Balance in academic leadership: Voices of women from Turkey and the United States of America (US)[1]

ÖZGE HACIFAZLIOĞLU

Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Bahcesehir University
ohacifazlioglu@bahcesehir.edu.tr

This comparative study examines the experiences of women leaders in Turkey and the US. It argues that the theme of 'balance in leadership' appeared to be the most influential driving force in women leaders' stories. It further shows that balance in leadership is associated with balance in two areas: balancing private and professional life, and balance in research, teaching and leadership. The analysis is based on qualitative interviews with nineteen women leaders working at four-year public and private (foundation) universities in Turkey and the US. It is hoped that aspiring leaders can learn from these women's experiences.

Keywords: women leaders, higher education, balance, academic leadership, Turkey, US

Introduction

During the 2008-09 academic year, I served as a visiting assistant professor at Arizona State University, College of Teacher Education and Leadership. As a woman and a department chair in my home country, Turkey, I became interested in stories of women in higher administrative posts in the US, which could provide others and me with a set of rich experiences and narratives. This article accordingly, aims to present stories and insights from women leaders in which they share the ways they balance their leadership positions with their academic and private lives. The study is groundbreaking in that no one has captured the stories of women leaders in Turkey, nor compared their experiences with counterparts in the US. This unique research thus examines "balance in leadership" through international and cultural comparison. It argues that as women leaders become more experienced they develop a range of strategies to create instrumental balance, i.e. create synergies between activities in different fields, to maintain balance in their private, professional and academic lives.

The literature includes painful accounts of women in leadership positions in the US, Europe, South Africa and Australia (Alison & De la Rey 2003; Brown & Chliwniak, 1997; Cotterill, Hughes & Letherby, 2006; Nidiffer, 2000; Schwartz, 1997; Turner, 2007; Twombly, 1998; Ummersen & Sturnick, 2001; Wolverton, Gmelch, Wolverton & Sarros, 1996). I am one of those leaders, as I took on administrative posts in higher education at a very young age. The challenge of combining administrative responsibilities with academic research became apparent immediately, though my experiences as an administrator would later serve as a foundation for practice and scholarship. I have had times of delight and sorrow in the journey towards becoming a successful academic, leader, wife and mother. I continue to seek balance between professional and private life, and it is my hope that by focusing on the stories of women from Turkey and the US, I can bring into focus insights for women leaders everywhere.

This article presents the findings of a qualitative study conducted with nineteen women academic leaders in higher education. It begins with the core literature on balance in leadership. I then interpret the stories of women leaders through the prism of four types of balance: segmental, compensational, instrumental and conflictual. I focus on four women who represent good examples in terms of their constant search for balance, which, as I will show, they achieve through a combination of conflictual,

compensatory and, above all, instrumental balance. In the remainder of the article, two emergent themes will be developed through synthesising findings with evidence from other women leaders' experiences.

The notion of balance

Balance is a relative term, since the way it is defined and experienced varies from one individual to another. Studies have shown that maintaining harmonious integrity in a person's life is a subjective, complicated and continuous process (Ashforth, 2000; Keene & Quadagno, 2004). Bailyn, Fletcher & Kolb (1997) assert that balance is a synergistic relationship in which different components of life complement others. Clark's (2000:750) work on family border theory similarly explores "how people manage and negotiate the work and family spheres and the borders between them in order to attain balance".

This study draws on Guest's (2002) work-life approach to the notion of balance, which entails four models of balance: segmentational, compensational, instrumental and conflictual. A segmentational approach means that an individual strives to ensure that there is no relation between work and other areas of his/her life. A compensational model refers to an ethos in which an individual uses one sphere to make up for what is lacking in other spheres. The third model is associated with the notion of instrumentality; that is, one sphere facilitates success in another. Finally, in the conflict model, personal and professional spheres clash in an antagonistic fashion.

