of organizations (CCO) has come about as a major theory for both interpretive and critical approaches to organizational and leadership studies. The constitutive view considers how processes of organizing are communicated

into being (Putnam & Nicotera, 2009, 2010). In other words, communication is seen as the building block of organizing (Ashcraft, et al., 2009). However, Cooren and Fairhurst (2009) argued that applications CCO should not be limited to a bottom-up approach for studying organizations. Rather, they recommend studying organizational interactions as both means and outcome of organizing. Thus, from a CCO perspective, leadership is a form of communication that contributes to—and is maintained by—organizations.

Interpretivist leadership researchers do not try to pinpoint the right and final view of leadership. Instead, they are interested in the multiple ways that leadership is constructed through language and ongoing processes of social interaction (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). Fairhurst (2007) has been particularly instrumental in exploring leadership from more of an interpretivist approach. She presented *discursive leadership* as a way of studying diverse and changing meanings of leadership in everyday interactions.

Discourse is used in two ways: *little-d* discourse and *big-D* discourse. Little-d discourse refers to day-to-day talk and interaction. Big-D discourse draws on a Foucauldian view of socio-historically constructed systems of thought and assumptions that are drawn upon and reinforced in day-to-day interaction and which constitute reality (Fairhurst, 2007, 2008). Discursive leadership views leadership as processes of communication rather than sets of individual traits, styles, or contingencies. The goal is not to predict and/or generalize the most *effective* ways to lead; rather, the goal is to understand how leadership is constructed in unique and ongoing processes of day-to-day interactions among organizational members. Likewise, discursive leadership does not privilege any single individual as being a leader, but is instead interested in studying leadership actors, which includes those who might take a follower stance (Fairhurst, 2007, 2008).

Summary of interpretivist approach. To summarize, interpretive scholars take a more discursive approach to leadership in order to highlight the interaction of big-D discourse and little-d discourse in the construction of leadership (Fairhurst, 2008). The interpretivist approach is interested in studying organizations and other social realities as discursive constructions (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). By focusing on the discursive construction of reality, the interpretive approach aligns with the linguistic turn in organizational communication studies, which I previously discussed as a major foundation of LC/MD. When taken together, LC/MD and the interpretive approach to leadership presents the possibility for understanding some of the diverse meanings of leadership and organizations that can be constructed by different people in different times and situations, which is important for my study because I hope to understand more about leadership from the perspectives of marginalized social class groups.

Despite its strengths, the interpretive approach is criticized for its lack of attention to materiality in leadership theorizing (Fairhurst, 2007; Sinclair, 2005). By thinking of leadership primarily as a discursive process, the interpretive approach marginalizes the potential role of materiality in constructing meanings for leadership. The interpretive approach also does not work towards surfacing and transforming dominant societal Discourses that privilege some meanings of leadership over others. However, a discursive approach to leadership recognizes that leadership and its relationship to power are taken-for-granted in functionalist approaches to leadership. Through its recognition of dominant, big-D, discourse, the interpretive approach implies that leadership is associated with underlying power structures that both enable and constrain new and diverse ways of conceptualizing leadership (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007).

A critical approach to leadership draws on a discursive approach to deconstruct taken-for-granted assumptions about power and leadership. Addressing taken-for-granted assumptions about leadership also helps researchers consider how a discursive approach can privilege some meanings of leadership, which provides an avenue for researchers to explore the marginalization of materiality in leadership theorizing.

Critical approach to leadership. Leadership can be studied with a critical lens by paying attention to dominant systems of control and power that are often tied to management and leadership. Fairhurst (2009) said that dominant management discourses have a disciplinary effect on leaders that can reinforce hegemonic systems of control, so a critical approach assumes that leadership becomes an avenue for the perpetuation of dominant management discourses. In other words, from a critical perspective, what counts as leadership is influenced by power relations in organizations.

Alvesson and Spicer (2012) outlined three general commitments of critical leadership studies. First, a critical approach examines patterns of power and domination that are associated with leadership. Critical researchers are interested in how assumptions about leadership are influenced and perpetuated by dominant systems of thoughts, ideas, and practices (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). For example, leadership is often associated with positions of authority and hierarchy because mainstream leadership research tends to equate leadership with management roles (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007). Second, a critical approach to leadership emphasizes gendered notions of leadership that legitimize male domination (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). In other words, critical researchers seek to understand why women tend to be excluded—or at least marginalized—from leadership considerations, even when they have similar qualifications, accomplishments, and

communication styles as their male counterparts (Baxter, 2011; Buzzanell, Meisenbach, & Remke, 2008). Finally, a critical approach denaturalizes leadership by showing it as the outcome of ongoing processes of social construction, rather than as an objectively generalizable phenomenon that can be reliably observed through traditional functionalist research methods (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012).

Broadly, a critical approach is interested in reforming relations of power and domination that are often tied to assumptions about leadership (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007). Leadership is always tied to issues of power, and is often associated with having some form of authority (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Petriglieri, & Stein, 2012). One way that researchers have defined power is “getting others to do what one wanted them to do—even against their will” (Clegg, Courpasson, & Phillips, 2006, p. 46). Others have defined power as the ability to influence others and create change (French & Raven, 2001). Still another way of conceptualizing power is by thinking of it as a way of managing organizational processes and decision making (Pfeffer, 1992). Similarly, Pfeffer (1992) explained that power is enacted through organizational politics aimed at influencing organizational outcomes. Based on these definitions, a common thread in the assumptions about power seems to be that it involves a process of influence, like leadership. However, the influence of power is perhaps more pervasive than the influence of leadership.

Literature about power is often oversimplified, but it is useful in a discussion about the relationship between power and leadership. I will briefly highlight the dominant approaches to power before integrating power into critical approaches to leadership. Mumby (2004) explained five approaches to conceptualizing power: (a) a systems rationality approach, which is characterized by a struggle over distribution of resources;

(b) an interpretive approach, which examines how meanings of power are socially constructed through communication; (c) a critical approach, which studies the power relations shaped by dominant social structures, like the economy; (d) a postmodern approach, which focuses on discourse and views power as fragmented, local, and individual; and (e) a feminist approach, which views patriarchy as a central feature in the construction of power. Further, Dougherty (2011) argued that power is not some “thing” that can be gained, lost, or used; rather, power is something people do. In other words, she sees power as a process—an ongoing struggle over meanings. Dougherty (2011) added that no single perspective can fully capture the complexity of power, so researchers must become open to the multiple meanings of power that are discursively constructed.

Critical leadership and power. Similar to Dougherty’s (2011) views of power, discursive leadership integrates power and influence and conceives of them in both positive and negative terms (Fairhurst, 2008). For example, Zoller and Fairhurst (2007) explained that leadership is often perceived as an enactment of power and domination, which has led researchers to overlook resistance as a potential form of leadership. In other words, power and leadership should not be viewed as the opposite of resistance. Instead, power and resistance—much like leaders and followers—are better understood as being in a dialectical relationship with one another; one cannot exist without the other (Collinson, 2005; Mumby, 2005; Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007).

Power has also been studied in terms of its disciplinary effects on leaders and other organizational members. Fairhurst (2007) draws on Foucault’s (1995) discussion of big-*D* discourse to critique disciplinary power and management technologies. Disciplinary power refers to norm-producing effects of power that are produced through

technologies and mechanisms of discipline, such as workplace surveillance, performance appraisals, examinations, 360-degree feedback, and executive coaching (Fairhurst, 2007). Through the effects of disciplinary power, “employees become knowable, calculable, and administrative objects subject to normalizing judgments” (Fairhurst, 2008, p. 513). In other words, disciplinary power functions to train and condition employees to think and act in certain ways that become taken-for-granted over time. Importantly, Fairhurst argues that leaders are not exempt from the disciplinary effects of power and processes of examination; leaders are never outside of the influence of power (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007). Leadership actors are permanently scrutinized, or at least they think they are, which pushes them to discipline themselves (Barker, 1993).

Finally, dominant discourses of gender are also examined within critical leadership literature. Popular stereotypes and assumptions about gender and leadership become the focus for critical researchers interested in understanding the marginalization of women from leadership roles in organizations. Some stereotypes that are drawn upon and reinforced through everyday interaction include assumptions that women are not as good at problem-solving, delegating, or being assertive, which are traits typically associated with leadership and advancement in organizations (Buzzanell, et al., 2008). Women and femininity are largely excluded from what it means to be a leader, even when women try to conform to masculine expectations (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Baxter (2011) and Buzzanell, et al. (2008) also found that women are marginalized from leadership considerations even when they have the same qualifications and use similar linguistic practices as their male counterparts. Related to the goals of this study, the focus on gender in critical leadership research highlights differences in how

leadership is experienced by different social groups. Recalling my discussion of LC/MD, subordinate groups—women in this case—generate knowledge that is different than privileged groups (Wood, 2005). Surfacing meanings for leadership that are divergent from meanings constructed by more dominant social groups serves to highlight systems of oppression, and opens up more possibilities for new ways of understanding leadership.

In addition to outlining the three commitments of critical leadership studies, Alvesson and Spicer (2012) also offered three critiques of critical leadership studies. First, they say critical leadership studies tend to overestimate the power of leadership. Second, they argue that critical leadership studies overlook how critiques of leadership can actually serve to reinforce relations of domination. In other words, by identifying and studying leadership as a dominant source of authority, critical leadership studies actually reinforce the assumption that leaders are powerful figures. Their second critique also argues for critical researchers to interrogate their own role in the construction of leadership, and to become open to decoupling leadership studies from assumptions of authority and dominance. Third, through an overly negative view of leadership as an oppressive form of organizational discourse and practice, critical researchers overlook potential for leadership to facilitate progressive social change (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). Similarly, Zoller and Fairhurst (2007) argued that leadership could be involved with organizing collective resistance against oppressive organizational processes.

Critical scholars pay close attention to the power of discourse. However, Cloud (2005) argued that critical research overemphasizes the power of discourse in at least two ways. First, an overly discursive focus on workplace strategies for employee involvement can lead critical researchers to overlook material experiences tied to work and

exploitation, such as healthcare, wages, and education. Cloud (2005) added that critical organizational scholars are overly suspicious of workplace initiatives that advocate for leaders and managers who give employees a voice in organizational decision making processes, which is closely tied to descriptions and critiques of transformational leadership. Second, she argued that an overemphasis on the power of discourse as a means of reforming unequal organizational processes promotes an overly utopian assumption that more open communication leads to a more democratic workplace (Cloud, 2005). Other researchers have noted that critical approaches can become overly theorized at the expense of practical application, making it difficult to apply ideas developed by critical leadership studies in day-to-day organizational processes (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Barge & Fairhurst, 2008; Spicer, Alvesson, & Kärreman, 2009; Voronov, 2008).

Taking past researchers' advice into account, this dissertation applies a critical approach to leadership. First, I am most certainly diverging from traditional functionalist approaches that seek to add to an already exhausted list of variables associated with leadership. I am more interested in understanding how meanings of leadership are discursively constructed. Next, this dissertation aims to give voice to social groups that have been traditionally marginalized from leadership positions in organizations, which connects this study to larger global issues of workplace marginalization and social class. Finally, to avoid becoming overly focused on abstract theorizing and keep my ideas grounded in practical application to day-to-day organizational processes, I will draw on language and situations described by participants.

Ironically, it can be challenging to argue against abstract theorizing without using abstract arguments. To help maintain my focus on applying critical leadership studies in

day-to-day organizational processes, I will consider some recent work of other researchers who apply a critical approach to leadership. My review of leadership ends by highlighting a growing concern for understanding the role of materiality in the construction of leadership, as well as the need to consider ways that leadership can become tied to issues of social class.

Applied critical leadership studies. There are some recently published critical leadership studies that are particularly relevant for this dissertation. For example, Fisher and Robbins (2015) examined a case study involving the testimonials of Australian military advisors who had been asked to recount their leadership experiences during the Vietnam War. Using phenomenological methods, Fisher and Robbins (2015) found that leadership was not simply a set of variables that could be categorized and generalized, nor was it simply a discursive process. Rather, Fisher and Robbins (2015) challenge traditional leadership studies that separate leadership communication from the physical embodiment of leadership experience. Their findings highlight an inseparable relationship between discursive leadership processes and material conditions involved in soldiers' leadership experiences, with a particular focus on the physical embodiment of leadership—the excitement, the sounds, the fear, the pain, the fighting, the joy, and all of the other sensations experienced on a battlefield (Fisher & Robbins, 2015)

In another study, Barge (2014) used autoethnographic methods to recount his leadership experience as an interim department head. Through recounting his experiences as interim department head, he concluded that processes of leadership were constantly grounded in skillfully navigating conversations with other organizational members. However, he also noted that material realities and his physical body played an important

role in his enactment of leadership. Leadership involved organizing and adapting to material realities such as department resources, other faculty members, and even physical injuries. Further, he began to recognize how his body became part of how he practiced leadership. Specifically, his physical feelings of stress and emotions played a role in how he made sense of situations and interactions with others. Ultimately, he argued for leadership researchers to become open to “understanding how material realities and our bodies weave themselves into conversational practices” (Barge, 2014, p. 75).

A concern for material experiences seems like a fruitful avenue for exploring how leadership is experienced differently by different groups of people. The problem, according to Barge (2014) and Sinclair (2005), is that the physical body is often overlooked in business and scholarly writing about leadership. Indeed, Fisher and Robbins (2015) speculated that the leadership experiences in their study might be very different if they included the perspectives of women. In their limitations, they noted that their sample was drawn from an exclusively male population, and that combat is closely tied to assumptions about masculinity, so “it is reasonable to question whether the role of the body in combat may have a different meaning for women” (Fisher & Robbins, 2015, p. 295). Exploring differences in experience is an important step for critical leadership researchers to take towards identifying potential sites of marginalization, and LC/MD is well suited for surfacing divergent meanings for leadership that might emerge from different ways of experiencing leadership. Despite calls for more critical leadership research made by Alvesson & Spicer (2012), Buzzanell, et al. (2008), Fairhurst (2007), Zoller and Fairhurst (2007), and a relatively small group of other scholars, the critical approach remains largely underrepresented in published leadership research. Tourish

(2015) lamented that the vast majority of leadership studies being submitted to the *Leadership Journal* continue to ignore critical literature, and instead continue using traditional approaches that seek to identify mediating and moderating variables associated with leadership. He added that most mainstream leadership research seems content to answer questions that have trivial relevance to day-to-day leadership communication or to larger global issues such as workplace exploitation, the environment, or collective representation in organizations (Tourish, 2015). Therefore, he made a call for more critical leadership research that addresses issues of more global importance.

Applying a critical approach to leadership means recognizing how some interpretations of leadership become privileged while others are marginalized. An overemphasis on the discursive construction of leadership—at the expense of understanding the role of materiality—could marginalize other ways of understanding leadership (Sinclair, 2005). As a result, critiques of both interpretive and critical approaches have led to calls for an approach to leadership that explores the dialectical relationship of discourse and materiality in processes of organizing (Dougherty, 2011; Pullen & Vachhani, 2011). Further, Dougherty (2011) argued that a discursive approach that does not consider material conditions is middle class privilege, which is tied to issues of social class. Therefore, the next section reviews literature on social class in order to understand how it might be involved with the construction of leadership.

Social Class

At a basic level, social class is a system of social stratification. It is a way of partitioning people into a social hierarchy, usually based on economic factors like income (Lareau, 2008; Stuber, 2006). However, there is little consensus on a definition for social

class. A major reason for the lack of a clear definition is that social class is made up of a complex mix of social and economic factors (Dougherty, 2011). Adding to the ambiguity of social class, researchers disagree about whether a specific measure of social class is needed, or even possible (Lareau, 2008). Despite lack of consensus about the meaning of social class, most Americans consciously identify themselves with a particular social class, and they generally use it to identify differences in education, occupation, and income (Hout, 2008; Stuber, 2006). The imprecise nature of social class—combined with its consistent pervasiveness in social life experiences—led Dougherty (2011) to describe social class as both fluid and fixed. It is fluid because its meanings are constantly shifting, yet it is also fixed because it remains a stable fixture of social life.

This study does not seek a precise definition of social class. Rather, this section provides context for understanding some dominant assumptions that become associated with social class. My review of social class will also highlight some of the overlapping assumptions about social class and leadership. Therefore, the following discussion of social class draws on Dougherty's (2011) synthesis of social class literature to explain how social class has been defined in terms of (a) variables, (b) culture, or as (c) social structure. From there, I will discuss how language use and communication are central to how social class is defined, experienced, and practiced. I will then illustrate the relationship between social class and different kinds of work.

Social class as variables. First, there are assumptions that social class should be defined in terms of certain variables. Researchers who take a variable approach to understanding social class are interested in identifying the key variables that correlate with a reliable measure of one's social class status. Financial status—income—is perhaps

the most common variable associated with social class (Krieger, Williams, & Moss, 1997). However, some other variables commonly used to identify class status are education, type of work, and home ownership (Craib, 2002). Resource acquisition, such as wealth and academic merit, is central to the variable approach.

In Western cultures, there is an assumption that those in higher social classes have access to discursive and material resources that give them more influence over others (Lareau, 2008). Variables are the different kinds of resources that can be acquired and used to achieve higher social class. For example, occupational status, wealth, power, and the ability to influence others have all been used as variables to define social class (Storck, 2002). The variable approach also relates to some assumptions about leadership. Occupational status and ability to accumulate influence and power are regularly tied to a more functionalist approach to leadership, which almost exclusively links leadership to management positions. However, like the functionalist approach to leadership, defining social class in terms of variables is an incomplete depiction of social class.

The variable approach highlights some of the differences that have been used to describe different social class groups; however, focusing on individual variables—or even the composite sum of variables—is a narrow view that loses sight of the ways people perceive and experience social class in their day-to-day lives. The variable approach also downplays the role of communication in how social class is understood and experienced. Therefore, a cultural approach is presented as a more nuanced and effective way to understand how social class works (Dougherty, 2011).

Social class as culture. Sociologists like Pierre Bourdieu and Annette Lareau have argued that differences in social class are marked by differences in culture. To

understand how social class can be defined by culture, it might be easier to think of social class as a lifestyle (Dougherty, 2011). In other words, social class can be defined by the way people live. To expand on how social class can be defined by culture, I will briefly review the work of Bourdieu (1984) and Lareau (2011).

Bourdieu. For Bourdieu (1984), a person's *habitus*—or cultural environment—is central to how they experience and make sense of social class. A person's habitus influences how they learn about and use different forms of economic, cultural, and social capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Differences that distinguish social classes come from a combination of economic, cultural, and social capital (Bourdieu, 1984). The different types of capital simultaneously work together to influence Bourdieu's framework for how people experience social class.

Economic capital refers to financial assets, which can provide access to other forms of advantageous resources. Those with more access to financial assets can pay for higher education, travel abroad, houses, cars, furniture, clothing, and other goods that typically stand as markers for social class (Bourdieu, 1984). However, economic capital is not simply a measure of whether—or how much—someone has access to financial resources. It is also important to consider *how* someone understands and deploys those resources. For Bourdieu, other forms of capital—cultural and social—are related to how people learn about and use economic capital.

Cultural capital broadly refers to a person's knowledge base or linguistic skill set. Knowledge and linguistic skills are heavily influenced by education and family (Bourdieu, 1984). Cultural capital is the foundation for our attitudes, values, and accepted ways of communicating and behaving. Through our early development with family and

schooling, we learn particular ways of thinking and talking about our experiences, as well as how to behave socially. Some knowledge and linguistic skills are preferred over others, and what counts as preferred knowledge is absorbed and shaped by the interests of the upper class (Bourdieu, 1984; Dougherty, 2011). Further, the acquisition of cultural capital is more or less enabled by access to advantageous resources—economic capital (Bourdieu, 1984). For example, the ability to pay for higher education or travel abroad provides a broader base of knowledge through exposure to new experiences and new ideas. A broader base of knowledge can then provide a wider range of linguistic resources, which adds up to greater degrees of cultural capital.

Finally, social capital refers to a person's networks of social connections (Bourdieu, 1984). Members of the privileged social class are likely to have more social capital because of their access to more cultural capital and financial resources. For example, the ability pay for college and travel abroad—combined with the assumption that those are valuable sources of knowledge—provides upper class children with connections to larger networks of people, which can lead to other advantages. For example, Lucas (2011b) noted that upper class parents can use their professional and social networks to pull strings for college admissions and arrange internships and job opportunities for their children. As a result, upper class children often have more opportunities to develop their economic, cultural, and social capital, which reproduces distinctions among different social class groups (Bourdieu, 1984; Lucas, 2011b).

The emphasis on developing preferred knowledge and linguistic resources provides an important link to the central thesis of this dissertation: dominant assumptions about leadership could stem from upper class experiences, which marginalizes other ways

of understanding and practicing leadership. Further, Bourdieu's (1984) explanation of cultural capital highlights the importance of learning values and norms that predispose children to develop upper class propensities. However, while Bourdieu's framework provides insight into how social class is reproduced on a larger societal level, it does not provide as much insight into the cultural enactment of class in day-to-day experiences of people from different social classes. Therefore, I will now turn to Lareau (2011) to understand more about how culture might be used to define social class.

Lareau. Lareau also views social class as a culture, and argues that social class norms are enacted and learned at the family level. Lareau's (2011) ethnographic study focused on basic class differences in child rearing among poor, working class, and middle-class families. She found that children from different social classes learned different cultural values, behaviors, and expectations. Using what Lareau calls "concerted cultivation," middle and upper-class parents tend to be more involved in cultivating individual skills and advocating for their children's education. Middle-class parents were also more likely to closely monitor their children's day-to-day activities and involve them in organized extra-curricular activities. Concerted cultivation also shapes the use of language in middle class families. Lareau (2011) noted that parent-child dialogue was much more valued in middle class families. Language use is valued in middle class families because it is important for the development of knowledge, opinions, reasoning, and children's ability to articulate their own views. Encouraging their children to use reasoning and language to develop and express their views could bring about a sense of entitlement among middle class children, but it also gives them an advantage. Specifically, "parent-child dialogue can boost children's vocabulary, preview or deepen

knowledge of subjects taught in school, and familiarize children with the patterns of interaction that characterize the classroom and other dealings with adults in organizational settings” (Lareau, 2011, pp. 110-111). Thus, children from middle and upper-class families are raised with norms and values that predispose them to academic success and middle-class careers and lifestyles.

Lower class parents had a different approach to child rearing. While middle-class parents are highly concerned with providing essential needs like food, housing, clothing, health, and safety, lower class families place more emphasis on what Lareau (2011) calls “the accomplishment of natural growth.” Lower class parents tend to leave the education up to the schools and they tend to let their children’s talents emerge naturally through playing with other children and family members (Lareau, 2011). Further, boundaries between adults and children are more clearly established. Rather than engaging their children through dialogue and reasoning, lower class parents are more likely to simply tell their children what to do, and they are not as concerned with eliciting their children’s feelings, opinions, and thoughts. As a result, lower class children experience more extended periods of silence than middle class children. Children in lower class families also experience more autonomy from adults and more unstructured leisure time.

Lareau (2011) emphasized that neither approach to parenting is inherently better than the other. However, her findings ultimately indicated that parenting styles in lower class families produce values, norms, and ways of communicating that are at odds with standards of American institutions. As a result, Lareau argued that lower class children may find it more difficult to achieve academic success and upward social mobility.

The cultural approach to social class provides a more complex perspective than the variable approach. It also fits with some theoretical foundations of LC/MD, as it emphasizes the importance of understanding how social class is produced and reproduced through lived experiences. It also draws attention to how people make sense of social class through language use and certain linguistic skills, which adds to my overall argument that leadership can be a classed process of communicating that privileges experiences and linguistic resources of the dominant social class. However, a limitation of viewing social class as culture is that it only focuses on the influences of the immediate material environment, which overlooks the influence of dominant assumptions about social class that might come from other surrounding environments. It also tends to assume that upward social mobility is an inherent goal of the working class, and does not fully address how different classes create boundaries for those considered low class (Dougherty, 2011). As a result, other researchers have studied structures such as rules, laws, and social norms that influence perceptions of social class.

Social class as structure. The main idea that emerges from the discussion of social class as structure is that there are dominant ideologies in society that work to privilege some groups over others. The structural approach to social class shares some of the same theoretical foundations that were covered in my discussion of the critical approach to leadership: there are dominant systems of thoughts, ideas, and practices that condition people to think and act in certain ways (Fairhurst, 2008). Dougherty (2011) argues that the most persistent structures that shape social class are those of gender and race, although capitalism and the economy are also very important. Dougherty (2011) also notes that emancipation and the critique of social inequality is a major focus of a

structural approach. To better understand how social class can be defined by social structures, researchers analyze the various social structures that constitute social life.

The most dominant and perhaps the most familiar social structure associated with social class is the economy. Karl Marx (1977) is widely cited in scholarship focused on how social class becomes structured by the economy. His main argument was that capitalism is a dominant economic structure that shapes social class in ways that separate people based on their relationships to production (Marx, 1977). The division of labor created through capitalism creates a social hierarchy that separates people into two main groups: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The *bourgeoisie*—those who control and profit most from production—are the dominant class with access to more economic capital. The *proletariat*—those who use their bodies to physically produce products—are the subordinate working class with less access to economic capital. The main source of economic capital for the working class is their own physical labor, which the proletariat sells to the bourgeoisie. The differences in how different groups access and control production is central to understanding the economy—particularly capitalism—as a dominant social structure that shapes social class. Because the bourgeoisie have greater control over the modes of production, the working class becomes alienated from the products of their physical labor, so workers may not know the worth of their labor, enabling the bourgeoisie to pay workers less than they are worth and profiting the difference (Dougherty, 2011). As a result, “the wealthy are able to become wealthier by exploiting the proletariat class” (Dougherty, 2011, p. 58).

Education—which crosses all the approaches to social class—and family are also prominent social structures that influence experiences and perceptions of social class

(Lubrano, 2004; Stuber, 2006). Similar to the cultural approach, values, norms, and ways of communicating are developed through early experiences with family and education. However, unlike the cultural approach, the structural approach is focused on how “the rules and norms of a society create and perpetuate social class” (Dougherty, 2011, p. 11). A structural approach is interested in how society is controlled through acceptance and perpetuation of taken-for-granted values, norms, rules, and ways of communicating.

Through education, certain values and ways of communicating are stressed over others. The privileged values and ways of communicating then become the dominant social structures that discipline people to think and act in certain ways that become taken for granted over time. For example, Lareau (2011) noted that educational professionals generally agree on a set of broad parenting principles for promoting educational development in children, like engaging them in dialogue and reasoning, cultivating their educational interests, and getting involved in their schooling. Widespread agreement on the broad principles of child rearing forms a dominant set of standards and expectations about how children should be raised (Lareau, 2011).

Preferred values and ways of communicating constitute the dominant rules and expectations for a given social system. Dominant rules and standards become part of how people are socialized into different social class groups. For example, Lucas (2011b) explained that parents reproduce workplace values and power structures in their homes. Blue-collar parents raise their children in ways that emphasize the value of respecting authority and complying with orders, while white-collar parents raise their children in ways that emphasize the values of decision-making and critical thinking, which are more highly valued among American institutions (Lucas, 2011b; Lubrano, 2004). Thus,

“middle-class children are trained in ‘the rules of the game’ that govern interactions” with social institutions (Lareau, 2011, p. 6). Conversely, the structures of lower social classes—their norms, values, and expectations for communication—make it more difficult for working class people to fit in with the preferred structures of the upper class.

The socialization and reproduction of preferred values, standards, and ways of communicating highlights some of the distinguishing and consistent indicators of social class. From a structural view, dominant ideologies perpetuate the assumption that higher social classes are associated with white-collar work, which focuses on “knowledge work, opportunities for hierarchical advancement, and management of employees” (Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004, p. 274). Thus, structures—in the form of social norms—reinforce the idea that higher social class is more suited for leadership and authority positions, which also distances higher social classes from manual labor roles (Lucas, 2011a).

In contrast, lower social classes are associated with lower income, lower levels of education, and lower hierarchical positions in organizations (Lucas, 2011a; Stuber, 2006). Lower social classes are also associated with blue-collar jobs that involve manual labor, and blue-collar jobs typically don’t involve hierarchical advancement and they are usually subordinate to management positions (Ashforth, Kreiner, Clark, & Fugate, 2007; Lucas, 2011a; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). By extension, lower social classes are perceived to have less access to the material and discursive resources that give power and influence to upper class members of society (Lareau, 2008; Stuber, 2006).

Distinguishing between and among social classes often highlights social inequalities (Stuber, 2006). Certainly, differences in income, education level, culture, and access to organizational advancement opportunities highlight some inequalities

associated with different social classes. However, meanings for social class can change depending on one's standpoint. In other words, "different social groups have divergent ways of knowing based on differing experiences" (Dougherty, et al., 2009, p. 22). As a result, the variable, cultural, and structural approaches to social class are helpful—yet incomplete—ways of defining social class. When social class is defined by variables, culture, or social structures, we lose sight of the binding social processes that attach meanings to the latent concept of social class.

Dougherty (2011) argues that communication is the mortar of social class. As a social construction, Dougherty (2011) says that meanings for social class can shift and change with time and organizational context. Therefore, researchers need to study how meanings of social class are constructed through communication in order to understand how meanings for social class might diverge for different individuals and groups.

Social class and communication. Social class can be distinguished through different ways of communicating. I noted some linguistic differences in my review of social class as culture. However, a cultural approach views communication as secondary to culture, rather than as a means through which culture—and thus social class—is constructed. For Dougherty (2011), communication is central to marking social class. Therefore, this section explains some of the main ways that communication is classed.

First, different styles of communicating are a way of making social class distinctions. In particular, working class families tend to provide shorter and less detailed answers to questions (Rushton & Young, 1975; Shatzman & Strauss, 1955). Working class communication also tends to be more direct and to the point, whereas white collar people are more prone to longer more circuitous explanations. For example, Lubrano

(2004) recounted the story of a working class writer named Andrea who got a job in a middle-class office. Andrea noted that she was puzzled by white-collar language and didn't understand the need for bosses to deliver flattering positive feedback through long, drawn out periods of talking before delivering the true message. She said, "It's like they picked it up in some manual. 'Say something positive first, then criticize.' I have no patience for bosses who talk in circles. Just tell me what you want" (Lubrano, 2004, p. 153). Andrea highlighted her preference for shorter, more direct speech. In addition, by associating upper class language with "bosses," Andrea reinforces the familiar assumption that social class is tied to hierarchical positions in organizations, which is similar to traditional assumptions about leadership that were previously discussed.

Researchers have also distinguished social class by studying communication differences in perspective-taking and descriptiveness. *Perspective-taking* means shifting to other points of view when answering questions. Through interviews with 340 residents in communities that had been hit by a tornado, Shatzman and Strauss (1955) found that lower class residents gave shorter descriptions of their experiences from their own perspective; their descriptions were less detailed and they rarely took the role of someone else in their stories. In contrast, upper class residents gave longer narratives with more detailed descriptions from several perspectives. In other words, upper class residents provided more elaborate descriptions of an experience as it might have been perceived by another person, group, organization, or even a whole town (Shatzman & Strauss, 1955).

Politeness is another communication difference that marks social class. Mills (2004) explained that linguistics researchers generally characterize working class communication as more impolite communication because it involves swearing, being

direct, and talking loudly. In contrast, middle class communication is more reserved and unemotional than working class communication behaviors. However, Mills (2004) argued that common assumptions about politeness serve to maintain social class differences. What constitutes politeness—or the lack of politeness—is often based on a more privileged middle-class perspective. As a result, Dougherty (2011) argued that “failure to adhere to middle class language use standards is likely to create a glass ceiling effect for working class people, with the unfortunate side effect of reinforcing social class divisions” (p. 87). For a working class person to succeed in a white-collar career, they might need to change how they communicate in order to follow middle-class assumptions about how to be polite. For example, Lubrano’s (2004) father-in-law explained how his blue-collar roots made it difficult for him interact with white collar colleagues. He said,

I could never bring myself to be nice. I used to scream back at any boss who yelled. A bourgeois puts his tail between his legs when someone takes him to task. But I confronted. All through my working career, I had this problem with obedience and authority. To make it in the business world, you have to sell your soul, take on a persona that’s not you in order to advance (Lubrano, 2004, p. 135).

Lubrano’s (2004) father-in-law highlighted the loud and direct communication styles associated with being impolite, which did not fit with communication norms of more privileged social class groups. The quote also shows how social groups that are “othered” use double-consciousness to understand the expectations of their own social position in addition to that of more dominant groups, which relates to the standpoint foundations of LC/MD.

Different social classes have also been distinguished by how people communicate with and about authority figures. The family we are born into teaches us how to communicate, and different social classes learn different ways of communicating with authority figures (Lareau, 2011). For example, children in middle-class families were more likely to interact with adults as equals, and parents of middle-class children encouraged the use of reasoning and dialogue (Lareau, 2011). Similarly, Lareau (2011) and Lubrano (2004) found that middle-class children were more comfortable asking questions and engaging in dialogue with doctors, teachers, and other authority figures. As a result, Lubrano (2004) argued that “children of the middle and upper classes have been speaking the language of the bosses and supervisors forever” (p. 9).

In contrast, there was less interaction between children and adults in poor and working class families (Lareau, 2011). When interactions between children and adults did occur, they typically involved parents issuing directives rather than using persuasion (Lareau, 2011). By extension, Lareau (2011) found that poor and working class children were less likely to initiate interactions with doctors, teachers, and other authority figures. Lubrano (2004) added that “there’s a greater depth of acquiescence among working class people, who tend to feel more powerless: You can’t fight city hall” (p. 21). It should be noted that the quote from Lubrano’s (2004) father-in-law—in the paragraph about politeness—would seem to contradict the argument that working class groups are more acquiescent to authority. However, I argue that his father-in-law performed the direct communication style that characterizes parents in working class families. Thus, it is not just about how different social class groups learn to communicate with authority figures; it is also about how they learn to communicate when they feel like they are the authority.

Silence is another feature of communication that has been associated with social class. A relative lack of talking in poor and working class families means poor and working class households are characterized by long periods of silence, punctuated with short periods of speech (Lareau, 2011). In contrast, there are greater amounts of talking in middle class households, which contributes to the development of larger vocabularies, more verbal agility, and more comfort with authority figures. However, researchers have argued that silence should not be viewed as the absence of communication (Acheson, 2008; Covarrubias, 2007). Covarrubias (2007) added that silence should be viewed as an avenue for generating meanings. Meanings are derived from silence, just as they are derived from speech (Acheson, 2008). In other words, silence and speech work simultaneously to construct meanings. Further, viewing silence as a lack of communication would reinforce middle class norms that prioritize the use of language and dialogue, so silence is another way that communication marks social class (Dougherty, 2011). Silence also has implications for its relationship to materiality and discourse. I will provide a deeper discussion of discourse and materiality after my review of social class, but at this point, it should be noted that silence is discursive because it communicatively constructs meanings, and it is materialized through its physical manifestation in our day-to-day lives. In other words, silence is an embodied communicative experience that takes up time, giving it a temporal presence that occupies space and constructs meanings in our day-to-day lives (Acheson, 2008).

Dougherty (2011) cautions communication researchers not to ignore the dialectic of discursive and material conditions of everyday life that influence the ways people talk about social class. Material resources, such as capital, clothing, food, and the body are an

important part of how social class is maintained. As I will explain in the following section, different types of work associated with social class help to show the ways material and discursive conditions can shape meanings of social class. Specifically, lower classes are associated with physical labor while higher classes are associated with knowledge work and management positions (Lucas, 2011a; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004).

This study does not seek a single definition of social class that fits all people in all situations. Rather, this paper focuses on understanding leadership experience in different work contexts, which is intimately tied to ways that people experience social class (Marvin, 1994). I should also avoid oversimplified and value laden distinctions of “upper,” “middle,” and “lower” typically implied by traditional variable and cultural definitions of social class. For this study, it is also important to highlight the discourse/materiality dialectic that constructs social class. Therefore, this paper draws on the concepts of *text work* and *body work* to understand the discursive and material conditions that shape social class and leadership.

Social Class and Text Work/Body Work

Different ways of earning a living become associated with perceptions of social class (Grusky & Weeden, 2008). Similarly, Bourdieu (1984) argued that “social hierarchies between the junior executives and the craftsmen or shopkeepers vary according to the activity or asset in question” (p. 115). Thus, social class is closely tied to work processes. Literature on text and body class focuses on how body and text become classed instruments of communication (Marvin, 2006). A key concept involved in the discussion of text and body class is the idea of *literacy*, which refers to “variable and culturally specific techniques for organizing, expressing, and performing social

relationships around the interaction of texts and bodies” (Marvin, 1994, p. 129). The main argument is that text/literacy has become privileged over the body/illiteracy.

