A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON OF LEADERSHIP CHOICES:

COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES AMONG FEMALE LEADERS IN THE

UNITED STATES, KAZAKHSTAN AND SWEDEN

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Title: A Cross-cultural Comparison of Leadership Choices: Commonalities and
Differences among Female Leaders in the United States, Kazakhstan and Sweden

This study examines commonalities and differences in leadership choices preferred by female leaders in Kazakhstan, Sweden and the United States of America. The results of the study show that all respondents (1) value the same leadership traits; (2) recognize the importance of mentorship; (3) share the same opinion about what is the most common mistake that can derail a leader's career and (4) face the same challenges at the workplace. The study revealed differences in following categories: (1) family-work balance issue; (2) conflicts at the workplace; (3) leadership development practices; (4) choosing among equally - qualified candidates.

Since the entire Central Asian region is largely overlooked in cultural analysis of managerial styles, I also suggest an original cultural metaphor for Kazakhstan and an original dimensional analysis of Kazakh culture. I also argue that leadership choices develop and transform over the time adjusting to the changes of the social reality.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, organizations have been undergoing rapid and multi-dimensional changes. Technological advances coupled with social and political transformations have accelerated the process of globalization. In addition, the number of multinational organizations and joint ventures is growing rapidly. According to recent data, only 47 of the world's 100 largest economies are national states, while the remaining 53 are multinational corporations (Melloan, 2004). One of the challenges for the growing number of multinational organizations is managing human resources effectively across different cultures. This implies that managers who consider expatriation should be aware of cross-cultural differences that influence business practices and be ready to adjust their managerial style according to their local working environment. In particular, leaders should understand differences and similarities in the expectations of leaders from other cultures (Miroshnik, 2002). Cross-cultural differences in leadership choices are embedded in cultural and social expectations of every country. Furthermore, I believe that leadership preferences can develop and transform over time adjusting to the changes of the social reality.

This study is an attempt to examine commonalities and differences in leadership attributes and behaviors possessed by female leaders across three different countries – the United States of America, Kazakhstan, and Sweden. The research will provide a comparative cross-cultural analysis of managerial styles in targeted countries based on recent cross-cultural anthropological studies, interviews, and my personal observations.

For this study I will analyze two recent influential cross-cultural studies. The first is Hofstede's cultural dimensions study. I will analyze figures for all targeted countries according to Hofstede's study and provide approximate figures for Kazakhstan and highlight explanations for each figure based on my observations of the Kazakh business culture. The second is Gannon's theory of cultural metaphors where he describes a unique metaphor that reflects certain characteristics of each nation studied. Unfortunately, there was no metaphor for Kazakhstan provided in Gannon's study. That is why I will propose the original cultural metaphor that integrates many characteristics of the Kazakh business culture. I believe that cross-cultural theoretical discourse will help to understand reasons why and how leadership choices vary across different cultures.

Studying and working in Kazakhstan, the United States and Sweden has shaped my own cross-cultural experience and influenced my intellectual pursuits and personal life. My experience has helped me to realize the significance of cross-cultural nuances and become aware of the possible differences in business practices from business etiquette to negotiating processes. Unfortunately, not enough investigations can be found in western literature about business practices and leadership development in Central Asia. That is why one of my primary goals is to provide original analysis of the managerial practices and female leadership development in Kazakhstan. As a Fulbright grantee, I want to contribute into constructing of the bridge of cross-cultural understanding and strengthening international cooperation. Working as an intern at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in summer 2011 also enriched my experience of working with a diverse international team and strengthened my cross-cultural communication skills. Inspired by insights I gained through this experience, I chose these three countries as my

regional focus to investigate commonalities and differences in leadership choices made by female leaders across three different nations.

For this research, I interviewed female leaders from the targeted countries. There are several reasons why I chose to interview only female leaders for this research. First of all, I believe that investigating female leadership can help to reveal the complexity of leadership development and gender dynamics at the workplace in different cultures. I think female leadership reflects deeper issues and complexities of the leadership development process. Secondly, studying female leadership in cross-cultural contexts was always my personal concern. I worked under supervision (professional and academic) of female leaders in Kazakhstan, Sweden and the United States. Besides, I have some managerial experience myself. Third, an incompatibility between standard leadership attributes and femininity makes it an interesting and thought-provoking subject to study. The controversy between femininity and leadership is embedded in culture and social stereotypes. In other words, "being feminine" is considered to be opposite to "being a leader". At the same time, women who engage in behaviors stereotypically linked to men are usually evaluated negatively. Unfortunately, women can often be perceived as ineffective leaders no matter what leadership style they use (Paludi, 2012).

Researchers claim that female leaders tend to display a transformational leadership style, which has been demonstrated to contribute to leader effectiveness, more than male leaders do (Bass, 2006; Powell, 2010). Transformational leadership describes leaders who motivate subordinates to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the group or organization (Powell, 2011, p. 52). It does not necessarily mean that male leaders cannot possess transformational leadership traits. However, male leaders tend to

display transactional leadership, which is considered to contrast with transactional leadership (Bass, 2006). This study is also an attempt to examine what challenges and obstacles female leaders have to face across different countries.

Fourth, being a member of the University of Oregon Women in Business Group (UO WIB Group) I have had a unique opportunity to explore features of female leadership dynamics in the local community. While communicating with female leaders in professional forums, meetings, and business galas and attending public speeches and lectures, I learned certain characteristics of female leadership in the United States. This experience helped me to get some stimulating insights about female leadership in the United States and helped me to recruit many of my respondents for this study. For all these reasons, I decided to narrow the scale of my respondents by interviewing only female leaders for this research.

The research for this thesis will address the following questions:

1.   How do culturally and socially embedded images of leadership impact leadership choices across three cultures?

2.   What are differences and commonalities in leadership traits, behaviors and styles preferred by female leaders in the U.S.A., Kazakhstan and Sweden?

3.   What factors impact transformation of leadership choices in different countries?

Organization of the Thesis

In Chapter II I will provide a brief critical review of recent dimensional analysis of culture and examine business cultures and expectations of leaders in the targeted countries. I will discuss Hofstede's analysis for Sweden and the United States, and I will

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construct original figures for Kazakhstan based on my own investigations and observations of the managerial and business practices in Kazakhstan. Then, I will describe and analyze Gannon's model of cultural metaphors. Cultural metaphors involve identifying some phenomenon, activity, or institution of a nation's culture that all or most of its members consider to be very important and with which they identify cognitively and/or emotionally (Gannon, 2011). The characteristics of the metaphor then become the basis for describing and understanding the essential features of the society. Cultural metaphors can be used to profile ethnic groups, nations, clusters of nations, and even continents (Gannon, 2010). For this study, I will analyze and compare cultural metaphors for the United States and Sweden as they have been described by Gannon. In addition, I will construct an original cultural metaphor for Kazakhstan.

In chapter III, I will discuss how cultural expectations of women and stereotypes of leadership affect evaluation of female leaders and influence leadership choices of female leaders in different countries. I will also highlight specifics of the so-called "feminine" and "masculine" leadership traits and behavior patterns through analysis which applies the elements of the transformational and transactional leadership.

Chapter IV will detail the research methodology. In this critical section, I will detail my research methodology and provide some validation of the qualitative research strategies and methods I used to derive conclusions and make recommendations about leadership choices in cross-cultural contexts.

In Chapter V, I will present the empirical findings based on interview data analysis. I will discuss some similarities in leadership traits and styles preferred by female leaders in the United States, Kazakhstan and Sweden. In Chapter VI, I will

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present differences in leadership traits and styles preferred by female leaders from the targeted countries.

In the final chapter, I will provide conclusions and recommendations based on my analysis of the leadership choices and research outcomes.

Practical significance and limitations of the research

In examining implications of this study there are certain points to be addressed.

The study can provide useful information for human resource managers and leadership training content developers in different countries. I also hope it will provide some insights about leadership in cross-cultural contexts for expatriates who occupy managerial positions and have to adapt to a new working environment and develop certain leadership styles for effective management of a diverse workforce. Furthermore, the study will provide an overview of the social stereotypes about leadership in three different countries and an analysis of leaders' expectations. This study will also be of interest for cross-cultural anthropologists and leadership researchers. And finally, by investigating challenges that female leaders face in different countries, this study will provide insights for those who are interested in studying gender dynamics in the workplace and the position of women in leadership.

There are certain limitations of the study. First of all, the conceptualization of leadership in this study is mainly based on western theories and approaches to leadership and management. While the United States and Sweden can be classified as western cultures, Kazakhstan belongs to a Eurasian cluster. The other limitation is that I interviewed only female leaders from the targeted countries. Interviewing different gender groups would bring diversity into the research conclusions. These limitations

should be considered for future research. Despite these limitations, I hope this

comparative study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field of

leadership and cross-cultural anthropology and will open discussions about the

significance of cross-cultural differences in managerial practices.

CHAPTER II

CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP: FROM DIMENSIONS TO METAPHORS

"The challenge of creating new forms of organization and management is very

much a challenge of cultural change."

(Morgan, 1997, p. 125)

This chapter will discuss recent approaches to understanding cultural differences

in managerial practices. In particular, I will examine how the cultural values of the

targeted countries influence femininity-masculinity as a dimension of societal culture.

When analyzing the role of culture in organizations, Hofstede calls patterns of

thinking, feeling, and potential acting the "software of the mind" using the analogy of the

way computers are programmed (Hofstede, 2010, p. 5). This does not necessarily mean

that people are programmed as computers. However, an individual's behavior is partially

predetermined by certain "mental programs" embedded in national cultures and the

ability to follow or deviate from these programs. According to Hofstede, such mental

programs lie within the social environment. In other words, the process of programming

and forming stereotypes starts within the family and school then, continues in the

workplace and in the community. In this chapter I will examine social and emotional

concepts of masculinity and femininity in leadership that are embedded in the "software

of mind", of three different cultures: American, Swedish, and Kazakh. Following that, I

will analyze advantages and limitations of Gannon's metaphorical approach in

understanding cultures and discuss metaphors for each of the targeted countries.

Depicting cultures in dimensions

Cross-cultural psychologists and cultural anthropologists have long tried to develop formal tools of analysis for understanding cultural differences. Many researchers: Florence Kluchholn and Fred Strodtberg (1961); Edward T. Hall (1990); Geert Hofstede (1991, 2001); Robert House and the GLOBE project (2004) have all contributed to development of the dimensional approach to understand national cultures and societies. According to these researchers, cultural dimensions are psychological features, or value constructs, that can be used to describe a specific culture. In this study, I will refer to the most recent dimensional approach developed by Hofstede and the GLOBE study. Viewing the cultures of the United States, Sweden, and Kazakhstan through the prism of different dimensions can highlight the advantages and limitations of such an approach and help to appreciate the cultural metaphor approach that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Hofstede's five-dimensional study was based on a large questionnaire survey of IBM employees and managers working in 53 different countries, completed in the period 1967 through 1973. Hofstede's work is considered especially significant because the type of organization is held constant. This is the only large-scale cross-cultural study in which the respondents all worked for a multinational corporation that had uniform personnel policies. Here are Hofstede's five-dimensions of basic cultural values:

1. **Power distance index (PDI)** or the degree to which members of a society automatically accept a hierarchical or unequal distribution of power in organizations and the society.

2.   **Individualism (IDV)** versus collectivism. This is the degree to which

individuals perceive themselves to be separate from a group and to be free from

group pressure to conform.

3.   **Masculinity (MAS)** versus femininity or the degree to which a society

look favorably on certain masculine and feminine traits in behavior. According to

Hofstede, masculine cultural values are competitiveness, assertiveness,

materialism, ambition, and power, whereas feminine cultures place more value on

relationship and quality of life.

4.   **Uncertainty avoidance index (UAI).** In other words, acceptance of risk.

This is the degree to which members of a given society deal with the uncertainty

and risk of everyday life and prefer work with long-term acquaintances and

friends rather than with strangers.

5.   **Long-term orientation (LTO),** vs. short-term orientation. The degree to

which members of the culture are willing to defer present gratification to achieve

long-term goals. (Hofstede, 2010)

To clarify how the dimensions can be applied, I will provide a brief comparative

analysis of the U.S. and Swedish cultures based on Hofstede's dimensional approach.

Unfortunately, neither Kazakhstan, nor the Central Asian region is represented in this

study. That is why I will try to provide approximate figures for each dimension based on

my own insights from living and working in Kazakhstan.

Graph 1 compares the U.S. and Swedish culture through the lens of the

Hofstede's cultural dimensions model (Appendix B, Graph 1).

According to Hofstede's investigations, the United States scores low on the Power distance dimension (40). In American organizations, hierarchy is established for convenience, superiors are ideally always accessible, and managers rely on individual employees and teams for their expertise. Information is shared frequently among managers and employees. At the same time, communication is informal, direct and participatory. Sweden scores 31 on this dimension. In Swedish organizations, leaders and managers tend to facilitate and encourage personnel rather than control and impose their power. Power is decentralized and managers count on the experience of their team members. The Swedish communication style is direct and participatory. There is no official data for Kazakhstan but, in my own analysis, Kazakhstan would score high on the PDI dimension since the relationships in the workplace are very formal and hierarchical. The long history of extreme centralization of power before, during, and after the Soviet period is reflected in a contemporary top-down managerial style. The discrepancy between the less and the more powerful members of the society leads to a great importance of status symbols. In addition, respect for authority and rank as well as a high appreciation of seniority can find its roots in ancient Nomadic culture. This connection will be discussed further in this chapter.

