ABSTRACT

NATT OCH DAG, KRISTINA ELISABET. Towards a Cross-Cultural Understanding of Authentic Leadership: Applying Authentic Leadership Theory to Leaders from Denmark, Sweden, and the United States. (Under the direction of Dr. Julia Storberg-Walker.)

A majority of leadership theories have been generated in the United States and are viewed as being culturally-specific to the western audience (Den Hartog & Koopman, 2001; Scandura & Dorfman, 2004). While contributions from other parts of the world have increased during the past decade (Mumford, 2011), the U.S.-centric focus is problematic because key leadership scholars, such as House (2004) and Scandura and Dorfman (2004) suggest culture is a critical—but not well understood—factor for understanding effective leadership. Consequently, there are two problems facing leadership scholars: 1) United States generated leadership theories and models may not transfer to contexts outside of the United States; and 2) empirical research has not produced a consensus opinion on how culture matters to effective leadership. Furthermore, there is a dearth of empirical research and dissertations on authentic leadership from a cross-cultural perspective, as found by this researcher.

To contribute towards addressing these two concerns, this exploratory phenomenological study selected a leadership theory generated in the United States (e.g., Authentic Leadership Theory or ALT) to analyze the perceptions of leaders from three different countries. A purposive sampling method was used to identify authentic leaders, and recognized experts in leadership practice selected participants for the study. An assumption undergirding the study was that the ALT model generated from the United States might expose hidden cultural differences of what it meant to be an authentic leader. The study was thus framed around Authentic Leadership Theory and drew from the literature on cross-cultural theory.
This analysis showed that when authentic leadership was enacted in the real world, it was informed or shaped by the cultural context. The eidetic reduction supports the findings of coherence and provides a deeper understanding of fundamental existentialist issues that a priori are shaped by the cultural context. The participants in the United States talked about being authentic from an individual perspective, while the Danish and Swedish participants talked about being authentic from a communal perspective.

The implications of the study extend to both the research and practice of leadership, as well as cross-cultural studies. The implications include 1) exploring the ‘I’ and ‘We’ narrative further through research on other leadership theories in other cultural contexts; 2) adding a new construct focused on altruism to ALT theory; and 3) exploring authenticity as not being bounded between professional or private persona.
Towards a Cross-Cultural Understanding of Authentic Leadership: Applying Authentic Leadership Theory to Leaders from Denmark, Sweden, and the United States

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the three most important people in my life, my husband Magnus and my children Alexander and Emma, without whom life simply would not be.

To Magnus

I speak of authenticity, and I think of you. I speak of honesty, and I think of you. I speak of being and I think of you. This work is a much your work as it is mine.

You have taken on the family and spent many hours at the park with the children just so I could write. You have been ready to jump in at times when our fragile support structure has fallen through. You have encouraged me in moments of darkness, held my hand during moments of panic and loved me in moments of utter, frantic desperation. Above all, you have been you, being there for me.

I love you.

To Emma and Alexander

This is for you and through you – you have both been with me every step of the way on this journey, literally. From the womb and to this day, when you are growing into two beautiful little individuals. Whether as babies being nursed as I finished a paper or whether lying on a blanket and playing with your toys in my office or whether sitting next to me drawing while I was plodding away on my computer, you have been remarkably patient with your mom and generous with your love.

Every page of this study involves a moment of you, whether a parallel mommy-brain thinking of every-day things or whether you have been sitting in my lap watching me write.
You are the greatest gift, sources of infinite joy and happiness and I hope you will one day see how much this work is you.

Unconditionally yours,

Mom
BIOGRAPHY

Kristina Natt och Dag is a native Swede who has had the opportunity to work and live in different countries for the most part of her adult life. After a career in training and development, she left the corporate world to pursue a Master in Human Rights from University of Lund, Sweden, after which she proceeded to work with leadership development and organizational development for a consultant company in Denmark. She also worked within the non-profit sector, teaching human rights as well as leadership development to volunteers for a non-profit organization.

She currently provides consulting services within organizational development and leadership development to organizations in the USA as well as in Europe. She lives outside Raleigh with her husband Magnus and their two children, Alexander and Emma.
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This journey actually started many years ago, in a lovely house in Paris, where my dear friend Christian Makarian awoke my need for learning as well as instilled a belief in me that I could do it; my thoughts were valid, my reflections could add something. Eventually I was brave enough to leave a great position with a great company to pursue my master. Little did I know this in a way started a journey where I would eventually pursue my Ph.D!

Fast forward more than a decade, and here I am today. I am so grateful to so many people and humbled by the incredible minds and talents I have come across. When I started at NCSU back in January 2009, I was pregnant with our son, who soon will be turning five. My fellow doctoral students watched me grow throughout the semester and touched my heart with throwing me a surprise baby-shower at the last class of the semester, on the initiative by soon-to-be Dr. Barbara Metelsky. I will never forget that. Since then, my daughter arrived as well, and just turned three!

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from her, as a scholar as well as an individual. Not only has she been my advisor and Chair, she has also become a dear friend.

I am also deeply grateful to Dr. Diane Chapman, who gave me the idea for this study. Without the support and encouragement from Dr. Chapman, I am not sure I would even have gotten through writing the proposal. Her ongoing support and encouraging feedback seemed to be there in the very moment when I needed it the most and her openness and generously sharing of her own experiences and thoughts have inspired me immensely. To me, she is a fantastic role model for faculty and as a person.

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When you live in a different country than your own, the support structure is not something you can take for granted, nor is it easy to build, which becomes very present when you have small children. We have been so lucky to have people around us who have been so apt and ready to help in times of need. Above all, I want to thank the Shade family, Teresa, Winston, Tyler, Lauren and Wesley who have been such a rock to us as well as Nancy Roth, who in moments of true crisis was able to jump in at a minute’s notice in spite of having a full schedule as it is.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Leadership is a well-researched field that has generated numerous studies and continues to fascinate scholars and practitioners throughout the world. Being traditionally dominated by a leader-centric perspective, studies now span a broader array of leadership aspects (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009). One such aspect is culture, which scholars suggest has a strong connection to leadership and leadership styles (Bass, 1990; Hofstede, 1980; House, Javidan, Hanges & Dorfman, 2004; Mittal & Dorfman, 2012). Relatedly, the importance of a leader’s ability to be globally aware is undisputed (House et al., 2002; Brodbeck et al., 2000; Tubbs & Schulz, 2006).

Leadership research therefore confirms that both culture and context are important elements for effective leadership, that both elements are changing, and that both seem to matter more than in the past (Higgs, 2003; Avolio, 2007; O’Brien & Peterson, 2008). Despite this knowledge, however, scholars have not reached agreement on how leadership and culture are related. Some scholars suggest there may be universal constructs in leadership (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta, 2002; Martin & Ernst, 2005), while others suggest the concept of leadership varies across cultures due to different beliefs and values of what effective leadership is (Holmberg & Åkerblom, 2006; Jogulu, 2010). In addition, some scholars lament that the majority of leadership theories are generated by scholars and practitioners in the United States and question the applicability of those theories across the globe (Scandura & Dorfman, 2004; O’Brien & Peterson, 2008).
Empirical research on leadership and culture also remains inconclusive. A recent cultural study encompassing 62 countries and conducted by over 160 researchers over a 10-year period found that “leaders’ reported effectiveness is associated with the society’s cultural values and aspirations, but the society’s effectiveness is associated with its cultural practices” (House et al., 2004, p. 892). Simply put, cultural practices are predictive of societal phenomena (Javidan, House, Dorfman, Hanges & Sully de Luque, 2006).

A pan-European study on the relationship between leadership and culture further showed the more leadership concepts differ between a leader in a foreign country and the followers in the host country, the less likely it is that leader will be effective or even accepted by the employees (Brodbeck et al., 2000). As Holmberg and Åkerblom (2006) point out, due to continuous business actions at an international level such as mergers and acquisitions, expatriate management and multi-cultural work-teams, “challenges due to culture and cultural differences are reportedly far from overcome” (p. 308).

Hamel (2007) asserts that 21st century leaders will need to operate in companies that are innovative, adaptable, and exciting places to work. O´Brien and Peterson (2009) suggest traditional leadership theories fall short; for leaders to be equipped to drive these new types of global organizations most effectively, new thinking in terms of leadership is required. Leaders in the 21st century need to be concerned “about an economy where knowledge is a core commodity and the rapid production of knowledge and innovation is critical to organizational survival” (Bettis & Hitt, 1995; Boisot, 1998 as cited in Uhl-Bien, Marion & Kelvey, 2007, p. 299). The possible consequences of leaders that do not have the right
leadership skills are not only costly, but also well-publicized, and not in a positive way (Alon & Higgins, 2005). As Alvesson and Spicer (2011) suggest, the leader has become “one of the dominant heroes of our time” (p. 1).

The 21st century organization poses however new challenges. Organizations in the 21st century are facing economic, technological and environmental forces in an unprecedented way. The world economy is more and more global, where “national boundaries are impediments and cost centers” (Drucker, 2001, p.63), and the technological evolution continues to revolutionize the way we work. Higgs (2003) suggested the critical issues facing organizations in the 21st century are changes in societal values, changes in investor focus, challenges in implementing organizational change, and the awareness of impact of stress on employees. Organizations are furthermore increasingly complex, where relations between components in the system continually change (Manson, 2001), creating new challenges for leaders. In the words of Hamel (Barsh, 2008), in the 21st century, companies will need to be innovative and adaptable as well as exciting places to work. Leaders must thus address complexity, innovation and be able to motivate and stimulate people. A decade into the 21st century, there has also been other turbulence besides the driving force of globalization. The world has witnessed terrorist attacks and corruption scandals, which has led to distrust in leaders (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) and a greater focus on ethics (Hitt, Kaynes & Serpa, 2010).

Based on scholars’ predictions of the future organizational climate, key challenges involve complexity, change, people skills and global competencies (Nadler & Tushman,
1999; Alon & Higgins, 2005). A recent study exploring the changing nature of leadership based on cross-national data, found that the skills leaders believe will be the most important going forward fall under the category of relationship and collaboration together with change management and resourcefulness (Ernst & Martin, 2005). Says Hitt, Kaynes and Serpa (2010), “The most unique resource any organization has is its human capital…which is where knowledge resides” (p. 422).

In light of this, Authentic Leadership Theory (ALT) is one of the more recent leadership theories that has emerged, and the body of research is steadily growing (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May & Walumbwa, 2005a; Northouse, 2013). A central premise to ALT is that authentic leaders foster the development of authenticity in followers (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) and builds around psychological capitals such as efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience.

As a theory, ALT builds from transformational leadership theory which is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards and long-term goals (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Burns, 1978; House, 1976). Although there is convergence between other leadership theories, in particular transformational and ethical leadership theory, there is also discriminant validity to the four core constructs of ALT (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009).

In essence, ALT combines elements of transformational and ethical leadership, emphasizing self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing and relational transparency (Ardichvili & Manderscheid, 2008; Northouse, 2013). In contrast to
transformational and charismatic leaders, however, authentic leaders may or may not be charismatic (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Likewise, in regard to an ethical type of leadership theory such as servant leadership, ALT involves positive psychological capital and a positive organizational context. Avolio and Gardner (2005) further suggest servant leadership lacks empirical research as well as groundedness.

A key element is the notion that ALT “requires heightened levels of self-awareness” (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Goffee and Jones (2005) further suggested authentic leaders foster trust and followership. Walumbwa, Christensen & Hailey (2011) suggest that “authentic leadership is founded on the notion of trust and transparency, which is a vital element that enables people who work together to know they can rely on each other implicitly” (p. 113). Leaders do not operate on their own and cannot succeed on their own (George & Sims, 2007). If resourcefulness, change management, collaboration and relations are what leaders in the 21st century organization need to have the abilities for, it is reasonable to suggest ALT builds from aspects that could become a leadership theory that equips leaders for sustainable leadership.

However, in spite of Authentic Leadership Theory (ALT) being a promising development for leaders in the 21st century, there is a need for further research. As Avolio et al. (2009) suggest, “There is a need to examine how authentic leadership is viewed across situations and cultures and whether …it represents the base of good leadership regardless of form” (p. 424). Alvesson and Spicer (2011) are critical of the aspect that authentic leadership rests on an assumption that the leader is inherently a good person with noble
intentions; they suggest such a highly individualistic moral perspective together with the notion of whose sense of right is right calls for a more critical perspective of this theory. Chan et al. (2005), however, refer to the potential dilemma between being authentic but not necessarily with good intentions as ironic; they believe that authentic leaders are as true to their role as leaders as to themselves as individuals.

Although scholars in authentic leadership appear to agree on the key aspects to the approach, it is important to view all new and existing leadership theories with a healthy amount of skepticism and question what some of the underlying assumptions may be as well as to ascertain the validity of the research. Existing leadership theories have furthermore predominantly been studied from a quantitative approach that fails to understand the actual behavior of leaders (House, 1995) while qualitative studies of leadership would be beneficial for the growing body of literature on leadership in general and authentic leadership in particular. Avolio et al. (2009) further suggest that future research of leadership from a more holistic perspective is important.

Statement of Problem

There are two related problems undergirding this study. The first problem, as demonstrated above, is a lack of consensus on the connections between leadership and culture. Further, scholars question the ability of U.S. generated leadership theories to accurately reflect leadership in other cultural contexts. The second problem, also presented above, is that scholars have called for new leadership theories to effectively address the tumultuous changes in organizations in the 21st century. One promising new theory, ALT,
has been recognized by scholars as having potential to meet the leadership needs of 21st century organizations (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Scholars agree, however, that this new theory needs continued refinement and development. This study sought to contribute to both problems by using ALT to understand how culture may impact leader perceptions of authenticity.

**Purpose of the Study**

Not only has globalization impacted leadership, or perhaps because globalization has impacted leadership, leadership is currently undergoing a paradigmatic shift of power and respect. Leaders in the 21st century need to listen and learn, and followers’ voices need to be heard, in the public as well as the corporate arena (Kellerman, 2012). The idea of the democratic workplace should be practiced and should not be limited to be seen as a western concept as democratic core concepts such as equality and participation should be the norm to strive for throughout the world. This could arguably appear as a naïve reflection of another way of expressing hegemonic western values. However, in recognizing this to be a very long process, it must start at some point and be strived for one step at a time. A first step could be to explore authentic leadership in general and ALT in particular, to understand how this theory could be translated into different cultural context as well as respecting different cultural norms.

The purpose of this study is to explore whether or not, or the degree to which, there is a difference in perception of authentic leadership in the U.S. versus in Sweden and Denmark. More specifically, the study seeks to explore the constructs of ALT and how leaders create
meaning in different cultures; in this case, Denmark, Sweden and the United States.

Scandinavian cultures (and Europe) have the closest structural similarities (i.e. economic development, media penetration, political system, political communication patterns, social structure) and cultural similarities (i.e. religion, ideology, culture, history) with the United States compared to any other global region, while they all share the same broad patterns of political participation and civic engagement (Almond & Verba, 1963; Norris, 2000, 2002; Verba & Nie, 1972).

**Research Questions**

The research questions guiding this study are:

1) How do leaders in Denmark, the United States, and Sweden talk about and understand authentic leadership?

2) How do leaders in Denmark, the United States, and Sweden enact authentic leadership?

Initially, the first question was the only research question. However, as I analyzed the data, findings emerged that I realized I in reality was answering two questions and the second question became a guiding question.

Further questions that make up the semi structured interview protocol aimed to explore how leaders in these two Scandinavian cultures and U.S. make meaning of ALT constructs such as self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing and relational transparency. The aim of the study was to understand the essence of authentic leadership as it is expressed in the Denmark, United States, and Sweden.
Significance of Study

This study contributes to both theory and practice in several ways. As a qualitative study, this research adds a different method to the dominating contributions of quantitative studies on leadership in general. The literature review shows that a majority of leadership studies are quantitative in nature and there is a need to complement quantitative studies with a deeper understanding of the topic using other methods, such as qualitative methods. Such understanding can add what it means at the individual level, and provide important indications for bridging the oft-mentioned gap between theory and practice (Kellerman, 2012).

Secondly, culture is an important contextual issue for effective leadership. However, many studies are still leaning on findings from Hofstede’s (1980) monumental study, while it could be suggested this study is dated. Due to the pace with which the world is changing, it is important to apply more recent findings such as the GLOBE-study. Research is further inconclusive on what comprises universal versus culturally specific leadership elements in the 21st century organization. More research must therefore be done on recent U.S. generated leadership theories to ascertain how well they work in non-U.S. cultures.

Thirdly, to date, few studies have explored ALT from a cultural perspective although contributions are growing and include authentic leadership in for example China (Zhang, Cone, Everett & Elkin, 2012), or Spain (Azanza, Moriano & Molero, 2013), or Switzerland (Endrissat, Müller & Kaudela-Baum, 2007) in addition to Walumbwa et al. (2009) in validating the authentic leadership questionnaire (ALQ) in China and Kenya. A recent
dissertation further highlighted authentic leadership in Islamic countries (Zaman, 2013).

There is without doubt an increasing attention to culture and the impact on leadership and as such, this study will also add to cross-cultural leadership studies. It is still not clear whether the constructs to ALT are universal or culturally-specific and the concepts thus need further examination.

**Theoretical Framework**

An oft-mentioned critique of qualitative studies is the role of theory: in quantitative research, the role of theory is clear (Anfara & Mertz, 2006). In qualitative research, however, there is no consensus to the role of theory. Anfara and Mertz suggest there are three different understandings that add to this lack of consensus. The first is theory as nearly invisible, the second is theory as related to methodology, and the third is theory as more “pervasive and influential than suggested by those who situate it methodologically” (2006, p. xxiii). The role of the theory in this study is undoubtedly pervasive, allowing for new themes to emerge, as this is the nature of the phenomenological approach, which will be explained further in detail in Chapter 3.

In brief, Anfara and Mertz (2006) suggest that “no preconceived notions, expectations or frameworks guide researchers” (p. xxii) in phenomenology. This, however, depends on the approach of phenomenology chosen for the purpose of the study. This study builds on transcendental phenomenology through a systematic approach as suggested by Moustakas (1994) while at the same time recognizing the aspects of hermeneutics and the full immersion of the researcher in the study, as suggested by van Manen (1990). As Polkinghorne (1989)
maintains, “The reader should come away from the phenomenology with the feeling ‘I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that’” (p.x). At the more abstract level, the study is embedded in the social-constructivist paradigm. In this paradigm, social construction and sense making are involved in shaping people’s interpretations of what they experience (Anfara & Mertz, 2006). The individual’s meaning is formed through social processes and individuals seek to understand and create meaning of the world in which they live (Creswell, 2009), which confirms the phenomenological approach as fitting with the purpose and objectives of this study.

**Conceptual Framework**

The goal of a conceptual framework is to categorize the relevant concepts of the study and how these relate (Rocco & Plakhotnik, 2009). Similarly, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest a conceptual framework “lays out the key factors, constructs, or variables, and presumes relationships among them” (p. 440). This study builds from two broad themes, leadership and culture, both which share a lack of definition as well as lack of a specific academic home. Both themes are furthermore interdisciplinary by nature and can be found in many disciplines including business, management, education, theology, and anthropology. For this study, the themes of leadership and culture frame the study in their own respective way, as leadership theory provides the research foundation for the study while cross-cultural theory informs the contextual setting for the study.

As a research foundation, leadership is a vast topic, ripe with different definitions and a plethora of theories, as well as accompanied by an equally vast body of non-academic
literature. The fascination with leadership spans centuries and many leadership theories can be traced back to the ancient Greeks (Cawthon, 2002). The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in Luthans and Avolio’s (2003) work on Authentic Leadership Theory (ALT), a theory of leadership anchored in positive values, beliefs and behaviors incorporating moral capacity (see Figure 1).

*Figure 1. Authentic Leadership Theory (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans et al., 2005).*
ALT builds from transformational, charismatic and servant leadership (Northouse, 2013). Avolio et al. (2004) suggest authentic leadership is a root construct that can incorporate other leadership theories such as transformational and ethical leadership. The ethical component of ALT is a key component, which sets this leadership theory aside from the traditional leadership theories, as many of the traditional leadership theories do not incorporate an ethical dimension. As Treviño, Brown and Hartman (2003) found, most leaders exhibit behavior which is neither ethical nor unethical.

The four key constructs of ALT as first introduced by Luthans and Avolio (2003) are (1) Self-Awareness, demonstrating an understanding of how one derives and makes meaning of the world and how that meaning-making process impacts the way one views himself or herself over time; (2) Relational Transparency, presenting one's authentic self (as opposed to fake or distorted self) to others; (3) Balanced Processing, showing that they objectively analyze all relevant data before coming to a decision; and (4) Internalized Moral Perspective, which refers to an internalized and integrated form of self-regulation, guided by internal moral standards and values versus group, organizational, and societal pressures (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). In Luthans and Avolio’s (2003) work, ALT is anchored in values, character and moral capacity. This leadership theory is not differentiated by behavioral style as, for example, transformational leadership or other theories are; rather it is distinguished by the deep levels of leaders’ awareness of their own and others’ moral values and perspectives; knowledge and strengths; and of the context in which they operate.
Core capacities of authentic leaders include possessing and modeling confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience.

ALT is, however, a theory which has emerged in the United States, and future empirical research needs to examine how authentic leadership is viewed across situations and cultures (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009). Although authenticity is increasingly discussed in Denmark and Sweden among practitioners, it remains unclear whether authentic leadership in these Scandinavian cultures is the same as suggested in the U.S. leadership theory. In the broad sense of its meaning, the entry for authenticity in the Oxford English Dictionary is “being true in substance, as being genuine or as being real.” However, though there are many definitions of authenticity within philosophy and psychology, Avolio and Gardner (2005) suggest it is often confused with sincerity. The difference lies in the involvement of others: sincerity involves other while authenticity involves self (Avolio & Gardner).

From a philosophical standpoint, Taylor (1991) suggested true authenticity involves recognizing and involving the larger contexts of human lives, such as being kind and respectful to others and the world, providing a sense of personal connection with a larger meaning, whether political, social, religious or other. As such, Taylor views authenticity as inherently individualistic as well as highly collectivistic, implying that moral values and beliefs are parts of authenticity.

Authenticity as defined in the dictionary is to be true to one’s self (Oxford English Dictionary). Within this definition, authentic, per se, does not necessarily hold any notions
of good intentions. It *could be* suggested that both Hitler and Stalin may, in fact, have been rather “authentic” in their leadership, although clearly lacking benevolence aside from what they saw as the good solution for their respective nations. From Taylor’s (1991) discussion, however, a deeper dimension of authenticity evolves: connecting self to something larger and, presumably, good. This deeper dimension can similarly be compared to the four core constructs of the theory of authentic leadership, in particular the element of internalized moral perspective, which would assume the element of good. One critique against ALT, however, is, in fact, the assumed good intentions of the leader (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011).

The contextual setting for this study is viewed through a cultural lens, which builds from House’s (House & Aditya, 1997) theory of cross-cultural leadership and the GLOBE-study. This theory suggests, “Expected, accepted, and effective leader behavior varies by cultures” (p. 454), placing the emphasis on person-oriented and task-oriented leader behaviors as “contingent on the culturally endorsed implicit theories of leadership of the broader social system” (p. 454). This theory is consistent with research that shows culture is an important aspect of leadership, and the same leadership style will yield different consequences in different cultures (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007).

The debate in cross-cultural studies spans from leadership as culture-specific to leadership as universally accepted to at least some degree (House et al., 2002). In this era of a globalized world where people and organizations are more interconnected than ever before, it could be suggested there are many aspects transcending culture today in comparison to twenty years ago. As Holmberg and Åkerblom (2006) point out, however, “fundamental
aspects of nationality, expressed as culturally endorsed leadership ideals, do not change as quickly or dramatically as the proponents of a changing world order would seem to suggest” and further claim the “challenges due to culture and cultural differences are reportedly far from overcome” (p. 308).

The key factors in the conceptual framework for this study are authentic leadership and the cultural context. As a phenomenological study, authentic leadership is the phenomenon of interest in this study and the shared experience among individuals participating in the study (Merriam, 2002), while cross-cultural theory serves as the lens through which similarities and differences in authentic leadership across cultures and the related dynamics can be viewed.
Figure 2. Conceptual framework.
By linking concepts regarding leadership and culture and framing them within the authentic leadership perspective undergirded by cross-cultural theory, my goal is to explore how this U.S.-centric leadership style fits in the Scandinavian culture to explore the question “Do Danish and Swedish leaders give the same meaning to the constructs of this theory as leaders in the United States?”

Thus, exploring how Danish and Swedish leaders view effective and successful leadership and their role as a leader in organizational contexts in these Scandinavian cultures and the similarities and differences that exist, is an important contribution to further understanding authentic leadership and how the ALQ-instrument may, may partially or not at all accurately reflect authentic leadership as suggested through the instrument. The ALQ-instrument is a questionnaire developed by Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing and Petersen (2007) for leaders’ self-assessment and will be further explained in Chapter 3.

Research Methods

To comply with human subject protection, an IRB-application was submitted complete with introductory sample letters and informed consent forms (see Appendices A and B). After approval, the recruitment process started. Through a professional network of high-level professionals within HR and leadership development as well as recognized experts in academia, a short list of “best in class” leaders who were recognized as having authentic leader attributes was made. The leaders on the list were invited to participate in phase one of the study, which consisted of a brief survey using the self-assessment part of the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ), the original ALT instrument developed by Walumbwa et
al. (2007). The ALQ consists of two elements: one is based on followers’ responses; the other is a self-based assessment. For the purpose of this study, only the self-based part was used, as the survey only served the purpose of providing baseline data in order to select participants for the following phase of the study.

The purpose of using the ALQ was to select participants for the next phase of data collection as well as to keep as an additional source of information for cultural interpretation of the constructs. The surveys were, however, not revisited until after the interview phase in order to avoid creating in me, the researcher, any preconceived ideas about how the leaders make meaning of the constructs beforehand. Based on the survey results, the four highest ranking as well as the four lowest ranking on the questionnaire were selected for maximum variation and to provide a stratified sample of leaders in the United States as well as in Denmark and Sweden. The ALQ measures 16 items related to the four underlying constructs to ALT. Through this self-assessment questionnaire, each participant ranked himself or herself on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree.” Scores in the range of 16-20 indicated stronger authentic leadership, while scores in the lower range indicated weaker authentic leadership. For this particular group of leaders, scores ranked high overall.

Selected leaders were then invited to participate in phase two of the study, which aimed at understanding through in-depth, open-ended qualitative interviews how they individually create meaning of the constructs. The purpose of the face-to-face interview was to probe deeply how the leaders create meaning to then compare across cultures. The
interviews were conducted in the local language by the researcher. To ensure reliability of the study, the transcriptions of the interviews were sent back to the participants to ask if they reasonably reflected what they said. This process is referred to as member checks (Merriam, 2002), which in transcendental phenomenology can be linked to what Moustakas (1994) refers to as intersubjective communication. The interviews generated a total of 15.25 hours of interview time; the average interview time was 1 and a quarter hours.

In the interviews, participants were asked open-ended, semi-structured questions and to vividly describe in as much detail as possible examples of their experience with AL. The semi-structured nature of the interview protocol gave way for asking other questions, probing deeper into specific situations examples participants shared. As Merriam (2002) suggests, follow-up questions mostly involved exploring how they felt about a certain experience, to reach to more affective information. Other questions involved what has influenced or inspired them, or what their thought process was in relation to a specific situation. In using Patton’s (2002) six types of questions, the interview questions were mainly based on experience and behavior questions and feeling questions.

Moustakas’ (1994) transcendental approach to the process is further described in Chapter three of this study. However, in terms of data analysis process, the process as suggested by Moustakas (1994) involves the steps of bracketing, in which I as the researcher wrote my own description of my own experience of authentic leadership. From the interviews, I developed a list of significant statements about how the participants experienced authentic leadership. I also developed a list of non-repetitive and non-overlapping
statements. These statements were grouped into themes, or meaning units, using open coding. The next step in the process involves interpreting, in which I developed a textural description of what the participants experienced in terms of authentic leadership and subsequently, a structural description of the experience of authentic leadership or how the experience happened. Finally, I wrote a composite description based on both the textural and structural descriptions. I am, however, applying both the transcendental phenomenological approach as described by Moustakas (1994) and the hermeneutic approach as suggested by van Manen (1990), as the focus of this study is more on the ontological question of being and becoming, thus experiencing the lived situation as opposed to the experienced lived situation.

Writing the report is an important step in the research process. As van Manen (1990) posits, “Creating a phenomenological text is the object of the research process” (p. 111). Moustakas (1994) explains a very structured approach to the write-up, providing a clear procedure for the organization of the report (Creswell, 2007). Polkinghorne (1989) suggests a similar although much less structured approach, emphasizing the importance of providing the reader with a real sense of the experience. van Manen (2006) however, maintains that “the experience of phenomenological reflection is largely (though not exclusively) an experience of language, and so phenomenological reflection on prereflective life would be much better described in terms of an experience of writing” (p. 716). van Manen (2006) suggested the report cannot be lead to readers’ understanding meaning objectively, but rather of “the changing contexts of meaning in which human beings find themselves, and to the complexity and instability of textual meaning, the language games and narrative practices
that give expression and interpretation to human experience” (p. 716).