Text refers to processes of communication that detach the body from the message (Marvin, 2006). Text class jobs primarily involve creating and manipulating words (Dougherty, 2011; Marvin, 1994). Text class workers have become the dominant class in Western cultures (Marvin, 1994). In contrast, the *body* is the biological and physical manifestation of our being, and the body class is associated with illiteracy and physical labor (Dougherty, 2011; Marvin, 1994). The body is also hidden in text class work, which further distances the text class from the denigration and risk of physical labor (Marvin, 2006). Or, as Lubrano (2004) explained, “the working class works at jobs that bite, maim, and wither. The middle class gets to work indoors at desks” (p. 22).

Adapting Marvin’s ideas of text and body *class*, Dougherty (2011) uses text and body *work* as a different way of talking about social class divisions (Dougherty, 2011). *Text work* is similar to white-collar work in that it involves jobs that emphasize the use of language and the construction of knowledge (Dougherty, 2011; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). *Body work* is similar to blue-collar work in that it is associated with physical labor and subordinate organizational positions (Lucas, 2011a). Descriptions of blue-collar and white-collar work draw particular attention to different ways of earning a living. Gibson and Papa (2000) explained that “blue-collar workers privilege labor and mechanical dexterity, and believe that working with the hands is more honorable than earning a living with your mouth” (p. 77). However, there are a few main reasons that I prefer to use the concepts of text work and body work in this dissertation.

First, text and body work are useful because they highlight ways that communication is de/emphasized as a way of doing work. Communication is emphasized in text work, and communication is deemphasized in body work. Second, the concepts of text work and body work draw attention to social class complexities that are not fully accounted for in traditional blue/white-collar characterizations of work and social class. Blue/white-collar divisions of social class are often tied too closely to capitalist assumptions about production and economic income (see Lubrano, 2004; Lucas, 2011b). Reframing social class in terms of text/body work helps to explain how higher-income families who work in physically demanding jobs might still be perceived as blue-collar working class (Dougherty, 2011). Third, I prefer the concepts of text and body work because they account for a dialectic of discourse and materiality that characterizes different types of work experiences that are associated with social class (Dougherty, 2011). Body work highlights material conditions typically associated with physical labor and lower social class groups, while text work emphasizes discursive processes typically associated with the work of higher social class groups (Dougherty, 2011).

Associating text and body work with social class highlights the ways material and discursive conditions can shape meanings of social class. Materiality and discourse work simultaneously to construct meanings and perceptions of reality. However, discourse can be easily overlooked in body work because the material conditions of physical labor are emphasized as the primary means of labor. At the same time, the body is often hidden in text work because the discursive conditions of communication and language use are emphasized as the primary means of labor. However, my intention is not to dichotomize text/body or discourse/materiality. I use the concepts of text and body work as orienting

poles that draw attention to how materiality and discourse *coexist* in different ways to influence perceptions of social class and leadership. For example, academic jobs could be considered text work because they emphasize use of literacy and communication (Dougherty, 2011). The physical body is less emphasized in text work, yet it is still part of how the work is accomplished; the physical exhaustion and pain that comes with long hours of sitting, writing, reading, and teaching are tied to the material experiences of academic text work. Similarly, discursive processes are present—although hidden—in body work. For example, Lubrano’s (2004) father worked 30 years as a bricklayer—a backbreaking job that emphasized physical labor more than proficient language use—and the emphasis on the role of the body did not fully account for the discursive construction of meanings and values that became tied to experiences of physical labor.

In sum, discourse is hidden in body work and the body is hidden in text work (Dougherty, 2011; Marvin, 2006). However, discourse and materiality should not be viewed separately (Marvin, 2006). Rather, bodies and texts influence and modify one another in important ways, so this study takes a dialectical approach to the discursive/textual and material/physical conditions of everyday life that influence the ways people talk about social class (Dougherty, 2011). Material resources like capital, clothing, food, and the body are an important part of how meanings of social class are socially constructed and maintained. To better understand the social and material conditions that shape everyday life—and thus influence meanings of social class and leadership—the next section reviews key literature concerning discourse and materiality.

Discourse and Materiality

Organizational research has become increasingly open to exploring the interaction of discourse and materiality. Ashcraft, et al. (2009) highlighted a growing concern for the relationship between the symbolic and the material among management and communication theorists. *Materialism* is mainly concerned with “physical factors driving organizational identities and goals” (Ashcraft, et al., 2009, p. 24). In contrast, *discourse* could be understood as symbolism, which mainly seeks to understand the influence of factors like “language, cognition, images, metaphors, and norms” that communicatively construct meanings and perceptions of reality (Ashcraft, et al., 2009, p. 25). Ashcraft, et al. (2009) also argued that material and symbolic approaches to organizing need to be synthesized rather than placed in opposition to one another. Drawing on Ashcraft, et al. (2009), three areas that could be explored for the intersectionality of material and symbolic constructions of leadership are (a) objects, (b) sites, and (c) bodies.

Objects. *Objects* are those physical artifacts involved with organizations such as technologies and machines. Ashcraft, et al. (2009) pointed out that organizational artifacts act in ways that influence interactions, which grants them some form of agency. Further, *representing objects* refers to communication research that explores how nonhuman agents (e.g., contracts, regulations, technology, etc.) play a role in the communicative constitution of organizations. Texts—in the form of rules, memos, and organizational documents—provide examples of organizational objects that help to implement procedures, programs, and protocols (Putnam & Cooren, 2004).

Some researchers have already taken steps to understand the interaction of material and discursive realities in organizations. For example, Leonardi and Jackson

(2009) studied an acquisition case involving two technologically grounded organizations. *Technological grounding* refers to organizations that have a “culture whose image, identity, and relationship to its environment are strongly associated with—indeed, dependent upon—the functionality of the technology it produces, services, or sells” (Leonardi & Jackson, 2009, p. 397). Their study investigated the acquisition of a small internet start-up company (Qwest) by a large regional telecommunications company (US West). The authors examined how organizational culture can change when a new technology is introduced as a result of an acquisition, and they found that an organization grounded in superior technology absorbed the culture of the other. Qwest managers combined technology and culture into narratives that could be used as strategic resources, which the authors called the narrative of inevitability (Leonardi & Jackson, 2009). Specifically, Qwest managers and employees framed their technology as the future of the organization, which helped them justify their dominance over US West’s culture.

In the previous example, discursive and material changes occurred during the acquisition. Material changes were seen in the physical changes in technology, and discursive changes were seen in the way Qwest managers used language to create a narrative of inevitability. Ultimately, the material and discursive changes led to a fundamental change in the organization’s culture and identity. Further, Leonardi (2009) argued that social interactions may help individuals develop interpretations about what a technology is supposed to do, but material interactions with the technology can create divergent interpretations. Through physical interactions, workers may decide that a new technology does not do what it was meant to do, so they may stop using the technology. As a result, Leonardi (2009) argued that managerially-driven planned organizational

changes through introducing new technologies can fail when social interactions and material interactions create diverging interpretations of the technologies.

Sites. In their discussion of *sites* as examples of materiality in organizing, Ashcraft, et al. (2009) discussed how physical locations influence processes of organizing. The concept of sites as material conditions of organizing is similar to Barge and Little's (2008) discussion of contexts, which refers to different situations that emerge through processes of communication. However, Ashcraft, et al. (2009) highlight the material aspects of contexts—sites—and discuss the ways that organizational places and human interactions mutually construct one another. *Knowing sites* means understanding how social and material resources of sites come together in communication.

Different cultures are examples of sites involved with the material and discursive construction of leadership. For example, Hall (2011) studied leaders of organizations in Jamaica and found that they had to manage dominant discourses of colonialism and Westernization, which complicated their ability to balance their own culture in their leadership processes. Hall's (2011) study was mainly focused on dominant discourses associated with Westernization, but there were also important elements of materiality that played a part in how leadership was constructed and practiced. Specifically, Hall (2011) found that material conditions of geography, like proximity to the United States, influenced Jamaican manager's discursive constructions of leadership and culture.

Different sites can also be explored by shifting the focus of organizational studies to different types of workplaces. Many organizational studies tend to research white-collar settings as opposed to other kinds of labor, so more attention should be paid to the ways that work and labor are constructed in family, leisure, housekeeping, and other non-

traditional work sites (Ashcraft, 2011). Accounting for materiality through the study of non-traditional work sites could help researchers gain a deeper understanding for the multiple ways that organizational processes are experienced and constructed. For example, Butler and Modaff (2008) studied in-home day care providers' accounts of work experiences. The researchers found that demands of work and home are paradoxical for in-home daycare providers because their home life was intimately tied to their work life. By studying organizational processes in non-traditional work-sites like in-home day care providers, the authors were able to highlight a dialectical relationship—rather than a dichotomous either/or relationship—between public and private spaces.

Another example that examines organizational processes in a non-traditional work site is Kramer's (2006) study of leadership among the members of a community theater group. His central argument was that leadership could be understood as a shared process among multiple organizational members, rather than as sets of individual traits or characteristics. By focusing on leadership processes at the site of a community theater, Kramer (2006) found that various members outside of designated leadership roles were fulfilling leadership functions. Results also showed that cast members shared leadership by taking on responsibilities either temporarily or permanently and communicating tasks to secondary leaders. Finally, although Kramer's (2006) article was not explicitly focused on the materiality of sites, his findings demonstrated how the enactment of shared leadership was constituted around needs of the particular work site, a community theater.

Unfortunately, exploring the materiality of different sites remains understudied in leadership communication research. However, the physical body is an aspect of materiality that has received more attention by communication researchers.

Bodies. *Bodies* are a third aspect of organizing that involves both materiality and symbolism. The most obvious forms of materiality involved with bodies are physical features like sex, race, gender, or attractiveness. However, bodies are overlaid with symbolic meanings because knowledge of bodies is discursively constructed through communication (Ashcraft, et al., 2009). Ashcraft, et al. (2009) also explained that identity construction can be limited by physical capacities of the body; however, communication can also create new ways of experiencing the body. Ashcraft, et al. (2009) paraphrase their point by saying that “In communication, symbol becomes material; material becomes symbol; and neither stay the same as a result” (p. 34).

Studying *working bodies* means studying how work becomes known through its relation to the body. However, Ashcraft, et al. (2009) noted how research on the communicative constitution of the body has focused on blue-collar work and dirty work, as well as knowledge workers like managers and executives—which largely ignores the role of the body. As a result, present research gives the impression that the “body is more relevant to certain types of work/ers, while extraneous to others” (Ashcraft, et al., 2009, p. 40). Therefore, they call for research that explores how the work-body relation is

Sinclair (2005) provided an example of research that repositions the physical body in leadership studies. To show how bodies are involved in leadership processes, she drew attention to physical movements, voices, and representations that can be observed emanating from a body. Her analysis of two leaders in Australia—an Aboriginal male principal and a white female police Commissioner—centered on body representations through “stature, stance and posture, voice, gestures, appearance, and costume” (p. 391). Findings highlighted the role of the physical body in leaders’ enactments and discursive

constructions of leadership. The Aboriginal male principal said that his ability to lead and influence others was easier because of his large physical size. On the other hand, the white female police Commissioner said she had to work harder to be seen as a leader because of her gender and relatively small size.

Ashcraft and Allen (2003) also draw attention to the role of bodies in organizational studies. Their article demonstrated how work becomes raced by the bodies that are associated with it. However, they said race should not be considered independently of other constructions of difference like gender and social class. Rather, researchers should study how multiple constructions of differences simultaneously interact. In other words, researchers should study the intersectionality of multiple materialities associated with bodies and work (Ashcraft, 2011; Ashcraft & Allen, 2003).

A final example of research that highlights the body comes from Hansen, Ropo, and Sauer (2007). They argue for an *aesthetic approach* to leadership that emphasizes sensory experiences that are felt through our physical interactions with material realities. The authors provide two enduring components of an aesthetic approach to leadership: (a) engagement of the senses and (b) the focus on the experiential. To paraphrase, they first say aesthetic leadership views aesthetic practices like “language skills, listening, gazing, touch, and treating emotion and feelings as important” are central to constructing knowledge (p. 553). Second, an aesthetic approach to leadership requires direct experience. In other words, a person must experience a situation in order to understand it.

An aesthetic approach is particularly relevant for this study because participants will draw from their own leadership and work experiences. The explicit focus on understanding leadership experiences also aligns with my application of LC/MD as a

theoretical perspective. Specifically, drawing attention to leadership experiences in different work contexts will help me analyze how the work experiences of different social class groups might contribute to divergent meanings of leadership.

The ontological and epistemological assumptions of an aesthetic approach are also relevant for this study. Ontologically, an aesthetic approach assumes reality is only knowable by the ways people experience it through their senses. Epistemologically, aesthetics is concerned with how knowledge is constructed through everyday experiences (Hansen, et al., 2007). Hansen, et al. (2007) also recognize that meanings for leadership are produced through social interactions, which aligns with the discursive approach to leadership applied in my study. Discursive and aesthetic approaches to leadership both challenge assumptions that cognitions are the source of knowledge, and they resist the tendency of past leadership research to privilege logic and reason with the construction of meaning. Finally, discursive leadership studies communicative practices as the site of day-to-day meaning construction, which aligns with an aesthetic focus on knowledge that is constructed through embodied interactions in day-to-day experiences.

In sum, three areas of materiality that might contribute to discursive constructions of leadership are (a) objects, (b) sites, and (c) bodies. More research is needed in order to understand ways that discourse and materiality interact to construct leadership in different ways for diverse people in different contexts.

Summary

The purpose of this dissertation is to understand how leadership is classed in both material and discursive ways. The Theory of Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence provides an appropriate theoretical lens for understanding how leadership can

become classed. Applying LC/MD will help me understand how divergent meanings of leadership become *othered* in ways that privilege some social class groups over others.

This dissertation takes social constructionist approach, which draws on a combination of discursive and critical approaches to leadership. A discursive approach to leadership means studying leadership as a process of communication rather than as sets of individual traits, styles, or contingencies. Further, the focus on an interplay of big-D and little-d discourse allows critical organizational scholars to learn about relationships among power and discourse and to potentially give social actors a chance to transform oppressive societal discourses (Hall, 2011; Mumby, 2008; Sinclair, 2007).

A central concern of this study is that researchers drawing on discursive leadership might privilege those who understand leadership more as a discursive construction over those who understand leadership based on material conditions. By privileging the discursive over the material, discursive leadership could be reproducing social inequalities, which relates to issues of social class (Dougherty, 2011). Leadership and more prestigious social class are traditionally associated with having positions of authority and influence in organizations that are distanced from manual labor roles (Lucas, 2011a). As a result, there may be underlying assumptions that the practice of leadership is more suited for upper class text workers who typically have more education, who often have management positions, and whose work places more emphasis on communication. In contrast, lower social classes may be “othered” from dominant assumptions about leadership because they are more associated with lower economic income, lower levels of education, lower hierarchical positions in organizations, more physical labor, and less emphasis on language use (Lucas, 2011a). Because of different

experiences and perspectives, different social class groups could have divergent ways of understanding, practicing, and valuing leadership. Further, the norms, values, and ways of communicating developed in upper class families overlap with dominant assumptions about leadership that are privileged in American institutions. Finally, the relative lack of perceived power, influence, and discursive resources could contribute to biased assumptions that people who engage in body work are members of lower social classes who are less suitable for leadership than people who engage in text work.

To understand how meanings of leadership become classed in both material and discursive ways, this study examines the leadership experiences of different social class groups. The following four research questions helped guide a narrative analysis of text and body workers' stories about leadership:

RQ1: How do people doing text work and body work construct what it means to be a leader?

RQ2: How are material and discursive conditions involved in the day-to-day work of text and body workers?

RQ3: How, if at all, do meanings of leadership converge and diverge for people doing text work and body work?

RQ4: How are stories about leadership classed?

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

The study of leadership has been dominated by quantitative research that seeks to identify the essential characteristics of leadership (Clifton, 2012). This kind of mainstream research has provided valuable insight into some of the variables—traits, styles, and behaviors—that are often associated with effective leadership, which has been particularly useful for organizational leadership training workshops that are aimed at teaching one right way to be a leader (e.g., Brown & May, 2012). However, studies that seek to reduce leadership to a single generalizable definition might be overlooking new ways of understanding leadership (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). Further, quantitative leadership research treats communication as a conduit for transmitting perceptions of reality, rather than as the complex and ongoing process of meaning construction. As a result, quantitative leadership research does not provide much insight into the ways that leadership is accomplished through mundane, ongoing, day-to-day interactions (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003; Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011).

In contrast to mainstream quantitative leadership studies, this dissertation seeks to broaden the ways that researchers study and write about leadership, which calls for qualitative methods. Thus, I apply narrative methodology to understand how meanings of leadership become classed through an interaction of discursive and material conditions.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodology and methods that I used in this dissertation. Creswell (2007) noted that methods for data collection and analysis stem from the researcher's philosophical and theoretical stances. Therefore, I will start by discussing my own perspective on conducting leadership research, which will include an explanation for how this study applies a combination of interpretive and critical

paradigms. I then move into a discussion of narrative methodology. Finally, I will explain the specific methods and procedures for data collection. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the data analysis and verification strategies that were applied for this study.

To understand the relationship between material and discursive processes of organizing, this study explores leadership as classed in both material and discursive ways. The following research questions guided a narrative analysis of text and body workers' stories about leadership:

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RQ4: How are stories about leadership classed?

Positioning Myself

This section of the chapter acknowledges my background and assumptions as the researcher in this project. I recognize that admitting my biases could invite criticism about a lack of objectivity. However, any piece of research is influenced by the author's own situated perspective and theoretical assumptions, which makes objectivity an impossible expectation to place on even the most credible research (Mumby, 2013). I will first outline three reasons why I believe researchers should explicitly position themselves in their research. Then, I will discuss my own social class background and interest in leadership. Finally, I explain my theoretical perspectives on communication and reality.

Why I position myself. To begin, there are a few reasons why I am engaging in a confessional process. First, positioning myself in the research is a way of practicing self-reflexivity, or self-awareness (Creswell, 2007). Interrogating how the research might be influenced by my own assumptions is far more rigorous than pretending my own biases do not exist (Ellingson, 2009). Practicing reflexivity also adds another layer to my analysis by grounding it clearly in my own particular perspective, making it easier for readers to engage with my reasoning (Ellingson, 2009; Mumby, 2013).

Second, writing research with a pretense of neutrality and objectivity makes no sense; it is impossible for researchers to set aside their own theoretical perspectives when they become an author (Mumby, 2013). Philosophical assumptions cannot be separated from procedures (Creswell, 2007). My point is not to argue that all research is biased and unreliable; rather, I believe I should be upfront about my own assumptions so readers can interrogate my arguments based on the situated standpoint from which they emerged.

Third, positioning myself can improve my writing by making it more concise and interesting (Ellingson, 2009). Using a first person voice allows me to be more precise when “describing research processes, findings, and implications” (Ellingson, 2009, p. 159). In addition, acknowledging my presence in the project is a crucial part of a dialogic narrative analysis, which I will describe in the methodology section of this chapter. For now, I will just say that a dialogic narrative analysis recognizes the researcher as an active participant in the co-production of a narrative (Riessman, 2008).

So, it is important to me that readers know who I am. With that goal in mind, I will now talk briefly about my own background. After that, I will explain the theoretical assumptions that will drive my processes of data collection and analysis.

My Background

Because social class is a major focus of this study, it makes sense to reflect on my own social class background. Social class—and perhaps leadership—are not experienced the same way for different groups of people, so I will try to describe my background in a way that helps readers engage with my perspective on social class. I will also highlight some experiences that may have influenced my assumptions about leadership.

To begin, I should highlight a personal struggle I encountered while writing this section. I struggled to provide a description of my Mom without it sounding like a gender stereotype, and that makes me uncomfortable. Adding to my discomfort is the fact that I scarcely considered how my father also sounds like a gender stereotype, which is probably because my experiences come from a privileged position that normalizes males as a dominant social group. I see myself as an advocate for feminist research that is interested in empowering women, so it bothers me that my descriptions of my parents could reinforce masculine/feminine gender norms that are criticized in feminist scholarship. I was relieved that Mumby (1993) had a similar conflict. Ashcraft (2005) cited Mumby's (1993) exchange with Marshall (1993), in which Mumby (1993) expressed his "discomfort as a man engaging in feminism" (p. 149). His solution was to focus on deconstructing binaries like masculine vs. feminine or public vs. private. Further, to avoid reinforcing dichotomies, Ashcraft (2005) encouraged researchers not to prioritize any interests as more important or legitimate than any other interests. With that goal in mind, I want to be clear that I view my parents as a collaborative team. They both committed themselves to work that was equally important to meeting our family's needs, and neither could fulfill their commitments without the support of the other.

From my view, social class and leadership have a lot to do with opportunity, and my family and educational background helped open a lot of doors. I am a Western white heterosexual male, raised in an upper-middle class home. As far as I remember, we never struggled to make ends meet. However, I also learned family stories about my parents' working class backgrounds, how they lived in double-wide trailers, and how they survived on food stamps while they were in college. Dad was raised in Michigan and served in the Army before going to college and majoring in Business Management. After college, he began working in textile manufacturing and made a good living as a factory manager. He also coached little league and stayed busy with home improvement projects.

Mom was raised on an Army base in North Carolina and worked at the family restaurant with her six siblings. Mom met Dad while he was training at the Army base, and they both went to college together. When my brother and I came along, Mom took on the full-time job of raising children and managing the family household. She was occasionally employed as a teacher and a banker in order to provide more income for the family. Mom was the day-to-day rules enforcer and supervisor of chores. She was also closely involved with my performance in school and sports. She—along with my dad—trained and encouraged me and my brother to play sports and to succeed in the classroom.

School came before play time, but playing—in the form of organized sports and backyard shenanigans—was highly encouraged. Organized sports had a major influence on my early assumptions about leadership. From my experiences in sports, I associated leadership with motivating teammates and winning competitions. Ironically, it was also sports—men's track specifically—that helped open doors to college, which would change how I thought about and experienced leadership.

Education was prioritized over extra-curricular activities. Good report cards were expected and praised. Poor academic performance resulted in extra chores and suspension from sports. College was not really an option for me and my brother; it was the expected next step after high school. Like I said, my understanding of social class has a lot to do with access to opportunities, and our family income made it possible for me and my brother to go to college by reducing—yet not eliminating—the barrier of cost.

While working on a BA in Communication Studies, I ran on the University track team and joined a fraternity. I did well in most of my classes, I was humbled by superior athletes on the track, and took on what I considered to be leadership roles in the fraternity. Long conversations with Mom and Dad helped me grapple with difficult decisions in the fraternity. Dad's advice was usually framed within stories about his own experiences in the Army and as a factory manager. Based on those conversations and experiences, my early interpretations of leadership were more in line with the functionalist approach to leadership—particularly transformational leadership—that I discussed in the previous chapter.

My current theoretical assumptions about communication and reality started taking shape during my first years of graduate education. Specifically, Dr. Gail Fairhurst encouraged a more discursive approach to leadership. Her influence steered me towards the interpretive/critical approach that I am applying to this dissertation.

Philosophical Assumptions: Interpretive Paradigm

For this dissertation, I start my exploration of leadership by drawing from the interpretive paradigm. A research paradigm is a set of ideological assumptions about how to study a particular phenomenon. They are schools of thought that come with their own

concepts, processes, and acceptable ways of conducting and presenting research (Tracy, 2013). For the interpretive paradigm, a few main assumptions are that (a) communication is central to the social construction of knowledge and reality, (b) meanings of reality are forged through language and interaction with others in specific contexts, and (c) meanings of reality are multiple and varied.

First, the interpretivist paradigm—sometimes referred to as social constructionism—explores the ways that meaning and reality are constructed through processes of communication (Creswell, 2007). By placing communication as central to the construction of meaning and reality, the interpretive paradigm directly challenges traditional functionalist and post-positivist assumptions that language is a conduit for expressing ideas about an objective, preexisting reality (Mumby, 2013). Interpretive research draws on the voices of participants to understand how they communicatively construct meanings for their social realities (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000).

Second, knowledge and reality are co-constructed through interaction with others in specific contexts. Interpretivists study social interaction in order to understand the communication *processes* that construct knowledge and reality (Creswell, 2007). In other words, the assumption is that “human beings create realities as they interact together” (Mumby, 2013, p. 20). Further, Barge and Little (2008) argued that we cannot appropriately study how meaning is constructed in conversation without taking the situated context into account. Therefore, interpretive researchers recognize meanings are not just formed through interactions with others, but that they are also formed “through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals’ lives” (Creswell, 2007, p. 21).

Third, a key assumption of the interpretive paradigm is that meanings and reality are multiple and varied (Creswell, 2007). Interpretive and social constructionist studies typically avoid making post-positivist assumptions about overarching and generalizable Truths. Rather, the interpretive and/or social constructionist paradigm embraces the possibility of multiple realities that are discursively constructed through ongoing processes of communication and social interaction (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). Multiple truths are also constructed and reconstructed through the research process. Interpretive researchers acknowledge that their own background shapes their interpretations, so knowledge created through research should be considered through the lens of the researcher's own personal, cultural, and historical experiences (Creswell, 2007).

The interpretive paradigm is useful for my study because I want to give participants a chance to communicate their understanding of leadership in the context of their own work experiences. It also helps me stay open to the multiple meanings of leadership that emerge through interactions, and it encourages me to recognize my own voice in the research process. However, the interpretive paradigm leaves out a deeper consideration for how some meanings of leadership become more dominant or privileged over others. Further, the interpretive paradigm alone does not adequately address questions about how meanings of leadership can be influenced by social class and materiality. Therefore, in the following section I will talk about some overarching concerns that the critical paradigm brings to my study.

Philosophical Assumptions: Critical Paradigm

The critical paradigm is closely tied to the interpretive paradigm because of their similar assumptions about communication and reality. In particular, the critical paradigm

views meaning and reality as constructed through communication (Deetz, 2005).

However, there are at least three key differences between the interpretive and critical paradigms that need to be addressed here. Mainly, the critical paradigm adds a concern for (a) understanding intersections of power and communication (b) transforming social inequalities, and (c) exploring intersections of discourse and materiality.

To begin, critical researchers argue that power is always present in processes of communication, which means power shapes meanings and reality (Mumby, 2013). Power could be broadly understood as a process of influencing perceptions of reality in ways that serve the interests of some individuals and social groups at the expense of others (Deetz & Mumby, 1990; Deetz, 2005). For example, managers may try to create an organizational culture—through rituals, stories, or daily interactions—that promotes management’s values of respect for authority and being a team player, yet employees may actively resist that culture—through jokes or oppositional behaviors—because they view the dominant culture as a way of manipulating their behavior and silencing independent thinking (i.e., Martin & Siehl, 1983). The main idea is that our everyday communication processes shape perceptions of reality in ways that can reinforce—or resist—the interests of some social groups while marginalizing the interests of others (Ganesh, Zoller, & Cheney, 2005; Mumby, 2013).

Second, researchers drawing from the critical paradigm argue that interpretivist assumptions do not do enough to reform social inequalities. While interpretivist assumptions acknowledge that research is value-laden, critical research is more explicitly value-driven. In other words, the critical paradigm argues that research should be explicitly directed towards improving the lives of participants (Creswell, 2007). Critical

research tries to understand how the interests of some groups become marginalized, and then bring those marginalized voices to the surface so that hegemonic systems of power can be deconstructed and transformed. Critical researchers have a shared interest in transforming unequal power relations in society—organizations in particular—so that more equitable decisions can be made (Deetz & Mumby, 1990; Ganesh, et al., 2005).

Finally, the critical paradigm helps me consider how material conditions might be tied to power and day-to-day communication processes. Mumby (2004) and Dougherty (2011) argued that critical research can be used to understand how material conditions of everyday life influence communication and perceptions of reality, and how an exploration of materiality has been sidelined by researchers' overemphasis on discursive constructionism. Critical researchers can also take a *critical realist* approach, which is broadly based on the idea that social structures become objectified in ways that exist independently of how they might be discursively constructed (Reed, 2004). The idea that social reality is constructed through an interaction of discursive and objectified social structures is similar to the way this dissertation explores the interaction of discourse and materiality. Specifically, the goals of this dissertation are in line with Reed's (2004) critical realist approach because my goal is to become more aware of the discursive and material realities that constrain and enable social actors in their everyday lives.

In sum, the main concern for those following a critical approach—what Mumby (2013) calls a “discourse of suspicion”—is to become more aware of how power works through everyday processes of communication to shape perceptions of ourselves and the world around us, and to focus on issues of emancipation and freedom by giving voice to the underrepresented. The critical paradigm is useful for this dissertation because I

explore how meanings for leadership are often derived from privileged social class positions, which has stifled the voices and experiences of marginalized social class groups. Further, the critical perspective helps me understand how intersections of leadership and materiality have been suppressed by an overemphasis on discursive constructionism in leadership research.

The critical paradigm provides an important foundation for understanding issues of privilege and marginalization, but a critical approach alone is not enough to address the research questions proposed for this dissertation. Therefore, I will briefly summarize how I intend to combine interpretive and critical paradigms.

Philosophical Assumptions: Combining Interpretive & Critical

My dissertation explicitly combines elements of both interpretive and critical paradigms. Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) explained that the interpretive approach draws on the voices of participants to understand how they construct meaning for their experiences, which is useful because a broad goal of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of meanings of leadership that emerge in the stories about day-to-day experiences of people doing text work and body work. At the same time, the interpretive approach is not enough to understand the issues of power and inequality that are tied to social class (Dougherty, 2011). Therefore, I also draw from a critical approach in order to expose the ways that some meanings become privileged over others.

Considering my research questions, I need to apply both interpretive and critical approaches. The first research question calls for more of an interpretive approach because it is focused on understanding the multiple meanings of leadership that emerge from the participants' experiences. The second and third research questions are both interpretive

and critical. It is necessary for me to interpret the discursive and material conditions that are involved in participants' experiences, and to scrutinize how materiality and discourse are privileged or marginalized in ways that create divergent meanings for leadership. Finally, the explicit focus on social class in the fourth research question calls for a critical lens because social class involves power (Dougherty, 2011).

Based on how I position myself in this study, I can summarize my background and philosophical assumptions with a few main ideas. First, I come from an upper-middle class home that promoted ideals of education, open communication, and leadership. Second, I embrace the interpretive paradigm because it allows me to immerse my research in the complexities of meanings and perspectives that emerge through day-to-day interactions. Third, my dissertation advocates for more inclusive views of leadership by recognizing the voices of underrepresented social class groups that have been marginalized in dominant assumptions about leadership.

It is important for readers to understand my background and philosophical assumptions because they influence the methodology and methods applied in this dissertation. I will clarify my methodology and methods for data collection and analysis.

Narrative Methodology

Methodology can broadly be understood as an overarching philosophical perspective that guides the approach to research (Corbin & Straus, 2008). A methodology is usually connected by common philosophical underpinnings, its analytical focus, and a common set of methods (Corbin & Straus, 2008). Drawing from both interpretive and critical paradigms, this dissertation uses narrative methodology to study stories about leadership told by individuals who engage in text and body work. Specifically, I applied a

thematic narrative analysis in order to examine participants' stories about leadership. In the following paragraphs, I will start by giving a broad description of narrative methodology. I then discuss the specific assumptions involved with a thematic narrative methodology before moving into my specific methods of data collection and analysis.

Narrative research can take many forms, but is broadly unified by a focus on analyzing stories that are told by individuals (Creswell, 2007). Applying narrative methodology to interviews, texts, or groups is usually an interpretive approach to understanding the ways people tell stories (Riessman, 2008; Stuber, 2006). Stories are *social artifacts* that tell us about society, culture, groups, and individuals (Riessman, 2008). Related to the sensemaking foundations of LC/MD, the underlying assumption of narrative methodology is that stories are a way for people to make sense of the world around them, and analyzing those stories can help us understand how people construct meanings for their experiences (Goodall, 2008; Riessman, 2008; Weick, 1995). In other words, narratives have a sensemaking and meaning-making function (Czarniawska, 2009; Riessman, 2008). Narrative methodology is also a way of identifying underlying societal structures, Discourses, or "systems of meanings" that might enable and constrain the ways people communicate and interact, which is in line with the critical paradigm's concern for intersections of power and communication (Czarniawska, 2009).

A thematic narrative approach is useful for this dissertation because it provides a systematic research design for interpreting and analyzing stories told by participants. I describe the research design in the following methods section. For now, I will focus on explaining overall assumptions of a thematic narrative approach. A thematic narrative approach is concerned with interpreting and organizing the major ideas of a narrative into

themes or categories that make the narrative cohesive (Riessman, 2008). The main idea is that researchers work to interpret the meaning of participants' stories as a whole. From there, the researcher selects particular blocks of narrative quotes that illustrate the general assumptions and overarching meanings of different cases (Riessman, 2008).

A thematic narrative approach also helped me analyze participants' narratives through the lens of the theory of Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence. For example, Ewick and Silbey (2003) provided a model of how to systematically work with stories in order to understand how narratives can be analyzed in terms of how they relate to a particular social theory. The specific steps involved with my thematic analysis will be explained in the analysis section of this chapter; however, the general idea is that the researcher starts with a theory related to the phenomenon being studied, examines interviews for stories that relate to the theory, and then groups the stories into categories to form a framework that helps explain the theory being used (Ewick & Silbey, 2003).

I also incorporate some of my own voice into the analysis, which is similar to a dialogic narrative approach. Although I did not explicitly apply a dialogic narrative approach, it might be helpful to explain some of the foundations of dialogic narrative analysis in order to understand why it was important for me to include my voice in the analysis. The dialogic narrative approach assumes that social reality is constructed through interaction, which means the researcher becomes an active part of meaning construction during interviews with participants (Riessman, 2008). As a result, using a dialogic narrative approach means the participants' and interviewer's voices must be included in the analysis. Further, the dialogic approach recognizes the importance of context by drawing on Bakhtin's (1981) concept of *utterances*, which describes how

words become saturated with meanings from previous usages. Considering the context involved with participants' stories helps me recognize and analyze some of the dominant societal discourses that influenced participants' perceptions of leadership and work.

One of the challenges involved with narrative methodology is that there is very little consensus on the steps involved in the research process (Czarniawska, 2009). Further, studies that apply narrative methodology do not always explain exactly how the researcher's use of narrative methodology was distinct from other interpretive qualitative work (e.g., Stuber, 2006). Without a clear explanation of narrative methodology, authors could be constraining the reader's ability to engage with the researcher's reasoning. I am in agreement with Mumby's (2013) claim that all good research should follow a rigorous and systematic design (Mumby, 2013). Therefore, I want to be clear about how I applied a narrative methodology in this dissertation. With that goal in mind, I will now explain the specific methods that I used to address my research questions.

Methods

Narrative methodology often incorporates multiple methods of data collection and analysis. Researchers can use observations and field notes, interviews, texts, or they can analyze images to give voice to participants' stories (Czarniawska, 2009; Riessman, 2008). I used observations and interviews. Before I explain my data collection methods, I will describe recruitment procedures as well as my sample of participants.

Recruitment Procedures

Participant recruitment relied on a combination of sampling strategies. Narrative research typically uses purposeful sampling strategies, not random, so I used a purposeful criterion sampling strategy (Riessman, 2008). Criterion sampling means that I

purposefully recruited individuals who meet certain criteria for my particular study (Creswell, 2007). I needed to understand what leadership means to people engaging in different work processes related to social class. Social class was distinguished by participants' engagement with text work and body work, so criteria for recruiting participants came from previous definitions of text and body work. For *text workers*, I recruited participants with jobs that emphasize the use, creation, and manipulation of language and words; for *body workers*, I recruited participants with jobs that emphasize physical labor (Dougherty, 2011). Perspectives of text and body workers are important for building the theory of Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence because I am exploring how diverse work experiences of different social class groups might contribute to divergent meanings of leadership (Dougherty, et al., 2009). Therefore, participants needed to include text and body workers from a range of jobs that require them to work mainly with their words or mainly through physical labor.

Again, I want to reiterate that text/body work should not be viewed as a dichotomy. All work involves degrees of text and body, but we can explore the differences by considering how text or body is more emphasized in the day-to-day work (Dougherty, 2011; Marvin, 2006). Text—in the form of language use—is largely hidden in body work, while the physical body is largely hidden from the production and outcome of text work. The concepts of text/body work are useful because they highlight ways that communication and materiality are de/emphasized in day-to-day work. As a result, the focus on text/body work allowed me to explore how discursive and material conditions of day-to-day work shaped definitions of leadership, which has implications for how perceptions of leadership are influenced by social class.