The next dimension identifies cultures as individualistic or collectivistic. The United States is a highly individualistic culture (91). People are expected to be independent and self-reliant. The culture is also high in geographic mobility: Americans tend to move across the country while pursuing education and making a career. In the business world, employees are expected to display initiative. Sweden, with a score of 71 is also considered an individualistic society. In Swedish organizations, the employer-

employee relationship is a contract based on mutual advantage. Hiring and promotion

decisions are supposed to be based on merit. However, Swedish individualism differs

from American individualism. We will discuss its features later in this chapter. In

contrast, Kazakhstan can be characterized as a very collectivistic society in which each

member of the community has its role. In such societies, people belong to groups or

communities that take care of them in exchange for loyalty. Kinship relations and family

ties are very strong in Kazakhstani society. Relationships are personal and authentic.

Having "connections" is crucial to obtaining information, getting introduced to certain

social ranks, or getting a better job position.

The third dimension characterizes cultures as being masculine or feminine. This

dimension has been the most controversial of the five dimensions of national culture. I

believe that could be because of the controversial nature of the relations between

masculinity and femininity and the possible trap of gender generalization when

associating masculinity and femininity with certain attributes. This dimension has been

called "the taboo dimension of national cultures" (Hofstede and Minkov, 2010) because

of the taboo on sexuality, mostly in masculine cultures. Critics have considered this

dimension to be politically incorrect and even offensive to what it called masculine

cultures (Hofstede, Minkov, 2010, p.145). Nevertheless, taboos are a strong manifestation

of cultural values. That is why I think that this dimension can capture a significant aspect

of national cultures and we should analyze it thoroughly.

Hofstede emphasizes that the extent to which a country demonstrates masculine

and feminine characteristics does not correlate with its wealth. In fact, national cultures

do differ dramatically on the value issues related to this dimension. It should be

mentioned that unlike an individual who can have both masculine and feminine characteristics at the same time, the culture is always ether predominantly feminine or masculine. (Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p. 147). However, I think this is a very questionable point, especially considering the fact that Hofstede does not provide argumentation about it in his study. I will discuss this further when I present my analysis of Kazakh culture according to Hofstede's dimensions of masculinity and femininity.

The United States is considered a masculine society with a score of 62 in the MAS index. According to Hofstede, societies with a high masculinity index are driven by competition, achievement, and success. The motto of the successful person is "the winner takes all" implying attaining higher social status, monetary rewards, and the respect of their counterparts. Americans tend to display and talk openly and proudly about one's achievements. As a result, effective leadership behavioral traits are perceived to be mainly masculine in their nature. Masculine cultures tend to extreme polarization of femininity versus masculinity. A U.S. bestseller was called *Men Are From Mars Women Are From Venus* whereas in feminine cultures both sexes will be from Venus (Hofstede, 2010, p. 149). In other words, in masculine cultures, the differences between gender roles are more dramatic and less fluid than in feminine cultures where men and women have the same values emphasizing modesty and caring. In contrast to American culture, Sweden is a feminine society with a very low MAS index (5)[1]. According to Hofstede, in feminine countries it is important to keep the life-work balance. An effective manager is supportive of his/her people by possessing such feminine traits as being sensitive to the needs of others, understanding, affection, and sympathy. Decision-making is achieved through involvement. Managers strive for consensus and people value equality,

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[1] One of the lowest in the world.

solidarity, and quality in their working lives. Conflicts are usually resolved by compromise and negotiation. It is emphasized that Swedes are known for their long discussions until consensus has been reached. Incentives such as free time and flexible work hours and place are favored in Swedish organizations. The whole culture is based around the notion of "lagom" which literally means "just enough" or "just right". This principle ensures that everybody has enough and nobody goes without. It was one of the first things I learned when lived in Sweden. Lagom is enforced in society by "Jante Law" (Swe.: *Jantelagen*) which should keep people "in place" at all times. Jante Law is a pattern of group behavior towards individuals within Scandinavian communities, which negatively portrays and criticizes individual success and achievement that is explicitly demonstrated and emphasized as unworthy and inappropriate (Gannon, 2010, p. 148). This feature of the Swedish culture contrasts with the American cultural image of the importance of individual success and idealization of masculine leadership. It also partially explains how Swedish individualism differs from American individualism. The latter manifests in extreme self-reliance and avoidance of long-term relationships outside the family (Gannon, 2010, p. 147) while Swedes practice so-called "horizontal individualism" which favors norms of equality over equity.

According to my analysis Kazakhstan would not score high in the masculinity dimension (40). It is not usual for Kazakhstanians to stress their personal achievements and capacities or use assertive methods of negotiation and managing. Usually, there is a strict hierarchy at the workplace that makes relationships between managers and employees clear. Dominant behavior is acceptable if directed from the top to downwards. However, it is not appropriate among peers. It is hard to identify whether business

relations and managerial style in Kazakhstan are feminine or masculine. In fact, I do not agree with Hofstede when he says that cultures can be ether masculine or feminine. National cultures are more complex and in many cases include both masculine and feminine characteristics. This is especially true for developing countries with transition economies where managerial practices are constantly transforming and change faster than in the countries where business cultures have a more stable nature. For this dimension, I would propose that the Kazakhstan score would be 50 – a number that puts the country right in the middle between masculinity and femininity.

The fourth dimension characterizes cultures as uncertainty avoidant or uncertainty accepting. American society is what one would describe as "uncertainty accepting." Its score on the uncertainty avoidance index is 46. Consequently, there is a larger degree of acceptance for new ideas, innovative products, and a willingness to try something new or different, whether it pertains to technology, business practices, etc. Americans tend to be fairly tolerant of ideas or opinions from anyone and allow freedom of expression. Sweden scores 29 on this dimension and, thus, has a high preference for avoiding uncertainty. Low UAI societies maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles and deviance from the norm is easily tolerated. In societies exhibiting low UAI, people believe there should be no ambiguous and unnecessary rules. For Kazakhstan, the UAI score will be significantly higher than for the U.S. and Sweden. The Kazakh system of complex bureaucracies is designed to avoid uncertainty. It affects relationships in the workplace that remain very formal and distant. It is common for Kazakhstan to put emphasis on detailed planning and relationship building. The result of

negotiations depends a lot on relationships - building. This also explains the importance of having "connections".

Finally, with a score of 29 on the LTO dimension the United States is characterized as a short-term oriented culture. For Sweden, the score is 20, which makes it also a short-term orientation culture. Given this perspective, American and Swedish businesses measure their performance on a short-term basis, with profit and loss statements being issued on a quarterly basis. This also drives individuals to strive for immediate results rather than to seek long-term impact. For Kazakhstan, the LTO score should be relatively high (50) since emphasis is put on building relationships and maintaining them to continue family businesses in the future.

In 2010, a sixth dimension was added, based on Michael Minkov's analysis of the World Values Survey data for 93 countries. This new dimension is called Indulgence versus 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 (Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p. 281). This is a new dimension that has not been reported in the academic literature yet. According to Bond's research, indulgent cultures are associated with happy societies where people are more likely to remember and express positive emotions. Unlike the indulgent cultures, restrained cultures foster various forms of negativism including societal cynicism which means that members of more restrained societies tend to have a more cynical outlook and are more likely to possess negative feelings (Hofstede, 2010, p. 288). Indulgence has a weak correlation with a country's wealth. In fact, such countries as Venezuela, Nigeria, and Colombia

appeared to be more indulgent than Japan, Germany, Hong Kong and some other wealthy countries (Hofstede, 2010, p. 291). Table 1.1 summarizes key differences between indulgent and restrained societies.

According to Minkov's and Hofstede's study, the IRV dimension for Sweden is 78 which is the highest among targeted countries. The United States is also considered an indulgence country with an IRV index of 68. In spite of the differences in other dimensions, both countries are characterized as "happy societies" where it is important to possess positive emotions in the workplace and everyday life. However, I am skeptical about this claim. Principles for masculine societies according to Hofstede's study contradict some principles of indulgency. For instance, according to Hofstede and Minkov, indulgent societies' gender roles are loosely prescribed, while in restrained societies we will find that gender roles are strictly prescribed. At the same time, Hofstede emphasizes that "masculine countries tend to maintain different standards for men and women: men are subjects, women are objects." (Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p. 157). Next, sexual norms in indulgent cultures are less strict while in masculine cultures there is a taboo on explicit discussion of sex and homosexuality is considered a threat to society. It does not necessarily mean that masculine cultures cannot be indulgent. However, the contradictions between principles that characterize masculine and indulgent cultures cannot be ignored.

There is no IRV index for Kazakhstan. However, there is data for Kyrgyzstan, a country that shares a lot in common with Kazakh cultural and social reality. Kyrgyzstan, with an IRV score of 39, is considered to be a restrained country in which gender roles are strictly prescribed. There are other attributes of restrained culture described by

Minkov (Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p. 297) that can be found in Kazakhstan. For example, smiling in public is not seem a norm but rather is suspect. If, in the U.S., maintaining a "poker face" would be a "virtual death sentence" for a political candidate, in Kazakhstan, as well as in other restrained countries, a smiling candidate would likely evoke suspicion and mistrust. In Kazakhstan, unlike in the U.S., it is restricted to smile for the passport photograph. It is simply forbidden by the rules and requirements for the photograph for the official documents. Smiling at strangers in Kazakhstan is inappropriate at the workplace and on the streets while considered to be a norm in Sweden and the United States.

Building upon Hofstede and Minkov's dimensions, Robert House and his colleagues proposed that the dimensional approach differentiate nine cultural dimensions: uncertainty avoidance, power distance, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, future orientation, humane orientation, and performance orientation. This approach was developed by House and a team of 162 researchers, and published in 2004 under the title Global Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness (GLOBE). This is the only study that includes data about Kazakhstan, and for that reason it is worthwhile discussing. That is why we'll discuss it briefly. The first two dimensions are similar to their counterparts in Hofstede's framework. With regard to collectivism, GLOBE researchers distinguish between institutional and in-group collectivism. In-group collectivism represents the extent to which people are loyal to their organizations and families. It is important to note that strictly prescribed gender roles belong to restrained societies while the strongest correlation of indulgence was with *gender egalitarianism* (GLOBE dimension). Next, indulgence negatively correlated with

the other GLOBE dimension *in-group collectivism*. According to researchers, restrained societies report more in-group collectivism but are less happy with it.

In the countries with a high index of in-group collectivism, organizations prefer to hire members of the extended family. In return, hired relatives have to work hard for the company. Institutional collectivism is the extent to which members of a culture identify with broader societal interests (Gannon, 2001, p. 12). Gender egalitarianism refers to the degree to which male and female roles are distinct from one another. Assertiveness implies the extent to which a culture encourages individuals to be tough, forceful, and aggressive versus being more timid and submissive in social relations. Future orientation is very much similar to short-term versus long-term orientation in Hofstede's time horizon dimension. Humane orientation in the GLOBE study described a dimension that identifies the extent to which a culture rewards people for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring, etc. And, finally, performance orientation refers to the extent to which an organization or society rewards people for setting and meeting challenging goals and improving performance. The GLOBE study distinguishes 10 regional clusters based on prior research, common language, geography, religion and historical accounts.

According to the GLOBE study, the United States belongs to the Anglo cluster that is characterized as high in performance orientation and low in in-group collectivism (Gannon, 2001, p. 13). Sweden belongs to the Nordic European cluster. It scores high on future orientation, gender egalitarianism, institutional collectivism and uncertainty avoidance. Countries of this cluster scored low on assertiveness, in-group collectivism and power distance. According to the GLOBE study, Kazakhstan belongs to the Eastern Europe cluster. Countries of this cluster scored high on in-group collectivism,

assertiveness, and gender egalitarianism. However, they scored low on performance orientation, future orientation, and uncertainty avoidance/acceptance of risk.

One can see that the overall picture represented by the GLOBE study is almost identical to the results of Hofstede's study's results. However, there are some areas of controversy about the data of the GLOBE study in comparison with Hofstede's analysis. For instance, according to Hofstede, Sweden scores low in uncertainty avoidance while the GLOBE data says the opposite. Furthermore, Kazakhstan scores low in uncertainty avoidance and future orientation. However, based on my own analysis I think this claim is not accurate. I believe that in Kazakhstan, uncertainty avoidance index should be high considering its emphasis on relationship building. In addition, Kazakhs feel very much threatened by ambiguous situations. That is one of the reasons why we have a very complex bureaucratic system. During negotiations Kazaks will focus on relationship building. Presentations and speeches are extremely detailed and well prepared. For example, some professors read their lectures from paper and do not leave time for discussion at the end of the lecture. There is a practice of "prepared questions" used when colleagues ask questions that were prepared by the presenter him/herself to avoid the ambiguity. Detailed planning and briefing is very common. When interacting with strangers, Kazakhs appear to be very formal and distant. At the same time, formality is used as a sign of respect during official meetings.