As such, the write-up for this study leaned on the structured approach by Moustakas (1994) while at the same time “enter[ing] the dark, the space of the text, in the hope of seeing what cannot really be seen, hearing what cannot really be heard, touching what cannot really be touched” (van Manen, 2006, p. 719), to reach for the raw essence of authentic leadership as it manifest itself to leaders in different cultural contexts. Ladkin (2010) refers to these aspects as absences, or “invisible factors influencing what occurs” (p.39).

**Chapter Summary**

In this first chapter I have sought to position the study in the context of the challenges of globalization for organizations in the 21st century and outlined the purpose, significance, theoretical and conceptual frameworks and the research questions. Global competencies among leaders are crucial to meet the challenges in a new organizational landscape that features unprecedented interconnectedness across cultures. This would suggest it is important to scrutinize new and emerging leadership theories from different cultural perspectives.

This study is organized as follows: this chapter will be followed by Chapter 2, in which I discuss previous research and related studies on the topic of authentic leadership and organizational culture as well as provide an in-depth discussion of the theoretical frameworks involved in this study. As will be discussed, ALT is a recent theory which has emerged in the U.S. However, it is important to explore the meaning of the underlying constructs to ALT in different cultures. I will furthermore describe the cross-cultural lens chosen for this
study, which builds from the GLOBE-study, one of the most extensive studies within cross-cultural theory.

In Chapter 3, I provide a detailed description of methodology and research design as well as describe data collection and analysis and discuss validity of the study. The research design for this study is informed by phenomenology, which emphasizes the world as experienced by the individual and not as a separate reality from the person and thus aims to explore the essence of meaning for individuals who have shared the same phenomenon. In this case, the phenomenon is authentic leadership. The rationale for choosing phenomenology will be discussed more in detail, but overall, phenomenology allows for a deeper understanding of how individuals view their world, providing a deeper insight of constructs and underlying assumptions.

In Chapter 4, I introduce the heart of this study, the voices of the leaders that so generously agreed to participate. In applying both the transcendental and the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, I found a way to let the individuals come alive beyond the systematic structuration of the themes that emerged.

The final chapter, Chapter 5, I will discuss the key findings form my analysis and the implications as well as future needs, followed by a conclusion of the study.

My overall hope is that, although this could be seen to pertain mainly to the organizational level, leadership in reality penetrates many more dimensions of life. In essence, this study builds around my own hope for a more genuine world, a world which
allows and embraces the individual to be who they are in a civil sort of way and where human values are seen for what they are rather than as a way to drive the business.
CHAPTER 2

Introduction

This chapter outlines the scholarly research informing my exploration of the constructs of authentic leadership theory and how leaders in different cultural contexts create meaning of leadership constructs. There are two broad perspectives that frame this study, leadership theory and cultural theory.

Beginning with leadership theory, I will go through leadership and compare scholarly thought on some of the dominating leadership theories in general and authentic leadership in particular to provide a view of how authentic leadership has emerged within the field of leadership theories, historically as well as developmentally. Secondly, I will describe the influence of culture on leadership and review scholarly thought pertaining to cultural theory, focusing on Denmark, Sweden and the United States. Third, I will describe in-depth the theoretical framework informing this inquiry.

Leadership

Leadership is a field that has fascinated scholars and practitioners for centuries, generated many studies and much research. An exhaustive overview of the existing literature for leadership theory would result in a series of books (see Bennis, 2009; Burns, 2010; Gardner, 1993; Yukl, 2013). The plethora of studies could be ascribed to the elusive and ambiguous construct of leadership (Nohria & Kurana, 2010), as well as lack of definition. Although the lack of definition implicitly appears as a weakness to the field (Yukl, 2013), Gardner et al. (2010) view this as a positive aspect of leadership research. In their review of
the past decade’s leadership literature published in a leading scholar journal within the topic, *Leadership Quarterly*, they suggest “the field of leadership research is more diverse, more robust, more multi-faceted and more multi-focused than at any time in recent decades” (Gardner et al., 2010, p. 952). The scholars view this as positive given that “leadership is a complex, multi-level and socially constructed process” (p. 952). As Rost (1991) points out, the many leadership studies and the multitude of theories have provided a scholarship of leadership that reflects the industrial era of the 20th century. Now there is, however, a need for a school of leadership that reflects the 21st century (Higgs, 2003; O’Brien & Robertson, 2009).

Leadership has thus been addressed in a vast range of studies, whereas authentic leadership remains a newer aspect of leadership studies. In fact, a keyword search of the ERIC, Business Source Premier and Academic Search Premier database for the past sixty years supports this claim. Over 100,000 hits emerged for the descriptor *leadership* and a little fewer than 14,000 hits for the descriptor *authentic*. The two descriptors combined significantly decreased the results and produced merely over 600 hits. When adding the descriptor *theory*, the number decreased even more, to 163. Finally, when adding the descriptor *follower*, the results decrease to 43. Using the descriptor *employee* in place of *follower* generated 82 hits. In fact, this lack of followers’ perspective has positioned the follower as a passive element in the process and excluded the voice of one part of the constellation leader-follower, which is curious, as a leader’s success also is attributed to the followers; indeed, the leader does not operate in a vacuum, isolated from his/her employees.
(Schein, 2004). However, since Lord and Maher (1999) suggested that “the follower remains an unexplored source of variance in understanding leadership processes” (p.16), there has been an increased focus on a follower’s perspective to leadership, and new theories have emerged considering this perspective. The focus is now shifting significantly to study leadership from a follower perspective.

Other trends in the study of leadership include more holistic approaches with greater emphasis on ethics and values as well as the role of organizations and, as a consequence, the leader (Avolio et al., 2009). However, to understand how leadership theories have developed over time and subsequently to understand how authentic leadership theory fits into the abundance of theories, a broad literature review of some of the most dominant leadership theories that emerged during the 20th and 21st century is important.

**Leadership Theory**

In the first few decades of the century, leadership theories emphasized control and centralization of power. Moore (1927) suggested leadership was a question of dominance. From leadership as dominant emerged the perspective of leadership as influential and in the 1930’s, Trait Theory in leadership development emerged, although during the late 19th century, scholars were already researching which traits distinguished leaders from other individuals (e.g. the “great man” hypothesis) (Carlyle, 1907). Trait leadership theory was based on the belief that certain traits and qualities make some individuals more suited than others to be in a leadership position (Cowley, 1931). Trait-based leadership theory was
popular the first few decades but fell under scrutinized inquiry only to be revived again during the latter part of the 20th century (Zaccaro, 2007).

Although scholars differed slightly in their lists of traits necessary for leaders, some of the central traits were intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity and sociability (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Lord, DeVader & Alliger, 1986; Mann, 1959; Stogdill, 1948). Critics of trait-based leadership theory emphasized the limits, as the situational impacts on behavior were omitted (Mann; Stogdill). Another critique that emerged was the many and endless lists of traits (Northouse, 2007). Zaccaro (2007) similarly pointed to the lack of considering situational context and the impact on behavior as a flaw. In spite of the critics, trait-based leadership theory remains to be the most persistent leadership theory, which can be seen in the more popular leadership literature still today (Zaccaro).

Trait-based leadership theory gave way for increasingly pragmatist perspectives, focusing on the reality of the experience: behavioral perspectives of leadership theory, leading to structure and consideration (Hemphill & Coons, 1957; Stogdill, 1967). Scholars who have explored the behavioral paradigm provided a basis for new theories such as Fiedler’s (1967) contingency model and Blake and Mouton’s (1964) managerial grid. Evidence also suggested, “leaders’ behaviors are important predictors of leadership effectiveness” (Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman & Humphrey, 2011, p.8). One of the critiques of both behavioral and trait-based leadership theories is their tendency to focus on a single, behavioral perspective (Derue et al., 2011), thus limiting the study from providing an understanding of what other factors impact the behavior or trait.
Another major strand within leadership theory is situational leadership, which focuses on leadership in situations (Northouse, 2013). Different situations call for different kinds of leadership. Two of the most noted scholars within situational leadership are Hershey and Blanchard (1969), who suggested four leadership styles to which the leaders must adapt in accordance with the situations. Some scholars viewed the flexibility of adapting leadership styles as strengths, although at the same time they pointed to the lack of empirical evidence for this theory (Graeff, 1983; Northouse, 2013). In fact, in two similar studies conducted ten years apart, no strong empirical evidence for situational leadership was found (Fernandez & Vecchio, 1997; Vecchio, Bullis & Brazil, 2006). However, situational leadership has, much like trait-based leadership theory, become a popular approach in non-academic literature.

Other influential strands in the leadership literature are transactional and transformational leadership, first introduced by Burns (1978). Transactional leadership theories are based on the exchange process of things of value between leaders and followers (Kuhnert, 1994). Yukl (1999) suggests that transactional theories involve an exchange process between leaders and followers wherein the follower is motivated to comply with the leader and the rules in the organization. Scholars suggest all leaders apply both transformational and transactional leadership although there may be a tendency for the individual to naturally lean more towards one of them (Bass, 1985; Conger, Kanungo & Menon, 2007). Bass and Avolio (1993) suggest transactional leadership theory to be the most common managerial behavior.
Transformational leadership theory is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards and long-term goals (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Burns, 1978; House, 1977) and is based on the process of relationships with others and creating motivation and followership (Bass, 1985). Building from four dimensions—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration—transformational leadership theory signaled a shift from previous theories, providing a broader perspective. Yukl (1989) suggests that newer transformational theories include the role of the leader as “making events meaningful for the followers” (p. 286).

One of the criticisms of transformational leadership is that it is often confused with charismatic leadership theory through the dimension concerning idealized influence. In the charismatic leadership perspective, the idealized tends to take the form of idolized. This is viewed as a weakness for transformational leadership theories due to the difference in intention between the two (Yukl, 1989; Northouse, 2013). Several scholars suggest this is a risk as it can be used for the wrong purposes (Conger, 1999; Howell & Avolio, 1993). Charismatic leadership theory as suggested by House (1977) builds on leaders’ “personal characteristics that have specific charismatic effects on their followers” (Northouse, 2013, p. 188). However, the focus of charismatic leadership is on the relationship with the followers, as charisma “exists only if the follower says it does” (House, Spangler & Woycke, 1991, p.366). Although charismatic leadership as suggested by House (1977) holds notions of a leader’s values and beliefs, transformational leadership theories are mainly based on charisma as a necessary, although not sufficient, component to leadership (Bass, 1985). Yukl
(1999), however, suggests there is little use to having two separate theories unless they are distinct from each other, implying that transformational leadership theories and charismatic theories could be integrated. Together with transactional and transformational theories, charismatic leadership provides a slight shift from leadership theories as strictly leader-centric to include a more collaborative perspective.

During the 1970’s, a similar leadership theory to transformational theories emerged, servant leadership. Servant leadership similarly focuses on leadership from the leader’s perspective, although the leader is of service to the follower (Northouse, 2013). Servant leadership has been debated, specifically in reference to whether it is simply another name for transformational leadership or is a distinct theory in itself (Northouse, 2013). Stone, Russell and Patterson (2004), however, found that although there are many similarities between the two, the key difference is the focus of the leader: the transformational leader’s focus is on followers’ commitment to and participation in organizational objectives while the servant leader’s primary focus is to be of service to the followers. Northouse (2013) suggests servant leadership is a paradox, as being a servant “implies following” while following “is viewed as opposite of leading” (p. 234-5).

However, it could be suggested servant leadership serves as an inspiration to a more holistic view of organizations and their role in society, as servant leadership also sees to empowering and creating value to society through ethical behavior and helping followers grow and succeed (Northouse, 2013). Mittal and Dorfman (2012) suggest that the origins of servant leadership have roots deeper and further than the 1970’s to religion and philosophy.
Current models of servant leadership are anchored in the “human drive to bond with others and contribute to the betterment of the society” (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012, p.555).

One of the most recent emerging strands within the leadership theory literature is authentic leadership, which is similar to transformational, charismatic and servant leadership. One of the first articles that advanced authentic leadership as a theory, was published in 2003 and was written by Luthans and Avolio. However, six years earlier, Duignan and Bhindi (1997) wrote one of the first articles that suggested authenticity as an emerging perspective in leadership already. In a review of existing leadership literature in a variety of cultures, Duignan and Bhindi (1997) found that key qualities of effective leaders were honesty, integrity, credibility, being fair-minded, being straightforward and being dependable.

In an article discussing leadership in a new organizational landscape in the post-bureaucratic era, Shamir (1999) suggests from a social-scientific view that the concept of leadership has been fluctuating in terms of disillusionment and enthusiasm. The 1970’s was a period of disillusionment, which perhaps is a reason to the emergence of servant leadership, while the 1980’s and 1990’s highlighted strong leadership, such as transformational or charismatic leadership theory; these theories have now given way to more participatory concepts of leadership that are “attractive due to their reduced power distance and greater equality among organizational members” (Shamir, 1999, p. 50), which are increasingly needed in the changing organizational landscape.

Whether or not there is a return to enthusiasm in regard to leadership in this century remains to be seen. So far, apart from a fast-paced spread of technology and globalization,
the 2000’s have also been tainted with ethical scandals in the corporate world, terrorism, and two major economic downturns during the first ten years of the century (Hitt, Kaynes & Serpa, 2010). Avolio and Gardner (2005) suggested this has urged a renewed focus on “restoring confidence, hope, and optimism; being able to rapidly bounce back from catastrophic events and display resiliency; helping people in their search for meaning and connection by fostering a new self-awareness; and genuinely relating to all stakeholders” (p. 316). As such, authentic leadership grows out of a need for more humane leadership, which also serves the common good (Luthans & Avolio, 2003).

**Authentic Leadership Theory (ALT)**

Although the concept of authenticity has been around for many years, as a leadership theory it is estimated to have emerged around 2003 (Northouse, 2013). However, in addition to Duignan and Bhindi (1997), other leadership scholars have previously discussed authenticity in leadership, such as Kouzes and Posner (1993) who identified aspects such as leaders who were true to what they said they would do and “walk the talk” in addition to the ability to build trust and Selvarajah et al. (1995), who discuss leadership as a moral craft.

Authentic Leadership Theory (ALT) gained attention significantly following a special issue of *Leadership Quarterly* in 2005. The special issue was a result of an inaugural summit on Authentic Leadership Development, hosted by the Gallup leadership Institute at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2004. Avolio and Gardner (2005) suggested the emergence of authenticity as a root construct in leadership theory was due to new challenges caused by ethical meltdowns as well as terrorism; in light of the Enron scandal and 9/11,
people had lost trust in leaders. Building from positive psychology in addition to leadership and ethics, the body of authentic leadership literature has continued to grow over the past decade, indicating an increasing interest.

In ALT, as with most leadership studies, there are several definitions. However, the central elements that have emerged thus far are leaders’ awareness of their values and beliefs; leaders’ self-confidence and their being genuine; reliability and trustworthiness; and leaders’ focus on building followers’ strengths (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner et al., 2005b; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; May, Chan, Hodges & Avolio, 2003). Ilies and Nahrgang (2005) further suggest that authenticity and authentic leadership are important to create meaningfulness for the leader him/herself as well as in followers’ lives. George (2007) builds authentic leadership around an inner moral compass: leaders pursuing purpose with passion, practicing solid values, leading with their hearts as well as their heads, establishing connected relationships and demonstrating self-discipline.

The definition of authenticity per se, however, is to be true to oneself, which does not necessarily posit that there should be a dynamic process to seek out knowledge about oneself. Authentic leaders as suggested by ALT are defined as “those who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others’ values/moral perspectives, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and of high moral character” (Avolio et al., 2004, p.4). Yukl (2013) suggests authentic leadership is based on “core values such as honesty, altruism, kindness, fairness, accountability and optimism” (p. 351). In
essence, scholars seem to agree there are fundamentally four factors involved in authentic leadership: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency (Northouse, 2013; Manderscheid, 2008).

Self-awareness builds on deep self-reflection. As Chan, Hannah and Gardner (2005) suggested: “The overriding agreement to the self-reflective processes is the leader’s strong and agentic commitment to be true to self” (p. 13). Internalized moral perspective involves the leader’s consistency between values and actions (Walumbwa et al., 2007). Like self-awareness, this is a self-regulatory construct and involves seeking others’ opinions and listening to others before making up one’s mind (Northouse, 2013). Relational transparency involves the ability to be transparent in terms of expressing one’s own feelings and emotions while at the same time regulating the emotions to avoid what could be potentially damaging or inappropriate (Gardner et al., 2005a).

ALT builds from positive psychology and focuses on strengths while at the same time exploring weaknesses. However, Diddams and Chang (2012) suggest there has been little emphasis on weaknesses, which could result in the opposite of what authentic leaders are, becoming self-protective rather than authentic and true. Diddams and Chang also suggest important elements such as humility and modesty should be included in the study about ALT. In line with such aspects, it could be suggested it is important to distinguish the authentic person from the authentic leader as the context within which the leader operates may not provide the psychological safety that allows for self-development, and implicitly, transparent forms of leadership (Chan et al., 2005). It is, therefore, important to consider the impact of
power on the leader and their leadership roles and responsibilities as well as context and culture.

Duignan and Bhindi (1997) further discussed pseudo-authenticity, which is the individual wearing “a mask of authenticity, a façade of respectability, rarely revealing their true selves. Some are so used to the dramaturgical performance that they would hardly be able to recognize their ‘true self’” (p. 198). Authenticity, in Duignan and Bhindi’s view, is thus a quest, a journey, an awareness of exploring deep within oneself and looking into the whole person of self, including the darker sides, which illustrates the depth of self-awareness as also suggested in ALT.

A distinguishing element to ALT is the follower perspective (Gardner et al., 2005a). The follower perspective is, unlike the term subordinate, comprised of all the individuals who acknowledge the central leader as the primary source of guidance (Yukl, 2013). The dominating leadership theories have not explicitly included this perspective although it appears both servant and transformational leadership theory gave way for an increasing attention to followers. By incorporating the follower’s perspective, ALT allows for a more holistic approach to leadership, while still using the individual as a point of departure. Gardner et al. (2005a) suggest authentic leadership is, in reality, a root construct to all leadership; thus an individual claiming nearly any leadership style can also be an authentic leader. An authentic leader can thus “be transformational or transactional, directive or participative” (Chan et al., 2005, p. 85).
Avolio et al. (2009) points however to the importance for future research to understand the connections between cognitive elements and behavior, such as whether transformational leaders have a different self-concept than for example authentic leaders and what would these differences look like.

As a theory, ALT, like many leadership theories, has emerged within the United States (Gardner et al., 2011) and although contributions have increased, suggestion for future research includes a deeper understanding of ALT from a contextual perspective, including cross-cultural perspectives (Avolio et al., 2009). Furthermore, although there has been a lot of interest in authentic leadership, there is a lack of empirical research to support its ability to support or reflect practice (Walumbwa et al., 2007) and Gardner et al. (2011) further suggest the need to vary the use of methods and the importance of qualitative studies.

However, Walumbwa et al. (2007) conducted a quantitative study in which they tested ALT in the United States, China and Kenya. Based on their findings, the authors suggested the core constructs of ALT could, indeed, show to be universally accepted in their broad definitions, highlighting the importance of considering the cultural nuances of the constructs in future research.

Based on ALT, the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) was created by Walumbwa et al. (2007). The instrument is thus a theory-driven higher order authentic leadership measure which has been developed in various contexts such as China and Kenya in addition to the United States to support its reliability and validity. However, one of the limitations to the instrument is that it does not consider contextual impact on leadership
(Walumbwa et al., 2007). As such, the qualitative part of this study will enrich the application of the ALQ and provide further, in-depth understanding of the instrument.

**Cross Cultural Key Studies**

The 21st century requires a different perspective on leadership, reflecting the post-industrial era where knowledge has taken the center role (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). The 21st century further requires global competencies based on the new organizational landscape. As Bryan et al. (1999) calculated, in two decades, the global quantity of economic production will be close to 80%\(^1\), compared to 20% one decade ago.

Cross-cultural research is a growing body of literature; in regard to leadership, the most common approach is to explain “cross-cultural differences in terms of differences in cultural values” (Yukl, 2013, p. 361). One of the earliest studies of cultural values was the Dutch researcher in the fields of organizational studies and organizational culture, Geert Hofstede’s book *Cultural Consequences* (1980), in which national cultures were quantitatively described. In addition to Hofstede’s influential study, there have been several other significant studies such as the GLOBE-study (House et al., 2004); Hall’s findings on individualistic and collectivistic cultures (1976); Trompenaars’ (1994) findings on culture as classifiable in two dimensions such as egalitarian-hierarchical and person-task; and Adler’s International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior (1991).

What many of these studies had in common was the notion that there were cultural changes.

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\(^1\) Based on an estimated growth rate of 4%.
dimensions that could be compared from culture to culture (Adler, 2002; Schwartz, 1999; Trompenaars, 1998). For the purpose of this paper, I will discuss in particular Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions and the GLOBE-study—Hofstede’ study, as it has been one of the most influential within cross-cultural theory and continues to influence the field still today, and the GLOBE-study due to its extensive and thorough methods involving researchers from all over the world, and applying both quantitative and qualitative methods as well as being more recent.

Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions study, based on the findings, initially identified four value dimensions: Power Distance, which regards individuals’ acceptance of power inequality; Individualism, as opposed to collectivism; Masculinity, based on masculine values such as assertiveness, performance, success and competition as opposed to feminine values such as quality of life, maintaining relationships, service, care and solidarity; and Uncertainty Avoidance, which regards individuals’ attitude to unstructured, unclear or unpredictable situations. A fifth dimension was added twenty years later, involving Short term versus Long-term orientation, which regards a society’s orientation towards the future or the past (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). A sixth dimension was further added in 2010, Indulgence vs. Restraint, which regards the degree to which societies allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).
Hofstede’s Matrix of Cultural Dimension Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>PDI</th>
<th>IND</th>
<th>UAI</th>
<th>MASC.</th>
<th>LTO**</th>
<th>IvR***</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>88</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<td>69</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>83 (78)*</td>
<td>40 (34)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
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<td>82</td>
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<td>55</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Cyprus and Former Yugoslavia omitted due to lack of indices. * = East Germany  ** = Cult. dim. Long-Term Orientation added after 2001 *** = Cult. dim. Indulgence vs. Restraint added 2010

Hofstede et al. (2010) suggest that culture is always a collective phenomenon. As such, it is “a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others” (p. 6). The researchers from GLOBE suggested this is a narrow perspective, highlighting the importance instead of understanding values as well as practice (Javidan et al., 2006).
Based on the view of culture as a collective phenomenon, Hofstede thus suggested members in high PDI-cultures (Power Distance Index) such as Slovakia and Romania view power as a basic fact in society and stress coercive or referent power. In comparison, members of low PDI-cultures such as Denmark and Austria prefer expert or legitimate power, believing power should only be used when legitimate. In the work setting, in low PDI-cultures, leaders and followers are more interdependent, and followers will approach and contradict their leaders. In high PDI-cultures, followers depend on their leaders and respond by either preferring the dependence in the form of an autocratic leader, or reject it entirely (Hofstede, 1991).

In regard to Individualism (IND), the emphasis in highly individualistic cultures such as the United States and Great Britain is on the individual initiative and achievement; such cultures promote self-realization (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Each individual is seen as having a unique set of talents and potentials (Waterman, 1984, as cited in Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). In collectivistic cultures such as Romania, Bulgaria and Portugal, on the other hand, the goals and needs of the group are emphasized over the goals and needs of the individual. Hofstede (1980) further pointed to how the link between individuals and traditional organizations in individualistic cultures is more based on self-interest and the market mechanism while in collectivist cultures, this link is moral, based on a belief about acting in the interest of the group as ultimately the best also for the individual (1980).

In regard to Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI), Hofstede summarizes the view of people in high uncertainty avoidance cultures as believing “what is different is dangerous” (1990, p.
119) and people in low uncertainty avoidance cultures as “what is different, is curious” (p. 119). Compared to members in cultures with low UAI, members in high UAI-cultures resist change more, have higher levels of anxiety, higher levels of intolerance for ambiguity, worry about the future more and take fewer risks. Cultures with high UAI furthermore tend to develop more rules and rituals.

In regard to Masculinity (MASC), the major difference between cultures with high and low masculinity scores is how gender roles are distributed in society. Countries scoring high on masculinity such as Slovakia and Hungary involve power, materialism, and assertiveness, while cultures scoring low such as Sweden and Norway involve people, quality of life, and nurturance (Hofstede, 1980). People in masculine cultures have stronger motivation for achievement, focus on work as central to their life, exhibit higher job stress, show greater value differences between women and men, and value recognition, advancement or challenge.

Since 2001, two recent dimensions have been added: Long-term orientation (LTO) and Indulgence versus Restraint (IvR). LTO deals with society’s orientation towards the future in terms of virtues such as perseverance and thrift. The opposite, short-term orientation (STO) is about a society’s values in regard to the past and present, such as the importance of traditions and social obligations (Hofstede et al., 2010). As such, long-term oriented societies foster pragmatic virtues oriented towards future rewards, in particular saving, persistence, and adapting to changing circumstances. Short-term oriented societies
foster virtues related to the past and present such as national pride, respect for tradition, preservation of "face", and fulfilling social obligations (Hofstede et al., 2010).

As late as 2010, a sixth dimension was added, Indulgence vs. Restraint. Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms. Initially, Hofstede’s study did not include all European countries such as Romania or Bulgaria nor counties in Eastern Europe or Former Ex-Yugoslavia, which were added at a later date and contributed to the expansion of the dimensions (Hofstede et al., 2010). Hofstede’s critics point to the limitations to one organization with a strong organizational culture (IBM) as well as lack of gender-perspective, besides the uneven representation from the different countries (Dickson et al., 2003; Javidan et al., 2006). Javidan et al. further point to how Hofstede’s study was a reinterpretation of a consulting project undertaken much earlier, implying a lack of research rigor. Nevertheless, Hofstede’s study remains as one of the most influential cross-cultural studies to date (Taras, Steel, & Kirkman, 2012).

However, although Hofstede’s extensive research has been so influential in the cross-cultural field, it seems fair to question why the scores in 1980 are the same as today. Furthermore, in spite of expanding the scope of the study and adding cultural dimensions based on research, due to the growing understanding about how dynamic cultures are and of cultural changes around the world, Taras et al. (2012) suggest, “It is uncertain if Hofstede’s 40-year-old data can be reliably used in conjunction with variables representing
contemporary phenomena or even with archival data from the 1990s as the relative rankings of national cultures may have changed in the past decades” (p. 330). Söderberg and Holden (2002) further suggest Hofstede failed to see the multicultural realities that were already present in many European countries.

A more recent study, GLOBE, suggested a set of cultural values such as performance orientation, assertiveness, future orientation, humane orientation, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance (Javidan et al., 1997). Two important aspects of the GLOBE-study were 1) its intent to explore to which extent effective leadership varies across cultures, and why; 2) to explain how cultural values impact leadership beliefs and behavior (Yukl, 2013). Similar to Hofstede’s study, the GLOBE-study was further expanded over the years to include issues such as how cultural drivers influence the economic competitiveness of societies and more aspects of the human condition (Dorfman, Javidan, Hanges, Dastmalchian & House, 2012).

The GLOBE-study spanned a 10-year period and involved over 160 researchers working together to collect and analyze data on cultural values and practices and leadership attributes involving 17,000 managers (Javidan et al., 2006). Scholars reached the conclusion that cultures could be clustered into groups such as Latin America, Anglo, Latin Europe (e.g., Italy), Nordic Europe, Germanic Europe, Confucian Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, Southern Asia, and Eastern Europe (Javidan et al., 2006), building from the country clusters as suggested by Ronen and Shenkar (1985).

The GLOBE-studies identified nine cultural dimensions as bases for how leadership
is viewed in different countries, or “universally rated as desirable” (Dorfman, et al., 2012, p. 507): uncertainty avoidance, power distance, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, future orientation, performance orientation and humane orientation. Based on common language, geography, religion and history, countries were clustered into distinct groups. The United States was clustered in the Anglo group together with Canada, Australia, Ireland, Great Britain, South Africa (white sample) and New Zealand. Europe was split into Eastern Europe (Greece, Hungary, Albania, Slovenia, Poland, Russia, Georgia, and Kazakhstan); Germanic Europe (Austria, Holland, Switzerland and Germany); Latin Europe (Israel, Italy, Francophone Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, France); and Nordic Europe (Denmark, Finland and Sweden). Other clusters were the Sub-Saharan Africa (Nigeria, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, black sample); Middle East (Egypt, Morocco, Turkey, Kuwait and Qatar); Latin America (Argentina, Colombia, Mexico); Confucian Asia (China, Hong Kong, Singapore); and Southern Asia (India).