I also used convenience and snowball sampling. I started with convenience sampling through networks of friends and co-workers. Creswell (2007) explained that narrative studies might use convenience sampling because the researcher wants to recruit participants who are easy to access and who are capable of telling stories about their experiences. Recruitment was aimed at friends and co-workers who work in fields that fit with descriptions of text work and body work. For snowball sampling, those who agreed to participate were asked if they had any coworkers who might be willing to participate.

Recruitment started by contacting potential participants through individual e-mails, text messages, phone calls, or face-to-face interactions. Individuals were asked if they would like to participate in an interview about how they experience leadership at work. Please see Appendix A for an example of the recruitment letter. If they volunteered for an interview, then I asked them when and where they would like to meet for the interview. When individuals responded to my recruitment e-mail to set up a time for an interview—or to decline participation—I asked them if they would forward my recruitment e-mail to any of their co-workers who might want to volunteer for an interview. Text and body workers who volunteered through snowball sampling contacted me through e-mail in order to arrange a time and location for an interview.

Participants

In order to explore a range of perspectives and experiences and to achieve saturation—which according to Creswell (2007) occurs when I no longer find new information that adds to my understanding of a research question—during the analysis of interviews, the goal was to recruit at least 20 participants representing a range of text work and body work. Ultimately, a total of 21 participants were interviewed for this

study; 10 body workers and 11 text workers. In all, there were 8 female participants and 13 male participants, and their ages ranged from 26 to 76 with a mean age of 42.38. At this point, it is more helpful to provide descriptions of each group of participants. I will start by describing the body workers, and then I will describe the text workers.

Body workers ranged in age from 26-76 years old, with a mean age of 41.6. There were three female body workers and seven male body workers. Two of the female body workers identified as Caucasian and one identified as African American. Among male body workers, five identified as Caucasian, one identified as Hispanic, and one identified as a mixture of Hispanic and Caucasian. Three body workers had bachelor's degrees, four had associate's degrees, one had completed some college education, and two had high school diplomas. Body workers' jobs included firefighter, motor oil bottling, mechanic, pecan farmer, masonry/construction, bartender/server, assistant brewer, line cook, welding/construction, and head brewer/brewery owner/construction. The previous sentence highlights how some body workers had a combination of different jobs.

Text workers ranged in age from 31-71 years old, with a mean age of 43. Among text workers, there were five females and six males. Three female text workers identified as Caucasian and two identified as Hispanic. Among male text workers, five identified as Caucasian and one identified as Hispanic. In terms of formal education, five text workers had PhDs, two had Juris Doctorates, two had master's degrees, and two had their bachelor's degrees. Three of the text workers are employed as faculty members at a large institution in the American southwest, and two text workers are employed as lawyers. One text worker is an elementary school teacher, one is employed as a manager for a small locally owned gourmet food store, one is a chemical biologist completing her post-

doctoral work at a children’s cancer research institute, one is a senior vice president for a textile manufacturing company, one is a forensic psychologist who also occasionally teaches classes at a local university, and one works as a family counselor. Table 1 provides a descriptive summary of the participants involved in this study.

After recruiting participants, I engaged in two forms of data collection: interviews and observations. I will start by explaining my interview process.

Table 1: Participants

Name	Occupation(s)	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Education
<i>Body Workers</i>					
Avery	Line Cook	F	26	African American	Associates
Bret	Brewer	M	32	Hispanic/Caucasian	Some College
Devin	Mechanic	M	33	Caucasian	Associates
Joe	Oil Production	M	58	Caucasian	High School
Jon	Brewery Owner	M	59	Caucasian	B.A.
Liz	Server/Bartender	F	37	Caucasian	Associates
Mary	Pecan Farmer	F	28	Caucasian	B.A.
Mason	Welder/Construction	M	34	Hispanic	Associates
Mitch	Firefighter	M	33	Caucasian	B.A.
Terry	Construction	M	76	Caucasian	High School
<i>Text Workers</i>					
Aaron	Professor	M	42	Caucasian	PhD
Adam	Lawyer	M	33	Caucasian	JD
Anna	Professor	F	34	Caucasian	PhD
Ben	Corporate VP	M	65	Caucasian	B.A.
Carson	Lawyer	M	32	Caucasian	JD

Gary	Elementary Teacher	M	33	Caucasian	MA
Julie	Chemical Biologist	F	33	Caucasian	PhD
Maggie	Family Counselor	F	59	Hispanic	MA
Natasha	Store Manager	F	31	Caucasian	B.A.
Nina	Professor	F	41	Hispanic	PhD
Steve	Forensic Psychologist	M	71	Hispanic	PhD

Procedures: Interviews

When text/body workers responded that they were willing to participate in my study, I worked with their schedules to find a time and location for each interview. The interviews followed a semi-structured form. Semi-structured interviews were useful for this study because they are aimed at gaining the interviewee’s descriptions of their experiences as they relate to the phenomenon being studied (Kvale, 2007). In this case, my goal was to learn more about the phenomenon of leadership in the context of participants’ work experiences.

Semi-structured interviews started with a sequence of prepared questions that were aimed at understanding my participants’ stories about leadership in their day-to-day work. Please see Appendix C for my interview guide. The semi-structured form of interviewing allowed me to change the order and wording of the questions as necessary “in order to follow-up the answers given and the stories told by the interviewees” (Kvale, 2007, p. 65). Follow-up questions are necessary in narrative and interpretive research because stories told by participants can shift and take on different narrative forms. As a

result, I had to give up some degree of control in order to follow participants through their narrative accounts and probe into the details of their stories (Riessman, 2008).

In preparation for the interviews, I recognized that eliciting narratives could prove challenging. Telling stories about experiences does not come naturally or easily for everyone, participants might not remember the details of their experiences, they might feel that they are not qualified to provide the information that the interviewer is seeking, or they simply might not be prone to telling stories in conversations (Czarniawska, 2009). Further, assuming that people can easily translate their experiences into narratives can put pressure on participants, which can lead to fleeting and meager responses (Riessman, 2008). Therefore, I used a number of strategies for eliciting narratives in the interviews. First, I wanted to establish a climate that allowed for storytelling in the interview. Drawing on Kvale (2007) I tried to create a supportive climate by listening attentively, showing respect and interest in the interviewee, and being clear about what the interview is about. In addition, Riessman (2008) noted that generating narratives in interviews can take longer and can lead to shifts in topics; indeed, my interviews typically lasted over 67 minutes and involved multiple shifts and tangents. Therefore, I drew on Riessman's (2008) recommendation and treated the interview as a conversation, which means I had to give up some control and follow participants as they shifted to different topics and details involved with their stories about leadership. Another technique I used was to ask participants to tell me about specific times when they experienced leadership at work, which Czarniawska (2009) describes as a *critical incident*. Critical incident questions were particularly useful when interviewees started giving broad, general descriptions because it helped them focus their thoughts on one particular experience (Czarniawska,

2009). Another strategy for eliciting stories is the straightforward approach of asking for them. Czarniawska (2009) found that many interviewees were able to provide interesting and detailed stories about their experiences when they were explicitly asked for stories about their experience with a particular phenomenon, and I used the same strategy in my interviews. Specifically, I instructed participants to try to answer questions as if they were telling me a descriptive story about their specific experiences. Finally, the thoughts and images of an experience can be difficult to translate into a coherent story without having put some thought into the wording beforehand. Therefore, to give the participants an opportunity to reflect on their experiences before the interview, they were told ahead of time that the questions would focus on learning about their experiences with leadership in their day-to-day work. Above all, I remained flexible to the interview situation. All of the aforementioned interviewing techniques were useful ways of eliciting narratives, but what worked in one interview did not always work in another (Czarniawska, 2009). Therefore, I remained open to changes in the interview context in order to prompt and follow up the answers given and the stories told by interviewees (Kvale, 2007).

In all, 21 participants volunteered to be interviewed for this study. Due to busy schedules, eight of the interviews were conducted over the phone (3 body workers and 5 text workers) and two interviews with body workers were a combination of in-person and over the phone. Thus, 10 interviews were completely face-to-face (5 body workers and 5 text workers). Notably, although there were 21 participants, there were only 20 interviews. Two of the text workers are married to each other, they work together, and they requested a joint interview. For each participant, I explained my procedures for maintaining their confidentiality and privacy, and each participant signed a consent form

agreeing to participate in the study. Please see Appendix B for an example of the consent form that I used for this study.

Interviews ranged from 44 minutes to 96 minutes, with an average length of over 67 minutes. In all, I collected 22 hours and 36 minutes of interview data. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed word-for-word, yielding a total of 480 pages of single-spaced data. A paid transcription service was used for transcribing 15 of the interviews, and the remaining 5 were personally transcribed. All identifying information was removed from the transcriptions in order to protect the confidentiality of the participants, and pseudonyms have been used in place of names in the interview transcripts.

Although interviews were the primary means of data collection, I recognize that interviews represent only one way of learning about a particular social phenomenon (Riessman, 2008). Therefore, in addition to interviews, I also used observations to enrich my understanding of participants' stories about leadership in their day-to-day work.

Procedures: Observations

Using multiple methods of data collection for qualitative research can be helpful because different methods make the social world visible in different ways (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Observations were useful for this study because they allowed me to see people in their embodied space, which helped me gain a better understanding of the material realities involved with text and body workers' narratives about leadership. Indeed, Czarniawska (2009) highly recommends that narrative researchers use direct observation along with interviews because "it makes it easier for the interviewer to visualize the stage on which the reported events are taking place, which greatly enhances understanding" (p. 50). Adding an observational component also helped me avoid over-

privileging the voices of text workers because relying solely on interviews would privilege discursive constructions of reality, which is native space for people engaging in text work. Finally, I added an observational component to help me provide a more rich and thick description of the day-to-day work processes of my participants. Thick description is broadly understood as adding multiple layers of detailed contextual descriptions of participants and the settings where they live and work (Creswell, 2007). Thick, detailed description is also a quality of good narrative writing (Goodall, 2008).

Observation and thick description are often associated with ethnographic research (Creswell, 2007). However, I am not trying to develop an understanding of a culture for a particular group, so my observations should not be regarded as an attempt at ethnography. Rather, my observations were used in combination with interviews to add context to participants' accounts of their day-to-day work processes.

I did not conduct observations for all of my participants in their day-to-day work. Rather, selecting participants to observe was based on two things. First, I used a form of criterion sampling in order to focus my observations on participants who were engaged in work that most strongly represents text or body work. Therefore, selecting participants to observe depended on the degree to which they use language or physical labor in their day-to-day work. Second, selecting participants for observation also depended on which participants were willing to let me spend time with them at their place of work. While arranging interview times with participants who agreed to be in the study, I asked participants if they would be willing to let me spend some time with them at work. If they agreed, then we proceeded with arranging a time for my observation. For two body workers and two text workers, the interview and observations occurred simultaneously;

the rest of my observations with body workers and text workers occurred at times that were separate from their interviews. Similar to the interviews, my goal was to engage in observations until I no longer found new information that added to my understanding of the research questions (Creswell, 2007).

Ultimately, I was able to conduct observations of the day-to-day-work for seven body workers and four text workers. For body workers, I observed day-to-day work at a fire station, a pecan farm, a work site for masonry and construction, a brewery, a professional kitchen, and a work-site for a welder. For text workers, I conducted observations in conference rooms and academic buildings.

In line with past research that uses participant observation, I kept field notes by writing down short accounts of my experiences within the immediate field situation (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). In situations where it was not possible to write down short accounts of my observations, I jotted down key words and phrases to describe my observations of different situations (Emerson, Shaw, & Fritz, 1995). Drawing on Lindlof and Taylor (2002), jotting down key words and phrases was focused on memories of specific events that occurred in the field. I then translated the field notes into more extensive accounts as soon as possible following the observations, resulting in 13 pages of double-spaced field notes for body workers and 5 pages of double-spaced field notes for text workers.

In total, I spent approximately 7 hours observing text workers. Excluding my observations at the brewery, the amount of time spent observing body workers was approximately 10 hours. My observations at the brewery, however, were unique. The brewery was in need of an assistant brewer, and I had some experience with

homebrewing, so I took a part-time job as an assistant brewer. As a result, I accumulated hundreds of hours of observations at the brewery. At the time of writing this dissertation, I am still working approximately 20-hours a week as an assistant brewer.

Using interviews and observations allowed me to collect a wide range of stories and descriptions of leadership in different work contexts. Next, in order to sift through the data and develop an understanding for how text/body work might influence perceptions of leadership, I needed to use a systematic process for data analysis.

Data Analysis

A thematic narrative analysis was used to examine the stories about leadership that were told by text/body workers. A thematic narrative analysis interprets stories as a whole and uses emerging themes to describe meanings associated with the phenomena under study (Riessman, 2008). Therefore, I focused on participants' stories about leadership, as well as their descriptions of discursive and material conditions involved in their day-to-day-work. I also used some elements of a dialogic narrative analysis, which allowed me to include both my voice and the voice of participants in the analysis and write-up of findings. The dialogic approach recognizes the researcher as an active part of narrative construction (Riessman, 2008). Further, observations helped me add context and thick description to the participants' narratives about leadership. Observations also served to highlight some of the ways that discourse and materiality were emphasized and de-emphasized in the different text work and body work environments.

In a thematic narrative analysis, data analysis begins during the interviewing and transcribing process (Kvale, 2007; Lindloff & Taylor, 2002; Riessman, 2008). For this stage of the analysis, I tried to gain a broad understanding of some of the major ways that

the participants talked about leadership in their day-to-day work. During interviews, when participants mentioned key phrases related to their stories about leadership, I would write them down on the interview protocol (Appendix C). Some examples of phrases that I wrote down during interviews include “lead by example,” “in the trenches,” “decision-making,” “listening,” “helping out,” and “safety.” I also wrote down key phrases that highlighted participants’ descriptions of discursive and/or material conditions in their day-to-day work, like “emails,” “writing,” “meetings,” “lifting heavy things,” “sweating a lot,” and “hand-eye coordination.” Throughout the process of collecting and transcribing interviews, I reviewed the notes that I had written down for each interview, and I highlighted the key words and phrases that were most prominent in participants’ narratives. Following the example of Smith and Dougherty (2012), I created a separate document where I wrote down memos about possible themes that seemed to be emerging from the stories in the interviews. Memos are a form of in-process analytic writing that “focuses on a theme or issue found in several incidents pulled together from fieldnotes and transcriptions,” and they help a researcher develop interpretations of the larger meanings emerging from the research experience (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 213).

Further, in thematic narrative analysis, the researcher goes back and forth between the emerging data and the existing scholarship in order to develop a surface level analysis of potential emergent themes (Riessman, 2008, p. 66). As I collected and transcribed initial interviews, I began noticing that some recurring ideas and phrases that were emphasized in participants’ narratives seemed particularly relevant to understanding divergent meanings for leadership among text and body workers. For example, my early interviews with body workers highlighted recurring stories about workplace safety.

According to Kvale (2007), this method of “interpreting as you go” can then be “pushed forward” into subsequent interviews in order to make later analysis more amenable (p. 102). Therefore, although my semi-structured interview protocol did not explicitly ask questions about workplace safety, I adapted subsequent interviews by asking body workers about the role of physical risks and workplace safety in their day-to-day work.

Although every participant had different stories to tell, I eventually noticed that my interviews were no longer generating new insights that added to my understanding of the research questions, which is an indication of theoretical saturation (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007). Riesman (2008) did not explicitly use the concept of theoretical saturation in her description of thematic narrative analysis, but she noted that researchers typically develop themes by identifying recurrent episodes across multiple narratives, which was demonstrated in Ewick and Silbey’s (2003) narrative thematic analysis. In other words, similar wholistic ideas were repeatedly emerging in participants’ responses to my interview questions. For example, text and body workers’ stories about work experiences began repeating similar overall ideas about different types of discursive and material conditions involved in their day-to-day work. Similarly, text and body workers’ stories about leadership began repeating similar overarching ideas related to demonstrating leadership in text and body work contexts. Having reached saturation, I stopped collecting interviews and moved into a deeper analysis of the data.

Interviews were transcribed word-for-word. A paid transcription service was used for transcribing 15 of the interviews, and the remaining 5 were personally transcribed. Notably, a thematic analysis of narratives starts with interpreting stories as a whole rather than simply fracturing them into thematic categories/codes. Keeping narratives whole

was done first by working with one interview transcript at a time, and examining each transcript for stories that relate to the specific phenomenon being studied (Riessman, 2008). For this dissertation, I focused on stories about leadership, as well as participants' descriptions of discursive and material conditions involved in their day-to-day-work. While working with each transcript, I listened to the interview recordings in order to check the accuracy of the transcriptions. Further, drawing on Smith and Dougherty (2012), as I read through the interview transcripts and examined stories about leadership, I created a separate document where I wrote down some of my interpretations of the overall meanings for leadership that seemed to be emerging from the stories. The document of memos was then combined with the memos that I developed during the interview process. Similar memos were grouped together, which served as preliminary interpretations of the larger meanings emerging from the data (Lindloff & Taylor, 2002).

The next step was coding the stories and organizing the codes into categories. For this step in the analysis, I read through each transcript multiple times, highlighting codes within the stories told by participants. Codes for each transcript were hand-written on a separate document, and similar codes were grouped together into broader categories. I then created a Microsoft Word document in which I stored quotes that demonstrated the different codes and categories. More specifically, drawing on Riessman (2008), after reading through each interview transcript and making initial interpretations of overall meanings for leadership that were constructed by text and body workers, I went back through the interview data and focused on coding the stories within each transcript. Following the example of Smith and Dougherty (2012), I created and named the codes by highlighting key words and phrases in participants' stories, which were similar to the key

phrases that I wrote down during the interview process. I then linked the codes together into categories that helped describe the stories as a whole, which is in line with Riessman's (2008) description of thematic narrative analysis. A *category* is a term that characterizes the overall meaning of a similar set of concepts or codes (Lindloff & Taylor, 2002). For example, codes like "showing respect," "being understanding," "caring," "listening," and "showing appreciation" continued to reoccur in participants' stories about good leaders, so those codes were initially placed into a broad overall category named "good leadership." To help manage the volume of codes and categories that emerged, I focused on codes and categories that seemed to be most prominent in the narratives of the participants. Notably, categories that were broad during the initial stages of analysis were later refined through further analysis and application of LC/MD.

As I developed codes and categories, I used the research questions to refine my analysis, but I was also careful to remain open to unexpected codes that emerged across participants' stories. I also followed the example of Dixon and Dougherty (2014) and used the theory of Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence as a sensitizing tool to help me develop codes (meaning fragments) and categories (meaning clusters) that described the different ways that meanings of leadership converged and diverged for people doing text work and body work. Further, incorporating a critical approach into my analysis means that I paid close attention to how issues of power imbalance emerged in participants' descriptions of leadership. I also applied a critical approach by exploring the ways that material conditions of everyday life influenced communication and perceptions of reality, which was contextualized by my observations of participants in their day-to-day working environments. Specifically, my analysis draws attention to how material

conditions of everyday life influence perceptions of leadership, which is a position that has been largely marginalized in most leadership research.

The final step was to group the stories into categories (themes) that helped answer my research questions and explain the phenomenon being studied (Riessman, 2008). My analysis drew particularly from the critical/feminist foundations of LC/MD, which helped me remain open to how people from marginalized social groups constructed meanings for reality that are different from the meanings constructed by members of more privileged groups (Dougherty, et al., 2009; Dixon & Dougherty, 2014). I focused on how meanings of leadership for people doing body work were marginalized in relation to meanings of leadership for people doing text work. In other words, as I developed codes and categories, I used LC/MD to interrogate how text workers and body workers used similar language to describe leadership, as well as how similar language served to mask divergent meanings. For example, in their descriptions of good leaders, nearly all of the text workers and body workers told stories about leaders who “set a good example” or “led by example.” However, upon using LC/MD for a closer analysis of the narratives, it became apparent that text and body workers had different expectations for how leaders should “lead by example,” and the divergent meanings were related to the different ways that discourse/materiality were de/emphasized in body work and text work.

As a qualitative study, questions about the validity of data must be taken into account (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, I will now explain some verification strategies that I used in order to strengthen the validity of my research.

Verification

Creswell (2007) suggests that qualitative researchers should use verification in order to lend credibility and transferability to the findings. Four forms of verification are used in this study. The first involves using rich, thick description by providing large sections of participants' narratives, which "allows the reader to determine the transferability of the participants' experiences" (Smith & Dougherty, 2012, p. 460). The second form of verification is a peer review, which provides an external check of the research process. In the peer debriefing, an individual keeps the researcher honest by "asking questions about methods, meanings, and interpretations; and provides the researcher with the opportunity for catharsis by sympathetically listening to the researcher's feelings" (Creswell, 2007, p. 208). The findings presented in this study are the end result of multiple debriefings with my doctoral advisor, Dr. Debbie Dougherty, in which she helped refine themes, sub-themes, and my interpretations of participants' quotes. The third form of verification is triangulation, which occurs when researchers use multiple sources and methods in order to gather evidence (Creswell, 2007). To accomplish triangulation, I conducted observations—in addition to interviews—in order to learn more about how leadership is experienced in the contexts of text and body work. Finally, the last form of verification that I used is clarifying researcher bias, which helps the reader understand the researcher's position and any biases that might impact the research process. Creswell (2007) described the clarification process as "the researcher comments on past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientation that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study" (p. 208). Efforts to clarify my bias can be found in the section about positioning myself earlier in this chapter.

Summary

To conclude this chapter, I want to reiterate that the primary goal of this study is to understand how assumptions about leadership might be related to the material and discursive work experiences of different social class groups. Traditional leadership research tends to take a quantitative approach that prescribes—and thus limits—the necessary characteristics of leadership. Further, more recent leadership research in the communication field has privileged the role of discourse in the construction of leadership, which has left materiality largely untheorized. Therefore, a related goal of my study is to develop a more inclusive understanding of the complexity and diversity of leadership processes in diverse lived experiences.

The meanings that people construct for leadership are at the heart of my analysis. A narrative approach is appropriate because stories are a way for people to make sense of their experiences, and analyzing those stories can help us understand the meanings that people create for their daily lives (Goodall, 2008; Riessman, 2008). I collected data through interviews and observations of participants in their day-to-day work. I used a thematic narrative analysis to organize my data into themes that helped me describe the ways that text/body workers experience leadership. Finally, the Theory of Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence was used as a sensitizing tool to help me understand how leadership can take on divergent meanings through diverse working experiences of different social class groups.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings

The overall goal of this study is to broaden current understandings of leadership by exploring the relationship between leadership and social class. Specifically, I want to know how, if at all, meanings of leadership might emerge from and reinforce a system of social class that privileges some groups—and meanings for leadership—over others. This analysis draws particular attention to the ways that materiality and discourse mutually influence how people talk about leadership, and it applies the theory of LC/MD to highlight how some meanings of leadership can become privileged over others.

To achieve the goals of this study, I began my analysis by seeking a broad understanding for the multiple ways that leadership was described by individuals engaged in text and body work (RQ1). Second, I paid particular attention to the ways that material and discursive conditions were involved with the day-to-day work of text and body workers (RQ2). Finally, I applied the Theory of Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence to help me understand how leadership can take on divergent meanings through diverse working experiences, and how those meanings can privilege some social class assumptions about leadership at the expense of others (RQ3 and RQ4). This chapter presents the main themes and sub-themes that emerged for each research question. The following table provides an overview of the themes and sub-themes.

Table 2: Summary of Themes and Sub-themes

Summary of Findings	
Themes/Subthemes	Description
Research Question 1	
RQ1: How do people doing text work and body work construct what it means to be a leader?	
Theme 1: Other-Oriented Leadership	Demonstrating a concern for the well-being, hard work, and ideas of others.

<i>Subtheme 1: Providing Support</i>	<i>Expressing emotional support and concern for the personal lives of others.</i>
<i>Subtheme 2: Giving Recognition</i>	<i>Explicitly recognizing hard work and accomplishments of others.</i>
<i>Subtheme 3: Listening</i>	<i>Providing opportunities for others to contribute ideas for work processes.</i>
Theme 2: Self-Oriented Leadership	Communicating and behaving in ways that are perceived as prioritizing self-interests and/or behaving unprofessionally.
Research Question 2	
RQ2: How are discursive and material conditions involved in the day-to-day work of text and body workers?	
Theme 1: Emphasizing Materiality in Body Work	Physical working conditions that are emphasized in body work.
<i>Subtheme 1: Subordinating Discourse in Body Work</i>	<i>Use of communication and language in body work.</i>
Theme 2: Emphasizing Discourse in Text Work	<i>Work processes that emphasize the use of language and communication in text work.</i>
<i>Subtheme 1: Subordinating Materiality in text work.</i>	<i>Physical working conditions involved in text work.</i>
Research Question 3	
RQ3: How, if at all, do meanings of leadership converge and diverge for people doing text work and body work?	
Theme 1: Leading by Example	Demonstrating the ability to understand and perform the expectations for a particular job.
<i>Subtheme 1: “In the Trenches”</i>	<i>Actively engaging in the day-to-day work processes that other organizational members are expected to perform in body work.</i>
<i>Subtheme 2: Reputation of Success</i>	<i>Possessing credentials that demonstrate experience and knowledge in text work.</i>
Theme 2: Helping	Behaving or communicating in ways that assist other organizational members in completing their day-to-day work.
<i>Subtheme 1: “Doing the Work”</i>	<i>Assisting other organizational members by physically performing their work responsibilities in body work.</i>
<i>Subtheme 2: “Communicating Expectations”</i>	<i>Using written and verbal communication to describe how a job should be performed in text work.</i>

Theme 3: Decision Making	Being responsible for choosing a course of action.
<i>Subtheme 1: Immediate Outcomes</i>	<i>Decisions made quickly in body work; outcomes are more immediate and tangible.</i>
<i>Subtheme 2: Prolonged Change</i>	<i>Decisions involve more deliberation in text work; outcomes emerge over time in interactions.</i>
Theme 4: Creating a Productive Work Environment	Promoting a work environment that minimizes physical risk and encourages productivity.
<i>Subtheme 1: Managing Physical Safety</i>	<i>Demonstrating a concern for physical safety in body work.</i>
<i>Subtheme 2: Inspiring Productivity</i>	<i>Communicating in ways that inspire others to accomplish goals in text work.</i>
Research Question 4	
RQ4: How are stories about leadership classed?	
Theme 1: Reinforcing Organizational Hierarchy/Subordination	Placing leaders in higher ranking positions on organizational hierarchy.
<i>Subtheme 1: Management as Leadership</i>	<i>Describing leaders by referring to management and administrative positions in organizational hierarchy.</i>
<i>Subtheme 2: Denying Leadership</i>	<i>Refusing to view self as leader due to occupying lower positions in organizational hierarchy.</i>
Theme 2: Integrating Discourse & Downplaying Materiality	Stories about leadership that emphasize skillful use of discourse over the material conditions of leadership.
<i>Subtheme 1: Integrating Discourse in Body Work</i>	<i>Body workers' stories about leadership that emphasize the skillful use of communication.</i>
<i>Subtheme 2: Downplaying Material Conditions of Leadership</i>	<i>Text workers' stories about leadership that downplay material conditions involved with leadership.</i>

Research Question One:

What It Means to Be A Leader in Text Work and Body Work

For the first research question, I remained open to the multiple meanings of leadership that were communicatively created by participants. Initially, it seemed like there were a large number of common themes that emerged for the first research

question. However, different meanings emerged for some of the common themes, making some themes more suitable for discussion in the third research question.

The findings for the first research question demonstrate how text workers and body workers constructed meanings for leadership that mostly align with transformational leadership theories, which describes leaders as charismatic and inspiring individuals who have influence and control over relatively passive followers (Bass, 2008; Tourish, 2008). Text workers and body workers emphasized the importance of leaders who communicated in ways that are emotionally supportive and caring, which demonstrates one of the ways that participants privileged discursive processes in their constructions of leadership. By privileging discursive processes and downplaying the importance of material realities, the findings for the first research question are related to Dougherty's (2011) discussion of middle-class privilege.

Finally, findings for the first research question provide insight into interactions of discursive and material conditions involved with text work and body work. Participants' stories about leadership draw attention to the physical body because they emphasize the embodied experience of emotions, which is part of Hansen, et al.'s (2007) description of an aesthetic approach to leadership. Participants' stories also draw attention to communication styles that have been associated with social class distinctions in past research (e.g., Lareau, 2011; Lubrano, 2004; Mills, 2004; Shatzman & Strauss, 1955).

The themes presented for the first research question are focused on the predominant meanings of leadership that were shared among text and body workers. Across all interviews, there are two main themes that highlight some of the common meanings for leadership in different work contexts: (1) Other-Oriented Leadership and

(2) Self-Oriented Leadership. What follows is a description of each theme, accompanied by exemplars from the participants' stories about leadership.

RQ1: Theme 1: Other-Oriented Leadership

Sub-themes: “Providing Support,” Giving Recognition,” and “Listening”

The first theme that emerged from an interpretive narrative analysis was caring for others. *Other-oriented leadership* means demonstrating a concern for the well-being, hard work, and ideas of other organizational members. All text workers and body workers emphasized caring for others as an important part of leadership.

Other-Oriented Leadership: “Providing Support”

The first sub-theme of “providing support” describes one way that that leaders can demonstrate that they care for others. Specifically, *providing support* means expressing emotional support and concern for the personal lives of organizational members. Natasha, a 31-year-old text worker, provides an example of how leadership involves caring for others by providing emotional support. She is employed as a manager at a small locally owned business, and she has daily contact with her boss, who is also the owner of the business. Natasha gave an example of good leadership by recounting a time when her boss provided emotional support and expressed concern for her personal life:

NATASHA: Okay, so a few years ago my grandfather passed away, and my boss also had a full-time job, and once I got the news, she was actually in the middle of her own meeting, and she happened to find out through other people what had happened. She was able to put things aside in her other job and come to me and be at my side. To let me go and grieve and deal with the shock, and also to be there as a support, and be there for her employee at a time when they really needed her.

She was a great leader—I'm not the type of person that really reaches out, especially when I'm emotionally distraught, so she would always check in on me.

(Natasha, text worker, 31-year-old Caucasian female, Small Business Manager)

Natasha's story highlights her preference for leaders who demonstrate concern for their employees by providing emotional support, which seems to support some assumptions of a functionalist approach to leadership. Specifically, transformational leadership theories emphasize the importance of leaders who can provide individual consideration and support to followers (Bass, 1985, 2008). Natasha's experience also highlights discursive and material conditions that became part of her interpretation of leadership. For her, leadership was tied to the emotions she experienced, as well as the discursive expression of support that was demonstrated by the leader in her example. Hansen, et al. (2007) explained that the sensory feeling of emotions is one way of understanding how the physical body becomes involved in meanings for leadership. Further, by drawing attention to her embodied emotions, Natasha demonstrates one of the ways that work becomes known through its relation to the body, which is one of the ways that Ashcraft, et al. (2009) recommended studying the material conditions that become involved with processes of organizing. Finally, Dougherty (2011) noted that the body is hidden in text work because text work emphasizes more use of language and communication, so Natasha's experience implies that studying the felt emotions of text workers could be a way of drawing attention to the role of the body in text work.

Other-Oriented Leadership: "Giving Recognition"

The sub-theme of *giving recognition* is used to describe participants' stories about how good leaders showed that they cared for others by recognizing the hard work and

accomplishments of other organizational members. Again, across the board, text workers and body workers shared a concern for having their hard work recognized by people they considered to be leaders. The following example comes from Mason, a 34-year-old welder, who shared an experience about how good leaders demonstrate that they appreciate others' hard work.

MASON: When I was shop foreman—we had a huge job coming up. It was a monster job. We beat our deadline by three weeks, you know, and all we got was a "good job" from the owner, but I bought those guys lunch. We shut down early on a Friday afternoon, we grilled hamburgers and hotdogs, you know. Just a simple show of appreciation...Just that little bit of gratitude went a long way for me. (Mason, body worker, 34-year-old Hispanic male, Welder)

Interestingly, Mason noted that the owner—someone who might otherwise be seen as a leader—did not do enough to demonstrate appreciation for a job well-done; a simple “good job” was not enough. Mason then described how he gave recognition to his employees, which involved providing food and time off from work. His example also implies that material conditions (i.e., food) are more preferable forms of recognition than discursive processes, such as saying “good job.” Using tangible objects like food as a way of rewarding hard work also relates to a functionalist approach to leadership. Specifically, Mason’s quote is connected to ideas of *transactional leadership*, which is essentially based on a model of economic transaction where leaders motivate followers by exchanging rewards for effort (Bass, 2008).

Other-Oriented Leadership: “Listening”

The sub-theme of *listening* refers to situations where leaders provide opportunities for others to contribute ideas for work processes. Body workers and text workers appreciated leaders who were open to feedback and gave them a chance to voice their ideas and concerns. The following example comes from Mary, a 28-year-old body worker who works as a pecan farmer at a relatively new farm. She helps run the day-to-day operations at the farm, and the farm is still in the process of developing standard operating procedures, so—using herself as an example of good leadership—she highlighted the importance of remaining open to feedback and new ideas:

MARY: When we first started people were using tools and not putting them back in the same place, so we couldn't find them when we went to go use them...and then we had a meeting. So just having that meeting so that everyone could be on the same page and also get the employees' feedback as well, so it's not just "this is what we want," but we're also open to what makes sense...If you're being a leader, you have mutual respect for each other and you can communicate ways that may work better. Because you may think one way is the best, but if you're not actually out there doing it, then you don't know. I think it's important to have that communication and teamwork from the top to the bottom. (Mary, body worker, 28-year-old Caucasian female, Pecan Farmer)

In Mary's example, listening is an important part of good leadership because someone else may have a better way of doing a job, and leaders should be interested in finding ways to improve work processes. Being open to feedback is also a way of demonstrating “mutual respect” for other organizational members. Mary's experience

also highlights some of the discursive (i.e., meetings) and material conditions (i.e., tools) that are involved with her constructions of leadership at a pecan farm.

It is particularly interesting that Mary said people who are “out there doing it” are in a better position to understand the work processes, so they are in a better position to “communicate ways that may work better.” The implication is that those who engage in physical labor—body workers—experience material realities in ways that provide them with knowledge that is different from those who are not as involved with the physical labor—text workers. By simultaneously articulating the perspectives and experiences of body workers and text workers, Mary seems to demonstrate the concept of double-consciousness, which is involved with the foundations of LC/MD. Double-consciousness refers to the idea that subordinate groups—in this case body workers—are in a better position to understand their own social position as well as the position of more privileged groups (Wood, 2005). The ability to perceive their own social realities as well as those of more privileged groups could be related to the tendency of body workers to recognize the importance of both communication and physical labor in their day-to-day work, while text workers mostly downplayed the physical conditions of their work.

Mary also associated leadership with a bureaucratic organizational structure by emphasizing the importance of communication “from the top to the bottom.” From a critical perspective, her construction of leadership could be influenced by dominant discourses that associate leadership with positions of authority and hierarchy (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007). Mary also implies that those at the “top” of the hierarchy might not know the best ways of working because they are not the ones who are “out there doing it,” so they should listen to the ideas of those who at the “bottom.” Her construction of

leadership is associated with having authority positions at the “top” of an organizational hierarchy, and those at the “top” are disassociated with engaging in physical labor. Thus, physical labor and those who engage in it, like body workers, become disassociated from positions of leadership. Associating leadership with management and hierarchy was prevalent among text workers and body workers, which has implications for issues of social class, so it will be further discussed in the findings in the fourth research question.

As some of the previous examples demonstrate, participants’ experiences with bad leadership were useful in identifying some of their expectations for good leadership. However, there were also a couple of ways that participants consistently talked about bad leadership that merit closer inspection. The second theme specifically highlights the most common ways that text workers and body workers described bad leadership.

RQ1: Theme 2: Self-Oriented Leadership

Self-oriented leadership means communicating and/or behaving in ways that are perceived as prioritizing self-interests and/or behaving unprofessionally. Compared to examples of other-oriented leadership, self-oriented leadership was associated with leaders who were perceived as selfish, short-sighted, deceitful, and/or personally offensive. When leaders prioritized self-interests, they refused to admit when they made mistakes, were unwilling to consider constructive feedback, took credit for other people’s work, or they tried to make themselves appear powerful by demeaning others.