In the scholarship on higher education, Middlehurst (1992) refers to balance within the context of administration and finds that many observers have no understanding of how harmony is obtained. Handy (1984) similarly underscores the importance of balance through a comparison of organisational management and individual management, contending that leaders must achieve both. In their study of leadership in academic development, Blackmore and Blackwell (2006:376) likewise asserted: "heads may find themselves mediating between the realities of institutional life on the one hand and, the beliefs and values of the faculty on the other". A further strategy leaders employ is to take "a holistic academic development approach", which establishes balance between research, teaching, knowledge transfer and management (Blackmore & Blackwell, 2006:375). This article examines the perspectives of Turkish and American women leaders in academe by asking questions which reveal which of these models, if any, are relevant to their experiences.

Women leaders and balance

Administrative posts offered to academics activate an array of interrelated complications, prejudices, challenges and tensions which affect their private lives and professional roles. The degree to which these constraints cause problems may differ in different cultures and settings (Çelik, 2007; Ercetin & Baskan, 2000; Korkut, 2002; Louw & Zuber, 2009; Ndebele, 2007; Razik & Swanson, 2010; Schein,1978). Loeffler, Gretchen & Chris (2010) indicate that work-family balance plays an important role in the lives of both male and females academics. According to Balcı (2000) male and female academics experience similar stress levels, regardless of their gender and age. Bakioglu and Hacifazlioğlu (2001) found that female academics experience additional constraints in their careers during pregnancy.

Work-life balance becomes a more serious concern in executive positions. Being a woman leader in higher education poses many challenges (Ward, 2007). A limited number of studies have also analysed the private lives of women leaders. Behind closed doors, they tell stories of resistance and/or support from parents, spouses and children (Emslie & Hunt, 2009; Weigt & Solomon 2008). Özkanlı and White (2009) analysed the factors to explain the under-representation of women in senior management positions in Turkish and Australian universities, and came to the conclusion that "women in both countries were more likely than men to experience difficulty in being appointed senior managers" (Özkanlı & White, 2009:326). This was also confirmed by some of the women administrators in Vatansever's (2008) study.

Hensel (1991) notes that as caretakers in the family, women are disadvantaged in their professional lives, and it appears, moreover, that challenges mount after marriage and motherhood. Walton (1997:77) describes the constraints experienced in the professional lives of women due to "prejudice with regard to gender" (other studies have commented on the common challenges faced by male and female leaders

in academia). Thus, whilst children and partners appear to be somewhat neglected in the lives of leaders, regardless of their gender, the societal onus of such "neglect" may be harder for women to bear. This may be a reason why, as other studies suggest, women appear to prefer being exclusively academicians rather than combining scholarly and administrative roles.

Regardless of whether women take on administrative responsibilities, they face additional pressures to perform as mothers and wives, whilst continuing to produce intellectually. This burden may be compounded by high profile administrative roles. In Kerr and Gade's (1986) study of presidents, for example, female presidents believe their situations are different from those of male counterparts. Women presidents report that "they are placed under more scrutiny when they first take their jobs, and in particular that they must show that they can administer, that they can be tough without becoming an iron lady" (Kerr & Gade, 1986:118). Turner and Myers (2000) show how faculty women of colour feel divided psychologically between home and faculty. Their experiences exemplify the ways women have to sacrifice family and community commitments for a certain period in their lives in order to pursue academic careers and leadership positions in particular. In light of such assessments, being a woman academic leader appears to entail swimming "against the tide" (Walton, 1996:4). In this research I also demonstrate that women nevertheless manage — through a combination of conflictual, compensational and instrumental balancing — to reconcile their private and family lives with their professional trajectories, albeit at no small cost.

Method

This research employed a qualitative research design, and female leaders' voices are heard throughout. My work seeks to draw out such voices because, as Seidman (1998) notes, when we encourage participants to tell their stories we hear about their experiences in an illuminating and memorable way.