In terms of the Nordic and Anglo Cluster, the Nordic Cluster scored high on future orientation, gender egalitarianism, institutional collectivism and uncertainty avoidance, while it scored in the middle range in terms of humane orientation and performance orientation, scoring low on power distance (Chhokar, Brodbeck & House, 2008). The Anglo cluster scored high on performance orientation while low on in-group collectivism (Javidan et al., 2006).
Table 2

*Cultural Clusters Classified on Societal Cultural Practices (as is) scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Dimension</th>
<th>High Score</th>
<th>Mid-score</th>
<th>Low Score</th>
<th>Cluster avg.range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance Orientation</td>
<td>Confucian Asia</td>
<td>Southern Asia</td>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>3.73-4.58</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germanic Europe</td>
<td>Latin Europe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nordic Europe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Germanic Europe</td>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>Nordic Europe</td>
<td>3.66-4.55</td>
</tr>
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<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>Latin America</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Confucian Asia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Southern Asia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Orientation</td>
<td>Germanic Europe</td>
<td>Confucian Asia</td>
<td>Asia Middle East</td>
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<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Latin America</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Angela</td>
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<td>Latin America</td>
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<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
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<td>Latin America</td>
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Table 2. (Continued)

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<th>Latin America</th>
<th>Eastern Europe</th>
<th>Sub-Saharan Africa</th>
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<th>Confucian Asia</th>
<th>Germanic Europe</th>
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<td>Confucian Asia</td>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>Latin Europe</td>
<td>Southern Asia</td>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>3.56-5.19</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Means of high-score clusters are significantly higher (p < 0.05) than the rest, means of low-score clusters are significantly lower (p < 0.05) than the rest, and means of mid-score clusters are not significantly different from the rest (p > 0.05).

Based on how different cultures view leadership, the GLOBE-study identified six idealized global leadership behaviors. Analyzing how each cluster viewed leadership, the researchers were able to identify a leadership profile for each cluster (Dorfman et al., 2012).

The charismatic/value-based leadership is the ability to inspire, to motivate, and to expect high performance from others. Behaviors consist of being visionary, inspirational, self-sacrificing, trustworthy, and decisive and performance oriented. Team-oriented leadership highlights team building and the ability to create a sense of a common purpose; behaviors include being collaborative, integrative, diplomatic, good and administratively competent. Participative leadership is the degree to which leaders involve others in decision-making and implementation; behaviors include being participative and non-autocratic. Self-protective leadership focuses on ensuring the safety and security of the individual and group through status enhancement and face saving; behaviors include being self-centered, status conscious,
conflict inducer, face-saver, and procedural. Humane-oriented leadership includes sensitivity to other people and modesty; behaviors include being supportive, considerate, compassionate and generous. Autonomous leadership refers to independent and individualistic leadership; behaviors include being autonomous and unique (Dorfman et al., 2012).

Table 3

Overview of GLOBE-clusters and leadership behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Charismatic/Value based Leadership</th>
<th>Team-oriented/Leadership</th>
<th>Participative Leadership</th>
<th>Self-protective Leadership</th>
<th>Hum. oriented Leadership</th>
<th>Autonomous Leaders</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordic Eur.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germanic Eur.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin Europe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Sah. Afr.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conf. Asia</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Asia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The behaviors are rated in term of importance and relevance, 1 being most important.

Hofstede criticized the GLOBE-study, suggesting it was a U.S.-centric study, with “figments of the researchers’ US-based imagination without understanding the worldview of the respondents” (Javidan et al., 2006, p. 909); furthermore, he recognized that the GLOBE-project built from Hofstede’s own work but simply added dimensions which was “too confusing” (Guthey & Jackson, 2011, p. 173). However, based on the background of Hofstede’s study which built from data collected within one single, worldwide organization based in the United States with a very strong organizational culture, compared to the full
involvement of over 170 researchers around the globe, it would seem as if Hofstede’s study would, in fact, seem more U.S.-centric than the GLOBE-study. Although Hofstede contended the addition of other dimensions such as the long-term dimension as enforcing the de-centered position of the study, Javidan et al. (2006) questions this in terms of poor empiricism due to the limitations to Hofstede’s study.

In a discussion between Hofstede and the scholars involved in the GLOBE-project hosted by the International Journal of Business, the issue in this debate came down to the validity of how to measure culture. Hofstede contends values drive practices, while the GLOBE researchers suggested such assumptions are largely untested in terms of knowing what actually happens in a culture (Javidan et al., 2006). As such, the GLOBE researchers set out to measure practice and values at the same time, providing as “is-scores” as well as “should-be” scores, thus separating values and practices. The GLOBE researchers suggested Hofstede’s view of values driving practice was too simplistic (Javidan et al., 2006); Hofstede, in turn, suggested that respondents described their as is-society reflecting there should-be society (Javidan et al., 2006). Javidan et al. (2006), however, suggested that “our findings show the opposite relationship: people may hold views on what should be based on what they observe in action” (p. 902).

For the purpose of this study, the cross-cultural lens was that of the GLOBE-project as it applies a more complex approach, anchored in theory and empiricism as well as being more recent (Javidan et al., 2006). Furthermore, the GLOBE-project specifically studied leadership.
Leadership and Culture in Denmark and Sweden versus USA

According to the GLOBE-study (House et al., 1997), Scandinavian cultures such as Denmark and Sweden are clustered in the Nordic group and the United States is clustered together with the U.K. and other English-speaking countries in the Anglo group. In Hofstede’s findings, however, Scandinavian cultures and the United States are often in the same field of the cultural dimension although there is variation in the actual score (see tables 4 and 5), whereas in the GLOBE-study, Nordic Europe and Anglo were only found to score the same in two of the nine cultural dimensions.

Table 4

*Excerpt of Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions (Hofstede, 1983)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Dimension</th>
<th>Low Uncertainty Avoidance</th>
<th>Low Power Distance</th>
<th>Individuality</th>
<th>Masculinity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scores: 0-100*

Table 5

*Excerpt of Project GLOBE (Javidan et al., 2006)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Dimension</th>
<th>High Score</th>
<th>Mid-score</th>
<th>Low score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance Orientation</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Nordic Europe</td>
<td>Nordic Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Nordic Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Orientation</td>
<td>Nordic Europe</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Nordic Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humane Orientation</td>
<td>Nordic Europe</td>
<td>Nordic Europe</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional collectivism</td>
<td>Nordic Europe</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5. (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-Group collectivism</th>
<th>Nordic Europe</th>
<th>Anglo</th>
<th>Nordic Europe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Egalitarianism</td>
<td>Nordic Europe</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Distance</td>
<td>Nordic Europe</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
<td>Nordic Europe</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a second major GLOBE book titled ‘*Culture and Leadership Across the World: The GLOBE Book of In-Depth Studies of 25 Societies*’ (Chhokar et al., 2008), quantitative and qualitative data were integrated. In regard to the Nordic Cluster, qualitative findings were described based on Sweden and Finland only.

In terms of leadership ideals, the Nordic Cluster endorses a mix of high charismatic/value based and team-oriented leadership, with considerable elements of participative leadership. Self-protective leadership was rejected but autonomous leadership tolerated (Chhokar et al., 2008). In the qualitative findings, which only included Sweden and Finland, Holmberg and Åkerblom (2007) suggested in their opening statement to the chapter relative to the Nordic cluster that,

Vagueness, equality and consensus are three of the notions that are crucial to (an understanding of) established leadership in the Swedish context. They are all rooted in an ideology that evolved over a period of many years between the late 1930s and 1990s, permeating most, if not all, aspects of life in Sweden and to a large extent in the other Nordic countries (p. 33).

For Clausen (2006), there is a great emphasis on the decision-making process in Scandinavian organizational culture, where all participants can influence the decision. Other
characteristics consist of the belief of respect for others’ feelings and avoiding conflicts (Clausen, 2006). In a study comparing Danish and Japanese leaders, Clausen (2010), however, found that Scandinavian decision-making practices were perceived as “more confrontational” (p. 63). Gelfand et al. (2001) suggested leaders in the United States perceived conflicts to be more about winning and violations to individual rights. In a study looking at horizontal and vertical individualism and achievement values, it was suggested that Scandinavian cultures are ambivalent toward high achievers while leaders in the United States “have been shown to aspire to such distinction and financial success” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Weldon, 1984 as cited in Nelson and Shavitt, 2002, p. 440). Achievement and competition are important values in vertical individualistic countries, while horizontal individualistic cultures hold uniqueness of the individual as important while at the same time, the individual does not want to stick out (Triandis, 2013).

Hoppe and Bhagat (2007) suggest the United States is heterogeneous, and as such there can, in reality, be no such thing as a U.S. leadership. Note here that the aspect of a heterogeneous leadership in the United States is a different dimension to U.S.-centric leadership theories as previously mentioned. The latter is based on contributions to the study of the field and the related scholars, whereas the former is based on leadership style. One does thus not contradict the other, as could be the impression at a first glance.

The heterogeneity of leadership in the United States is further confirmed by a study on cross-cultural organizational behavior in which Gelfand et al. (2007) found, for example, differences between Anglo Americans and Asian Americans in terms of intrinsic motives for
autonomy, competence, and relatedness. However, Hoppe and Bhagat (2007) did find some of the most frequently used characteristics to describe outstanding leaders across sub-cultures in the United States, which are performance orientation, sacrificial, inspirational and visionary leadership, decisiveness and integrity. Generic suggestions about leadership in the United States is thus having a strong desire toward action, execution and results; emphasizing work and career over personal and family life; possessing an orientation toward task over relationship and competition over collaboration; stressing performance, change and competition; and short-planning (Hoppe & Bhagat). Furthermore, Anglo-Americans and Asian-Americans are still Americans, while Swedes and Danes as Scandinavians, which different in that Scandinavia is not a sovereign state or one national culture like the United States is.

Hoppe and Bhagat’s (2007) findings are reminiscent of Hofstede’s dimension of masculinity, which measures whether a society endorses earnings, recognition, advancement and challenge rather than relationships, cooperation, living area, and security (Suutari, 1994). Masculine countries thus strive for a performance-driven society in which behaviors such as being decisive and aggressive are valued in addition to an emphasis on money over leisure and living in order to work (Hofstede et al., 2012).

In a comparative study between leadership in Western Europe and in the U.S. and Japan, Calori and Dufour (1995) suggest it is more important for leaders in Western Europe to see the individual follower and his or her fulfillment, compared to the United States where the follower is considered more as a resource. Leaders in Western Europe are, furthermore,
better negotiators as they spend more time on negotiations at all levels within the organization and were found to be better at applying cultural diversity compared leaders in the United States, where the U.S.-leadership style tends to be exported to the foreign affiliates. Europeans tend to decentralize leadership and accept diverse leadership, which also can be a weakness. Calori and Dufour (1995) further suggest the multitude of leadership traditions in Europe provide more opportunities for leaders to learn and develop as leaders, which, in turn, improves European leaders’ ability to handle conflicting demands while leaders in the United States tend to choose between extremes in terms of leadership styles (Calori & Dufour, 1995).

In a European sub-sample of the GLOBE-study, Brodbeck et al. (2000) identified characteristics that facilitated outstanding leadership as well as characteristics that impeded outstanding leadership, also referred to as prototypicalities or the extent to which a leader’s behavior is regarded as exemplifying how group members should behave. In regard to Nordic Europe, Brodbeck et al. (2000) suggested characteristics that facilitate outstanding leadership are integrity (honest, sincere, just, trustworthy); inspirational (enthusiastic, positive, encouraging, morale booster, motive arouser, confidence builder, dynamic, motivational); visionary (foresight, anticipatory, prepared, intellectually stimulating, future oriented, plans ahead); team integrator (clear, integrator, subdued, informed, communicative, coordinator, team builder); performance (improvement, excellence and performance oriented); decisive (willful, decisive, logical, intuitive); non-autocratic (not autocratic, dictatorial, bossy, elitist, ruler, or domineering); participative (non-individual, egalitarian,
non-micro manager, delegator).

Slightly facilitating prototypicalities were collaborative (group oriented, collaborative, loyal, consultative, mediator, fraternal); diplomatic (diplomatic, worldly, win/win problem solver, effective bargainer); administrative; conflict avoider; self-sacrificial; humane; and modesty. Slightly impeding outstanding leadership were autonomous (individualistic, independent, autonomous, unique); status conscious (status conscious and class conscious); and procedural (ritualistic, formal, habitual, cautious), while directly impeding to outstanding leadership were face saver (indirect, avoids negatives, evasive); self-centered (self-interested, non-participative, loner, asocial); and malevolence (irritable, vindictive, egoistic, non-cooperative, cynical, hostile, dishonest, non-dependable, intelligent).

In a similar study using prototypicalities in regard to leader perception, Gerstner (1994) found the most prototypical traits for effective leaders in the United States were being perceived as determined, goal-oriented, verbally skilled, industrious and persistent, in that order. Although Gerstner points out the aim of the study was not to establish leader prototypes by country, the results still show aspects that are in line with other findings in regard to leaders in the United States such as suggested by Hoppe and Bhagat (2007) in the GLOBE-study.

As such, it could be suggested there are significant differences in leadership and culture between the United States and Scandinavian countries such as Denmark and Sweden. Although all three are considered as highly individualistic and share some cultural
dimensions, research shows there are similarities as well as differences. However, it is often
assumed Scandinavian cultures are similar to the United States, possibly based on the many
suggested this is due to a horizontal orientation of individualism and collectivism (such as in
Scandinavia) versus a vertical orientation (such as in the United States). Individuals in
horizontal societies value equality and view self as being equal to others. Vertical societies,
on the other hand, view self as being different from others along a hierarchy and believe that
rank has its privileges (Triandis, 1995 as cited in Nelson & Shavitt, 2002).

Social context

For this study, some of the absences or layers inherently present in the experience of
the leaders consist of the unique attributes of each respective country and how the broader
social and cultural context of the society impacts individual values as well as the way in
which organizations promote or foster values pertaining to ALT. As previously mentioned,
Denmark, Sweden and the United States are often perceived to be similar countries, although
the latter is described as a vertical culture towards the former two, which are both described
as horizontal cultures, although all three on the individualist end of the spectrum (Triandis &
Gelfand, 1998).

Triandis and Gelfand (1998) suggest horizontal individualistic cultures are
characterized by a view of all people as equal while at the same time believing each person is
unique. This can be seen in both Denmark and Sweden, with a strong principle about
equality underpinning the societal context. Both being countries with strong social-
democratic political movements during the 20th century, Esping-Andersen (1990) suggest these welfare states are based on the principle of universalism that entails all citizens’ access to benefits and service “that would promote an equality of the highest standards, not an equality of minimum standard needs as was pursued elsewhere” (p. 27). As such, access to quality healthcare is granted to all citizens, as is higher education. In both Sweden and Denmark, university is free of tuition to all inhabitants of the EU. Parental leave is a right of both women and men.

Both Sweden and Denmark are characterized by a high unionization rate of over 70% in both countries (www.ilo.org). The history of the union as incremental in protecting workers’ rights and collective negotiations is furthermore similar in both countries. The role of the union in Sweden is preeminent, and the union exerts political power. Unions and employers work more like partners. Behind, for example, the Employment Act (Medbestämmande-lagen, MBL), the idea is that employees, through the union, are given an insight into the company and can be a part of the decision-making process. Denmark has a similar collaborative nature of the relationship between employer and unions, with the two as partners rather than opponents (www.ilo.org).

Denmark employs a different model based on the flexicurity-model, which combines a flexible labor market with more market-driven hiring and firing procedures. While still maintaining generous social security and active labor market policies, Denmark combines flexibility and security together with an active labor market policy, also called The Golden Triangle (www.denmark.dk). Wilthagen and Tros (2004) suggest the most important
implication of flexicurity in Denmark is the shift from job-security towards employment security. The flexible rules for hiring and firing are thus combined with unemployment security, which can be up to 90% for the lowest paid workers. This model is in consensus with the unions, which, as in Sweden, play a pivotal role in the Danish labor market, with a high level of union membership among Danish workers.

In contrast, vertical individualistic cultures are characterized by people’s view of others as distinct while at the same time being “the best” in relation to others. This is illustrative of the United States which is categorized as a liberal welfare state based on market dominance and private position, which “effectively contains the realm of social rights, and erects an order of stratification that is a blend of a relative equality of poverty among well-fare recipients, market differentiated welfare among the majorities and a political dualism between the two” (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 27).

Public schooling is free in the United States as well as in Sweden and Denmark. While public schools in the United States are locally funded usually from property taxes and rewarded based on high performance through programs, Danish and Swedish public schools are nationally funded based on the number of students (Ravitch, 2010; www.denmark.dk; www.swedenabroad.se). It seems evident that the risk of school stratification is far less in the two Scandinavian countries, while the tie to property taxes in the United States could foster social inequality due to the difference in quality among schools because of unequal funding.

In terms of higher education, Bradford, Hägglund and Lancashire (2008) found an
inexpensive undergraduate education in the United States is at least $3,400.00 per academic year (University of Central Florida), towards the tuition-free Danish and Swedish universities.

In terms of healthcare, the spending on health care (as percent of GDP) in the United States is the highest in the world; the United States spent 17.6% of its GDP on health care in 2011, compared to 11.1% in Denmark and 9.6% in Sweden (OECD Health Data, 2012). In spite of high spending, United States health care is not accessible to all, and the United States is one of the few countries without universal health coverage within OECD (www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org), although this may change with the help of the Affordable Care Act.

Job security and labor politics are relatively less regulated in the United States compared to, in particular, Sweden, while the Danish model is closer to the United States model. However, while the Danish model combines generous unemployment benefit, the United States model does not. The unemployment benefits are further conditioned by number of weeks by a certain number of hours, for example. State and federal laws prohibit employers from relying on certain justifications for firing employees, such as discrimination or retaliation (www.dol.gov) but the principle of at will employment is an underpinning principle to employment in the United States.

Membership in unions is low, averaging 11.3% (www.bls.gov), and employers have a legal right to resist unionization. Unions do undertake collective bargaining. However, an important difference between the countries is that while there are regulated minimum wages
in the United States, in Denmark, the minimum wage is negotiated between unions and employer associations, while in Sweden, these are set by annual collective bargaining. Although there are health and safety laws that protect workers in the workplace as well as provide protection from exploitation (through the Fair Labor Standards Act) and unfair treatment (through the National Relations Labor Act and antidiscrimination laws), losing one’s job in the United States could mean no health insurance and can furthermore “be treated as a function of both replacement job prospects and access to sources of income (livelihood) that do not depend on finding another job” (Andersson & Pontusson, 2007, p. 215). If the person in question has a family and is a provider for the family, this could, in turn, affect the entire family in different ways, (e.g. whether family members were on the same health care insurance, or whether they have children in college and are responsible for paying their tuition).

**Culture**

Another absence that can be ascribed to the experiences of the leaders in this study is culture. As Ladkin (2010) suggest, culture “as a socially constructed phenomenon, [it] operates largely through its absence” (p. 42). Leaders internalize the cultural values and practices where they grow up (Dorfman et al., 2012). An important finding in the GLOBE-study was, however, that culture does not predict leader behavior, but rather leader expectations (Dorfman et al., 2012). Through the GLOBE-study, seven culturally contingent leadership dimensions were identified that fall into the six global dimensions. The leadership dimensions ranked the highest by both the Nordic and the Anglo cluster were *participative*
style (the United States and Nordic) and team-oriented style (Nordic). However, Hoppe (2007) points to how the position of a cluster within a style signals the relative importance of that style compared to the other styles for that cluster. Therefore, the performance-oriented leader style ranks in effect the highest for the Anglo cluster, indicating that this style is more important to the Anglo cluster than any of the other styles, while Denmark and Sweden, clustered in the Nordic Europe group, ranks future orientation, gender equality and institutional collectivism as highest.

The performance-oriented style (called "charismatic/value-based" by GLOBE) stresses high standards, decisiveness, and innovation; seeks to inspire people around a vision; creates a passion among them to perform; and does so by firmly holding on to core values. The Nordic cluster, however, ranked the team-oriented style and the participative style. The team-oriented style instills pride, loyalty, and collaboration among organizational members and highly values team cohesiveness and a common purpose or goals. The participative style encourages input from others in decision-making and implementation and emphasizes delegation and equality (House et al., 2004).

Although there may be further absences or layers to each individual leader based on what is going on in their private lives thereby affecting them personally, the above-described phenomena of culture and societal context are reasonably certain to make up each individual’s absences or layers of which they do not think. Leaders further operate within an organizational context which scholars suggest also has an impact on their leadership (Nohria & Khurana, 2010; Schein, 1994).
Organizational culture

Organizational culture is based on shared assumptions, beliefs and values; paradigms are reflections of the broader cultural paradigm (Schein, 1994). Scholars have discussed whether leaders shape the organizational culture, a popular notion within change management literature (see Schein, 1994; Yukl, 2013; Bass, 1990) or whether the organizational culture shapes leadership. Yukl (2013) suggest it’s a bit of both: culture shapes leaders, but over time leaders can also influence culture. Walumbwa et al. (2010) further suggest leaders are important as they “create organizational cultures and practices that determine whether employees are more or less involved in decision making processes” (p.905). Schein (1990) suggest organizational cultures can be “weak” or “strong,” implying that leaders can shape “weak” cultures while “strong” cultures shape the leader. Alvesson (2002) suggests that as much as “organization specific cultural ideas and meanings in various ways direct and constrain managerial behavior and leadership” (p. 107), leaders can pass on or modify organizational culture through how they behave and being a role model. Thus, it is clear that the organizational context impacts leadership and is often neglected in many leadership studies (Alvesson & Svenningsson, 2003).

Building a strong organizational culture is almost a mantra within business literature, and in recent years, it could be suggested that the importance of building a strong global organizational culture has been added to the mantra. However, in a study by MIT, it was found that global organizational culture is rather the “exception than the rule,” critiquing the simplicity of viewing organizational cultures as “weak” or “strong,” which the authors deem
Researchers found that organizational cultures in global organizations can be categorized based on the degree to which an organization shares values and practices throughout the organization, how core values are localized, or if core values are continuously reconciled with local realities (Levy, Taylor & Boyacigiller, 2010).

Organizational culture is an infinitely more complex topic than what is suggested here. However, for the sake of the purpose of this study, organizational culture is included as a reflection that leaders operate in a context where certain behavior or attitudes may be promoted or hindered by the culture based on the view that organizational cultures are reflections of the broader cultural context. Below is an illustration of the cultures within which leaders move and how two leaders in different cultural contexts could find themselves in terms of the organizational culture. The figure does not reflect to which degree or how deeply shared core values are. What is reflected is the distinction between cultural universalities and cultural specifics and how organizational culture lingers in the realm of the other contexts.
Figure 3. Interception of cultures: Leaders within one organization positioned in different cultures.
Scholars suggest both organizational and national culture impacts leadership (Hofstede, 1980; Schein, 2004; Javidan et al., 2006). Both Hofstede’s monumental study as well as the GLOBE-study incorporates both although with the difference in dimension: while Hofstede contends organizational culture and national culture cannot be measured as similar phenomenon but rather that organizational culture should be measured through a set of practices while national cultures should be measured through a set of values (Hofstede et al., 1990). In the GLOBE-study, on the other hand, researchers moved beyond this view and measured both as similar constructs (Javidan et al., 2006) and further found that national culture outdoes organizational culture (Dorfman et al., 2012).

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have discussed previous research in terms of leadership theories as well as provided a more in-depth understanding of ALT. When it comes to leadership theories and cross-cultural theories alike, there is a plethora of theories and studies. As such, an exhaustive discussion of either would require infinitely more space, which is further beyond the scope of this proposal.

As such, I have sought to provide a comprehensive overview of some of the most dominant leadership theories during the past decades and furthermore described the conceptual framework used in this study, ALT.

In regard to cross-cultural studies, I have discussed one of the most influential and one of the most extensive and significant studies, the GLOBE-study and further described the rationale behind my choice of the GLOBE-study. As discussed above, the GLOBE-
project is also the most recent, which in itself is a valid reason given the dynamic nature of cultures. In addition, the GLOBE-study further explored cultural values and cultural practices, suggesting a more complex approach to a complex phenomenon such as culture than compared to Hofstede’s study.

Cross-cultural theory would thus suggest leaders in Denmark and Sweden may think differently from leaders in the United States about the underlying constructs to ALT. In analyzing the data, it was therefore important to think about how the cultural lens impacts ALT in each country.

In the next chapter I will discuss the theoretical framework phenomenology in depth and provide a description of research methods such as data gathering and analysis.
CHAPTER 3

Introduction

Qualitative research is a powerful tool to explore and understand more about our lives and the world in which we live (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2002). As Creswell suggests, “We consider qualitative research because we need a complex [italicized as in text] detailed understanding of the issue” (2007, p. 40). Qualitative research thus seeks to study human experiences, which clearly would be hard to approach quantitatively (Moustakas, 1994). Furthermore, in contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research does not seek to prove a theory or test a hypothesis, but allows for a fluid process in which new research questions may emerge as the study evolves (Merriam, 2002). As Alvesson and Spicer (2011) suggest, leadership studies demand an approach in which deeper meanings are understood, an approach which “involves listening to people in organizations and finding out when and why they talk about leadership, what they mean by it, their beliefs, values and feelings around leadership” (p.10), inherently implying the need for more qualitative studies.

The qualitative research method used in this study is phenomenology. A phenomenological study seeks “understanding about the essence and the underlying structure of the phenomenon” (Merriam, 2002, p. 38). The focus of phenomenology is thus the human experience as perceived by the individual him/herself (Savin-Bader & Major, 2013). Some choices are dependent on which phenomenological approach a researcher applies: in the transcendental application focus is on the life-world, where the hermeneutic traditions focus on lived experiences. As Finlay (2009) suggests, the difference between
exploring the *life-world* or the *lived experiences* is considerable: exploring the life-world of a person who has experienced a certain phenomenon is different in emphasis to exploring the experiencing of that phenomena.

Overarching principles for the phenomenological approach include phenomenological reduction, description, and the search for essence. Phenomenologists agree that “the point of phenomenology is to get straight to the pure and unencumbered vision of what an *experience essentially is* [italics as in text]” (Sanders, 1982). How to best apply the phenomenological approach in practice is, however, still debated, and many different approaches have emerged (Finlay, 2009).

In this chapter on methodology, I first discuss the two major types of phenomenology, transcendental and hermeneutic phenomenology as well as key scholars’ contributions to the field of phenomenological research including key terminology. This is followed by a description of data gathering methods, of the analytical procedures, and of trustworthiness and limitations.

**Phenomenological Approaches**

The father of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, saw phenomenology as a pure science, a science of essences, arriving at the essences through a process of reduction (Moustakas, 1994). Influenced by Husserl’s phenomenology, Heidegger applied Husserl’s view to start, but eventually shifted the emphasis; while Husserl’s phenomenology sought to understand the phenomena, Heidegger’s phenomenology sought to understand being human (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).
Husserl’s phenomenology is referred to as transcendental, empirical or psychological phenomenology and Heidegger’s as hermeneutic. The two should not be used interchangeably, although transcendental and hermeneutic scholars alike agree to phenomenology as the study of lived experiences of individuals. For both Husserl and Heidegger, the experience of the human being thus lies at the heart of phenomenology (Merriam, 2002). To Husserl, however, the focus is on epistemology, while Heidegger goes beyond the epistemological questions and focuses on the ontological question.

A third and more recent type builds from hermeneutic phenomenology and seeks to describe how things appear to people. This type is based on the assumption that there are a limited number of ways for people to understand a phenomenon (Savin-Baden & Major, 2103) and aims to look for the variation within the experience. Phenomenography originated in Sweden during the 1970’s, and Marton (1981) suggested the following main distinctions between phenomenography and phenomenology: (1) it is not possible to separate the experience from what is experienced; (2) people’s experience of a phenomena is “in a relatively limited number of qualitatively different ways” (p. 181); (3) phenomenography is substance-oriented; (4) the aim is to describe the world conceptually as well as experientially including perceptions and thoughts.

The phenomenological debate hovers mainly around questions of method, knowledge and subjectivity. While some transcendental phenomenologists such as Moustakas (1994) and Giorgi (1985) offer a systematic method to phenomenological research, others apply an interpretative approach, using an iterative process of hermeneutics (Savin-Baden & Major,
Critics suggest the understanding of which approach to choose is crucial and unfortunately too often confused, simply referring to the umbrella term of phenomenology (Sanders, 1982). Creswell (2009) further suggests that phenomenology might be challenging to the novice researcher, implying the systematic approach in transcendental phenomenology then would be the preferable choice.

**Transcendental Phenomenology**

Transcendental phenomenology is grounded in post-positivist thought, whereas hermeneutic phenomenology, influenced by the philosopher Heidegger, is grounded in constructivist thought. This difference is illustrated by Moustakas’s (1994) systematic process and, respectively, van Manens’s (1990) dynamic interplay between research activities. Viewed in these perspectives, the two types can be placed on a continuum, where one end is represented by transcendental phenomenology being more influenced by positivist thought; on the other end of the continuum, hermeneutic phenomenology is influenced by philosophical thought.