Ben, a 65-year-old text worker, provided an example of how self-oriented leadership occurs when someone is primarily concerned with their own self-interest. Ben worked his way up to become the Vice President of Global Procurement for a Fortune

500 manufacturing company, and he experienced many examples of good and bad leadership along the way. In the following example, he describes a self-oriented leader:

BEN: I'll call this person a selfish manager...Thinking more of himself, short-sighted...It was their effort to hide problems. He was managing a location, they were producing some defective materials. Rather than correct the issues causing the bad materials, either the workmanship or the equipment wasn't maintained to properly manufacture the parts, rather than address that, this manager decided to hide the defects, literally, in the case of this textile plant. Took the defective fabric that was produced and put it into empty trailers and stored those trailers in a rented yard on the other side of town...An issue that probably causes many leaders a problem is covering up failure. They've grown with so many successes that anything considered less than superior is shameful and to be hidden. Hence, not an opportunity for the next promotion. On the other side, good managers admit to a mistake right away and what separates them is their ability to get to the root cause of issues and correct it. It changes the dynamics, it goes from this mistake, this issue that is causing an inefficiency, to finding a problem, exposing it, and correcting it. If that's allowed to happen, other plants can look at things...that were solved by this event and you can export the solution. (Ben, text worker, 65-year-old Caucasian male, VP of Global Procurement)

Ben constructed a contrast between good and bad leadership. Bad leadership is tied to being short-sighted and selfish, and when someone who is expected to be a leader prioritizes self-interests, they forgo opportunities to admit mistakes and solve problems. On the other hand, good leadership involves placing organizational interests ahead of

self-interests, and when someone admits mistakes and solves problems, those solutions could ultimately be used to benefit the organization as a whole. Therefore, based on Ben's constructions of leadership, the concepts of bad/good leadership can be described in terms of a self/other-orientation. Ben later told me that the "selfish manager" in this example was ultimately fired because of their selfish actions. If the "bad leader" had acted in a way that was more other-oriented, they might not have been fired. Thus, the story implies that being other-oriented can be a tool for achieving self-interests.

Ben's narrative about leadership also involves different forms of organizational sites and objects, two areas for exploring the intersection of discursive and material conditions involved with constructions of organizational realities (Ashcraft, et al., 2009). In his story about leadership, Ben talked about material objects like fabric, equipment, and trailers. He also highlighted organizational sites by drawing attention to physical locations like a textile-manufacturing plant, as well as a rented yard for trailers full of defective products, which was located on the "other side of town." Further, discursive processes of "admitting mistakes" were associated with meanings for good leadership.

Like Mary, Ben seems to associate leadership with ideas about efficiency and productivity that are prominent in functionalist leadership research. Further, when asked to provide an example of bad leadership, Ben focused his story on an individual in a management position. Therefore, Ben's story seems to draw upon and reinforce dominant assumptions that associate leadership with management roles (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007).

The next example of self-oriented leadership is from Mitch, a 33-year-old body worker. Mitch shared a story about a bad leader from his early career as a firefighter:

MITCH: I mean, this guy he's special. He's just very maniacal. He's able to twist things, and to find your weaknesses and really use them against you, and just a bad person. So, I'm just starting out in this department, kinda learning, I'm doing everything wrong, he's not teaching me as much as he's letting me fail, and that would be fine if he was gonna pick me up and say, "Hey, this is how you do it." But no, he'd let me mess up, and then use that as another dig on me. It wasn't just me, it was a lot of people in this department. You know, these are my first memories of this department, and if I'm an employee here, you want me to be molded in a way that's gonna be beneficial for this department, and beneficial to the people that I serve, and this guy was just...I hated coming to work, at home I was stressed, and just on edge, and I wasn't happy.

At this point, Mitch went into more detail about the history of this particular bad leader, who was the Chief at his fire department. He also described times when the Chief berated other firefighters for minor infractions. Later in the interview, Mitch described why he felt the Chief was demonstrating bad leadership:

MITCH: To me, there's a million hard things about being a leader, but the biggest thing, using him as an example, he was all about himself, and his image, and wanting to be the biggest and baddest guy. Whereas a really good leader, you know, you care about what people think of you, that's very important, but for a real leader...that stuff is beside the point, you know? The real leaders think about what's right, what's good for other people, what's gonna benefit everybody, what's the real good in putting themselves behind that, and that guy couldn't do that.

(Mitch, body worker, 33-year-old Caucasian male, Firefighter)

Like Ben, Mitch's story about leadership relates to the other/self-orientation of good/bad leadership that I previously mentioned. For Mitch, bad leadership involved placing self-interests above the interests of others and above the best interests of the organization. The self-oriented leader in Mitch's example was more concerned with his own personal image than with thinking about "what's good for other people." For Mitch, other-oriented leadership seems very similar to descriptions of transformational leaders who give individualized consideration to followers and create a positive vision for the future of the organization (Bass, 2008). In Mitch's example, a good leader would have given individualized consideration by "picking him up" when he failed and "teaching" him how to perform his work. Further, Mitch implies that a good leader could foster a positive vision for the future of the organization by "molding" followers in ways that would be "beneficial for the department" and "good for everybody."

As with previous examples, Mitch chose to talk about his Chief—a position of authority and higher rank—when prompted to talk about leadership. Therefore, Mitch's construction of leadership seems to reinforce dominant assumptions that tie leadership to positions of management and hierarchy (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007; Lucas, 2011a). Further, by associating leadership with a position of authority and higher rank, Mitch subordinated himself within his own construction of leadership.

However, like Mary, the pecan farmer, Mitch appears to demonstrate a form of double-consciousness. He seems to demonstrate his perception of leadership from the perspective of the more privileged, higher-ranked organizational members, as well as from his own subordinate perspective (Wood, 2005). In the first part of his quote, he momentarily views himself from the perspective of a leader in a higher-ranked authority

position, and noted that a good leader would want him to be molded in a way that would benefit the department. Mitch's act of perspective-taking would seem to contradict the research of Shatzman and Strauss (1955), who found that perspective-taking was less common among the working class. However, Mitch later explained that he comes from a family of teachers and educators—text workers—so Mitch was raised in a family associated with more upper-class norms of communicating, which includes the tendency to engage in perspective-taking (Shatzman & Strauss, 1955). Thus, his act of perspective-taking actually reinforces the work of Shatzman and Strauss (1955).

The final example of self-oriented leadership draws attention to some of the unprofessional behaviors that participants associated with self-oriented leadership. Participants' descriptions of leaders who acted unprofessionally reinforced the rules for emotional displays in the workplace that were discussed by Kramer and Hess (2002). When participants described self-oriented leaders as “unprofessional,” it typically involved uncontrolled emotional outbursts. In the following story, Carson, a 32-year-old lawyer, recounts an example of an unprofessional leader:

CARSON: This guy wanted to enforce rules against everybody, and not obey any of them himself. He was pretty unabashed in the way he did it, too. He actually walked into the special assistant's office on day—which is essentially like the office manager—and just said, "I'm gonna tele-work today, and if anybody has a problem with that, then fuck them." That's a direct quote, which was both unprofessional and just completely narcissistic. Somebody made a thinly veiled suggestion that he should maybe keep more regular hours at the office. He called a meeting of the attorneys and told us we needed to keep more regular hours and

our appearance needed to be more professional. He said that in sweatpants, as he was leaving to go to the doctor. We were like, "You realize what you're saying, right?" (Carson, text worker, 32-year-old Caucasian male, Lawyer)

In his example, self-oriented leadership was characterized by what Carson considered to be "unprofessional" behavior, which came in the form of vulgar language and hypocritical demands. Carson's mention of "narcissism" also seems to link his story to the previous quotes that described leaders who prioritized self-interests. Therefore, Carson's quote reinforces the possibility of using the other/self-orientation for describing good/bad leadership, because it implies that bad leaders are primarily concerned with fulfilling self-interests. Carson's example also highlights some of the discursive and material conditions involved with constructions of leadership. Material conditions like clothing (i.e., sweatpants and professional appearance) and discursive processes like meetings and vulgar language were mutually involved in his construction of leadership.

Material and discursive conditions in Carson's quote also relate to issues of social class. Carson's story about leadership highlighted the inappropriateness of using vulgar language and wearing sweatpants in a law office. Dougherty (2011) and Lubrano (2004) noted that clothes become an important part of what counts as appropriate for white-collar office environments. Wearing sweatpants at work, it seems, is not a good way of marking the body as part of the text class. Further, by drawing attention to the inappropriate use of vulgar language, Carson's example of bad leadership reinforces some middle-class assumptions about language and politeness. "Characteristics such as swearing, directness and talking loudly which are generally considered impolite are associated with the working class" (Mills, 2004, p. 173). By highlighting the

inappropriateness of vulgar language in the text work environment of a law office, Carson reinforced norms of communication that could reinforce social class differences.

Findings for the first research question imply that meanings for bad/good leadership can relate to perceptions of having a self/other-orientation. Good leadership is associated with having a concern for others, so the shared meanings of good leadership relate to an emphasis on interpersonal consideration that is one of the central ideas of transformational leadership (Bass, 2008; Tourish, 2008). The importance of listening also relates to transformational leadership because it involves making organizational members feel like they are an important part of organizational processes (Bass, 2008).

One of the main overall findings seems to be that common understandings of leadership tend to reinforce traditional functionalist approaches to leadership that associate leadership with positions of management and authority (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007). Reinforcing dominant assumptions that tie leadership to positions of authority could be related to issues of social class (Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). Lucas and Buzzanell (2004) explained that dominant ideologies of social class tend to associate blue-collar workers with physical labor and subordinate positions in organizations. Therefore, by disassociating leadership from subordinate positions, text and body workers reinforced dominant assumptions that marginalize body workers from constructions of leadership, which simultaneously reinforces social class distinctions.

Emotions were also highlighted in participants' shared meanings for leadership. When participants described good and bad leadership, they highlighted leaders who expressed emotional support, leaders who made them feel frustrated, and leaders who made them feel appreciated—or under-appreciated. The emphasis on emotions is tied to

an aesthetic approach to leadership, which advocates for paying attention to the ways that the embodied experience of emotions becomes tied to constructions of leadership (Hansen, et al., 2007). Therefore, the shared meanings for leadership draw attention to how the physical body becomes part of discursive constructions of leadership.

In addition to providing support for functionalist assumptions about leadership and an aesthetic approach to leadership, findings for the first research question also demonstrated some of the ways that discursive and material conditions become involved in constructions of leadership. In the following section I will give a more detailed account of the discursive and material conditions that are emphasized in the day-to-day work of text workers and body workers who participated in this study.

Research Question Two:

Discursive and Material Conditions in Body Work and Text Work

The second research question called for an explicit focus on the material and discursive conditions that are involved in text work and body work. Discursive conditions are characterized by processes of communicating and language use that were personally observed and/or described by participants. In order to better recognize different kinds of material conditions, it was particularly helpful to use some of the past literature about materiality as a sensitizing tool. I used ideas from Ashcraft, et al. (2009) to draw attention to the ways that objects, sites, and bodies become involved with processes of organizing. Further, the aesthetics approach—advocated by Hansen, et al. (2007)—helped me focus on different ways that day-to-day work experiences appealed to the senses. Finally, I incorporate my own observations along with interviews in order to add more thick description of physical working conditions experienced by text and body workers. The

findings for the second research question are organized into two main themes: (1) Emphasizing Materiality in Body Work and (2) Emphasizing Discourse in Text Work.

Findings for this research question highlight the unique ways that discourse/materiality is de/emphasized in text/body work, which is important because the different material experiences of text workers and body workers shape how they understand reality (Dougherty, et al., 2009). Further, Dougherty (2011) argued that “social class is characterized, at least in part, by the textual/body work accomplished by a person or group of people” (p. 179). By making the discursive and material conditions of text work and body work more salient, the findings for this research question can help me explain how different types of work experiences become associated with social class. Because these findings will have implications for social class, they will provide insight into the ways that marginalized groups—body workers—create meanings for reality that are different from meanings constructed by members of more privileged social class groups—text workers (Dougherty, et al., 2009).

Finally, highlighting discursive and material conditions that are de/emphasized in body/text work helps make sense of divergent meanings for leadership that are constructed by different social class groups. Specifically, “different social groups have divergent ways of knowing based on different experiences” (Dougherty, et al., 2009, p. 22). Understanding material/discursive conditions of text/body work also provides insight into how meanings for leadership are constructed through both discourse and materiality.

In the following presentation of themes and sub-themes, I draw attention to the different ways that discursive and material conditions are de/emphasized in text work and body work; however, the findings are not meant to dichotomize text/body and

discourse/materiality. Discursive and material conditions cannot—and should not—be viewed as mutually exclusive conditions. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, all work involves degrees of text and body (Dougherty, 2011; Marvin, 2006).

RQ2: Theme 1: Emphasizing Materiality in Body Work

Sub-theme: “Subordinating Discourse in Body Work”

The first theme—*emphasizing materiality in body work*—describes physical working conditions that were emphasized in body work. In line with past research, material conditions—particularly the physical body—were foregrounded in the working experiences described by body workers. Further, to avoid reinforcing dominant assumptions that disassociate discursive processes from body work, my analysis includes a subtheme that draws attention to discursive processes involved with body work. Before getting to my subtheme, I present examples that highlight physical objects, organizational sites, and physical bodies that are central to day-to-day tasks of body work.

The first example of *emphasizing material conditions in body work* comes from Avery, a 26-year-old line cook. The following quote highlights some of the material conditions involved with her day-to-day work routine:

AVERY: Typical day for me, coming to the kitchen. Turning on a bunch of equipment. Stocking a bunch of items. Prepping for the day. Cutting tomatoes. Burning bacon. Things like that. For lunch, setting everything up so the night crew doesn't have to struggle for the dinner rush. Then I make my way to the other restaurant for my own dinner rush...Serve a bunch of food. Sweat a lot. I do a lot of sweating. A few dishes. Then undo it all. Stock again. Wrap it up. Scrub the floors. Clean the equipment.

The food, kitchen equipment, and dishes are some of the material conditions that are immediately noticeable in Avery's description of her day-to-day work. She also mentioned "scrubbing floors" and "stocking items," which demonstrates processes of physical labor that typically characterize body work. Further, her description of "sweating a lot" draws attention to the role of the physical body in her work, and it highlights the way that her line of work appeals to the senses.

I had the opportunity to personally observe Avery's working conditions, and it makes sense that her work involves sweating a lot; the grill is hot, and it is always on. The grill is next to the fryer, which contains oil between 350 to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Then, when an order is ready, the plate goes underneath two large heat lamps—next to the fryer—until another worker can take the food to the customers. When the restaurant is busy, Avery is usually grilling multiple pieces of meat while simultaneously managing a couple of frying baskets filled with hot French fries. Throughout the entire process, she is grabbing ingredients out of refrigerators and freezers, cutting and slicing meats and vegetables, preparing side dishes, and carefully plating hot meals.

The kitchen is full of hazards, so accidents are always a possibility. One day I noticed that Avery was walking with a limp and she had bandages on her leg and forearm. When I asked Avery what happened, her quote provided an example of the physical risks that were exclusively involved with body work:

EVERY: That was fun. All my fault. I was taking something out of an oven. It was braised beef. There was a lot of grease. A lot of liquid. Straight out of the oven. It shifted and kind of slipped out of my hand and fell into my boot.

Fortunately, my boot was untied. I kicked it off pretty quick...My sock, you could

see the imprints...My socks were kind of burned to my fresh. (Avery, body worker, 26-year-old African American female, Line Cook)

Extremely hot liquids, hot kitchen equipment, boots, slippery conditions, and burns are normal in a commercial kitchen. The physical nature of Avery's work, as well as the injuries she sustained doing her work, reinforces Dougherty's (2011) discussion of the physicality and inherent risk that characterizes body work. In contrast to text workers, all of the body workers who participated in this study had a story about the physical risks involved with their day-to-day work, which could relate to divergent meanings for leadership that will be discussed in the next research question.

Avery's experience with extreme burns demonstrates one of the most interesting ways material conditions become emphasized in body work. In the next exemplar, Mason, a 34-year-old welder, provides more examples of the material conditions and physical risks involved in body work:

MIKE: So, would you say that your work involves more hands-on physical work or primarily involves more working with words and communication?

MASON: Oh, it's physical. Constant hand-eye coordination...Lifting stuff, moving things. Loading and unloading the truck getting ready for work that day is physical itself...You might be lifting materials at lunchtime for a job next week and there's 3000 pounds of steel in that trailer that we're gonna install next week.

Without hesitation, Mason immediately described his work as "physical." "Hand-eye coordination," "lifting stuff," "moving things," and "loading and unloading" are aspects of physical labor that emphasize the use of the body, and de-emphasize use of communication. Mason also mentioned some of the material objects that are involved

with his work, like trucks and 3000 pounds of steel. Thus, Mason's description draws particular attention to material conditions and the physical body, and reinforces past literature that describes body work as inherently physical (Dougherty, 2011).

I joined Mason at a work site where he was welding scaffolding for a local brewery, and the "physical" conditions of the job dominated my senses. When I arrived at the work site, I noticed some large metal grating and about a dozen long metal rods on the ground behind the brewery. As I began talking to Mason, his assistant turned on a large power saw and began measuring and cutting some of the metal rods. The sound of sawing metal was so loud that I had to pause the interview for a few minutes until the sawing stopped, which made me realize one way that this particular work context related to Dougherty's (2009) description of body work. Specifically, as I waited to continue the interview, the sound of sawing metal was so overwhelmingly dominant that it literally drowned out or silenced any attempt at verbal communication. Thus, Mason's interview provided a literal example of how communication is subordinated to material conditions in body work. When the sawing stopped, the air was filled with the smell of hot metal, and Mason hauled the fresh-cut metal rods into the brewery and placed them between three giant metal brewing kettles—ranging from about seven to ten feet tall.

At this point, Mason and his assistant used tape measures and painters' tape to mark spots on the floor. Mason's assistant went back outside to cut some pieces of metal grating, which would become the main platform of the scaffolding that they were putting together. As I watched them work, I noticed how their clothing and appearance—as well as their physical labor—were tied to the work they were doing. They wore thick pants, long sleeve shirts, gloves, and work boots. They both had tape measures and pocket

knives clipped to their pants, and they both brought their own tool boxes. Thus, my observation seems to reinforce Dougherty's (2011) examples of how clothing can serve as a marker for perceptions of social class. Their clothing and attire marked them as body workers who engage in dangerous physical labor, which requires different—more durable—clothing than one would expect to see in a text work environment.

I also noticed that most interactions between Mason and his assistant involved communicating directions about how to measure, cut, and move metal pieces. Their communication was brief and focused on the immediate tasks they were performing for their work, which reinforces past research that describes working class communication as short and direct (Lubrano, 2004; Rushton & Young, 1975; Shatzman & Strauss, 1955).

The space inside the brewery was tight, so it took careful teamwork to put the metal grating into place. Mason lifted one side of the grating and his assistant lifted the other side, and they proceeded to move the grating into place by verbally communicating directions to one another, like “One, two, three, lift,” and “A little more towards you,” and “Watch out for the kettle,” and “Okay, right there.” Once everything was in place, Mason grabbed a welding torch, pulled on a welding mask, warned me not to look into the flame, and began welding the metal rods—the legs of the scaffolding—onto the metal grating. The smell of burning metal and smoke filled the room.

Mason later explained how much he appreciated leaders who could *lead by example*—a theme I will discuss in the next research question—and that it can be dangerous when leaders do not understand how to do the job. I asked him to tell me more about the dangers and risks involved with his job, and he explained how he injured himself while teaching a welding class at a local community college:

MASON: It's one of those things, like I knew better... You don't wear gloves around lubed equipment, because you never know. And that's what happened, the blade—the saw was turned at 45 degrees and so the saw was actually hanging out of the base a little bit, and I heard something crash in the lab. We have these horrible tables that if you bump them sometimes, they come crashing down and it makes like a horrible shatter sound. So I turned around like "HUHUUHUUH"—It's loud, you know... I said, "Is everybody alright?" And when I turned like this, the teeth of the saw blade caught my glove and just sucked my hand in. I got lucky though because my glove lost three fingertips. I only lost one. So, it coulda' been worse. (Mason, body worker, 34-year-old Hispanic male, Welder)

Based on Mason's experiences, body work involves a necessary focus on material conditions. Mason literally lost part of his body when he stopped paying enough attention to how he was using a piece of equipment that was a normal part of his day-to-day work. When body workers lose focus on how they are interacting with their physical surrounding, they put themselves—and anyone around them—at physical risk.

Mason and Avery's quotes highlight the physical risk that is inherent in body work, which demonstrates Dougherty's (2011) concept of body-sacrifice. Body-sacrifice means that doing body work comes at the price of sacrificing personal safety, which means accepting the possibility that their work will lead to a potentially extreme bodily injury. In contrast, no text workers involved in this study expressed a concern for risk of physical harm in their day-to-day work, which reinforces past literature that distances middle-class labor from the physicality and risk involved with blue-collar working conditions (Dougherty, 2011; Lucas, 2011a; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004).

Although material conditions were central to body workers' experiences, they also noted the importance of good communication. The following sub-theme provides examples of discursive processes that intertwine with material conditions of body work.

Subtheme: “Subordinating Discourse in Body Work”

Dougherty (2011) cautioned researchers not to ignore the dialectic of discourse and materiality that characterizes different types of work experiences, so it is important to recognize the role of discursive processes in body work. Further, Ashcraft, et al. (2009) explained that meanings and organizational realities are constituted through both symbolic and material conditions, so limiting my analysis to the material conditions of body work—without consideration of discursive processes—would constrain my ability to interpret participants' meanings for leadership. Therefore, the sub-theme, *subordinating discourse in body work*, is focused on demonstrating the use of language and communication involved in body work. In particular, this sub-theme draws attention to the content, styles, and functions of communication that emerged in body workers' descriptions of their day-to-day work routines.

In the following example, we return to Avery, the 26-year-old line cook. When I asked if her job emphasized more use of communication, or more use of physical labor, she emphasized both the discursive and material conditions involved in her work:

AVERY: A lot of both. Communication in the kitchen is so important.

Communication breakdown in the kitchen means service breakdown. That's when food stops coming out...and customers leave bad Yelp reviews.

MIKE: What kind of communication do you deal with?

AVERY: Dinner rush, for example. It's a busy Friday night. Usually someone will be expediting. There's a tiny little computer screen. I don't really have time to be scrolling through orders, trying to see how many burgers I need dropped, or chickens or whatever. I rely on this expediter to tell me how many burgers I have across the board. Not just for one ticket.

MIKE: You don't have time to do them one at a time.

AVERY: Exactly...When you're working with someone on the line, you need to be communicating as well. I've been in situations where the other person is not communicating with me at all. Either something ends up not getting made at all or you double drop things. Like, he drops a burger, but he doesn't say anything, so I drop a burger. In the end, we have like four extra burgers. I need you to be like, "Burger down. I dropped that blue-cheese burger." And I say, "Heard."

MIKE: So communication is crucial to making sure the job is done the way it needs to be done. Then the physical aspect is...

AVERY: Everything is heavy. You're prepping volumes of things. I'm carrying it either from the line to the walk-in. The walk-in or the line. The dish pit; you're carrying arms full of porcelain dishes. I don't go to the gym. Cooking is my gym...And it's hot. You're running back and forth on the line. It's a physically demanding job...If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. That's a real thing. (Avery, body worker, 26-year-old African American female, Line Cook)

In Avery's experience, working in a kitchen involves a high degree of physical labor. However, communication is still a crucial part doing the day-to-day work. Drawing from past research, working class styles of communicating tend to be more direct, while

middle-class and white-collar workers tend to give longer, more detailed and circuitous explanations (Lubrano, 2004; Rushton & Young, 1975; Shatzman & Strauss, 1955). In her line of work, there is not much time for deliberation and casual conversation, so the communication demonstrated in her example is more direct and task-oriented.

Avery's description of communication also relates to the communication described in the previous example from Mason, the welder. Mason and his assistant seemed to use a direct, task-oriented style of communication to coordinate their efforts and accomplish work tasks. Similarly, the communication in Avery's experience was focused on communicating and listening to instructions (in the form of food orders) and verbally confirming that instructions had been "heard." Without clear and direct communication, there is a "breakdown" in Avery's ability to do her job.

Research by Rushton and Young (1975) provides a useful way of interpreting the task-oriented communication that emerged in body workers' work experiences. Although Rushton and Young's (1975) study was focused on the written language of working class individuals, and not oral communication styles, their findings are still helpful in explaining the communication described by Avery, as well as the communication I observed between Mason and his assistant. Their style of communicating could relate to the technical explanatory style of communication that was discussed by Rushton and Young (1975), who identified types of functional discourse that are more or less common among middle-class and working class individuals. *Functional styles* of discourse are focused on the function of language in a situation (Rushton & Young, 1975). Their findings indicated that working class individuals had a greater tendency to use what they called a *technical explanatory style* of functional discourse, which refers to

communication that “describes the interrelationship of the components of a piece of machinery in such a way as to reveal how it is enabled thereby to perform its function” (Rushton & Young, 1975, p. 377). A technical explanatory style of communication means describing the appearance and function of work equipment in a way that makes it possible for others to understand how to use the equipment.

I build upon the concept of *technical explanatory communication* by adding a consideration for how body workers used language to describe the physical work-space in relation to the physical body and the material objects within the work space. I argue that the function of language in body work contexts was to describe the physical environment—as well as the functions of materials, tools, and machinery—in ways that enabled workers to perform their jobs. Therefore, by describing processes involved with measuring, cutting, and moving pieces of metal scaffolding into a specific position in their physical work space, I argue that Mason and his assistant were using a form of technical explanatory communication. Similarly, by communicating and describing food orders, as well discursively confirming that instructions are heard, Avery’s example also demonstrates a technical explanatory form of communication.

The next example highlights more discursive processes that were commonly described in body work. Devin, a 33-year-old mechanic, describes how communication and physical labor are both involved in his work:

DEVIN: For this particular field, it's about 50/50. If you don't take the time to process and see what's going on, you can't just jump right into it. Sometimes you gotta think it out, talk it out with somebody else. The guys I work with have a lot more experience in the field, so I'm always asking them questions...If there's

something that I don't know, I will ask them to find out, "How would you feel about doing this?" That information is vital, so if you make a mistake, there's ways to learn from your mistake, or you can learn from someone else's experience and not make the mistake in the first place...Communication is key, especially when you're doing the safety bit. When we're transferring equipment, if I see an obstruction in the way and he doesn't see it right away, I've gotta be in communication with him constantly. Just, "All right, we gotta go around this," or "You gotta stop the forklift. You're too close." And then he can reassess and judge, but he can't have the 365-degree view of what's going on around him. Two sets of eyes and verbal communication work a lot better than one guy trying to do everything. (Devin, body worker, 33-year-old Caucasian male, Mechanic)

For Devin, day-to-day work involves discursive processes focused on gathering information and learning how to complete the physical tasks of his job. Similar to the quote from Avery, it seems like some of the main discursive processes in body work are centered on task-oriented communication about how to do the job. Again, task-oriented communication in body work contexts seems related to a technical explanatory style of communication that describes physical characteristics and functions of the work site, tools, and equipment in ways that enable body workers to perform their jobs (Rushton & Young, 1975). Through their use of direct and technical explanatory communication styles, the previous examples demonstrate forms of communication associated with the working class (Lubrano, 2004; Rushton & Young, 1975; Shatzman & Strauss, 1955).

Devin's quote also draws attention to issues of safety, in addition to the importance of communication. In body work, communication is an important tool for

preventing bodily injuries, which highlights an interesting intersection of discourse and materiality. The physical risk involved with the material conditions of body work influences the use of discourse about safety, and the discourse functions to manage the way body workers interact with dangerous material conditions. In short, materiality and discourse mutually constitute one another. Body workers repeatedly highlighted the importance of safety due to physical risks involved in their day-to-day work, and I will come back to issues of safety and physical risk in the third research question.

In sum, the first theme was focused on describing material and discursive conditions of body work. Material conditions were more emphasized than processes of communication, which reinforces previous literature. Physical safety and risk of bodily harm were also prevalent in the experiences of body workers, which is a fruitful avenue for demonstrating how organizational realities are experienced—and thus constructed—through a dialectic of discourse and materiality. Communication is also important—though less emphasized—for doing in body work. Body workers used communication as a tool for coordinating work tasks and preventing bodily injury.

RQ2: Theme 2: Emphasizing Discourse in Text Work

Sub-theme: “Subordinating Materiality in Text Work”

Text workers described their work in ways that emphasized the use of communication, which supports Dougherty’s (2011) description of text work. Therefore, the second theme, *emphasizing discourse in text work*, involves work processes that emphasize the use of language and communication in text work. The purpose of highlighting discursive conditions that are central to text work is to analyze the distinct differences in the day-to-day work experiences of text workers and body workers, which

has important implications for social class distinctions. Highlighting discursive and material conditions that are de/emphasized in body/text work could also help make sense of divergent meanings for leadership that are constructed by different social class groups, because “different social groups have divergent ways of knowing based on different experiences” (Dougherty, et al., 2009, p. 22).

I also include a subtheme that draws attention to the physical working conditions that were—to a less noticeable degree—involved with text work, because Dougherty (2011) argued that paying attention to discursive processes without considering material conditions is a form of middle-class privilege. Highlighting material conditions—in addition to discursive conditions—is also important because it answers calls for understanding dialectical relationships of discourse/materiality in processes of organizing (Ashcraft, et al., 2009; Fairhurst, 2007; Dougherty, 2011; Pullen & Vachhani, 2011).

Before getting to my subtheme, I will provide examples that highlight the discursive processes that are central to day-to-day tasks involved with text work. Text workers commonly described their work as involving a high degree of reading and writing emails, giving presentations, attending meetings, sharing ideas, conducting research and writing research reports, as well as interactions with other members of the organization. In line with past research, their physical bodies were rarely involved in their narratives about typical day-to-day work experiences, which could reinforce social class distinctions that privilege text workers (Dougherty, 2011; Marvin, 2006),

The first example of *emphasizing discourse in text work* comes from Carson, a 32-year-old lawyer. The following quote highlights some of the discursive conditions involved with his day-to-day work routine:

CARSON: Mainly, I'm drafting communications between us and the clients, or drafting cease-and-desist letters to identified or unidentified unauthorized sellers. While a lot of the cease and desist letters stuff is boilerplate-form language, there's a lot of proof-reading, because nobody's gonna pay attention to you if there's a "4" in the middle of one of the words when it's not supposed to be there, or anything like that...But really making sure that the clients are aware of where we are in the process...And doing that in a way that's judiciously worded is important. There's a primary focus on making sure those updates are timely and accurate, and comprehensive and wisely worded, strategically worded. (Carson, text worker, 32-year-old Caucasian male, Lawyer)

Carson's legal work involves an explicit focus on processes of communication. When writing legal documents, communication and "strategic" use of language are a primary focus for Carson's day-to-day work. Carson's quote highlights one of the main differences between communication in text work and communication in body work. Written forms of communication were more emphasized in text work. However, when communication was involved in body work, it was almost always verbal communication, and past research has noted how verbal communication is more associated with working class (Dougherty, 2011). Carefully crafting messages in writing is more associated with text work, so prioritizing verbal communication in body work could imply that body workers are not expected to be as skilled at communicating compared to text workers. Thus, different expectations for using communication in text/body work serves to reinforce assumptions about social class.

Differences in language use for text/body workers also highlight an interesting point of divergence in the participants' day-to-day work experiences. The uses and meanings for *communication* were different for text workers and body workers. Communication in text work involves putting more time and effort into carefully crafting messages, probably because that was central to their work responsibilities. For body workers, communication was secondary—though still necessary—for the accomplishment of day-to-day work responsibilities because it was used to provide directions and information about how to do a job in the immediate moment.

In another example of text work, Anna explains what it is like to work in an academic department. Anna is a 34-year-old Assistant Professor at a university, and her day-to-day working conditions emphasize discursive processes:

ANNA: My given day is entirely words. Emails have become a significant part of my day, and just that back and forth written communication...All day long, there's constant emails, and the writing that comes with research, the PowerPointing...And what's interesting is I sometimes know that I spend too long on the emails. I think I make my job even more wordier than it needs to be if that makes sense, because I'm really crafting every email, even if it's a short simple one, to make sure the message is getting across correctly or the way I want it...I'm constantly playing with words all day long, whether it's a simple email or an important manuscript that I'm trying to get out for review. It's just, it's words.
(Anna, text worker, 34-year-old Caucasian female, Assistant Professor)

Discursive processes dominate the day-to-day work described by Anna. Specifically, her work revolves around discursive processes like writing emails, writing

research manuscripts, and creating PowerPoint presentations. For Anna, work is a constant process of “playing with words,” which seems to refer to processes of carefully crafting and editing messages, as well as creating research manuscripts. “Playing with words” could also imply a connection to a discursive approach to leadership, because Kelly (2008) described leadership as a series of “language games” that involves using words and communication in ways that others perceive as leadership.

Not surprisingly, discursive processes were central to day-to-day text work conditions. The physical body and material workplace conditions—if they were mentioned at all—were secondary to the actual work being done. However, there were a number of important material conditions highlighted in some of the text workers’ stories, such as appropriate work clothing, physical office space, legal documents, and wages. Therefore, the next sub-theme will expand on some of the material conditions that text workers experienced in their day-to-day work.

Subtheme: “Subordinating Materiality in Text Work”

In order to avoid overlooking the role of materiality in text work, the subtheme, *subordinating materiality in text work*, draws attention to text workers’ descriptions of physical conditions involved in their day-to-day work. The first example comes from Steve, a 71-year-old forensic psychologist. He noted that his work mostly involves communication, but he also drew attention to the role of the physical body in his work:

STEVE: I spend a lot of time in court...as a witness, as an expert witness, we're questioned. We present our data, our information in such a manner that you've got to be careful we're not stepping on the court's toes and playing the role of the decider of fact, but just presenting our data. There's a real caution in how you

present your information to the court... Wording has to be precise, and you have to be able to support it, your conclusions and your opinions. That's weighted very heavily verbal, but when we meet with clients, it's also body language... But, the job is also physical in the sense that it's exhausting. It's exhausting. I go to parties and people say, "Oh, you're a psychologist? Oh, you just sit and listen. What an easy job." No, no. Even in therapy, it is a very physically draining process. (Steve, text worker, 71-year-old Hispanic male, Forensic Psychologist)

Discursive processes are again central to work responsibilities for a text worker. Like Carson, Steve highlights the importance of using precise language and wording in legal work contexts. However, Steve also draws attention to some of the ways that materiality interacts with discursive processes. The idea of "body language" seems to recognize a literal connection between the physical body and processes of communication. Similarly, Acheson (2008) argued that human language and speech is an embodied experience; whether it is through interpretation or production, the physical human body and the human brain are involved with language and speech.

Steve also noted that other people typically assume that his job does not involve much physical work. However, text workers noted feelings of "exhaustion" in descriptions of day-to-day text work, even though it might be different from doing physical labor. Thus, Steve's example supports Dougherty's (2011) observations about the physical exhaustion, pain, and stress involved with long hours of conducting research, teaching students, and sitting at a desk while typing.

Although the physical body is part of doing text work, the emphasis is still on the reading, translation, creation, and teaching of texts (Dougherty, 2011). Text work is

relatively free of the intense physical risks that body workers experience in their work, some of which was highlighted in Avery's story about burning her flesh in a commercial kitchen and Mason's story about cutting off part of his finger on a table saw. In other words, the body remains largely hidden from the processes and outcomes of text work.

In one final example of material conditions in text work, Adam, a 33-year-old lawyer, recognizes the relatively minimal amount of physical labor involved in his work:

MIKE: Would you say that your work emphasizes more physical labor, or emphasizes more working with words?

ADAM: Written and oral communication...the most "physical" that I do would be carrying about five pounds of paper. I don't think that counts. (Adam, text worker, 33-year-old Caucasian male, Lawyer)

In his response, Adam draws attention to—and minimizes—the physical conditions (i.e., carrying stacks of paper) involved in his work. However, in an earlier portion of my interview with Adam, he referenced material conditions like physical office space and hard copies of legal documents. Although materiality is minimized, its presence remains an important part of the discursive processes that characterize the day-to-day work experiences—and meanings for leadership—for text workers.

Findings for the second research question reinforce descriptions of text work and body work that were discussed in the second chapter of this study. Specifically, discursive and material conditions are both involved in the day-to-day working conditions for any kind of job. However, the body and other material conditions are minimized in text work, and discursive processes are minimized in body work. Interestingly, the findings for the second research question also imply some meaning

divergence in the ways that body workers and text workers understand the concept of “communication.” For body workers, communication seems to refer more to face-to-face interactions where someone is providing short and direct explanations for how to complete work tasks. On the other hand, for text workers, communication is tied to careful and thoughtful creation of messages.

Differences in work experiences could contribute to divergent meanings of leadership for text and body workers, which could ultimately reinforce subordination of body workers’ meanings for leadership. The next research question will focus on how meanings for leadership converged and diverged for body workers and text workers.

Research Question Three:

LC/MD of Leadership in Text Work and Body Work

In addition to the dominant meanings for leadership discussed in the first research question, there were also divergent meanings for leadership, which is particularly relevant to the Theory of Language Convergence/Meaning Divergence. Drawing on the Theory of LC/MD, the themes for the third research question represent some of the main ways that meanings for leadership diverged for text workers and body workers.