Most importantly, I do not agree with the fact that researchers put Kazakhstan into the Eastern European block. I believe that there should be a Central Asian or a distinct Eurasian block for Kazakhstan to get more precise understanding about the country's culture.

This brief analysis of targeted countries through recent dimensional approaches provides an overview of their cultural features and how they influence management practices. Even though the dimensional approach is gaining in popularity among cross-cultural anthropologists, I think we should not overemphasize its value in order to avoid creating cultural stereotypes and strengthening culturally embedded labels and prejudice towards other cultures. It also makes sense to rethink certain stable constructions in the context of globalization and dynamic social change.

Consequently, we will investigate a very different approach to examine cultural differences. This approach implies constructing a cultural metaphor for each nation based on cultural features and the social mind-set of each nation. This method was developed by Gannon through his analysis of 29 nations. He claims that cultural metaphors are based partially on the work of cultural anthropologists who emphasize a small number of factors or dimensions such as time and space when comparing one society with another (Gannon and Pillai, 2010, p. 8). I consider this method to present a more complex picture of the reality than the dimensional approaches discussed above. Instead of opposing one element to another and presenting the culture of one nation as being just scores in the list of a small number of criteria, cultural metaphors provide a more diverse picture of the cultural reality, revealing linkages between historical, cultural, and anthropological backgrounds of the nation.

Cultural metaphors – reflecting the complexity of the cultural reality

According to Gannon's research, each nation has a particular cultural metaphor that reflects the essential features of the society including social stereotypes and culturally embedded images in relation to masculinity and femininity. I will analyze

cultural metaphors for the United States and Sweden based on Gannon's study (Gannon and Pillai, 2010). Because Gannon neglected Kazakhstan in his study, I will then develop a cultural metaphor for Kazakhstan. The analysis of the cultural metaphors for each of the targeted countries will help to explore what factors affect the nation to be either feminine or masculine and how it affects managerial practices and preferences in leadership style.

First of all, we need to understand the term "cultural metaphor" as it is used in this chapter. Gannon associates different cultures with different cultural metaphors and considers it an innovative method for understanding the cultural mind-set of a particular nation and comparing it to other nations. In essence, the method involves identifying some phenomenon, activity, or institution of a nation's culture that all or most of its members consider to be very important and with which they identify cognitively and/or emotionally (Gannon, 2010, p. 10). The characteristics of the metaphor then become the basis for describing and understanding the essential features of the society

In his book, Gannon describes a metaphorical journey through twenty-nine nations discovering a kaleidoscope of cultural symbols and allegories that reflects the complexity and diversity of different nations. Gannon believes that understanding these metaphors will help to comprehend in-depth differences among cultures (Gannon, 2001, p. 76). There are cultural metaphors developed for Swedish and American nations in this study. I will analyze each metaphor further in this chapter highlighting its features in relation to femininity and masculinity in leadership. Unfortunately, there is no cultural metaphor provided for Kazakhstan. Thus, in the final section of this chapter I will construct a metaphor based on my own original analysis of Kazakhstan and its culture.

The Swedish Stuga – love of nature, horizontal individualism and equality

Sweden, along with the other Scandinavian countries, is reflective of the most extreme type of egalitarianism (Gannon and Pillai, 2010, p. 137). Gannon claims that the best cultural metaphor that reflects Swedish culture is the *stuga* - the Swedish summer home. The typical summer home in Sweden is a small wooden house painted a traditional reddish-brown color with white trimming around the door and windows. The facilities are very modest and the furniture inside the house is plain and simple (Gannon and Pillai, 2010, p. 144). Stugas are located around lakes and in the countryside where Swedes usually spend time alone or with close family members rejuvenating themselves and refreshing their ties to nature. If the family does not have a summer home, it will use the stugas of their friends or ones owned by the company they work for. Furthermore, not only Swedish values and lifestyle but also Swedish design, are mirrored in the metaphor of the Swedish stuga. Nature-inspired Swedish design has been perhaps most widely recognized in furniture, which spread the principles of its creators. With their tradition of craftsmanship, Swedes are efficient in using their limited material resources (due to their relative geographic isolation). In line with prevailing democratic social views, everything was made to be available to everyone. There is still an emphasis on extreme approaches to functionalism. (Eyporsdottir, 2011). "They aren't intent on "selling" new design concepts to consumers. Scandinavian designers pride themselves on only creating functional, durable and cost-efficient products and goods. If people need something, they will buy it. If they don't [need it], it doesn't exist on the market to begin with" (Lara Iziercich, 2010).

The following characteristics of the *stuga* reflect Swedish culture: love of

untrammeled nature and tradition; individualism through self-development; and equality

(Gannon, 2010, p. 145). The other important Swedish principle, *lagom*, also can be

understood through this metaphor. *Lagom* is untranslatable but as it was mentioned above

can be understood as "middle-road" or "reasonable" (Gannon and Pillai, 2010, p. 142).

Lagom is a key to understanding the rationale behind Sweden's social democracy that

paradoxically combines socialism and capitalism. The principle of equal share,

simplicity, rationality and decentralization in decision-making, horizontal individualism

and environmentalism characterize Swedish culture. No wonder that Sweden was the first

country to pass an environmental protection law, in 1909. Perhaps, love of nature comes

from the desire of Swedes to preserve it the way it was when their families lived on

farms. It was observed by Gustav Sundberg in 1912 that "we Swedes love and are

interested in nature, not people" (Jenkins, 1968, p. 154). Indeed, Swedes avoid building

long-term relationships outside the family. (When I lived there, it was hard for me and for

other international students to build close relationships with Swedes.) As it was

mentioned above, Swedish individualism differs from American individualism. Swedish

horizontal individualism facilitates personal development whereas American vertical

individualism is more competitive in nature (Gannon and Pillai, 2010, p. 148). In

organizations the relationships are usually formal since Swedes aspire to preserve an

individual's isolation. Interesting fact: in spite of the emphasis on individualism Swedes

invented the concept of the ombudsman – the person who is supposed to process and

negotiate issues on behalf of others (Gannon and Pillai, 2010, p. 149).

According to my own observations, some Swedish cultural features can even be

directly drawn from this metaphor. Sometimes several stugas built next to each other can

form a little community but typically, Swedish stugas are located far away from each other. This feature reflects the Swedish inclination to solitude and isolation. The summer homes usually look very similar – Swedes use similar colors and shapes. There is no desire to make something creative or to look original but a wish to preserve the traditional way. This feature mirrors Swedish egalitarianism and the welfare system. Most Swedes label themselves as middle class. According to an opinion poll only 2% of Swedes desire higher social status (Gannon and Pillai, 2010). In terms of masculinity-femininity, Sweden is considered to be extremely feminine (Hofstede, 2010). However, Gannon claims that in some respects the society is changing because relationships among people are becoming more distant, and concern for others is eroding due to increased American-styled individualism (Gannon and Pillai, 2010, p. 151). The metaphor chosen by Gannon accurately reflects these features of Swedish culture. I think that metaphorical approach allows us to see the culture in its diversity and allows various interpretations of the images and metaphors. This broadens our perception of the culture without limiting it in the frames of a certain dimension. In this case, the metaphor of the Swedish stuga incorporates many images that help us to comprehend the complexity of the Swedish culture. However, we should avoid categorization and narrowing down the entire culture to one particular metaphor.

American Football – strategy and war

During one of the French language classes that I was taking at the University of Oregon, we had a talk about symbols that we associate with France and the United States. Approximately 75 percent of the class was American while the remaining 25 percent consisted of international students. The teacher asked the students to name symbols that

they associated with the United States. After a short silence, an American student who sat right next to me said "Football". I was very surprised and asked myself "Why not the eagle or the Statue of Liberty?" But, perhaps, those symbols only reflected my standard images about the U.S. that I picked up when I studied English in high school in Kazakhstan. In that discussion I realized for the first time how powerful is the image of American football and how many different characteristics of the nation one can find in this symbol.

Gannon and Pillai emphasize that it will be difficult to understand American business culture if you don't understand U.S. football. In other words, they claim that American football is the most appropriate metaphor with which to understand American culture and U.S. business behavior (Gannon and Pillai, 2010, p. 49). The reason why the authors chose this particular metaphor to understand American culture was not only because it is the most popular sport in the United States. (At least 68% of the nation's sports fans prefer football (County, 1999). The complexity of the rules of the game, its strategy and war, aggression, unpredictable outcomes, individual specialized achievement within the group, high risks, and celebrating perfection – are the features of American football that can be found reflected in its business culture.

Strategy is as important in football as it is in chess. The head coach has about 10 assistant coaches, and each of them specializes in a particular area of the game. Immediate tactical decisions are made by the quarterbacks. Accurate strategy and fast tactical decisions serve one mission – getting to complete victory. Home fans and cheerleaders energize the home team and demoralize the opponent. Such emphasis on the strategy of the game is reflected in the American approach to business. It is important to

mention another crucial feature of the most loved game in the U.S. - saving dignity and face of the opponent is a minor concern in American football. In football the winner is exalted while the loser is quickly forgotten (Gannon and Pillai, 2010, p. 253). In other words, in American football as well as in business the objective is to wear down and destroy completely the opponent. On the one hand, the cooperative team spirit can be also found within the American business organizations. On the other hand, the relationships between organizations (just like between two rival football teams) are based on competition rather than cooperation. Another parallel can be found in the specialization that happens in football with its special teams for offense, defense, kick return, field goal, and the specialization that happens within companies that incorporate cooperation to deliver a product or service. High competitiveness and short-term orientation are important characteristics of the American culture. Players, in the business world or sport, are not concerned about preserving good relationships with the opponent or the competitor because the only thing that matters is the complete and total victory over the enemy. This can also explain the reason why Americans connect payment with performance. Everyone should be rewarded according to his/her contribution.

Another defining feature of American business and management is the importance of selecting and training candidates. American companies devote enormous resources, time and money to the selection and training of employees. It is considered that selecting the right people for the right places is a part of a company's success. An interesting fact is that U.S. companies spend more on training and education than do all American business schools combined (Gannon and Pillai, 2010, p 254). This is a true indicator of the high importance of selection and training that is mirrored in the practices of American football

teams. Once carefully selected from the entire country, candidates arrive at the summer camp to learn numerous complex plays. The same happens in the companies where selected candidates go through a number of selective procedures and trainings before they become members of the team.

Gannon claims that the emphasis on individualism by Hofstede when referring to American culture is only partially true. He underlines that being a part of the group is very important to Americans. Everyone is expected to add value to the final product. However, not everyone will receive the same compensation and rewards. Rewards in the U.S. are much more unequal than in any other nation (Gannon and Pillai, 2010, p. 255). Here, one can see the drastic difference between the U.S. culture and Swedish culture. Americans see the main role of the government as not creating a stable welfare system so everyone can enjoy equal benefits but providing freedom to pursue goals. (Parker, 2003).

This reflects that Americans believe in equality of opportunities but not equality of outcomes. Those who take on the bigger and more risky part that requires more responsibility and effort, receive more rewards than the other members of the team. This is reflected in football team structure. American football is a team sport, yet the individual is glorified and celebrated. (Gannon, 2010, p. 256). In other words, all players/employees benefit but not equally. I think this feature can be also found in the tradition to name awards after certain individuals – those "heroes" who contributed the most into the field. Gannon stresses that equal opportunities, independence, initiative, and self-reliance remain some of the crucial values of the American culture. Thus, paradoxically, individual achievements are encouraged within the structure of the team making American culture group-oriented and individually-specialized at the same time.

The other feature of American football that Gannon observed in American business is huddling. Huddling is when teams come together as a group before a game – not only to call a certain plan into action but also to encourage each other. I think this is a very strong feature of the American culture. Huddling brings all players together while putting aside all differences to achieve one particular goal – a victory to the team. Accordingly, many American companies will start their day with motivational meetings to handle their problems and achieve their objectives and end the week with featuring awards for the those employees who contributed the most to achieving a desired outcome. Gannon says that American culture cannot be characterized as purely individual but individual within the structure of the team/group. This feature of the American culture is also to be found in the football metaphor.

American culture is highly competitive according to cross-cultural anthropologists (Hofstede, 2010; Gannon and Pillai, 2010; House, 1999). In fact, people believe that success is an individual responsibility and those people who lack certain benefits are frequently viewed as losers. I have noticed that nowhere else but in the U.S. culture is being called "a loser" a very offensive comment. For instance, in Kazakh culture, it is more offensive to be called as someone who does not remember his or her roots, mother tongue or ancestors. In other words, it is important to Kazakhs always to know how one is in relation to one's nation and its symbols and attributes. In Russian culture, it is more offensive to be called a fool (someone who is unintelligent). I think this feature of the American culture puts a double pressure on average Americans who constantly try to meet such high expectations. The other thing I have observed is how success is portrayed in Hollywood movies in which usually the hero is the one who can overcome certain

obstacles and achieve goals that eventually surpass all expectations. For example, injured in childhood, a man becomes a marathon winner or a woman who was an "ugly duckling" in high school wins a beauty contest in college. Another example could be the popular American image of the heroes with superpowers. Each generation of Americans has its own superhero: Superman, Spiderman, Neo (from "Matrix"), Ironman. Each hero reflects a certain era with its achievements in science, as well as social and political features. (There are also a number of superwomen that can be found in American cinema.) According to Gannon, it does not count what the individual achieved in the past. Americans are honored for what are they are currently accomplishing. This makes American people constantly in a state of flux or evolution but also in a state of stress because of the need to accomplish more (Gannon and Pillai, 2010, p. 259). Another other important characteristic of American culture that I observed is that American people are open to change. That is why organizations are constantly introducing new programs and innovations especially if they bring immediate or short-term benefits. It is like applying new tactics in football – if it helps to win the game, we should do it.