To understand phenomenology, it is important to know the phenomenological terms that are central to the approach (Sander, 1982; van Manen, 1990). Depending on which type of phenomenological approach the researcher chooses, some terms are labeled differently. In transcendental phenomenology, Moustakas suggested (1994) understanding terms such as *epoche*, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation and synthesis are crucial to conducting phenomenological research. van Manen (1990), however, uses terms such as bracketing, interpretation and essence. Another important term to phenomenology is
intentionality. Starting with intentionality, these terms will be further explored in the next section of this chapter.

**Intentionality**

Phenomenology is intricately linked up with intentionality; intentionality as it applies to the theory of knowledge is a core doctrine to the approach (Sokolowski, 2000). In the Husserlian view, essence is linked to intentionality; being intentional means seeing the meanings and essences of the lived experience in one way or another (Dahlberg, 2006).

Moustakas (1994) suggests the knowledge of intentionality requires being present as an individual, not only to the world but also to one-self. Although slightly confusing as a term, it seems intentionality thus encapsulates “being” as opposed to “acting,” or the intention do to something. As Sokolowski (2000) suggested, the word “intention” needs to be understood from a mental perspective as “the conscious relationship we have to an object” (p.8). van Manen (1990) suggested intentionality “indicates the inseparable connectedness of the human being to the world” (p.181). Moustakas (1994) suggested intentionality consists of *noema* and *noesis*. The *noema* is the phenomenon, or the perceived meanings of the object. *Noesis* on the other hand, is the intentional experience, or the underlying meanings to the phenomenon. For every *noema*, there is thus *noesis*: on the noemetic side lies the exploration and understanding of the phenomenon as it is perceived. On the noetic side is the continual perceiving of the phenomenon, “an explication of the intentional processes themselves” (Husserl, 1977, p. 46). Understanding the textural
(noematic) and structural (noetic) dimensions of a phenomenon is important to understand the raw essence as perceived by human beings (Moustakas, 1994).

For Heidegger, intentionality is neither objective nor subjective, but rather “the essential though not most original structure of the subject itself” (p.65), replaced by the concept of care or a being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1982). Building from Heidegger’s thought, van Manen (1990) suggests the principle of intentionality is the “inseparable connection“ between the researcher and the world, where the researcher becomes part of the world, or even “becomes the world” (p. 5).

**Essence**

Essence, *eidos*, is the heart of phenomenology and is closely linked to bracketing. Husserl believed that to arrive at the true essence of the lived experience, it is necessary to suspend judgment (Creswell, 2009), as discussed above. van Manen (1990) suggested that phenomenological researchers are not interested in whether something actually happened and how it happened. In phenomenology, the essence of the experience is the focal point (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Moustakas (1994) suggested the essences of any phenomenon are never exhausted. As such, the researcher’s findings will reflect the essences of a particular phenomenon at a certain time, indicating the dynamic process of what being is. For van Manen (1990), the essence is found through the lived experience, the lived experience being the “breathing of meaning” (p. 36).

Essences belong to our everyday world; they are intertwined in the “flesh of the world”, in Merleau-Ponty’s (1968) words. This signifies understanding the deeper
underlying meanings that emerge through the lived experience and the phenomenon as well as through the relationship between researcher and individual. As such, phenomenology is a challenging form of inquiry as the researcher must continuously reflect and question his/her lived experience contemporaneously. As van Manen (1990) suggests,

\[ T \]o do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings. And since to know [italicized as in text] the world is profoundly to be [italicized as in text] in the world in a certain way, the act of researching-questioning-theorizing is the intentional act of attracting ourselves to the world, to become more fully part of it, or better, to become [italicized as in text] the world (p. 5).

A transcendental phenomenologist, however, will put his or her world in a symbolical bracket and suspend all preconceived ideas. The purpose of the process is to allow for new findings (Moustakas, 1994). As such, the process of bracketing, or epoché, is a way of looking at things as if they’re new and being open and curious to what is new. This process requires the researcher to be honest and transparent with the subject as well as with him or herself.

The bracketing process implies the researcher must objectively disconnect from his or her own subjectivity, which can be argued is impossible. As Creswell (2009) suggests, perhaps it is more a question of suspending our understandings reflectively. In whichever case, the researcher needs to be clear how to introduce personal understandings in the study. For phenomenological researchers, to arrive at the essence of the phenomenon, it is thus
important to question what we already know about things to avoid taking the meaning thereof for granted. Sokolowski (2000) offers an interesting view, in which he suggests the need for the “phenomenological attitude.” To Sokolowski, the phenomenological attitude means the ability to rise above one’s natural attitude and “distinguish and describe both the subjective and objective” (p. 50), implying both bracketing and the hermeneutic circle to be part of the research process.

**Bracketing (epoche)**

The difference in emphasis between the two major types of phenomenology becomes clearer when discussing bracketing, or *epoche*, a central element to phenomenology. Bracketing means the researcher must set aside personal experiences and focus on the participants’ descriptions of the experience (Creswell, 2007, 2009) in order to avoid imposing anything from without and let the experience of the phenomenon be explained in its own meaning (Merriam, 2002). Transcendental phenomenology thus relies on the process of *epoche*, but as Moustakas (1994) carefully highlighted, this is not the same as eliminating everything and denying the reality of anything. It is rather a process in which the givens are questioned: “The biases of everyday knowledge, as a basis for truth and reality” (p.85).

**Hermeneutic Phenomenology**

In the hermeneutic camp, Heidegger saw the researcher and his or her experiences as inseparable and argued it is impossible for the researcher to disconnect from experience (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). As Budd (2005) suggested, “The object perceived (the intentional object) [parentheses as in text] and the consciousness perceiving it, are not
separable” (p. 48). What Husserl, however, claimed was that phenomenology requires reflection of how we perceive and experience things (Finlay, 2009). In Heidegger’s view, however, the true approach to phenomenological method means not to follow a path, as “when we try to reflect on the originary dimensions of meaning of some phenomenon, we would abandon the single-mindedness of reflection for reflection relying on some preconceived method” (van Manen, 2006, p. 720).

While bracketing, or *epoché*, is central to transcendental phenomenology, the hermeneutic circle is central to hermeneutic phenomenology. In the hermeneutic circle, the researcher moves from exploring a component of experience to developing a holistic sense, only to go back to another component in an iterative cycle (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). The circle as a metaphor depicts the dynamic movement between the components and the whole within the understanding. As such, the nuance between the two appears as best described in the epistemological quest of Husserl versus the ontological (although not excluding the epistemological questions) quest of Heidegger.

**Phenomenological Reduction and Imaginative Variation**

Husserl’s idea of phenomenological reduction is the bracketing in which “objects are constituted as correlates of consciousness” (Heidegger, 1975, p. 21). Building from Husserl, Moustakas (1994) views phenomenological reduction as part of the systematic process together with bracketing, whereas Merriam (2002) suggests phenomenological reduction as another strategy in addition to bracketing. In phenomenological reduction, according to
Merriam (2002), the researcher continually returns to the essence of the experience to understand the inner structures and meanings, “in and of itself” (p. 26).

van Manen (1990) suggests reduction involves first of all the “awakening of a profound sense of wonder and amazement at the mysteriousness at the belief in the world” (p. 185), through which the researcher’s fascination with the question arises. To van Manen (2007), the reduction process is, however, never objective as even objectivity is still an “abstraction of how we see ourselves in the world” (p.17).

Both aspects are, however, crucial to the process of arriving at the very essence of the lived experiences. If the data is objectified and structured, data could be missed from perspectives due to context and due to the circumstance of the data collection, losing the value of the experience as experienced by the individual (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). If it is too loosely interpreted, it could fall prey to the researcher’s over-interpretation or over-reliance on personal opinions and experiences. This dilemma between the phenomenological open attitude as suggested by the hermeneutic phenomenologists and the systematic approach as suggested by transcendental phenomenologists appears to be one of the major challenges to phenomenology.

In the transcendental approach, following the phenomenological reduction, the next step is imaginative variation (Moustakas, 1994), also referred to as structural description. A crucial aspect to imaginative variation is describing the essential structures of a phenomenon such as how the participants experienced the phenomenon in terms of conditions, situations or context (Creswell, 2009). For the hermeneutical phenomenologist, however, “the
meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 37). Interpretation is, thus, not a separate procedure but rather an on-going reflection due to our “being-in-the-world” (Finlay, 2009).

The imaginative variation and interpretation posits on the one hand the descriptive analysis, on the other hand, the interpretative. The question is, how much can we in reality be descriptive without being interpretative? At the same time, we need to be aware of how preconceived ideas and experience may get in the way for understanding how the individual sees the lived experience. Thus, I agree with Finlay (2009) in perhaps the question is not being either/or, but being more or less, as was my intent in this study.

Through the phenomenological approach, authentic leadership can be explored from a more holistic way, with the core of the study being the lived experience of the leaders involved in the study. van Manen (2006) suggests, however, the goal of describing such things as a lived experience is in reality naïve, as data is not given to us in the moment of the experience but rather in a reflective stance where the interviewee consciously thinks about the experience. The rawness or pure essence of the data is thus gone, just like the elusive moment of the now (van Manen, 1990).

However, “the project of phenomenological reflection and explication is to effect a more direct contact with the experience as lived” (p. 78), embedded in a nest of invisible layers, or absences as Ladkin (2010) suggests. As a consequence, the meaning of a phenomenon can never be one-dimensional. Sokolowski (2000) uses the metaphor of a cube to describe the multi-dimensionality of the phenomenon; if you look at the cube, you see
different angles, or perspectives, yet never all of them at once, although we co-intend the different sides are there, knowing it is a cube. From the different angles, you can hold the cube, and you can see how the sides take on different aspects, illustrating there are more than one view of the side. The sides and aspects are all distinctive although all related to the same phenomenon, the cube. Sokolowski (2000) refers to the cube as a way to show how our perceptions are mixes of absences and presences, or what I previously referred to as invisible layers. For the phenomenological researcher, the understanding of the absences and the presences in each individual’s perception of the phenomenon at study is thus crucial to arrive at the essence.

**Participant Recruitment**

A common qualitative sampling strategy is to “study a small number of special cases that are successfully saying something” (Patton, 2002, p. 7), as it is the quality of the insights that are important and not the quantity. As such, the participant recruitment for this study aimed at identifying “good” leaders, where “good leadership” was in alignment with factors such as self-awareness, expressed beliefs and morals, listening, objectivity, openness, trustworthiness, and honesty. The recruitment of leaders relied on recognized experts within the field of leadership and HR. Five experts were involved in identifying leaders: two in Denmark, one in Sweden, and two in the United States. The experts identified in total 10 leaders per country, all of whom participated in the first phase of data collection. The criteria for selecting the leaders were based on the assumption that the experts have the adequate
knowledge and expertise for evaluating what is effective and/or good leadership. Once I identified the leaders, the experts’ role was terminated.

Ten leaders each in Denmark, Sweden and the United States were identified for a total of 30 leaders. The leaders were 19 men and 11 women, all aged 40+; they all held upper mid- to executive positions within their organizations. Organizations ranged from academia, corporations and non-profit. Once the participants agreed to participate, they received a letter with information about the study and the two phases involved in the process as well as the estimated amount of time to commit. With the letter, they received a link to the questionnaire, distributed using Qualtrics, together with the Informed Consent Form as approved by IRB. Walumbwa et al.’s (2008) Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) was used. The ALQ consist of two elements, one based on followers’ responses and the other a self-based assessment. For the purpose of this study, only the self-based side was used. The reason is that this study’s purpose was to explore authentic leadership, as it is perceived through the leader’s lived experience and not how it transferred to followers.

There are other instruments building from ALT such as Neider and Schriesheim’s (2011) Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) or the Spanish PLQ (Psychological Capital Questionnaire) which build from the four constructs of self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience (Azanza, Dominguez, Moriano & Valero, 2014). The ALQ was selected due to its reliability and validity. The ALQ is a validated, theory-based instrument that consists of 16 items that measure the four underlying constructs to ALT (Avolio et al., 2009). Furthermore, based on Neider and Schriesheim’s thorough factor analysis of the ALQ compared to the
ALI, the validity of the ALQ was yet confirmed. The ALQ has further been validated in different cultures such as Kenya and China and it has been found that the core components of the basic factor structure may, indeed, generalize across cultural contexts (Walumbwa et al., 2007).

The questionnaire served as baseline data to identify which individuals in the group to interview. A second purpose of the questionnaire was its use as an additional source of information during the analysis process. Through the information gathered in the questionnaires, I could connect with the in-depth findings from the interviews to further understand possible cultural or contextual aspects. The sample size was identified based on suggested sampling sizes for qualitative studies to provide expected reasonable coverage of AL given the purpose and scope of the study and as agreed with the dissertation committee.

For maximum variation of sample, once the participants had responded to the questionnaire in the first phase of the study, the two leaders with the highest score and the two leaders with the lowest score were selected to participate in the second phase of the study. The total group of leaders was 12: eight men and four women. In regard to the ratio men/women per country, Danish leaders were three men and one woman, Swedish leaders were also three men and one woman, and U.S. leaders were two men and two women. Leaders’ positions ranged from upper- to mid-management (equivalent to Director-level) to executive management (equivalent to CEO and president). Participants’ age range was 40+ and spanned a variety of organizations (Table 6).
Table 6

Participant overview per country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Pseudonyms</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Organization Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Merethe</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kenn</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ole</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Per</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Johanna</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anton</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Måns</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jakob</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Academia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teresa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Academia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Business/Non profit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of the ALQ were thus mainly used to identify leaders for the in-depth interview. However, the results of the questionnaires also served as a secondary source of data in terms of understanding differences and similarities between the three groups from a cultural perspective. Results showed that the five leaders that ranked as the most authentic, based on their self-assessments, were spread throughout the countries. No one country thus demonstrated more authenticity than another. In terms of highest ranked construct within ALT, the United States and Swedish groups both ranked Internalized Moral Perspective, while the lowest was Balanced Processing. For the Swedish group, Balanced Processing and Relational Transparency ranked the same.

For the Danish group, the highest construct was Self-Awareness and the lowest Balanced Processing. A caution is however in place here: the word “lowest” only serves to
indicate the position within a group of authentic leaders and does not mean that authenticity was low per se. Results between 16-20 indicate a high level of authenticity as suggested by ALT. As illustrated in the table, the differences in score between the three countries were marginal, 0.63 between the highest and the lowest score (see Table 7).

Table 7

*Overview over ALQ Average Rankings per Country*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>U.S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>16.25</td>
<td>16.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalized Moral Perspective</td>
<td>15.75</td>
<td>17.25</td>
<td>17.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced Processing</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>14.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Transparency</td>
<td>16.50</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Average</td>
<td>16.44</td>
<td>16.38</td>
<td>15.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| % *                       | 82.19%  | 81.88% | 79.06%|

*= 100% ALQ would indicate resp. had answered 5 (strongly agree) to all questions in the questionnaire

**Data Gathering Methods**

To collect data for this study, depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the leaders who either ranked as lowest or highest within their group. Most interviews were conducted on-site in their respective country although a few of them had to be conducted via Skype due to practical logistics and unforeseen conflicting schedules.

The interviews were one-on-one, semi-structured interviews in which the participants were asked broad and general questions as suggested by Moustakas (1994). The purpose of
the face-to-face interview was to probe deeply how the leaders view their leadership and understand what the meaning of the underlying constructs such as self-awareness means to them. All interviews were conducted in their own language. As such, Danish leaders shared their stories in Danish, Swedish leaders shared their stories in Swedish, and leaders in the United States shared their stories in English. Knowledge of the language per se might however not be sufficient to grasp the local nuances of meaning as conveyed through everyday personal language and understand the “words” beyond the spoken as it is communicated through the facial expressions, body language, use of tone of voice or melody. As Merriam (2002) suggest, although in relation to ethnography, in order to understand a culture, the researcher must spend time with the group. In this case, as a researcher, I was able to arrive at deeper meaning behind the world as an active member of the cultural fabric in each country: a native Swede growing up in Denmark, moving back to Sweden, later moving to the United States and from there move back to Sweden and later Denmark, only to move back to the United States.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and then sent to the leaders for member checks which were followed up by email. The average interview time was 1 and a quarter hours, and the total interview time was 15 and three-quarter hours of conversations.

van Manen (1990) suggests the interview serves different purposes in hermeneutic phenomenological research; it can be used to explore and gather narratives to develop a “richer and deeper understanding of a human phenomenon” (p. 66) or it can be used to understand how an individual create meaning of a lived experience. For the purpose of this
study, the purpose of the interview was both; to understand the phenomenon of leadership better through the participants’ stories as well as to understand how leaders created meaning of authentic leadership as they lived it, through their experience of leading. It is fundamental to stay close to the lived experience as it is immediately lived, which may be challenging in the reflective nature of the interview.

As the approach selected for this study is the transcendental type of phenomenology, an important aspect to the interviews is bracketing. However, as a researcher, I also confer with the hermeneutic view. As Creswell (2009) implies, the choice between the two is, in essence, an ethical issue to which there is no right answer, where the researcher must decide how personal understandings will be introduced in the study. For this study, I have kept a journal during the research process to reflect on my own understandings and lived experience of authentic leadership in an attempt to reflect on and set aside any preconceived notions. The journal has thus served as a tool for questioning and reflection, in which I also applied pre-post and post reflection to understand my own interpretations of the phenomena.

The questionnaire responses, audiotapes and transcripts were stored in files on my personal computer, which I keep in my home office. The files were backed up as to prevent any potential lost files and I developed a master list of the various types of materials, such as transcribed interviews and tables of statements and themes.

The audio files were also stored in my home office and were furthermore coded in order to protect participants’ anonymity. Once the audiotapes had been transcribed verbatim
and verified with participants, the audiotapes were deleted on my computer as well as on the iPhone voice recorder.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

As previously mentioned, I have applied the systematic method as suggested by Moustakas (1994) using the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen model. In Moustakas’ (1994) Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen model, there is also a step that includes the co-researchers. In the phenomenological tradition, the subject is often referred to as co-researcher. The steps in the model are:

1. Using a phenomenological approach, I provided a full description of my own experience of the phenomenon.
2. Using the verbatim transcripts, I:
   a. Considered each statement with respect to significance for description of the experience.
   b. Recorded all relevant statements.
   c. Listed each non-repetitive, non-overlapping statement. These are the invariant horizons or meaning units of the experience.
   d. Related and clustered the invariant meaning units into themes.
   e. Synthesized the invariant meaning units and themes into a description of the textures of the experience, including citations, using the qualitative research software ATLAS.ti.
f. Reflected on my own textural description. Constructed a description of the structures of my experience through imaginative variation.

g. Constructed a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of my experience.

3. From the verbatim transcripts of the experience of each of the other co-researchers, completed the above steps.

4. From the individual textural-structural descriptions of all experiences, integrated all individual descriptions into a universal description of the experience representing the group as a whole.

Although only parts of step 2 are practically feasible in terms of participants’ involvement, my intention has been to use the steps according to the modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Model as much as possible. However, the participants in this study were not co-researchers in the full sense of its meaning, but rather were involved through member checks throughout the process. To illustrate the procedure of how I worked with the raw data, I have included tables that illustrate the process of significant statements and the themes that emerged.

**Researcher Role and Subjectivity**

In my understanding of the world, reality is socially constructed. What is real is determined by our perceptions and how we create meaning. Creating meaning, or making sense, is, in turn, formed by our backgrounds and social and cultural heritage as well the contextual setting in which we find ourselves. Thus, as it is the individual who creates his or
her own reality, there cannot be a right or wrong reality; secondly, this further signifies reality is not limited to just one. Reality is what the individual perceives it to be and what meanings he or she creates of that. However, individuals do not operate alone in a vacuum, unaffected by others. The social construction of reality also takes place through the interaction with others.

How did authenticity enter my life? Consistent with the stories of the leaders involved in this study, understanding leadership from a personal perspective evolves from your journey in life. In my own experience, as a first-time leader in my late twenties, the tumultuous and confusing years of losing my own sense of self led me to the need to find me, in the midst of the corporate rat race, political games and painful experiences of broken trust. In embarking on this journey, little did I know how long it would take and the existential magnitude of self-reflection, and discovery. Essentially, it was the lack of authenticity that propelled me into a change of path, although I was not aware of the importance of authenticity to me for a long time.

In essence, I believe many of us are run by fear. Society has many hidden norms that so many of us comply to and accept without hesitation: fear of not standing out, fear of losing face, or fear of not being seen. Focus is put on being the best, being unique, perform, “fake it till you make it”. We measure others and ourselves by the accolades, awards, recognition we receive. And we forget to applaud the individuals for who they are, for the sheer being, unless they themselves call attention to it. My hope is that with the increasing focus on
authenticity, in a realistic perspective, we can start shifting the focus from performance to living authentically without fear.

A crucial part to the phenomenological approach is to understand the underlying assumptions of the lived experience and how the researcher’s assumptions may interfere with the understanding of the other individual’s assumptions. As experience has taught me, people’s perceptions differ, and as such, it is important to the process to be critical of how easy it is to assume that my own, firmly-embedded values and beliefs are shared by others.

However, my own experience from leader positions within organizational contexts can be an asset as well as a limitation. As an asset, I believe my previous experience in regard to my understanding the complexities of the organizational context and the impact thereof, as well as of the cultural contexts in which I will conduct my study enrich the study. It was important to me to be aware of preconceived ideas that stemmed from my own experience and may have otherwise hindered me from hearing the individual’s perceptions. On the other hand, while being sort of an insider to the extent that I understand the challenges a leadership role involves in a contextual setting, my previous experience may also make me hear or see certain aspects from a perspective based on the specific context in which I operated.

As a researcher, I wanted to gain access to the individuals who are perceived as authentic leaders to understand what meaning they create, what authentic leadership is really like for them. My particular interest in this study is to capture the essence of how leaders
create meaning of the underlying constructs to ALT in three different cultural contexts, as they perceive it and understand it through their words.

As previously discussed, depending on where on the continuum the phenomenological researcher positions himself or herself, the researcher must either engage in the bracketing process and allow for “a fresh start” or be fully immersed and part of the world of the participant. As Moustakas (1994) suggests, it is “an ability to gaze with concentrated and unwavering attention”, “a presuppositionless state” through which the researcher can see with fresh eyes and be open to receive whatever emerge in consciousness (p. 89).

Phenomenology assumes that knowledge stems from experience (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Our experience is part of us as human beings, whether immersed in consciousness yet or not. As such, it would appear disconnecting from a part of oneself is infinitely difficult, if not impossible. Moustakas (1994) does, in fact, say, “it is rarely perfectly achieved” (p. 90). Given this statement, I have thus positioned myself somewhere in the middle as a phenomenological researcher. I will lean on the transcendental methodology as suggested by Moustakas (1994), while still maintaining a certain hermeneutic touch due to my belief that although engaged in a bracketing process, my experience will still influence me in my role as a researcher, as Moustakas (1994) confirms.

Finlay (2009) critiques such a position as being “both naïve and confused” (p. 8). Being naïve and confused would, however, imply limited knowledge of phenomenology. This would, in turn, suggest a good knowledge of phenomenology would allow the
researcher to phenomenologically explore phenomenology, questioning the seemingly
either/or question between bracketing and hermeneutics. Creswell (2009) has, indeed,
suggested perhaps there is a need for a new way to look at this dilemma. Although Creswell
suggests this could be by “suspending our judgments in a reflective move that cultivates
curiosity” (p. 62), it could be suggested the suspension is but a nuance of bracketing, or
_epochs_. Perhaps it is rather time to explore whether a combination can be applied, which, in
essence, is what I am trying to achieve here.

Thus, I have engaged in a bracketing process to ensure my experience did not take
away from the experience of the participants in the study, to be able to see with fresh eyes,
and reflected on my understandings and preconceived ideas as well as my own lived
experience through the research journal. The journal has also served as an important part of
the research, as I have been able to go back and forth between journal, data and analysis, and
the different components in each, allowing for interpretation to emerge and deeper layers to
be discovered, thus creating, in a sense, my own hermeneutic circle.

**Trustworthiness**

To ensure the findings are meaningful and can be trusted, I have relied on the
standards Creswell (2007) uses to assess the quality of the study. These standards consist of
five questions. The first considers how the author has conveyed the understanding of the
philosophical tenets of phenomenology. The second question asks whether the phenomenon
of the study is comprehensible and the author has explained this clearly. The third question
asks what procedures the author has used to analyze data and the fourth considers if the
author gets across the overall essence of the participants’ experience and includes a textural and structural description of the experience. The last and final question considers the author’s reflexivity throughout the study.

**Limitations**

A major limitation to this study is that it is based on an assumption that the leaders have been open and honest, as their perceptions, feelings and thoughts are the main source of information for this study. The small number of participants also limits the generalizability of the study, while still well within the sampling range for phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2007). Furthermore, as recognized experts selected participants, it is a purposefully drawn sample of leaders. The study can thus not be representative as such for each nationality, but rather contributes to the growing body of literature addressing ALT and cross-cultural aspects.

An additional limitation was the limited time at disposal to conduct the interviews in Denmark and Sweden. However, thorough, advance planning helped schedule interviews, although unforeseen cancellations did alter the planning somewhat and a few interviews had to be using Skype. In comparing to the face-to-face interviews, this change did not impact neither the time spent with each participant nor the quality of the interview.

The major delimitation to the study is that I have collected data from parts of Scandinavia as opposed to all Scandinavian countries or Europe, for that matter. The reason for choosing Denmark and Sweden is as it was feasible to conduct research in terms of identifying leaders, travel and accommodation. This does not exclude that I would like to
take this study further in a next step and conduct the same study including the rest of Scandinavia as well as European countries.

It could further be questioned why the selected leaders are not within the same organization but rather span a range of different organizations. The rationale to this is that the focus of the study is on the lived experience of the leaders in the study, where authentic leadership is the phenomenon. The organizational context is thus not the focus, which, however, does not exclude considerations being made assuming the organizational context influences leadership.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have described the methodology used for this study, phenomenology. In describing the two traditional phenomenological approaches, I have sought to give the idea of a continuum between the two, rather than an either/or approach. The reason to this is while my belief in terms of subjectivity and the role of the researcher leans more toward the hermeneutic camp, I similarly believe in the systematic approach to a study. The Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen’s model for phenomenological research as suggested by Moustakas (1994), thus provide the research-model for the transcendental phenomenological analysis. However, considering my position of subjectivity and objectivity as a whole, I have also discussed the need to reflect and interpret my own understandings and assumptions throughout the research. Recognizing potential prejudices and bias helped collecting data with an open and fresh mind. As van Manen (1990) suggests, studying the lived experience, the researcher needs to needs to fully immerse in the “question of the meaning” of the
phenomenon (p. 53), in which nothing about the meaning of authentic leadership should be assumed or taken for granted, but where the meaning of authentic leadership should be found in the experience of authentic leadership.

In conclusion, as the world continues to become more interconnected, global skills will be necessary for leaders in the 21st century. ALT based on underlying constructs such as self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and moral beliefs would seem to foster global competencies as well. However, like the majority of leadership studies have been generated in the United States, so has ALT. It is, therefore, important to explore deeper to understand what meaning leaders in different cultural contexts create of the underlying constructs to the theory.

Denmark, Sweden and the United States are often grouped together in various cross-cultural studies and assumed to be quite similar. However, as a native Swede, having lived and worked in Denmark, now living and working in the United States, I can testify to the similarities as well as the many differences, not just between Scandinavian Denmark and Sweden towards the United States but also between Denmark and Sweden. Understanding the differences in interpretation of the lived experiences in different cultural contexts can thus contribute to the practical application of the study. Ultimately, I hope ALT indeed is a leadership theory for the future, although I agree with Alvesson and Spicer (2011) and the need to address leadership studies with a critical mind and thus explore the underlying assumptions to ALT as they manifest in different cultures.
CHAPTER 4

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore authentic leaders in Denmark, Sweden and the United States and how their lived experiences are or are not in alignment with ALT. The research questions guiding the study are 1) How do leaders in Denmark, Sweden and the United States talk about and understand the underlying constructs of ALT, as suggested by Avolio et al. (2004)? and 2) How do these leaders enact authentic leadership?

This study found that in answer to the first question, study participants seem to have a shared understanding of the four constructs in ALT, namely self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency. The answer to this research question was generated by the transcendental and in vivo analysis conducted on the interview data. Interestingly, in answer to question number two, and despite having a shared understanding of the constructs of ALT, the leaders in this study seemed to enact authentic leadership differently. The participants in the United States talked about being authentic from an individual perspective, while the Danish and Swedish participants talked about being authentic from a communal perspective. Thus, the embodiment of authentic leadership appeared in different forms depending on the country of the leader. The answer to this question was generated by the hermeneutic analysis conducted on the interview data, which will be presented in this chapter. Basically, this study found that culture does matter in living and enacting being an authentic leader.
In addition to answering the two research questions, there were three key findings from this study that contribute to the growing body of leadership, ALT, and cross-cultural literature:

1. Culture seems to matter in how authentic leadership is enacted, but culture may not matter in how authentic leadership is described. Leaders used the same words and expressions when describing authentic leadership, but used different words and expressions when talking about how they enacted authentic leadership.

