

“The more you grasp the culture, the more you realize
how little you actually understand”

A rhetorical analysis of democratic potentials in cross-border leadership through the lens of western leaders operating within a Chinese context.

Bachelor Thesis

Rhetoric

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Abstract

The Swedish government states that increased relations and collaborations with China will promote democratization. Leaders working cross-border can be viewed as a major source for influence. This thesis will use a rhetorical framework when aiming to examine democratic potentials in Swedish leaders operating in a Chinese context. Here communication is viewed as a possible tool for democratic influence. Rhetoricians believe that for influence to occur, the establishment of ethos is crucial, therefore will the thesis also explore how the leaders maintain and establish ethos in their daily interactions. The material mainly consists of interviews and field work carried out with leaders located in Shanghai and Hong Kong.

Rhetorical analyses, Intercultural, Leadership, Democracy, Communication, Ethos

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MFS scholarship gives students, commonly at the end of their education, the opportunity to conduct two months of field work in a developing country. The thesis must include questions dealing with the country's economic, social, or political development.

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1. Introduction

“Through communication, individual experiences are shared, knowledge is created, the associated life is formed, and democracy is rendered possible”¹.

In an increasingly globalized world, the opportunities to communicate across borders is rising. Companies and individuals operating international are one of the key actors for cross-border communication and therefore a major source to produce common knowledge and connect people. Could relations and interactions across borders be an opportunity to promote democracy? Cross-border leaders have major opportunities to influence and are they thereby a potential path to more democratized societies? The purpose of this thesis is to use a rhetorical framework, aiming to get a deeper understanding of democratic potentials of cross-border leadership, focusing on Swedish leaders operating within a Chinese context.

As China is one of the fastest growing economies, it is for many countries, including Sweden, a major partner for trade.² China is a country with a long multifaceted history that is marked, for instance, by Confucianism and communism, still affecting today’s China. The last century has been characterized by change, westernization, political and economic reforms, and a search for balance between modernity and tradition.³

In the last fifty years, Sweden and China has a constantly growing amount of partnerships. Several Swedish leaders are operating in Chinese companies and Swedish organizations are starting to cooperate with Chinese companies or establish manufactures there.⁴ According to the Swedish government enlarged collaborations and increased personal contacts between Sweden and China will promote democratization and increase civil rights.⁵ A deeper explanation of this statement is given in the background chapter.

¹ C., Chang, (2002), “The Problem of the Public: John Dewey’s Theory of Communication and Its Influence on Chinese Communication”. In X., Lu, W., Jia, & R., Heisey, (Eds.), *Chinese communication studies. Context and comparison*, (pp.47-63). United States of America: Ablex publishing, p. 48.

² Regeringen, (2016-03-12), ”Tätare samarbete mellan Sverige och Kina”, <<http://www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2016/04/tatare-samarbete-mellan-sverige-och-kina/>>, Downloaded: 2016-11-30.

³ X., Lu, (2002), Chinese Culture and Communication: Diverse Contexts and Comparison with the West”. In X., Lu, W., Jia, & R., Heisey, (Eds.), *Chinese communication studies. Context and comparison*, (pp.47-63). United States of America: Ablex publishing, p. 4.

⁴ Föreningen för utvecklingsfrågor, (2000-10-12), ”Riksdagesseminarium, Kina i världen”, <<http://www.fuf.se/2000/10/25/riksdagesseminarium-kina-i-varlden/>>, Downloaded: 2016-11-07.

⁵ Regeringen, ”Diplomatiska förbindelser – Kina”, <<http://www.regeringen.se/sveriges-regering/utrikesdepartementet/sveriges-diplomatiska-forbindelser/asien-och-oceanien/kina/>>, Downloaded: 2016-11-30.

If increased collaboration could drive the vehicle of democratization forward, functioning establishments and cooperation's are crucial. Working alliances therefore requires leaders that can reach impact cross border. How can western managers successfully use rhetoric to influence within a Chinese context? And can they in fact promote democratization as the Swedish government suggest? This research aim to examine these questions.

The key for successful influence is an understanding for the culture one is operating within. As well as the country's culture has a role in the organizational culture, the leader has possibilities to influence the organizational culture.⁶ Leadership is about affecting people through words and rhetoric deals with influential communication.⁷ If leadership mainly is about influence, the rhetorical theory about persuasive communication is a useful tool.⁸

2. Disposition

After an introduction of what the thesis aim to examine, a background to the study is presented, offering a review of some historical influences and exploring the relationship between China and Sweden.

The next section will declare the thesis purpose and research questions. Here is also an exploration of previous research and inspirations for the thesis presented, followed by the theoretical framework, there rhetoric pervades. Terms presented is rhetoric and its connection to culture, leadership, and democracy. Thereafter follows an examination of communicative leadership and leadership in different cultures. Next the rhetorical term *entechnoi*, focusing on ethos and its link to leaders' possibilities to influence is explored and lastly *kairos* is defined.

After the theoretical framework is declared, the methodology used in the research is presented and methodological problems that may appear is explored. The research material will also be presented. In following section the results is offered and the rhetorical framework and the thesis research questions is applied to the material. The analysis is divided, answering one research question at the time.

Whereas the first research question focus on discussion and shared decision-making, viewing these as elements of democratic potentials, the second look closer into establishing ethos through its elements. Lastly a discussion about the studies result is presented.

⁶ G., Yulk, (2012), *Ledarskap i organisationer*, Edinburgh: Pearson, p. 345.

⁷ J., Fafner, (2011), "The Focal Point of Rhetoric". In J.E., Kjeldsen, J.E., & J., Grue,(eds.), *Scandinavian Studies in Rhetoric*, (pp. 57-75). Portland: Retorikförlaget, p. 62.

⁸ L., Lid Andersson, (2009), *Ledarskapande retorik*. Diss., Stockholm: Handelshögskolan, p. 24.

3. Background

“Consider that, of every five people in the world, one is Chinese, the significance of studying Chinese communication cannot be over emphasized”⁹.

China has a long and complex history and all its complexity and influence cannot be captured here. Therefore, a short review of two ideologies with a major influence will be presented together with an exploration of today’s China and its relationship with Sweden.

3.1. History and today’s context

Confucianism has for many years been one of the most prominent philosophies as it plays a major role in China’s past and present culture.¹⁰ The ideology highlights harmony and acceptance of authorities and that some individuals are made to rule and there is a natural difference between rulers and common people.¹¹ Confucians believe that the government’s purpose partly is to preserve harmony and a leader partly fill the same purpose, by tradition both the government and leaders can demand obedience and loyalty to keep harmony.¹² Confucianism is deeply rooted in the Chinese culture and therefore it still today provides the Chinese people with sense-making schemas and beliefs.¹³

Mao came to power as a revolutionary with the intention to destroy all traditions and replace it with a communist ideology. Authoritarian regimes are dedicated to ideological-based projects independent of the economic or social consequences. Mao commanded a broad collectivization of farms and factories which resulted in one of the greatest man-made famines in history. Even though Mao’s death led to essential changes in the social system and some of the most radical communist ideologies disappeared, key part of his philosophy still exists in China’s politics and culture today.¹⁴ The reform opened the borders for collaboration with west and “transformed China into an economic Powerhouse”¹⁵. Today the Communist party argues that Maoism was needed to move China forward.¹⁶ Some researchers believe that the communist party’s overbearing hand had a harmful effect on China’s further political

⁹ Lu, (2002), p. 1.

¹⁰ R.M.C., Ng, (2002), “Culture and Modernization: The Case of the People’s Republic of China”. In X., Lu, W., Jia, & R., Heisey, (Eds.), *Chinese communication studies. Context and comparison*, (pp.47-63). United States of America: Ablex publishing, p. 35.

¹¹ G., Hofstede (1980), *Culture’s consequences: International differences in work related values*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, p. 51.

¹² Ng, (2002), pp 39–41.

¹³ Lu, (2002), pp. 3–4.

¹⁴ A., Lawrance, (1998), *China under Communism*. Great Britain: Routledge, p. 6.

¹⁵ C., Tubilewicz, (2017), *Critical Issues in Contemporary China – Unity, Stability and Development*, (2nd edition). Great Britain: Routledge, p. 7.

¹⁶ Globalis, (2003), “Kina”, <<http://www.globalis.se/Laender/Kina>>, Downloaded: 2017-02-26.

development, “leaving China with an immature, underdeveloped political system”¹⁷. Therefore, China's history and the Mao-era still has an impact on present China and Chinese mentality.

The Communist party is still governing China as a one-party state and is struggling with the balance between keeping political control and foster economic development and global trade.¹⁸ At the same time the Communist Party indicates that China will not duplicate the arrangement of Western countries politics or introduce a system with multiple parties.¹⁹ The Chinese legal system has been reformed more in the last hundred years than any time before because of increased connection with the outside world.²⁰ China joined World Trade Organization in 2001 and more than five million foreign companies has established there since.²¹ The next section will present a brief overview of the relationship between China and Sweden.

3.2. The relationship between China and Sweden

Sweden reopened for collaboration with China in the late 1970's. Back then the alliance was primarily built on Sweden's economic aid to China, focusing on environmental, human rights and democratic development.²² In the beginning of the twenty-first century China's growing economy lead Sweden to decrease their developmental work and economic aid.²³ During the last years of aid the countries collaborated on a project which goal was to stimulate the emergence of self-supporting, sustainable partnerships between Swedish and Chinese organizations.

The Swedish government states on their webpage that “by enlarged networks, economic exchange, cooperation with projects and increasing the interpersonal contact, Sweden continues to support the emergence of the Chinese civil society, which in time also will promote democratization and respect for human rights”²⁴. The amount of Swedish organizations establishing in China is increasing every year and over 500 Swedish companies are based there today.²⁵ With the economic aid out of the picture, it is time for the commercial companies and individuals to drive the vehicle of democratization forward. Many Western companies have already entered China and several of them have run into problems as the culture and institutional environment is different from that in Western

¹⁷ Lawrance, (1998), p. 33.

¹⁸ P.F., Landry, (2008), *Decentralized Authoritarianism in China*. Connecticut: Yale University, p. 1.

¹⁹ BBC, (2009-03-09), *China will not have democracy*, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7932091.stm>>, Downloaded: 2017-02-16.

²⁰ X., Ping, & P., Griffith, (2017), “Legal Reforms”. In: C., Tubilewicz, (2017), *Critical Issues in Contemporary China – Unity, Stability and Development*, (2nd edition). (pp.48-65.). Great Britain: Routledge, p. 48.

²¹ Globalis, (2003),” Kina”.

²² Sida, (2009-06-15), “Vårt arbete i Kina”, <<http://www.sida.se/Svenska/Har-arbetar-vi/utfasade-samarbetslander/Kina/Vart-arbete-i-Kina/>>, Downloaded: 2016-01-20.

²³ Sida, (2009-06-15), “Vårt arbete i Kina”.