In their review of LC/MD, Dougherty, et al. (2009) explained that divergent meanings can be masked by the use of similar words, or common language. In order to make divergent meanings salient, it is helpful to identify meaning fragments and meaning clusters. Referring back to my discussion of LC/MD in the second chapter, *meaning clusters* refer to the overall interpretation that a person or group has for a particular concept or phenomenon (Dougherty, et al., 2009). *Meaning fragments* are like codes; they are smaller bits of meanings that combine to make up a holistic meaning cluster

(Dougherty, et al., 2009). A more in depth understanding of meaning divergence can come from analyzing meaning clusters (Dougherty, et al., 2009).

In the findings below, I demonstrate how text and body workers used meaning fragments in the form of common language, or similar words, to explain their overall interpretations—meaning clusters—for leadership. For example, text and body workers shared a preference for leaders who could “lead by example” and “help,” and they shared a concern for leaders who could “make decisions” and create “safe” work environments. However, the illusion of shared meaning comes from the use of common language (Dougherty, et al., 2009). Thus, the findings draw attention to the divergent meanings for leadership that were constructed through the use of common language. Interestingly, when meanings diverged, it was connected to the different material/discursive experiences of text and body workers, which has implications for social class.

There were four main themes that emerged across all of the interviews with text workers and body workers: (1) Leading by Example, (2) Helping, (3) Decision-Making, and (4) Creating a Productive Work Environment. The sub-themes are focused on the divergent meanings that text workers and body workers constructed for the theme. In the following paragraphs, I will describe each theme and sub-theme, and provide exemplars from participants’ stories about leadership. When possible, I will add context to examples by explaining any personal observations I was able to obtain.

RQ3: Theme 1: Leading by Example

Sub-themes: “In the Trenches” and “Reputation of Success”

When talking about good leadership, the most frequently used phrase by all participants was “leading by example.” Broadly, *leading by example* means

demonstrating the ability to understand and perform the expectations for a particular job. Across all interviews, there were some overlapping descriptions for this theme. All participants shared the idea that good leaders should treat others the way they want to be treated, which relates to the shared meanings for *other-oriented leadership* discussed in the first research question. However, participants also articulated divergent meanings for “leading by example,” and the divergent meanings draw attention to different ways that discourse and materiality are de/emphasized in body work and text work.

Leading by Example: “In the Trenches”

The first sub-theme, “in the trenches,” is an in-vivo code that describes body workers’ expectations for how to “lead by example.” *In the trenches* refers to how leadership involves actively engaging in the day-to-day work processes that other organizational members are expected to perform in body work. Quotes from body workers who talked about leading by example often referred to leaders who do the same work that they expect others to do.

The phrase “in the trenches,” which is a war time analogy that refers to the practice of trench warfare that rose to prominence in WWI, has links to materiality and social class. Trenches were long ditches that had to be dug deep enough for soldiers to walk from end to end without being shot by enemy soldiers. Most of the soldiers in the trenches came from working class backgrounds. In the trenches, everyone is in the dirt, and everyone is trying not to get shot and killed, so it becomes difficult to tell the difference between officers and any other soldiers (Sheffield, 2000). Further, officers had vested interest in making themselves appear similar to the other soldiers in the trenches, because dressing or acting in a way that made them look like an authority figure could

mark them as a high-priority target for the enemy (Sheffield, 2000). Thus, working “in the trenches” could be a way of reducing perceptions of class differences.

Working “in the trenches” also relates to a particular kind of labor discussed by Lucas (2011a). Digging ditches is associated with blue-collar work, which is tied to lower-status social groups and physical labor (Lucas, 2011a). Thus, body workers could be drawing upon an understanding of leadership that comes from their day-to-day working experiences, which emphasizes physical labor and relates to traditional blue-collar/white-collar class divisions.

The first example of leading from “in the trenches” comes from an Assistant Brewer at a small craft brewery, where I spent hundreds of hours observing and participating in day-to-day work routines. Being a brewer means working in a physically demanding environment, which includes—but is not limited to—repeatedly lifting and carrying up to 160lbs, handling hundreds of gallons of boiling hot liquids, working with dangerous equipment and machinery, climbing up and down ladders, and handling of hazardous chemicals like acids.

During my time at the brewery, I had an experience that demonstrated some of the physical labor and risk that was typical for day-to-day-work as a brewer. I was tasked with moving about 20 kegs of beer—weighing about 160lbs each—into the keg fridge so that they would be ready to serve when the brewery opened for business later that day. The keg fridge was limited in space, so the kegs had to be stacked three-high. Stacking kegs was exhausting work, but the real challenge was getting the kegs onto the third level. When I started to run out of space for kegs on the second level, I had to climb on top of one layer of kegs, and then lift kegs from the second level up to the third level. As

I was lifting the last keg into place, my foot slipped and my wedding ring got stuck on the handle of the keg as the keg crashed back down to the second level. I was pretty numb from the cold at that point, but I could still feel my finger throbbing. When I looked down at my left hand, I saw the damage. The handle of the keg bent my wedding ring and ripped off a callus from the base of my finger, and I was leaking blood onto the floor of the keg fridge. I walked out of the fridge, grabbed a towel for my hand, and grabbed another towel to clean my blood off of the floor. Then I finished my job; I lifted that last keg onto the third level. When I was done, I cleaned and bandaged my wound, and moved on to the next task. I now wear a silicon wedding ring; If the ring ever gets caught on something, I will lose the ring before I lose my finger.

Based on my experience, being a brewer involves more than actually brewing beer. However, brewing is—of course—essential for a brewery. A typical brew-day is around eight to ten hours long and there is very little opportunity to sit down. I can say from personal experience that by the end of a brew-day, I was drenched in sweat, sticky from shoveling hundreds of pounds of wet grains, and completely exhausted. I also felt a sense of pride for my role in creating a product with my own physical labor.

When I asked him for an example of good leadership, Bret, a 32-year-old Assistant Brewer, described a manager from a previous job in the food service industry:

BRET: I worked at a country food chain, and there was this general manager, one of the nicest guys you could meet. He was always pressed and dressed, which was interesting because he looked the cleanest and he would be in the dish pit, to busing tables, to the office doing paperwork, to the fry cook, he did everything. Started off low at a fast food place for like 20 years before he got this position,

and he learned from the bottom up the way people really respect you and listen to you is if you're down in the trenches with 'em... Anyone can point a finger and say, "Do this, do this. This is your job, listen to me," etc. But that's when your subordinates don't really respect you. Whereas, if you're down in the trenches, they can see you're working... you're doing the same thing... You can't be on a high horse just telling people what to do 'cause they won't respect you as much. (Bret, body worker, 32-year-old Caucasian/Hispanic male, Brewer)

Based on Bret's example, leaders earn respect by working "in the trenches" with other organizational members—particularly subordinates—instead of simply telling employees what to do. Working "in the trenches" meant engaging in the same physical labor as other organizational members, and the ability to engage in physical labor is a way of earning respect among the working class (Thiel, 2007). However, other research noted that engaging in physical labor is traditionally viewed with disdain among white collar, or text class workers (Ashforth, et al., 2007; Dougherty, 2011; Marvin 1994, Meisenbach, 2010; Thiel, 2007). The implication is that the kind of labor that earns respect in body work seems to have the opposite effect in text work. As a result, there seems to be divergent meanings for "earning respect" based on the way people earn a living, which could reinforce class divisions between body work and text work.

Bret's example of good leadership also focused on the leader's clothing and physical appearance, as well his ability to do "paper work." Bret described the leader as "clean" and "pressed and dressed," which relates to Dougherty's (2011) ideas about how clothing can serve as a symbol for marking social class. In this case, Bret's former manager's "clean" appearance aligns with markings of text work, which contrasts with

the dirty work that is characteristic of body work and physical labor (Ashforth, et al., 2007; Thiel, 2007). The leader Bret described also had freedom to move from working “in the trenches” to doing “paper work” in “the office,” which is interesting given that text workers may avoid engaging in physical work because it is traditionally considered less prestigious than text work. However, it also demonstrates a form of mobility that might not be as available to body workers; in general, physical labor is associated with subordinate positions that have fewer opportunities for upward mobility (Dougherty, 2011; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). It seems leaders/managers can choose to move from text work to body work, but body workers are left with little choice for mobility.

Finally, Bret makes implicit associations between management and leadership. Leading from “in the trenches” means “doing the same thing” as “subordinates.” Bret also highlighted a leader who worked his way “from the bottom up” to become a manager, which associates organizational hierarchy with meanings of leadership (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). Body work and physical labor is associated with subordinate positions in organizational hierarchies and subordinate social class, as well as less opportunity for upward mobility (Dougherty, 2011; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). Thus, reinforcing an association of management and leadership is a way of maintaining social class divisions and marginalizing body workers from meanings of leadership.

In the next example, Terry, a 76-year-old body worker with an extensive career in construction, talked about how he demonstrated good leadership in his line of work. Terry was preparing his equipment for an upcoming construction job when I visited him for an interview. The work area was about 3,000 square feet of dirt, including a couple of garages and all kinds of equipment—like cement mixers, scaffolding, fork lifts, and

trucks—scattered around the property. For most of the interview, we stood at the back of his pickup truck, which was filled with construction tools.

At one point, Terry used a stick to draw a diagram in the dirt to help explain a technique he learned for building a retaining wall, and the act of kneeling down was visibly and audibly challenging for him. He said years of working construction and laying bricks had taken a toll on his back, which drew attention to the extreme physical demands that body work can have on the human body.

It was an extremely windy and dusty working environment, so combined with the obvious physical toll that the job had taken on Terry's body, it seems that Lubrano (2004) had it right when he said “the working class works at jobs that bite, maim, and wither. The middle class gets to work indoors at desks” (p. 22). Unfortunately, most of my interview recording was obscured by persistent wind. However, I was able to transcribe the following example, which demonstrates Terry's ideas about good leadership:

TERRY: I think it's a little bit of knowledge about what you're doing. And you've gotta be able to demonstrate it to the guys that you're doing it with. You can't just tell them. You know, respect is earned. I'm not gonna respect you just because you're in charge, and I don't expect that of my guys. Just 'cause I'm the boss they don't have to respect me.

Although Terry did not use the phrases “leading by example” or “in the trenches,” his overall interpretation of leadership aligned with the meaning clusters that other body workers created for “Leading by example.” Being a good leader in his line of work meant physically demonstrating the same work that he expected his employees to perform. Terry also associated leadership with a “boss” who is “in charge,” so he is reinforcing

dominant assumptions that tie leadership to positions of authority and hierarchy (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). The problem with associating leadership with positions of authority is that excludes working class individuals who are traditionally associated with physical labor, subordinate organizational positions, and less upwards mobility (Dougherty, 2011; Lucas, 2011b; Lucas, 2011c; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004).

Like Bret, Terry highlights a similar connection between respect and leadership in body work contexts. A good leader in body work earns respect by doing the same work that other people are expected to perform. Terry went on to describe how he earned respect as a leader at a construction site:

TERRY: I didn't drive up in some big 4-wheel-drive, wearing a \$150 cowboy hat, \$200 belt buckle; I barely had barbed wire holding my pants up. I didn't make huge amounts of money, and I didn't try to show off that I was making money, you know, it would make guys feel bad...

MIKE: So they felt more like you were one of them?

TERRY: Yeah. I drive the same thing they drive. I use my tools the same way they use theirs. (Terry, body worker, 76-year-old Caucasian male, Construction)

Terry's quote aligns with the "in the trenches" subtheme because he emphasized "using his tools" the same way his employees use their tools. Terry also highlighted material conditions that contribute to perceptions of respect, which supports past research about earning respect in manual labor jobs (Thiel, 2007). In order to earn respect and be seen as a leader, Terry tried to align his physical appearance—his clothing, his vehicle, and using his tools—to become more similar to the people he was attempting to lead. However, the problem with how earning "respect" is associated with leadership in body

work is that physical labor is traditionally linked to societal perceptions of dirty work and the lower social class (Ashforth, et al., 2007; Dougherty, 2011; Marvin 1994; Meisenbach, 2010; Thiel, 2007). Thus, body workers who try to earn respect by engaging in physical labor could reinforce perceptions of social class that maintain class divisions.

I previously speculated that leading from “in the trenches” could be a way of reducing perceptions of social class differences. Based on Terry’s explanation for leadership, it seems that there is indeed a class-leveling component involved with ideas about leadership “in the trenches.” In body work, a good leader looks, sounds, and acts like a subordinate. Therefore, Terry seemed to support previous research about how symbols like clothing and material resources can serve as markers for social class, and that individuals can manage their physical appearance in ways that help them “pass” as members of a different social class (Dougherty, 2011).

The last example of leadership from “down in the trenches” comes from Mason, a 34-year-old welder who previously talked about cutting off part of his finger with a table saw in the second research question:

MASON: In this field, a good leader is willing to do the work themselves. In working construction stuff, you kind of have the term, like a *Cadillac boss*, somebody that just barked orders, didn't really get down in the trenches with you...I don't like that. Some years back I was in another state and I had 44 employees. The company I was working for previously had 90 welders. They laid them off in December, I got hired in February...so I wasn't very well-liked when I got there because I was a new guy in town. The company needed a new shop

foreman, the owner of the company asked me—and I didn't have the history of relationships—and it was hard to get their respect in the beginning.

MIKE: So what did you do to earn their respect?

MASON: Same thing, if we needed to work overtime, I grabbed my hood and worked with them. I worked side-by-side with them...It's easier to gain respect with people that you're working with or leading if you're willing to do the work yourself. (Mason, body worker, 34-year-old Hispanic male, Welder)

For Mason, a bad leader—a “Cadillac boss”—gives orders without doing the work themselves, and a good leader gets “down in the trenches” and works “side-by-side” with employees. Further, in body work, a “Cadillac boss” relies solely on discursive processes by giving verbal “orders,” which is less preferable than a leader who works “side-by-side” with subordinates. However, by constructing the “Cadillac boss” as a bad leader, Mason highlights the idea that—compared to discursive processes—engaging with materiality through physical labor is more central to leadership in a body work context. Similarly, in previous quotes from body workers, Bret said that someone who “points a finger and says ‘Do this, do this’” would not be respected by subordinates, and Terry’s quote indicated that a leader “can’t just tell them” what to do. Thus, body workers’ constructions of leadership involve a focus on using the body to engage in physical labor, which supports Dougherty (2011), who explained that discursive processes are secondary to the role of the physical body.

The metaphor of a “Cadillac boss” also relates to Dougherty’s (2011) discussion about different ways of marking social class. Consumption of certain commodities is a way of enacting social class, and high-end automobiles are symbols that can mark an

individual with the appearance of middle class (Dougherty, 2011; Osteen, 2008). By associating bad leadership with an image of a high-end luxury automobile like a Cadillac, Mason seems to draw attention to social class divisions. Specifically, text work is associated with higher income and greater access to resources, authority positions in organizational hierarchies, and work that primarily involves using words and language instead of engaging in physical labor, which seems to align with the “Cadillac boss” in Mason’s example. Mason’s metaphor implies that individuals who predominantly rely on working with their words—text workers—are not well-suited for leadership in body work contexts because they are too different from the people they are trying to lead.

Finally, like the previous examples from Bret and Terry, Mason explains how earning respect and being seen as a leader in body work involves “working side-by-side” with subordinates and being “willing to do the work yourself.” Thus, leadership in body work contexts seems to involve reducing perceived social distance between leaders and subordinates. The implication is that good leaders reduce perceptions of social class differences by engaging in physical labor alongside subordinates and marking themselves with clothing and tools that symbolize membership in the working class.

For body workers, leading by example is a way of earning respect as a leader, which involves engaging in the same physical labor that is expected of other organizational members. Leading by example was also important in text work; however, leading by example can mean something different in text work, compared to body work.

Leading by Example: “Reputation of Success”

Like body workers, text workers recognized that good leaders should set a good example by treating others with respect, which relates to meanings for *other-oriented*

leadership that I previously discussed. Leading by example was also a good way to earn respect among text and body workers. However, body workers and text workers diverged in their expectations for how “leading by example” was practiced in the day-to-day work. In line with past literature, meaning divergence was related to the different material experiences of text workers and body workers (Dougherty, 2011). For text workers, “leading by example” was accomplished through mainly discursive processes, while body workers emphasized engaging in physical labor as a way of “leading by example.”

Leading by example in text work was related to having a *reputation for success*, which means having credentials that demonstrate experience and knowledge in text work. Different forms of credentials highlighted by text workers are in line with white-collar measures of success (Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). Credentials generally refer to textual/discursive evidence of accomplishments, such as advanced degrees, published research, positive teaching evaluations, career advancement, having a title associated with management, or settled case files for lawyers.

The first example of “leading by example” in text work comes from Steve, a 71-year-old forensic scientist. Steve talked about his early experience as a student of a forensic scientist, and gave an example of a mentor who demonstrated good leadership by discursively setting and modeling high standards:

STEVE: He was one of my mentors. He was a professor. A very, very bright man. He also demanded a lot. I’m very appreciative of him. Back then, his standards were very high. As a psychologist, he did a lot of what I’m doing right now. He modeled those high standards and ethics very much so. He's extremely well known, at least he was then, and well thought of throughout, actually

nationally. He did a lot of writing, multilingual...I always appreciated his teaching and his leadership and his high values...I try and set that example for my students as a leader amongst my students. (Steve, text worker, 71-year-old Hispanic male, Forensic Psychologist)

To describe good leadership, Steve noted that his past mentor “modeled” the same high standards that he expected from his students. The high standards modeled by his mentor were manifested in “writing” and “teaching,” two primarily discursive activities that are traditionally associated with how success is measured in white collar careers (Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). Steve also noted that his mentor was a “professor” who became “extremely well-known” nationally, which implies that success and leadership in text work is measured through reputation and advanced education.

In contrast to body workers, text workers did not associate “leading by example” with engaging in physical labor, which makes sense because text work is not associated with doing physical labor (Dougherty, 2011). Further, it does not seem like Steve expected his mentor to work “side by side” while engaging in the same work as subordinates. In light of the previous quotes from body workers, one implication of Steve’s interpretation of leadership is that divergent meanings of leadership seem to be tied to perceptions of social distance. Leadership in body work means working with, as well as looking, sounding, and acting like subordinates, but leadership in text work means working more independently from subordinates and establishing a reputation that is more prestigious than subordinates. In other words, text workers perceive leadership in authority figures who work primarily with words in ways that makes them different—particularly more prestigious—than subordinates, while body workers perceive

leadership in managers and authority figures who make themselves appear more similar to subordinates by engaging in physical labor side-by-side with subordinates.

Divergent meanings for leadership seem to parallel social class divisions that differentiate text work and body work (Dougherty, 2011; Marvin, 1994, 1995, 2006). The physical body of the leader is hidden in Steve's description of leadership, but it is central to performing leadership in body work, which supports previous literature about text/body work (Dougherty, 2011). Therefore, one implication is that those who primarily engage in physical labor may not be considered for leadership opportunities in text work.

In the next example, Nina, a 41-year-old Chemical Biology Professor, explains her ideas about good leadership. She described how she tries to manage her research lab based on the "hands-off" example set by her mentor, whom she views as a leader:

NINA: We do bacterial research. My students...they're doing a lot of bacterial physiology, and high-resolution microscopy. I am very hands-off in that I don't really know what specific experiment is going on today. And that's because my trainers—my post-doc advisor and my PhD advisor—they were very hands-off, and I think it works best that way...I enjoy more thinking with the students about the design, the experiments, and having them come and give me the data and we analyze it. I enjoy that more than me going and getting the data myself.

For Nina, a "hands-off" approach means that she does not work side-by-side with her students on a day-to-day basis, which contrasts body workers' expectations for leaders who work alongside subordinates. Nina's students have relative freedom to do their own work without Nina being physically present, which supports Stuber's (2006) findings that more privileged social class positions are associated with perceptions of

greater degrees of workplace autonomy. Nina also said she prefers the more cognitive and discursive processes of thinking and designing experiments with students, which is in line with descriptions of text work (Dougherty, 2011).

Nina also seems to highlight social distance between herself and her students by not being physically present with her students while they do their work and by doing work that is different from the day-to-day work of her students. Later, I asked Nina why she felt her advisor set a good example for leadership:

NINA: My goal is to become like my post-doc mentor, because she was very hands-off. She never told me what time I had to come in or how many hours I had to work, but—I don't know how she did it—that made me and everybody feel that we wanted to please her... This woman, she was a super star... She was a director of the building where we had our lab. She now has two companies, very successful. Like, she's a millionaire... She was crazy busy... But the thing I liked about her is that—I think because she trusted us—I always wanted to please her... And if I was getting the results it was going to be for my own benefit. Because she doesn't need an extra publication; she has hundreds. She has plenty of funding. She doesn't need the work... But I think that's what I want, because right now I feel I have to push my students, and I want to get to a point where they want to please me, you know? I haven't gotten there yet. (Nina, text worker, 41-year-old Hispanic female, Assistant Professor)

For Nina, leading by example seems tied to having a reputation for success. The leader in Nina's example had credentials to demonstrate her ability to understand and perform the tasks of a biological chemist at a more advanced level, so the leader was not

expected to engage in the same day-to-day tasks that subordinates were expected to perform. Instead, it seemed like the “example” set by the leader was more related to Nina’s future goals, which was apparent in Nina’s statement that “I haven’t gotten there yet.” In other words, in Nina’s experience, leading by example is associated with a level of achievement to which subordinates might aspire, but have not yet accomplished. Further, success seemed to be marked by accomplishments like publications, having funding for research, personal wealth, and business ownership. Notably, the benchmarks for success overlap with how success is measured in white collar careers (Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004), which marginalizes meanings for success and leadership that come from blue-collar perspectives.

Divergent meanings for leadership seem related to differences between text workers’ “hands-off” approach to leadership and body workers’ description of leadership “in the trenches.” Compared to the physical expectations of leaders in body work, leaders in text work are not as expected to engage in the same day-to-day hands-on tasks with subordinates. Further, body workers associate leadership with authority figures who minimize perceptions of social distance by working side-by-side “in the trenches” with subordinates, while text workers perceive leadership in authority figures who are seen as more successful than subordinates and whose work is primarily discursive. Notably, the meanings for leadership seem to diverge along traditional social class divisions that distinguish text work and body work (Dougherty, 2011; Marvin, 1994, 1995, 2006).

Nina previously used the term “trainers” to describe her mentors, whom she also described as leaders. For both groups, “training” was a way for leaders to “help” other organizational members, which emerged as one of the main themes in this study.

Therefore, the following theme will focus on how the concept of “helping” became associated with divergent meanings of leadership for text workers and body workers.

RQ3: Theme 2: Helping

Sub-themes: “Doing the Work” and “Communicating Expectations”

The second theme is focused on another idea that regularly emerged in interviews with body workers and text workers. Most participants gave examples of good leaders who “helped” them in some way. *Helping* means behaving or communicating in ways that assist other organizational members in completing their day-to-day work. However, meanings for “helping” diverged in ways that related to the dis/embodied day-to-day conditions of text work and body work (Dougherty, 2011).

In body work, “helping” was associated with leaders who would assist other organizational members by physically engaging in manual labor, so the role of the physical body is central to how leaders “helped” in body work. In text work, “helping” was more associated with leaders who could clearly communicate instructions about how to complete work tasks, which emphasizes processes of communication and minimizes the role of the physical body in text work.

Helping: “Doing the Work”

The first sub-theme, *doing the work*, represents meanings for “helping” that were highlighted by body workers. Specifically, *doing the work* means assisting other organizational members by physically performing their work responsibilities. Notably, “doing the work” looks very similar to the way body workers described “in the trenches;” they both involve leaders working side-by-side doing physical labor with subordinates. The main difference is that working “in the trenches” is part of regular day-to-day body

work routines for good leaders, whereas “helping” occurs specifically when body workers are overwhelmed or unable to perform their physical work responsibilities.

When body workers become overwhelmed and/or they can’t complete their day-to-day work responsibilities, they appreciate leaders who help by physically doing the work that needs to be done. In the first example, Mary, a 28-year-old pecan farmer, explained how her cousin demonstrated good leadership by helping her at the farm:

MARY: He was helping us during harvest, and he came over and was walking with me behind the harvester just to make sure everything was going smoothly, and running okay...I mean he’s not my boss, he’s my cousin—but if I’m trying to learn how to drive a piece of equipment, he’ll show me and then he’ll let me do it and talk me through it so I can learn. It’s not just like, “Do this” but there’s no true understanding as to what you want...like, driving the sweeper and just sitting in the sweeper, and showing me “this is how you turn it on, this is what you do,” and then letting me sit in there and do it and talking me through it...

MIKE: Okay. So, why do you feel like that’s an example of good leadership?

MARY: Just because I think in any field when you’re talking to someone, and if you’re delegating and you’re asking someone to do something, and you have a certain expectation, I think it’s important to literally show them and help them through it versus just demanding and expecting. They’re not gonna meet your expectations if you don’t help and show in the beginning. (Mary, body worker, 28-year-old Caucasian female, Pecan Farmer)

Mary’s cousin demonstrated good leadership because he helped her learn how to use some of the farm equipment. Mary explained that communication was insufficient for

“helping” on the pecan farm by noting how her cousin did not simply issue a command like “Do this.” Instead, material conditions were emphasized in her construction of leadership, like how her cousin used his body to physically demonstrate and teach how to use the farming equipment. By emphasizing physical labor in her definition of leadership of helping, Mary seems to support previous literature that describes the primarily physical nature of body work, and farming in particular (Dougherty, 2011).

Mary also draws attention to the material experiences that contribute to divergent meanings for different social class groups, which supports the theory of LC/MD (Dougherty, et al., 2009). By expressing a preference for leaders who engage in physical labor—which is associated with body work—over leaders who rely more on discursively communicating directions—which is more associated with text work—Mary implies that meanings for leadership diverge along differences in social class experiences.

Mary provided one of the few examples of leadership that did not focus on a position of authority and organizational hierarchy, which is a persistent part of dominant assumptions about leadership (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). Instead, Mary associated leadership with a family member who had experience, knowledge of, and an ability to demonstrate the physical labor on the farm.

Mary also drew attention to the concept of “training,” which was mentioned by other body workers as a way that leaders “help” other organizational members. In body work, training meant physically demonstrating how to do the work. One implication is that leaders who help by demonstrating work processes could be at a disadvantage in text work environments, where “helping” is more likely to come in the form of discursive processes expectations, which will be discussed in the next sub-theme.

The next example of “helping” comes from Jon, a 59-year-old body worker who retired from a career in construction and decided to start his own microbrewery. During our interview, Jon repeatedly emphasized leading by example, which for him, means that he can do any job that he asks somebody else to do. When I asked Jon for an example of good leadership, he told me about a recent interaction between himself and an employee:

JON: Good leadership is being on task at work and not taking advantage of a situation. It’s important to take action—helpful action, at the right time—to make your employee successful, making your business successful, making myself successful...For instance, you have a really big lunch rush...Does it benefit me if my server is free to do the most important parts of her job, which is taking care of the customer? Yes. So I asked our server three times, “Do you need help? Do you have the dishes?” And she would say, “I’m good.” Finally I walk by again. “Need help?” And she said, “It would be awesome if you did the dishes.” Okay, I’m the owner—Am I too important to do dishes so our customers are taken care of? No, I’m not too important to do that. By me stepping in and doing the dishes, she can take care of the customers—our number one important thing—and at the same time I’m taking care of my employee. To me, that’s leadership. I am not too important to do a job that my employees—my servers—frequently will. (Jon, body worker, 59-year-old Caucasian male, Brewery Owner/Head Brewer)

Jon’s idea of “helpful action” was demonstrated when he assisted an employee by physically performing some of the server’s work responsibilities. Jon used his body to engage in physical labor like “doing dishes,” which draws attention to the material conditions involved with his construction of leadership. By emphasizing engaging in

physical labor to “help” subordinates, Jon reinforces research that highlights physical labor and the role of the physical body in body work (Dougherty, 2011).

He also drew attention to discursive processes, like explicitly asking if someone needs help, so his construction of leadership—while emphasizing materiality—involved some degree of both materiality and discourse, which supports past research that argues for researchers to view processes of meaning construction as a dialectic of materiality and discourse (Ashcraft, et al., 2009; Fairhurst, 2007; Dougherty, 2011).

Jon also implied that some owners or managers might “take advantage” of their “important” place in the organizational hierarchy by not actually doing physical labor to help their employees, which relates to the idea of a “Cadillac boss” previously mentioned by Mason. Thus, Jon’s example of leadership aligns with different strategies of social distancing that emerged in the “leading by example” theme. Body workers constructed leadership in a way that leaders looked, sounded and acted more like subordinates, while text workers created meanings for leadership by referring to leaders who were more socially distant in terms of reputation, success, credentials, and even physical presence.

In Jon’s case, it seems that “helping” subordinates by physically assisting them with physical labor could serve to reduce perceptions of social distance. Engaging in physical labor alongside subordinates is a way of appearing more similar to subordinates, and simultaneously masking a position of more authority in the organization. Further, based on previous quotes from body workers and past research from Thiel (2007), reducing perceptions of social distance by engaging in physical labor with subordinates could also be a way of earning respect and being seen as a good leader in body work. However, the same strategy for reducing social distance might not be as effective in text

work, where work and leadership is not as associated with using the physical body, which could limit body workers' options for social mobility.

In body work, good leaders “help” by using their body to engage in physical labor, particularly when other organizational members need assistance. Text workers also associated good leadership with helping others. However, there were differences in how leaders “help” in text work, compared to how leaders “help” in body work.

Helping: “Communicating Expectations”

The second sub-theme, *communicating expectations*, describes how good leaders “help” in text work. *Communicating expectations* means using written and verbal communication to describe how a job should be performed. The discursive and material differences involved with participants' interpretations of leadership are related to the different ways that discourse/materiality is de/emphasized in Dougherty's (2011) descriptions of text/body work, which has implications for social class. In contrast to the explicitly physical and embodied ways of “helping” in body work contexts, when text workers associated leadership with “helping,” it typically involved discursive processes like face-to-face interactions, answering questions, and providing written instructions. The implication is that meanings for “helping”—and by extension leadership—diverge along lines of social class that traditionally privilege individuals who engage in text work, and subordinate those who do body work.

The first example is from Adam, a 33-year-old lawyer. To provide an example of good leadership, he described communicating expectations as a way of helping others:

ADAM: So I took over litigation in February because another guy left. When he left we hired a new attorney and before she started I made actually a training

manual just for litigation. She actually asked me where I got it from. I was like, “No, I made that.” She was like, “When?” I was like, “This week.” [And she said,] “What do you mean? Like, I hired you on Monday.” [And I said,] “Well, it’s the following Monday, I made it last week.”

MIKE: That’s awesome. It probably makes your job easier too.

ADAM: Believe it...If she quit or we hired a paralegal, we could hand them the manual, give them a day, and they could just read the manual and draft everything I need them to draft and have it ready to file a lawsuit...Communicated expectations, in writing. That's all it is. A training manual. It all comes back to communicated expectations. If people know what you expect of them, they can either perform up to that or not, but you can't claim you didn't know it otherwise. (Adam, text worker, 33-year-old Caucasian male, Lawyer)

Adam drew attention to sharing information as a way of helping others. Further, when I interpreted his example as a form of “helping,” Adam characterized his actions as “communicating expectations,” which highlights discursive processes—like writing a training manual—that are important for leadership in text work (Dougherty, 2011).

Adam’s example also demonstrates the disembodied nature of his work, which is tied to the elevated social class status of text class (Marvin, 2006). He described a manual that he created, and explained how the manual will continue to be used as a source of knowledge that exists independently of the human bodies that create and use it. In contrast, the physical body is central to descriptions of day-to-day physical labor—and how leaders “help”—in body work. By overlooking and downplaying the role of the

physical body, text workers reinforce the marginalization of body workers, whose bodies are the primary means of earning a living (Dougherty, 2011).

In the next example of communicating expectations, Anna, a 34-year-old Assistant Professor, explains a time when she felt like she demonstrated good leadership:

ANNA: As you work up through PhD...you are kinda helping people out. I was an advisor for an undergraduate organization. My main thing was to help—in that situation—that person behind me who was gonna be the one taking over the next year...I created a system, a folder for that organization. It was like here's every event. Here's every form you need. Here's a list of steps for interacting with different people on campus, what students and organizations might be in charge of what. I saved any receipts that might've been helpful, so they knew how much we spent on certain items or events. The person ahead of me didn't do that, so I kinda recognized...the things that I didn't have, the resources I didn't have from the leader before me. It was like, hey, I need to be very detailed, very clear, very organized, and as I'm leaving meetings and things to be very detailed for the person, and for the students that you're leading. (Anna, text worker, 34-year-old Caucasian female, Assistant Professor)

Anna described a time when she acted as a good leader by “helping people out.” Helping meant sharing information and “creating a folder” to help future advisors understand how to manage the organization. By providing “detailed” and “organized” instructions, she communicated her expectations—to the co-advisor and to the organizational members (i.e., students)—for how to run the organization, which is similar to how Adam created a training manual in the previous example.

Leadership processes are also disembodied in a similar way to how leadership was described in the previous quote from Adam. The file she created serves as a source of knowledge that exists independently of the physical body that created it. In contrast to text work, body workers cannot easily mask the role of their physical bodies in the work that they do (Dougherty, 2011). Masking the physical body is associated with the more privileged social class position of text work. As a result, Anna's description of leadership reinforces the implication that divergent meanings stem from different ways of experiencing materiality and social class (Dougherty, 2011; Dougherty, et al., 2009).

Finally, Anna associates leadership with an elevated rank in organizational hierarchy, reflecting traditional assumptions that associate leadership with management and hierarchy (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). As I mentioned in previous themes, body workers are typically associated with physical labor, subordinate positions in organizational hierarchies, as well as fewer opportunities for social mobility (Lucas, 2011b; Lucas, 2011c; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). Therefore, associating leadership with authority and organizational hierarchy is a way of reinforcing social class divisions and marginalizing body workers from constructions of leadership.

In addition to leading by example and helping, body and text workers talked about how decision-making was involved with good leadership. The next theme is focused on how text and body workers described decision-making and leadership.

RQ3: Theme 3: Decision-Making

Sub-themes: "Immediate Outcomes" and "Prolonged Change"

Body and text workers noted that good leaders are decision-makers. *Decision-making* is associated with the expectation that leaders are often responsible for choosing a

course of action that impacts the organization and individual organizational members. However, there were divergent meanings for processes and outcomes of decision-making.

As with the previous two themes, divergent meanings for leadership relate to issues of social class and different ways that discourse/materiality are de/emphasized in text and body work. When body workers associated leadership with decision-making, it was tied to leaders making decisions about managing physical risks involved with body work, which emphasizes material conditions central to body work (Dougherty, 2011). Body workers also noted that decision-making was a quick process that did not typically involve gathering feedback, which is similar to authoritarian leadership styles (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Further, outcomes of decision-making in body work had a more tangible and immediate impact on the physical surroundings and/or the physical bodies occupying the physical environment.

In contrast, when text workers described decision-making, they emphasized communicating with other organizational members to gather information and options before making decisions, which relates to an interpretive/discursive approach to leadership, as well as discursive processes that are central to text work (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Dougherty, 2011). Outcomes of decision-making in text work were also less tangible than in body work because they described large-scale organizational change, like trying to change organizational culture, or implementing new organizational policies.

In the following two sub-themes, I will present examples from body workers and text workers who highlighted “decision-making” in their constructions of leadership.

Decision-Making: “Immediate Outcomes”

The first sub-theme, *immediate outcomes*, represents how body workers described decision-making and leadership. *Immediate outcomes* means decisions are made quickly in body work, and outcomes are more immediate and tangible. When body workers talked about leaders making decisions, they often described situations in which decisions had to be made quickly, and the outcomes were immediately evident because there was a visible and tangible effect on the surrounding work environment and/or the physical bodies within the environment.

The first example of *immediate outcomes* comes from Mitch, a 33-year-old firefighter, who talked about how leaders are responsible for making tough decisions:

MITCH: Leadership...it’s a big responsibility. It says a lot if you're put in that position, someone believes in you, someone sees something that in part makes you a good person. It should be a thankless job...you're gonna be responsible for a lot of stuff, and you have to make some hard decisions, you're gonna have to do some unpopular things...I'm not a quote unquote leader, but I recognize that, and you don't have to be promoted, you don't need brass on your collar to be a leader.

For Mitch, decision-making is part of a leader’s responsibilities. Interestingly, Mitch’s statements that “you don’t have to be promoted” and “you don’t need brass on your collar to be a leader” imply ideas about leadership that are not necessarily tied to positions of authority. Thus, Mitch provided a rare example of non-hierarchical leadership, like the quote from Mary, the pecan farmer, in the previous theme.