2. Leader’s authenticity was indistinguishable between personal and professional persona. Being authentic was not bounded by work role.

3. The ALT model may need to add an additional construct (orientation towards others) to fully capture authentic leadership in a more comprehensive way.

The chapter is organized as follows: the first section presents findings from a hermeneutic iterative approach, and the second section illuminates the transcendental phenomenological approach. As such, both reflective-interpretation as suggested by van Manen (1990) and a systematic approach based on the modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen model as suggested by Moustakas (1994) have allowed for findings to emerge. Although the transcendental analysis was conducted prior to the hermeneutic analysis, this order will allow for the reader to get a sense of the whole person through the portraits that emerged from the hermeneutic analysis.

The two approaches will be followed by eidetic reduction, which is the pure essence of authentic leadership as experienced by the leaders who participated in this study. The chapter concludes with a summary.
The Hermeneutic Cycle

After undergoing the systematic approach as suggested by Moustakas (1994), interpretation of data was also derived through the hermeneutic circle. Moving back and forth between the parts and the whole of the interview thus allowed for naïve interpretation about the meaning of the lived experiences and helped formulate understandings of the leader’s being-in-the-world, in their worlds, in addition to the structural and textural descriptions as identified through the transcendental phenomenological approach. This analysis allows the reader to see the fullness of each participant and to understand (as much as possible) how it is to “be” the interviewee.

The audio files were particularly helpful in that they allowed me to be back in the moment of the interview, recollecting the sounds, the expressions, the gestures, the melody of the voice, and the pauses, immersing myself in the data as it unfolded through the voice of the leader. Following are twelve descriptions of the conversations that captured key understandings of the leaders. As such, the next sections present twelve mini-portraits of leaders, grouped by their respective country.

The purpose of these mini-portraits is to give readers a sense of the fullness of each leader’s life and work. After deep analysis and reflection, I selected the points of conversation that most powerfully exposed how the participant embodied authentic leadership. These snippets are presented below, and some are longer than others. I suggest to the reader to take time after each portrait to reflect and re-read the text. This may help
develop a connection to the participant and create a fuller understanding of the participant’s lived experience. To protect the participant’s anonymity, all names are pseudonyms.

**Danish Leaders: Ole, Kenn, Merethe and Per**

In this section, we meet Ole, Kenn, Merethe and Per, four Danish leaders who have each been recognized as authentic in their leadership.

Table 8

*Overview of participants in Denmark*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<th>Organization Category</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Per</td>
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<td>Business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ole**

Tension is present for Ole. Ole lives in Denmark with his family, “my beautiful family,” and has a new position in an organization which recently has been reorganized into a centralized organization. Ole speaks with disappointment with his organization, with himself. He thoughtfully answers my questions and often makes long pauses, asking me to clarify what I mean exactly. Ole talks about his new organization: “What I don’t like is the culture in the centralized organization, everything is to be counted, and weighed and measured…and if it can’t be measured, it doesn’t count. There is not much focus on the values that are important to me.” Ole’s voice is full of disappointment. “There should be
more trust and see and understand human values, and use them, I mean in a good way, use people’s potential…there’s a lot of focus on performance.”

When I ask Ole to describe what his values are, he says, “I think, as a starting point, I am trusting and I believe in people, that they know what they do,” saying further that “my starting point is not the controlling, my starting point is the coordinating.” He further talks about his disappointment with himself: “I should put my principles before my boss…it’s kind of an existential thought whether I should stand up and argue the things that I don’t stand for, as a leader.” He speaks with pauses, very thoughtfully and conveys the words with a sense of earnestness, of truth, his truth. I ask him if he is disappointed in others as well. He reflects before he answers and eventually says, “I don’t think I can expect of others to have the same values as I have…I turn it inward, I’m the only one who can do anything about it and take the consequences.”

Ole’s view of his leadership touches upon the existentialist perspective of asking “Who am I as a leader?” in a context in which Ole is clearly at tension with unaligned values. His leadership is a more inner-oriented experience of self, having ready access to his true self. This suggests Ole’s leadership from an ALT perspective is closely aligned with the construct of self-awareness.

**Kenn**

On another day, I meet with Kenn, a Danish business owner, in the airy offices outside of Copenhagen in the midst of the countryside. Authenticity is a salient feature in the conversation with Kenn, whose passion for his company shines through his eyes as he leads
me into the spacious conference room. He answers my questions with a lot of thought and often pauses to think before he answers, giving my questions good thought. Kenn describes two good leaders that have inspired him and when I ask how he felt, he answers that he felt “comfortable.” “What does comfortable mean to you?” I ask. “Comfortable means to feel ok with who you are, stand by the decisions you make, feel that you are part of a team and that your strengths are backed up and feel support from around you. That’s feeling comfortable, isn’t it?”

This learning is reflected in Kenn’s own approach to leadership. Kenn talks mainly about “we” and “us”: the importance of being a team and “playing up the various strengths in the team” is further enhanced through Kenn’s use of a soccer-metaphor about the famous Danish soccer-player, Michael Laudrup, in which he describes the meaning of a Laudrup-pass: “His team players looked really strong because he made at pass which was pretty easy to score on, so that thing with a ‘Laudrup-pass’ in that people score and then think they’re great although the pre-work has been done already” he explains and laughs.

To Kenn, in describing his leadership and his company, he says, “What you see is what you get”, expanding, “We are honest, authentic and I believe there is a great conviction in our dignity as leaders.” He paints the picture of a team outing in which the team spent a few days in Africa doing river rafting along the Nile and sleeping under the stars. “While some people probably prefer to stay in a five-star hotel with new sheets every morning, we’re perfectly ok with camping, being muddy and not take a bath for four days, together…that’s how authentic we are.”
Through Kenn’s stories, his authentic leadership seemingly develops in an external context and from a communal perspective where team trumps the individual and the team is the force, not the individual player on the team. An evident feature of Kenn is being himself, which suggests a key element of his leadership is aligned with the construct of self-awareness in ALT.

Merethe

Like Kenn, Merethe is very focused on her team. Merethe works in a Danish company with markets all over the world. Merethe explains how the company has an international culture, “and that means that when we communicate, we speak English.” Merethe further describes the organizational culture as very consensus-seeking, open and international, but also family friendly and social: “There are many social things I was part of, in particular in the beginning, we went running and on picnics together,” she recalls, and notes that when you get a family, priorities change. The family-friendly culture allows for flexibility and room for advancement, whether sideways or upwards. This is an organization with low turnover. As Merethe says, “People tend to stay.”

Merethe comes across as very balanced, pleasant, and genuine. She speaks in a low, quick voice. In her experience, leadership development is not high on the agenda in her organization; you rather need to seek it yourself. As such, she has been through, as she says “some situational leadership training”. She shares that to start, in her position, she was “looking mainly inward”. “Looking inward” to Merethe is about objectively looking inside into the group: “I think that is very natural when you have a group that sits in different places
around the world.” That was the first year, establishing the group; the following two years were about finding their place in the organization as a group. To Merethe, it was about “finding herself” during these times, indicating that she was reflecting on who she was as a leader. In terms of her personal development, Merethe notes she has “developed my own opinion, my own style” with time. “I am often told that I am very empathetic, I listen, and I think that is important. It could be that female value and the female intuition [enhances that],” she reflects.

When she talks about leaders who have inspired her, she mentions their openness and seeing the individual (human perspective) as the most influencing. Care about her followers is evident, and she shares how she prepares a lot for the annual employee development conversations:

It’s very important, and I follow up after 6 months. So we set some goals and we have the annual talk, and then we usually get together after the summer vacation, just to kind of, look each other in the eyes and where are we in regard to the individual goals and then at that occasion it comes very naturally to reflect over their well-being.

In Danish, the expression “look each other in the eyes” (at se hinanden i øjnene) is a way to say, “let’s be honest.” Merethe also follows up on new hires, “kind of after 3 months, [I ask for] some feedback in regard to how they experience the job…you know, when you’ve been in an organization many years you get a bit of a blurred vision…”

To Merethe, it is important to be who you are. “So there’s not some kind of layer…because then you have built that mutual trust so if you need anything, like if
something has become a little infected, then you can talk to the person without feeling that you lose face” and, further “people will also see through you if you’re not being true to who you are.”; “Trust,” she says,” has to be mutual…I think that is the foundation to many things.”

Being who you are also involves showing the real you, but she also mentions the tension that comes with that:

I can easily get carried away and sometimes you have to remind yourself that you are a leader…of course you need to be accessible and be able to talk with, but at the end of the day, you also need to be able to take that tough conversation. It’s a balance.

Merethe lends the idea of being oriented towards an inner perspective of self in terms of her leadership, which quietly emerges through what almost become side phrases or quick remarks. In line with her personality, which seemingly is to enhance the team and not take individual credit, she quietly reflects on who she is as a leader and how she can learn more. Through her reflection, the construct in ALT that is most closely aligned with her leadership is relational transparency.

Per

Per is a dynamic and outgoing leader, working in a global company. Self-awareness is a dominant facet of our conversation. He speaks with a clear voice, often pauses to reflect, and speaks with intensity and at times, passion. Leadership to Per is a huge interest and stems from an interest in people: “I’ve always been interested in a form of leadership that is engaging, you know, happy people must be fun to work with and luckily it shows that it’s
also the most productive.” He calls his view of leadership as performance management based: “To me a good leader is someone who can create meaning as to why we do what we do, and who creates commitment and result. And it should be fun along the way. But there also has to be some result.” Per describes how he has developed in his leadership from using what he calls “very basic tools”. He says, “I was a manager” and became a leader “who sets mission and visions…much more strategically thinking.” He says, “I believe in myself now, and the system confirms my leadership style now, before I had to look outside my locus of control for confirmation, I don’t need that anymore.” In describing how he has found this confidence in himself, he mentions tangible results of the past few years in terms of customer satisfaction and business: “And did I mention employee satisfaction is in the top ten in the entire company?” he asks with a grin. “That builds confidence. Together with me having been who I am throughout this journey, what you see when you see Per is what you get, that builds confidence!”

He also describes that sometimes he needs to be less authentic and that he has been advised to dampen his authenticity: “They said it demands of people that they interpret what I say, and you can’t expect that of people in the middle in the process to look up and interpret [change-related issue].” As he describes it, “But that’s what I get back to, these are good, intelligent people we have hired, of course they can handle it, if I follow up with them.” He continues to describe how he allows himself to believe that he can be exactly the way he is, even if outside expertise disagrees and even if the organizational culture is not aligned with such openness. Being true to who he is, is, however, important to Per: “If I can use the
advice and the culture so that it doesn’t limit me, and I can be the authentic leader I am, that
must be what I should follow.” He says, “I feel that I can relax at night, I can go to bed and
think that’s what you get when you work with Per.” In speaking of how he has developed
his leadership, he mentions the human perspective; it is okay for people to make mistakes.
Per has clearly reflected on his leadership.

As he recalls, speaking in present tense, “At one point [in my career], I seek some
external coaching,” which together with a leader assessment “reached me and grabbed a few
things [about me] that really inspired me.” He is clear on who he is as a person and as a
leader: “I think I’ve found that place in my career where things make sense.” A recent
learning experience for Per has been his own development in leading upwards. In describing
how he has developed in his leadership upwards, in relations to his leaders, he says he
recently had a real moment of self-awareness: “I looked at myself from the outside in one of
those meetings where I could see how I kind of went into a diva-attitude, and I simply didn’t
like that.” Further, he says, “I have also experienced other moments when I’ve found myself
on a learning streak and become aware about something, so learning and the dynamic around
myself, of being flexible, that’s been very developmental.”

To Per, the tipping point came through an executive development course. Before, “I
said things and did things [in my leadership] but then I started looking at myself, and to work
and study yourself, and be allowed to be reflective around leadership, that was a gift.” The
course boosted Per’s confidence and empowered him: “First half year I was probably pretty
quiet and I listened and listened, but then I started being called upon and wrote a few reports
and had a few opinions, and this in a group where most of them were 10-15 years older than I, and then pull it home with strategy, that was pretty cool…”

Per is clearly balancing an ongoing process of construction of self, which emerges through his stories, and inner reflection. With the ability and motivation to recall and process self-hypothesis, self to Per is known and readily accessible. From the perspective of ALT, a key element to Per strongly aligns with the construct of self-awareness.

In summary, a clear aspect to leaders in Denmark was the communal perspective of leadership, a strong orientation towards the team. In addition to this perspective, their authentic leadership was about being true to themselves. This was worded in different ways; one leaders’ tension with conflicting personal values and organizational values indicates a tension due to the inability of being true to who he was. Another leader’s focus on self-awareness and being honest, similarly showed a will to be true to himself. The salient feature of being true to oneself shows internal coherence and consistency among the Danish leaders.

**Swedish Leaders: Anton, Johanna, Måns and Jakob**

In this section we meet Anton, Johanna, Måns and Jakob.

Table 9

*Overview of participants in Sweden*

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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jakob</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Anton

Honesty is the red thread in my interview with Anton. When I ask Anton how he has developed in his leadership, he pauses for a second and reflects: “I don’t know…have I developed?” and laughs a little:

I think I’ve become better at it [leadership]. On the other hand, I’m also more authoritative, but my basic philosophy is that people around me feel good and have fun…they get a lot of freedom. I have a lot of trust in people and expect them to do what is expected of them.

This is something that is important to Anton, as he later describes how his father was equally concerned about people in his company but where his father got very disappointed in people, Anton talked about having a more rational approach:

I’m more…I realize people are only humans. People will fail, people, or not do what they’re supposed to, and there’s no use in getting mad, it’s better to tell [people] what I’m unhappy with, but do it in a constructive and sort of civil way.

Anton uses the Swedish word *rationell* (rational) and in translating his words, a first impulse is to use the word accepting. However, Anton’s choice of word conveys an important nuance as to him being accepting of people is more of a logic approach. I get a sense of reluctance in being overoptimistic and I get a sense that Anton has been disappointed in people himself.

While more accepting of people, Anton does share his disappointment with organizational politics in his organization, in particular the lack of openness:
I mean, I’m not really that impressed with leaders…sure, they have the knowledge and the background [for the job] but I can’t really say I find them that sharp. I think it’s because a lack of flexibility and understanding for how things can look different…but above all, I don’t think there’s any openness, people don’t dare to say things.

Anton’s leadership becomes operationalized in a context where he appears to feel up against politics and is disappointed by the lack of “real honesty”, as he calls it. To Anton, his authentic leadership is perhaps not so much the essentialist perspective of self, but rather develops in an external context, through a symbolic-self process, through the language he uses, his gestures, facial expressions and so forth. His concern for others suggests a key element to his leadership from an ALT-perspective could be balanced processing.

Johanna

Like Anton, Johanna works in a global company where she has been for many years and recently started in a new position. Johanna is pensive, and often says, “Let me think about that”, pausing after I ask my questions. Johanna explains how the organizational culture encourages leaders to delegate, build trust and commitment and “focus on the human being.” When talking about her leadership, she is very reflective and pauses often to think. “I think I’ve become more personal,” she says. “In the beginning, you’re pretty directed by the things you have to do…in the beginning I was probably more concerned with those things than with who I was as a leader.” She laughs slightly when she reflects on how she has developed over the years.
To Johanna, it is hard to recall leaders she feels have been great leaders, but she recalls a leader she had twenty years ago and this leader’s ability to be more human and personal: “She made you feel confirmed as a person, not just as a worker.” In her own leadership, Johanna has aspired to be interested in the individuals as human beings as well, “but I think it’s a little about how you are as a person, if you’re curious and have an interest in people, it’s probably easier.” She shares an experience of a bad leader, and how she felt that “you start doubting whether you can do your job, you lose your confidence and start doubting your competencies.” From this experience, Johanna says she knows what kind of leader she wants to be, but she also realizes the tension between being the leader you really want to be and delivering results. “Right now when my team is not where I want them to be, I feel myself moving towards being the kind of leader I don’t want to be… I think of that all the time, I have stop myself. But I also need to deliver [results].”

Johanna is quietly oriented towards inner experience of her authentic leadership although in her stories, her leadership is developed in the external context. Prompted by a need in the new workplace, she appears to have frequently renegotiated her sense of self as a leader, made sense of it and then applied it in her leadership. Her inner reflections in relation to others could suggest a propensity for relational transparency in terms of ALT.

Måns

Måns is a Swedish leader. He speaks in a calm and relaxed voice, sometimes chuckling with self-irony as he recalls a certain situation; Måns is very much about being himself and is humble in his approach, consciously not wanting to seem boastful. Måns, who
has been a leader almost his entire working life, was appointed a leadership role only a few months into his first job after graduating from college and has since continued a successful career. “Maybe I gave myself a leadership profile through my education without thinking about it” he reflects when describing his background. “I also dared to go to the organization and say, I want to change jobs, do you have anything exciting?””, which Måns describes as career “suicide” in this particular organization. When I ask where he thinks he has that courage from, what made him dare that, he says he thinks it’s because he is a confident person: “I feel pretty good about myself and I felt confident I’d find something else if this organization didn’t work out for me.”

In terms of personal development, Måns feels he is pretty much who he’s always been, but that he hopes he has become better at “dealing with people” and “read[ing] situations”:

I also hope I’ve learned from the feedback I’ve received over the years. I mean if you invite people to have an opinion, you will always find those who have a lot of opinions about your leadership and obviously you have to try and accept that.

Måns describes a situation where he was very disappointed how people gave him personal feedback: the management meeting was about to end and as Måns as the leader of the group wraps up, one person in the management team asks him to sit back down; they want to talk with him.

The management team had discussed this together, even had some sort of pre-meeting, something how they wanted me to go in and be more authoritative. I wasn’t
surprised to hear this from this person, who was doing most of the talking, and had he come to me directly, I would have seen it as more natural but it was bloody hard when it kind of got presented as this is what the entire management team thinks.

Måns emphasizes the word “bloody” as he recalls the situation, clearly deeply disappointed and hurt. It turned out to be mainly the doings of one person and after six months when Måns spoke individually with his management team, no one recalled the incident. “So then it felt like it was almost about making fun of me, and they really didn’t mean anything with it. You just don’t do that to people.”

Måns feels he has become much clearer on what he accepts and what he doesn’t accept. He describes how he likes to learn from when he sees someone doing something really well while at the same time cautions against empty buzzwords,

Sometimes you can be fascinated by people initially because they say what sounds like really wise things, but that after a while just turn out to be empty buzzwords, like this is not really something this person believed in or is applying, but just describes some sort of idealized leadership with a number of catchy phrases that sounds good and trustworthy.

Being honest and being true to oneself is as important to Måns himself as it is that other people are being who they are.

Måns appears to base his leadership on an existential view of self, asking “Who am I as leader?” and being open and humble to input. A significant element to his leadership viewed from the perspective of ALT is balanced processing, as he appears to be readily able
to access his true self while aware of how to operationalize within particular situations and contexts.

**Jakob**

Jakob speaks with a clear and steady voice, filled with determination and passion about what he does. Being real is a significant element to the conversation. There is no doubt in his voice. In his leadership, Jakob notes how self-awareness and communication are fundamental, “And which you always practice, you’re never done learning” and “it’s important to listen to what other people say and work with feedback and learn about who you are.” Jakob describes how he is aware of strengths and weaknesses: “You learn more and more about yourself, and then you can also use your strengths and weaknesses in a better way.”

Values to Jakob are very important: “It always has been, and in particular when I started to be able to have an influence, I always started with values.” He continues, “It’s crucial to be able to gather around the right values as an organization and feel that these represent us as individuals and as an organization.” At the same time, Jakob is focused on delivery and on being involved with all stakeholders: “It can’t get too fluffy, we also must deliver [results].” But he is very clear about how he could never work in an organization where he did not share the same values: “I couldn’t, for example, work in a traditional type of [the sector he is in], where people are just a commodity…our purpose here sees to the bigger picture.”
A pervading value to Jakob is “seeing and believing in people”, what he also refers to as the human perspective. “Everybody has the ability [to do something] but people can have different prerequisites, to me it is very important that you see and believe in people.” He is proud of the current organization, where he has created a place for the human being: “If you ask people who’s been there a few years, to them it’s like night and day.”

His ethos is about “bringing out the good in people”, and he recalls an expatriate assignment, to which he refers as his “black period”, during which he was working with a leader who lacked any component of empathy: “I suffered from day one, it was unbearable, the environment was completely wrong for me, no humanity….” He says, “There was no way to influence [the environment].” Through his description of the situation, I can sense how he suffered during this period: “I mean, you’re not a good husband, you’re not a good dad…nothing’s good [in such a situation].”

Jakob’s view of his leadership appears to stem from a power of recalling and expressing stories of his life as a leader and key incidents that have formed his leadership identity. Through his words, a strong sense of presence emerges, present in the moment, outwardly focusing on the other rather than on himself. This could indicate balanced processing as being a key element to Jakob’s leadership, from the perspective of ALT.

In summary, among the Swedish leaders, a salient feature was the importance of honesty, which in some cases translated as being real or being oneself, and in others transpired through the conversation; being pensive or reflective signaled a desire to be very
honest with their answers to me. This would show a cohesive and internally consistent relation to all “being” authentic in the Swedish culture.

**United States Leaders: John, Teresa, Sharon and Matthew**

In this section, we meet John, Teresa, Matthew and Sharon.

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**Table 10**

*Overview of participants in the United States*

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<td></td>
<td>Teresa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Academia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Business/Non profit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**John**

John, a leader in the United States, speaks with a strong, straightforward and powerful voice. To John, leadership is a combination of personality, skills and circumstance. “That’s John’s little formula of leadership”, he laughs. “I was a terrible leader in the Army, for example, that just wasn’t my thing, I wouldn’t have succeeded had I stayed in that”, he explains as he describes a situation in which one of the commanding officers barked orders. “I walked away with thinking how, when you position somebody in a leadership position how bizarre people then can behave.” In reflecting upon the abusive use of power, he says “The issue is, how do you apply power in the right time and place and do it in sort of a civil way?”
When John talks about his leadership and describes different situations, his strong sense of principles shines through. As John explains, “A friend of mine gave me good advice, that was to not talk about specific issues, to talk about principles,” which seemingly is a red thread through John’s experience as a leader. Within John’s principles there is also the importance of being direct and honest. In describing his work in the political realm, he says in his direct manner, “You know, there’s gonna be disagreements on different issues, but you know, you’ll have another day and it’ll work out, so being direct and honest with people is helpful.”

Confidence and stability is my sense of John. I get a glimpse of how John has developed when he remarks, “If you talk to my sisters they’ll tell you years ago I was shy” back in high school, which conveys a picture to me of someone who was a different person and has developed into the person I am talking with today.

Through John’s stories, John’s authentic leadership builds from the power in recollecting the stories and experiences through life and the key incidents that have helped shape his leadership identity. Principles are an evident feature to John, in his life and in his leadership, which indicates a propensity for internalized moral perspective in terms of ALT.

Teresa

Teresa is brutally honest with herself and speaks with a clear and steady voice, interspersed with laughter. To Teresa, faith and her relationship with God are a part of who she is, and many of her leadership experiences came through church at an early age. She also taught the piano at a very young age, teaching adults, “And if you can teach, you can lead.”
She recalls how she found “joy in watching them get better every week and you know, thinking back, that was probably a really important thing in helping me find my voice and having this confidence that I don’t need to know everything. I just know that I am good at certain things and that I can be helpful to other people.” Teresa speaks with clarity, a sense of “that was just how it was” and reflects on how she would get a lot of positive feedback from people, so much so that “my dad, who is a very humble guy, worried I’d be prideful”, she says and laughs a little.

In talking about education, she tells me how a special blessing in her church stated how it was part of her calling to get educated, conveying a higher sense of purpose: “I think it was really important in building me forward. And maybe even confirming to me that it was OK to have a voice, to speak out and do that, which is somewhat unique in my culture.”

For Teresa, her journey has been more about identity than about voice, which has been a struggle to her, due to her culture and background, a struggle with God. She talks with intensity, thinking back, sharing her path to where she is today in her leadership. Teary-eyed she describes how she finally said to herself, “He didn’t make me wrong, He made me right,” coming to peace with her as a person and leader, and her influence through “speaking and inspiring skills, and people believing me.” Her voice conveys a sense of great peace.

She describes a situation when she felt she let someone down: “I could see the disappointment in his eyes, he saw me as being better than that.” She recalls the disappointment in her friend’s eyes and how that changed her: “I actually changed the way I feel, the way I behave…..”
In another situation, she describes a conflict in which a colleague behaved badly towards her during a meeting. Through Teresa’s description, it is easy to imagine the tension in the room and how everybody was in shock. Teresa describes how she reflected on the situation driving back to the office and how she said to herself, “Maybe I need to just forgive people better. I need to just move on.” She decided to forgive him. “That was empowerment!” she finishes.

Teresa’s view of her leadership is as a calling. This gives Teresa a higher purpose and through her stories, a deeply, inner-oriented self emerges. Through that calling, truth and honesty are implied as fundamental aspects of her leadership, but also the notion of being better as a leader and as a person. From the perspective of ALT, internalized moral perspective is a key component to Teresa’s view of her leadership.

**Matthew**

Matthew talks about his leadership with a clear, steady, often thoughtful voice, pausing to reflect. Throughout our conversation, evident values to Matthew are discipline and hard work. Matthew describes how he would see his dad getting up early in the morning and working until early evening, often coming home with dirty clothes and how he thought his dad worked really hard. His dad further stressed that they had to work “very, very hard in school,” and he shared the importance of education that was instilled in him from his parents. “Hard work paid off, was the lesson I was learning.” He explains, “[I] could see people who didn’t work hard and who seemed kind of complacent and they weren’t getting good grades
or good opportunities, the good offers to do things.” Matthew feels he has a strong sense of responsibility because of that:

All these good things that happened to me [earning scholarship to top colleges], with that training comes responsibility. I can’t just sit here and collect my pay…I need to be true to myself and be true to my training, be true to all these good things that happened to me and put that together and do the right thing.

Values are pertinent all through our conversation. Gratefulness springs to my mind as I listen to Matthew describe his success in his studies and in his career. Other deep-held values are being honest, as well as being someone who, in his capacity, can help. In reflecting on an advancement in his career, Matthew shares how deeply that affected him in terms of being recognized: “So I was recognized as a leader and not the guy up there waving the flag, but the guy there trying to help others do their work best. And that was a huge thing for me personally.”

Deeply-entrenched values of discipline and hard work are evident in Matthew’s view of his leadership, lending the idea of a strong component of internalized moral perspective. Self has developed through interaction with others, in the external context, like a symbolic self-process through the expression of language, facial expressions, behavior and other. Matthews deeply held values suggest a key element to his leadership is aligned with the construct of internalized moral perspective in ALT.
Sharon

Like Matthew, Sharon is a leader who sees herself as a helper. Sharon talks to me in a noisy café just outside of where she used to work. She conveys a sense of earnestness, of just being in the moment of the interview and not knowing what to expect. I ask her how she thinks she has developed as a leader: “I have always liked being a leader but not so much from a power perspective as from, I don’t know how to say it, being able to facilitate getting people together and making things work better.” She describes how she thinks that comes from her dad and growing up: “He was always helping people. Not in a big way, just if we would be at the grocery store and somebody in front of us wouldn’t have enough money to pay, he would just pay for it. Just tackled things as life came along.” Sharon talks a lot about her father and mentions how she and her siblings used to go to football games or restaurants together and observe people, “and, you know, make up stories about them.”

Sharon also mentions her faith and how that too impacted her perspective of leading as helping: “[Being] a leader but serving, that’s kind of how I’ve always felt, not so much talk down but I am working with all those people that I have a little more power to create the right environment for them to work in.” In working with a boss who did not lead like Sharon did, she felt it was “very stressful” and how in relation to her followers, “I had to buffer it.” I get the sense Sharon felt very protective of her team. To Sharon it is important to hear what everyone has to say:

Someone was asking me the other day if I was a consensus builder and I said, no, I am more like an information gatherer. I like to know what everybody in the group is
thinking and get their ideas, but it doesn’t necessarily have to be consensus, but I do want to know.

Sharon reflects on how she’s changed throughout her leadership career:

Well, you certainly change…because it’s hard not to. You have a base, like I believe most people are good and want to do the right things. And I’m probably, you know, my husband would always worry that I’d let people take advantage of me because I have. But even if I knew they were doing that, I still wouldn’t want to change.

Maybe I would change a little bit, but I don’t think my core values have changed.

She recalls a situation in which she needed to get something done for her CEO that seemed impossible, but through her ability to work through people, she solved it. She also recalls how she noticed how a colleague was particularly good at suggesting things and reflects, “[I learned] from little things like that, so observing people that are successful in different situations and what do they do…how they deal with issues and how I can relate to that.”