²⁴ Translated by the author. Regeringen, “Diplomatiska förbindelser: Kina”.

²⁵ Sweden Abroad, (2016-03-22), “Landsfakta om Kina”, <<http://www.swedenabroad.com/sv-SE/Ambassader/Peking/Landsfakta/Om-Kina/>>, Downloaded: 2017-03-20.

countries.²⁶ To sum up the relationship between China and Sweden, a reorientation has occurred from focusing on developmental question and economic aid to a linking dealing with trade and business relations. This is the context wherein the study is conducted and it can be questioned if business and work relations can be a potential path for more democratized societies. In the coming chapter the research purpose and research questions is presented.

4. Research purpose

The purpose of the thesis is to explore communication and democratic potentials of cross-border leadership through the lens of Western leaders operating within a Chinese context.

4.1. Research questions

Based on the research purpose, the following question will provide guidance:

1. How do the leaders look upon democratic potentials in their leadership?
2. How are the leaders establishing and maintaining ethos in cross cultural meetings?

Rhetoricians believes ethos to be the ultimate tool for influence. Therefore, establishing and maintaining ethos is a crucial part of affecting people in one's surrounding. Without a trustworthy ethos the leader's possibilities to reach impact and their potential for democratic influence is lessened. Consequently, it can be argued that the leaders maintaining of ethos is a vital part of their opportunities for democratic potential.

4.2. Limitations of Study

This thesis is constrained both regarding time for conducting the study and limitations in writing space, therefore logos and pathos is omitted to make room for a deeper examination of ethos. When trying to influence, ethos is the main tool, but nonetheless it is hard to separate completely from pathos and logos. However, if the speaker does not have a high ethos, the receiver will not trust the speaker and then the arguments, independent of how much logos and pathos they contain, does not reach an impact. Consequently, is ethos the base that must exist for the others to function.²⁷ Therefore is it relevant to research how the leaders maintain their ethos without any deeper exploration of logos and pathos. This choice is made with an awareness of that some details that may be perceived as effacing the leaders' opportunities to influence will be left out.

The thesis is focusing only on the coworkers the leaders are interacting with face to face, omitting for example communication via phone calls and emails. The leaders intermingling with people separate of

²⁶ I., Bremmer, & F., Zakaria, (2006), *Hedging Political Risk in China*. Harvard Business Review, 84 (11), pp. 22-25.

²⁷ Aristotle, (2012), 2:1:5.

their ordinary work is also excluded, because these interactions are not a part of the ordinary organization, their absence will probably not have a larger effect on the thesis results.

5. Previous research

There are many researches focusing on finding differences between Western and Chinese behavior, communication, and culture, for exemplar Hofstede's cultural dimensions.²⁸ Hofstede, with both admirers and critics, is one of the main researchers dealing with culture connected to organizations. His study is about national culture and how it influences values in working spaces and organizations.²⁹ One of the dimensions in Hofstede's theory is individualism versus collectivism. Nordic countries are more individualistic, focusing on the individual, and Confucianism Asian is categorized as collectivistic, concentrating on the group.³⁰ With Hofstede as an inspiration, The Globe study further developed the theory. Globe is dedicated to study the connection between social culture, leadership, and organizational practice. Their research from 2004 is a quantitative survey-based study, including over 200 researchers operating within 62 different countries. The research is interested in how social culture affects leadership actions expected in the culture and if a leader's success is dependent on his abilities to live up to the social expectations. The study consists of several dimensions dealing with both cultural aspects and leadership features.³¹

Some of the Globe study's cultural dimensions are assertiveness, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, and power distance. The leadership dimensions are for instance charismatic/value-based, team-orientated, and participative leadership. Nordic countries scored low on for example power distance and in-group collectivism and Confucian Asian counted high on power distance, institutional, and in-group collectivism.³² Critics of these studies states that researches focusing on finding differences between cultures often are shown without any empirical research evidence and that it generalizes cultures. This form of study can partly help to understand Chinese culture, but simultaneously it produces stereotypes and treats culture and communication as something static. Only in the last couple of years more studies have shown up as an attempt to examine the complexity of Chinese culture.³³ In this thesis will the Globe study's results contribute to an understanding for the cultural differences and thereby be a part of the theoretical base. The expectation is that the Globe study, together with the rhetorical framework, will ease to understand the cross-cultural

²⁸ Lu, (2002), p. 8.

²⁹ Hofstede, (1980).

³⁰ Hofstede, (1980), p. 51.

³¹ The Globe Project, (2016), "Studies", <<http://globeproject.com/studies>>, Downloaded: 2017-03-06.

³² The Globe Project, (2016), "Studies".

³³ Lu, (2002), p. 8.

communication. The dimensions relevant to Confucian Asian and Nordic countries is described in more detail in the theoretical framework.

One of the inspirations and a used source for this thesis is Lu's, Jia's and Heisey's book "Chinese communication studies: context and comparison, presenting an influential meta-analysis of several dimensions of Chinese communication"³⁴. The book discusses for example the rise of communication as an academic discipline, Confucianism and harmony, and traditions of Chinese communication. It describes some major Chinese concepts and will therefore contribute to several main foundations in this thesis for understanding Chinese culture and communication. Some of the inspirations and sources used from this volume is briefly described below.

The book spends a great deal giving a comprehension for Chinese understanding and connection to Confucianism with the conclusion that the ideology still plays a major role in China's culture and customs of communication.³⁵ Confucianism is also seen as one of the foundations for understanding leadership. The book is comparing a traditional Chinese leader to a family father and explains Chinese family constellations as a natural way for the individual to be socialized to respect hierarchies.³⁶ The book concludes that even though the research about China is increasing, there still is need for more studies examining the similarities and differences of western and Chinese culture and communication.³⁷ My thesis will build on their findings, attempting to continue examination of leadership and communication in a Chinese context.

6. Theoretical Framework

In the upcoming chapter the theoretical framework is presented. Starting with rhetoric and its connection to democracy and culture. Thereafter communicative leadership is examined followed by a brief summary of the Globe-study. Further entechnoi pisteis are explained, especially ethos, followed by a presentation of kairos. Lastly a summarize of the theoretical framework.

6.1. Rhetoric

It is not a coincidence that rhetoric and democracy were born simultaneously. Rhetoric is, explained in classical terms, the art of speech and persuasion, dealing with the means and manners of communication.³⁸ "in a democracy, it is speech (in the form of spoken words or written text) that more often than not provides this means. The manner of speech, therefore, takes on a heightened importance

³⁴ Lu, Jia & Heisey, (2002).

³⁵ Lu, (2002), pp. 3–4.

³⁶ Ng, (2002), pp. 35–36.

³⁷ Lu, (2002), p. 8.

³⁸ Aristoteles, (2012), *Retoriken*, (2nd edition. *Akujärvi Trans.*). Ödåkra: Retorikförlaget, 1:2:1.

– the words, styles and techniques of public argumentation mediating exchanges and shaping the wider political space”³⁹

In Ancient Greece, Quintilians, one of the founding fathers of rhetoric, defined a good rhetorician as “vir bonus dicendi peritus”⁴⁰, a good man, skilled in speaking. Every free man needed to be able to speak up for himself and a man which could speak well, could reach power, consequently democracy was born through good rhetoricians.⁴¹ Traditionally rhetoric was dealing with persuasion through speech. A more modern definition by Fafner, Professor of Rhetoric, is “the purpose of rhetoric is to create trustworthiness through linguistic actions”⁴². Another is “the art, practice, and study of human communication”⁴³. While traditional rhetoric is a matter of persuasion, it is today often about creating and understanding communication.⁴⁴ In this thesis rhetoric is defined in modern terms.

To comprehend the cultural differences between western and Chinese patterns of communication, an exploration of culture is needed. Culture is a complex term, existing on many levels and forms, making it hard to define. Hofstede believes that a culture is “the collective experienced world that holds people together but also keeps different groups apart.”⁴⁵ The Globe-study defines culture as “shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives that are transmitted across generations”⁴⁶. The two definitions presented above does not cover it all, but it is a starting point when trying to frame culture. Culture manifest itself through different symbols as language, narrative and rituals/ceremonies. A crucial part of maintaining a culture is communication, a social process where people integrate with symbols, and therefore culture and rhetoric are closely linked.⁴⁷ According to Burke, literary theorist and philosopher focusing on rhetoric and aesthetics, humans create and understands their world with the help of symbols, language being a major one. Rhetoric is “rooted in an essential function of language itself”⁴⁸ and it is a crucial part of a culture because it is how we communicate and create meaning in a social world.⁴⁹

³⁹ J., Martin, (2013), “A feeling for democracy? Rhetoric, power and the emotions”. *Journal of Political Power*, 6:3, 461–476, p. 462.

⁴⁰ L., Hellspong, (2011), *Konsten att tala*. India: Studentlitteratur, p. 47.

⁴¹ Hellspong, (2011), p. 20.

⁴² Fafner, (2011), p. 62.

⁴³ W., Booth, (2004), *The rhetoric of rhetoric; the quest for effective communication*. MA: Blackwell Publishing, p. 8.

⁴⁴ A., Lundsford, & L., Ede, (2014), ”Om distinktioner mellan klassisk och modern retorik”, (trans. Eriksson, A.). *Rhetorica Scandinavia* 68, pp. 15-18.

⁴⁵ Hofstede, (1980), p. 44.

⁴⁶ The Globe Project, (2016), “Studies”.

⁴⁷ Lid Andersson, (2009), p. 31.

⁴⁸ K., Burke, (1969), *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 43.

⁴⁹ Burke, (1969), p. 43.

Rhetoric is a social activity which implies that its analyses is rooted in a social and cultural context.⁵⁰ According to Yukl, Professor of Management and Leadership, it is essential for a leader to understand the culture one is trying to communicate within to be able to influence,⁵¹ and cross cultural rhetoric as a theory is about making it easier to communicate and influence across cultural boundaries.⁵² As rhetoric often deals with influential communication it also has a close bound with democracy. This will be described further below.

6.1.1. The democracy of Rhetoric

“Between rhetoric and politics there are bounds, which are both conceptual and historical.”⁵³ To understand the link between rhetoric and democracy, a review of the thesis understanding of democracy is necessary. Democracy can be defined in many ways based upon various criteria’s’, most commonly is to look at a state’s governmental regime, legal system, and polity. A more extensive definition beholds language choices and behaviors opening for discussion and shared decision-making in off state-linked organizations and groups as a form of democracy. It can be viewed as a process that attaches individuals and through which people can significantly influence their common actions.⁵⁴

Hellspång, Professor of rhetoric, states that all politic styles must coordinate human actions and in a democracy, this should be done with as much acceptance as possible Therefore is it vital to find solutions accepted and preferred by the majority. It is easier to find favored solutions if you can gather around shared values whereby influence is a crucial element for making people create common beliefs.⁵⁵

Another key scholar of the connection between democracy and communication is Dewey, an American philosopher, psychologist, and education reformer. He states that the essence of democracy and its progress is communication, believing that the Chinese language must change or be Westernized for a democratization to be possible.⁵⁶ This because language is the tool used to comprehend the world and it is through language we create, recreate, and recognize. Our

⁵⁰ B., Renberg, (2007), *Retorikanalys – En introduktion*. Polen: Studentlitteratur, p. 16.