Mitch repeatedly emphasized the importance of decision-making for leaders. People can live or die based on his decisions as a firefighter and EMT:

MITCH: What comes to mind—what makes it a little harder I think—is the split-decisions that have to happen. We had a situation on a third story building, a person on a balcony, smoke pouring out, but you've got fire, in a room where there's jugs of gasoline. You have to make a decision right now. Do you send your guys in there with that known hazard to save that person? Or you know, risk them dying also? I mean, you gotta make this decision in a couple seconds. So, I mean, not like that happens every day, but that could happen right now. That's a very real possibility. And I have a friend that works in a bank, and a lot of decisions, he might be able to sit in his office for a week or something...but like, we're not afforded that sometimes. In my line of work...it's something new every day, and you could be the most prepared guy in the world...but you get some really bizarre stuff...and you have three seconds to make a decision that could get somebody killed. (Mitch, body worker, 33-year-old Caucasian male, Firefighter)

For Mitch, leadership means being “responsible” for split-second decisions” that could have immediate life or death outcomes. Leadership involves literally putting the physical body at risk, and decision-making is tied to the material conditions of the moment, such as the third-story fire that he described. Further, he implied that leadership and decision-making in text work jobs are not as immediate as decisions leaders need to make in body work, highlighting a privileged class position of text work. Text workers have less pressure to make immediate decisions, and when they make decisions, outcomes are less likely to involve potential for physical harm or even death.

The next example of decision-making and leadership in body work emerged at the end of an interview with Liz, a 37-year-old server and bartender:

MIKE: What else should know about leadership in your line of work?

LIZ: In my line of work...like bartending and shit, sometimes you have to make decisions fast. Like if you're getting your ass kicked and you ran out of something, or something broke...Or, I've seen crazy shit, like...there was like a dude that punched his girlfriend in the face...I've had to call 911 a few times...

MIKE: Jeez! What did you do?

LIZ: Well, I thought something funny was going on...so I started trying to keep an eye on it. And I made sure I had my phone close by. I went and told my boss as soon as I thought something felt off. And then just suddenly he like took the table, flipped it, the food flew up in the air so high it hit the ceiling, and just straight punched this chick. I immediately got out my phone to call 911. (Liz, body worker, 37-year-old Caucasian female, Server & Bartender)

Liz emphasized “making a decision fast” in emergency situations. She communicated with her boss and the police, so discursive processes were involved with leadership and decision-making, but discourse was only part of the experience. Material conditions like broken dishes, flying food, flipping tables, and violent customers were more central to fast decision-making—and leadership—in her work.

In the final example, Avery, a 26-year-old line cook explains how a co-worker demonstrated good leadership by making quick decisions in an emergency:

AVERY: It was busy, and the owner wasn't there. It was myself and our pastry chef, James...He runs the line, does everything...expedites, does dishes, does pastries, does all of that. He really did a good job that day...Some things were running out. Our other boss is useless in an emergency...he runs back to the

kitchen like "We're out of this! We're out of this!" Like a chicken with his head cut off. We calmly explain to him...like, "Tell me what you need. Get servers to keep eyes out so they can tell us when things are getting low as opposed to when they're already out." And James proceeded to organize everyone. He was like "Get a tray of enchiladas started. Put these things in the fryer." That was nice to see him take charge and make decisions when there was no one else.

ME: What else makes that an example of what you consider good leadership?

AVERY: I guess because no one else was going to. That's part of it. A leader has to be the one who does step up. That's the whole thing. He did that. (Avery, body worker, 26-year-old African American female, Line Cook)

Similar to Mitch and Liz, Avery associated leadership with decision-making by describing an emergency situation. The situation she described implies there was no time to wait for someone else to make decisions or to engage in a long process of deliberation. Further, outcomes of decision-making were tangible and immediately observable because they were manifested in the form of physical objects like "trays of enchiladas" and putting "things in the fryer," as well as organizing physical bodies of other workers so they could tell the cooks "when things were running out." The physicality involved with leadership and decision-making in body work aligns with descriptions of body work in past research. Specifically, Dougherty (2011) explained that work produced by the body class is physical, and involves primarily physical outcomes (p. 6).

Avery also associated decision-making and leadership with "stepping up" and "taking charge" of a situation, which aligns with an authoritarian style of leadership because the individual leader in her example made decisions and gave orders without

consulting others (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Karau, 2002). However, her example also differs from dominant assumptions about leadership. Like Mitch and Mary, she did not associate leadership with authority positions, which expands definitions of leadership to include workers who occupy subordinate positions on an organizational hierarchy.

The leader in Avery's example was also described as doing all of the same physical work that other organizational members were expected to do, which aligns with body workers' previous explanations for how leaders "helped" and worked "in the trenches." The implication is that working "in the trenches" with other organizational members puts leaders in a better position to recognize when quick decisions need to be made, and thus, when to step up and take charge of a situation. However, as I previously explained, engaging in physical labor is traditionally viewed with disdain among white collar, text class workers (Ashforth, et al., 2007; Dougherty, 2011; Marvin 1994; Meisenbach, 2010; Thiel, 2007). Therefore, meanings of leadership and decision-making in body work, which emphasize physical labor, could reinforce social class divisions.

Precisely, Mitch, the firefighter, implied that decision-making in text work was not as immediate as decision-making in his line of work. After analyzing the interviews with text workers and body workers, it seems like Mitch's instincts were accurate.

Decision-Making: "Prolonged Change"

The second sub-theme of *prolonged change* represents how text workers talked about decision-making and leadership. *Prolonged change* describes how decisions involve more deliberation in text work, and outcomes emerge over time through interactions. Text workers described leaders who gathered information by meeting and interacting with other organizational members before making decisions, which relates to

discursive processes that are central to text work and discursive leadership (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Dougherty, 2011). Further, outcomes of decision-making in text work were not as immediately visible or tangible as outcomes of decision-making in body work; decision-making in text work was more associated with long-term organizational changes instead of immediate changes to the surrounding physical work site.

The first example of *prolonged change* comes from Ben, a 65-year-old Vice President of Global Procurement for a textile-manufacturing company. The following excerpt is part of his response when I asked what leadership means to him:

BEN: It's about decision-making. Decisiveness is necessary in true leaders...They make decisions and they're not afraid of their decision. In making decisions, people that do, you know they're well thought-out...And communicating that upfront and allowing yourself to modify a decision based on input from confidants and others in the room that have skillsets that you need, in order to be successful, is a true measure of leadership. Willingness to make a decision, but the willingness to modify based on information that you don't have...even before you implement, you cover it with people that you have confidence in...you take their input and modify that decision, before you implement it, before that decision ever comes from you, it's had input to make sure that others also agree with it.
(Ben, text worker, 65-year-old Caucasian male, VP of Global Procurement)

Ben highlights a strong connection to the discursive processes of decision-making. In his line of work, good leaders use a “well-thought-out” process to make decisions. To make good decisions, leaders gather input from other organizational members, which emphasizes discursive processes tied to leadership in text work.

Constructing leadership and decision-making as primarily discursive processes aligns with a discursive approach to leadership, and also relates to an emphasis on discursive processes that are central to text work (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Dougherty, 2011).

In contrast to discursive processes highlighted in Ben's quote, body workers' examples of leadership and decision-making emphasized physical labor, material objects, specific organizational sites, and physical bodies. Thus, Ben's explanation of leadership and decision-making diverges from meanings created by body workers in ways related to social class distinctions of text and body class (Dougherty, 2011; Marvin, 1994, 2006).

In the next example, Aaron, a 42-year-old University Professor, highlights a connection between leadership and decision-making. He explained a time when he was Acting Department Head, and a large group of international students were in jeopardy of losing their tuition funding because the University was mismanaging their English Language training program. Using himself as an example of good leadership, he drew attention to decision-making processes involved in solving the problem:

AARON: I decided we had to set up a number of meetings...What I did, ultimately, was work to identify the nature of the problem, articulate it, and try to create an environment of addressing the problem without blaming, or trying to punish or anything like that...I guess it was a moment of clarity, saying like, "If we're going to get through this, we need to stop making excuses. We need to stop trying to save face...and refocus our attention in a way that accomplishes the task. We need to serve these students, and we also need to decide how to change the program in a way that works, while also maintaining relationships with the staff. Creating a collegial environment...I realized there's two different roads I could

choose. I could go down this road, which was like, "This is going to happen. This is what you're going to do, and if you're not going to do it, you're out." (Aaron, text worker, 42-year-old Caucasian male, Associate Professor)

For Aaron, decision-making was necessary for problem-solving. Decision-making was also implied when he highlighted needing to "choose" between two options.

Decision-making was also a highly discursive and prolonged process because it involved multiple meetings and interactions with groups of people, which seemed to provide an example of discursive leadership, which is an interpretive approach to leadership that emphasizes the co-creation of leadership through interaction (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010).

In Aaron's example, the outcome of decision-making would not be completely known until the students actually attended the classes and demonstrated some improvement in their English proficiency, suggesting outcomes of decision-making are likely to emerge over time. Outcomes of decision-making were also discursive because Aaron's example was focused on improving students' proficiency in speaking English. In contrast, for body workers, leadership and decision-making were intimately tied to the material conditions of the surrounding work site, like a kitchen or a burning building, and the outcomes were immediately tangible because they had a material presence within the physical work site. In other words, material conditions of body work are central to body workers' constructions of leadership and decision-making; whereas discursive processes are more emphasized in text workers' constructions of leadership and decision-making. Thus, Aaron provided another example of how meanings for leadership can diverge in ways that are related to social class differences associated with text work and body work.

Moving forward, Aaron's example emphasized the importance of creating a positive working environment, which draws attention to another aspect of leadership that emerged in my interviews with text and body workers. Specifically, the next theme addresses how leaders are expected to cultivate productive work environments.

RQ3: Theme 4: Creating a Productive Work Environment

Sub-themes: "Managing Physical Safety" and "Inspiring Productivity"

Body and text workers reported that leadership played an important role in creating and maintaining a productive work environment. *Creating a productive work environment* means promoting a work environment that minimizes physical risk and encourages productivity. Similar to findings from the first research question, all participants appreciated leaders who were supporting and encouraging, which contributes to a more productive and satisfying work-place. However, body and text workers also diverged in some expectations for how leaders managed day-to-day work environments. Leaders' concerns for "physical safety" was almost exclusively emphasized by body workers, while text workers talked more about leaders' ability to "inspire productivity".

Creating a Productive Environment: "Managing Physical Safety"

The first sub-theme, *managing physical safety*, is focused on body workers' expectations for how leaders demonstrate a concern for the physical safety of organizational members in body work contexts. Past literature supports the idea that body work involves a greater degree of physical risk. Dougherty (2011) explained that the physical nature of body work "and the inherent risk in many of these jobs represent a form of body sacrifice" (p. 179). *Body sacrifice* refers to the idea that body workers willingly risk physical injury in the course of their day-to-day-work. For example, in their

studies of blue-collar workers employed as miners, Lucas (2011a) and Lucas and Buzzanell (2004) found that miners faced constant risk of physical injury and even death.

Based on previous quotes, material conditions and physical risk involved with body work seem to encourage a sense of urgency in processes of leadership and decision-making. Physical injuries could occur at any time in body work, so body workers would seem to benefit from leadership that actively promotes an awareness of physical safety.

The first example comes from Devin, a 33-year-old mechanic, who described a recent experience at his new job. While working as a mechanic, he took on a new position as an Operations Maintenance Technician at a large manufacturing facility, which involves monitoring and maintaining machines, tools, vehicles, electrical components, and any other equipment at the facility. Devin explained how a leader in his line of work should demonstrate a concern for physical safety:

DEVIN: At the job recently, there is a gentleman, Julio, he has a lot of experience... We were building a room and I was taking a measurement... he was definitely better with showing me how to do measurements and cutting material for the drywall... Also, making sure that whatever and wherever we are, trying to be safe. Every time we would operate the machine, he would always yell out, "Devin, are you out of the way?" And I would say, "Clear!" And his main thought was take a second, think before you do... I thought he was a good leader in that regard because he was just saying you don't have to know everything. If you don't know something, ask or take your time with it, be safe, and think about it before you do anything. (Devin, body worker, 33-year-old Caucasian male, Mechanic)

For Devin, demonstrating concern for a safe working environment highlights the physical body, because safety—in this context—specifically relates to risk of bodily harm involved with day-to-day conditions in body work. Risk of bodily harm came from material conditions of the work-place, like saws for “cutting the material for drywall” and the “forklift” he mentioned in the second research question. To demonstrate a concern for the physical safety of other organizational members, the leader in Devin’s example communicated in ways that helped minimize risk of physical injury, which enabled workers to complete their work. Verbal communication in Devin’s example also related to the short and direct style associated with working class communication (Lubrano, 2004; Rushton & Young, 1975; Shatzman & Strauss, 1955). Thus, in body work, clear and direct communication is an important tool for preventing bodily injuries at work.

One implication of Devin’s example of leadership is that discursive processes and material realities are simultaneously involved in constructions of leadership. Dougherty (2011) argued that communication researchers should pay more attention to how “symbolic language impacts material conditions, and material conditions impact symbolic language (p. 92). When it comes to safety in the workplace, the intersection of discourse and materiality seems particularly evident in constructions of meanings for organizational realities. The physically dangerous work conditions give rise to leaders’ discourse about how to safely work in the dangerous environment, which in turn influences how organizational members interact with the physical environment.

In the next example, I asked Mary, a 28-year-old pecan farmer, how leadership is different in her line of work compared to jobs that involve less physical labor. She emphasized how leaders should be concerned with physical safety in body work:

MARY: The safety part comes to mind because, like, in an office job or something, you could run a fire drill. But I don't think you're gonna hurt yourself by typing up something incorrectly. So, there's the safety piece in making sure everyone is being careful and aware. And we don't necessarily have a common meeting place, so we have to check in and get everyone on the same page. Drive around the farm, look at what needs to be done, and talk about those things together. (Mary, body worker, 28-year-old Caucasian female, Pecan Farmer)

Mary's job involves operating large and dangerous farm equipment, which supports past research that describes body work as physically dangerous, so it makes sense that she emphasized the importance of physical safety (Dougherty, 2011; Lubrano, 2004; Lucas, 2011a; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). I observe some day-to-day work at Mary's farm, and I noticed some of the machinery that she later referenced in our interview. I visited the farm during the pecan harvest, so the farm was a flurry of activity. A key piece of machinery—a tree shaker—had already shaken the pecans off of each tree. While I watched, another machine called a sweeper was passing through the rows of trees and sweeping the pecans into neat lines, which made it easier to later collect the pecans with a pecan harvester. The sweepers were loud and kicked up a lot of dust, so visibility was limited to about 75 yards in any direction. Occasionally, we had to step aside for large trucks filled with thousands of pounds of pecans. At one point, Mary demonstrated how a tree shaker worked. The vehicle had a large vice on the front that clamped to the trunk of a pecan tree, and—as the name implies—it literally shook the tree so hard that the pecans fell to the ground. Witnessing the tree shaker in action, as well as

equipment like the sweepers and large trucks filled with pecans, helped me understand why Mary later emphasized the physical hazards of working on a farm.

Mary also contrasted the physical risk of working on a farm with relatively safe working conditions of text work, demonstrating how different working experiences contribute to different ways of experiencing leadership. Mary's comments highlight a way that meanings for leadership can diverge along the same lines that distinguish body work from text work, which supports Dougherty, et al.'s (2009) description of LC/MD.

Further, Mary's explanation involves demonstrating concern for the physical safety of the people working on the farm by making sure they are "being careful" and "aware" of their surroundings. Mary explained how she would "drive around the farm" in order to personally observe the day-to-day tasks that need to be performed, which highlights primarily material conditions—like the physical body and the surroundings of the work site—involved in her description of leadership. However, she also stressed the importance of discursive processes like checking in, meeting, and talking with other organizational members to make sure everyone was "on the same page" about what they needed to be doing on the farm. Therefore, like Devin, Mary's interpretation of leadership highlights an intersection of discursive and material conditions.

In the next example, Joe, a 58-year-old body worker employed on the bottling lines of an oil factory, emphasizes safety in his construction of leadership. Joe's experience demonstrates the high degree of physical risk in body work, as well as the severe physical harm that can occur when appropriate steps are not taken to ensure safety:

JOE: A good leader has to make sure you have enough employees or else it's just unsafe. 'Cause we're always short. I mean, everyday we have to shut lines down,

take people from other areas, and that's a safety hazard, 'cause people's not trained all the way...I don't know if his bonus is tied to how much money he saved, but he's cut the workforce way down...A good boss makes sure you have enough employees, enough materials you need, and this guy doesn't do that. He likes us running real slim and I'm sure his bonuses are tied in to what the cost to run the plant is...A bad boss will do things like that just to pad their own pocket...That's probably why we've had more injuries. Hell, we had one guy almost killed down there. He got smashed between a building and a truck. The guy was out in the parking lot, talking to a truck driver, and another truck was backing in—and how could you not see a truck backing in? But he backed in and he smashed him between the building and the dock door...It is unsafe down there. You have people not trained all the way... 'cause you don't have enough extra people to train them. (Joe, body worker, 58-year-old Caucasian male, Oil Factory Worker)

Joe's work involves a high degree of physical risk, which is characteristic of body work (Dougherty, 2011; Lubrano, 2004; Lucas, 2011a; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). Joe also explained that a good leader should make sure the work environment is safe. When leaders do not adequately demonstrate a concern for physical safety, it creates “safety hazards” and “injuries,” which was demonstrated by Joe's example of a worker who “got smashed between a building and a truck” and “almost died.” As I mentioned in the findings for the second research question, most body workers in this study demonstrated a concern for physical risks involved with their work. In contrast, text workers are privileged in that their work was relatively free of physical danger (Dougherty, 2011).

Joe also mentioned the importance of training, and based on previous examples from body workers who mentioned “training,” it seems more associated with physically “doing the work” as a way of “helping” body workers, which was discussed in a previous theme. However, “training” could also imply less obvious discursive processes that are involved with sharing and learning information about work processes.

Physical bodies were central to Joe’s narrative, in part because of their absence. Joe emphasized the need for more employees—more physical bodies—in order to create a safer, more productive work environment. Bodies were also central to the story because they were at risk of being seriously injured, demonstrated by the “smashed” body of a worker caught between a truck and a building. Joe also drew attention to physical objects by referencing “lines” for filling bottles of oil, “trucks,” and the “dock door.” Finally, the work site—the oil factory itself—has “safety hazards.” The prominence of materiality in Joe’s example supports past descriptions of body work, and is different from the relatively safe, mainly discursive processes involved with text work (Dougherty, 2011). Thus, body and text workers could create meanings for leadership and safety that diverge based on different material conditions involved with their day-to-day work experiences.

Joe’s speculations about the manager’s motivation for cutting the workforce is also interesting, and it relates to Lucas and Buzzanell’s (2004) study of blue-collar occupational narratives among miners. From Joe’s perspective, a selfish pursuit of individual wealth was a logical explanation for why the manager/leader did not hire enough employees to maintain a safe workplace. Similarly, from Lucas and Buzzanell’s (2004) research, the greedy pursuit of personal financial gain was associated with imposing increased physical risks on others. Therefore, Joe could be unconsciously

drawing upon a similar blue-collar narrative to make sense of increased physical risk that the leader was imposing upon the oil factory workers. Joe's disdain for the apparently self-interested leader also relates to the self/other orientation that characterized text and body workers' descriptions of bad/good leaders in findings for the first research question.

Recall that Mary, the pecan farmer, speculated that physical safety is not as much of a concern for leaders and other organizational members in text work environments. Based on my interviews with text workers, it seems like she had the right idea.

Creating a Productive Work Environment: "Inspiring Productivity"

The second sub-theme of *inspiring productivity* represents text workers' expectations for how leaders should create a productive working environment. *Inspiring productivity* means communicating in ways that inspire others to accomplish goals in text work. There was little to no threat of bodily harm in text work, so physical safety was less apparent in text workers' meanings for leadership. Text workers talked more about how leaders create encouraging working environments that inspire productivity.

In the following example, Gary, a 33-year-old elementary school teacher, explained how his Principal demonstrated good leadership:

GARY: She's expressed her confidence in me. Just, "We want this role to change. You are the one that's going to do it, so do your thing." It's given me that confidence. It gets me excited. It inspires me to want to do something. I know somebody's got my back. I feel safe to take risks. I forget what I did a couple weeks ago, but I totally shit the bed on it. The whole thing, kids were psychopaths, they were running around. It was crazy. If I didn't feel like she wanted me to take those risks, then I wouldn't have...If I want the kids to feel safe

to take risks in my class, I've got to be able to feel safe to risks. (Gary, text worker, 33-year-old Caucasian male, Elementary School Teacher)

Gary's Principal demonstrates good leadership because she "inspires" him by discursively expressing her confidence in him. Gary noted that his principal expects him change how his role is performed, and feeling supported and inspired motivates him to "do something" and "take risks" in his daily activities, which involved discursive processes of instructing elementary school children.

Gary's explanation of "safety" and "risks" is particularly interesting compared to body workers' meanings for safety and risk. For body workers, risk relates to potential bodily injury that was a normal part of day-to-day work experiences, and safety was part of body workers' constructions of leadership because leaders were expected to demonstrate concern for workers' physical safety. In contrast, for Gary, "risk" is not about possibility of physical injury; rather, it was more tied to having freedom to create and implement unique teaching methods, which—based on Gary's humorous illustration of kids running around like "psychopaths"—are not always successful. I would add that if new ways of doing things were guaranteed to be successful, there would be no risk. Since Gary's day-to-day work is relatively free of physical danger, he creates a more discursive meaning for "safety," which he associates with not fear reprimand by his principal if one of his "risks" do not go according to plan.

Discourse is central to Gary's meanings for risk, safety, and leadership; on the other hand, material conditions are more central to body workers' meanings for the same concepts. Thus, Gary's illustration of "leadership," "safety," and "risks" demonstrates

examples of LC/MD in ways that relate to different discursive/material experiences of text/body work, which is tied to class distinctions among text workers and body workers.

The next example comes from Maggie, a 59-year-old family counselor. This is what she said when I asked her what leadership means to her:

MAGGIE: A good leader is somebody that sees potential in whoever's following and inspires them to meet their potential...Maybe there's a project you're working on, but it's more about caring about the people who are following rather than the product...You're going to get the good product if you inspire your people.

(Maggie, text worker, 59-year-old Hispanic female, Family Counselor)

For Maggie, a good leader “inspires” others to “meet their potential.” She explained that caring about others is a good way to “get the good product.” “Inspiring” others seems related to demonstrating care for others and encouraging productivity. Based on her illustration, a good leader—who ultimately seems to want to “get the good product”—should prioritize demonstrating that they care about followers, because that is a way of ultimately “getting the good product.”

Based on different work experiences of text and body workers, as well as different kinds of outcomes that are produced, text and body workers seem to create divergent meanings for productivity. In contrast to the discourse produced in text work, the previous examples from body workers indicate that materiality was central the “products” that come from body work. For example, Mary’s work produces pecans, Joe’s work produces bottles of oil, and Devin’s work in the previous example produced a physical room with walls that he had to measure and cut. The divergent meanings for productivity seem to reinforce past literature. Specifically, Dougherty (2011) explained that people

who do more physical work produce more physical outcomes, which is demonstrated by the different forms of productivity for the text workers and body workers in this study.

The themes and sub-themes in the third research question highlighted some of the ways that meanings for leadership converged and diverged for body workers and text workers. For example, one of the key findings that emerged in the third research question was that text workers and body workers referred to different forms of social distancing in their divergent constructions of leadership. Body workers perceive leadership in managers and authority figures who make themselves appear more similar to subordinates by engaging in physical labor side-by-side with subordinates, whereas text workers perceive leadership in authority figures who work primarily with words in ways that makes them different—particularly more prestigious—than subordinates.

Meanings for leadership also diverged in ways related to different communication styles among text and body workers. Text workers relied more on detailed processes of communication in day-to-day work, and body workers primarily used their bodies—along with a short, direct style of communication. Similarly, when it came to helping others, text workers described leaders who relied more on texts like written manuals in order to communicate expectations, and they typically engaged in more prolonged decision-making that involved interacting with others. In contrast, body workers described leaders who relied on using their bodies to physically assist subordinates with their work, and decisions were typically made quickly without much input from others.

Third, meanings for leadership diverged based on different descriptions of productivity and safety. Risk of physical injury is a normal in body work, and work that involves physical labor—like body work—produces physical outcomes (Dougherty,

2011). Thus, in body work, it was important for leaders to create a physically safe environment for body workers to produce the tangible outcomes of their work. In contrast, text workers were relatively free from threat of physical harm at work, so “risk” was more associated with taking chances on new ideas for performing a text work job. By extension, when leaders made text workers feel safe, it meant text workers did not fear being reprimanded by their superior if they take a “risk” and the risk fails.

Finally, examples of leadership and safety contribute to leadership research. The body is often overlooked in business and scholarly writings about leadership, which marginalizes other ways of understanding leadership (Barge, 2014; Sinclair, 2005). By associating leadership with ideas about workplace safety, as well as the importance of clear and direct communication, body workers constructed meanings for leadership that highlight intersections of discourse and materiality. Thus, the findings answer calls for more critical leadership research that examines the intersection of discourse and materiality in meanings for leadership (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Barge, 2014; Buzzanell, et al., 2008; Fairhurst, 2007; Sinclair, 2005; Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007).

Overall, based on the different ways that participants talked about leadership, it seems like meaning divergence was tied to the different ways that relate to the different material and discursive conditions that are associated with text work and body work.

Research Question Four:

How Stories About Leadership Are Classed

The fourth research question highlights some of the specific ways that leadership becomes tied to assumptions about social class. Based on interviews with text workers and body workers, their stories about leadership reinforced dominant assumptions about

leadership and social class in at least two main ways: (1) Reinforcing Organizational Hierarchy/Subordination and (2) Integrating Discourse and Downplaying Materiality. The themes and sub-themes will be described in the following paragraphs, along with examples from text workers' and body workers' stories about leadership.

RQ4: Theme 1: Reinforcing Organizational Hierarchy/Subordination

Sub-themes: “Management as Leadership” and “Denying Leadership”

The first theme focuses on how organizational hierarchies became associated with stories about leadership, which was overwhelmingly common in text workers' and body workers' constructions of leadership. *Reinforcing organizational hierarchy/subordination* refers to stories that place leaders into higher ranking positions in an organizational hierarchy, as well as stories that place body workers in subordinate positions.

Body work and physical labor are more associated with subordinate positions in organizational hierarchies, subordinate social class, and less opportunity for upward mobility (Dougherty, 2011; Lucas, 2011b; Lucas, 2011c; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). Physical labor is also traditionally viewed with disdain among white collar, or text class workers (Ashforth, et al., 2007; Dougherty, 2011; Marvin 1994; Thiel, 2007). In contrast, leadership and more prestigious social classes are traditionally associated with authority and management positions in an organizational hierarchy, as well as more opportunity for upward mobility (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Lucas, 2011b). Therefore, reinforcing the taken-for-granted association of management and leadership is a way of maintaining social class divisions by limiting body workers' opportunities to embody leadership.

Although there were some examples of non-hierarchical leadership in previous narratives, every participant still provided stories about leadership in which they

referenced organizational hierarchies. The following two subthemes demonstrate some ways that body workers and text workers associated leadership with authority and higher-ranking positions in an organizational hierarchy.

Reinforcing Organizational Hierarchy/Subordination: “Management as Leadership”

The first sub-theme, *management as leadership*, represents how body and text workers referred to leaders in management and administrative positions. Most stories about leadership in previous themes focused on managers and bosses who were seen as superiors—in terms of rank—in their organizations, so I have already provided examples and discussed implications for reinforcing traditional assumptions about leadership and organizational hierarchy. Therefore, the following examples will not be as extensive.

The following two examples—one from a text worker and one from a body worker—draw attention to connections between management and leadership that were prevalent across all interviews. The first example comes from the beginning of my interview with Ben, a 65-year-old Vice President of Global Procurement for a textile manufacturing company, when I asked him why he wanted to go into management:

BEN: I was most comfortable in that role. It is a role that I experienced through most of my life, being in a position to be responsible, to make the decisions, to lead others...From there it just metastasized itself into the same thing in a corporate entity...All the roles that I ever had in the companies that I worked for after college were all leadership positions. They were all management positions...

MIKE: Tell me more about that...What made it so comfortable for you?

BEN: I think starting off, I have five younger brothers; I’m the oldest. That’s probably the first place where leadership became part of my life. I was expected

to set an example, to take care of my younger brothers, to be the responsible one of the children. As I entered high school, I was an athlete, captain of my teams. Left high school, went into the military. Quickly rose to platoon sergeant, ended up as a tank commander in an armored squadron. From there, went to college pursuing business administration, as opposed to leadership in other areas. First job that was offered to me, I took it and from there had management opportunities that grew larger as I stayed with business. (Ben, text worker, 65-year-old Caucasian male, VP of Global Procurement)

For Ben, leadership and management are intimately related. All of his roles have been “leadership positions,” which were also “management positions.” He also associated leadership and management with being the oldest sibling, because as the oldest, he “was expected to set an example,” which relates to how text and body workers talked about leadership in the third research question.

Ben also mentioned having a college education, which is traditionally associated with management positions, text work, and more privileged social classes (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Dougherty, 2011; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). However, he later explained that neither of his parents went to college and none of his brothers went to college. He added that his dad “was a truck driver,” and that he “started work at 15, at a gas station and delivering newspapers.” Before the military, he said that he “was an auto mechanic and a line supervisor at an automotive parts stamping plant, and a plumber’s apprentice.” Drawing on past research, Ben’s experience aligns with descriptions of a social class straddler—someone born into a blue-collar family who then moves into middle-class and/or white-collar occupations (Lubrano, 2004; Lucas, 2011b; Dougherty, 2011).

However, whether referencing leadership in text work or body work, Ben still associated leadership with authority and management positions in an organizational hierarchy.

In the next example, Mitch, a 33-year-old firefighter, explains a situation that highlights a connection between leadership and organizational hierarchy:

MITCH: In this job in particular we have some really good leaders... like we have a captain who's the guy in charge of the whole entire shift. We actually have four, but there's one on each shift, and then one has an extra one.

At this point, Mitch already made the implicit connection between leadership and having an advanced rank in the organization. When asked about leadership, his first response was to talk about “captains” who are “in charge.” By associating leadership with positions of authority and higher rank, Mitch subordinated himself from his own construction of leadership, which is similar to Mitch’s example in the first research question. However, Mitch is also one of the few body workers who gave an example of non-hierarchical leadership, highlighted in his example for decision-making in the third research question. Thus, Mitch demonstrated an understanding of leadership that is more nuanced than traditional assumptions about an organizational hierarchy.

Mitch then told a story about leadership that highlights some of the previous themes that have already been discussed:

MITCH: Somebody got in trouble... Mistakes are gonna happen, and unfortunately sometimes if you make a mistake in this job, somebody can die... A member of my crew picked up a guy who they believed was homeless, and they just assumed he was cold. So, they were treating him with that mindset, "This guy's cold, he just needs to get to hospital." But actually turns out this guy was

having a cardiac episode, and was having a heart attack...And the guy ended up dying...And so that's a pretty big deal. You can lose your medic license, or lose your job, but the captain on that shift was able to understand that people make mistakes. (Mitch, body worker, 33-year-old Caucasian male, Firefighter)

Mitch later explained that the Captain decided not to suspend or revoke the medic licenses of the medics who made the mistake. Rather, Mitch said his department used the incident as a “learning experience”—they sat down and discussed what happened and used the incident as a reminder of the risks when mistakes are made, as well as a lesson about increasing awareness on the job. Mitch’s example demonstrates a number of themes that emerged for each research question. His Captain provided support by being understanding, which relates to findings for the first research question. Material conditions of body work were highlighted by a man actually losing his life, which relates to immediate outcomes body workers associated with leadership and decision-making.

The previous two quotes seem to draw on and reinforce traditional, dominant assumptions about leadership. Associating leadership with management and authority positions in organizational hierarchies implies that leadership is not suited for subordinate positions (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). Dominant ideologies of social class tend to associate blue-collar workers with physical labor and subordinate positions in organizations (Lucas and Buzzanell, 2004). By distancing leadership from subordinate positions, text/body workers subtly reinforce dominant assumptions that marginalize body work from constructions of leadership, which reinforces social class distinctions.

At the same time, the previous quotes from Ben and Mitch also highlight an interaction of text/body, rather than a dichotomy. For Ben, leadership was tied to his

blue-collar background and military experience, both of which emphasize physical risk and using the body for physical labor, in addition to discursive processes involved with decision-making he discussed in the third research question. Mitch tied leadership to material conditions that emphasize extreme physical risk, as well as discursive processes involved with providing support, having meetings, and discussing learning experiences. The implication is that distinctions between leadership among text and body workers should not be viewed as a dichotomy of text/body and discourse/materiality. Rather, in line with Dougherty (2011) and Marvin (2006), the previous quotes demonstrate how all work involves degrees of text and body, and how constructions of leadership emerge through a dialectic of text/body and discourse/materiality.

On top of linking leaders to management, the next sub-theme highlights another way text and body workers reinforced organizational hierarchies and subordination.

Reinforcing Organizational Hierarchy/Subordination: “Denying Leadership”

The second sub-theme, *denying leadership*, refers to another way that participants associated leadership with organizational hierarchies. *Denying leadership* means refusing to view self as a leader due to occupying lower positions in an organizational hierarchy. All text workers and body workers reinforced an association between management and leadership by choosing managers and authority figures as examples of leaders. However, some text workers and body workers also reinforced a hierarchical view of leadership by denying that they were leaders in their current subordinate positions. When I asked for an example of how they acted as a leader, they would refer to their subordinate positions in organizational hierarchies to explain why they didn't see themselves as leaders

In the first example, Carson, a 32-year-old lawyer, explains why he doesn't view himself as a leader in his organization:

CARSON: At the job I'm at now, I don't feel like there have been many opportunities for me to be a leader or really exhibit any leadership skills. I'm definitely the new guy, low guy on the totem pole. No seniority...In my previous job, there was an informal hierarchy based on seniority. I was there a couple of years. In that role, the leadership that I think I exhibited would be primarily about helping the new guys or the newer attorneys that were hired try to get up to speed. (Carson, text worker, 32-year-old Caucasian male, Lawyer)

To explain why he is not a leader in his current organization, Carson compared the organizational structure to a "totem pole" and placed himself on the "low" end, which reinforces an assumption that leadership is reserved for higher-ranking positions. He added that "seniority" in his previous job granted him some leadership in an "informal hierarchy." Further, when I asked Carson to tell me more about "helping" new attorneys, he said that it involved "explaining" the work, teaching them "the statutes and the regulations," and "being available for questions." Therefore, Carson described processes of *communicating expectations* that text workers previously associated with leadership.

Carson associated leadership with rank and organizational hierarchy, but as a "new guy," he does not yet see himself as a leader in his current job. However, compared to body workers, effects of reinforcing connections between organizational hierarchy and leadership are less problematic for Carson. Carson's day-to-day work still aligns with text class assumptions about leadership that privilege discursive processes over consideration

for material conditions, which puts him in a better position to embody dominant assumptions about leadership than body workers whose work emphasizes physical labor.

The next example comes from Avery, a 26-year-old body worker employed as a line cook. She expressed reluctance to view herself as a leader in her current line of work:

AVERY: I don't know. Me? Now I'm nervous. Am I a leader at work? Hold on. Let me think about this one. Let me light the rest of this cigarette...I don't know. People ask me questions and I answer them, even if I don't know...I'll be like "I'm not sure but if you're asking me, this is what I would do." I'm not truly in charge. I can't make executive decisions. But I do because there's no one else there sometimes...But I'm not technically a manager. (Avery, body worker, 26-year-old African American female, Line Cook)

Avery resisted seeing herself as a leader because she is not “in charge” and she “can’t make executive decisions.” She was reluctant to view herself as a leader because she is “not technically a manager,” which reinforces her subordination, and reinforces assumptions that tie leadership to more advanced positions in organizational hierarchies. However, she also said she answers questions and makes executive decisions when “no one else is there,” which aligns with her description of leadership in the third research question, in which she explained how individuals can demonstrate good leadership by “taking charge,” “stepping up,” and “making decisions.”

The findings demonstrate how some text and body workers denied leadership, even when they described their own behaviors in ways that overlapped with their previous descriptions of leadership processes. By not seeing their own behaviors as leadership—based on their subordinate organizational positions—body and text workers

reinforced dominant Discourses that associate leadership with positions of authority, and they reinforced their own subordination in an organizational hierarchy. Reinforcing their own subordination is particularly problematic for body workers, because their constructions of leadership typically emphasized material conditions that are already marginalized in dominant text class assumptions about leadership (Dougherty, 2011).