Participants

Participants in the study were women leaders at universities from large cities in Turkey and the US. Istanbul, Turkey, like Phoenix, Arizona, is a large metropolitan area encompassing different cultures and nationalities. This means that regardless of the fact that the pursuit of balance is a cross-cutting theme in their stories, women leaders in higher education are likely to be exposed to different family dynamics and institutional cultures. Volunteers for this study included nine participants from Istanbul and ten from Phoenix.

Although nineteen narrative summaries were developed for this study, in this article, I focus on the stories of four of the women leaders — two from Turkey, and two from the United States — because each demonstrated use of conflictual, compensational and instrumental balance. Pseudonyms appropriate to names in the relevant cultures were used to keep respondents' identities confidential. Like McMillan and Schumacher (2001), I used a combination of case type sampling strategies, to categorise women leaders according to their marital status, whether they were mothers or not, and with regard to other care-giving responsibilities they may bear. This methodological framework enabled me to examine sub-themes under the heading of 'balance', the topic to which we now turn.

Academic leadership positions

All the women leaders surveyed held academic leadership positions — dean, vice dean, director and provost — although the responsibilities associated with the titles varied across the institutions.[2] No specific information regarding the individuals and their institutional profiles is provided to ensure the privacy of the participants (Arizona State University, Institutional Review Board Policy).

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2   For example, Bilge's title and responsibilities are equivalent to those of the dean of a graduate school in the U.S. But Bilge's university uses the title director instead of dean for the graduate school.

Data collection

I launched the interview process by sending women in leadership positions a letter soliciting their voluntary participation, informing them of participation requirements and safeguards, and asking that they certify their informed consent. Interviews were conducted at leaders' own offices, where they appeared to feel comfortable and confident. All the interviews were recorded.

Bias and validity

In qualitative studies, there is always a possibility that the researcher could misunderstand what s/he has heard. In order to minimise this, I allowed participants to review their own interview transcripts. During the analysis phase, I solicited input from my colleagues (see Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2009; Maxwell, 1996; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008), inviting them to challenge both my thinking and my interpretation of the data. During transcription, I was very careful to transcribe word-for-word, and paid close attention to the subjects' unsolicited comments and observations. In addition, my questions were open-ended, so that the leaders could tell their stories better, free from the influence of my own story.

Analysis

Analysis was divided into the five phases suggested by Marshall and Rossman (1999). These include: 1) organising the data; 2) identifying themes, patterns and categories; 3) testing the emergent hypothesis against the data; 4) searching for alternative explanations of the data; and 5) writing the report. I selected excerpts from transcripts and placed them into broad categories in search of thematic connections within and across the transcripts (Seidman, 1998). Throughout the analytical process, I used women leaders' own voices and words to describe their experiences.

Maintaining balance: Voices of women leaders

All participants strove to create balance in their lives, though they were very different in other respects and their family dynamics and institutional cultures varied. Stories of four women academic leaders follow.

Turkish Dean Müge (Managing conflictual, compensational and instrumental balance)

Müge, an academic leader for several years, earned a doctorate in the social sciences. She is single and in her 40s. Müge's experiences when she first received her appointment reflect the challenge of balancing elements from her life before becoming an academic leader and the demands of the new position. She found, for example, that upon hearing the news, her friends' perceptions appeared to change, becoming inflected with their views on leaders in higher education in Turkey. Müge thinks that this was also related to gender:

> *My social circle of friends called me 'Mrs. Dean' at the very beginning! They said: 'we won't be able to see you again because you are a dean'. One of them said jokingly: 'we have to button up our jackets'.[3] This behavior could be interpreted as an indication of our society's resistance to associate a woman with the rank of a dean.* (Interview with Müge, March 28, 2008)

Müge's words echoed a tension many Turkish women leaders encounter in the early months of their appointments. But they may also reveal something true across cultures and, indeed, genders, namely, when a person is promoted to a position of authority the nature of their interactions may change, especially if they are interacting with the same people. Thus, the joking tone of Müge's friends could be read as a signal to all involved that there is a new 'ball game'. This can come as a shock to young leaders who do not anticipate that their relationships could be transformed. Yet, like Müge, they soon realise that it is no longer possible to spend as much time with friends, not least due to the administrative load.