⁵¹ Yukl, (2012), p. 245.

⁵² L., Hellspång, (2000), *Interkulturell retorik. Retoriken som redskap för att analysera kulturskillnader i kommunikation*. Stockholm: Umeå Universitet & Södertörn högskola, p. 13.

⁵³ L., Hellspång, (2011), “Democratic Dialogue. On the relationship between democracy and the art of public speaking”. In J.E., Kjeldsen, J.E., & J., Grue, (eds.), *Scandinavian Studies in Rhetoric*, (pp. 127-155). Portland: Retorikförlaget, p. 128.

⁵⁴ M., Young, (2007), “Inclusion and Democracy”. In T., Tracy, J.p., McDaniel, & B.E., Gronbeck, (eds.), *The Prettier Doll – Rhetoric, Discourse and Ordinary Democracy*, (pp. 22-44). United States of America: The University of Alabama Press, p. 173.

⁵⁵ Hellspång, (2011), p. 131.

⁵⁶ J., Dewey, (1916/1980), “Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education”. In *John Dewey: The middle works*, (1899–1924), volume 9, p. 93.

understanding of the world is both made and constrained by our vocabulary.⁵⁷ Therefore, to reform schemas of thinking the language needs to change. It means that Chinese speaking people need to renew the way they communicate for a democratization to be possible because words connected to democracy do not exist in their language and consequently not in their understanding of the world. In this sense, language play the main part in change and communication is what creates political structures, education, culture, and economic systems.⁵⁸

This exposes two different views of language. On perception understands language as a given construction for identifying how we observe things. The contradictory view recognizes language as the expression of engagement, humans become the creator and recreator of language and the understanding of the world within it. In rhetoric, language is not seen as a tool merely for precision and logic but is perceived as a creating force.⁵⁹

6.2. Communicative Leadership

Leadership is a complex phenomenon, partly because it has been defined in numerous ways.⁶⁰ What several of these definitions have in common is that they are based upon the premise that leadership is a process where one or several individuals consciously affects others.⁶¹ Leadership is both a specialized role and a social process of influencing others.⁶² It is a context-sensitive, social process, created, and presented in language and communication.⁶³

Yukl writes that researchers often explain leadership based on their individual perspective and interest and therefore it is defined both in terms of characteristics, behavior, influence, and administration.⁶⁴ When emphasizing the communicative aspects of leadership, extra importance is put on the leader's ability to influence through communication.⁶⁵ It can be defined as a leader "who engages employees in dialogue, actively shares and seeks feedback, practices participative decision-making, and is perceived as open and involved".⁶⁶ As leadership is about influencing through communication, it has a strong connection with rhetoric, dealing with reaching impact through messages.⁶⁷ This thesis aims to

⁵⁷ Chang, (2002), p. 53.

⁵⁸ Dewey, (1925/1981), pp. 135-147.

⁵⁹ Fafner, (2011), p. 61.

⁶⁰ Yukl, (2012), pp. 4-5.

⁶¹ Yukl, (2012), & P., Northouse, (2013), *Leadership in theory and practice*, (sixth edition). United states of America: Sage.

⁶² Yukl, (2012), p. 11.

⁶³ M., Alvesson, & D., Kärreman, (2000), "Taking the linguistic turn in organizational research: Challenges, responses, consequences". *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, vol. 36:2, pp. 136-158, pp. 140-145.

⁶⁴ Yukl, (2012), pp. 4-5.

⁶⁵ C., Johansson, V.D., Miller, & S., Hamrin, (2014), "Conceptualizing communicative leadership : A framework for analyzing and developing leaders' communication competence". *Corporate Communications. An International Journal*, vol. 19: 2, pp. 147-165, p. 148.

⁶⁶ Johansson, Miller, & Hamrin, (2014), p. 155.

⁶⁷ Lid Andersson, (2009), p. 24.

examine if some parts of a communicative leadership are implemented in the leadership styles and in the daily interactions.

Leadership is a cultural activity, it is filled with values, rituals, and transmitting information through symbols. Social and organizational culture are vital in how leadership profess itself.⁶⁸ An organizations culture is dynamic and not only shaped by the leader but by everyone dealing with the organization.⁶⁹ The national culture also influences the organizational culture through employees' norms, ethics, the politics of the country, etcetera.⁷⁰ The leader's values and way of leading is deeply affected by her/his cultural background and by extension, her/his values have a big impact on the organizations attitude and employees' behavior.⁷¹ Communicative leadership assumes that innumerable elements interact dynamically to affect the understanding of leadership because knowledge and interpretations of leadership is a part of the language and culture. People from different cultures understand and create meaning in different ways and therefore they will perceive leadership differently.⁷²

As leadership is culturally bound and what is appreciated in leaders varies. Below the Globe study's result of leadership in different cultures are presented to give an understanding for leadership in diverse cultures.

6.3. The GLOBE-Study: Leadership in different cultures

What leadership style is appreciated and practiced is dependent on many factors, including cultural expectations on how a leader should be. The Globe study focus on the connection between social culture, leadership, and organizational practices.⁷³ Below the dimensions that are relevant for Scandinavian and Chinese culture and leadership is examined.

6.3.1. Cultural dimensions

One of the dimensions is assertiveness which can be explained as "the degree to which individuals are (and should be) assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their relationship with others"⁷⁴. Another is collectivism and has two dimensions, institutional and in-group. Institutional deals with to which degree organizational and social practices encourage and prize shared distribution of resources and cooperative achievements. In-group collectivism is if people express pride and faithfulness in their

⁶⁸ B.K., Berger, & J., Meng, (Eds.), (2014), *Making sense of public relations leaders as sense-makers: A global study of leadership in public relations and communication management*. New York: Routledge, pp. 10-14.

⁶⁹ B., Jacksson, & K., Parry, (2011), *Ledarskap*. Malmö: Studentlitteratur, p. 87.

⁷⁰ Berger & Meng, (2014), pp. 5-14.

⁷¹ Yukl, (2012), p. 345.

⁷² Alvesson & Kärreman, (2011), pp. 142-147.

⁷³ The Globe Project, (2016), "Study 2004 and 2007 Data", <http://globeproject.com/study_2004_2007#data>, Downloaded:2017-03-06.

⁷⁴ The Globe Project, (2016), "Study 2004 and 2007 Data".

organizations or relations.⁷⁵ Power distance is dealing with whether the people accept authority, power differences, and social privileges.⁷⁶

6.3.2. Leadership dimensions

While charismatic/value-based leadership is dealing with the leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and expect high performance outcome, team-oriented emphasizes "effective team building and implementation of a common purpose or goal among team members"⁷⁷. Participative leadership is about to which degree leaders include others in making and applying decisions.⁷⁸

6.3.3. Nordic countries

According to the Globe study, Nordic countries, including Sweden are low on power distance, assertiveness, and in-group collectivism even though they score high on institutional collectivism. Looking at leadership, Nordic countries believes that charismatic/valued-based, team-oriented, and participative leadership is the most contributing.⁷⁹

6.3.4. Confucian Asian

Confucian Asian, including China, scored high on power distance, as well as institutional and in-group collectivism. The leadership dimension charismatic/valued-based and team-oriented leadership was desired.⁸⁰ Traditional Chinese leadership is a form of a paternalistic authority. The characteristics contains compassionate, moral, and authoritarian leadership.⁸¹ As presented above leadership can take different forms but still a high ethos can be understood as valuable for achieving influence. Below ethos will be explored.

6.4. Ethos

For influence to be reached a high ethos is crucial. Ethos is one of the three entechnoi pisteis. Fafner describes the word pistis, meaning trustworthiness or trust and it can be increased or established through language.⁸² Trust is an essential factor for influence to occur and the three classic components to reach influence is logos, pathos, and ethos.⁸³

Aristotle, one of the founding fathers of rhetoric, describes logos as the logic behind an argument which appeals to peoples' rational side. It is about with choosing arguments in a way that makes

⁷⁵ The Globe Project, (2016), "Study 2004 and 2007 Data".

⁷⁶ The Globe Project, (2016), "Study 2004 and 2007 Data".

⁷⁷ The Globe Project, (2016), "Study 2004 and 2007 Data".

⁷⁸ The Globe Project, (2016), "Study 2004 and 2007 Data".

⁷⁹ The Globe Project, (2016), "Results Clusters, Nordic countries",

<<http://globeproject.com/results/clusters/nordic-europe?menu=cluster>>, Downloaded: 2017-03-06.

⁸⁰ The Globe Project, (2016), "Results Clusters, Confucian Asian",

<<http://globeproject.com/results/clusters/confucian-asia?menu=cluster>>, Downloaded: 2017-03-06.

⁸¹ Ng, (2002), pp 39–41.

⁸² Fafner, (2011), p. 62.

⁸³ Aristotle, (2012), 1.2.2–6.

people understand what you mean.⁸⁴ To influence the sender need to move the recipients emotionally. Aristotle explains pathos as the speaker's way of conveying emotions and put the receivers in a certain frame of mind. Ethos is about the character of the speaker and it should appear as trustworthy to fill its purpose.⁸⁵ Ethos has a close connection with the other two pisteis and it can be argued that they are hard to separate, but Aristotle argues that of those three, ethos is the ultimate tool for persuasion.⁸⁶ Therefore, this study will mainly focus on ethos as the tool for influence.

Ethos is a dynamic, socially constructed phenomenon which changes in relation to interaction and context.⁸⁷ In every communicative situation establishing of ethos is occurring simultaneously as the listener creates a picture of the speaker. This means that ethos is in constant change and a speaker, for the better or worse depending on how the situation unfolds, puts their ethos on stake every time they speak. The image the receiver already has about the speaker based on former experiences or expectations and in which extent the sender lives up to them, will also affect the establishment of ethos. What can submit high ethos in one situation, does not necessary do so in another.⁸⁸

Certain characteristics that contribute to a higher ethos are given, for example age, gender and looks, but some can be evoked by the speaker.⁸⁹ Maintaining of ethos can be done with the help of three factors. These are arete (virtue), fronesis (wisdom), and eunoia (good will). Arete is the speaker's moral principles and ethical character,⁹⁰ but it can be difficult to know what defines moral character. Nixon can be used as an example of how someone with high trustworthiness can lose it because of their character. Even though Nixon was competent as a president, the American people lost their trust in him because he appeared to lack moral standards.⁹¹ Some key scholars suggests that character can be built through dignity, honesty, and integrity.⁹² To have a strong ethos, the speaker also need to show wisdom and knowledge within their field, fronesis. This includes both practical and theoretical knowledge.⁹³ By expressing that the speaker is working for the good of the receiver, she/he is showing good will, eunoia.⁹⁴ Aristotelian rhetoric believes that one's ethos can be perceived as high without fulfilling all the elements.⁹⁵

⁸⁴ Aristoteles, (2012), 1.2.6.