RQ4: Theme 2: Integrating Discourse & Downplaying Materiality

Sub-themes: “Integrating Discourse in Body Work” and “Downplaying Materiality in Text Work”

The second theme is focused on different ways that text/body workers privileged discursive processes in their constructions of leadership. *Integrating discourse and downplaying materiality* refers to stories about leadership that emphasize the skillful use of discourse over the material conditions of leadership. One concern is that text/body workers who prioritize discursive conditions of leadership might be reinforcing a system of social class that already privileges text class assumptions about leadership and marginalizes the material conditions that are central to the day-to-day work experiences of body workers. At the same time, body workers who emphasize the integration of skillful use of discourse—along with using the physical body—could be demonstrating a more complex understanding of leadership than text workers, which relates to the Standpoint Theory foundations of LC/MD (Dougherty, et al., 2009).

Integrating Discourse & Downplaying Materiality: “Integrating Discourse in Body Work”

Integrating discourse in body work is focused on body workers’ stories about leadership that emphasize skillful use of communication while simultaneously

downplaying the importance of material conditions. Note that “all work is both physical and textual in some way” (Dougherty, 2011, p. 182); however, body and text work can be distinguished by the degree to which communication is de/emphasized as a way of doing work. Text work emphasizes more use of communication, and is typically associated with more privileged white-collar social classes. In contrast, body work emphasizes more use of physical labor and less use of communication, and body work is typically associated with blue-collar work and more subordinate social class (Lucas, 2011a; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004; Dougherty, 2011). Thus, when body workers privilege discourse in their constructions of leadership, they reinforce dominant assumptions about leadership in a way that privileges text workers—who primarily use communication as a way of doing work—and simultaneously marginalizes body workers—who are associated with more physical labor and less communication in their day-to-day work.

In the first example, Joe, a 58-year-old oil factory worker, talks about the kind of person he associates with leadership:

JOE: You want a people-person in leadership, 'cause that's a very important part of that job; you're just dealing with people all day. You're dealing with the other stuff, but you're also dealing with people underneath you...Especially if you have 90 or 100 people under you. There's always something coming up...I'd say, if I ran a business, I'd almost look for people with better people skills than engineering skills...As long as they was a decent business person, but if they had better people skills, I'd give more towards that. (Joe, body worker, 58-year-old Caucasian male, Oil Factory Worker)

Joe prioritized discursive processes involved with “people skills” and “dealing with people” over the material conditions associated with “engineering skills,” which seems to imply working with machines and equipment. Further, by associating leadership with having “people under you,” he reinforced an assumption that leadership is tied to elevated positions in an organizational hierarchy. Prioritizing discursive processes of leadership serves to marginalize the physical labor of body workers from meanings of leadership. Similarly, associating leadership with management/hierarchy means associating leadership with positions that do not typically engage in physical labor, which marginalizes body work from Joe’s construction of leadership.

However, in findings for the third research question, Joe explained that good leaders should demonstrate a concern for the physical safety of employees, which foregrounds the material conditions and physical risks that are involved with embodying leadership in body work. Therefore, Joe’s overall construction of leadership is one that integrates a concern for both discursive and material conditions involved with leadership. Drawing from Feminist Standpoint Theory, a foundation of LC/MD, marked groups tend to have a more complex understanding of their conditions than more dominant, unmarked groups (Baxter, 2011; Wood, 2005). Therefore, by consciously articulating the importance of both discursive and material conditions involved with leadership, Joe’s narratives about leadership imply that body workers could be in a better position to recognize their own social position and the position of more dominant social groups, which supports Wood’s (2005) description of double consciousness.

In the next example, Bret, a 32-year-old Assistant Brewer, emphasizes the importance of communication to explain how someone could become a better leader:

BRET: You'd have to talk to your staff, subordinates, almost on a personal level, but without any backlash...Communication's the biggest thing...You need to do an open-door policy so you can get all the facts. Surveys can work. People are more honest when they don't have to use their own names. In the school spectrum, you get to do a survey about your teacher afterwards...Why don't we do that in business? (Bret, body worker, 32-year-old Caucasian/Hispanic male, Brewer)

Bret explicitly emphasized discursive processes as a way of becoming a better leader when he said “communication is the biggest thing.” His examples of “surveys” and “open-door policies” highlighted the importance of communication and feedback, which relates to discursive processes of leadership involved with *listening*, which was discussed in findings for the first research question. Bret also noted that becoming a better leader should involve talking with “subordinates,” which reinforces an assumption that leadership is tied to having a superior position in an organizational hierarchy.

Bret’s current quote prioritizes the use of communication for individuals who want to become better leaders. However, Bret previously emphasized his preference for leaders who engage in physical labor side-by-side “in the trenches” with subordinates, which highlighted material conditions and physical labor that are central to body work. Thus, it seems that Bret provides another example of how some body workers construct a more nuanced understanding of leadership that encompasses both body and text. Therefore, Bret reinforces Feminist Standpoint research that explains how marked groups—like body workers in this case—have a more complex understanding of their conditions than unmarked groups (Wood, 2005).

Before I discuss the next quote, I want to draw attention to part of my interview process. Near the end of every interview, I asked participants to talk about how leadership might be different for people doing more/less physical labor. In contrast to text workers, almost all of the body workers said that leadership in less physical labor contexts would involve more communication, less concern for physical safety, and leaders who were not as physically present. In other words, body workers were more likely to articulate an understanding of leadership that highlighted the importance of both discursive and material conditions, and they seemed to have a better understanding for how leadership would be different in text work.

In the final quote for this sub-theme, Mason, a welder, integrates discursive and material conditions involved with leadership. In addition to his job as a welder, he also teaches welding classes at a community college, giving him a unique perspective from which to view leadership in different work contexts. This is his response when I asked him how leadership might be different in jobs that don't involve as much physical labor:

MASON: In my experience, a lot of leadership in academia says, "You can talk to HR, or here's the policy," and they kind of get you to go to it in writing. And, here, we're showing by example, or working with them and not necessarily saying, "Hey, this is how it needs to be done because this page in this book says to do it this way." And at academia, you don't have that flexibility in leadership; you got strict protocol to follow. And here, you gotta adjust, everything changes daily, sometimes multiple times a day...Now, with that being said, I get it, they're dealing with hundreds of people from all walks of life; we have people that are hardcore academia, and then we have the trade college that I'm part of, and we

kind of view things differently from somebody that teaches English for fifteen years. So, I get why there's a strict protocol over there. It's hard to see how that applies to something that we do though.

MIKE: In this environment, you mentioned earlier that a good leader is not afraid to get down in the trenches, get their hands dirty with you.

MASON: Right.

ME: Is that something you expect of a good leader in an academic setting?

MASON: I would like a little bit more involvement, not necessarily getting down in the trenches like, “Hey we're gonna dig this hole together,” just like, be involved. I don't expect the president of the college to grab a welding helmet and start welding with the students, you know, but poke their head in and say, “How are things going today?” Those little things go a long way in my opinion. Just a simple, “Hey, thank you,” or “Good job.” It's not necessarily doing the work; it's just having the leader know what it takes to get the job done. That's valuable to me. (Mason, body worker, 34-year-old Hispanic male, Welder)

For Mason, leadership in more physical work environments involves engaging in physical labor side-by-side with subordinates, which aligns with body workers' descriptions of leadership in the third research question. He also demonstrated perspective-taking by explaining how leadership in text work involves more social and physical distance between leaders and subordinates, as well as more “writing” instead of “showing by example,” which aligns with text workers' descriptions of leadership in the third research question. Thus, Mason integrated a concern for discursive processes—in addition to material conditions—involved with leadership. Mason also associated

leadership with hierarchy by referencing the college president, reinforcing dominant assumptions that tie leadership to authority positions (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012).

The quotes from Joe, Bret, and Mason imply a more nuanced view of leadership than what was suggested by findings in previous research questions. The body workers in this study gave examples of leadership that emphasized the use of the physical body; however, the quotes from Joe, Bret, and Mason demonstrate that body workers also recognize the importance of communication by leaders. As I mentioned in my discussion of the discursive conditions of body work in the second research question, all of the body workers in this study noted the importance of good communication when they talked about their day-to-day work experiences. Thus, by integrating concerns for discursive processes and material conditions in descriptions of leadership, body workers seem to have a broader understanding of leadership that recognizes the importance of the physical body as well as processes of communication, which supports Dougherty's (2011) call for understanding social class as an intersection of discursive and material processes.

In contrast to body workers, most of the text workers said they did not see much difference in leadership across different work contexts. Therefore, findings from this study support past research that explains how groups that are marked as *other* tend to have a more complex understanding of their conditions than unmarked groups, which is articulated by Standpoint Theory (Bach, 2005; Buzzanell, 1994; Dougherty, et al., 2010; Wood, 2005). However, despite their ability to see more clearly, marked groups have less voice in crafting meanings for organizations, which is why women are more likely to "see" gender biases than men (Acker, 1990; Baxter, 2011; Buzzanell, et al., 2008; Wood, 2005; Wood & Conrad, 1983); people of color are likely to have a more nuanced

understanding of race than white people (Allen, 1998; Parker, 2001, 2002); and people with disabilities are more likely to recognize ableism than people without disabilities (Harter, Scott, Novak, Leeman, & Morris, 2006). Not surprisingly, then, body workers in this study seem to have a more nuanced understanding of leaders as filling both body and text roles. Unfortunately, due to their privileged positions, most text workers separate text from body and thus fail to see nuances of leadership within different social classes.

Before discussing the next sub-theme, it is important to keep in mind that, in contrast to body workers, text workers mainly emphasized communication in their meanings of leadership and descriptions of day-to-day work; the physical body and material workplace conditions were rarely mentioned, or they were secondary to the work being done. The findings for the second research question already highlighted some ways that text workers emphasized discursive processes in their day-to-day work, so the examples in the following sub-theme demonstrate some of the additional ways that text workers downplayed the material conditions involved with leadership.

Integrating Discourse & Downplaying Materiality: “Downplaying Materiality in Text Work”

Downplaying materiality in text work refers to text workers’ stories about leadership that downplay material conditions involved with leadership. Towards the end of every interview, I asked participants to talk about how they think leadership might be different for people doing more/less physical labor. In contrast to the responses from body workers that were demonstrated in examples from the previous sub-theme, most of the text workers said they did not see much difference in leadership across different work contexts. Text workers mainly emphasized the discursive processes of leadership that

they think are important in any work context, without as much consideration for material conditions involved with leadership in different work contexts.

For example, Aaron, a 42-year-old Professor, gave his response to my question about how leadership might be different for people who engage in more physical labor:

AARON: I'm trying to think of times I've done manual labor. I've never made a career out of it, so I really can't talk to leadership styles or practices. But, I think, depending on the labor or task...Well, actually I don't even know if it does matter, if it does differ. It's still about achieving the task and maintaining the relationship...Right? I don't know if there is a difference. Again, maybe I'm not the right one to speak to that, but I don't see that there really is. (Aaron, text worker, 42-year-old Caucasian male, Associate Professor)

Although Aaron conceded that his lack of physical labor experience could limit his ability to discuss leadership in different contexts, he articulated assumptions that differences might not matter, and that there might not even be any differences. Aaron also said that “achieving the task” and “maintaining the relationship” are universal parts of leadership, regardless of the work context. “Maintaining the relationship” seems related to primarily discursive processes of *other-oriented leadership*, which was discussed in the first research question, so Aaron could indeed be identifying an aspect of leadership that was shared among text and body workers. At the same time, prioritizing discursive constructions of reality and overlooking material conditions that are central to experiences of the working class is middle class privilege. In other words, “only those people who do not have to consider the physical necessities on a daily basis have the privilege of arguing that material resources do not count” (Dougherty, 2011, p. 13).

Further, overlooking material conditions involved with leadership could reinforce dominant assumptions about leadership that reinforce the marginalization of body workers' leadership experiences.

In the final example, when I asked Nina, a 41-year-old University Professor, how leadership might be different for people who do more physical labor, she explained why she didn't see much difference:

NINA: I don't know if there are big differences, because I think that a good leader will make their people do what he wants without really asking them. It doesn't matter what you're asking as long as you're making them want to do what you want...I have relatives that do more physical work. One specific example is my aunt. She was talking about her boss, who she was very happy with, because she organized a nice dinner at a nice restaurant for all the employees, with their families. So I think it's this caring for them, right? Caring that not only that they're going to get the work done but that this person cares about them as people. (Nina, text worker, 41-year-old Hispanic female, Assistant Professor)

Nina explained that leadership in any context is mainly about "caring," which prioritizes discursive processes that were central to *other-oriented leadership* in the first research question. She also said that good leaders make people "want to do" what the leader wants them to do, which seems related to discursive processes of *inspiring productivity* that were highlighted in the third research question.

Further, Nina's previous quotes about leading by example emphasized how leaders should demonstrate a *reputation of success* by publishing research and generating funding for research, which emphasized discursive processes. She also noted that she

tries to emulate her mentor's "hands-off" approach to leadership, which involved creating social and physical distance between herself and her students. By prioritizing discursive processes of leadership in any work context, Nina downplays material conditions involved with leadership in text work. She also demonstrates middle-class privilege by downplaying material conditions involved with leadership in body work.

Nina's previous quotes emphasized discursive processes of leadership, and in the current example she said that she does not know "if there are big differences" in how leadership might be different for people who do more "physical work." However, she then described leadership—in more "physical work" contexts—in a way that could involve a combination of text/body. Specifically, "organizing a nice dinner" for employees is similar to how Mason—a welder—demonstrated good leadership by *giving recognition* for the hard work of his employees, which was discussed in the findings for the first research question. Nina does not seem to realize how her constructions of leadership in her own work might be different from how she constructs leadership for people who do more "physical work." Thus, by emphasizing the overall importance of leaders who "care for" subordinates in any work context, and simultaneously overlooking the material differences in her constructions of *leadership* and *caring for others* in more physical work contexts, Nina unconsciously provided an example of divergent meanings for "leadership" and "caring" for others.

Nina also draws on family connections to describe leadership for people who do more "physical work," which implies a more nuanced approach to understanding connections between social class and meanings for leadership than simply focusing on an individual's current line of work. Past research highlighted the importance of family

background and occupational narratives—stories about work told by friends and family—to explain how individuals create meanings for and become socialized into different organizational contexts (Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). Thus, these findings demonstrate how individuals can draw on diverse narratives, from their own experiences as well as the experiences of family members who do more/less physical work, to construct divergent meanings for leadership. By paying more attention to how individuals draw on diverse family narratives from different work contexts, as well as how individuals might draw from past experiences in diverse work contexts, researchers could better understand how discourse and materiality become mutually involved in constructions of leadership.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The main purpose of the final chapter is to summarize and discuss the key findings for each research question. The findings for each research question will be connected to relevant literature about organizational leadership, social class, and LC/MD. I will then explain how the findings contribute to current research on organizational leadership and social class, as well as how the findings build upon research that applies the Theory of LC/MD. Next, I will highlight the implications in terms of methodology and methods. Finally, I will discuss the practical implications of the findings, as well as the strengths and limitations of the present study. The chapter ends by proposing directions for future research, followed by some concluding thoughts.

Summary of Findings

The main goal of this study was to understand how meanings for leadership become classed in discursive and material ways. I wanted to know how leadership might be constructed by people doing different kinds of work, and how stories about leadership could reinforce a system of social class that marginalizes those perceived to be in a lower social class. Another goal was to build on the demand for organizational communication research—particularly leadership research—that addresses the role of material conditions in the social construction of reality. With these goals in mind, the following research questions helped guide a narrative analysis of text and body workers' stories about leadership: (RQ1): How do people doing text work and body work construct what it means to be a leader? (RQ2): How are material and discursive conditions involved in the day-to-day work of text and body workers? (RQ3): How, if at all, do meanings of leadership converge and diverge for people doing text work and body work? (RQ4):

How are stories about leadership classed? In the following pages, I summarize the findings for each research question, and discuss their connections to previous literature.

RQ1: What it Means to be a Leader in Text Work and Body Work

The first research question provided a broad understanding for how text and body workers talked about leadership. Findings support past leadership research by highlighting some ways that meanings for leadership overlapped for text and body workers. All participants told stories about leadership by highlighting a manager or boss, which reinforces past leadership research and dominant discourses that associate leadership with positions of authority and hierarchy (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007). Findings also drew attention to some discursive and material conditions involved in text work and body work, which supports past research that argues organizational realities are constructed through an interaction of discourse and materiality (Ashcraft, et al., 2009; Dougherty, 2011). The findings also hint at some of the divergent meanings that body workers and text workers constructed for leadership, as well as some of the ways that meanings for leadership become classed, which will be discussed in more detail in the summary of findings for the third and fourth research questions.

The findings for the first research question were organized into two main themes: (1) Other-Oriented Leadership and (2) Self-Oriented Leadership. Below, I emphasize the key findings for each theme.

Other-oriented leadership. Other-oriented leadership broadly refers to stories about leaders who demonstrated a concern for the well-being, hard work, and ideas of other organizational members. First, text and body workers emphasized that other-oriented leadership involves *providing support*, which generally meant expressing

emotional support and concern for the personal lives of organizational members. Leaders showed emotional support by prioritizing the needs of employees, which involved being physically present with employees who were in emotional distress, expressing sympathy for employees' emotions, and verbally asking how employees were feeling. By associating meanings of leadership with providing support, findings for the first theme provide support for transformational leadership research that argues that good leaders should provide individual consideration and support to followers (Bass, 1985, 2008).

Findings also support Hansen, et al.'s (2007) aesthetic approach to leadership, because the sensory feeling of emotions is a way of involving the physical body in meanings for leadership. By emphasizing embodied emotions, findings demonstrated how work becomes known through its relation to the body, which is one way that Ashcraft, et al. (2009) recommended studying the material conditions that become involved with processes of organizing.

The second way of demonstrating other-oriented leadership was by *giving recognition*, which refers to ways that leaders showed appreciation for the hard work and accomplishments of other organizational members. Body and text workers shared a preference for leaders who gave explicit recognition and praise for hard work. Exchanging rewards for effort can be described as transactional leadership, which is a traditional functionalist approach to leadership (Bass, 2008).

The third way of demonstrating other-oriented leadership was through *listening*, which meant providing opportunities for others to contribute ideas for work processes. Listening was demonstrated in stories about leaders who encouraged subordinates to share ideas and information during meetings, which are discursive processes that align

with Dougherty's (2011) descriptions of text work. Linking the discursive processes of listening with meanings of leadership could be related to interpretive approaches, which view leadership as constructed through ongoing processes of communication and interaction (Fairhurst, 2007; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). On the other hand, making others feel like their ideas are being heard could also be a way of creating perceptions that a leader is giving individual consideration to followers, which is more in line with transformational leadership (Bass, 2008).

Emotions were also an important part of the findings for the first research question. Text and body workers expressed resentment and frustration when they did not feel like they could share their ideas, or believed that their ideas were not being fairly considered. Drawing from Hansen, et al. (2007), emotions are part of an embodied experience, which draws attention to the role of the physical body in meanings for listening, and thus, meanings for leadership.

Self-oriented leadership. The findings for the second theme were focused on stories about leaders who communicated or behaved in ways that were perceived as prioritizing self-interests and/or behaving unprofessionally. First, *prioritizing self-interests* meant sacrificing the well-being of others and the organization in order to satisfy personal interests, which occurred when leaders lied and did not admit mistakes. The emphasis on telling the truth, admitting mistakes, and benefitting the organization relates to ideas about efficiency, productivity, and "effective" leadership that are prominent in functionalist approaches to leadership (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012).

Second, *unprofessional conduct* meant behaving and communicating in ways that were perceived as emotionally inappropriate and/or rude, which occurred when leaders

used emotional outbursts and vulgar language. Thus, this theme reinforces the rules for emotional displays in the workplace that were discussed by Kramer and Hess (2002), who specifically highlighted yelling as a negative emotional expression that was associated with being unprofessional. Further, like the previous theme, unprofessional behavior was also tied to emotions experienced by participants. When a supposed leader acted in a way that involved yelling or aggressive and vulgar language, participants were frustrated, insulted, and in some cases angry.

Overall, the findings for the first research question support past leadership research. Demonstrating care for others and providing opportunities for followers to contribute ideas are hallmarks of transformational leadership theories (Bass, 2008). Further, the emphasis on emotions that became associated with meanings of leadership highlighted the role of the physical body in meanings for leadership, because emotions are part of an embodied experience (Hansen, et al., 2007).

RQ2: Discursive and Material Conditions in Body Work and Text Work

The second research question focused on the diverse discursive and material conditions that shape day-to-day work experiences—and thus meanings for leadership—for text workers and body workers. Findings for the second research question help to address calls for organizational communication research that considers the interplay of discourse and materiality in the constructions of meanings for leadership and other organizational realities (e.g., Ashcraft, et al., 2009; Barge, 2014; Dougherty, 2011; Fairhurst, 2009; Pullen & Vachhani, 2011; Sinclair, 2005). Finally, Dougherty (2011) argued that work conditions are closely tied to issues of social class that privilege text work experiences and perspectives, and Ashcraft (2011) argued that meanings for

organizational experiences are influenced by physical work *sites*, *bodies*, and *objects*. To understand how meanings for leadership might become classed, I needed to understand how materiality/discourse are de/emphasized in different ways for text and body work.

Findings for the second research question were organized into two main themes: (1) Emphasizing Materiality in Body Work, and (2) Emphasizing Discourse in Text Work. Each theme included a sub-theme that highlighted the discursive and material conditions in body work and text work, respectively. Overall, findings for the second research question support previous research about the working environments of text work and body work, and have important implications for how participants constructed meanings for leadership. Below, I emphasize the key findings for each theme.

Emphasizing Materiality/Subordinating Discourse in Body Work. Findings for the first theme highlighted the material conditions and physical labor that were emphasized in body work experiences, which supports previous research (Dougherty, 2011; Marvin, 2006). Drawing on Ashcraft, et al. (2009), body workers drew attention to the objects, physical bodies, and organizational sites that were central to their day-to-day working conditions. However, body workers also recognized the importance of communication in their day-to-day work. The following paragraphs summarize some material conditions that were emphasized in body work, as well as a discussion of the discursive processes that characterized the experiences of body workers.

The physical body was central to day-to-day working experiences for body workers, particularly when they explained issues of safety. Participants also described using their physical bodies for lifting things, building things, welding, sawing, cooking,

sweating, scrubbing, and hand-eye coordination. The body was also central to the risk of physical injury that characterized day-to-day work experiences for body workers.

In contrast to text workers, all of the body workers in this study highlighted the importance of safety in their day-to-day work, largely because of the inherent physical risk involved in their work. In line with Dougherty's (2011) discussion of body-sacrifice, body workers expressed an understanding that they could sustain serious physical injury in the course of doing their day-to-day work. Unlike text workers, body workers described working conditions that led to physical injuries like burns, cuts, and even possible death, not to mention daily scrapes, bruises, and physical exhaustion that are normal parts of day-to-day body work. Given that bodily risk was more normalized in body work, there was also an emphasis on discourse about safety in the workplace, which was not a concern for text workers. Body workers noted that communication was important for maintaining a safe workplace, which demonstrated an interesting intersection of discursive and material conditions in body work. Specifically, the physical risk involved in body work influenced the use of discourse about safety, and the discourse about safety functioned to manage the way body workers interact with the dangerous material conditions of their day-to-day work. Thus, the findings support Ashcraft, et al.'s (2009) claim that social practices of organizational members are influenced by the physical settings of day-to-day work. I will return to issues of safety in my discussion of findings for the third research question.

Finally, in contrast to text workers, body workers were more likely to recognize that their work involves a combination of discursive and material conditions. Body workers reported that "communication is key" and "communication is crucial" for how

they interact with the objects involved with their work. Avery needed clear and direct communication about amounts, types, and temperatures for cooking food in the kitchen, and Devin learned how to safely operate machinery by “talking it out” with co-workers, which reinforces Leonardi’s (2009) claim that people develop interpretations about how to use workplace technologies based on social interactions. Discursive processes highlighted by body workers could be described as a short and direct style of communication, which has been associated with communication among working class, blue-collar workers (Lubrano, 2004; Lucas, 2011b, Rushton & Young, 1975; Shatzman & Strauss, 1955). Discursive processes involved with body work were also focused on accomplishing work tasks in relation to the immediate material conditions of the situation. In order to make sure work was done properly, efficiently, and safely, body workers needed to communicate directions and instructions in ways that were quick and easy to understand, and they needed to verbally acknowledge when instructions were “heard,” as Avery explained. My later discussion of contributions to social class research will expand on the finding of task-oriented communication among body workers.

To summarize, based on the findings from this study, the day-to-day work for body workers is mainly characterized by physical labor and physical risk, which emphasizes the material conditions of organizational objects, sites, and physical bodies. Further, when body workers described the role of communication in their work, they described a short and direct style of communication that focused on the immediate working environment, as well as the coordination of bodies and objects involved with the particular work site. In other words, the discursive processes of body workers were

intimately tied to the material conditions of their day-to-day work. In contrast, material conditions were largely hidden in text work.

Emphasizing Discourse/Subordinating Materiality in Text Work. Findings for the second theme demonstrated how text workers mainly emphasized discursive processes in their day-to-day work, with very little implicit or explicit connections to materiality. Discursive processes broadly refer to human processes of communication (Ashcraft, et al., 2009). Text work usually doesn't involve physical labor, so material conditions—like objects, bodies, and sites—are less emphasized in text work compared to body work (Dougherty, 2011). In support of past research, the creation and use of language was central to text work (Dougherty, 2011). The following paragraphs highlight the main ways that text workers emphasized discursive processes, and minimized material conditions, in their day-to-day work experiences.

First, written communication was the most common discursive process text workers highlighted in their day-to-day work. When text workers described using written language, they focused on carefully using words to create texts, like legal documents, emails, research manuscripts, and instruction manuals. Text workers also emphasized discursive processes like interactions with other organizational members. Participating in meetings, delivering presentations, and teaching students were some of the communicative interactions described by text workers. In her summary of Marvin's (2006) description of text class and body class, Dougherty (2009) explained that "the text class is defined by the manipulation of words and language, while the body class is characterized by the manipulation and use of one's body" (p. 84). Thus, by making communication central to their day-to-day work, and ignoring or subordinating the

material conditions involved in their work, text workers reinforced research that associates text work with more dominant and privileged social class.

Second, although materiality was largely minimized or even ignored in the day-to-day work experiences for text workers, the findings suggest that material conditions are not completely absent from text work. One of the main forms of materiality involved with text work were the “texts” that were discursively created. In other words, the findings demonstrate some of the ways that the work produced by text workers can become materialized as organizational objects. Texts include “collections of interactions, mediums of communication (i.e. print or electronic message), or assemblages of oral and written forms” (Putnam & Cooren, 2004, p. 324). Thus, legal documents, emails, research manuscripts, and instruction manuals mentioned in the previous paragraph demonstrate an intersection of discourse and materiality in text work.

Finally, the physical body was also implied in some of the text workers’ narratives, like physical fatigue from sitting, listening, and writing for extended periods of time. Further, findings from the first research question highlighted different ways that emotions were experienced by text workers, which draws attention to the physical body. Specifically, the aesthetic approach that was discussed by Hansen, et al. (2007) describes how emotions become part of an embodied experience. Although materiality was involved with the day-to-day experiences for text workers, they mainly emphasized their use of language, which is consistent with past research (Dougherty, 2011)

In sum, the findings demonstrate that Ashcraft, et al.’s (2009) framework of bodies, sites, and objects is a useful way of highlighting the material conditions that— together with discursive processes— influence the construction of organizational realities.

Further, learning about day-to-day working conditions for text and body workers helped me understand more about the discursive/material conditions that could be involved with participants' stories about leadership, which addresses calls for research that considers the interplay of both discourse and materiality in the constructions of meanings for leadership (Barge, 2014; Fairhurst, 2009; Pullen & Vachhani, 2011; Sinclair, 2005). Findings for the second research question also support social class literature that associates text and body work with white-collar and blue-collar labor, as well as text class and body class distinctions (Dougherty, 2011; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004; Marvin, 2006). Physical labor and material conditions were emphasized in body work, and text work mainly involved working with words. Finally, findings demonstrated some ways that discursive processes are tied to material conditions in body work, as well as how some material conditions are involved with mainly discursive processes of text work. Thus, the findings in this study support Dougherty's (2011) argument that "all work is both physical and textual in some way. It is a matter of how emphasis is placed" (p. 182).

The differences in work experiences also contributed to divergent meanings that text and body workers constructed for leadership. Therefore, I will now summarize the findings for the third research question.

RQ3: LC/MD of Leadership in Text Work and Body Work

In line with Ashcraft, et al.'s (2009) discussion of organizational sites, the physical settings of day-to-day working experiences became tied to the meanings that workers created for their organizational realities. Body workers in this study deal with work sites that are loud, dirty, hot, windy, wet, slippery, and generally dangerous. As a result, the meanings that they constructed for concepts like "leading by example,"

“helping,” “decision-making,” and “creating a productive work environment” were all tied to the way they experienced the material conditions of their work sites.

Leading by example. Text and body workers emphasized their preference for leaders who could *lead by example*, which means demonstrating an ability to understand and perform the expectations of a particular job. However, there were divergent expectation for how to lead by example. Body workers explained how leading by example meant getting down “in the trenches,” which means actively engaging in the day-to-day work processes that other organizational members are expected to perform in body work. Body workers’ examples focused on leaders who earned employees’ respect by engaging in the same physical labor and working side-by-side with their employees. Thus, the findings support past research that says the ability to engage in physical labor is a way of earning respect among the working class (Thiel, 2007). Notably, working “in the trenches” also has implications for how leaders in body work made themselves appear more similar to their workers, which is a way of reducing perceptions of social distance. I will return to the idea of social distancing in my discussion of this study’s contributions.

In contrast to body workers, text workers described “leading by example” as having a *reputation of success*, which is having credentials that demonstrate experience and knowledge in text work. Credentials generally refer to textual/discursive evidence of past accomplishments, such as advanced degrees, published research, positive teaching evaluations, a history of career advancement, having a title associated with management, or settled case files for lawyers. Thus, different forms of credentials highlighted by text workers are in line with white-collar measures of success (Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004).

Text workers also described leading by example as a more “hands-off” approach to leadership, so text workers expected leaders to have some degree of independence from subordinates. The hands-off approach contrasts with the “in the trenches” description of leaders in body work, because it demonstrates a difference in how leaders created perceptions of more or less social distance with subordinates. Again, I will explain more about social distancing in my discussion of contributions.

In line with Dougherty (2011), meaning divergence was related to the different material experiences of text workers and body workers. For text workers, “leading by example” was accomplished through mainly discursive processes, while body workers emphasized engaging in physical labor as a way of “leading by example.”

Helping. The second point of meaning divergence was focused on how text workers and body workers associated leadership with *helping*, which refers to when leaders assist other organizational members in completing their day-to-day work. Meanings for “helping” diverged in ways that highlighted the dis/embodied day-to-day conditions of text work and body work (Dougherty, 2011).

Helping in body work specifically referred to situations when body workers were overwhelmed or unable to perform their physical work responsibilities. When body workers explained how leaders helped, they gave examples of leaders who assisted other organizational members by physically *doing the work*—engaging in manual labor, so the role of the physical body is central to how leaders “helped” in body work. My analysis also drew attention to discursive processes involved with helping in body work, like explicitly asking if someone needs help, so constructions of leadership—while emphasizing materiality—involved some degree of both materiality and discourse, which

supports arguments for viewing processes of meaning construction as a dialectic of materiality and discourse (Ashcraft, et al., 2009; Fairhurst, 2007; Dougherty, 2011).

In contrast to body workers, text workers associated “helping” with *communicating expectations*, which means using written and verbal communication to describe how a job should be performed. In contrast to “helping” in body work contexts, text workers described leaders who helped through discursive processes like face-to-face interactions, answering questions, and providing written instructions. The discursive and material differences involved with participants’ interpretations of leadership are related to the different ways that discourse/materiality is de/emphasized in Dougherty’s (2011) descriptions of text work and body work. Therefore, meanings for “helping”—and by extension leadership—diverge along lines of social class that traditionally privilege individuals who engage in text work, and subordinate those who do body work.

Decision-making. A third point of divergence was how text and body workers associated leadership with decision-making. *Decision-making* is the expectation that leaders are often responsible for choosing a course of action that impacts the organization and individual organizational members. In body work, decision-making had more *immediate outcomes*, meaning decisions were made quickly and the outcomes had more immediate impacts on the physical surroundings and/or physical bodies in the work environment. Decision-making in body work also did not typically involve gathering input from others. Rather, body workers expected leaders to “step up” and “take charge” by accepting responsibility for making decisions, which has similarities to authoritarian leadership styles (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Body workers also described leaders who made

decisions about managing the physical risk involved with day-to-day experiences in body work, which highlights material conditions central to body work (Dougherty, 2011).

Alternatively, text workers described decision-making as a more *prolonged change* process, which meant decision-making was a more discursive process, and that outcomes emerged over time. They gave examples of leaders who took time to gather information by meeting and interacting with other organizational members before making decisions, which relates to discursive processes that are central to text work and an interpretive approach to leadership (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Dougherty, 2011).

In sum, for body workers, leadership and decision-making were intimately tied to the material conditions of the work site, and outcomes were immediately tangible because they had a material presence within the physical work site. On the other hand, discursive processes were more emphasized in text workers' constructions of leadership and decision-making. Thus, participants' stories about decision-making demonstrated how meanings for leadership can diverge in ways that are related to differences in text work and body work, which relates to social class differences (Dougherty, 2011).

Creating a productive work environment. Finally, participants recognized that leaders should create work environments that enabled workers to complete their work responsibilities. However, body and text workers had different expectations for how leaders could create productive work environments.

Body workers expected leaders to create a productive environment by *managing physical safety*, which meant demonstrating a concern for physical safety in body work contexts. Concern for physical safety is related to day-to-day risk of bodily harm in body work, and also relates to research that describes the physical danger in blue-collar work

(Dougherty, 2011; Lucas, 2011a; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). Body workers also noted the importance of face-to-face meetings so workers could be informed of safety procedures. Body workers emphasized leaders who use a clear and direct communication style as a way of minimizing the risk of physical injury, which relates to the short and direct communication style that past research associates with working class communication (Lubrano, 2004; Lucas, 2011b; Rushton & Young, 1975; Shatzman & Strauss, 1955).

In contrast to body workers, text workers were not as concerned about physical safety in day-to-day work because their work did not typically involve physical risks. When text workers explained how leaders create a safe working environment, they described good leaders who *inspire productivity*, which meant communicating in ways that inspire workers to be productive and accomplish goals. In order to inspire productivity in text work, leaders communicated reassurance that it was okay for employees to take risks and create and implement new methods of completing their text work, which is similar to descriptions of transformational leadership, which describes leaders as inspiring figures who motivate followers to be more productive (Bass, 2008).

Divergent meanings for a safe work environment also draw attention to divergent meanings for the concept of productivity, as well as how meanings diverged based on different ways of experiencing discourse/materiality in text and body work. In text work, workers discursively produced texts. In contrast, materiality—like pecans, bottles of oil, beer, and physical buildings—was central to the “products” that come from body work. Therefore, divergent meanings for productivity seem to support Dougherty (2011), who explained that people who do more physical work produce more physical outcomes.

Overall, the findings provide support for LC/MD by demonstrating how people from marginalized social groups construct meanings for reality that are different from the meanings constructed by more dominant social class groups. To better understand some of the ways that text and body workers' stories about leadership become tied to issues of social class, I will now summarize the findings for the fourth research question.

RQ4: How Stories About Leadership Become Classed

The fourth research question focused on understanding how meanings for leadership could reinforce social class divisions that serve to marginalize people who engage in more physical labor. There were two main themes that emerged. First, *reinforcing organizational hierarchy/subordination* refers to stories about leadership that place leaders into higher ranking positions in an organizational hierarchy, as well as stories that place body workers in subordinate positions in an organizational hierarchy.

Reinforcing organizational hierarchy/subordination. Although there were examples of non-hierarchical leadership in some narratives presented by three body workers, every participant still provided stories about leadership in which they referenced organizational hierarchies. Specifically, all of the participants gave examples of leaders in authority and management positions, which is particularly problematic for body workers. Body work and physical labor is more associated with subordinate positions in organizational hierarchies and subordinate social class, as well a less opportunity for upward mobility (Dougherty, 2011; Lucas, 2011b; Lucas, 2011c; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). Past research also notes that engaging in physical labor is typically viewed as undesirable among white collar, or text class workers (Ashforth, et al., 2007; Dougherty, 2011; Marvin 1994, 2006; Meisenbach, 2010; Thiel, 2007). In contrast, leadership and

more prestigious social classes have traditionally been associated with authority and management positions in organizations, as well as more opportunity for upward mobility (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Lucas, 2011b). Therefore, reinforcing the taken-for-granted association of management and leadership is a way of maintaining social class divisions and marginalizing body workers' meanings of leadership.