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3   A buttoned up jacket flags respect in Turkish culture.

Müge chose not to marry. She did not argue that being single would be advantageous, as she believes success and luck are relative concepts. Müge said she could not determine whether her career would have been as successful had she married. Recalling an ex-fiancée, she observed:

> One of the major reasons why I broke up with one of my exes was his discouraging attitude towards my career plans. Based on our [discussions], I had the impression he might do something to block my advancement in this long, tough career journey … Alternatively, the scenario could have been positive if I married someone who was supportive and sensible. Who knows? (Interview with Müge, March 28, 2008)

Müge's experience while engaged could be interpreted in terms of the conflictual model of balance, since two aspects of her life, her fiancée and her academic aspirations, were in an antagonistic relationship. Müge believes that she made the right decision. Though her choice could be interpreted as a compensatory act, she appears to have widened her career options through the sacrifice, and this approach, in turn, helped her to achieve instrumental balance in her career later on. Therefore we could say that conflictual, compensational and instrumental balance are embedded in Müge's story.

Turkish Dean Bilge (Managing segmentational, conflictual, compensational and instrumental balance)

Bilge, the director of a graduate school, is in her 50s. She has worked in various high-level administrative posts in higher education and holds a doctorate in management. She was divorced when her son, who is now in his 30s and married, was young.

Bilge's experience underscores the role of a supportive family in career success. She felt empowered by her PhD in administration, but also by the support of her father, an academic, and her family. These factors appear to have allowed her to maintain instrumental balance as she climbed the leadership ladder. For example, though she married early, her father assured her that he would support her financially as she launched her academic career, "… and when I had a son", she said "he was practically raised by my mother" (Interview with Bilge, January 12, 2008).

Bilge's relationship with her husband, however, appears to have oscillated between the segmentational and conflictual models of balancing. He offered no support during the PhD process, and since he worked in the private sector their working and leisure hours differed. She believes they divorced not because she worked "too hard" but because neither their professional nor private lives intersected. Ever since, Bilge has sought to balance professional and private life. She works hard, but the purpose is to establish a family-like culture within her division. Indeed, Bilge's colleagues describe her as a "maternal leader"[4] who cares for staff through active collaboration. She works around 12 hours a day and has no time for social life besides academically related social activities. Thus, her private and professional lives appear to be complementary, with her team serving as her family. This, in turn, implies a compensational balancing strategy in which professional life is actually at the fore.

U.S. Dean Gina (Managing conflictual, compensational and instrumental balance)

Gina, in her early 60s, is a dean in the US, an appointment she received after fourteen years as an associate dean. She has a doctorate in education, is married and has two children who today are young, independent adults.

Gina's career did not come easily. She received no support from her parents or extended family in her pursuit of education, though she was able to complete high school at the age of sixteen because she skipped twice. She believes it was she who created the opportunities for advancement in her career.

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4   Maternal (*anaç*), comes from ana which means mother, and is used to describe women who are eager to take care of people with whom they are close. Bilge uses the term to indicate her sense of nurture and integrity towards those under her leadership.

Gina's working class family disapproved of college or career for women. As her aunt put it, "you know there is a woman out there somewhere who will wanna prepare a hamburger for your husband". Reflecting on this attitude, Gina notes that

they [her parents] did not understand education and they certainly did not understand college and graduate school. They don't even ask me questions about [my leadership role]. (Interview with Gina, December 11, 2008)

Gina struggled to deliver as a spouse, mother and professor, and in so doing, she appears to have been engaged in conflictual, compensational and instrumental balancing.