⁸⁵ Aristotle, (2012), 1.2.2–6.

⁸⁶ Aristotle, (2012), 1.2.2–6.

⁸⁷ J.E., Kjeldsen, (2008), *Retorik idag - Introduktion till modern retorikteori*, (2ond edition). Lund: Studentlitteratur, p.125.

⁸⁸ Kjeldsen, (2008), p.125.

⁸⁹ Renberg, (2007), p. 28.

⁹⁰ Aristotle, (2012), 2:1:5.

⁹¹ Kjeldsen, (2006), p. 118.

⁹² R., Hedquist, (2002), *Trovärdighet: en förutsättning för förtroende*. Stockholm: Styrelsen för psykologiskt försvar, p. 31.

⁹³ Hedquist, (2002), p. 24.

⁹⁴ Aristotle, (2012), 2:1:5.

⁹⁵ Aristotle, (2012), 2:1:5.

Ethos is in this thesis seen as a dynamic, social construction that is not stable in any communicative situation. Ethos is changeable, which means that the credibility is put on test every time something is communicated. Lastly the theoretical chapter will explore the term kairos before presenting the methodology and material.

6.5. Kairos

As well as a trustworthy ethos is needed to influence, it is more affecting if the impact is successful or not. Kairos is used to describe when someone says the right thing, to the right person, at the right time. The word kairos does not easily translate into English, but a Greek expression related to it is ‘penetrable opening’, connecting kairos to opportunity. It is an opening, created or discovered, to speak and if handled in the right way it can increase the chance to influence. Kairos emphasizes that the speaker must evaluate the circumstances and adapt the message thereafter, thereby kairos highlights the importance of the situation for influence to occur. Lost kairos cannot be rebound, consequently it underlines changes within the situation, what was kairos in one moment will not be in the next.⁹⁶

6.6. Theoretical summary

As an overarching term for the thesis is rhetoric, viewed as how one can use communication to influence. Its purpose here is to understand how communication can be used to influence and how certain forms of engagement possibly can contribute to democratic potentials. Closely related to influencing through language is communicative leadership. Here applied to recognize how people in a certain position can influence, emphasizing the use of communication. Further the Globe-study is aiming to highlight that leadership is culturally bound and therefore the expectations on leaders can be dissimilar in diverse contexts. Further ethos is explained. Ethos purpose in this thesis is to help in understanding how the leaders create and maintain trust in their interactions. Kairos will contribute with and emphasize the importance of an understanding of the context. Further will rhetoric, ethos, and its connections to influence and democracy offer theoretical concepts to help comprehend and critically examine communication.

⁹⁶ C.R., Miller, (1992), “Kairos in the Rhetoric of Science”. In P., Witte, N., Nakadate, & R.D., Cherry, (Eds.), *Rhetoric of Doing*, (pp. 310-328). United States of America: Southern Illinois University Press, p. 310-320.

7. Methodology and Material

7.1. Methodology - Interviews and Field Work

The purpose of the thesis is to comprehend how the leaders reflect on their communication and behavior within a specific setting. It is carried out using an ethnographic method, including interviews and observations. Central for ethnography is that the researcher has experienced the researched context or phenomena. This method is characterized by a continuous link between theory and empirical findings, where the theories purpose is to provide direction and a systematic approach, not stand in the way of the observations and analyzes.⁹⁷ The social world is dynamic and therefore cannot knowledge about it be drawn without being in the context.⁹⁸ Consequently interviews and field study can be an appropriate method when trying to gather information about specific social phenomena's in a certain context.

Interview is a form of conversation where the main purpose is for the researcher to gather knowledge from the interviewee.⁹⁹ Another possible method would have been to hand out surveys and thereby collect a greater quantity of material. Even though surveys gather a larger amount of data the knowledge found through surveys cannot be expanded to any greater extent. An interview creates a context where the dynamic interaction can create and expand knowledge to reach new insights in a way that a survey cannot.¹⁰⁰ Interviews are therefore an effective method when it comes to exploring individuals understanding of a social concept. I selected semi-structured interviews because it gives the opportunity to dig deeper into interesting subjects brought up by the informants. Semi-structured interviews go by the questionnaire but are “able to follow topical trajectories in the conversation that may stray from the guide when she/he feels it is appropriate”¹⁰¹. The basic questions in the interview is designed to reach a greater understanding for the communicative and democratic potentials in cross-border leadership. The questionnaire used as a base is presented in appendix 2.¹⁰² The interviews varied between 30-60 minutes and were all recorded.

To correctly perceive a social reality, one must experience it,¹⁰³ and therefore the field studies are carried out as a complement to the interviews. Field studies can balance interviews by letting the researches observe for herself/himself.¹⁰⁴ A combination of these methods is helping to answer the

⁹⁷ T., May, (2001), *Samhällsvetenskaplig forskning* (J., Johansson, Trans). Lund: Studentlitteratur, p. 184.

⁹⁸ T., May, (2001), p. 184.

⁹⁹ S., Kvale, (1997), *Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun* (S.E., Torhell Trans.). Lund: Studentlitteratur, p. 52.

¹⁰⁰ S., Kvale, (1997), p. 52.

¹⁰¹ Qualitative Research Guidelines Project, (2008), “Semi-structured Interviews”, <
http://www.sswm.info/sites/default/files/reference_attachments/COHEN%202006%20Semistructured%20Interview.pdf>, Downloaded: 2017-03-16.

¹⁰² Appendix 2.

¹⁰³ May, (2001), p. 184.

¹⁰⁴ May, (2001), p. 185.

research questions by presenting a combining picture of the interviewees everyday interactions and their thoughts surrounding them.

The ethnographic field work is conducted in a total time of three working weeks. During the field studies two of the interviewed leaders were observed in their daily operation. Ethnography can be explained as “the ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives [...] watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned”¹⁰⁵. A known expression connected to ethnographic observation is “be a fly on the wall”, but “the observer is always observed”¹⁰⁶, meaning that a researcher attendance cannot fully be ignored.¹⁰⁷ The researcher is always a part of the context and therefore may her/his presence influence that is happening and how people act. My aim during the field study is to try and be a natural part of the context so my attendance would affect as little as possible.

7.2. Hermeneutic and close reading

A comprehensive approach used is hermeneutics, the study of interpretations.¹⁰⁸ When interviewing and witnessing, the researcher’s interpretations of what is said and observed will inevitably play a role.¹⁰⁹ It has a close bound to rhetoric because rhetoric is dealing with how we express ourselves and hermeneutics is about how to perceive what is expressed.¹¹⁰ The hermeneutic circle is to understand how different components and factors affects the situation and the opportunity to influence within it.¹¹¹ One of the characteristics is that the whole picture can only be understood by beholding the smaller parts and the minor elements is comprehended by viewing the bigger picture. The understanding between the parts and the bigger picture is called the hermeneutic circle.¹¹²

The gathered material is examined together with the theoretical framework though a close reading. A close reading can be explained as “the mindful, disciplined reading of an object with a view to deeper understandings of its meanings.”¹¹³ In rhetoric, close reading, is to study elements that helps the sender

¹⁰⁵ M., Hammersley, & P., Atkinson, (2007), *Ethnography, Principals and practice*. New York: Routledge, p. 2.

¹⁰⁶ K., Fangen, (2005), *Deltagande observation*. Malmö: Daleke Grafiska AB, p. 66.

¹⁰⁷ S.J., Ball, (1990), “Self-doubt and Soft Data: social and technical trajectories in ethnographic fieldwork”. In M., Hammersley, (Ed.), *Educational Research: current issues*, (pp. 157-171). London: Paul Chapman, p. 159.

¹⁰⁸ Fafner, (2011), p. 68.

¹⁰⁹ Kvale, (197), pp. 50–53.

¹¹⁰ J., Viklund, (2014), ”Retorisk kritik - en introduktion”. In O., Fischer, P., Meherens, & J., Viklund, (eds.), *Retorisk kritik - Teori och metod i retorisk analys*, Lettland: Retorikförlaget, p. 320.

¹¹¹ Viklund, (2014) s.29.

¹¹² Kjeldsen, (2008), pp. 319–320.

¹¹³ Viklund, (2014), p. 29.

to influence aiming to understand how different components and factors affects the situation and the opportunity to influence within it.¹¹⁴

As mentioned, this study is a form of interpretive research, indicating that the researchers understanding will impact the results. Therefore, during the research I will go by some guiding principles:

1. **Openness** in choice of method, analysis, and reporting.
2. **Interest in interpretation of the empirics**, for example should variances found in the study be acknowledged.
3. **Self-criticism** to method and reporting.
4. **Visible subjectivity**
5. **Transparency** around methods used when the research is conducted.
6. **Clarity** in what conclusions the study led to and what contributions it made.
7. **Reasons** about chosen method, research question, analysis, and report.¹¹⁵

7.2. Material

The material consists of interviews with five Swedish leaders and field studies from two different organizations, all located in Hong Kong and Shanghai. A more extensive presentation of the interviewees and the organizations is presented in appendix.¹¹⁶ One of the field works is conducted for one week and the other during a period of two. The leaders, both in the field studies and the interviews, have diverse backgrounds and are working in different fields. Mutual is a Swedish background and having experience operating in the Chinese culture. The one with least experience has been working four years within a Chinese context and the one with the most has been collaborating with China since -86. Notable is that the interviewees have been given alias and the companies are not presented by name as anonymity was requested.

7.3. Methodological problems

Some possible problems that could occur during the research will be explored below.

An interview is built on the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee and there are different problems that may occur. Some researchers argue that interviews contain a form of power structure because the interviewer defines the situation and decides the conversation topics. This can lead the interviewee to feel the need to satisfy the interviewer and thereby answering with what they think the researcher is looking for.¹¹⁷ Tries to avoid this can be made by emphasizing that the

¹¹⁴ Viklund, (2014) s.29.

¹¹⁵ Lid Andersson, (2009), p. 43.

¹¹⁶ Appendix 3.

¹¹⁷ Hammersley, & Atkinson, (2007), p. 66.

interviewer is searching for the participant's individual experiences, also by being open combined with a critical perspective, following up the interviewees statement with critical questions.¹¹⁸ Thereby it could be problematic if a leader is trying to answer in the "right" way instead of speaking of their experiences. My solution is partly a critical openness and highlighting that their experience is in focus. When creating the questions for the interview, attention was also put on creating open questions which cannot be perceived as having a "right" answer and instead they put emphasize on personal experiences.