Findings for the fourth research question also relate to Lubrano's (2004) description of social class straddlers. For example, Ben—a text worker—drew on a blue-collar background to describe why he was comfortable in business management/leadership roles. His blue-collar background also helped Ben understand how leadership can be different in jobs that emphasize more physical labor, which demonstrated how text and body work can be simultaneously involved in constructions of leadership. In addition, Nina drew on stories about family members who do more “physical work” to describe how leadership might be perceived in different work contexts, although she downplayed the material conditions involved with her construction of leadership in more physical work contexts. Thus, the findings reinforce Dougherty's (2011) argument that text/body should not be viewed as a dichotomy.

Body and text workers also reinforced social class distinctions by *denying leadership*, which meant refusing to view themselves as a leader due to occupying a lower position on the organizational hierarchy. Denying leadership reinforced an assumption that leadership is reserved for higher-ranking positions in a bureaucratic organizational hierarchy. For example, when I asked Avery how she saw herself as a leader at work, she denied that she was a leader by explaining that she was not a “manager,” that she was not “in charge,” and that she “can't make executive decisions.”

Further, denying leadership based on their subordinate position in an organizational hierarchy blinded text and body workers from seeing some of their own behaviors as leadership processes, even when they described their own behaviors in ways that overlapped with their previous descriptions of leadership, which reinforced their own subordination in an organizational hierarchy. Reinforcing their own subordination is particularly problematic for body workers, because their constructions of leadership typically emphasized material conditions that are already marginalized in dominant text class assumptions about leadership (Dougherty, 2011). Overall, the findings indicate that text workers and body workers reinforced dominant Discourses that associate leadership with organizational hierarchy and positions of authority (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012).

Integrating discourse and downplaying materiality. The second main way that text workers and body workers reinforced social class divisions was related to the different ways that participants de/emphasized discourse and materiality in their constructions of leadership. Specifically, *integrating discourse and downplaying materiality* refers to stories about leadership that emphasize the skillful use of discourse over the ability to engage in body work.

First, some body workers told stories about leadership that emphasized the skillful use of communication at the expense of being able to do physical labor, and nearly all body workers said that leadership in other work environments is different because it would involve more communication than physical labor. For example, Joe explained that he would rather have a leader who was a good “people-person” than someone who knows how to use the equipment and machines. Associating leadership with primarily discursive processes—which are not part of body workers’ day-to-day work—could be a way of

reinforcing social class divisions and marginalizing the experiences of body workers from meanings for leadership (Dougherty, 2011). At the same time, some body workers added a concern for communication processes—in addition to the role of the physical body—in their constructions of leadership. Thus, findings demonstrated how body workers could recognize the importance of the physical body as well as processes of communication in leadership, which also reinforces Dougherty's (2011) call for understanding social class as an intersection of discursive and material processes.

Second, *downplaying materiality in text work* was focused on text workers' constructions of leadership. When asked how leadership might be different for people doing more physical labor, most text workers said that they did not see much difference in leadership across different work contexts. They emphasized discursive aspects of leadership that they thought were important in any work context, without giving much consideration for material conditions involved with leadership in different work contexts. Focusing only on discursive constructions of reality and overlooking the material conditions that are central to the experiences and realities of the working class is middle class privilege (Dougherty, 2011). By privileging the discursive over the material, discursive constructionism overlooks material conditions that shape the experiences of marginalized social class groups. Finally, overlooking material conditions involved with leadership could reinforce dominant assumptions about leadership that marginalize body workers' leadership experiences.

Finally, dominant social structures also seem to be involved in how stories about leadership become classed. Dominant ideologies associate higher social classes with management and hierarchical advancement in organizations, which also distances higher

social classes from physical labor (Lucas, 2011a; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). Similarly, there are persistent ideologies that associate lower classes with physical labor and subordinate positions in organizations (Ashforth, et al., 2007; Lucas, 2011a; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). Therefore, when text and body workers consistently associate leadership with management and more advanced hierarchical positions, they draw upon and reinforce dominant assumptions about leadership, which marginalizes leadership experiences and leadership opportunities for body workers.

Study Contributions

Based on the findings in this study, there are several important contributions to current communication research. The findings also have practical implications for organizational leaders who might want to improve their leadership practices in diverse work contexts, as well as implications for identifying those who might have been previously overlooked for leadership opportunities in organizations. By extension, the findings have practical implications for body workers who seek advancement opportunities in organizations. Contributions to communication theory and research, as well as implications for practice, will be discussed in the following sections.

Theoretical Contributions. The findings of this study build upon the theory of LC/MD by demonstrating how diverse work experiences of different social class groups might contribute to divergent meanings of leadership (Dougherty, et al., 2009). Specifically, meanings can diverge based on different ways of experiencing the discursive and material conditions in day-to-day work. For body workers, day-to-day work mainly involves physical labor, and their constructions of leadership emphasized using the physical body to engage in physical labor side-by-side with subordinates. In

other words, when asked to provide examples of leadership, body workers told stories about leaders who looked, sounded, and behaved like subordinate organizational members who mainly engage in physical labor. In contrast, discursive processes were emphasized in the day-to-day work of text workers, so they typically described leadership by highlighting processes of communication in their stories about leadership.

Text and body workers also associated a number of other concepts with leadership, and those concepts provided more layers of LC/MD in meanings for leadership. Specifically, there were divergent meanings for how text workers and body workers described (a) leading by example, (b) earning respect, (c) helping others, (d) communicating, (e) decision-making (f) productivity, and (g) maintain a safe working environment. In line with past literature, meaning divergence was related to the different material experiences of text workers and body workers (Dougherty, 2011).

The findings of this study also contribute to the foundations of LC/MD. Drawing on Feminist Standpoint Theory, LC/MD asserts that subordinate groups generate knowledge that is different from privileged groups (Dougherty, et al., 2009; Wood, 2005). Nearly all body workers said that leadership in other work environments is different because it would mainly involve communication—not as much physical labor. However, with some exceptions, text workers were more likely to say that leadership is “not that different” in jobs that involve more physical labor, which overlooks the material conditions that are involved with discursive constructions of reality. Thus, body workers demonstrated that they could take the perspective of more privileged social class groups, while text workers were less likely to articulate the perspectives of individuals who do more physical labor. Based on these findings, body workers seem to be in a better

position to perceive their own social position as well as the position of more dominant groups, which is in line with Wood's (2005) explanation of *double consciousness*.

Further, when body workers demonstrated double-consciousness, they challenged the work of Shatzman and Strauss (1955), who argued that working class communication was less likely to involve taking the perspective of others.

The findings also implied that social class straddlers, which Lubrano (2004) described as individuals born into a blue-collar family who then move into middle-class and/or white-collar occupations, are positioned in a way that can enable a more nuanced understanding of leadership and LC/MD. By drawing on blue-collar work experiences and family backgrounds, some text workers articulated—consciously or unconsciously—how leadership can be different in jobs that emphasize more physical labor.

Next, the findings demonstrate how working class perspectives can become “othered” in relation to perspectives of more dominant social groups, and how “othering” becomes tied to divergent meanings (Dougherty, et al., 2009; Wood, 2005). Discursive processes were central to text workers’ constructions of leadership, while materiality and physical labor were more central to body workers’ constructions of leadership. Thus, when text workers explained that leadership is “not that different” for people who do more physical labor, they marginalized the perspectives of body workers because they overlooked the physical demands and physical necessities that are central to body workers’ day-to-day experiences (Dougherty, 2011). By overlooking materiality and privileging discursive processes involved with leadership, text workers also created meanings for leadership that diverged from body workers’ meanings for leadership.

In sum, the findings of this study contribute to LC/MD by highlighting social class as an avenue for understanding language convergence/meaning divergence. Further, the findings add to LC/MD by providing specific examples of how dominant/subordinate social class groups construct divergent meanings for leadership based on different ways of experiencing material realities. Lastly, the findings contribute to LC/MD by demonstrating how meanings diverge at multiple levels for a single shared concept, like leadership. Specifically, the seven points of divergence for meanings of leadership that I described above indicate that meaning clusters are made up of multiple other meaning clusters, and that they can all have divergent meanings.

Methodological contributions. The findings from this study also provide a few important methodological contributions. First, this study demonstrates that narrative methodology can be a good way of identifying some of the underlying societal structures, or “systems of meanings” that might enable and constrain the ways people communicate and interact, which supports Czarniawska’s (2009) explanations for how narrative methodology can be used for critical research. Applying a narrative approach helped me gather over 22 hours of interview data in which participants explained specific stories about leadership experiences in their day-to-day work, and participants’ stories highlighted some of the explicit and implicit assumptions that they drew upon and reinforced when constructing meanings for leadership.

Further, the narrative methodology applied in this study highlighted connections to the sensemaking foundations of LC/MD. The findings demonstrated how individuals used stories to create meanings for their past experiences, which reinforces Riessman’s (2008) and Czarniawska’s (2009) arguments that narratives have a sense-making

function. Thus, this study demonstrates that storytelling—like sensemaking—is a way of retrospectively making sense of past experiences, so the narrative approach a useful way of understanding processes of meaning making.

Second, this study demonstrated that incorporating observations can be a useful tool for adding thick and vivid descriptions of the context of participants' day-to-day work experiences (Creswell, 2007; Goodall, 2008). Observations were also important for this study because they helped raise my awareness of some of the unique material conditions involved in body workers' experiences, which were central to their stories about leadership. Observations also helped me avoid over-privileging the voices of text workers because relying solely on interviews would privilege discursive constructions of reality, which is native space for people engaging in text work (Dougherty, 2011).

A final contribution is related to the use of LC/MD as a tool for analyzing participants' narratives. As I explained in the third chapter, I started with a thematic narrative analysis, which meant examining stories about leadership within each individual interview, then coding the narratives based on key words and phrases in participants' stories, and then grouping those stories into themes that helped explain the phenomenon (i.e., leadership) being studied (Riessman, 2008). However, although thematic analysis can be a helpful way of interpreting some of the commonalities among participants, it can also downplay differences in meanings (Dougherty, et al., 2009). As a result, a thematic narrative analysis would not have been sufficient for exploring how meanings for leadership diverged for different social class groups. Thus, it was necessary for me to utilize "fragment and cluster analysis techniques in which connections were drawn between various meanings such that both similarities and differences in meanings

are honored” (Dougherty, et al., 2009, p. 41). For qualitative researchers, this study demonstrates how LC/MD can be a helpful tool for analyzing and surfacing both similarities and unique differences in meanings constructed by participants. Using LC/MD as a tool for analyzing similarities and differences in meanings could also be helpful for narrative researchers because, as Czarniawska (2009) explained, one challenge involved with narrative methodology is that there is very little consensus on the steps involved in the research process. While I doubt that my study will lead to greater consensus in how to apply narrative methodology, it does provide a useful framework for analyzing narratives. Specifically, applying LC/MD—particularly the core concepts of meaning clusters and meaning fragments—to stories about how different social class groups experience a particular social phenomenon—like leadership—can be a helpful way of identifying instances of meaning divergence.

Contributions to leadership research. This study contributes to current leadership research by addressing the role of materiality in constructions of leadership. Frustrated with an overemphasis on discursive constructionism, a growing number of leadership researchers have called for understanding more about how materiality interacts with discourse to construct meanings for leadership (e.g., Barge, 2014; Fairhurst, 2009; Fisher & Robbins, 2015; Hansen, et al., 2007; Pullen & Vachhani, 2011; Sinclair, 2005). In this study, body workers discursively constructed meanings for leadership by emphasizing the role of the physical body, as well as material conditions of particular work sites. Text and body workers also highlighted sensory feelings of emotions in their constructions of leadership, which is a way of understanding how the physical body becomes involved in meanings for leadership (Hansen, et al., 2007). Further, the

discursive production of texts, which can become materialized as organizational objects—like instruction manuals, research publications, and legal documents—were also associated with text workers’ stories about leadership (Putnam & Cooren, 2004). Thus, the findings of this study answer calls for leadership research that demonstrates how meanings for leadership are mutually constituted through discourse and materiality. By extension, the findings for this study also contribute to broader calls for more organizational communication research that addresses the role of material conditions in the social construction of organizational realities (Ashcraft, 2011; Ashcraft & Allen, 2003; Ashcraft, et al., 2009; Cloud, 2005; Dougherty, 2011).

Second, the findings of this study contribute to critical leadership research. Critical leadership researchers are concerned with how assumptions about leadership are influenced and reinforced by dominant systems of thoughts, ideas, and practices (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). Further, a critical approach to leadership research is interested in understanding how marginalized social groups become excluded—or at least marginalized—from leadership considerations (Baxter, 2011; Buzzanell, Meisenbach, & Remke, 2008; Parker, 2001, 2002). While past critical leadership research has focused on issues of gender and race, the findings of this study demonstrate that dominant assumptions about leadership can also be a hegemonic avenue for perpetuating social class divisions. For example, the findings demonstrate how associating leadership with authority and management positions excludes working class individuals who are traditionally associated with physical labor, subordinate organizational positions, less upwards mobility, and subordinate social class (Dougherty, 2011; Lucas, 2011b; Lucas, 2011c; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). Further, leadership research that takes a strictly

discursive approach without considering the interplay of material conditions reinforces social class divisions by overlooking the role of materiality that is central to day-to-day work experiences of body workers.

Third, Hansen, et al. (2007) speculated that communicating in ways that evoke emotional feelings of reassurance and warmth could contribute to perceptions of leadership, which could be a way of motivating followers. Similarly, transformational leadership emphasizes providing interpersonal consideration as a way of inspiring followers to work towards shared organizational goals (Bass, 1985, 2008). Body and text workers in this study explained that followers are not as motivated to work when leaders do not provide what is perceived to be adequate individual consideration and emotional support. Thus, the findings support transformational leadership research, as well as Hansen, et al.'s (2007) speculation about creating perceptions of leadership and motivation through evoking emotional feelings of warmth.

Contributions to social class research. One of the main ways this study contributes to social class research is by demonstrating how meanings for leadership can reinforce social class divisions, which I discussed in the contributions to leadership research. Specifically, I noted that social class divisions are reinforced when leadership is associated with management, as well as when meanings for leadership overlook the role of material conditions in constructions of leadership. In other words, discursive constructions of reality without consideration of materiality is a form of middle-class privilege (Dougherty, 2011). Text workers can choose to overlook materiality because their work mainly involves discursive processes that obscure the physical body in the

day-to-day work; however, body workers do not have the same luxury because their work involves constant engagement with material conditions and physical risk.

In addition, the findings add to social class literature by providing specific examples of how text and body workers construct meanings for leadership that relate to social class divisions. Some body workers constructed leadership in a way that prioritized the skillful use of discourse over the ability to engage in physical labor, which could serve to marginalize the physical labor of body workers from meanings of leadership. For example, Bret, an Assistant Brewer, said that “communication’s the biggest thing” if someone wants to become a better leader. Drawing on past research, body work emphasizes more use of physical labor and less use of communication, and body work is typically associated blue-collar work and more subordinate social class (Lucas, 2011a; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004; Dougherty, 2011). Therefore, when body workers privilege discursive processes in their constructions of leadership, they reinforce dominant assumptions about leadership in a way that privileges text workers—who primarily use communication as a way of doing work—and simultaneously marginalizes body workers—who use more physical labor and less communication in their day-to-day work. However, based on body workers’ constructions of leadership in the first and third research questions, in which they emphasized the physical body and material working conditions, the findings also demonstrate that body workers have a more nuanced understanding of leaders that integrates the physical body in addition to the skillful use of communication. By demonstrating how body workers emphasize the importance of both discourse and materiality in their descriptions of leadership, the findings for this study

reinforce Dougherty's (2011) call for understanding social class as an intersection of discursive and material processes.

Second, related to the contributions to LC/MD, the findings demonstrate how processes of "othering" can be self-imposed when marginalized groups construct meanings for leadership that reinforce their own subordination. Body workers commonly associated leadership with management positions and having "people underneath you" in an organizational hierarchy, but authority/management positions are not typically associated with physical labor (Lucas, 2011a; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). In other words, body workers—whose day-to-day work mainly involves physical labor—disassociated their own work experiences from their constructions of leadership/management. Thus, findings demonstrate how body workers constructed meanings of leadership in ways that privileges text workers and marginalize those who engage in physical labor and who are not typically associated with management positions.

Third, the findings add a depth of understanding for the discursive processes involved with body work. In support of past research, materiality and physical labor were emphasized in body work (Dougherty, 2011). However, discursive processes were also apparent in body work, and most body workers in this study emphasized the importance of both communication and physical labor in their day-to-day work. Based on the findings, discursive processes were arguably crucial for the accomplishment of body work, especially considering body workers' emphasis on using communication as a tool for coordinating work tasks and preventing bodily injuries. Specifically, body workers associated leadership with a short and direct style of communication, which contextualizes past research that describes working class communication styles (Rushton

& Young, 1975). The findings provide more insight into the content and function of communication in body work. To better characterize the style of communication highlighted by body workers, I build upon Ruston and Young's (1975) concept of a technical explanatory style of functional communication, which they found was more common among the working class than the middle class. *Functional communication* refers to the function of language in a situation, and a *technical explanatory style* is used for describing the appearance and function of a piece of equipment in a way that helps others understand how to use the equipment (Rushton & Young, 1975). Based on my findings, *technical explanatory communication* could be extended by adding a consideration for how body workers use language to describe the physical work-space in relation to the physical body and the material objects within the work space. Thus, I argue that the function of language in body work contexts was to describe the physical environment—as well as the functions of materials, tools, and machinery—in ways that enabled workers to perform their jobs.

Fourth, the findings challenge literature that describes perspective-taking among middle- and working class people. Shatzman and Strauss (1955) argued that perspective-taking—answering questions by taking the perspective of another person or group of people—is more associated with middle-class individuals, and that working class individuals tend to limit their explanations to their own individual perspective. However, as I explained in the contributions to LC/MD, most body workers said that leadership in other work environments is different because it would involve more communication—not as much physical labor. Some body workers even provided hypothetical examples of how leadership would be viewed from the perspective of someone whose job does not involve

physical labor. In contrast, text workers were less likely to articulate perspectives of individuals who do more physical labor, except when text workers were social class straddlers with blue-collar backgrounds, or when text workers drew on stories about family members who do more physical work. Findings from this study are not meant to be generalizable, so I am not arguing that all body workers will engage in perspective-taking, or that all social class straddlers can articulate meanings of leadership from different class perspectives; however, my findings do suggest a more nuanced approach to understanding the relationship between communication styles and social class than the one provided by Shatzman and Strauss (1955).

Fifth, the findings add to Dougherty's (2011) description of text work by providing a way to highlight the role of the physical body in text work. Dougherty (2011) explained that the body is hidden in text work because text work emphasizes more use of language and communication. Indeed, the physical body was largely invisible in text workers' descriptions of leadership and day-to-day work processes. However, the findings also demonstrated that emotions became tied to text workers' descriptions of leadership. Drawing on Hansen, et al.'s (2007) aesthetic approach to leadership, emotions are an embodied experience. Thus, the findings of this study contribute to social class research by demonstrating how the physical bodies of text workers can be revealed by paying attention to the emotions they experience in their day-to-day work experiences.

Sixth, related to contributions for LC/MD, text and body workers referred to different forms of social distancing in their divergent constructions of leadership. Social distancing relates to Dougherty's (2011) discussion of marking social class, which refers to how people use physical markers to "appear to be from a particular desired class

position” (Dougherty, 2011, p. 13). Based on my findings, body workers perceived good leadership in managers and authority figures who make themselves appear more similar to subordinates by dressing and acting like subordinates. Leaders in body work contexts reduced perceptions of social distance with employees by wearing rugged clothing suitable for physical labor, engaging in physical labor alongside subordinates, using the same physical tools as subordinates, and concealing symbols of wealth like expensive vehicles and expensive clothing. However, social distancing worked differently for text workers. Text workers created meanings for leadership by referring to leaders who were more socially distant in terms of professional reputation, career success, credentials that demonstrate more experience and advanced knowledge, and even physical presence. Thus, for text and body workers, meanings of leadership are associated with certain perceptions of social distance. Text workers perceive leadership in authority figures who work primarily with words in ways that makes them different—particularly more prestigious—than subordinates. In contrast, body workers perceived leadership in authority figures who reduced perceptions of social distance.

Interestingly, the key finding about social distancing is that, although body workers preferred leaders who looked, sounded, and acted more like subordinates, leaders were still communicatively marked as managers and hierarchical superiors. In other words, body workers created social distance in their meanings for leadership by using managers and authority figures as examples of leaders, even though they preferred leaders who were physically more similar to themselves. The implication is that even when leaders look, sound, and act like subordinates in body work contexts, they are still recognized as being superior in some way, typically by having an authority position.

Processes of social distancing were also associated with earning respect. Body workers explained that engaging in physical labor side-by-side with subordinates is a good way for leaders to earn respect, which supports past research that describes earning respect in manual labor jobs (Thiel, 2007). However, manual labor is typically viewed with less respect in text work (Ashforth, et al., 2007; Dougherty, 2011; Marvin 1994, 1996; Meisenbach, 2010; Thiel, 2007). Thus, the findings imply that the kind of behaviors that earn respect in body work could have the opposite effect in text work, which could limit body workers' opportunities for social class mobility.

Practical applications. Overall, the findings from this study could have useful implications for leadership practitioners who want to improve their leadership practices in diverse work contexts. The findings demonstrate that individuals create different meanings for leadership depending on their own experiences with leadership in day-to-day work contexts, so managers—who are often associated with leadership in most work contexts—could experience failure if they do not account for the different ways that workers construct meanings for leadership. In work contexts that involve physical labor, leaders should be willing and able to engage in physical labor alongside other organizational members, and manage their physical appearance—in terms of clothing and other material resources—so that they look more like the people they are trying to lead. In work contexts that are more focused on using words and processes of communication, leaders should maintain some degree of distance and independence from workers, and it would help to demonstrate competence by building and maintaining a reputation of success in whatever field is relevant to the workers being led.

Next, a shorter and more direct task-oriented communication style should be the goal for anyone who tries to perform leadership in physical labor contexts, and they should encourage others to share ideas about how to improve work processes. Performing leadership in text work environments should also involve being open to feedback, but short and direct communication may not be as necessary or as effective. Rather, in text work environments, leaders should provide detailed and specific explanations of work tasks, and they should be willing to initiate and engage in extended interactions focused on gathering input and feedback from other organizational members.

Third, regardless of the work context, leaders should communicate in ways that are helpful, encouraging, inspirational, emotionally supportive, and emotionally calm. The importance of being open to feedback in different work contexts is also tied to encouraging productivity and being emotionally supportive; if workers feel like their voices and ideas do not matter, then they are likely to feel frustrated, demoralized, defeated, and devalued, which can have a negative impact on productivity. Further, leaders in any work context should find multiple ways to give recognition for hard work, which involves providing explicit discursive recognition as well as providing material resources that are perceived as valuable by the workers receiving recognition.

Fourth, current and aspiring leaders should consider ways to create and maintain a safe working environment, and recognize that safety means different things depending on the work context. In jobs that involve more physical labor, leaders should personally demonstrate that they are concerned about the safety of other organizational members. Be aware of surroundings, watch for and minimize potential physical risks, and help other organizational members become more aware of their surroundings and physical threats

by using short and direct communication to describe potential hazards in the physical workspace. In contrast, text workers want to feel like it is safe to take risks by testing new ideas for accomplishing their day-to-day work, so leaders should explicitly communicate those expectations with workers, and avoid overly reprimanding—or threatening extreme consequences—if new ideas do not go according to plan.

Finally, when body workers construct leadership as a process of engaging in physical labor, they could be limiting their ability to demonstrate leadership in jobs that involve more use of language and knowledge construction (Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). In addition, text workers who construct leadership mainly in terms of processes of communication could be at a disadvantage when attempting to demonstrate leadership body work contexts. Thus, the goal for leadership practitioners should be to improve their competencies in both physical labor as well as processes of communication.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although this study provided useful insights into ways that people create divergent meanings for leadership, there were also some notable limitations. This study was limited in the gender diversity of participants and my limited knowledge of participants' backgrounds, and limitations to some of the interview process. There are also limitations and potential risks involved with practical application.

Limitations. One limitation of the current study is that there were not enough women involved. Given the critical approach to leadership that was applied in this study, understanding more about the perspectives of women would have been particularly valuable, because past leadership research has highlighted some of the ways in which women have been excluded from leadership considerations, even when they have the

same qualifications as male counterparts (Baxter, 2011; Buzzanell, et al., 2008). Further, women in leadership positions have been “othered” in relation to more dominant masculine norms associated with leadership, and women in leadership positions spend more time consciously regulating their language than men when practicing leadership (Baxter, 2011). Finally, Ashcraft, et al. (2009) explained that physical features of the body like sex, race, gender, or attractiveness are forms of materiality that become tied to discursive processes and day-to-day work experiences, and Wood (2005) noted that a person or group that is othered will have a different view of reality than more dominant groups. Thus, learning the perspectives of more women would have supported the critical goals of the study, and it would have provided more insight into the ways that discourse and materiality mutually construct meanings for organizational realities, as well as how those meanings might diverge for different social groups.

Next, there is a relative lack of racial diversity represented in the data for this study. Sex and race are two physical markers that have typically been “othered” in relation to more dominant social groups (i.e., white men). Further, Ashcraft and Allen (2003) argued that race should not be considered independently of other marked differences, like gender and social class, and that researchers should study how multiple constructions of difference and materialities interact. Thus, in addition to hearing from more women, the data for this study would have been enriched with a more racially diverse sample of text workers and body workers.

Third, my interviews did not provide adequate insight into participants’ past work experiences and family backgrounds. Families reproduce workplace values and power structures in their homes, which can reinforce dominant ideologies that associate higher

social classes with white-collar work, and lower social with physical labor and subordinate positions in organizations (Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). Families are also a source of learning different styles of communication, and different styles of communication are a way of marking social class (Dougherty, 2011; Lareau, 2011; Lubrano, 2004; Mills, 2004; Rushton & Young, 1975; Shatzman & Strauss, 1955). Further, when individuals start working at an organization, they are not blank slates. Perceptions and meanings for leadership could be influenced by past work experiences, as well as ongoing day-to-day work experiences. Thus, understanding more about participants' past work experiences and family backgrounds could provide more insight into the meanings they construct for leadership, and it could add a deeper level of explanation for how meanings of leadership diverge for different social class groups.

Fourth, although I have repeatedly explained that text/body and discourse/materiality should not be dichotomized, it is possible that my presentation of data could reinforce a false dichotomy. My findings highlighted differences in how text and body workers experienced leadership and day-to-day work; text work involves more working with words/discourse, while body work involves more physical labor and engagement with material conditions. By making the differences salient, I can see how text/body and discourse/materiality might be viewed as exclusive dichotomies. However, all work involves degrees of both text work and body work, but we can learn about differences by considering whether text or body is more emphasized in the day-to-day work (Dougherty, 2011; Marvin, 2006). I highlighted differences because it helped me demonstrate how materiality and discourse coexist in different ways.

A final limitation of this study is that it could potentially be used to manipulate followers' perceptions of leadership, as well as to maintain social class divisions. Similar to the traditional traits, styles, situational, and transformational leadership theories, the insights provided by these findings could provide a roadmap for current organizational leaders to change their appearance and/or behaviors such that they are perceived as a good leader, which is not necessarily a bad thing. However, it could be problematic if these findings are only used to reinforce current class divisions, rather than expanding leadership opportunities for members of social groups that have typically been marginalized from management and leadership opportunities in organizations. It could also be problematic if leaders simply pay lip service to demonstrating concern for the safety and well-being of others, as well as pretending to be open to new ideas.

Directions for future research. Based on findings from this study, as well as the limitations, there are several fruitful avenues for future research. First, to continue adding to leadership research that explores intersections of discourse and materiality, future research could focus on studying connections between emotions and constructions of leadership, because emotional experiences are a way of drawing attention to the role of the physical body in meanings for leadership (Hansen, et al., 2007).

Next, findings from this study demonstrate that physical safety is intimately tied to meanings for leadership, as well as material conditions and processes of communication in body work. Thus, issues of workplace safety provide another avenue for exploring intersections of discourse/materiality in the construction of leadership and organizational realities. LC/MD could also be applied to issues of workplace safety in order to understand how meanings for "safety" diverge for people doing different kinds

of work. A critical lens could also be applied to issues of workplace safety by considering who decides what constitutes a “safe” working environment, and who decides correct ways to manage “safety” in an organization.

Third, to learn more about how leadership is constructed by people doing different kinds of work, future research should explore different assumptions about “leading by example,” as well as how leading by example might relate to processes of social distancing. By extension, future research could build on our understanding of social distancing by applying LC/MD to understand divergent meanings for “respect” that are associated with leading by example in text work and body work.

Fourth, future research could provide a deeper understanding of how text and body workers’ work history and family background influence their perceptions of leadership in their current day-to-day work. Families are a major influence on perceptions of social class and work, as well as styles of communicating (Dougherty, 2011; Lareau, 2011; Lubrano, 2004; Mills, 2004; Rushton & Young, 1975; Shatzman & Strauss, 1955). Thus, studying family and work history could help make sense of meaning divergence among different social class distinctions.

Fifth, text and body workers preferred leaders who demonstrated appreciation for hard work. However, the findings lacked insight into different ways of demonstrating appreciation in different work contexts. Therefore, it could benefit leadership practitioners, as well as other organizational members, if future research applied LC/MD to understand potential divergent meanings for demonstrating recognition.

Sixth, future research should explore more intersections of leadership, gender, race, sexuality, and social class. Past research noted that gender, race, and sexuality

become markers for perceptions of social class (Ashcraft & Allen, 2003; Ashcraft, et al., 2009; Baxter, 2011; Buzzanell, et al., 2008; Dougherty, 2011). Further, very few women were identified as examples of leaders by the participants in this study, so it could be fruitful to explicitly ask participants to give examples of women whom they view as leaders in their day-to-day work experiences.

Conclusion

Leadership continues to be held in high esteem regardless of work context. Leadership is associated with management and authority, and a privilege of management is that they do not typically have to engage in physical labor. Thus, for many participants in this study, as well as a hardy amount of traditional leadership communication research, leadership comes with prestige and elevated status in organizations, while those at the other end of the hierarchy are subordinate physical labor workers, which sets up a system of social stratification that relates to social class distinctions. A discursive approach has become increasingly accepted among leadership and other organizational communication researchers, which means viewing leadership primarily as a process of communication. However, the argument presented in this study is that overemphasizing a discursive approach to leadership could marginalize those who understand leadership based more on how it functions in physical labor contexts, which could reinforce social class divisions.

With that in mind, the goals of this study were to understand how meanings for leadership might reinforce social class distinctions, and how meanings for leadership might diverge based on material and discursive conditions involved with the kind of work someone does on a day-to-day basis. Findings indicated that, overall, meanings for leadership do indeed diverge in ways that emphasize differences in material/discursive

conditions involved in day-to-day work, and those differences are tied to social class distinctions. Text work and leadership are associated with more privileged social classes, like white-collar work, and it does not typically involve physical labor. In text work contexts, leaders are also expected to carefully and strategically communicate instructions and expectations with other workers. In contrast, body work is associated with physical labor, less language use, and subordinate positions in an organizational hierarchy. Body workers contexts still associated leadership with authority and management positions, but leaders were also described in terms of how they use their bodies and engage in physical labor side-by-side with other workers.

Overall, the practice of leadership, the meanings constructed for leadership, and most leadership research can serve to reinforce social class divisions. By privileging discursive processes and overlooking the material conditions involved with day-to-day experiences, meanings for leadership reinforce social class divisions that privilege those who work more with words and marginalize those who engage in more physical labor.

In conclusion, there is still no consensus on meanings for leadership and social class. However, that was not the goal of this study. Findings that emerged from my study are not meant to generalize—and thus limit—leadership to certain situations, types of work, or social classes. Instead, the purpose of these findings is to provide some insight into the multiple ways that leadership might be constructed, and how discourse and materiality might work together to construct meanings for reality.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

Greetings,

My name is Mike Halliwell and I am a doctoral student in the Department of Communication at the University of Missouri. I am writing because I am currently conducting a research study that investigates leadership in different types of labor. Specifically, I am interested in learning more about how you experience leadership in your day-to-day work.

If you are interested in talking to me about your experiences, then I would like to schedule a time for us to meet. The interview would last from 30 minutes to 1 hour. Questions would focus on learning more about your day-to-day work and how you experience leadership.

Leadership is often discussed in ways that limit its application to diverse working conditions. Therefore, my hope is that learning about leadership experiences in different types of labor will broaden our understanding for the ways that leadership can be used.

Please let me know if you would like to participate in this research study. You can contact me by phone or e-mail. I am sure you are very busy, so I am happy to work around your schedule. If you would like to know more about the project, or if you have any questions, please contact me. You may also contact the study advisor, Dr. Debbie Dougherty, at 573-882-0300. You may also email her at doughertyd@missouri.edu.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Mike Halliwell

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Appendix B: Consent Form

- Project Title:** Dis/Embodied Leadership: Intersections of Leadership and Social Class
- Researchers:** Mike Halliwell is a graduate student in the Department of Communication. Debbie Dougherty, project advisor, is a faculty member in the Dept. of Communication
- Purpose:** I am interested in learning more about how people understand leadership and social class. If you are 18 and older and you have experience with employed work, then you will be asked to participate in 1 interview.
- Time:** The interview should take between ½ to 1 hour, depending on how much you have to say.
- Procedure:** After you sign this form, I will ask you some questions about your work experiences as well as your ideas about leadership and social class. Sometimes the questions will be written down, and sometimes the questions will follow up on topics you mention during the interview. Our conversation will also be audiotaped for the purpose of transcription.
- Voluntary:** Your participation is voluntary. You may quit at any time and you may refuse to answer any question.
- Risk:** Minimal risk is involved with the study. There is no more risk than you would experience in your daily interactions.
- Confidential:** Neither your identity, the identity of your place of employment, or the identity of the people you discuss will be revealed in either transcripts, written documents, or verbal presentations of the data. The following steps will be taken to protect your identity and confidentiality.
1. Documents and transcripts will be stored in a secured location.
 2. This consent form will be separated from the data.
 3. The audio recording of the speech will be stored on a password protected hard drive separate from the interview transcriptions.
 4. Identifying information will be deleted from interview transcripts.
 5. Participants will never be mentioned by name or job title.
 6. You can refuse to answer any questions asked.
- Contact:** If you have any questions, please contact the primary investigator, Mike Halliwell at 859-248-5906. You may also contact the study advisor, Debbie Dougherty, at 573-882-0300. You may also email her at doughertyd@missouri.edu.
- Questions:** If you have any questions about your rights, contact:
Campus IRB
483 McReynolds Hall
Columbia MO 65211
(573) 882-9585

Thank you for your participation! Signing this consent indicates that you understand and agree to the conditions mentioned above

Signature

Date

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Demographics

Age

Race

Gender

Education

Income

Social Class Questions

1. What is a typical work-day like for you?
 - 1a. What made you choose this line of work?
2. Do you think you work more with your hands/body or with words?
 - 2a. Why do you say that?

Leadership Questions

3. What does leadership mean to you?
4. What experiences have you had that make you think of leadership in that way?
5. Tell me about a time when you or someone you work with acted as a good leader.
 - 5a. What happened? What made you think they were a good leader?
6. Describe a person you know who was a bad leader?
 - 6a. What happened? What made you think they were a bad leader?
7. What does a bad leader need to do to become a good leader?
 - 7a. Please give me an example from an experience you have had.
8. In what ways do you see yourself as a leader at work?
 - 8a. Please give me an example from your experience.
9. How do you think being a good leader in your line of work is different from being a leader in other types of work?
10. How do you think a person who works mostly with their hands would describe a good leader?
 - 10a. Why do you say that?

VITA

Michael Halliwell (B.A., Communication, Eastern Kentucky University, 2008; M.A., Organizational Communication, University of Cincinnati, 2011) earned his doctorate in Organizational Communication from the University of Missouri in July 2019. His research primarily focuses on exploring the meanings of leadership in diverse working contexts. He has presented single and co-authored work at national and regional communication conferences, exploring topics such as organizational mergers and acquisitions, organizational assimilation, organizational identity, and relational tensions among leaders and followers.