Whilst Gina indicated that she received support from her spouse and children, she believes she gave more than she received. Her words highlight an attempt to be an ideal mother figure for her family:

I think my husband supported [me]; and my children supported me too. But they also want what they want. No matter what! You're still ... the mother ... you still want your wife not to be tired at the end of the day! You owe them ... it is more like a passive acceptance. I think it is kind of a long process that I need to understand what kind of support I need ... there is a lot of guilt that comes after missing a kid's concert. (Interview with Gina, December 11, 2008)

This remark reveals the ways Gina also moves between compensational and instrumental balance. Like most respondents with grown children, Gina believes her administrative as well as academic career was especially challenging until her children attended college. Even now she thinks they do not fully understand the kind of support she needs. She believes her children thought she should do all the tasks required of her job, and still be able to listen to their problems as a full-time mother.

It is evident that Gina has made sacrifices in order to serve as a dean. She nevertheless appears pleased with her success. She notes, moreover, that being a young mother of young children as a dean, would present a whole different set of challenges. Like Müge, her life is a blend of compensational and instrumental balance.

U.S. Director Victoria (Managing conflictual, compensational and instrumental balance)

Victoria, in her early 60s, is a director. She earned her doctorate in sociology and has held various academic leadership positions for over 20 years. She is divorced and has a 40-year old son, refers to herself as a feminist, and has been in a relationship with her partner for 20 years.

Most of the respondents with children recalled the period when their children were young as one of the most challenging of their career, especially in terms of balancing child-rearing and academic leadership. Victoria indicated that after divorce she found more time to conduct research in her field. This was somewhat striking as her husband was also an academic, a professor of Afro-American studies, and they had not in any case, sought a conventional marriage, as they were both activists. She divorced her husband in the 1980s, not least because they experienced conflict regarding matters like the sharing of domestic responsibilities. Victoria received joint custody of their son and found more time to work on her studies.

Victoria was grateful to have a partner from the field of leadership, from whom she could receive support and to whom she could provide support. This is an example of how she maintains instrumental balance, evident in her assertion that activities in administrative posts inevitably percolate into leaders' lives.

Victoria's experience also underlines the difficulties faced by women in performing as both faculty members and leaders. All the women in this research echoed her words:

... You have to be a researcher; you have to have success to get tenure; ... You know it is like a lot of things going on. I can remember at the time when my kid was little. Oh my gosh! It would be forever before I had free time. Then I think oh my gosh, it went so fast ... (Interview with Victoria, October 30, 2008)

Emerging themes

In this study, women leaders in academe appeared to deal with many challenges, and at times they paid for career advancement through sacrifices. Each leader's analysis of her situation affirms Guests' (2002) view of balance as subjective. Balance takes different and nuanced forms at different times in each person's life. Relevant factors include age, energy level, family situation, attitude towards work, and gender (Mangels, 2009). Each leader accordingly defined and interpreted "balance" in his/her own way, but the following sub-themes were discernible across responses, viz. the pursuit of balance in private and professional life, and research, teaching and leadership.

This research has shown that in response to challenges, leaders seek balance in a variety of ways (e.g. conflictual, compensational or instrumental). Although they state that they became more competent in maintaining balance as they gained experience and grew older, they are still seeking ways to improve balance. In some cases, readers might wonder whether this actually constitutes balance. Yet, in both Turkey and the US, we hear leaders relating success stories; it is as if they are the "hero" of their own autobiography. There are also stories of disappointment. Some, for example, might question the modern template for success in which one is expected to assert that "I work hard, I am competitive and I am responsible for my successes". This dilemma is audible in the voices of most of the leaders in this study; still, their narratives are ultimately ones of success. In this context, we see snapshots of women who are responsible for many issues. Though they have indicated that they have learned how to maintain instrumental balance, it is evident that it is not always possible to achieve a stable condition, and compensational behaviour is also unavoidable.