Occasionally the researcher can feel a strong identification with the interviewee and thereby lose her/his professional distance, resulting in an uncritical description of the interviewees statements.¹¹⁹ My solution to this is keeping a professional distance combined with a critical perspective. Another part of the resolution is several interviews with different leaders, giving the opportunity to compare their answers.

A part of participating observation and interview is access to the social and professional sphere. A researcher can only perceive what is exposed or told, therefore is social expectance and access relevant to how the results unfold.¹²⁰ During the field study I aimed to become an accepted part of the environment so my presence would affect as little as possible. Even though expectance increased during the field studies what I did not access or if they chose to act in a certain way because of my attendance is difficult to determine. This also apply to the interviews, my access to material is dependent on what the leaders choose to tell and expose. An interviewer's response to the interviewees answer may affect which direction the interview take.¹²¹ Consequently is my behavior important. My approach is to be open and curious to the leaders' answers and respond with relatively neutral replies, aiming to not influence the leaders more than necessary. Therefore, is also the questionnaire designed in a neutral tone.

Because the research is hermeneutic, the researcher's understanding will inevitably play a part in the study's result. The interpretation in the study's result is a combination of the observed material, the materials context, and the researcher previous experiences and preconceptions of the material.¹²² Therefore it may be that new perspective presented in the situation is not persevered as my earlier understandings and presumptions is interfering the meeting with the material. In this research, intercultural communication and leadership is studied through the lens of a young, Scandinavian student. As both communication and leadership is contextually, socially, and culturally bound it could

¹¹⁸ Kvale, (1997), p. 139.

¹¹⁹ Kvale, (1997), p. 113.

¹²⁰ May, (2001), p. 193.

¹²¹ Kvale, (1997), p. 139.

¹²² P.J., Ödman, (2013), *Tolkning, förståelse, vetande – Hermeneutik i teori och praktik*, (2nd edition). Stockholm: Norstedts Akademiska Förlag, pp. 26–30.

be that my understanding of the occurring situations is limited, meaning that my possibility to comprehend and recognize underlying symbols might be restricted. A researcher must combine her/his self-understanding with an openness to different questions and answers.¹²³ The thesis solution is an openness for what is observed and a transparency of the research's findings, aiming to expose what is ascertained and trying to retell as precise as possible, clearly distinguishing my observations from interpretations.

In the thesis, western rhetorical terms are used to examine how ethos is established and maintained in a Chinese context. Since ethos is contextually bound,¹²⁴ and the study is conducted within Chinese settings, it might be a risk that the elements used are not in fact the "right ones" for establishing ethos within the context. My resolution to this is an honesty for what obtained and an open mind for the possibility to discover other foundations. After discussing possible methodological problems, the analysis is offered below, starting with a closer exploration of democratic potentials.

8. Result

Below the results from the interviews and field work are presented, starting with research question one dealing with democratic potentials in the leaders' interactions. The following part will focus on research question two, how the leader establishes and maintain ethos in their daily interactions.

8.1. Exploring the prospects of democratic potentials

"China faces the dilemma of balancing the preservation of Confucian values of respecting authority and hierarchical relationship with the influence of Western individualism"¹²⁵. In the context where the study is conducted, this dilemma is exposed. Here the Western leaders meet the Chinese culture and they all witness of a sophisticated, complex culture with many, many dimensions.

One of the interviewees, here called John, with seventeen years of experience operating within a Chinese culture, invites me in to his office in Hong Kong where he has been located for the last eight years. He sits down with his coffee and starts the interview by stating "the more you grasp the culture, the more you realize how little you actually understand"¹²⁶.

In all the interviews the Swedish governments statement was discussed and a commentary made by Alex, a man in his early thirties with four years of experience working in China, summarizes it well. When discussing democratic potentials with Alex, he hesitates, looks around while thinking before he answers, "I do not believe it will influence democratization in the country but maybe on an

¹²³ Ödman, (2008), pp. 26–30.

¹²⁴ Kjeldsen, (2008), p.125.

¹²⁵ Lu, (2002), p. 4.

¹²⁶ Interview with John, General manager, (2017-04-05), The interview was held at the interviewees office. Recording of the interview is held in the authors home.

organizational level.”¹²⁷ This statement indicates what most of the leaders have confidence in, that a democratization of the Chinese government is not possible through extended relations. John states that “China is China, and it works very hard to stay China, others just have to adapt to that.”¹²⁸

Regardless of the leaders’ disbelief in a larger Chinese reform, several of them testify about changes occurring within their organization because of the increased collaboration with and influence from west. While many of the interviewees describe Chinese organizations as hierarchical where the top leader or the organizations owner make all the major decisions, they also indicate that the Swedish leaders do affect how the organization operates. All the leaders believe that their management has an influence on the organizations culture, but in different degrees and ways.¹²⁹ Alex describes how the corporation has become more of a mixture between a Swedish and Chinese organization culture. “they have taken a part of our culture, for exemplar our words of value as being honest and taking care of costumers, but the major things like decisions are still made top-down.”¹³⁰

Democratic possibilities do not necessarily have to be potentials of democratization in a nation, it can also be initiated in everyday situations that opens for dialogue and deliberation.¹³¹ The following chapter is explores democratic potentials, focusing on **if** the leaders’ communicative actions open for discussion and shared decisions-making, viewing these factors as a form of democratic potential. The results will be presented by looking closer at possibilities for discussion, shared decision-making, and language. These elements are selected because they emerged as important factors and reappearing subjects in the interviews.

8.1.1. Possibilities for discussion with employees

When trying to reach a mutual decision, interaction and discussion are useful tools. While the Globe study demonstrates that both Nordic countries and Confucian Asian appreciate value-based and team-oriented leadership, Nordic countries put higher value on a participating leadership. This means that people in Nordic countries to a higher extent appreciate the chance to participate when decisions are made. According to Hamrin, researcher of communication and leadership in organizations, Swedish leaders are more commonly using communicative leadership than many other countries.¹³² When trying to discuss with the employees, several of the leaders bear witness to difficulties.

¹²⁷ Interview with Alex, Regional Sales manager, (2017-04-04), The interview was held at a café in Hong Kong. Recording of the interview is held in the authors home.

¹²⁸ Interview with John, General manager, (2017-04-05) The interview was held at the interviewees office. Recording of the interview is held in the authors home.

¹²⁹ Interview with John, General manager, (2017-04-05), Interview with Alex, Regional Sales manager, (2017-04-04), & Interview with August, Vice President, (2017-03-03), The interview was held at a restaurant. Recording of the interview is held in the authors home.

¹³⁰ Interview with Alex, Regional Sales manager, (2017-04-04).

¹³¹ Young, (2007), p. 173.

¹³² Hamrin, (2016). 28.

Lars, Human Chief Officer at a Chinese company with roughly 80 000 employees, believes that discussion or debate does not occur normal to the Chinese employees due to their Confucian background.¹³³ August, which soon is retiring and has worked his whole carrier in collaboration with China, states, “if I say to my employees, now we are going to discuss how we should to do this, they just stay quiet. They are used to the chief telling them what to do.”¹³⁴ Story, Emeritus Professor of International Political Economy, states that Confucianism as the dominant ideology also has a great impact on the norms of communication, especially round preserving harmony.¹³⁵ Norms and cultural values are built on a collective memory and therefore does Confucianism’s deep cultural root still provide sense-making schemas and ideologies for Chinese actions and socialization today.¹³⁶

August continues to tell about the lack of discussion and says, “one of the biggest challenges is that they need more critical people but they are just allowed to be critical to a certain point”¹³⁷. Maybe it is not surprising that discussion has not been a part of the Chinese culture when its history is partly a combination Confucianism and a government that does not encourage freedom of speech. Hierarchical leadership and harmony works mainly because the subordinates is socialized to follow and accept their leaders without questioning. When both leaders and the subordinates play their respective roles, there is social harmony.¹³⁸

Despite this, leaders describe that the employees become more engaged and grow in the discussions if they are encouraged. August states, in a positive tone, that “when the employees notice that there is possibilities to come with ideas, they do”¹³⁹. An example from the field study is when one employee is conversing with the chief around if they should hire a job applicant or not. The employee gives ideas, tells about his worries, and comes with possible solutions. In between the leader ask questions and follow up on the employee’s statements, then they reach the mutual decision do carry through another interview with the applicant.¹⁴⁰ As communicative leadership partly is about opening for exchange of ideas and discussion,¹⁴¹ the dialogue demonstrates how it can be used to reach a dialogue were the counterparts listen and respond to each other. This could be viewed as an example where Hellspång’s connection between rhetoric and democracy encounters. By influencing each other through communication one can reach a decision preferred by both counterparts. This example illustrates some democratic influences that can be found in certain interactions. At the same time, it should be

¹³³ Interview with Lars, Chief Human Resource Officer, (2017-04-11).

¹³⁴ Interview with August, Vice President, (2017-03-03).

¹³⁵ J., Story, (2010), *China uncovered – What you need to know to do business in China*. United Kingdom: Prentice Hall, p. 106.

¹³⁶ Lu, (2002), pp. 3–4.

¹³⁷ Interview with August, Vice President, (2017-03-03).

¹³⁸ Ng, (2002), pp. 35–36.

¹³⁹ Interview with August, Vice President, (2017-03-03).

¹⁴⁰ Field notes, (2017-04-13).

¹⁴¹ Johansson, Miller, & Hamrin, (2014), p. 155.

acknowledged that the leaders resolve the majority of the decisions during a day without any possibility for employees to engage in further discussion.¹⁴² Lars, with eight years of experience as a leader in China, believes that a good leader in a Chinese context must find a balance between determination and discussion, stating that “the employees expect me to be determined”¹⁴³. Indicating that even if there are examples of discussion in the daily work, the leaders also takes the majority of the decisions on their own.

Some of the statements and examples presented above could be perceived as a form of democratic potential. However, even if the leader is trying to open for dialogue it does not always occur, likewise in many situations there is no room for it.

8.1.2. Mutual decision-making and reaching consensus

Several of the interviewees speak of reaching consensus in their leadership, believing that some form of agreement around what should be done is positive for the organization. Alex says, “I could go in and just do what I want, but I want their opinion”¹⁴⁴. This can also be demonstrated by an example from the field study where a leader is deliberating whether an employee should carry out a specific project or not. The leader asks how the employee would feel about working with the project and listens patiently to the answer. First when the leader has made sure that the employee would feel comfortable doing so, he decides.¹⁴⁵

While Alex argues that it is important to reach common agreements if the employees are going to be willing to implement them.¹⁴⁶ When we meet at the company’s office in Hong Kong, John speaks about what he is calling “partly” reaching consensus. He may discuss the issue with the employees but then decide on his own, believing that decisions made by the leader is a part of the Chinese culture.¹⁴⁷ At the last day of my field studies, Lars tells that it sometimes is difficult to take common decisions because many employees are used to the leader answering questions, not asking them.¹⁴⁸ This indicates that efforts to use communicative actions to reach common decision-making does exist, but to which degree the employees participate in decision-making varies, something that presumably differs depending on organization, leader, and what decision needs to be made.