Sharon reflects over her leadership: “I am very much a believer in letting people do the things the way they feel best, have faith in people, using people’s strengths, giving people the OK to make mistakes.” She also describes a situation through which she recalled she made it important to people to respect other people’s work and notes, “If you are criticizing the people you are going to have to work with, you are not going to get anywhere. So whenever I could, I am always trying to make things positive.”

Sharon would seem to apply a more inner-oriented experience of self to her leadership. Her deeply entrenched values of helping and having faith in people along with
her own strong beliefs could indicate that key components to her leadership from an ALT perspective are self-awareness and internalized moral perspective.

Among the leaders in the United States, strong moral beliefs were more evident compared to the other two groups. Another feature to this group was the more individualized perspective whereas in general, the other two groups tended to speak from a more communal perspective.

**Section Summary**

The hermeneutic analysis allowed for findings to emerge that described leaders’ real worlds, and their thoughts in moments of reflection on their actions. Through the constant iterative process of the hermeneutic circle, it was possible to convey a deeper understanding of the leaders’ stories and their enactment of leadership in their everyday life. This deeper understanding also let a second research question emerge. As I was trying to reconcile my findings from the transcendental and the hermeneutic analysis, I found a disconnect between the two, and I realized that my findings, in reality, pointed to two different things. The question that emerged was about the leaders when they were being leaders, in the moment of leading in the real world, which the hermeneutic analysis provided the answer to. The second question that emerged was how do these leaders enact authentic leadership?

Findings from this study suggest that leaders are authentic in alignment with their culture. The leaders in the United States were, for example, more apt to talk about themselves than the Nordic culture leaders, which in this case was not necessarily about being more self-aware but rather because the context the leaders in the United States live in is
characterized is a highly individualistic culture. Although Denmark and Sweden are categorized as individualistic cultures as well, there is a strong collectivistic orientation underpinning the society (House et al., 2004). A cultural dimension found in highly individualistic cultures was assertiveness and uniqueness, which could explain the difference in dimension between the groups. This would suggest that how authentic leadership is enacted is thus informed by the culture.

**Transcendental Phenomenological Analysis**

As described earlier, this relatively structured and analytical step actually preceded the hermeneutic analysis presented above but is presented second in order to give readers a sense of the “full” person (hermeneutic analysis) before presenting “parts” (transcendental analysis) of each person.

The process of transcendental phenomenological analysis takes apart the narratives in order to describe the whole structure, with its most essential part(s) and meanings that constitute the actual essence of the phenomenon (Dahlberg, 2006). The transcendental analysis conducted on the data generated five internally consistent and coherent themes of which four are aligned with the ALT constructs of self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing and relational transparency. These findings are not surprising, really, but do offer evidence that there may be some universal understandings between human beings that transcend culture or nation.

The process of transcendental phenomenological (TP) analysis used for this study was a highly structured process designed to generate meaning from data as in-vivo coding
allows. From the modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen model as suggested by Moustakas (1994), the process involved seven steps. First, every expression relevant to the experience was listed and in a second step, the significant statements identified. Each participant statement should be considered with respect to how important it was to describe the individual experience, in this study, of authentic leadership. Third, these statements should then be given codes to represent discrete elements of the phenomenon (authentic leadership) clustered into non-overlapping or unique themes (Moustakas, 1994). In a forth step, themes are validated and checked against a complete record of the interview. The fifth step includes constructing an individual textural description of the experience, followed by a sixth step in which a structural description is made. The final and seventh step incorporates the textural-structural descriptions, incorporating themes and significant statements.

This study followed the process closely. From 12 verbatim transcripts, 109 codes were extracted and 26 significant statements found, from which five themes, or cluster of meaning, emerged (Figure 4). The five themes are: development of self, personal and relationship-based assets, values, learning and experience and altruism.
Two themes correlate with in particular the construct of self-awareness: development of self and learning and experience. A third theme, values, correlates with the construct of internalized moral perspective. Personal and relationship-based assets correlates with the foundational root construct to ALT, positive psychology, as this theme clustered around psychological capacities of the leaders such as confidence, optimism and resiliency. The fifth and last theme, altruism, could be seen as being implicitly present in ALT as altruism involves others and the core of all leadership is relational. However, in ALT, others are discussed in terms of the benefits yielded by being led by an authentic leader. In this study, altruism seemed to be an inner-oriented characteristic, whether innate, instilled from childhood, or acquired through experience.
The process of TP analysis generated several formulated meaning statements; these statements represent what the researcher understands is the deeper meaning “behind” the statement offered by the interviewee. A list of all formulated meaning statements is offered in Appendix D. Below, Table 8 includes two examples of significant statements and their respective formulated meaning as interpreted by the researcher.

Table 11

Selected Examples of Significant Statements of Authentic Leadership and Formulated Meanings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Statement</th>
<th>Formulated Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think it’s important that you are yourself… so there’s not some layer you’re not aware about</td>
<td>Being an authentic leader means being who you are and being aware of who you are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know sometimes my male managers would say things like ‘you need to be meaner, you need to be tougher’, and I’m like, you know, that isn’t me. And if you need me to do that, then maybe you don’t need me. I always try to stay true to who you are.</td>
<td>Being an authentic leader means standing up for who your “true you” is</td>
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</table>

Only two leaders out of the twelve explicitly mentioned the word “authentic”: a leader in the United States in realizing how she wanted to be authentic, when she said, “I realized I can be authentic but not whine about everything to everybody.” The second use of the word was from a Danish leader who noted that “we are honest, authentic and I think [people] believe we as leaders have a lot of dignity.”

To generate the formulated meaning statement, I read through each transcript a first
time while making notes as to grasp an overall sense or gestalt of the interview. The second reading was a more thorough reading, through which the significant statements emerged. These were further organized into the 5 clusters of meaning or themes. Table 9 shows an overview of the clusters and their formulated meanings.

Table 12

*Overview of Theme Clusters and Formulated Meanings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Formulated Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Development of self</strong></td>
<td>Personal strengths through deeper knowledge of themselves</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Integration on self and experience</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Self-reflection based on feedback</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Consciousness of experience from within</td>
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<td></td>
<td>First-personal reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Personal and relationship-based assets</strong></td>
<td>Positive self-perceptions (self-efficacy)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive outlook on life</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emotional stability/ balanced</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Personal empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Values</strong></td>
<td>Moral beliefs in terms of right and wrong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faith</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feelings of right or wrong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of responsibility</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Honesty/Truth</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Respect</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Humane orientation (doing good)</td>
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</table>
Table 12. (Continued)

4. Learning and experience.

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<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formal learning from education or similar</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observing others</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning from experience</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Learning by doing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mentors and Role models</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Elicits and accepts feedback</td>
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</table>

5. Altruism

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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Care and concerns about others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humane orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seeing people</td>
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</table>

These formulated meaning statements and themes are offered in order to illuminate the deeper thinking and reflection done during the TP analysis. During the process, I became more reflective, and as I started to write, language gave way to meaning.

Description of themes

This section presents the five themes as they emerged through the transcendental analysis. The next section connects the themes to ALT, consequently answering research question #1: How do leaders in Denmark, Sweden and the United States talk about and understand the underlying constructs of ALT, as suggested by Avolio et al. (2004)?

Theme 1: Development of Self. To some leaders, first-personal reflections were more evident than in others, and a few leaders shared profound experiences that had helped them become more aware of themselves as individuals. To some, reflecting on self seemed embodied in them as individuals, a natural way of being. To others, reflection was more distinct, as illustrated by a Danish leader who shared situations both from work and in private life during which he had observed himself “from the outside”, which prompted him to
become aware of who he was in that situation. Similarly, another leader in the United States shared a real moment of awareness and how it deeply impacted her: “I actually changed the way I feel, the way I behave...”

A Swedish leader felt that simply through the experience of life, understanding self was his biggest development as a leader:

Like with everything, you learn above all through increased self-awareness, and what you practice in modern leadership, I think, is to get to know yourself better and learn how to handle relations with other people.

A pervading sense of self among several leaders was expressed in the form of “you have to feel and believe in what you are in”, or by the importance of having “a sense of who you are”. A leader in the United States noted that “I think it’s, you know, just a matter of sense of who you are and, you now, how you fit into the bigger scheme of things.” A sense of reflection on self was also voiced through another leader in the United States, who shared that “I am actually pretty good at seeing my bad qualities in other people so I would see people being so stubborn and I would think I do that sometimes too.”

Another thought came through reflections about the individual journey, as illustrated by the reflection of a Swedish leader: “I think I’ve become more personal. In the beginning, you’re pretty directed by the things you have to do and I was probably more concerned with those things than with who I was as a leader.” In contrast, a few other leaders noted how they felt they had not fundamentally changed, although “I’m sure I’ve learned a thing or two along the way.”
Theme 2: Personal and relationship-based assets. In this theme, leaders focused on belonging, support, empowerment, affirmation and similar aspects that have helped shape their outlook on life and build self-esteem and confidence, whether in the shape of family and upbringing, friends, sports, church, and mentors. A strong sense of belonging was evident in several leaders, describing situations with family. A Danish leader noted being inspired in his leadership by family members over the dinner table “at family get-togethers”:

I haven’t seen them [my family member] in action at work but it’s been kind of like friendly sparring across the dinner table or on those family occasions you have with your family, you know…I have a brother-in-law who, I keep asking my wife, ‘what is it that he does that makes him so well-liked by everyone and at the same time a very tough negotiator?’

A leader in the United States drew a similar picture of togetherness and family platform through descriptions of her father. She described how she and her father would be in the grocery store and he would help the person in front of them or go to restaurants or football games and they would laugh and play games. Other leaders’ comments similarly indicated involvement and attention to family: a Swedish leader noted the importance of teaching his daughters to speak their minds but balance what they say, and a Danish leader referred to his family as “when you have such a beautiful family like I do.” Both quotes are representative of leaders having a strong sense of family.
However, the aforementioned happy dinner table was not illustrative of as strong a sense of belonging for all leaders. A Danish leader shared his dismay with family discussions over the dinner table:

It irritated me like crazy. And I would simply retreat; I don’t feel like discussing something that I know will only go into one direction. It’s like I’ve been sitting there and could predict ok, now so and so will do that and so and so will do this, and just been sitting there…completely exhausting. And it is very clear to me, and that is of course both superior and arrogant of me, but it wasn’t until I stepped out of the little-brother role that I could get in on it and bring my perspectives, but there were a few years when I simply didn’t have the energy to go into the fight. Now I am pretty clear on who I am and what I stand for, in family situations and all situations.

In contrast to the dinner table as a symbol for sense of belong through family relations, whether a venue for conversations or debates, a Swedish leader reflected that his parents being alcoholics made for a “messy childhood,” but he found a sense of belonging and empowerment in sports: “I was boxing throughout this time… it’s a sport that offers order, structure, I was always training…. ” Sports, together with military and being with a person who “had an outlook on life [in terms of values]” provided stability and structure in his life.

Being supported was further evident in several leaders’ reflections. To some leaders, support was described in conjunction with work and empowerment and referred to leaders or followers, as illustrated by a situation one leader in the United States shared:
[E]ven some of the people that worked for me knew how stressful it was and sent me a note, and she said, “I’d hate to lose you but there’s a position I think you would be perfect for…”

To others, support and belonging both were in connection to their faith. One leader in the United States noted, “I think my confidence comes partially from my faith”, while another leader shared her strong involvement in her church and the empowerment she received through her faith and her church:

I had leadership skills in church. People would ask me to be in charge of things. So I get a lot of affirmation. A lot of encouragement of “you’re good at this, you can speak well”. My mom said, “when you were a teenager, you used to just run things.”

**Theme 3: Values.** This theme was the most far-reaching or dense aspect of the findings. Leaders focused on faith, feelings of right or wrong, and sense of responsibility in addition to commonly held values such as honesty, trust or respect.

To several leaders, honesty transpired as a key value. One Danish leader described a proud moment in his leadership during which he had to let people go, he felt due to his being honest with them, they were able to leave with respect and dignity:

One after another I was firing them, and often they said, “There’s one thing I want to do”, and then they shook my hand or gave me a hug. I’m bloody proud of that.

Everything was done soberly, it had been fought from their side, from my side, often on verge of being on their side, they saw a person, not a suit…
In contrast, a moment of disappointment, but which also emphasized the importance of honesty, is illustrated by a Swedish leader who shared a situation when his leader lied to him about an important issue the leader had promised to bring to the attention of the board. The boss told him he had, indeed, presented the issue but that the Chairman asked to move on in the agenda “…but when I ask people I know were there [in the same meeting], and ask about this issue, they said, ‘No, it never came up’. So he’s lying to me.”

Honesty often translated as being real. In an example describing what influences another Swedish leader, he noted:

Sometimes you can be fascinated by people initially because they say what sound like really wise things, but that after a while just turn out to be empty buzzwords, like this is not really something this person believed in or is applying, but just describes some sort of idealized leadership with a number of catchy phrases that just sounds good and trustworthy…I mean, it’s easy to collect good quotes or good expressions that others have come up with, but there’s nothing real in that.

Honesty also manifested itself through behavior at work. As illustrated by a leader in the United States recalling one situation when his leader provided him with unexpected feedback:

This guy was a tyrant, an absolute tyrant, a very unpleasant, hard, driving person. And he was mean and unpleasant to work for, but he also was very good at his job and taught us a lot of good things. But one year, we did our evaluations, at the end of it, he said, “I’m going to tell you something. I’ve gotten people that work for me and
you’re the only one who will tell me when you think I’m either wrong or in the wrong
direction and I appreciate not having a yes-man.”

Other leaders mentioned trust in connotation to honesty. As a Danish leader noted in
speaking about trust, followers’ trusted in him as a leader and his open approach, “As long as
they can trust me and what I say, I’ll continue with my approach.” A leader in the United
States described how mutual trust and the importance to establish “those relationships” in the
working environment that enabled people to work even better together, took pride in being
able to do that.

Several leaders further mentioned respect. To some, respect was mentioned in the
form of behavior, as illustrated by the Swedish leader who described an unpleasant situation
where he experienced a complete lack of respect towards him as a person and as a leader.
His take-away from this situation was the importance of respect:

You just don’t play with any individual, regardless of position, just because it was a
fun experiment. However much you dislike someone or something is wrong, you
can’t expose someone or make a fool of someone or treat someone with lack of
respect, you must be able to see the person with respect, in any situation. I learned
that then.

Other leaders mentioned respect as an attitude. A Danish leader talked about the importance
of respect in terms of *earning* leadership and how unethical behavior can erode that:

You talk about how you build your leadership power through how you behave and
you create a certain respect through your actions and through your leadership….if
leadership power was only in the extreme form of your title or your salary, it wouldn’t matter [how you behave], but since there is so much importance in how you behave.

Values were often instilled from childhood, whether from parents or from experiences in childhood. This is illustrated by the following reflection by a leader in the United States describing how he would see his dad come home after a long day of hard work, sometimes with dirty clothes, and how that inspired him to be disciplined, work hard and do well:

My impression of my dad was that he got up early in the morning and he went to work and he came back early evening, really tired, he’d empty his pockets out, he could have dirty clothes if he had a particular rough day and he talked about some of the things he did at work and I thought he works really hard.

Working hard and a strong sense of responsibility were also evident in some of the leaders’ values as illustrated in this statement from a leader in the United States: “I think that I felt somewhat of a responsibility based on all the good things that happened to me.”

Deeply-held values also transpired through several leaders’ experiences of tension between personal values and applied values in the organization, as illustrated through a Danish leader’s disappointment with himself in working in an organization that was not aligned with his own values: “I don’t think I can expect of others to have the same values as I have…I turn it inward, I’m the only one who can do anything about it and take the consequences.”
Theme 4: Learning and experience. Across the group, learning was evident. Whether in the form of formal learning, observing others or taking away learning from experience, learning was evident throughout the conversations. An example representative of that was a Swedish leader sharing how he liked to learn from other people by observing them:

I can’t say I have a guru of any sorts, I’m more like if I see someone where I notice, something really good is happening here; this person does something or says something or radiates something or have arranged it in a way that [the message] goes through, I try to learn from that. I mean, it’s not like I try and copy it, I’m sure I have done without success but I try to add it to my own mind or toolbox or however you want to call it.

Another Swedish leader, who recently changed jobs within the organization where she works, described a situation working for a micro-managing boss whose way of working eventually had her in doubt over her competencies and the learning she walked away with:

This is really interesting, because I really learned something [from that] and that is that when you walk into a new position and a new job, you really need to take time to form an opinion about people’s competencies and get to know them.

A leader in the United States described a situation where he felt his superior, who had not upheld a promise in terms of advancement and justified this as due to organizational priorities, had misled him. As the leader reflected, with great disappointment: “It taught me
to just not blindly follow a boss, but to watch and be more analytical what the boss is going through.”

A few leaders mentioned the effect of formal education and learning; in particular, a Danish leader described an executive formal development course as a “tipping point” for him in building his confidence and in increasing understanding about who he was, saying, “I realized it was OK to be reflective around what you do, sure, you need to drive the business, set the direction, but you also need to be open and adjust [your leadership].” In contrast, a Swedish leader noted that he feels he is “pretty much who I’ve always been”, but that he hopes he has learnt to become better at “dealing with people” and “reading situations”:

I also hope I’ve learned from the feedback I’ve received over the years, I mean if you invite people to have an opinion, you will always find those who have a lot of opinions about your leadership and obviously you have to try and accept that.

Some leaders described bad experiences as learning experiences. As a leader in the United States noted, during a short period in the military, people in leadership positions may abuse their power and “how bizarre people then behave”. A Danish leader’s experience of working in a context without communication or sense of direction, made him think, “Would I ever be given the chance, I would definitely do something about that.”

**Theme 5: Altruism.** In this theme, leaders focused on their attitudes towards others. The human perspective was evident, and in relation to self, there was a significant awareness of others. As illustrated through one United States leader’s thoughts:
I have always liked being a leader, but not so much from a power perspective as, I don’t know how to say it, [it was about] being able to facilitate getting people together and making things work better.

Helping others was, in this case, the key purpose of the leadership, which was a salient feature in several other leaders throughout the countries. A general attitude as a leader was “to be of help” to their followers. Protecting followers was also an important aspect that was mentioned in several of the interviews, as illustrated in a Swedish leader’s description of a recent experience of working for a boss who “had their own agenda”, “didn’t delegate”, and “did everything on their own and just interfered in everything”:

It was hard, because at that time I was a middle manager, I had 30 people in my team and then you have to, in some way, as a leader, you know, are you yourself and personally, whose voice will you choose…I felt that I had to take whatever came from above and make it a little better before I presented it to my team.

Another Swedish leader described his orientation towards others through reflecting on a leader that had influenced him strongly and his aim to “see people” combined with strong values. But, as he points out, it’s also important to look at the business side:

To me it is very important to have the right values as a base, and to see and believe in people. I think that is important. But that you at the same time can have the drive and make things happen. That’s what Leif, my boss, was very good at. Everybody looked up to him.
Awareness of others described as seeing others was evident among several leaders as they mentioned their ability to see people and their “real qualities” and “peeling off the wrapper”.

A Danish leader further noted:

I think you have to get to know people and their strengths and weaknesses. In my experience I’ve found that I am pretty spot on with my gut feeling about what people can and can’t do, I think I can trust that pretty well. I make mistakes, and I learn from that, but I can evaluate fairly well what people are good at or not, and how I need to lead them.

A few of the Swedish leaders reflect on the “human perspective”, and one leader noted how he wouldn’t be able to work in an organization “where people were only considered a commodity”. Another leader mentions the “focus on the human being” in the organization as part of the organizational culture, in line with a leader in the United States who reflects on once being inspired by a leader who came into his organization to “not just make life decisions for the business” but with a focus on the people in the organization. A Danish leader notes the importance of “understanding and empathy for other people and [their] different positions.”

One United States leader noted the importance of the bigger picture to people and for the individual to see how you fit in the whole:

I quickly discovered that if you can help people conceptualize the circumstance and understand the paradigm in which they operate, you know, what people really don’t
like is they get most anxious and paranoid and negative and stressed out of they don’t understand where they fit into the scheme of things.

An evident streak among Danish and Swedish leaders was the focus on the team. Several among them reflected on their leadership from more of a communal perspective than an individualized perspective. Even in answering direct questions about their feelings or emotions, a quick answer would be given in regard to the “I” and then turn into a longer reflection about the team. Using a soccer-ball team as a metaphor was not uncommon in this group. However, while the United States group spoke from a more individualized perspective, it is important to remember that leaders in Scandinavia were more focused on their leadership in the workplace while leaders in the United States were focused on their leadership as individuals. This could suggest that, in fact, the leaders involved in this study from the United States are not distinguishing their work-self from their personal self, while Scandinavian leaders distinguish the two.

**Mapping themes to ALT constructs**

The purpose of this section is to illuminate the connections between the themes and the underlying constructs of ALT, which are self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing and relational transparencies (Avolio et al., 2005). When themes are mapped to ALT, the findings indicate that leaders across the countries created meaning of the constructs in similar ways.

It seemed as though leadership, to several leaders in this study, was second nature. A few leaders openly shared self-reflective experiences and thoughts, which reflected a deep
knowledge of self, and self-awareness. In others, self-awareness was subtler, sensed through the conversation and the pauses, the sighs, and the facial expressions as they reflected on their thoughts and feelings as leaders. With others, it was felt choice of words and idiomatic expressions as they conveyed their stories.

Consistent with Avolio et al.’s (2005) construction of self-awareness as encompassing learning about self and what the core values, identity, emotion and motives or goals are, leaders across the nationalities shared strong values in terms of honesty, trust and respect as significant to their leadership. This would indicate that across nationalities, leaders have a knowledge of self that has led them to know their core values and what they can and cannot accept. At least one leader from each country mentioned the tension between wanting to be completely transparent, but not being able to, due to the nature of the issue or felt a need to buffer messages from above, to “protect followers”. Mentioning the importance of being real, but applying “appropriate self-disclosure” was evident throughout the conversations: “I didn’t show my frustration right there…”; “Of course I didn’t say how mad I was but made some diplomatic remark…”; “I got in my car …I mean, I was bawling.”

The stories were dependent on the individual context. In particular, two constructs are thus aligned here: internalized moral perspective and balanced processing.

In terms of internalized moral perspective, a few leaders further expressed their values more specifically such as, “To me, a crucial point is to have a basis of values, to everything we do.” Other leaders set high standards for moral and ethical conduct, and they guide actions by internal moral standards and values (versus group, organizational, and
societal pressures) as well as express decision-making and behavior consistent with such internalized values (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Often, this construct was expressed in a role model, a previous leader who had upheld values that were important to the leaders in questions as exemplified in the following comments: “I remember one leader I had, she managed to be more personal…more human”, or experiences wherein the leader had observed behavior he or she disagreed with: “I leave company parties early… I have seen leaders not behaving appropriately, and I’ve thought, that’s not something I want to do, that is not where I want to distinguish myself, I want to distinguish myself at work [being professional].”

Balanced processing builds from objectively being able to gain information and feedback without the need to protect the ego, or as Walumbwa et al. (2008) phrase it: “that the leader objectively analyzes the relevant data before coming to a decision and solicits views that challenge deeply held positions.” (p. 95). Aligned with Gardner et al.’s (2005) definition of this construct, several leaders in Denmark and Sweden mentioned “consensus”, but what ascribes even more to this construct is perhaps the oft-mentioned “openness”. Several leaders in the same group mentioned the importance of “letting everybody be heard” while a few United States leaders mentioned the aspect of accepting mistakes, which could indicate a propensity for allowing people to have opposing views as well.

In line with the construct relational transparency, which Avolio and Gardner (2005) view as a process through which individuals gather feedback to their leadership, several leaders across the countries mentioned the importance of listening and learning in addition to
receiving and/or soliciting feedback. The notions of being honest and being real also align with this construct.

An underlying aspect to ALT as suggested by Avolio and Gardner (2005) is how authentic leaders instill trust. Trust was important to several leaders, again across the nations, although leaders in the United States expressed trust in terms of belief in something while leaders in Denmark and Sweden explicitly used the word *tillid* (Danish for trust) or *förtroende* (Swedish for trust). Both Swedish and Danish leaders spoke about trust in terms of building trust with followers or having faith in them as well as followers’ trust in them as leaders. “Trust in self” and “lack of trust” were other expressions. Trust was also mentioned as trust in self, or confidence (*selvtillid* in Danish; *självförtroende* in Swedish). In a similar vein, United States leaders also spoke about trust in terms of having faith in people as well as having faith in themselves.

**Summary of section**

Four of the five themes can be mapped directly to ALT. The one theme that is not expressed in ALT in the same terms as in this study, is awareness of others from an intrinsic perspective. The care and concern for others were expressed in different terms, such as being a helper, a bigger picture of doing good, or buffering tough or non-friendly messages from top management. While ALT posits positive consequences of orientation towards others such as commitment and motivation (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), this study found that most leaders had a genuine orientation towards others, which seemed to be something within them, expressed from them, part of who they are as individuals. Avolio and Gardner (2005)
suggest, “Authentic leaders will influence follower self-awareness of values/moral perspective…based on their individual character, personal example, and dedication” (p. 330).

The departure point for orientation towards others within ALT thus seems to have more of an extrinsic character.

**Eidetic Reduction**

The eidetic reduction can be likened to a methodological path that takes us back to the meaning of essences, implicit in the experiences of the leaders. The process of going beyond and exploring deeper meanings under conventional patterns is reached through intuition and reflection, the primary tools of a phenomenologist.

The eidetic reduction complements both the transcendental and the hermeneutic analyses in that it arrives at the very essence of what authentic leadership is for the leaders involved in this study. The eidetic reduction mainly answers the first research question, how leaders understand and talk about authentic leadership. However, in seeing the essence as it may translate into different cultural contexts, it could allow for an implicit understanding of the cultural impact. Our understanding of temporality is, for example, different in different cultures and so is the question of spatiality. This positions the enactment in a different dimension, as the so to speak “DNA” of the enactment to begin with, is formed by the cultural context.

The experience of authentic leadership is an experience that encompasses the entire life of the leader and touches existential fundamental themes in the life-world, such as lived time, lived body, lived space and lived relation to other, or, in other words, the way a person
is in the world with all that entails. From the point of view of lived time, or temporality, authenticity develops over the course of life’s journey, through experiences and learning, which are the temporal dimension of past, present, persons “temporal landscape” (van Manen, 1990, p. 104).

Authenticity also builds from a platform of belonging to something, a platform of love and support and of togetherness: feelings of being oneself, of groundedness, of being content or happy with who I am; feelings of empowerment as the journey continues, being open to learning, from painful moments to moments of inspiration, from moments of awareness to moments of reflection; having been believed in, as children, as adolescents or early adults; believing in self and sense of accomplishment. Memories from their lives now stick to them as well as almost-forgotten experiences leave traces on their person. Within this is a reinterpreting of self as the journey continues, and authentic leadership becomes something about being real, being true, being you: “So there’s not some layer you can’t make sense of.”

Authentic leadership builds from values. Values form early in life and are reinforced through the initial platform of belonging, continued through that same platform. The importance of values is significant: “Values are incredibly important to me, to anything I do.” Leaders must sometimes compromise their values: “I should put my values before that of my boss”, which creates tension and negative feelings. Values are deeply held.

From the point of view of corporeality, or lived body, leaders experience the followers as separate from them while still physically close during the time of shared space,
spatiality, or lived space. In their relation to the followers, the leaders look with the eyes of a human being who is also their leader.

The leader and the follower both share a history; we can call it employment, which has its own sphere, with its positive and negative memories. This relation is also experienced as a special lived relation to the other, relationality, or lived other. This relation is a professional relation, but still filled with interpersonal significance due to the concern for the followers as well as the reciprocity in terms of leaders being open and humble to receive feedback and learn from what others say. The experience of authentic leadership further emphasizes the human perspective, the importance of seeing people and doing good, having a deep belief and trust in people, that they do their best.

Chapter Summary

In this study, leaders recognized as authentic from Denmark, Sweden and the United States shared their lived experiences of their leadership. From the transcendental analysis, five themes emerged which showed strong internal coherence and consistency between leaders from all countries. These findings suggest that leaders from all the three countries shared the same understanding of the underlying constructs of ALT.

From the hermeneutic analysis, however, leaders’ enactment of authentic leadership in their real world was exposed. This analysis showed that when authentic leadership was enacted in the real world, it was informed or shaped by the cultural context. The eidetic reduction supports the findings of coherence and provides a deeper understanding of fundamental existentialist issues that a priori are shaped by the cultural context.
In this chapter, I have provided the analysis of the findings based on the conversations with 12 leaders in Denmark, Sweden and the United States. Through using a transcendental phenomenological approach as well as the hermeneutic circle, I have allowed the leaders’ voices be heard while I explore and seek to understand the deeper meaning to their stories. The findings provide the basis for my discussion and conclusion in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5

Introduction

In Chapter Four, we met twelve leaders from three different countries and heard their stories and voices in regard to their experiences of leadership, their authentic leadership. This final chapter presents the researcher’s discussion, conclusions and implications as well as considerations for future research and practice.