Many researchers characterize American culture as being more masculine than feminine. According to America's most widely used personality scale - the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, 75% of American males and females are extroverted and aggressive in personal relations (Keirsey, 1998). This feature is not viewed negatively in the U.S. but interpreted as energy and intense motivation (Gannon and Pillai, 2010, p. 260). Similarly, aggressive competitiveness is encouraged in football. Researchers claim that there are so many reasons to study football and watch it to be played. Among these reasons they emphasize complexity, risk taking, and unpredictable behavior. All these characteristics

can be found in American business and management.

One can see that many features of the U.S. business culture can be found in the metaphor of the American football. There are main principles that are the same for American football and American business:

- ✓ any problem can be solved through strategic planning;

- ✓ any task can be accomplished, one at a time;

- ✓ any complexity can be overcome through high motivation and dedication.

However, globalization and openness to change are constantly transforming American managerial and business culture and it may incorporate more of the feminine traits in the future.

Kazakh aul –extended family kinship and nomadic mindset

The entire Central Asian region is largely overlooked in cultural analysis of managerial styles. There is no special study or data dedicated to Kazakhstan or the Central Asian region in Hofstede's dimensional study while the GLOBE study places Kazakhstan into the Eastern European cluster. There is no cultural metaphor for any of the Central Asian countries provided in Gannon's study. That is why I have developed an appropriate cultural metaphor for Kazakhstan. The metaphor that I propose in this study is based on my own observations and investigations of the business culture and management practices in Kazakhstan.

I think that a most appropriate and complex metaphor that reflects Kazak culture is the *Kazakh aul.* The *aul* is a type of nomadic settlement.it provides the most insightful metaphor to reflect features of Kazakh culture and help us to understand modern Kazakh managerial practices. An aul usually includes several yurts (the number of yurts can be

varied). A yurt is a portable, circular, wood-framed dwelling structure traditionally used by Turkic nomads in the steppes of Central Asia. Auls can be very small in size and include yurts that belong to the members of one extended family. They also can be bigger in size and consist of the yurts of several clans, usually belonging to the same *ru*. For a better understanding of the Kazakh culture, it is important to understand the nature of the following subdivisions – zhuz (tribe) and ru (clan). Ru is a subdivision within the Kazakh nomadic tribes. The culture of nomadic people had features of hierarchy and social relations based on territorial belonging and occupation rather than class or gender. The etymology of the word Zhuz is rooted in the Arabic "Juz" which means "section". In the Kazakh language, the word "zhuz" means "hundred" and "face". Kazakh people have been divided into three *zhuz* (tribes): Uly Zhuz (Great Zhuz), Orta Zhuz (Middle Zhuz) and Kishi Zhuz (Little Zhuz). Each zhuz has *rus*, or subdivisions, the number of which varies. *Ru*s were also divided into small groups down to the size of average families. The important question that Kazakhs ask each other is "What *ru* do you belong to?" or "What is your *ru*?" These divisions played an important role in ancient Kazakh society since it was important to people to know their lineage and to be able to find members of the big extended family (clan) in different *auls* – nomadic tribes' settlements that control migration routes. According to anthropologists, nomads adopted the Zhuz division to be able to develop migration routes within the natural borders of the geographical zones formed on the territory of ancient Kazakhstan. However, I think that close ties with extended family members also play an important role in identity formation and development of the sense of belonging. This feature leads me to conclude that Kazakhstan will probably have a very low IND index as mentioned before. The culture is

highly collectivistic. The whole idea of the aul is to develop and extend these relationships within clans by practicing everyday habits of helping and supporting each other. Unlike the Swedish stuga, yurts in an aul are placed next to each other. Strong clan kinship relations have transformed into modern forms where extended family ties are still important. For example, an influential relative is still expected to take care of the members of his or her extended family – nephews, nieces, cousins, etc. It is not surprising when people who run their own business have their relatives working in their offices in various job positions. These relatives are expected to pay back by being loyal and dedicated. Even nowadays, the average number of the guests on *toi* – Kazakh wedding celebrations - varies from 150 to 500 guests (depending on the size of the family and its wealth), primarily relatives who get together to know each other and build a beneficial network within the extended family. There is a certain hierarchy within the collectivistic culture that explains the high score in the power distance dimension. Besides, the Soviet system with its authoritarian politics and command economy strengthened power distance relationships and hierarchical structures in Kazakhstan.

Adaptability is another feature of Kazakh culture is reflected in the nomadic mindset with its respect for the powers of nature and dependence on the seasons' cycle. The nomadic way of life and continuous struggle with a harsh steppe climate made Kazakh people sturdy and adaptive physically and mentally to any external changes. For instance, according to anthropologists, during the Soviet period Kazaks were the only nation amongst the Central Asian countries that adapted quickly to the new political and social environment, learned the new language and adjusted to nuances of urbanization (Dave, 2001). Nomadic strength and adaptability to change helps Kazakhs to adjust to the

modern pace of globalization and develop strategies to go forward. That could explain the

fact of economic advancement of Kazakhstan in comparison to other Central Asian

countries. Besides, the nomadic mindset made people become very anxious about the

ambiguity that the future holds and made them create social constructions and institutions

that help to avoid the uncertainty.

Seniority is another feature of the Kazakh culture. Old people, especially old men

– *aksakals* (Kazakh: white beard) played an important role in nomadic society. People

asked of their wisdom during disputes among members of the tribe or when an important

decision had to be made. This feature can explain the appreciation of seniority in the

workplace. Employees are usually paid and get rewarded not according to their

performance but for the years of continuous dedication and loyalty to the company or

organization. The situation is changing in new companies but the tendency has been

stable over the years.

My selection of the aul as the metaphor for Kazakh culture is based on my own

experience, observations and investigations of management and business culture in

Kazakhstan. I propose that it reflects many features of the Kazakh managerial culture.

In conclusion, the objective of the metaphorical approach is to identify metaphors

that are relatively complex so that they allow us to make several direct comparisons

between the metaphor and the nation that is represented by it. The preceding analysis

shows that Gannon's cultural metaphors provide more a illustrative and complex picture

of the cultural and social reality of the nation than Hofstede's cultural dimensions. While

the metaphor itself cannot encompass all of the reality that is found within each society, it

is a good starting point for understanding and interacting effectively with it (Gannon and Pillai, 2010, p. 11).

Understanding cultural metaphors helps to identify features of the managerial practices and leadership choices across targeted countries. It is hypothesized in this study that the reasons why female leaders favor particular leadership traits and display certain behavior patterns can be found in culturally embedded images of leadership that can be understood through cultural metaphor. Metaphors provide a very profound cultural sketch that helps to identify the connection between leadership choices and cultural features of a nation. However, it is important to avoid cultural stereotyping while justifying cross-cultural differences in leadership choices.

CHAPTER III

CULTURAL STEREOTYPES AND LEADERSHIP CHOICES

In this chapter, I will discuss how cultural expectations of women and stereotypes of leadership affect evaluation of female leaders and influence leadership choices of the female leaders in different countries. I will also highlight specifics of the so-called "feminine" and "masculine" leadership traits and behavior patterns through the analysis of the elements of the transformational and transactional leadership.

Gender stereotypes have been stable over a long time. According to these stereotypes, males are high in so-called "masculine" traits such as independence, aggressiveness, and dominance while females are high in "feminine" traits such as gentleness, sensitivity to the feelings of others, and tactfulness (Powell, 2010). Historically such feminine traits as cheerfulness, loyalty, sensitiveness to the needs of others, affection and compassion were not associated with effective leadership (Bem, 1978). Perceptions generally associate leadership with masculinity. The ideal leader is expected to be directive, dominant, aggressive, and self-confident (Hackman, 1992, p. 314). In contrast, the traditional stereotype of femininity includes such behaviors as being emotional, passive, submissive, intuitive, nurturing, and indecisive; these attributes being negatively associated with leadership (Putnam, 1981). Not surprisingly, most organizations are structured by a traditional and stereotypical masculine culture that values and rewards leaders who exhibit these stereotypical traits. Culturally embedded images about gender division surely impact what traits people expect to see in the effective leader. Individuals with feminine characteristics have historically entered group to live as loyal members of the new group, while individuals with masculine traits have

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frequently come to new groups to dominate, to conquer or to fight them (Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p. 16). Consequently, individuals with feminine traits are not viewed as potential leaders. This tendency is reinforced by the gendered character of bureaucracies and workplaces. It can also be found in the concept of *hegemonic masculinity* that refers to the belief in the existence of a culturally normative ideal of male behavior (Connell, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity implies that males should possess certain characteristics that are socially endorsed to dominate other males and subordinate females. Proponents point to characteristics such as aggressiveness, strength, drive, ambition, and self-reliance, which they argue are encouraged in males but discouraged in females in contemporary Western society, as evidence of the existence of hegemonic masculinity (Pierce, 1996). Hegemonic masculinity emphasizes gender divisions and strengthens stereotypes of leadership.

Some researchers claim that modern social changes require de-masculinization of leadership (Tichy, 1990). However, extreme polarization of femininity and masculinity will entail social resistance. A balanced leadership approach should instead be prioritized to avoid such polarization based on socially constructed stereotypes. This will allow constructing the type of leadership that will dynamically accommodate masculine and feminine leadership traits.

The modern pace of globalization brought significant dynamic change in all spheres of life including management and leadership that requires re-thinking culturally embedded stereotypes about leadership. It has been documented by the American Psychological Association that women who are evaluated for leadership positions are frequently face a double bind (Paludi, 2011). On the one hand, if females engage in the

same behaviors as males, they may be perceived negatively. On the other hand, if they don't possess some of the same traits and display similar behavioral patterns as their male counterparts, they also may be perceived negatively. In other words, social expectations of leaders put women into an ambiguous position and require them constantly to transform their leadership choices according to the settings.

I think that for a better understanding of the differences in the nature of "feminine" and "masculine" leadership traits, it is useful to understand concepts of transactional and transformational leadership.

According to Burns, leadership is either transactional or transformational. Transactional leaders are those who lead through social exchange. For instance, transactional business leaders offer financial rewards for productivity and deny reward if the productivity has not been achieved. Politicians, according to Burns, are good example of transactional leadership because they "exchange one thing to another: jobs for votes, subsidies for campaign contribution" (Burns, 1974, p. 4). Transformational leaders, on the other hand, are "those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity" (Bass, 2006, p. 3). Transformational leadership can move followers to exceed expected performance, as well as lead to high levels of follower satisfaction and commitment to the group and organization (Bass, 1985, 1998). In other words, transformational leadership emphasizes empowering followers to become leaders themselves. Emphasis on human resources development and focus on long-term growth leads transformational leadership to excel among other leadership models.

The theory of transformational leadership is related to other concepts and theories about effective leadership. For example, according to House (1977) and Conger and Kanungo (1988, 1998) the theory of transformational leadership has much in common with the theory of charismatic leadership that emphasizes charisma as an important trait that should be possessed by the effective leader. However, researchers also claim that transformational leadership theory is much broader and encompasses other elements and traits that are important for effective leadership (Bass, 2006). Howell and Hall-Merenda (1999) found a positive relationship between leader-member exchange (LMX) theory and both transformational and transactional leadership.

According to Burns, transformational leadership is an ongoing process that causes change in individuals and social systems by emphasizing four elements (Burns, 1978).

First, being a transformational leader includes connecting the follower's sense of identity and self to the mission and the collective identity of the organization.

Second, the transformational leader should be a role model for followers who inspires and challenges them to take greater ownership for their work (Burns, 1978). Tom Peters, who is considered to be one of the provocative and engaging management gurus of the time, claims that leadership is not just about being on the top but about inspiring people to grow, to go beyond where they believe they can go (Peters, 1982). Being a role model that inspires others to work more productively cannot be considered as a solely feminine trait. However, nurturing inspiration in others while being sensitive to the needs and feelings of others are clearly feminine characteristics. I think that if the leader possesses certain qualities that inspire others to take more responsibility, it positively impacts the productiveness of the teamwork. Commitment of team members to work

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together effectively to accomplish the goals of the team is a critical factor in team success. The relationships team members develop out of this commitment are key in team building and team success. The effective leader knows how to develop responsive relationships based on mutual support and cooperation. Competitiveness and aspiration to dominate and control would hardly contribute to creating cooperative relationships.

The third element of transformational leadership implies the ability of the leader to understand the strengths and weaknesses of followers to be able to assign followers with tasks that optimize their performance. In other words, the leader should always try to create favorable conditions for each individual for their self-actualization in the workplace. In its ideal form, transformational leadership creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders. Transformational leadership enhances the motivation to work and raises self-esteem that positively affects the performance of the employees (Bass, 2006, p. 61). The feminine approach puts emphasis on listening and being sensitive to the needs of others. I believe that possessing these traits would positively impact self-esteem and encourage self-actualization of the employees.