It should also be noted that the individuals observed discussing with the leaders during the field studies also are people with high rank in the organization.¹⁴⁹ Alex states that in a Chinese context

¹⁴² Field notes, (2017-04-13-20).

¹⁴³ Interview with Lars, Chief Human Resource Officer, (2017-04-11).

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Alex, Regional Sales manager, (2017-04-04).

¹⁴⁵ Field notes, (2017-04-16), Meeting.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Alex, Regional Sales manager, (2017-04-04).

¹⁴⁷ Interview with John, General manager, (2017-04-05).

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Lars, Chief Human Resource Officer, (2017-04-11).

¹⁴⁹ Field notes, (2017-04-03-07, & 2017-04-14).

everyone may not get to speak their opinion.¹⁵⁰ If there are further opportunities for people of higher rank to discuss will be left unsaid, but the field observations indicates that individuals with power in the organization often are open for deliberation.¹⁵¹ On the other hand, Lars believes that if you have engaged employees, they will speak their opinion, but they might articulate them in indirect ways. “It is about being sensitive to what is actually said under the surface. We call it the onion effect. With every question, you just remove one layer and if you want to reach the substance you have to ask a lot”¹⁵². This statement demonstrates that many messages are sent with concealed meanings. Story, also confirms, stating that China is a highly contextual culture, meaning that when communicating much is said in the situation rather than in the message.¹⁵³ This indicates that the leaders’ knowledge about the culture and understanding of what the situation and employees’ states indirectly, may play a crucial part in the opportunity to reach consensus.

At a meeting one of the subordinates says, “in fact, I have a different thought, I thought we would do it this way”¹⁵⁴. This could probably be a more indirect try to give one’s opinion and it might indicate that discussion appears on several power levels, but in different ways. To reach consensus it is probably up to the leader to be able to notice these opportunities for discussion. To do so one must perhaps be sensitive to the signals sent out by the employees, dealing with the so called “onion effect”. If the leaders are understanding and consciously looking for indirect opinions in the situations it might be opportunities for *kairos* leading to discussions. Thereby an awareness for *kairos* can open possibilities for deliberation. Several of the leaders’ statements indicate that consensus and common decision-making is to prefer and is to some extent implemented. When discussing intercultural leadership with Lars, he states that people fast adapt to their leader’s style and how they should act within it.¹⁵⁵ If the employees adjusts after their leader’s style, it can be argued that if the leader are sensitive for *kairos* related to discussion it could eventually make the coworkers to adapt to it. That this may be the case is also shown above were August states that the employees begin to discuss when they realize the opportunity to do so exists.

Hellspong believes that rhetoric is the tool used in democracy to create shared beliefs’ and take mutual decisions. If the employees adapt to their leader, an organization should be a decent place for a chief to find opportunities to affect the coworker toward creating common beliefs’. In that case, communicative leadership could influence the coworker and in extent the organizational culture to be more open for discussion and dialogue. A leader ended a meeting by pronouncing, “in the future

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Alex, Regional Sales manager, (2017-04-04).

¹⁵¹ Field notes, (2017-04-18-20).

¹⁵² Interview with Lars, Chief Human Resource Officer, (2017-04-11).

¹⁵³ Story, (2010), p. 107.

¹⁵⁴ Field notes, meeting, (2017-04-12).

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Lars, Chief Human Resource Officer, (2017-04-11).

decisions will be made as a process, not just by one person”¹⁵⁶. If one chose to believe this statement it could indicate that the leader is trying to influence his coworkers with the possibility to discuss and participate in decisions. McDaniel and Gronbeck, both Professors of Communication, states that democracy can grow from small societies or occur in organizations without existing in the country’s policy and that it is in the daily social interactions democracy can be found and developed.¹⁵⁷ With this perspective it can be argued that democracy can grow in small scale. It may not occur in bigger terms in the Chinese society or overall in the organizational culture, but in certain dialogues, in some contexts, everyday decisions are made through a process including democratic features.

8.1.3. Language and Democracy

Burke states that rhetoric is rooted in the vital purpose of language itself and it is a central part of a culture.¹⁵⁸ When exploring the cultural barriers in the interviews, language is brought up as one of the main obstacles for many leaders’ prospects to influence.¹⁵⁹ Glimpsing back in time, August tells about when he first got there in -86 and English was forbidden. This meant that no one spoke English and they had to use a translator to be able to communicate, creating difficulties when trying to influence and build relationships. August says that when the Mao-area ended “it was like letting lose a river”¹⁶⁰ and people started to speak more English.¹⁶¹ But even today the leaders operating in China views language differences as an obstacle. Not only dissimilar mother tongues, but the languages are constructed in different ways and consequently in diverse schemas of thoughts.¹⁶² As mentioned in the theoretical framework, language is the tool used to both create and understand our world and consequently it might not be surprising that difficulties can occur when the two cultures and languages encounters.

Looking at the need to learn Chinese to influence, the leaders have different opinions. August states that learning the language is the ultimate tool.¹⁶³ Although, John speak mandarin himself and believes that one does not need to know the language to influence, it is of greater importance to be culturally fluent.¹⁶⁴ With the leaders’ different perspectives clarified, it can be questioned if one can be culturally

¹⁵⁶ Field notes, meeting, (2017-04-24).

¹⁵⁷ J.P., McDaniel, & B.E., Gronbeck, (2007), “Through the Looking glass and Back. Democracy Theory, Rhetoric and Barbiegate”. In K., Tracy, J.p., McDaniel, & B.E., Gronbeck,, (Eds.), *The Prettier Doll – Rhetoric, Discourse and Ordinary Democracy*, (pp. 22-44). United States of America: The University of Alabama Press, pp. 22-25.

¹⁵⁸ Burke, (1969), p. 43.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with John, General manager, (2017-04-05), Interview with Alex, Regional Sales manager, (2017-04-04), Interview with August, Vice President, (2017-03-03), Interview with Lars, Chief Human Resource Officer, (2017-04-11).

¹⁶⁰ Interview with August, Vice President, (2017-03-03).

¹⁶¹ Interview with August, Vice President, (2017-03-03).

¹⁶² Interview with John, General manager, (2017-04-05), Interview with Alex, Regional Sales manager, (2017-04-04).

¹⁶³ Interview with August, Vice President, (2017-03-03).

¹⁶⁴ Interview with John, General manager, (2017-04-05).

fluent without knowing the language when it is built on unlike schemas of thought. According to Dewey, which understands the world through language, and Burke believing that language is a central part of a culture, the answer would possibly be negative. Story, states that “learning Chinese will not help much if you don’t at the same time make an effort to understand Chinese culture”¹⁶⁵.

Consequently, there is different opinions if the language is needed to influence or not, but without a deeper understanding for the culture, it can be questioned how much Chinese will help when trying to reach impact.

Another perspective is the use of English, some scholars believe the language opens for schemas of thoughts connected to democracy.¹⁶⁶ Viewed from Dewey’s perspective, Chinese does not include words that can explain democracy, therefore the language must change for a reform to be possible. Beholding this perspective, the usage of English could be a path for the Chinese schemas of thoughts to embrace words used in a democracy. If the leaders then encourage discussions and openness in the English language, it may open new prospects for patterns of thought. To sum up, the language differences is affecting the opportunities to establish ethos and perpetrate influence, but if English can have an impact on perspectives of democratization will be left unsaid.

To summarize, democracy can be defined from different perspectives. The interviews demonstrate that the leaders seem to emphasize discussion and the coworkers’ participation and this might be conducted to a certain degree, whereas the employees are invited to discuss and participate in certain situations and decisions. The results also indicate that a lot is articulated indirect and thereby is a sensitivity for the context is important to find situations open for discussion. For influence to occur the leaders should maintain a trustworthy character. The thesis is now moving to the next research question focusing on establish ethos.

8.2. Establishing ethos

Research question one is focusing on the democratic potential and exploring the construction of leadership. It is through the leaders’ ethos and their creation of leadership that influence may occur and democratic potentials can affect. Looking at the first research question it might be possible to see democratic prospects in some of the leaders’ daily interactions, but without a trustworthy ethos, the chance to influence is reduced and thereby the opportunities for it would be lessened. The thesis second question aims to explore how the leaders establish and maintain ethos. In the daily operation, the leaders appear to get several chances to interact with subordinates and thereby get opportunities to build their ethos. Depending on their skills of establishing and maintaining ethos, their prospects to influence varies.

¹⁶⁵ Story, (2010), p. 103.

¹⁶⁶ K., Bolton, & B.B., Kachru, (2006), *World Englishes*. Great Britain: Routledge. p. 141.

8.2.1. Determination and fronesis

That a trustworthy ethos is needed to influence may be something universal, but what is perceived as trustworthy may vary between cultures. Discussing what is a good leader in a Chinese context, several of the leaders mention determination, meaning that in a hierarchical organization, the leaders are expected to be decisive.¹⁶⁷ To make determination decisions can therefore be perceived as a part of preserving ethos. Consequently, to maintain a trustworthy ethos, fortitude should be a factor in the leader's character. If the employees' preconception is that leader should be decisive it is going to be a part of their expectation and depending on the leader's ability to live up to it, the leader's ethos will rise or sink.

As mentioned earlier, both research on Swedish leaders and the interviewees emphasizes discussion and common decision-making. In a Chinese context, there is a possibility that trying to discuss to reach consensus is perceived as being indecisive and by extension may make the leaders ethos decline. Martin, working as a project leader in Shanghai, says with confidence in his voice, "you cannot seem insecure about your decisions"¹⁶⁸. Further can maintenance of ethos be dependent on one's capability to determine when a discussion is in hand. As Lars stated earlier in the thesis, it is about finding the balance between determination and discussion.¹⁶⁹ The choice among discussion or fortitude could be understood as a form of fronesis, to understand what is said in the context and know the proper respond. Further the decision can be connected to kairos. The leaders must be sensitive to the right moment for discussion or determination and her/his ethos is partly dependent on the her/his competence to understand the situation and capability to recognize the different kairos in it.

During a workday, the leaders must answer an immense amount of questions from their coworkers. Majority of them do not lead to a discussion but is just answered straight up, often the leaders seems to use answers built on information, for example about the organization.¹⁷⁰ By answering without deliberating and selecting answers build on information the leader demonstrates both knowledge and determination. When using information and thereby indicating knowledge around the subject the leader is showing fronesis. In the fields studies fronesis is probably the most commonly used factor to maintain one's ethos. This will be examined in more detail further down.