Leadership is a multifaceted and multidimensional topic that permeates most areas of our daily lives today. Our fascination with leadership continues, to the point that leaders have become the solution to every problem and have been given the status of a hero (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011). The majority of leadership theories have emerged from the United States, although research suggests culture has an impact on leadership. However, as described in Chapter One, an ongoing debate holds that on the one end, globalization has promoted a convergence and transcends cultural difference, whereas on the other hand, scholars suggest culture still has an impact on leadership. Scholars out of the latter standpoint have found that culture does have an impact although not on behavior but rather on expectations (Javidan et al., 2007).

A recent leadership theory that has gained recognition from scholars as promising for 21st century leadership needs is Authentic Leadership Theory (ALT) (for example, see Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2005; George & Sims, 2007; Cooper, Scandura & Schriesheim, 2005; Yammarino, Dionne, Schriesheim & Dansereau, 2008). Contributions to the study of ALT have increased
significantly during this past decade, although not in terms of the application of ALT in different cultural contexts. Furthermore, this is yet again a theory that has emerged from the United States. To date, little is known about how authentic leadership may be interpreted in different cultural contexts, although the instrument Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) was validated in China and Kenya (Walumbwa, Avolio & Gardner, 2007). However, as ALT is rapidly increasing in popularity, it is important from a qualitative perspective to explore the depths and the meanings of ALT constructs in different cultural contexts to understand how this theory adheres in a context in which leaders need to be equipped to lead organizations in the 21st century.

The purpose of this study was to explore how leaders in Denmark, Sweden and the United States talk about and understand authentic leadership and map this understanding to the underlying constructs of the ALT model. The study aimed to answer two questions specifically: How do leaders in Denmark, United States and Sweden talk about and understand authentic leadership? How do these leaders enact authentic leadership? Overall, findings suggest there is a shared understanding across the three countries of the underlying constructs of ALT. However, this study suggests that culture may have an impact on how authentic leadership is enacted.

This chapter is organized as follows: in the first section, I will present a general overview of the three key findings. This is followed by the second section, in which I will highlight the connections and divergences of the findings with the existing leadership literature on authentic leadership. In the third section I will discuss the implications of this
study, and in the fourth and final section, I will conclude this study and offer suggestions for future research.

**Overview of Findings**

The purpose of this section is to present an overview of the three key findings generated by this study and to summarize the larger contexts in which these leaders find themselves. The understanding of culture and social context as absences that are nevertheless present in every leader’s unique story is crucial to gaining a deeper insight in to the conversations (Ladkin, 2010).

The first key finding that emerged is that while there is coherence in terms of how the study participants understood and talked about authentic leadership, the participants seemed to enact it differently. There was coherence in understanding as evidenced by the fact that the same words were used to describe stories and experiences. As the analysis deepened it became clear that there were no significant differences in how the leaders understood authentic leadership. This, in a sense, may be no surprise, as Denmark, Sweden and the United States can be viewed as similar as Western, developed countries with similar economic and political structures (Verba & Nie, 1972) and furthermore categorized as individualistic countries (Hofstede, 1980).

On the other hand, while the description of authentic leadership was coherent across countries, there seemed to be a lack of coherence in ‘being’ or enacting authentic leadership between study participants. The study findings suggest that differences emerged in being an authentic leader that aligns with recognized cultural differences, such as a recognized
individualistic perspective in the United States versus a more communal perspective in Denmark and Sweden (Nelson & Shavitt, 2002). Being authentic for the United States participants in this study was an individualized experience. Being authentic for this study’s Danish or Swedish participants was a communal experience.

These findings are aligned with existing literature. All three countries involved in this study scored high on the charismatic leadership dimension in the GLOBE study (House et al., 2004) which is a broadly defined leadership dimension “that reflects the ability to inspire, to motivate, and to expect high performance outcomes from others on the basis of firmly held core beliefs” (Javidan et al., 2006, p.73). However, in terms of society at large, the United States scored high on performance orientation and low on institutional collectivism, while some of the cultural dimensions Denmark and Sweden scored high on, were gender egalitarianism and institutional collectivism while low on assertiveness orientation. In the United States, expectations of leaders is based on the individual leader and his/her leadership, while in Denmark and Sweden, expectations involve leading a team.

A second key finding was the impossibility to distinguish authenticity between the personal and professional person. This leads into an almost existentialist debate about authenticity and whether, in fact, authenticity is non-conscious or conscious. In terms of this study, authenticity in terms of the leaders leadership was clearly not something the leaders had put much thought into. To them, authenticity appeared to be something that transcends consciousness, revealing itself only through one’s intentional interactions with the world. This finding is aligned with the findings of Avolio and Wernsing (2008) that suggest,
authenticity is the underpinning foundation to the leadership of these individual leaders regardless of form of leadership, whether participative or directive.

The third key finding was the leaders’ orientation to others as an intrinsic interest, in other words the leaders’ altruism. In the literature surrounding ALT, Avolio et al. (2004) built in the follower component based on commitment, job satisfaction, empowerment and task engagement. Orientation towards others is phrased in terms of authentic leaders being an inspiration to followers (May et al., 2003). In short, the general idea of orientation to others is focused on work outcomes, thus what I labeled as orientation of interest in others is more explained as impact on others. In labeling this aspect altruism, altruism is referred to as a value, embedded in the moral component of ALT (Hannah et al., 2005). This is perhaps where many critics raise their voices and suggest that “the leader's view of what is just, moral, ulterior or ethical is entirely self-referential” (Lloyd-Walker & Walker, 2011, p.387) or that the noble intentions of the leader can only be assumed (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011).

My study generated a different view of how authentic leaders are oriented to others. Interest in people, care and concern about people, helping people, believing in people and seeing people were expressions of many of my study participants most deeply held values. My analysis suggests that this perspective builds from a genuine interest in others, and not from the point of results, or consciously measuring how the potential impact the followers. Consequently, my findings suggest that the ALT framework may be modified in the future to represent what I’ve called both intrinsic and extrinsic care for others.
The next section presents a more detailed discussion around the key findings and how the findings relate to the existing literature and scholarship on authentic leadership.

**Discussion**

**Finding #1: Describing and Being a Leader**

As described above, the first finding in this study is the lack of congruence between *describing* and *being* authentic leaders. While individuals talked about the meaning of authentic leadership in similar ways, the stories and anecdotes seemed to portray *enacting* authentic leadership in two different ways. The two ways were individual (e.g., authentic leadership is an individual accomplishment or virtue) and communal (e.g., authentic leadership is, at its core, the result of people moving forward together). These are aligned with previous culture research that found United States to be more individualized and Europe more communal (House et al., 2004). This finding suggests that there may be aspects of authentic leadership that can be universally understood and described, but at the same time a deeper, non-spoken difference may exist that reflects the influence of culture. Consequently, this study reinforces Javidan et al.’s (2006) earlier findings that culture influenced how enacting or being a leader shaped the way leadership attributes were performed.

These findings also contribute to the general debate about the influence of culture on leadership. Scholars in one camp suggest there are cultural universalities (Boyacigiller, Kleinberg, Phillips, & Sackmann, 2003) while those in the other camp hold that there are cultural specifics (House et al, 2004; Javidan et al., 2007). Other scholars suggest that cultural differences are diminishing due to globalization processes. This has been called the
convergence hypotheses, and it suggests that as globalization continues, nationality and national culture will eventually cease to impact international business (Holmberg & Åkerblom, 2006).

Another perspective on culture and leadership offers a more detailed view. Chemers et al. (1997) suggested that the primary impact of culture on leadership depends on level of analysis: at the most basic level of leadership such as task/performance and relationship/maintenance, there would be cultural universality, while the specific ways leadership is enacted is where cultural specifics emerge.

Interestingly, some scholars seem to argue for and against cultural influence—just like this study does, suggesting the likelihood of both universal and cultural specifics. Javidan et al. (2006) have found that attributes of a leader were universally desirable, such as being honest, decisive, motivational, and dynamic, as well as attributes that were universally undesirable, such as being a loner, irritable, egocentric, and ruthless. At the same time, Javidan et al. suggested that cultural specifics are very much part of leadership and “woe to the leader who ignores them” (p. 71). Culture, Javidan et al. (2006) suggested, impacted the enactment of the attributes.

This study confirms Javidan et al.’s findings as in this study twelve leaders from three different countries, and from different organizational contexts, all used similar words and expressions to describe what they understood about authentic leadership. Like Javidan et al., this study found consensus in desirable and undesirable attributes--honesty as previously discussed was a salient feature to the participants while an undesirable attribute seemed to be
egocentrism, was expressed through the importance leaders put on genuine concern for others.

Although there thus seem to be universal leadership attributes, leadership must be viewed in the broad social context as culture forms leadership rather the other way around, which is a commonly held assumption (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011). The impact of culture on the universal attributes, impact the nuances of said attributes. An example is how Denmark, Sweden and the United States can be considered to be similar countries in terms of similar political structures and economic systems, while many would expect more of a difference between the United States towards Denmark and Sweden combined. However, even Scandinavian countries operate in quite different societal contexts. Danish leaders operate in a context where the basis of authority is different due to the flexicurity model, where hiring and firing people is easy and leaders have more power towards followers (Wilthagen & Tros, 2004). Leaders thus tend to be more direct and authoritative in their leadership style. In contrast, Swedish leaders, who operate in a context where firing somebody is very difficult, Swedish leaders tend to be more caring and participatory (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011). This subtle difference between leaders in the two countries is however less obvious when clustered in a broader cultural dimension, which shows the multidimensional and multilevel challenge of leadership studies. Through the GLOBE-study, the cultural dimension for the United States was characterized by competition and results, while Denmark and Sweden were characterized as valuing cooperation and societal-level group identity (House et al., 2004).
It could be assumed that the leaders in the United States would be more challenged in enacting authentic leadership due to the “risk” of not seeming assertive or performance-driven, which would be an expectation of the leaders according to House et al. (2004). In contrast, Swedish culture would seem the ideal culture for authentic leadership with its caring and participatory expectations of the leader. The interesting thing here is that expectations of leaders in Denmark seem to be somewhat in line with the United States in terms of assertiveness, which could mean authentic leadership is not fostered by either organizational nor national cultures, but by an individual drive. On the other hand, since leaders in Denmark and the United States in general have more authoritative power, it could be suggested they also have the room and “power” to be authentic in their leadership. Alternatively, Danish leaders may be more influenced by the flexicurity model, which rewards outcomes and success.

The themes that emerged for the leaders in this study showed that at the individual, introspective level, they used the same words and expressions and understood authentic leadership in a similar way. Leaders across the groups described what was important to them in their leadership in terms of “being true to oneself,” “being real,” and “feeling comfortable with yourself,” which are expressions of authentic leadership (Avolio et al., 2004; George & Sims, 2007). Whether being inwardly- or outwardly oriented, authenticity is inextricably linked with notions of identity (Ladkin, 2010).
Identity is thus an implicit part of this study, hidden in the depths of the leaders’ stories and that would require an additional study in itself. For the purpose of this study, however, albeit briefly, identity will be further explored in the next section.

In returning to the lack of congruence between describing and being authentic leaders, it is also important to point to how leadership per se is viewed differently in the three countries. As Scandura and Dorfman (2004) suggest, the “terms leaders and leadership are not as universally revered as we in America think” (p. 283), which means that in addition to the different expectations on the leader due to the cultural context, the a priori view on leadership is different. As Scandura and Dorfman suggest, what the concept of leadership is rooted in could seem as an important starting point for future cross-cultural leadership studies. This would entail careful attention to the historical context as well, as leadership theories are influenced by the societal context, as described in Chapter 2. The need for a more humane leadership was prompted by ethical scandals in both the corporate as well as the non-profit arena, such as Enron and Catholic Church; terrorist attacks such as 9/11; and, the economic turmoil, calling for leaders to be trustworthy, honest and with strong integrity (Gardner et al., 2005; Alimo-Metcalfe, 2013).

**Finding #2: Personal and Professional Authenticity**

The note of identity leads us to the second key finding from this study: the impossibility to distinguish authenticity between personal and professional person. Although Walumbwa et al. (2008) suggest ALT builds from a multidimensional construct of being true to oneself, with authenticity being but one component, for this group of leaders, authenticity
thus seemed part of their identity. For some leaders, I got a sense this was something that was still developing in them, reflective of the dynamic process leadership is to the individual. With this in mind, it was thus not a question of not being self-aware but rather a question of an immersed view of their leadership, in which their leadership was an extension of themselves, the “something” of the leadership being part of who they are (Finlay, 2010).

This could, on one hand, be an example of what Ladkin (2010) refers to as ready-at-hand in phenomenological terms: to those people, leadership is not something they stop and think about, leadership is simply not “distinctive from its purpose to which it is put” (Ladkin, 2010, p. 45). On the other hand, it could also be that the leader does not have immediate access to his or her innermost, deepest thoughts and feelings. Both aspects could explain why I was not able to distinguish how people distinguish work self from real self.

However, as I was unable to distinguish authenticity in terms of personal or professional role, I realized this could also depend on the possibility that authenticity was non-distinct. Authenticity simply pervaded all aspects of life and was not something the leaders reflected on. This finding seemingly contradicts ALT. In ALT, leaders have a deep knowledge of self and who they are, which lends an idea of authentic leadership as being consciously reflected on and intentionally applied. This could lead into an almost existentialist debate about authenticity and whether it is, in fact, possible to be truly authentic all the time or whether the conscious reflection would point to moments of inauthenticity that causes this reflection. Furthermore, if authenticity is something that is being deliberately
reflected upon in terms of a desirable outcome, there is a risk to become inauthentic in one’s authenticity at the cost of true authenticity.

In terms of this study, the majority of the leaders had not consciously thought about authenticity in terms of their leadership. To them, authenticity rather appeared to transcend consciousness, a natural part of who they are, both as professionals and as private individuals.

Does this mean the leaders were authentic leaders in everything they did? Is that even possible? The difficulty with the concept of authenticity is that in its broad sense of meaning as defined in dictionaries, authenticity means “to be true to yourself” (Oxford English Dictionary). Within that broad sense lays an implicit idea that to be true to yourself, you must know yourself. Arendt (1978) argues that a person can never know him or herself in the way that proponents of authentic leadership suggest. In authentic leadership, authenticity is defined around leaders who know and act upon their true values, beliefs, integrity and strengths (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio, Griffith, Wernsing, & Walumbwa, 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2008), and emphasizes the “deep knowledge of self.” However, who is to determine how deep is deep?

The discussion of authenticity does not come without its critics. To Braman (2008) authenticity has become a “common linguistic currency in contemporary culture” (p.4), with a self-centered focus that causes authenticity to become the very antithesis to what it is assumed to be and take a narcissistic flair. In ALT, authenticity is, in fact, focused on self, the core components being self-awareness and self-regulation (Chan et al., 2005). However,
Gardner et al. (2005b) claims that authentic leaders have the capacity for self-reflection and introspection required for a true understanding of the self (or others), which suggests a deeper sense of self-awareness. Authenticity according to ALT is thus based on a construction of self-awareness, values and self-regulation.

As the word authentic and authenticity is a huge topic per se, surrounded by philosophical debates, a thought is whether the name authentic leadership renders what this leadership theory truly is about, or whether for example the word genuine in effect better captures the theory as suggested by Avolio and Gardner (2005). At the same time, using the word authentic invites for skepticism and further exploration, which is good for the continuing understanding of the theory although also exhausting as the same criticism are discussed. Genuine, on the other hand, is not a topic per se in the same way authenticity is. The choice would be between a catchier and perhaps more provocative use of the word authentic towards the more careful but perhaps in reality more true use of the word genuine.

In this study, authenticity appeared as a way of being, a natural way of approaching things in life, through learning from experience and learning about self and what is important, which is reflective of the ongoing process Walumbwa et al. (2007) refer to. This conveyed a sense of deeper level of self-awareness. However, I also got a sense that leaders’ ability to be deeply self-reflective varied greatly. The difference was reflecting on self with the own person as being the point of departure in a quest to understand self, or with others as a point of departure with a quest to understand others view of self. This could be a reflection of the cultural impact of the United States as being one of the most individualistic cultures,
while both Sweden and Denmark, although still individualistic, are also oriented towards a collective culture.

The difference is subtle and deeply engrained and the individualistic view did not seem to alter leaders’ individual authenticity in any way, but was a reflection of how deeply culture impacts everything we do. To illustrate the overall meaning of my reasoning, let’s look at such everyday workplace related symbols such as the performance appraisal. In the United States the annual appraisal clearly points to the individual “appraisal” and “performance,” in line with the findings of the leadership dimension as being performance-oriented (House et al., 2004). It further enhances the roles of one individual being appraised by another, implicitly conveying a sense of authoritative power. In both Denmark and Sweden, the same instrument reflects the equality principle through the focus on the word “conversation” and with the intention to enhance individual development (medarbejderudviklingssamtale or MUS in Danish; medarbetarutvecklingssamtal in Swedish).

The way the leaders embodied authenticity led me to the thought of how Kernis (2003) suggests authenticity as “reflecting the unobstructed operation of one's true, or core self in one's daily enterprise” (p. 13). In Kernis’ (2003) view of authenticity, “individuals are free to choose their own reality, but they must have trust in it and recognize that it is not the only reality” (p. 15). However, Kernis’ (2003) notion of freedom puts a halt to the idea that ALT could possibly be a universally applicable leadership theory. In reality, how much freedom to choose their own reality do people, even leaders, in underdeveloped countries
have? Perhaps more than talking about universal cultural constructs, there should be more attention towards whether the constructs of ALT are limited to being a *Western* universal construct. The individualistic focus suggests a more Western concept of self. The three countries involved in this study are individualistic cultures, although at two opposite sides of the spectrum: the horizontal cultures of Denmark and Sweden towards the vertical culture of the United States. In horizontal individualistic cultures, the individual is seen as unique, while not sticking out, self is viewed as equal to others. This is in contrast to the vertical individualistic culture, where the view of self is seen as different other and along a hierarchy (Triandis, 1995). As such, the differences in view of self are significantly different, clearly reflecting the context of society as being more collective oriented, based on principles such as equality (Denmark and Sweden) or individualistically oriented, based on principles such as achievement and competition (United States). However, in spite of this, there were still subtle differences between the three.

The question is how the constructs would be viewed in non-Western cultures such as Islamic or Asian countries. Although Walumbwa et al. (2007) found validity in the instrument of ALQ in both Kenya and China, the cultural view of self did not emerge, which could be acquired through complementing the quantitative studies with qualitative. The ALQ does not account for contextual influences (Walumbwa et al.), which means that the initial finding of a universal construct in ALQ cannot alone determine that there is universality in the understanding of the constructs, the cultural view of self being of core importance.
Understanding the context of culture and how it impacts the constructs is thus of key importance to understanding the differences as these are manifested through enactment.

**Finding #3: Orientation to Others Through Intrinsic and Extrinsic Care**

The third key finding was the leaders’ orientation to others as an intrinsic interest, which did not quite align to any of the constructs as the nature of altruism, perhaps because it emerged among these leaders as a personal characteristic. Hannah et al. (2005) introduced the construct of altruism as based on the notion of what Batson (2011) refers to as a “motivational state with the ultimate goal to increase another person’s welfare” (p. 20) and that encompasses empathy, acts of charity as well as bystander engagement (Hannah et al., 2005).

Altruism is a complex topic in itself that spans a variety of academic fields. Clavien and Chapuisat (2013) suggest altruism can be categorized in four distinct but related concepts: psychological altruism involves the genuine motivation to improve others’ interests and welfare; reproductive altruism involves increasing others’ chances of survival and reproduction at the actor’s expense; behavioural altruism involves bearing some cost in the interest of others, and preference altruism, which is a preference for others’ interests. Two of the four can in particular be related to this study: preference concept and psychological concept. In ALT, altruism would appear to be in line with being a preference concept of altruism, while it emerged in this study as a psychological concept. Psychological altruism is “characterized by genuine concern for others” (p. 134) while preference altruism may not
necessarily show any genuine motivations and thus appear to be more oriented towards others than it really is (Clavien & Chapuisat, 2013).

In this study, the theme that eventually became altruism was initially labeled orientation to others. The aspect of others within ALT is mainly brought forward through how the authentic leader impacts followers in terms of their motivation and commitment or in terms improving communication, thus from the perceptive of how the followers perceive them (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Others are also included in the ALT-model, in which one leg of the model involves the followers’ response to the four constructs to ALT in regard to the leader. However, I did not feel this orientation towards others, or what I later labeled as altruism, captured the sense of altruism as part of the person the way it emerged in this study. The majority of the leaders in this study had a genuine interest in followers, which was expressed through words such as having a sincere interest in people, emphasizing the importance of the human perspective, seeing people for whom they are, believing in people, empowering people or helping people.

Like authenticity, altruism opens up to a huge debate, which is beyond the scope of this study. Hamilton (1964) discussed kin altruism and Trivers (1971) reciprocal altruism, while Ghiselin (1974) provocingly suggest:

No hint of genuine charity ameliorates our vision of society, once sentimentalism has been laid aside. What passes for cooperation turns out to be a mixture of opportunism and exploitation . . . Scratch an altruist, and watch a hypocrite bleed (p. 247).
However, whether as a derivative of egotism or as a human quality, altruism is part of the structure of being and plays a pivotal role in the human condition (Draguns, 2013).

Besides Hannah et al.’s (2005) introduction of the construct of altruism, in most of the key articles about ALT, altruism seems to encompass the notion of being good, or having noble intentions, which is one of the frequently voiced critiques to ALT, as authenticity is not necessarily connected with good intentions (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011). As Avolio and Wernsing (2008) point out, that is inevitably always the remark.

In ALT, it is rather clear that it is in the construction of the constructs together, that authentic leadership is created and thus the explicit importance of values and morals rules out there being any assumptions of noble intentions. For example, Peterson et al. (2012) suggest internalized moral perspective “refers to leader behaviors that are guided by internal moral standards and values” (p. 503) rather than behavior due to external forces. Values guiding the leaders’ behavior were evident throughout, although most were more dispersed in the conversations. Expressions would thus take the form of descriptions of situations indicating, for example, honesty or hard work or respect for the human being. In terms of altruism, it is within the broader category of values that altruism is embedded.

However, in this study, altruism emerged strongly as a meta-awareness, which suggests a different dimension of altruism as it manifests itself from within the individual. As such, this could suggest that ALT does not give altruism the weight that it could need. The question is if altruism could build upon the model and be improved if this construct was added. In fact, altruism as an added construct to the theory could be linked to the discussion
around pseudo-authenticity. Pseudo-authentic leaders are leaders who may appear as authentic to others but who decouple self-awareness from self-regulation (Chan et al., 2005). This can happen when a leader is either not capable or not motivated to “conduct an accurate and controlled self-assessment” (Chan et al., 2005, p. 30) or who applies self-distortion, trying to be someone he or she is not ready to be.

The conundrum with ALT, or all authentic leadership regardless of approach, is the importance of knowledge of self, which thus calls for substantial attention to self. As Taylor (1991) suggests, “It seems true that the culture of self-fulfillment has led many people to lose sight of concerns that transcend them’’ (p. 15) with an exaggerated focus on self in the name of authenticity thus becoming a travesty. In fact, although the proper use of ALQ is to be administered to leaders and followers alike, used solely by leaders as in this study, it may not capture the true level of authenticity as truly authentic people could underestimate answers to each respective construct, while pseudo-authentic people could overestimate their answers.

The question is thus whether altruism as a fifth construct to ALT could have an effect on the model and further understanding of how ALT in terms of development could be designed and implemented. With altruism as a construct, it could be suggested that self-focus necessarily must shift to attention to others and how to be a truly authentic leader with others. As a potential construct, altruism refers to a genuine interest in other people, an internalized and integrated form of orientation to other people that manifests in care and concern for people, seeing people as they are and a strong belief in humanity.
Placed in this dimension, altruism needs to be highlighted and further research conducted to assess whether altruism is conceptually equivalent to the other constructs and whether, in effect, altruism should be a fifth construct to extend the ALT-model.

To summarize this section, three key findings emerged that in essence found that for the majority of participants in this study, authentic leadership was part of who they are and how they enact in a culturally authentic way. To a great extent in alignment with ALT, a salient feature that emerged was the intrinsic nature of both authenticity and care and concern about others, which seemed to go beyond how orientation to others in ALT is centered around work outcomes as well as the moral component.

Although ALT is a developmental form of leadership that perhaps is a natural journey for many individuals, it could seem pertinent to build upon the constructs and consider the difference between individuals intrinsic versus extrinsic adherence to the theory.

Limitations

This work was intended to begin exploring how leaders from different cultures create meaning of the underlying constructs of ALT and was not intended to be generalizable. An obvious reason for this is not exclusively, but partially, that meaning itself is iterative and emergent and, as such, never absolute. Another reason is that this is a limited sample of twelve individuals, and while still well within the sampling range for phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2007), findings are thus not transferable. As recognized experts furthermore selected participants, it is a purposefully drawn sample of leaders. The study can
thus not be representative as such for each nationality, but will rather contribute to the growing body of literature addressing ALT and cross-cultural aspects.

In addition, the study relies on individuals and their willingness to openly and honestly share their thoughts and experiences, which of course cannot be validated or confirmed in an objective sense. Furthermore, the study only involved two countries out of Scandinavia or Europe as a whole. The view of the United States as comparable to the two Scandinavian countries is further a limitation, as the United States in effect has many strong subcultures. However, as the scope of the study was to understand the individual leader, the focus was on identifying the authentic leader, regardless of possible sub-cultural belonging. It could be argued that a cross-cultural perspective of ALT requires more diverse cultural settings. I would however suggest that cross-cultural perspectives that forces us to consider nuances, is an equally important aspect to the understanding of the impact of culture.

An additional limitation was the limited time available to the researcher to conduct the interviews in Denmark and Sweden. Although, thorough advance planning helped schedule interviews, unforeseen cancellations did alter the planning somewhat, so a few interviews had to be conducted using Skype. In comparison to the face-to-face interviews, this change, however, neither impacted the time spent with each participant, nor the experience of the interview.

The major delimitation to the study is that I have collected data from parts of Scandinavia as opposed to all Scandinavian countries or Europe, for that matter. The reason for choosing Denmark and Sweden is as it was feasible to conduct research in terms of
identifying leaders, travel and accommodation. This does not exclude that I would like to take this study further in a next step and conduct the same study including the rest of Scandinavia as well as other European countries.

It could further be questioned why the selected leaders are not within the same organization but rather span a range of different organizations. The rationale to this is that the focus of the study is on the lived experience of the leaders in the study, where authentic leadership is the phenomenon. The organizational context is thus not the focus, which however does not exclude considerations being made assuming the organizational context influence leadership.

**Implications**

The implications of the study extend to both the research and practice of leadership, as well as cross-cultural studies. The implications include 1) exploring the ‘I’ and ‘We’ narrative further through research on other leadership theories in other cultural contexts; 2) adding a new construct focused on altruism to ALT theory; and 3) exploring authenticity as not being bounded between professional or private persona.

In terms of exploring the “I” and “We”-narrative further, this extends beyond ALT and could also be an implication involving other leadership theories. The full implication of this finding entails requires further research, however, as it emerged in this study, it highlights the absences of culture that is present in everything we do and thus necessarily will shift emphases of aspects that lends to the understanding of the theory.
Adding a new construct to the ALT-model is similarly a theoretical implication. Diddams and Chang (2012) suggest empathy might be an important component to the model, which signals other scholars have found a need to add aspects to extend the model. Whether empathy as suggested by Diddams and Chang could be housed in a possible additional construct of altruism as suggested in this study, remains to be understood through further research.

Exploring the significance of authenticity as non-distinct between professional and personal persona is further an implication of this study. Whether or not this has significance, this finding still shows that it understanding authenticity in terms of identity is an important aspect that could impact practical application of ALT and understand pseudo-authenticity. As previously described, the pseudo-authentic leader is the leader who presents him or herself as authentic for “impression management purposes only” (Chan et al., 2005, p. 6), thus not producing the effective leadership ALT could in theory do.

**Future Research**

In the absence of sufficient empirical research on authentic leadership in cross-cultural settings, future researchers could follow a number of different approaches to study important questions raised by these findings. Future work could consider whether there is a need for a fifth construct in the model to extend ALT as a representative model of leadership that could provide the most comprehensive analysis of authentic leadership. Future research should further attempt this work involving more countries in Europe in line with the GLOBE project as well as ultimately involve the world. The impact of context is crucial, and the
understandings of the constructs need to be further researched through a mix of methods. The qualitative body of literature is a much-needed complement to the plethora of quantitative factor analysis of ALT.

One dimension of this study is the researcher’s multilingual abilities and deep knowledge of the cultural contexts in which the leaders live and work. This knowledge lends itself to a deeper understanding of cultural expressions and words that otherwise could possibly be lost. Expressions such as the Danish “look each other in the eyes” could for example convey a more romantic idea, however, it can also mean “let’s be honest”, in a context of candid conversation between two people. Other aspects are, for example, the individual’s use of sarcasm or irony, which further may be missed due to a lack of understanding the cultural fabric, or getting a sense of the cultural fabric through understanding the deeper meanings behind the words. Future research should thus consider this aspect and gauge the importance it provides in terms of value, power, rigor, and trustworthiness to the study.