And finally, according to the fourth element of the transformational model of leadership, the leader should develop team structures by which power and influence are shared within the group. This element of leadership emphasizes interpersonal competence and participatory decision-making and is supported by the results of this study. According to my own research data, 85 percent of the women from all three targeted countries, Sweden, Kazakhstan and the united States, emphasized effective teamwork as an important element of the organizational success. In addition, 92 percent of the

respondents emphasized that effective teamwork ability was one of the most important criteria for making a final decision when choosing between two equally qualified candidates.

All four elements of transformational leadership emphasize the importance of cooperation among employees and constructive relationships between leaders and followers in the workplace. But most importantly, transformational leadership promotes group identity construction that is based on the concept of "wholeness". Some researchers emphasize the importance of apprehending the picture as a whole rather than focusing on static "snapshots" for a healthy dynamic perception of the reality (Senge, 1994, p. 69). Interestingly, the English words "whole" and "health" come from the same root – the old English word "hal" as in "hale and hearty" (Senge, 1994, p. 68). Hence, functioning "as a whole" is an important attribute of healthy and productive functioning of the organization. While seeing the system as a whole and realizing him/herself a part of it, the individual easily switches from being a follower to being a leader when it is necessary. Researchers claim that individuals with masculine attitudes have an inclination to focus more on details rather than seeing the whole picture (Powell, 2010) while the ability to see and apprehend the picture as a whole is an attribute of individuals possessing a feminine attitude (Powell, 2010, Paludi, 2011).

It was mentioned above that transformational leadership is viewed in an opposition transactional leadership (Burns, 1978). According to Burns, the transactional leader focuses more on a series of so-called "transactions". The individuals who possess transactional leadership traits are focused on having exchange benefits with their subordinates and clarify a sense of duty with rewards and punishments to reach certain

goals (Bass, 1997). This dimension of leadership focuses on clarifying employees' role and task requirements. It provides followers with positive and negative rewards based on their performance. Transactional leadership implements the fundamental managerial activities such as setting goals, monitoring progress towards goal achievement, and rewarding people according to their performance. This type of leadership uses extrinsic motivation to increase productivity (Bass, 2006). Such elements as assertiveness, sometimes even aggressiveness, nurturing competitive spirit in employees, controlling subordinates through the set of rewarding-punishing activities and measurements can be found in masculine behavioral traits. Individuals possessing masculine traits are more likely to be goal-oriented rather than focusing on relationship-building. In other words, for individuals possessing masculine traits, completing a task that will result in a certain outcome is prioritized over creating a positive environment in the workplace.

On the one hand, it is fair to assume that transactional leadership is more masculine in its nature, while transformational leadership positively correlates with femininity. However, radical polarization of masculine and feminine traits as like in "men are from Mars – women are from Venus" evokes stereotyping and limits the perception of masculinity and femininity.

On the other hand, both leadership models- transactional and transformational - may include feminine and masculine attributes. For example, while transformational leadership is relations-oriented it is also developmental in its nature which is revealed in a leader's will to develop and raise the awareness of his or her followers about the importance of satisfying higher order growth needs. Additionally, the transformational

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leader can possess such masculine attributes as being less conforming, having high self-confidence, and being willing to take risks (Burns, 1978).

Investigators have concluded that both feminine and masculine factors are positively correlated with perceptions of transactional and transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 2006). This means that effective transformational leadership requires reaching internal gender-trait balance. Perpetuating a sustainable balance is a critical element of the effective leadership and organizational dynamics. Results of recent research suggest that both feminine factors and masculine factors showed a positive relationship with transformational leadership (Hackman, 1992, p. 315).

In conclusion, stereotypes about leadership and negative evaluations of female leaders create a double bind situation for, and negatively impact leadership choices made by, female leaders across different countries. However, opposing masculine and feminine leadership traits and behavioral patterns would rather bring confrontation than constructive decisions. That is why I believe that both female and male leaders should encompass both, feminine and masculine characteristics.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

In this critical chapter, I will detail the research methodology I have used and provide some validation of the qualitative research strategies and methods I used to derive conclusions and make recommendations about leadership choices in cross-cultural contexts.

Qualitative methods

For this study, I used qualitative interviews and participant observation. I conducted 25 *semi-structured interviews* with female leaders from the United States of America, Kazakhstan and Sweden. I used the *grounded theory* method with some elements of *narrative research* to analyze interview data and identify commonalities and differences in leadership attributes and behaviors preferred by female leaders across the cultures.

The constructivist *grounded theory method* offers an interpretive approach to qualitative research with flexible guidelines (Charmaz, 2006). This method implies that theory construction depends on the researcher's view, learning about the experience within embedded, hidden networks, situations, and relationships (Creswell, 2007). I use this method because it allowed me to not only reveal factual information provided by respondents but also highlight their views, values, beliefs, assumptions, and feelings.

For this study, I also used *narrative research* that implies using a variety of analytic practices with a specific focus on the stories told by individuals (Creswell, 2007, p. 54). This method implies not only repeating stories of the individual's life but also uncovering "the figure under the carpet" while interviewing respondents (Edel, 1984). In

other words, the researcher should reveal hidden symbols that will help him to construct significant analysis of the certain phenomena. While collecting the stories told by respondents, I tried to find links between leadership choices made by female leaders and the cultural features of each of the targeted nations. I tried to place participant's stories within their personal experience (their jobs and lives), their culture (Swedish, American or Kazakh) and historical contexts (time and place). In particular, I was interested to reveal how these three categories influenced their managerial styles and shaped leadership characteristics. Analysis of an individual's life within the specific culture helped me to better understand the complexity of leadership choices and reveal connections between culture and preferred managerial styles. Another method I used was postmodern narrative analysis that includes such elements as deconstruction of stories, exposing dichotomies, examining silences and body language (Czarniawska, 2004). I used it to analyze behaviors, body language and other verbal and non-verbal signs while I was interviewing my respondents. It helped me to identify cultural features and compare negotiating behaviors of American, Kazakh and Swedish female leaders.

Recruiting respondents

Overall, I interviewed fourteen American, six Kazakh and five Swedish respondents. All respondents were female leaders who occupy various managerial positions in different sectors: professors at the universities, heads of university departments, CEOs, executive directors and senior managers of different companies and NGOs, recruiting directors, directors of human resources and risk management departments, bank directors, athletic directors, politicians, chief editors, presidents and vice-presidents of associations. The information about respondents can be found in Table

1 of the Appendix. I prefer not to reveal personal information of the respondents in spite of the fact that some of them gave me written permission to do that. Instead, I use letters "A", "S" and "K" referring to American, Swedish or Kazakh respondents and a number that corresponds to their number in the table.

Interviewing female leaders from different fields helped me get very detailed and revealing data about leadership development in cross-cultural context. In addition, I collected documents related to companies, planners, leadership training programs and other related materials.

As a member of the Women in Business Association of the University of Oregon, I participated in different activities that involved interaction with females who occupy different managerial positions in various business sectors. Attending lectures and participating in professional forums, meetings, discussions, and business galas allowed me to observe the dynamics of the female leadership in the local community and meet American female leaders from various sectors. Most of the American respondents I recruited to participate in my research while participating in these events.

During the interviews, I tried to build constructive dialog with participants while creating an atmosphere of trust in which both parties can learn from the encounter. Together, we discussed different stories from their leadership experiences. I tried to place the stories that were the most relevant to the topic within a chronological sequence. Some respondents shared the story of how they begin their leadership career, what motivated them, what challenges they had to overcome to become leaders. Others put more emphasis on how they successfully negotiated conflict or how much they had learned from their mentors. Many of the respondents demonstrated interest in the research

outcomes and asked me to send them results of my study. It was a crucial advantage of using the narrative research method for this research.

Most of the American respondents I interviewed in person in their offices in Eugene or when they were visiting the city except those who were from different states whom I interviewed over the phone. The fact that I had face-to-face interviews with most of my American respondents helped me to observe and analyze respondents' behavior, body language and other aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication. It also helped me to identify features of the interior office design and observe the overall working atmosphere in the American organizations such as financial institutions, banks, university, sports administration, city hall and private companies.

Since I had to stay in the United States for the whole period of my research, I contacted Swedish and Kazakh female leaders using internet tools – email and Skype. I recruited Swedish respondents through personal connections I had at Lund University and in the Malmo region. I found respondents from Kazakhstan also due to my connections with universities, non-governmental organizations, and some private companies. Some Kazakh female leaders preferred to write their answers and send me the forms while others were willing to have Skype video conversations to share their thoughts and ideas about leadership.

Interviews were conducted in English or Russian, depending on the preferences of the respondents. However, I also used Swedish language skills when I used web-sources to recruit female leaders from Sweden. Knowing three languages and having an experience of living in all three countries helped me to do investigation and evaluation of the topic through different linguistic perspectives.

Questionnaire

It was essential for me to learn how culturally embedded images and social stereotypes about leaders and leadership influenced their leadership choices. That is why I posed questions that were aimed at revealing what traits and behaviors female leaders favor in leaders and why; what are the mistakes that derail a leader's career, what do they do to develop their leadership skills; etc. The second part of the questionnaire focused on the respondent's experience as a leader. I asked what challenges and obstacles they faced in the beginning of their career and what they considered as a main challenge for all leaders today. I also asked how they chose whom to hire between two equally qualified candidates and how they helped a new employee to understand the culture of the organization. The third part of the interview was devoted to exploring how female leaders deal with conflict at the workplace and how they encourage creativity and participation in decision-making in the workplace. However, I intentionally did not ask questions that would require respondents to answer if they felt dependent on culturally embedded images about leadership and if their leadership styles somehow reflected the culture of the country. The reason that I did not ask such questions was to avoid getting biased and predisposed answers. My objective was to understand why female leaders prefer certain leadership styles through analyzing their preferences of the leadership styles and behavior patterns displayed during interview.

CHAPTER V

SIMILARITIES IN LEADERSHIP TRAITS AND STYLES PREFERRED

BY FEMALE LEADERS

There are many important similarities in female leaders' experience across the

three cultures that were revealed in this study. In this chapter I will discuss four responses

that were similar for respondents across all three targeted countries.

First, many respondents provided the same answers in the category "*the most*

valued leadership characteristics". Based on the interview data I will present what

characteristics female leaders mentioned when asked to identify the most important

leadership traits. Second, many respondents from all three countries also share the same

opinion about what is *the most common mistake that can derail a leader's career*. The

study shows that these two topics have universal character.

Female leaders from the U.S., Kazakhstan and Sweden also mentioned the

importance of mentorship in their leadership careers. Many of them emphasized that

there were certain people who inspired and supported them during their leadership career.

They emphasized certain characteristics that they not only appreciated in their mentors

but also learned and developed certain traits and behaviors that they valued in their

mentors.

In the last section, I will discuss similarities among *what challenges female*

leaders faced in the beginning of their leadership careers and what challenges they are

still facing.

When quoting respondents, I use a letter that corresponds to the country of the

respondent and the ordinal number of the respondent in the Table of the Respondents (see

Appendix A, Table of Respondents). Letter "K" identifies respondents from Kazakhstan, "A" – American respondents and "S" – Swedish respondents.

Most valued leadership traits and characteristics

Despite the cultural differences, there was a surprising amount of agreement among all the women leaders about the most valued leadership trait. Almost 70 percent of the respondents from all three targeted countries emphasized that the most valued leadership characteristic that every leader should possess and learn is *listening*. Respondents claim that good listeners know their employees better and can learn from other people's perspectives, allowing them to develop a more complete "whole picture" when dealing with conflicting situations.

K-3: "A good leader should be first of all a good listener."

A-9: "Being a good listener served me well during my leadership career."

Many of those respondents who mentioned listening skills as a main characteristic of successful leaders also emphasized that a leader should possess integrity and be a role model for others. Being a role model is considered to be an element of transformational leadership.

Among other most valued characteristics that female leaders emphasized was the ability to *understand strengths and weaknesses of their followers* to be able to assign them with tasks that optimize their performance. This is also one of the elements of transformational leadership that was discussed in the previous chapters. In spite of the fact that most of the respondents were not familiar with the transformational leadership literature, their responses demonstrated that there is a positive correlation between

transformational leadership elements and leadership traits preferred by female leaders across the cultures.

S-1: "The leaders should have a talent to identify what task can be assigned for each particular employee. Leaders should know how to use their resources wisely and be a long term oriented person".

A-13: "When everybody is doing what they are good at and what the are like to do is positively affects productivity of the organization and working environment".

K-3: "The leader should know his or her employees. It will help to optimize productivity of the organization".

A-4: "Compassion is an important trait that I believe every leader should posses".

Approximately 27 percent of the respondents emphasized the *importance of team-building skills* and the ability to *provide necessary support and encouragement* for employees as important in strengthening a team's cooperative spirit.

A-1: "Effective leader should be authentic and provide support to his or her employees. I think it is important for strengthening integrity in the organization".

A-2: "Leader should have an ability to see from other people's perspective. The ability to sympathize and empathize with another person served me well during my leadership career. Even if it sounds like a "female thing" I believe that it is important for both female and male leaders".