The employees seeking the leader for questions can be viewed from different perspectives. One is that the leader has a high ethos and the coworkers trust that she/he will give the answer they need. At the same time, most decisions in a hierarchical organization is made by the leader and thereby it is

¹⁶⁷ Interview with John, General manager, (2017-04-05). Interview with Lars, Chief Human Resource Officer, (2017-04-11).

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Project manager Martin, (2017-01-16) The interview was held at a café in Shanghai. Recording of the interview is held in the authors home.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Lars, Chief Human Resource Officer, (2017-04-11).

¹⁷⁰ Field notes, (2017-04-14, & 2017-04-24-26).

possible that the employees ask because they do not have the authority make their own choice. Independent of the reason, and one does not exclude the other, it is an opening for the leader to affect coworkers. In one perspective, the leaders are getting help from the coworkers to find situations to uphold their ethos. Independent of the reason for these situations, it gives the leaders communicative opportunities to establish ethos and thereby increase the chance to influence. The employees' questions may be one of the leaders' main sources to maintaining ethos in the daily work and consequently does establishment of ethos not have to be an initiative from the leader as many prospects are offered through others.

Another opportunity is meetings with coworkers or a subordinate. Of ethos elements, *fronesis* seems to be used most commonly. At several meetings, the use of *fronesis* were clearly exposed. For exemplar when attending a meeting about digitalize the staff systems. The leader remained quiet and listened for most of the time, but occasionally he interrupted and asked questions, with several of the questions he included facts about how the company works.¹⁷¹ The leader's way of mixing questions with inputs can be a sign of his knowledge about the organization and thereby a try to establish ethos through *fronesis*.

Every time the leader spoke the others attended carefully and afterwards they always followed up on his statements and/or questions.¹⁷² This could be understood in various ways. It could be that the leader is trusted and therefore his opinion is highly valued. If this is the case, the knowledge-based statements made are most likely to maintain the leader's ethos and thereby his announcements probably have a chance on influencing the employees. Thus, and as mentioned above, it cannot be ignored that Confucianism is partly built on accepting hierarchy and subsequently an employee may not ignore their leader's statements independent on if they find it useful or not. Alex says "one may not say to your boss: I think this is a bad idea"¹⁷³. Therefore, there could be several reasons why the subordinates listen carefully to their leaders, but with this said, one possible explanation does not eliminate the other, and independent of the reason, it is an opportunity to maintain one's ethos.

At the same time, Lars declares "when you talk to someone the worst thing that can occur is that people just smile and bow but nothing happens, because that is when they have given up on you as a leader"¹⁷⁴, meaning that when the employees listens to the leader but do not ensure what the chief says, they have lost their belief in the leader.¹⁷⁵ This indicates that even if employees listen to what their leaders pronounces does not mean that the chief has an high ethos and that it might be about the actions that follows than the interaction itself. Again, looking at the Confucianism's believes in

¹⁷¹ Field notes, meeting, (2017-04-10).

¹⁷² Field notes, meeting, (2017-04-10).

¹⁷³ Interview with Alex, Regional Sales manager, (2017-04-04).

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Lars, Chief Human Resource Officer, (2017-04-11).

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Lars, Chief Human Resource Officer, (2017-04-11).

harmony, it may not be surprising that this is an expression subordinates can use toward a leader with low ethos. This implies that just because the subordinates listen to their leader does not signify that the leader has been able to establish a high ethos and further it demonstrates that it takes more than being heard to be able to influence the employees.

8.2.2. Arete and honesty

Having a trustworthy character can be expressed in various ways. During the interviews and field studies honesty was a recurring subject. Therefore, when examining arete, focus will be on honesty.

In one of the observed meetings honesty, as a part of arete, is distinctively exposed. At one point the leader does not agree with what is presented by the employees, which leads to a situation where the leader pronounces his disagreement, saying that he thinks the employee's idea is totally wrong. The subordinate does not know how to respond whereas the leader explains how he thinks it should be and the subordinate agrees.¹⁷⁶ This could be a sign of both arete and fronesis. Partly the leader contributes with his knowledge around the field by explaining his opinion on the question and thereby demonstrating fronesis. Partway he also proves honesty by pointing out that he thinks it is wrong. Honesty can be understood as one of arete's elements, but when discussing with the leaders if being this direct and honest would lead to a higher ethos, they have different opinions. The scenario may be perceived as what within a Chinese culture is called lose face. Story describes face as "a combination of public perception, social role, self-esteem, and, crucially, it can be given or taken away by the words and actions of others"¹⁷⁷. Some of the leaders believe that one should never let the communication get to the stage that someone loses their face.¹⁷⁸

John is determined when stating that "to lose one's face is among the worst thing that can happen. One cannot quite scold someone in the Chinese culture. It is hard to criticize, just saying no can be a way to make someone lose face, if you are not culturally trained, you might not even notice when someone loses face."¹⁷⁹ But Alex has a different opinion, when talking about honesty and being straight forward he shrugs his shoulders and says, "I have learned what they appreciate and not, but at the same time they must learn what I appreciate and not."¹⁸⁰ If agreed with the first statement, there is a risk that this pronouncement was not *kairos* and the direct honesty is not a "proper way" to act in the situation leading the leader's ethos to decline instead of increase. But if agreed with the second statement there is a possibility that the honesty is perceived as arete and thereby the leader's ethos would enchain.

¹⁷⁶ Field notes, meeting, (2017-04-10).

¹⁷⁷ Story, (2010), p. 105.

¹⁷⁸ Interview with John, General manager, (2017-04-05), & Interview with Lars, Chief Human Resource Officer, (2017-04-11).

¹⁷⁹ Interview with John, General manager, (2017-04-05).

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Alex, Regional Sales manager, (2017-04-04).

The large power distance existing also affects the situation. Martin, dealing with several Chinese companies every week, explains that there is in many Chinese organizations a great respect for the people of higher rank but one can be tougher with people below you.¹⁸¹ It may be the case that one cannot let it come to a lose face situation if it is with someone with the same or higher power, but that the situation changes if it is with someone of less. If this is the case, the leader's ethos would rise or sink depending on context and who he is talking to, a phenomenon which highlights the contextual significance of ethos.

John also describes how to find more indirect ways to make an announcement to avoid a lose face situation. He also witnesses about the complexity with this and how being a foreigner makes it difficult to understand when something is or should be articulated indirectly.¹⁸² Discussing the same subject with Lars, he hesitates and I get the feeling he is trying think of the best way to put it in words. Then he explains that the culture is very sophisticated and white lies and prevarication can be used as ways to for example say no or give other ideas and that many foreigners more direct communication style can easily be understood as unsophisticated.¹⁸³ This is yet another factor influencing the maintaining of ethos. By appearing unsophisticated one can probably also seem unexperienced and thereby there is a risk of ethos lowering. Consequently, establishing ethos in a Chinese culture can be interpret as being even more sensitive to the context than it may be in certain others culture. This because the indirect communication and underlying signals require a greater understanding for the situation to be able to act within the Chinese patterns of communication. By making statements when kairos occur, the leaders probably have a bigger chance of maintaining ethos. By extension the need to find kairos may be difficult because a greater deal is said without being articulated. Though kairos might be hard to identify a sensitivity for it could be crucial for if the leader's ethos will sink or rise.

It might take a greater understanding for the circumstances to maintain ethos, something that could be difficult for a foreigner. At the same time, several of the leader argues the cultural differences can be used as an advantage. Martin sips his coffee while explaining how he can use a more direct talking style blaming the cultural differences.¹⁸⁴ Lars states "they expect me to be more honest because I'm not Chinese"¹⁸⁵. This adds additional element in how honesty affects the leaders' ethos. If their pronouncements are true, maybe it is forgivable if a foreigner is so honest that it makes someone lose face, in that case, are the leaders allowed to be less sensitive to the situation because they are not Chinese? Here the employees' expectations play a crucial part. A leader's ethos is partly on their

¹⁸¹ Interview with Martin, Project manager, (2017-01-16).

¹⁸² Interview with John, General manager, (2017-04-05), & Interview with Lars, Chief Human Resource Officer, (2017-04-11).

¹⁸³ Interview with Lars, Chief Human Resource Officer, (2017-04-11).

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Martin, Project manager, (2017-01-16).

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Lars, Chief Human Resource Officer, (2017-04-11).

background and thereby could a Chinese and a Swedish leader have dissimilar expectations upon them. Believing these statements, the leaders' ethos is partly "protected" because they are not Chinese and thereby their ethos will not sink in the same amount as a Chinese leader would in the example described above.

8.2.3. The lack of Eunoia?

The results above have proven that the leaders' communicative actions help them in their tries to establish ethos using both arete and fronesis. In the interviews the leaders talked about how they work for the best of their employees,¹⁸⁶ but in the field studies, eunoia was hard to identify.¹⁸⁷ One of the exemplars presented earlier in the analysis, when the leader discussed if a coworker wanted to work on a project, could be a sign of eunoia. Here the leader pay attention to if the coworker if willing to which could be a sign of caring about his wellbeing.

In a collectivistic culture the organization can be perceived as a group and in a Chinese context the traditional leader is often a paternalistic authority,¹⁸⁸ indicating that he should care and protect the group (the organization). With this perspective, it could be argued that the leaders are showing good will when making decisions that (hopefully) affects the organizations to the better. If this is the case or not will be left unsaid and if the lack of identifying eunoia is due to the absence of eunoia or the researchers limited understanding of the culture is difficult to determine. With this stated, it should also be clarified that the three elements of ethos do not all have to be accomplished for a high ethos to appear.

To sum up, fronesis seems to be the element most frequently used to establish ethos, whereas the employees asking questions and meetings are the most common situations giving an opportunity to do so. In a larger perspective establishment of ethos for Swedish leaders operating within a Chinese context comes back to a consideration for the cultural one is operating in. Lars believes that one must learn to accept and work with the cultural differences for influence and acceptance to be possible.¹⁸⁹ This can relate to rhetoric's views on influencing. If one does not adapt her/his message so it fits the receiver, the chances that influence is achieved is lessened. While some leaders argue differently, the majority of leaders believes that an understanding and adaption to the culture opens the best prospects to influence. Further the analysis has shown that a sensibility to the context and trying to find kairos in

¹⁸⁶ Interview with John, General manager, (2017-04-05), Interview with Alex, Regional Sales manager, (2017-04-04), Interview with August, Vice President, (2017-03-03), Interview with Lars, Chief Human Resource Officer, (2017-04-11).

¹⁸⁷ Field notes, (2017-04-03-07, & 2017-04-14, & 2017-04-24-26).

¹⁸⁸ Ng, (2002), pp 39–41.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with John, General manager, (2017-04-05).

the context is crucial for establishing and maintaining ethos. The results will be followed by a discussion, focusing on some factors in the results.

9. Discussion

During the research the interviewees have shown that there are many different elements to have in mind when functioning as a leader within a Chinese context and it is hard to not get impressed by their vast amount of knowledge about the culture and operating within it.