Understanding the multidimensional aspects of culture would also be important to further understand ALT. As such, exploring the direct impact of sub-cultures and organizational cultures on this leadership theory would be important in the future. As Hannah et al. (2005) suggest in regard to the moral component of ALT, it is important to understand how “various contexts may either bolster or strain the moral leader’s ability to be true (authentic) [parenthesis as in text] to his or her core ethical beliefs” (p. 74).
More research on the difference between describing and being an authentic leader is needed. Furthermore, studies should explore authenticity as a consequence of ALT, or whether authenticity may show to be best conceived as an antecedent. The risk in terms of implementing ALT in practice, may be to dilute the theory and create pseudo-authenticity or limit authentic leadership to be socialized culturally, where individuals know what to do and how to act, but do not “espouse the value consistent with the action” (Scandura & Dorfman, 2004, p. 284).

Another interesting thought is how this study would translate to young and emerging leaders. As Chan et al. (2005) suggest, self-awareness develops through “increased levels and complexity of self-knowledge” (p. 16), which in turn lends to the idea of maturity acquired through the journey of life. This study involved participants aged 40 and over who were all experienced and had endured at least one life-changing event, such as for example having children. Whether young emerging leaders would be psychologically ready for the level of self-reflection necessary in ALT or whether the younger generation is more readily able to grasp such constructs, would thus be an important area for future research. In other words, whether psychological maturity has anything to do with age, and in turn if age impact ALT, would be an important area for future inquiry given the need to understand what the next generation of leaders will be about.

A final consideration for future studies would be the impact of gender. Although both women and men were involved in this study, gender did not seem to influence ALT in any specific way. However, the scope of the study was framed around cross-cultural aspects and
did thus not look at ALT from a gender-perspective. This would further indicate an important area for future studies. Eagly (2005) suggest, “when leadership is defined in masculine terms, the leaders who emerge are disproportionately men” (p. 464). Whether ALT translate as a being defined in masculine terms or not would thus benefit the understanding of ALT as a theory from a gender-perspective. In combination with findings from cross-cultural studies such as the GLOBE-study, where culture was found to have an impact of leadership, the question should further be what the impact of leadership expectations that are defined in masculine terms would be on ALT.

**Conclusion**

A thought provoking point is whether the theory should even be called authentic leadership or whether label the theory “genuine” leadership more fittingly describes the broader understanding and meaning of the word, using authenticity may not exactly capture the essence of these combined constructs. This could allow for more constructive debate in regards to the applicability of the theory rather than the nature of authenticity per se and the moral component that may or may not pertain to authenticity.

However, in turning to looking at what absences could be present in the conversation with the leader, Ladkin (2010) suggests, from a phenomenological perspective, “the full identity of any phenomenon cannot ever be completely known” (p. 37). Even in considering that what can be known is the identity of the phenomenon as perceived by the individuals involved in the study; thus the essence of that identity is what we see. However, the depth of thoughts, feelings and reflections behind that identity may lie deep beyond our conscious
awareness and thus not readily accessible to us. In this study, leaders who are recognized by experts as good leaders and viewed as authentic, opened up to the point they felt comfortable and reflected on their journey as leaders, important values, and experiences from which they drew conclusions about their leadership.

In essence, all of the themes identified in this study lead up to the question “Who are we?” As Zahavi (2012) suggests, “Who one is depends on values, ideals and goals one has, questions of what has meaning and significance for one and this of course is conditioned by the community of which one is part” (p. 146).

Leaders’ experiences are about lived time, lived space, lived body and lived orientation to others (van Manen, 1994), which all acquire a different meaning due to cultural context. Earlier I referred to this as a gene, but the picture I want to paint is almost one of a cloud floating in the sky. Each cloud holds the words of the leaders, but the words are floating within this cloud of culture, which thus permeates the words in a way that is beyond mere linguistic translation, conveying a silent understanding of a much deeper meaning to the word. The much deeper meaning is the sun behind the clouds, for which we have no words. We may sense the sun behind us in times of silence and reflection, but language to describe this is beyond our knowing.

For example, the word for time in Danish, Swedish and English translate directly, but the understanding of time as floating around within the cultural cloud is different. Although Scandinavian countries and the United States have several aspects of the concept of time in common as Western societies (Brislin & Kim, 2003), a significant difference is illustrated
through the example of how the three countries view life-work balance, or rather leisure – time and work-time. Based on OECD’s ranking of best work-balance (www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org), time in Denmark could for example appear to be considered valuable, as work is not all in life while in the United States time is a question of money, or “live to work”.

Thus, key findings show that while there is internal coherence and consistency among the leaders in terms of reflecting, talking and understanding authentic leadership, the cultural context impacts how authentic leaders enact their leadership. To extend the cloud and sun metaphor, the constructs of ALT can be likened to the sun, the sun spreads its rays equally across the cosmos. On planet earth, the rays are filtered through a cloud which alters the intensity, the warmth or the strength of the sunrays and how they touch the individual. In this metaphor, the cloud signifies the cultural and societal context in which we are living and experiencing the world, and as such shapes how we understand and experience life.

This study indicates that until we really understand the clouds, and how they shape our understanding of the sun’s rays, ALT could risk becoming just another leadership fad, fading into the background at the dawn of the next big leadership buzz.

As a theory, there is great promise for ALT at the individual as well as group level, and even at the societal level. However, unless it can be understood in its cultural context, it is questionable whether this theory can reach its potential to have significant impact on organizations and society at large.
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doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.03.005


förstå hur ledarskap kan utövas mellan chefer och medarbetare i svenskt arbetsliv

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A – IRB Consent Form

North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board for the Use of Human Subjects in Research
SUBMISSION FOR NEW STUDIES

GENERAL INFORMATION

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<td>1a. Revised Date:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title of Project:</td>
<td>A Phenomenological Case Study Exploring Constructs within Authentic Leadership between Leaders in Scandinavia and USA w/n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Principal Investigator:</td>
<td>Kristina Natt och Dag</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Department:</td>
<td>Leadership, Policies and Adult and Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Campus Box Number:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:xxxxx@ncsu.edu">xxxxx@ncsu.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Phone Number:</td>
<td>(xxx) xxxx xxxx</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Fax Number:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Faculty Sponsor Name and Email Address if Student Submission:</td>
<td>[NAME], <a href="mailto:xxxxx@ncsu.edu">xxxxx@ncsu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Source of Funding? (required information):</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Is this research receiving federal funding?:</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. If Externally funded, include sponsor name and university account number:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>12. RANK:</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student: Undergraduate; Masters; or PhD</td>
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<td>Other (specify): Ed.D.student</td>
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As the principal investigator, my signature testifies that I have read and understood the University Policy and Procedures for the Use of Human Subjects in Research. I assure the Committee that all procedures performed under this project will be conducted exactly as outlined in the Proposal Narrative and that any modification to this protocol will be submitted to the Committee in the form of an amendment for its approval prior to implementation.

Principal Investigator:

Kristina Natt och Dag

* (typed/printed name) (signature) (date)

As the faculty sponsor, my signature testifies that I have reviewed this application thoroughly and will oversee the research in its entirety. I hereby acknowledge my role as the principal investigator of record.
Faculty Sponsor:

[NAME]  
_________________________  ___
*  
(typed/printed name)  (signature)  (date)

*Electronic submissions to the IRB are considered signed via an electronic signature. For student submissions this means that the faculty sponsor has reviewed the proposal prior to it being submitted and is copied on the submission.

Please complete this application and email as an attachment to: debra_paxton@ncsu.edu or send by mail to: Institutional Review Board, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (Administrative Services III). Please include consent forms and other study documents with your application and submit as one document.

***************************************

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Reviewer Decision (Expedited or Exempt Review)

☐ Exempt  ☐ Approved  ☐ Approved pending modifications

Table

Expedited Review Category:  ☐ 1  ☐ 2  ☐ 3  ☐ 4  ☐ 5  ☐ 6  ☐ 7  ☐ 8a  ☐ 8b  ☐ 8c  ☐ 9

Reviewer Name  Signature

Date
North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board for the Use of Human Subjects in Research
GUIDELINES FOR A PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

In your narrative, address each of the topics outlined below. Every application for IRB review
must contain a proposal narrative, and failure to follow these directions will result in delays in
reviewing/processing the protocol.

A. INTRODUCTION
1. Briefly describe in lay language the purpose of the proposed research and why it is important.

   The purpose of this study is to draw parallels between authentic leadership and cultures. More
   specifically, the study seeks to explore the constructs of the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI)
   and how leaders create meaning in different cultures, in this case Scandinavia and USA. It is my
   hope that findings from this study will expand on existing theory as well as shed light on what
   authentic leadership theory from a cultural perspective.
   The study could reveal future areas for research in regards to exploring authentic leadership theory
   from a cultural perspective.

   Furthermore, as this is a qualitative study, it adds to the significant gap in amount of qualitative
   versus quantitative studies. A majority of leadership studies are positioned in the quantitative
   paradigm. Authentic leadership theory is also an emerging theory. With this qualitative study, I
   thus hope to contribute to the existing and growing body of knowledge that discuss authentic
   leadership.

2. If student research, indicate whether for a course, thesis, dissertation, or independent research.

   This study is proposed for the purpose of dissertation research.

B. SUBJECT POPULATION
1. How many subjects will be involved in the research?

   Phase 1 of the investigation involves approx. 20 leaders from each country (total of 40) that will
   conduct a survey on-line based on an instrument used in authentic leadership theory, Authentic
   Leadership Inventory (ALI)
   Phase 2 of the study involves selecting the highest and lowest ranking on the ALI, for maximum
   variation and then conduct in-depth interviews with 6-8 leaders in each country (total of 12-16).

2. Describe how subjects will be recruited. Please provide the IRB with any recruitment materials that
   will be used.

   Recognized experts and individuals in senior HR- positions from my interpersonal network will
   help identify effective leaders, intentionally not defining effective leadership. The rationale for not
   defining what constitutes effective leadership is the ability to have maximum variation between
   leaders as well as not providing any bias for authentic leadership. The study is not about exploring
   if the leaders are authentic or not, but rather how they perceive/interpret the constructs of the
   theory.
   Once the leaders have been selected, they will receive a letter from the researcher that explains the
   study as well as a link to the survey, using Qualtrics.
   From the surveys, I will select the highest ranked and the lowest ranked and then contact again,
   with a letter explaining phase two of the study, which is in-depth interviews.
   The employees will initially be contacted via email, followed up by phone.
Attached, you will find a proposed email invitation.

3. List specific eligibility requirements for subjects (or describe screening procedures), including those criteria that would exclude otherwise acceptable subjects.

   Eligible participants will be leaders who are recognized as effective leaders that has been identified as such by recognized experts in the field as well as HR-individuals in senior positions.

4. Explain any sampling procedure that might exclude specific populations

5. Disclose any relationship between researcher and subjects - such as, teacher/student;

   I have no pre-existing or current relationship with any of the study participants other than work or friendship ties.

6. Check any vulnerable populations included in study:

   - minors (under age 18) - if so, have you included a line on the consent form for the parent/guardian signature
   - fetuses
   - pregnant women
   - persons with mental, psychiatric or emotional disabilities
   - persons with physical disabilities
   - economically or educationally disadvantaged
   - prisoners
   - elderly
   - students from a class taught by principal investigator
   - other vulnerable population.

7. If any of the above are used, state the necessity for doing so. Please indicate the approximate age range of the minors to be involved.

   N/A – unless any of the subjects happen to be pregnant. As pregnancy is not central to the study, and the nature of the study does not involve any elements that could endanger a pregnancy in any way, this should not be a reason to exclude participants.

C. PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

1. In lay language, describe completely all procedures to be followed during the course of the experimentation. Provide sufficient detail so that the Committee is able to assess potential risks to human subjects. In order for the IRB to completely understand the experience of the subjects in your project, please provide a detailed outline of everything subjects will experience as a result of participating in your project. Please be specific and include information on all aspects of the research, through subject recruitment and ending when the subject's role in the project is complete. All descriptions should include the informed consent process, interactions between the subjects and the researcher, and any tasks, tests, etc. that involve subjects. If the project involves more than one group of subjects (e.g. teachers and students, employees and supervisors), please make sure to provide descriptions for each subject group.
1. After IRB-approval, recognized experts in the field of leadership and HRD and HR-individuals in senior positions will begin identifying the leaders. And send list to me.
2. Once the list have been compiled, the individuals on the list will receive an email from me with an introductory letter and asking to participate in a survey and possibly also participate in an in-depth interview at a later stage.
3. If participant agrees to participate, they will receive a second email with the link to the survey. I will continue to recruit participants until about 20 people from each country have agreed to participate.
4. After collecting the surveys, I will identify the 3-4 highest and lowest ranking on the survey from each country and then contact these via email again.
5. First interview will be scheduled upon confirmation of participation in the in-depth interviews.
6. Interviews will be conducted using the attached interview guide.
   i. After introduction, I will review the purpose of the study and explain how the study is designed
   ii. I will then explain the informed consent process and clarify any possible questions the participant may have
   iii. Conduct interview
   iv. Schedule possible phone follow-up upon transcription of the interview
7. Interviews will be audio taped
   i. After each interview, I will transcribe ad verbatim
8. Once all interviews have been transcribed, I will begin analyzing the data through phenomenology. I will look for any significant statements, sentences or quotes in the material produced from interviews and field notes that describes how the participants experienced authentic leadership.
9. The next step will be to develop clusters of meaning from the statements and arrange into themes.
10. Once I have identified the central themes of the research, participants will be sent a copy of their transcript and a description of themes. Based on participant feedback, I will refine the themes and correct any mistakes identified in the interview transcripts.
11. Based on the analysis of the data, I will proceed to write a textural and structural description of the participants’ experiences.
12. Based on the two descriptions, I will advance a composite of the two, to convey the meanings of constructs of authentic leadership theory between the different countries.

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2. How much time will be required of each subject?

I estimate that each individual leaders will need to commit approximately 10-15 min., to the ALQ-survey. Selected leaders will then commit to approx. 3 hrs, which consists of the interview (est. 2 – 2.5 hrs) and a brief read-through of their transcripts for member checks.

---

D. POTENTIAL RISKS

1. State the potential risks (physical, psychological, financial, social, legal or other) connected with the proposed procedures and explain the steps taken to minimize these risks.

No risks are anticipated.
2. Will there be a request for information that subjects might consider to be personal or sensitive (e.g. private behavior, economic status, sexual issues, religious beliefs, or other matters that if made public might impair their self-esteem or reputation or could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability)?

I will ask leaders to share how they make meaning of the constructs involved (such as e.g. ethics) in authentic leadership and what their thoughts, feelings and similar are in regards to that. Participants decide how much information they wish to reveal during the research process and will not be encouraged to participate in any aspects of the study, which they perceive to be too personal or private.

a. If yes, please describe and explain the steps taken to minimize these risks.

The questions are broad general questions about authentic leadership. While it is not my intent to ask intrusive questions, some participants may have a higher level of sensitivity to revealing their real thoughts and emotions. The majority of the information gathered is self-disclosed and gives participants a high degree of control over what information is shared in the study.

b. Could any of the study procedures produce stress or anxiety, or be considered offensive, threatening, or degrading? If yes, please describe why they are important and what arrangements have been made for handling an emotional reaction from the subject.

Not likely. Authentic leadership is generally considered a positive leadership style and my aim in this study is to find out authentic leadership theory mirrors effective leadership in different cultural contexts.

3. How will data be recorded and stored?

All of the information shared is confidential. All interviews will be recorded digitally and via handwritten notes. The data will be stored in my home. All electronic files will be stored on my personal computer and password protected. All handwritten notes will also be stored in files in my home.

a. How will identifiers be used in study notes and other materials?

Each participant will receive a pseudonym and the master list of participant names will not be saved in the same file or stored in the same electronic location as the interview data.

b. How will reports will be written, in aggregate terms, or will individual responses be described?

The report will be written with individual responses being attributed to the appropriate pseudonym.

4. If audio or videotaping is done how will the tapes be stored and how/when will the tapes be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.
Digital files will not be associated with participant names and will be stored on my home password protected home computer and backed up to a hard drive. Once the research process is complete, the files will be deleted from the computer and the hard drive.

5. Is there any deception of the human subjects involved in this study? If yes, please describe why it is necessary and describe the debriefing procedures that have been arranged.

| No |

E. POTENTIAL BENEFITS

This does not include any form of compensation for participation.

1. What, if any, direct benefit is to be gained by the subject? If no direct benefit is expected, but indirect benefit may be expected (knowledge may be gained that could help others), please explain.

While there are no direct benefits expected from this study, indirect benefits include contributions to the existing body of research regarding authentic leadership theory. Additionally, study participants may benefit from the opportunity to share the insights of their lived experience and feel important to have been selected to participate in the study.

F. COMPENSATION

Please keep in mind that the logistics of providing compensation to your subjects (e.g., if your business office requires names of subjects who received compensation) may compromise anonymity or complicate confidentiality protections. If, while arranging for subject compensation, you must make changes to the anonymity or confidentiality provisions for your research, you must contact the IRB office prior to implementing those changes.

1. Describe compensation

| N/A |

2. Explain compensation provisions if the subject withdraws prior to completion of the study.

| NA |

3. If class credit will be given, list the amount and alternative ways to earn the same amount of credit.

| NA |

G. COLLABORATORS

1. If you anticipate that additional investigators (other than those named on Cover Page) may be involved in this research, list them here indicating their institution, department and phone number.

| NA |

2. Will anyone besides the PI or the research team have access to the data (including completed surveys) from the moment they are collected until they are destroyed. The researcher’s faculty sponsor and peers from her doctoral cohort may be asked to review
codes and drafts of the final report. However, no one other than the principal investigator will have direct access to the data.

H. CONFLICT OF INTEREST
1. Do you have a significant financial interest or other conflict of interest in the sponsor of this project? No

2. Does your current conflicts of interest management plan include this relationship and is it being properly followed? N/A

I. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
1. If a questionnaire, survey or interview instrument is to be used, attach a copy to this proposal.

2. Attach a copy of the informed consent form to this proposal.

3. Please provide any additional materials that may aid the IRB in making its decision.

J. HUMAN SUBJECT ETHICS TRAINING
*Please consider taking the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), a free, comprehensive ethics training program for researchers conducting research with human subjects. Just click on the underlined link.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Goal</th>
<th>Projected Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receive IRB approval</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct Pilot Interview</td>
<td>May-July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit Study Participants</td>
<td>April - May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Data Collection</td>
<td>September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze Data</td>
<td>June-November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Final Chapters and Revise</td>
<td>November-December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defend Dissertation</td>
<td>December-January 2014</td>
</tr>
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2. Selection criteria list

Participant Selection Criteria:

Recognized experts within the field of leadership and/or HRD (such as e.g.
scholars, published writers) and senior HR-individuals (such as e.g. Senior Vice Presidents and CEO’s) will select a number of leaders they deem as effective or good. The criteria for selecting the leaders is thus based on the assumption that senior professionals and experts have the adequate knowledge and expertise for evaluating what is effective and/or good leadership.

Once identified the leaders, the experts and senior professionals role is terminated. The identified leaders will then be the unit of analysis for the study.
APPENDIX B – Sample letters

Participant sample letters - Danish

Kære ____________

Tak for dit interesse omkring mit studie i autentisk ledelse. Jeg sætter stor pris på dit unikke bidrag til mit studie og jeg glæder mig til at du vil være delagtig.

Formålet med dette brev er at igen forklare nogle af de ting vi har diskuteret og sikre at du har modtaget en Informed Consent Form, som er en del i de regler og standarder omkring forskning i USA der er til for at sikre etisk og korrekt forskning omkring den individuelle deltager. Jeg vil bede dig om at underskrive denne form og sende tilbage til mig, enten via mail eller via normal post.

Den forskning model jeg vil bruge er en kvalitativ model, der har til formål at forstå individuelle erfaringer og fornemmelser. På denne måde vil jegprove at svare på mit forsknings spørgsmål, How do leaders in Denmark and Sweden create meaning of the constructs of authentic leadership compared to leaders in the United States? (Oversat: hvordan skaber Danske og Svenske ledere mening omkring tankebanerne indenfor autentisk ledelse sammenlignet med ledere i USA?).

Gennem din deltagelse, vil jeg prove at forstå essensen af autentisk ledelse som den viser sig gennem din erfaring. Efter et første spørgeskema, vil du evt. blive bedt om at deltage i fase to, hvor jeg vil lave individuelle interviews, og stille spørgsmål omkring dine erfaringer, situationer, og vigtige episoder for dig i din ledelse. Jeg søger ægte, åbne, levende beskrivelser omkring din erfaring og mennesker, steder, pladser du forbindes med disse beskrivelser og hvad de betød for dig; dine tanker, føelser og adfærd.

Din deltagelse er meget værdifuld for denne studie, og jeg vil på forhånd sige tak for din tid, energi og indsats. Om du har flere spørgsmål omkring studie, når du mig nemmest via email: [NAME]@ncsu.edu.

De bedste hilsener,

[NAME]
Sample letter – Swedish

Kära ____________

Tack för ditt intresse i min doktorsavhandling om autentiskt ledarskap. Jag uppskattar ditt unika bidrag väldigt mycket och ser fram emot din medverkan.

Syftet med det här brevet är att återigen förklara några av de saker vi har diskuterat samt att säkra att du har mottagit en Informed Consent Form, som är en del av de regler och standards som omger forskning i USA och som är till för att säkerställa att all forskning där individer deltar, går etiskt och korrekt till. Jag skulle vilja be dig att skriva under formuläret och skicka tillbaka till mig, antingen via mail eller vanlig post.

Den forskningsmodell jag kommer att använda är en kvalitativ modell med syfte att förstå individuella erfarenheter och uppfattningar. På så sätt vill jag besvara min forskningsfråga How do leaders in Denmark and Sweden create meaning of the constructs of authentic leadership compared to leaders in the United States? (Översatt: hur skapar Danska och Svenska ledare mening av de tankekonstruktioner som ligger till grund för autentiskt ledarskap jämfört med ledare i USA?).


Ditt deltagande är mycket värdefullt för den här studien och jag vill på förhand säga tack för din tid, energi och insats. Om du har fler frågor om studien när du mig lättast via email: [NAME]@ncsu.edu.

Många hälsningar,

[NAME]
Sample letter – English

Dear______,

Thank you for your interest in my dissertation research on Authentic Leadership. I value the unique contribution that you can make to my study and I am excited about your participation. The purpose of this letter is to reiterate some of the things we have already discussed and to secure your signature on the *Informed Consent Form*, which is a part of the US rules and standards in research in that exist to ensure ethical and correct research when human subject are involved. I would like you to sign the form and send back to me either by email or regular mail.

The research model I am using is a qualitative model through which I am seeking to understand individual experiences and perceptions. In this way I hope to answer my research question

*How do leaders in Denmark and Sweden create meaning of the constructs of authentic leadership compared to leaders in the United States?*

Through your participation, I hope to understand the essence of authentic leadership as it reveals itself in your experience. After a firth questionnaire I may ask you to participate in the second part of the study, in which I will conduct individual interviews and ask you about your experiences, situations and important events to you and your leadership. I am looking for real, open and vivid descriptions of your experience and of the people, places and situations you connect with the descriptions and what these have meant for you, your thoughts and your feelings.

I value your participation and thank you in advance for your time, energy and effort to this study. If you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on [NAME]@ncsu.edu.

Kind regards,

[NAME]
APPENDIX C – Authentic Leadership Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Authentic Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I can list my three greatest weaknesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>My actions reflect my core values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I seek others opinions before making up my own mind</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I openly share my feelings with others</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I can list my three greatest strengths</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I do not allow group pressure to control me</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>I listen closely to the idea of those who disagree with me</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I let others know who I truly am as a person</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I seek feedback as a way of understanding who I really am as a person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Other people know where I stand on controversial issue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I do not emphasize my own point of view at the expense of others</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I rarely present a “false” front to others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I accept the feelings I have about myself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>My morals guide what I do as a leader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I listen very carefully to the ideas of others before making decisions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I admit my mistakes to others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Self-awareness*: 1, 5, 9, 13; *Internalized Moral Perspective*: 2, 6, 10, 14; *Balanced Processing*: 3, 7, 11, 15; *Relational transparency*: 4, 8, 12, 16
**APPENDIX D – Table of Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Statement</th>
<th>Formulated Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I think it’s important that you are yourself… so there’s not some layer you’re not aware about</td>
<td>Being an authentic leader means being who you are and being aware of who you are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I know sometimes my male managers would say things like ‘you need to be meaner, you need to be tougher’, and I’m like, you know, that isn’t me. And if you need me to do that, then maybe you don’t need me. I always try to stay true to who you are.</td>
<td>Being an authentic leader means standing up for who your “true you” is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I was a terrible leader in the army for example, that just wasn't my thing and wouldn't have succeeded in the military life had I stayed in that, and so circumstances really are important</td>
<td>Authentic leadership is about knowing who you are as a leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I think I can play most roles on the team, without being one where I’m unique, but I play well in all positions</td>
<td>Being an authentic leader, you know what you can do and do not need the spotlight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I have a naïve belief in the best in people, and I believe people will do [what they’re supposed to do] without being whipped or orders and commands.</td>
<td>Authentic leadership is about believing in followers and what they do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I don’t think I can look back over time and see that I haven’t been myself. I’ve been immensely authentic and faithful to my own principles.</td>
<td>Being an authentic leader is about having a strong set of values and not compromising on your values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Good leaders are those that haven’t been interested in the next step or more power but rather been in the situation they are and been present in the moment</td>
<td>Authentic leadership is about presence and not compromised by other ambitions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. You have to draw a line for how bad you allow yourself to feel...it’s a little bit of a survival instinct too.
9. One of the driving forces [to my leadership] is when people develop and grow, being able to support them and have that dialogue with them...
10. To have a human perspective, make people feel confirmed and...be interested in them [followers] as people
11. I always say that I prefer when people are honest and direct...I do that too as a leader, I apply being very much who I am without wrapping anything up
12. I think it’s important there not some layer that gets in the way of building mutual trust
13. I’m more grounded in myself now than I was before...I think it’s a quite common journey
14. I can get caught up in the [issue] and have to think to myself that ‘come on, you are the leader’ and then you have to know how to balance, in the end you also need to be able to have that difficult conversation
15. “A really hard guy to work for told me ‘I appreciate not having a yes-man’”, it was great to hear that he appreciated that and maybe that’s a little bit of a leadership element.
16. Even maybe with a bigger sense of purpose and in maybe a small sense of, at the end of the day, if my boys had been watching me, would they be proud of me; had I done well, had I done the right thing, had I done that extra little thing to help a colleague, I would feel that at the end of the day.
Table continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>17. Lots of Americans are very overt and have no hesitation stepping up and talking big and trying to take control of the meeting or making sure everybody understands that they know what they're talking about and I don't feel that compelling need that I think different personalities do.</th>
<th>Being authentic means accepting who you are regardless of societal norms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18. Not recognizing the human value and only focus on performance, I think that’s bad</td>
<td>Authentic leadership is embracing others, valuing humans and their contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I’m always in doubt so I haven’t found my role as a leader, I mean, I always doubt if I do it well…my starting point is always that I can do it better</td>
<td>Being an authentic leader is about asking yourself who am I as a leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I have a deep sense of respect for [leaders that installs] trust and gives space and that also dares to challenge people [to develop]</td>
<td>Being an authentic leaders signifies being open to feedback and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. It’s a development…and I have heard myself in a heated conversation say “but this is me, and I cant change that!”…I would hate living with someone like that.</td>
<td>Authentic leadership is about harnessing moments of awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. It’s about seeing the best in people, not think about them as if they leave the brain by the gate as the come to work, but to see them and…well, to like them.</td>
<td>Being an authentic leader signifies having a genuine interest in people and view them as equals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. We are not going into a situation and talk about money first, but when we know our goals, our values and where we’re heading, then we can talk about it…but not enter a situation thinking about profit first.</td>
<td>Authentic leadership rests upon strong values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. But I do not hold grudges. I just do not. I’ve changed that in myself. And I don’t know, it may not sound like a big thing but it was a big deal to me to know that ‘that’s just the way I’m made’, is not an excuse.</td>
<td>Being an authentic leader means improving yourself, through self-reflection and awareness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table continued.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25. When they’re [leaders] talking to you, you actually believe what they are saying and it’s not just the nice spin because you have read in management books to do this, but they really believe that this is the way to operate and work and be straightforward.</td>
<td>Authentic leadership cannot be applied or faked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. I am very much a believer in letting people do things the way they feel best…and just [have] the faith that if you’re doing the right things, it is going to work out right, and any bad experiences you learn from…I am definitely a very glass half full kind of person.</td>
<td>Being an authentic leader means having optimism and hope.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>