Balancing private and professional life

Private and family lives appear to have crucial importance in women leaders' lives. The positive pictures presented by the women leaders of their family and private lives were impressive. Most participants directly or indirectly mentioned their responsibilities as women. A need to play many roles in both the workplace and within their families was perceived as a real but manageable constraint. Participants with children remarked on how administrative problems and burdens were reflected in their homes. They stated that the intensity of the burden lessened once children were grown. This corroborates Davies' (2006) finding in his study of women and transgression in the halls of academe. Interviewing women and men in Australia, the US, Sweden and New Zealand, he found that "both men and women pushed themselves to extremes to fulfil the greedy demands of their positions" (Davies, 2006, 502).

Twombly (1998, 389) likewise notes that "women described families as the most significant limiting factor in their careers and yet, when asked directly, they did not label family responsibilities as an obstacle or problem". Indeed, one of the most significant cultural differences between Turkish and American respondents was the citation by the former of "cooking and housekeeping" as a part of their responsibilities within the family. Some Turkish leaders said they sought balance by hiring housemaids and/or through support from figures like mothers, mothers-in-law, relatives or housemates. Significantly then, this study suggests that American respondents feel somewhat less obliged to maintain traditional gender roles in the household when compared to Turkish respondents. Yet it is impossible to generalise, since each experience is unique.

Other research has revealed that better conditions could minimise work-family conflict (Emslie & Hunt, 2009; Weigt & Solomon, 2008). As noted, scholarship on academic leadership addresses the difficulties women experience in balancing work and family responsibilities, given the expectations and demands of an academic career (Ledwith & Manfredi, 2000; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004; Young & Wright, 2001). Partners who do not understand the demands of leadership positions may increase women's levels of stress. These factors are among the many reasons why women leaders could be sceptical about taking on leadership responsibilities early times in their careers.

US Dean Mariana found that leadership entailed a trade-off in her personal life. Mariana describes herself as a hard worker who devotes nights and weekends to her job. She asserts that she has good relations with others who are committed to their jobs, because they too have only limited time for social

life. She accordingly tends to have relationships with other hardworking academics, and at least one relationship ended due to the demands of her position. Like Müge, however, she appeared happy to hold a leadership position, regardless of the personal sacrifices it necessitated:

> I was in a relationship a couple of years ago and he needed a lot of time. I just said: 'you get x amount of my time. I had a life before you got into it' ... It was the one relationship that ended ... I gave a lot of time. I cut back a lot of things and it was not enough. I made a lot of compromises. (Interview with Mariana, November 12, 2008)

In short, there were many similarities between the experiences of women leaders in the two cultures, perhaps a function of the common academic setting, as well as considerable nuance and difference, which might be related to broader cultural differences. Further studies could be conducted in Europe, Africa and Asia to compare how women leaders balance their academic, professional and private lives. The notion, for example, that partners and children should support the woman in her career was seen more often in the stories of American respondents. In Turkey, however, women leaders appeared to receive support from their families in delivering as *both* the "perfect" mother and wife as envisaged by traditional gender roles, *and* as successful leaders in the professional sphere. It is nevertheless clear that in both contexts women leaders rely on a support network outside academia, constituted by parents, spouse or friends. In this context, "outside" support appears to be a critical component for the successful maintenance of instrumental balance.

Balance in research, teaching and leadership

Leadership careers in higher education are primarily cultivated in the professoriate (Kerr, 1984; Twombly, 1986). Academic leadership thus necessitates fusing leadership and scholarship. As such, for the women in this study, balance in leadership appears to be aligned with "research and teaching". Almost all the leaders in both countries asserted that they had worked in lower administrative posts before being appointed to their current positions. This appears to translate into a quest to become an academic leader who can also deliver on the research and teaching requirements of their posts. For as much as leaders emphasised the issue of balance in leadership with regard to family, social and professional life, almost all also underlined the importance of continuity in research. Thus, whilst most are concerned about time management, they seem to have a genuine interest in conducting research and working collaboratively with their graduate students. They accordingly emphasised the importance of maintaining balance in "research, teaching and leadership". Almost all also advised aspiring leaders not to become involved in administrative activities at an early age.