K-5: "A good leader is a good team-player. He/she accepts constructive critics and work on his/her mistakes".

As it was mentioned in the previous chapters, transformational leaders try to enhance the motivation to work and support self-actualization of employees that

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positively affects their performance (Bass, 2006, p. 61). One can see that the most valued leadership traits emphasized by respondents correspond to certain elements of transformational leadership.

Another leadership trait that was highlighted by female leaders was the ability to make decisions. While Kazakh respondents put more emphasis on *courage to make right decisions*, American respondents accentuated that leaders should make *fast and fair decisions*, and Swedish respondents emphasized the necessity of making *long run decisions*.

K-6: "The leader should have enough *courage* to make decisions. He/she must be a person with high moral and critical mind".

K-2: "Effective leader have to be brave enough to deal with tough situations and make right decisions".

A-6: "The ability to make fast and fair decisions is a crucial element of the effective management".

S-1: "The leader of the organization should think of long-term consequences of their decisions. We need to be aware of the long-term value that we need to provide".

Female leaders from the different countries emphasized different aspects of decision-making. I believe such difference in answers reflects cultural features of the targeted nations. The emphasis of Kazakh respondents was on "courage to make right decisions". Perhaps this could mean that female leaders in Kazakhstan are facing social resistance and have to possess enough courage to deal with it. Americans put more emphasis on making "fast and fair decisions". The ability to make fast decisions is one of the strategies of American football when the game can be won if one of the players or the

team can make fast decisions during the game once they understand the opponent's strategy. Swedish respondents prioritized the long-term character of the decisions. Some Swedes also emphasized the importance of producing "sustainable results" and orienting to "sustainable relationships" (S-3). Thus, in spite of the fact that Hofstede characterizes Swedish culture as being short-term oriented, the responses I got from Swedish respondents demonstrate that Swedes are more long-term oriented rather than short-term oriented.

Most common mistakes that derail leader's career

Approximately 75 percent of the respondents from all countries emphasized that there are certain negative behavioral patterns that they had witnessed derail leaders' careers. They are egocentrism, arrogance, and lack of communication skills.

A-12: "The leader who is lack of the skill of communication will not be able to succeed as an effective leader".

K-1: "Egocentrism and arrogance will derail leader's career".

K-6: "Egoistic leader who does not comply with certain communication norms would never succeed".

S-3: "Egocentric leadership will definitely ruin leader's career".

These answers show that many female leaders across different cultures have a common opinion about what traits and behaviors make leaders incompetent and ineffective.

Among other answers to this question were traits that are a result of being insensitive and unsympathetic. In particular, Kazakh respondents stressed that they witnessed that lack of reliability, faith in people, and lack of charisma can also derail a

leader's career. All these elements are important for interpersonal communication and relationship-building.

Many Swedish respondents mentioned that inability to build a team and cross-cultural insensitivity would make bad leaders. They told anecdotes about how a lack of cross-cultural awareness was the reason for many failures they witnessed. Additionally, for Swedes successful leadership also implies learning how to make everybody involved in decision-making and everyone "feel on board".

S-1: "It is impolite to overemphasize your personal achievements or personal contribution. Instead, effective leader will make sure that everyone contributed to the final solution and it was collective decision even though previously the idea belonged to him/her personally".

American respondents accentuated lack of team-building skills and neglecting details as negative traits. Interestingly, these traits are critical in American football, which requires both productive teamwork and high specialization at the same time.

Importance of mentorship

Approximately 78 percent of respondents emphasized that having a mentor and being a mentor for others is essential for the leader. I believe that the emphasis on successive relationships between different generations of leaders come from the fact that female leaders value role modeling. In other words, they value mentors who were role models for them while they try to be role models for others. It could also come from family values and roles within the family.

Most of the female leaders claimed that support and advising provided by mentors in the beginning of their career helped them to realize their strengths and develop certain

leadership styles. Most of the American respondents appreciated that their mentors always pushed them beyond their limits to achieve more and better results. Three out of five Swedish respondents mentioned that they did not have one particular mentor but they learned from different people whom they met during their leadership career. Some respondents mentioned having negative mentorship experience that helped them to learn what behaviors they should avoid. Only one respondent mentioned Eleanor Roosevelt as a model that inspired her during her leadership career while others referred to one of their parents or their very first supervisor who encouraged and supported them in the beginning of their leadership career.

Overall, female leaders from all targeted countries appreciate support and encouragement that comes from mentors and try to emulate leadership traits of their mentors while avoiding certain negative behavioral patterns that they witnessed in other leaders.

Technological progress and globalization as challenging factors

Thirty percent of the respondents emphasized that facing changes caused by globalization and dealing with technological advancement are two of the main challenges facing leaders today. In particular, respondents emphasized that due to technological progress, they have to accomplish more in a shorter period of time. Some of them connected this factor with so-called "mother's guilt" because they don't have enough time to dedicate to their families and especially to their children. Others mentioned that rapidly changing requirements for work creates an unpredictable and challenging environment.

S-1: "I think all leaders facing a challenge of volatile environment. The leader should be able to adapt to the immediate change that is caused by globalization and technology development".

A-12: "Dealing with the speed of the information flow is quite challenging".

K-6: "Unpredictability of the working environment when requirements are changing constantly and what was planed is not working anymore puts us into the situation of the continuous stress".

This demonstrates the double effect of technological development and challenges faced by female leaders. Many females emphasized that virtual communication, the necessity to answer email requests, in particular is very time-consuming. On the one hand, it is a positive change that enhances global communication. On the other hand, such inescapable change can be overwhelming because virtual presence takes too much time and displaces live communication and allows less space for personal life. Besides, keeping a balance between work and family is still very challenging for many female leaders.

An American manager talks about the reason why adapting to technological advancement and the growing amount of information is challenging for her, personally:

A-2: "The pace of technology development and information flow which we work with and produce is quite fast. I can spend the entire day including my non-working hours checking and responding to my emails and messages, staying connected with people, expanding and strengthening my network. Today we definitely have to do more in within the same time limit".

It is possible that male respondents would not put as much emphasis on technological advancement as female leaders do. I believe this complaint about keeping pace with technological progress may be amplified by the demand and desire of most women-leaders to balance their personal and professional lives.

The other aspect that was mentioned by some respondents is mass media and virtual presence that are also created by new technologies.

A-7: "Being an athletic director I have to make sure that every member, every player complies with the image of our team created by mass media. It is important to correspond to the brand we established because this is a part of the success in our business".

Unfortunately, I did not directly ask my respondents about how do they represent themselves virtually. I think it would be interesting to know what virtual networks they use and how they manage their virtual presence. I will definitely consider learning more about this aspect in a future study.

Male versus female leaders – leadership expectations and challenges faced by female leaders across the cultures

Female leaders across three different cultures have a lot in common in terms of the challenges that they had to face in the beginning of their leadership careers. Many females from all targeted countries emphasize that they were not taken seriously by their colleagues and customers in the beginning of their careers. They mentioned two main reasons for that: gender and age discrimination. It is still challenging in all three countries to be a successful female leader in a male dominated sphere. Underestimation of the female leaders is a result of the negative evaluation of female leaders, cultural

stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. When respondents were asked the question about challenges they had to face in the beginning of their leadership career, I received the following responses:

K-1: "Whatever you do to prove that you are an effective leader people still consider that men are better leaders than us".

K-6: "Unfortunately, in our country many people still believe that leader should establish authoritarian rules to be respected and feared by his/her subordinates. And when you have different politics and leadership style they might consider you ineffective leader".

A-7: "Sometimes people were not taking me seriously because I was the only young female manager in the athletic administration".

A-3: "I was the only woman in a group of attorneys. Our customers and even my colleagues usually were not taking me seriously even though I had more experience and information about certain issues than other attorneys. Yet, I was just doing what I had to do. In spite of all prejudice all I wanted is to prove that I am a good lawyer and I deserve to be treat with a respect, just like that girl from the movie "Legally Blond" [laughs]".

A-11: "I was young when I become a manager of this organization. People sometimes were not taking me seriously because I looked young".

S-1: "It is like a permanent stigma that I carry. Sometimes during presentations and professional forums people think that my tall male assistant is my boss and they communicate and act accordingly before they realize I am the leader of this project and the first contact person. I am a young short female and it is hard to notice me among male counterparts. People sometimes think I am a student or a very junior person".

The other challenge that was mentioned by female leaders is that they should always be on the top of their performance and show even better results than men do. Thus, the paradox of the social acceptance of female leaders is that to be accepted as equal to men and recognized as effective leaders females have to perform better than men.

A-13: "Women have to show results. We have to outperform men to be equal with them".

A-11: "Our customers usually got surprised when I introduce myself and ask me several times if I am really a manager. I just want to quote one of them: "I expected to see a fat white middle aged man not a young girl leading such company". It seems that for many customers this was the only acceptable image of the manager who can operate in this sphere of business".

Despite these challenges, some respondents are very optimistic about female leadership development. They believe that the social mindset about female leaders and feminine leadership can be transformed in the future even if female leaders will still face more challenges than males do.

These challenges are also documented in the literature. There are many researchers who study psychological microaggressions towards female leaders (Nadal, Griffin, Wong, 2011), emphasize social stigma faced by female leaders in the workplace (Morgan, Gilrane, McCausland, King, 2011) and describe the continuous struggle with the glass ceiling[2] effect, while accentuating discrimination against women.

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[2] "The term glass ceiling refers to the unseen, yet unbreakable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements" - Federal Glass Ceiling Commission. Solid Investment: Making Full Use of the Nation's Human Capital. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, November 1995, p. 4.

The results of this study show that despite cross-cultural differences, female leaders in the U.S., Kazakhstan, and Sweden still face the same challenges. However, in spite of all negative aspects such as gender and age discrimination, underestimation and negative evaluation, female leaders across different countries demonstrate efficiency and high results.

CHAPTER VI

DIFFERENCES IN LEADERSHIP TRAITS AND STYLES PREFERRED BY

FEMALE LEADERS

There are also some interesting differences in certain leadership behaviors and traits favored by female leaders from the three targeted countries. These differences will be discussed in this chapter. I will to examine how and why the leadership experiences of female leaders from the United States, Kazakhstan, and Sweden differ from each other. The first aspect that will be discussed further in this chapter is how female leaders express their concerns about the *family-work balance issue*. Second, I will discuss *attitudes to conflicts in the workplace and strategies of conflict resolution* preferred by female leaders from the targeted countries. The third aspect will focus on differences in *leadership development practices across the targeted countries*. And fourth, I will discuss how *cultural expectations of leadership in targeted countries* affect female leaders' behavior in the different countries. In this section, I will also examine what traits and behaviors female leaders value the most in a candidate and why. And finally, in the last section of this chapter, I will examine the *cross-cultural interviewing experience* and I will discuss my observations about differences and similarities in respondents' behavior and attitudes. I will also provide my observations about how office interior design and communication styles reflect the atmosphere in the organizations across the different cultures.

Family-work balance issue

There was no special question about balancing work and family life and responsibilities. However, many respondents emphasized that keeping a balance between work and family is a very important and challenging aspect. In fact, it was the main concern of females who occupy stressful managerial positions that require dedicating a lot of time and dealing with high risk. In most cases, they were women who worked in the political sphere, banking, and academia. This aspect is determined not only by gender and occupation but also by culture. For instance, 75 percent of the American respondents emphasized the importance of keeping a balance between work and family while Swedish females did not mention this aspect as being challenging. Kazakh respondents were focused more on other aspects of female leadership and did not show any major concern about family-work balance issue.

A-2: "Working as a political appointee in the Administration was very demanding and it was hard to keep it contained and not let it expand to every open hour. Now, I have a work that is not as high profile and as high paced as my previous one but it is letting me live the life I want where all parts of my life are balanced".

A-12: "For women in particular, there is still a challenge of balancing between work and family. We made a lot of progress but I think there is still a lot to be done. I feel like working women will always have this guilt in our lives that we not giving enough to out children and families".

For many American women, keeping a balance between work and family become a main concern. They work hard on organizing their business schedule more effectively to be able to spend more time with their families. Some of them also emphasized that a

spouse's support played a major role in continuing their career. In some cases, their husbands were taking most of the household and child-care responsibilities while the women were able to continue their leadership career.

American respondents felt very thankful for their husbands and family and emphasized that their success in their leadership career would be impossible without the support and encouragement of their spouses. Swedish respondents did not mention family-work balance as a main concern. Perhaps they no longer consider it as something extraordinary when men share house keeping and child caring responsibilities with women. There are also certain features of the Swedish parental leave system that distinguish it from other countries. In Sweden, when a child is born, the couple is given 16 months of leave from work, which starts as being paid at 80 percent of the worker's wage, and steps down over time. The couple can divide up the leave between the mother and the father as they want. Besides, some Swedish political parties on the political left argue for legislation to oblige families to divide the 16 months equally between both parents.[3] The system has a built in motivation for families to get the father to take time off to look after the child on his own. I think this reflects not only the Swedish social system with its aspiration to equality but also the Swedish cultural inclination to the feminine. Regarding this issue, none of the Kazakh respondents especially mentioned work-family balance as their main concern. However, being a representative from Kazakhstan, I know that family is very important for females in Kazakhstan. The fact that neither Swedish no Kazakh respondents mentioned family problem does not necessarily mean that this aspect is underestimated by females in Sweden and Kazakhstan. Besides, I

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[3] Information of Swedish parental leave at www.forsakringskassan.se

interviewed unequal numbers of respondents from the each of the targeted countries, and, I did not target demographically identical groups. In other words, all respondents belong to the different age groups and have different marital and family status (See Appendix A, Table of Respondents), and this may have been a factor.