Regarding research question one the leaders do not seem to believe that their leadership can contribute to democratic potentials in any larger extent but they appear to have confidence in that it to some amount is opening for discussions and mutual decisions within the organization. It was only John that stated that he often makes decisions on his own, but the field studies indicate that many leaders also do. It could be questioned if John is the only one to do so or if he is the one to articulate it openly. Nevertheless, it might not be that odd if the leaders make a vast amount of decisions on their own because, firstly, there are many decisions to be made every day. Therefore, it might be that the leaders chose in which situations discussion might be valuable. Also, that discussion does not always occur naturally for the employees can probably further interfere with the possibilities. An additional factor is also Martins statement about that a leader should be decisive, yet another aspect that might complicate the occasions for discussion. Wanting to discuss might not go well together with being perceived as decisive and is it therefore possible that the leaders' ethos would decrease if they frequently wanted to discuss. Lars, Alex, and August all talk about the value of discussion and shared decisions and it can be argued that it is possible to see some democratic potential in certain situations. If one agrees that democracy can exist in such small scale as a single interaction it could probably be claimed that the leaders can influence with democratic potential.

My research has shown that an understanding of the context is desirable both for the leaders' maintenance of ethos and for their prospects to influence. Notable is that it seems like the leaders with more experience put extra emphasis on the need to understand the culture. Martin and Alex, the two interviewees with the least experience did not to the same amount focus on what could be perceived as "deeper" cultural differences, for example the Chinese more indirect talking style. This could be an indicator that the leaders that spent a vast amount of time there have a greater understanding for the value of comprehending the culture. Even though the leaders to some degree can use the cultural differences as an advantage many of them and other key scholars presented in the thesis argues that influence mainly can occur if one understands the situation and adjust their message thereafter. This is where rhetoric and kairos plays its role, dealing with how one can adapt communication to fit the receiver. In a culture where much information is within the context, it can be viewed as important for the leaders to be sensitive for underlying signals. Several of the interviewees believe that discussions

are taking place but in more subtle ways. This could be a sign that a sensibility for kairos could be the key to find situations open for discussion and it is up to the leaders to recognize and catch this form of kairos. Further it can be questioned if there is an increased need to understand kairos in a situation where much is said in the context itself. Could it be that kairos does not appear as clearly in these contexts? Or maybe it just does not appear as visibly to the leaders because of the cultural differences? If this is the case is indeterminable but for future research it might be interesting to dig deeper into how kairos and the prospects of finding it is affected when trying to influence in different cultures.

Research question two demonstrate just some of the vast number of elements in a context that influences how ethos is apprehended. An interesting statement when discussing cultural differences is Alex commentary about how he can use the cultural differences as an excuse to behave in certain way. This indicates that even though the leaders witness of difficulties when operating and trying to maintain ethos in a new culture, they also tell how the cultural differences can be used to their advantage. That Lars also, with plenty of experience working in China, agrees with the statement indicates that this might also be used by the more experienced leaders. It seems that ethos can both be put on risk and get a safety net because of the cultural differences. If this is the case it could imply that foreign leaders can act different than Chinese leaders, indicating that in the right context Swedish leader could might have the prospect to preformed actions in a way that a Chinese leader maybe could not? As mentioned above, a leader's behavior and leadership style has an impact on the organizations culture. If a certain behavior does not necessarily lower the leader's ethos it could be an opportunity for the leader to use unfamiliar communication patterns to influence the organization with new thoughts. Although, at the same time the leaders believes that a sensitivity and consideration for the situation is necessary to reach influence, would not thereby an understanding for the culture be required? There is a possibility that the leaders in some situations chose to act in a certain way even though they recognize that it might not be fully in line with the culture, knowing that their ethos may not sink from the certain act. In that case, one can "misbehave" or act outside of certain norms without it working as a disadvantage.

If this is the case, cultural meetings partly put ethos is a sensitive and fragile position but it can perhaps correspondingly present a form of protection or open possibilities for certain behaviors. That ethos is affected when trying to operate in other cultures can perhaps appear obvious, but it is an intriguing thought that it might work as an advantage. It is interesting to reflect on to what extent and in which contexts one's ethos might benefit from being and behaving like a foreigner. For further researches more investigation on how ethos is affected when operating in various cultures would be interesting.

Summary

This thesis aims to examine democratic potentials of cross border leadership focusing on Swedish leaders operating in a Chinese context.

The Swedish government states that enlarged networks and cooperation's with China will in a long-term perspective support democratization in the area. As the world get more globalized, individuals and companies operating cross borders are increasing the intercultural exchange and thereby they are one of the main sources for cross cultural communication. Leaders, often with opportunities to impact, could therefore be a key source for influence.

The thesis uses a rhetorical perspective and its close bound to democracy and leadership, when viewing democratic potentials of the leaders' daily interactions with their subordinates. The research is dealing with the leaders view of democratic potentials and their possibilities to influence with it. Rhetoricians believes that influence cannot occur without a trustworthy character. Therefore, will the research also deal with how the leaders establish and maintain ethos. The research was carried out with an ethnographic approach, using interviews and field studies as the main method to gather information. Further was close reading used to examine the material together with the theoretical framework.

The results are presenting that the leaders do not believe in any greater democratic change but several of the them speaks of the value of mutual decisions and discussion. Discussion and mutual decisions does appear to some extent but the leaders indicate that there are several factors effecting if discussion occur or not. The element dealing with if it occurs or not includes both the leaders approach and the organizations and the national culture. The thesis also demonstrates that ethos is established in several ways, but determination seem to be a crucial part of maintaining it. The results indicate that ethos is mainly established trough fronesis and showing knowledge within one's field. When studying arete and honesty there is different opinions dealing with if direct honesty is to prefer or not. Interesting is that several leaders believe that they can communicate outside of certain social norms without losing their ethos, this due to their background in another culture. Signifying that one's cultural background may have an impact on how one can behave within the situation.

The discussion further deliberates the democratic potentials of the studied leaderships, implicating that discussions and mutual decisions due occur, but not in any greater scale. The thesis conclude that the lack of discussions is depending on many different factors. Finally, a discussion is held about if the leaders can go outside cultural norms without reducing their ethos, concluding that how one's ethos is effected by being a foreigner and acting like one is an interesting filed for further research.

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Interview with General manager, (2017-04-05, Alias John. Recording of the interview is held in the authors home.

Interview with Chief Human Resource Officer, (2017-04-10), Alias Lars. Recording of the interview is held in the authors home.

Interview with Project Manager, (2017-04-10) – Alias Martin. Recording of the interview is held in the authors home.

Field Notes

2017-04-03 to 2017-04-07.

2017-04-10 to 2017-04-14.

2017-04-24 to 2017-04-26.

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Tack för att du tar dig tid. Som jag berättat innan studerar jag kommunikation och ledarskap över kulturgränser, i detta fall mellan Kina och Sverige. Intervjun är beräknad att ta 45 min till en timme om det är ok. Är det Ok att jag spela in?

Så jag kommer ställa lite frågor så får du berätta hur mycket du vill. Jag är här för att höra dina upplevelser av att arbeta här.

- Kan du berätta lite mer om ditt arbete?
- Hur länge har du arbetat i samarbete med Kina?
- Kan du berätta lite om hur först det var att komma hit och jobba? Vad var svårt/lätt?
- Kan du berätta om ett tillfälle i arbetet när det uppstått en kulturkrock? Vad var det som krockade? Hur tror du det skulle kunna undvikas?
- Finns det å andra sidan tillfällen när du sett likheter i kulturerna? Ge exempel
- Om vi tittar närmare på just kommunikation, samtala, föra en dialog? Minus just att man har olika modersmål, kan du minnas något tillfälle när det varit svårt att förstå varandra? Be om exempel!
- Har du märkt någon skillnad/likheter i sätten att kommunicera i en kinesisk organisation mot en svensk? Vilka då Hur har du märkt av dem? Hur påverkar det samarbetet?
- Vad tror du är de viktigaste förutsättningarna för att kommunikationen ska fungera mellan personer från de olika kulturerna? Hur skulle man kunna nå dit?

Om vi flyttar fokus lite till ledare

- Vad skulle du säga utmärker en bra ledare?
- Vad skulle du säga utmärker en bra ledare i en kinesisk organisation? Speciella egenskaper?
- Har du märkt att det finns skillnader i vad som anses vara en bra ledare i Sverige gentemot Kina? I så fall vad, berätta mer?
- Hur tror du en ledare i en kinesisk organisation bör vara för att lyckas? För att bli omtyckt hos sina medarbetare?
- Hur skulle du beskriva dig själv som ledare i den organisation du är nu? Berätta mer, ge exempel
- Hur tror du ditt ledarskap påverkar medarbetarna? Organisationen? Ge exempel på situationer
- Hur fattas beslut i organisationen?
- På svenska regeringens hemsida beskriver dem att ökade nätverk och samarbeten mellan Kina och Sverige kommer att främja en demokratisering i kina? Hur ställer du dig inför det uttalandet? Exempel, berätta mer!

- Vad behöver svenskar som söker sig till att jobba i Kina ha med sig för att lyckas?

Jag tror jag har fått all information jag behöver, tack så jättemycket för att du tog dig tiden att vara med i intervjun!

Appendix 2. Material

Below follows a short review of the interviewed leaders and the organizations they operate in. The field studies were conducted with two of the leaders described below.

2017-03-03 – Alias August. Interview with Vice President, working with environmental research. Been working in cooperation's with China since – 86. Have manly been operating as projects leader in several different parts of China, the projects dealing with environmental issues. Visits China approximately three times a year to manage different projects. Recording of the interview is held in the authors home.

2017-04-04 – Alias Alex. Interview with Regional Sales manager, responsible for sales and business in southeast Asia and Australia. Located in Hong Kong but is mainly cooperating with employees and businesses partners located in mainland China. Operating different project and businesses groups mainly with Chinese coworkers. Have been working with sales and collaboration in Asia for four years. The interview was held at a café in Hong Kong. Recording of the interview is held in the authors home.

2017-04-05 – Alias John. Interview with General manager. Worked in collaborations with China for 17 years in several different companies. Located in Hong Kong for the last 8 years but is mainly cooperating with employees and businesses partners located in mainland China. Chief of the Hong Kong office and several industries located on mainland. The interview was held at his office. Recording of the interview is held in the authors home.

2017-04-10 – Alias Lars. Interview with Chief Human Resource Officer in a company with 80 000 employees, approximately 40 000-50 000 of them are Chinese. Have eight years of experience collaborating with China and is stationed in Shanghai for the least three years. The interview was held at his office. Recording of the interview is held in the authors home.

2017-01-16 – Alias Martin. Interview with Project Manager. Been living in Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Ningbo for the last five years. Graduated from a university in Shanghai. Now operating a project group including only Chinese members. The interview was help at a café in Shanghai. Recording of the interview is held in the authors home.