US dean Stephanie's recommendation to aspiring leaders to constantly pursue balance in research, teaching and administration and never to forfeit the first two elements, is meaningful in this context (Interview with Stephanie, December 22, 2008). It reveals that at the heart of an academic career is commitment to being a faculty member, even though one can also pursue higher administrative roles.

This research has further revealed that balance is a necessary ingredient in the lives of women leaders, despite their different institutional settings and the diverse problems they encounter. Academic leadership is also challenging because of the expectation that leaders will foster a stimulating environment for faculty. As Bryman (2007) asserts, leadership entails creating conditions for academics to pursue their research interests and objectives in a relatively unfettered way. Other authors have noted that academic leaders should never neglect their identities as researchers (Creswell, Wheeler & Seagren, Egly & Beyer 1990), an imperative which requires that academics work harder and longer to manage time constraints (Acker & Armenti, 2004). This research has revealed how such imperatives are salient in the lives of women leaders who appear to rely on the compensation model. Being a full time professor appears to be an advantage in this context, yet almost all participants asserted that they are eager to continue research and that they miss the times when they could write with a fresh mind. Almost all accepted that they are not as productive intellectually as they were before taking leadership positions. This situation could again be interpreted as a form of compensatory balancing between administrative and research commitments.

In sum, achieving and sustaining balance between career and private life on one hand, and between administrative and scholarly responsibilities on the other represent challenges with which women leaders deal throughout their careers. Private and academic lives were in none of the four cases segmented, and women constantly sought to create complementarity between the personal, academic and leadership spheres. They learned to cope through a combination of conflictual, compensatory, and instrumental balancing. It should also be noted that each woman tailored a work-life balance appropriate to her own circumstances based on her values, potential and aspirations. In line with this finding, Mangels (2009) contends that there is no one right path to success, but rather stumbling blocks to avoid. The key appears to be to avoid dissonance in work and life (Gregorian & Martin, 2004; Mangels, 2009; Trebon & Trebon, 2004). All of this suggests that discussion of balance and ways it may be pursued could be an important component of leadership training and seminars. Action research oriented training will also help leaders to learn from others' experiences. As Louw and Zuber-Skerritt (2009:237) have revealed:

> the evaluation process [during a seminar] encouraged participants to reflect on their own learning, research growth and leadership capabilities, and on how they may further develop their practice and career.

Meanwhile, according to Cross (2009), Gümüşeli & Hacıfazlıoğlu (2009), Kotecha (2009) and Tembile (2003), universities are being greatly transformed in an era of globalisation. This poses additional challenges to and opportunities for university administrators across the world who increasingly have to manage the demands of a wide range of stakeholders. A promising avenue of future research would be to explore how leaders create and maintain balance in such situations. A broader cross-cultural perspective on this as a phenomenon would be a welcome addition to the literature, and should include African and Asian case studies.

In this article, however, I focused on the accounts of women in Turkey and the US from the perspective of how they balance the private/personal and the research/teaching/administration spheres. Further research along these lines could compare a range of cultural and institutional settings. A comparison of men's and women's experiences would also be enlightening.

In sum, this study revealed that whilst there are four ideal-typical forms of balancing, women leaders will mix and match balancing styles depending on the specifics of their situation. There is thus no explicit prescription for success. In this context, Ndebele's (2007:2) reading of leadership is compelling:

> ... leadership is the ability of leaders to read a situation whose most observable logic points to a most likely (and expected) outcome, but then to detect in that very likely outcome not a solution, but a compounding of the problem. This assessment then calls for the prescription of an unexpected outcome, which initially, may look strikingly improbable.

Rising to such challenges is the stuff of leadership and, as this study reveals, at the heart of successful leadership is the pursuit of balance.

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