Conflicts in the workplace – attitudes and strategies of conflict resolution

When I asked my respondents about their attitudes towards conflicts in the workplace and how they usually deal with them, I did not expect open and honest responses. However, most of the respondents were confortable talking about conflicts and even provided some stories and anecdotes that helped me to understand their feelings about conflicts, and the strategies preferred when dealing with conflict situations.

The results of the study show that female leaders from different countries have different attitudes to conflicts in the workplace while strategies of conflict resolution are almost the same in all three targeted countries. Overall, the research found that the attitudes to conflicts in the workplace were strongly negative among Kazakh respondents. Most of them emphasize that they prefer to avoid conflicts and see them as obstacles that prevent effective communication and effective teamwork. Most of the Kazakh respondents felt uncomfortable talking about conflicts. Their answers were short and concise. Most of the respondents put more emphasis on how they handle existing conflicts.

K-2: "Conflicts make me feel uncomfortable. I don't know how to prevent them. Luckily, they don't occur very often in my organization. However, if there is a conflict I try to talk with confronting parties and we resolve all conflicts on informal level".

K-3: "I see conflicts as something negative and undesirable. But when they happen, I believe that persuasion is the most effective way to resolve the problem".

However, the younger generation of Kazakh female leaders feels more confident when talking about conflicts:

K-1: "First, I insist on voting every time we have a contradictive issue within the organization. Second, I believe that women are more diplomatic and liberal. Sometime when we have "hot time" I try to recall some jokes or to highlight another details of the issue and turn arguing parts' attention to another details too".

K-6: "There is a positive element in any negative occurrence. We should not avoid conflicts but try to resolve them objectively".

Conflict prevention practices such as consultations, mentoring, and other supporting networks are not very developed in Kazakhstani companies. Usually, managers have to deal with existing conflicts. Informal meetings and talks are the most common conflict resolution strategies in Kazakhstan. I think that seeing the negative side of conflicts in the workplace limits conflict resolution outcomes and creates an unfavorable working environment.

Unlike Kazakh females, Swedish respondents have a fairly neutral attitude to conflicts in the workplace. None of them specifically characterized conflict as negative or positive phenomena. Yet, most of the Swedish female leaders prefer to deal with conflicts in the early stages. Swedish respondents claimed that collective decision-making helps to prevent conflicts among co-workers.

S-1: "Collective decision-making in Swedish organizations reduces risk of conflicts among co-workers. It does not mean that conflicts do not exist but they are minimal. We usually discuss all work-related issues during staff meetings".

Sweden is known for having a very long history of social engagement. In fact, labor unions are still very active. If the conflict that occurs within the organization cannot be solved in unofficial meetings, representatives of Swedish unions or higher administrative structures will intervene. However, Swedish respondents emphasized that a flat hierarchy and participatory decision-making in their organization prevents most of the conflicts.

American respondents have a more constructive view of conflict and see conflict as a "healthy" and even constructive event that can positively affect the dynamic of the organization. Some of them also see conflicts as sometimes a necessary experience that can help people to learn more about the organization:

A-5: "Conflicts are inescapable but not necessarily negative phenomena. Sometimes, co-workers and their supervisors can learn about each other and themselves while dealing with conflicts."

A-1: "If the conflict is approached in healthy respectful way is not a problem. I would middle them if I see that there is a danger of damage to the relationships".

In the United States, most female leaders view conflicts as being a part of work dynamics. American females emphasized that conflict resolution strategies such as consulting, mentoring, and open door policies help to manage conflicts at the early stages.

A-10: "Conflicts are always difficult to manage; in our company we implemented

support networks – mentors, buddies and open door policies so that conflicts are not escalated. In the cases where they are conflicts, each are unique, so the first task is to consult, consult, consult. After all information is evaluated, a course of action that is fair, reasonable and is in line with our core values will be implemented".

In spite of the fact that respondents from different countries have different attitudes towards conflicts in the workplace, most of them referred to the same strategies for dealing with conflicts in the workplace. Approximately 75 percent of all respondents believe that mediation, consultation, and open informal dialog between two opposing parties is the best way to deal with existing conflicts. There is a specified conflict resolution system to deal with more severe cases such as sexual harassment and/or abuse. Each organization has its own internal policies and rules to manage these issues.

Differences in leadership development practices

At the end of the interview, I asked respondents about what they do to keep developing as a leader and what recommendations they have for those who are beginning their leadership career. These answers helped me to reveal differences in leadership development practices across the cultures that I will discuss in this section.

Almost all American respondents mentioned trainings and professional seminars as a "must do" to keep developing professional and leadership skills and to be at top of your performance. As was mentioned in the chapter II, trainings are a very important part of the American business culture that is also reflected in American football. Athletic departments devote enormous resources to selection and training. Thorough selection is followed by systematic evaluations during the sport season. Athletes not only must remain disciplined and stay in their best physical condition but also perform better with

every new game. Likewise, U.S. companies spend more money on training and education

than do all of the U.S. business schools combined (Gannon and Pillai, 2001, p. 254).

American employees are encouraged to keep improving their professional skills

throughout the career to be at the top of their performance.

Besides participating in trainings, many American respondents recommended

their favorite books on leadership and communication skills development. Many of them

recommended "E-Myth" by Michael Gerber. The book provides excellent business

coaching and strategies to entrepreneurs. In addition, many American female leaders

emphasized the importance of community service and volunteering. While interviewing

American female leaders and participating in Women in Business professional meetings

and forums, I realized the importance of volunteering in American society. It is

encouraged in Americans from a very early age. Almost all American female leaders

have diverse active social lives. Almost 70 percent of the respondents belong to a certain

professional, religious, or social organizations. Most of them volunteered or provided

certain service contributing to community development. Many respondents also

emphasized that volunteering is a good self-development practice that helps you to

improve your professional skills, especially if the service is related to your specialty.

A-3: "In the beginning of my career I consulted population about family law

matters 3 days per week. It was a good practice for myself and also the way to give back

for the community".

Some Swedish and Kazakh respondents also mentioned that a leader should

participate in leadership trainings and seminars. However, both Kazakh and Swedish

females put more emphasis on the necessity of learning from others and from their own

mistakes. Yet, none of the respondents from Sweden or Kazakhstan mentioned

volunteering and serving the community as an important part of a leadership career.

Unlike Swedish respondents who provided practical advice about how to develop

leadership strategies, Kazakh respondents put more emphasis on what characteristics

leaders should develop and what skills to improve to become a better leader.

S-5: "There are different people I have to work with – my colleagues, our

partners, our opponents. The best way to learn how to be a better manager is to see how

your strategies and skills work in practice".

K-1: "I try to learn and implement as well as to listen and hear".

Moreover, Kazak female leaders also mentioned the importance of obtaining

international experience: participating in international conferences, seminars webinars,

etc.

K-6: "The politics of the development in Kazakhstan include local and

international components. International experience is important. Participation in

international conferences and seminars strengthens network and provides many

opportunities for realization new projects".

Overall, American respondents suggested diverse leadership development

practices including participating in trainings, reading recent literature about leadership,

and volunteering for community organizations. Swedish leaders prefer to learn from their

colleagues while Kazakh respondents put emphasis on gaining international experience.

Leadership expectations in targeted countries

In this section, I will discuss how leadership traits and behaviors accepted and

expected from leaders in different countries impact leadership choices made by female

leaders. I will analyze what type of behavior is considered to be appropriate and what is

not in different cultures and how cross-cultural awareness helps to prevent

misunderstanding and misinterpretation not only during business negotiations but also

during everyday communication.

I was surprised when Swedish respondents mentioned that it is inappropriate for

leaders to overemphasize their personal achievements. Instead, the effective leader,

according to the Swedish respondents, has to make sure that everybody will take part in

the decision-making process and contribute to the final solution.

S-1: "It is inappropriate to say in front of my colleagues: "*I* have an idea, *I* made

all analysis and *I* created the strategy, and here is *my* suggestion".

S-3: "It is true, that in Sweden managers do not talk about their accomplishments.

I know that this is totally appropriate and even encouraged in the U.S. However, it will

not work here".

Swedish managers avoid talking about their accomplishments in public.

According to some researchers Swedish organizations tend to promote conformity

(Gannon and Pillai, 2011, p. 148). However, in some cases this tendency may decrease

individual initiative and creativity.

S-3: "The consensus is very important part of the Swedish culture. It has its

positive and negative sides. You may have a great idea but if it is not an idea that shared

by others it will be devalued".

Researchers also claim an apparent contradiction exists between Swede's

preference for working toward a goal as a group and the individual isolation that is a

national characteristic. An element of individual isolation can be found in Swedish

horizontal individualism that focuses on facilitating personal development. Such a type of individualism can lack a competitive nature and implies loneliness.

Swedish respondents who lived and studied in the U.S. claim that American culture is very affirmative while in Sweden it is completely opposite. For instance, during presentations or speeches, an American audience will express agreement or disagreement using affirmative body language and verbal signs such as nodding or making comments like "Yes, right" or "Exactly" while in Sweden it is inappropriate to intervene when someone is talking.

S-3: "If there is no questions, verbal respond or a certain gesture from the audience in the U.S. it might mean that people are not interested in your presentation. In Sweden, it is opposite, people do not express themselves because it is considered to be rude to interject when someone is talking or presenting".

S-5: "My American colleague was very frustrated after her presentation in our organization. She said: "I don't think they liked it, they did not do any sound". I tried to explain her that silence during presentations means acceptance and respect in Sweden".

What in Swedish culture is called "overemphasizing of self" can be a positive trait in American leadership culture. It does not necessarily mean that a leader should be self-centered and posses extreme individualism. American respondents mentioned independent thinking and confidence as important leadership characteristics. American leaders are proud and open about their accomplishments.

Here is another observation made by a Swedish respondent who studied in the U.S.:

S-1: "In the United States being very driven and having a lot of personal initiative would be considered a positive thing, while here in Sweden this is the path to make you very unsympathetic person who is not appreciated by colleagues. In Sweden people like to be convinced that they should be on your side. They should feel that they contribute into decision-making. You should make sure that everybody is on board".

Perhaps it is true that for American leaders showing initiative and being proactive are considered to be positive characteristics. However, in American companies, people also need to "feel on board". In spite of the fact that it is very individualistic culture, Americans are also very group-oriented. Being a part of the team, group, club or a community and identifying themselves with a certain network is essential for success in almost all instances, especially in leadership. Many American respondents belong to different business organization and communities and in their answers they emphasized the importance of these groups.

It is also clear from the answer of the respondent that colleague's recognition and acceptance is important for Swedish leaders. In addition, Swedish respondents emphasized that it is important for the leaders to be aware of cultural differences.

In Kazakhstan the leader has to possess strength and independence. It is generally viewed that only leaders with "masculine" charisma can handle tough situations and manage the workforce effectively. Kazakh managers prefer to have formal and distant relationships with employees. However, Kazak respondents whom I interviewed for this research emphasized the importance of team-building and other skills that prioritize constructing trustful relationships at the workplace. While interviewing younger generation Kazakh female leaders I realized that managerial practices are changing in

Kazakhstan. This transformational process includes moving towards building constructive relationships with international partners, adopting certain innovations, and developing managerial practices. Yet, in Kazakhstan, relationship-building was always an important quality of the leader. The ability to create and keep strong professional and personal networks is a crucial part of leader's success in Kazakhstan.

Approximately 40 percent of the Kazakh respondents claimed that if they have to choose between two equally qualified candidates they would prefer the one who will be a good team player. Respondents also mentioned such qualities as independent thinking and eagerness to learn as important qualities for the candidate.

Almost all American and Swedish respondents emphasized that it is necessary that the candidate is fits the culture of the organization and having good interpersonal communication skills.

S-1: "It is highly important that candidate fit the culture of the organization and can adapt his communication style. In Sweden to be dominant, proactive and showing too much of personal initiative is not a positive attribute".

A-10: "There are always characteristics that separate individuals that make them a qualified hire for our firm. We will evaluate each data point and determine at the at end of the day, who would fit our culture the best".

One Swedish respondent told me a story about a woman who was hired by a Swedish organization. She was very qualified professionally and had excellent references from previous employers. However, she could not fit the organization because of certain qualities that were not welcomed in the company. Moreover, these qualities led to misunderstandings that created a hostile working environment.

S-1: "The person simply did not fit the environment culturally. She was dominant woman who wanted to push her ideas at all costs. She had her own vision of how things should work and she thought more of herself that others".

Unlike, the Swedish respondents, some American female leaders emphasized that they would favor someone who can bring a diverse perspective and a background that is very different than everybody else's. This demonstrates that Americans are used to creating challenging competitive environments in which co-workers bring different perspectives.

A-2 "I will choose the candidate who can bring new ideas that would be empowering. I try to stay away from "replicating" employees. Instead, I would really appreciate if there will be someone who is unique and who is able to bring something really different into our community: new perspective, new ideas".

Americans believe that creating challenging alternatives will stimulate work dynamics and lead to better ideas and solutions. This underscores the perception that Americans accept and even encourage risk in the workplace.

In conclusion, there are a lot of differences in leadership traits and styles preferred by female leaders in the United States, Kazakhstan and Sweden. Most of the differences are based on cultural variations among these countries. It is essential to be aware of cross-cultural differences among different nations.

Cross-cultural interviewing experience

I met most of the American respondents during professional meetings and forums of the Women in Business association or during lectures and seminars at the University of Oregon. The fact that I had face-to-face interviews with most of my American

respondents helped me to observe and analyze the respondents' behavior, body language and other aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication. It also helped me to identify features of the interior office design and observe the overall working atmosphere in the American organizations that my respondents worked at. I noticed that, in most cases, there were very friendly relationships between managers and personnel. Managers were approachable which indicated that the hierarchy is very flat in American organizations. In most cases, American respondents invited me to have a conversation sitting around the discussion table that also signified that there should not be any visible barrier between me, as a researcher and the respondent, the manager of the organization. On the bookshelves and tables, I noticed many books on leadership and communication strategies development. In the previous section, I mentioned that many American female leaders recommend reading literature on leadership development.

Almost all of the American managers had pictures of their family in frames and sometimes there were small handcrafts made by their children displayed on the shelves. This shows that family values are important for Americans. There were also many trophies and awards received from competitions or conferences that were displayed on shelves and hanging on the walls. These trophies and awards tell visitors that the person is proud of his or her achievements and ready to talk about them openly.

Prior to the day of the interview, I emailed the questionnaire to all of my respondents. During the interview, I noticed that American respondents had the questionnaire printed with some written remarks on it. Sometimes they even prepared documents, and informational pamphlets about their organization. Most of the American respondents told me that they needed to brainstorm before the interview, and that

participation in the research stimulated them to rethink their leadership styles and attitudes. Sometimes they asked questions about leadership choices in Kazakhstan and in Sweden turning a standard interview into an active discussion. Overall, I very much enjoyed interviewing American female leaders and learned a lot about the features of the American communication style.

Since I had to stay in the United States for the whole period of my research, I had to contact Swedish and Kazakh female leaders using internet tools – email and Skype. Some Kazakh female leaders preferred to write their answers and send me the forms while others were willing to have a Skype video conversation to share their thoughts and ideas about leadership. Based on my own observations, there are certain differences in the interior office design of the American and Kazakhstanian offices. In the Kazakh administrative buildings and university offices, there are lot of national symbols such as national flag, national emblem or the text of national anthem. Sometimes one can see a portrait of the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan hanging on the wall. Displaying pictures of the family and children in the offices has only become common very recently as an imitation of the western tendency. Alongside books, some people have souvenirs from different countries displayed on the shelves. The trophies and awards for collective (in rare cases, individual) achievements are displayed in offices in Kazakhstan. Usually, Kazakh managers would prefer to sit in their "boss chair" while giving the interview or talking with a stranger. There is a strict hierarchy in the workplace that Kazakhs emphasize through establishing very formal and distant relationships. Kazakh managers prefer to establish clear distinction of the ranks in the workplace. It is considered the best way to avoid confusion about subordination between manager and employees. However,

this tendency is changing, especially in the young generation of managers. The tone of speech is more formal in the beginning of the conversation but then it can become more relaxed depending on the rank, age, gender and the personality of the manager. Kazakh female leaders whom I interviewed demonstrated a very open and collaborative attitude. Most of them agreed to have a video conversation that allowed us to have eye contact.

Most of the Swedish females preferred an audio Skype interview. Swedish females were willing to share their leadership experience but within a certain time limit. This demonstrates Swedish time precision and willingness to keep certain balanced distance in the relationships between the interviewer and the respondent. There were a couple Swedish respondents who studied in the U.S. and were familiar with American business culture. Knowing that I was making a comparative study, they shared their experiences and provided some critical feedback about differences in business communication styles and leadership images in American and Swedish organizations. Some of these differences will be discussed in the following section of this Chapter.

Unfortunately, I could not observe office designs when interviewing Swedish respondents. However, I assume that Swedish office design can be described by traditional the Swedish proverb that states "*Lagom är bäst*" which literally means, "Middle is the best." Swedish office design includes the following elements: simple, modern, and affordable. Four out of five respondents emphasized that it is rude to talk and demonstrate in public about your personal achievements. That is why I assume there are not any trophies displayed in the offices of the Swedish female leaders. Considering that Swedish society is truly egalitarian, I used first names when interviewing Swedish female leaders.

Overall, interviewing female leaders across three different countries was a very enriching and inspiring experience that strengthened my cross-cultural communication skills. I realized the importance of being aware of cross-cultural differences not only in business practices but also in every day life communication. Additionally, this experience encouraged me to develop a critical opinion about theories and approaches that reinforce stereotypes about cultures and leadership.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this Chapter I will provide conclusions and recommendations based on the analysis of the research outcomes. I will discuss how human resources managers and leadership coaches can implement the study outcomes to improve existing leadership practices and leadership trainings. And finally, I will discuss limitations of the study and provide suggestions for future investigations of the leadership choices in cross-cultural contexts.

Cross-cultural leadership studies: limitations and prospects

This study shows that leadership images and expectations of a leader embedded in culture impact leadership choices in different countries. American and Swedish business culture and managerial practices are widely discussed in western anthropological and cross-cultural research. However, the entire Central Asian region is underrepresented in such studies. That is why one of the objectives of this comparative research is to highlight cultural features and leadership choices in Kazakhstan. For the critical review I chose two recent cross-cultural studies – Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Gannon's cultural metaphors.

Despite the fact that Hofstede's cultural dimensional approach is considered to be very comprehensive and popular among theorists and practices, it does not provide any information about the Central Asian region countries and/or Kazakhstan. Using Hofstede's dimensional approach, I suggested approximate figures for Kazakhstan for

each of the dimensions based on my own observations and experience of the Kazakh business culture.

In this study, I provided evidence that Hofstede's dimensional study suggests only a sketchy, incomplete vision of the different business cultures. For example, according to Hofstede's dimension the individuality index for both countries, Sweden and the United States is relatively high which makes us assume that both countries share similar individualistic values that are usually perceived as opposite to collectivistic. Such a perception is only partially accurate because Swedish horizontal individualism differs from American vertical individualism. Besides, the results of this study show that being a part of the team is very important in American culture that makes it also somewhat collectivistic. As another example, in Hofstede's study, Sweden is characterized as a short-term oriented nation. However, four out of five Swedish respondents emphasized the importance of the sustainable relationship-building and long-term consequences of decisions. This suggests that Swedish culture is also long-term oriented. Thus, Hofstede's study has certain limitations and cannot be used as an accurate model to describe a nation's culture. Yet, his study can be used to get a cultural sketch that provides some information about a nation.

Unlike Hofstede's dimensions, Gannon's metaphors provide a more complex discourse of the cross-cultural differences. In this study, I analyzed the cultural metaphors for the United States and Sweden as they have been described in Gannon's study. Likewise, I made an attempt to construct an original cultural metaphor for Kazakhstan that incorporates key features of the Kazakh culture and explain modern leadership choices preferred by managers in Kazakhstan.

There is no solid research or statistical data available to make accurate measurement and validate the authenticity of the presumptions about Kazakhstan. While the proposed figures and metaphor for Kazakhstan are speculative, I believe that my attempt to disclose some information about business practices and leadership development in Kazakhstan can contribute to a better understanding of the leadership in cross-cultural context and facilitate future studies about Central Asia and Kazakhstan.

Key themes: predetermination and unexpected responses

Critical review of the cross-cultural studies helped me to build a theoretical basis for better understanding of the leadership choices across three different countries. My expectations and further investigation of the leadership choices were based on theoretical analysis of the recent cross-cultural studies.

In the beginning of the research prior to interviewing respondents, I expected that female leaders from targeted countries would express many similar concerns. However, my expectations proved to be only partially accurate. In this section, I will highlight the main findings of the research and emphasize certain results that were unexpected or/and surprising.

Indeed, the research revealed that there are many similarities in managerial styles and behavioral patterns preferred by female leaders across the cultures. While many of such preferences were determined by belonging to the same gender group, cultural differences were revealed when respondents provided more information to determine their choices. For example, all female leaders highlighted that decision-making was an important leadership trait. However, the specifics of such decisions were different in the U.S., Kazakhstan, and Sweden. Kazakh respondents emphasized that effective leaders

have to make *right decisions* to manage difficult ambiguous situations while American respondents highlighted the ability of the leader to make *fast and fair decisions*. Swedish female leaders emphasized that leaders should think of the *long-term consequences of their decisions.*

Many female leaders underline certain common *characteristics that they witnessed ruining leader's careers.*

- ✓ Egocentrism

- ✓ Arrogance

- ✓ Top-down management

- ✓ Lack of the communication skill and cultural awareness (Sweden)

- ✓ Being insensitive and unsympathetic (United States)

- ✓ Lack of reliability (Kazakhstan)

Almost all respondents had a *mentor* who inspired them and had a tremendous impact on their leadership career. Kazakh and Swedish respondents especially emphasized that support and encouragement were important and inspiring. Americans mentioned those mentors who were pushing them to go beyond their limits, teach them to overcome challenges and to achieve professional excellence.

It was surprising to find that female leaders are still facing the same challenges in spite of the differences in culture and the longevity of the history of female leadership development in the targeted countries. The research revealed that respondents from all three countries still have to deal with unfair evaluation, prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination. Alongside other challenges, some women mentioned technological progress and constant virtual presence as challenging factors.

There were the following differences in leadership choices revealed by the study:

✓ Family-work balance issue.

✓ Conflicts at the workplace: attitudes and strategies of resolution.

✓ Leadership development practices.

✓ Choosing among equally-qualified candidates.

The research revealed that respondents from different countries have different attitudes to conflicts in the workplace. Kazakhs evaluate conflicts negatively while Swedes have a neutral attitude to conflicts in the workplace. Americans see conflict, as a part of the organizational process that could positively impact the dynamic of the organization if handled appropriately.

One of the most interesting parts of the research related to the recruiting and interviewing processes. That is why I added the separate section to discuss the cross-cultural interviewing experience. In this section, I provided my observations about differences and similarities in respondents' behaviors and attitudes, communication styles, and business negotiations that I observed during recruiting and interviewing the respondents. I also provided my observations about how office interior design reflects cultural features of the targeted countries.

Limitations of the study

There are certain limitations of the study. First of all, the conceptualization of leadership in this study is mainly based on western theories and approaches to leadership and management. Second, conducting surveys in different organizations and companies in Kazakhstan would help gain more profound quantitative and qualitative data for Kazakhstan to make reflective analysis within the Hofstede's theory of cultural

dimensions. Unfortunately, I could not achieve that additional scope within the limits of this study.

Furthermore, interviewing different gender groups would bring diversity to the research outcomes. In addition, I could get more observational data and valuable details if I had a chance to visit Sweden and Kazakhstan to interview Swedish and Kazakh respondents in person. Direct communication with respondents would give me an opportunity to make more consistent and comprehensive observations and provide more coherent comparison of the behavioral patterns and communication styles possessed by female leaders in Kazakhstan and Sweden. Yet, conducting virtual interviews is a part of the digital reality that makes this research unique.

These limitations should be considered for future research and investigations.

Recommendations for implementation

The studies about cross-cultural differences offer diverse approaches from dimensions to metaphors to reveal and understand differences in business and managerial practices across different countries. However, there exists very limited research on the Central Asian region. Additionally, there is still a gap in understanding of the leadership choices across different countries.

I hope that the analysis presented in this study will help human resource managers and leadership coaches to improve managerial training programs for better performance of employees working in different countries. These programs should include *critical reviews* of the recent cross-cultural studies (Hofsted and Minkov dimensional approach, the GLOBE study, Gannon and Pillai's cultural metaphors, etc.). Additionally, such programs should include *case studies* that demonstrate differences in managerial styles

and behaviors in different countries. The cases should reveal potential cross-cultural misunderstandings and provide a review of the possible solutions to avoid conflicting situations. Critical analysis of such case studies will help employees to understand the reasons for differences in the managerial styles implemented across the countries and become more tolerate and sympathetic when dealing with such differences. And finally, it will be beneficial if the trainings will include *role-playing* exercises where parties within a certain narrative should pretend being from different countries and use appropriate negotiating styles and behaviors. Possible narratives for such games can include business negotiations and bargaining, conflict resolution at the workplace, hiring new employees, etc. Data analysis presented in this study can help to develop the content for the case studies and the role-playing games. Such trainings will help to reduce cross-cultural misunderstanding, increase cross-cultural awareness among managers and employees, and improve problem-solving strategies and cross-cultural communication skills.

 I also hope this study can help expatriate managers from different countries gain some valuable insights about leadership behavioral models in the U.S., Kazakhstan, and Sweden. I believe it will help them to adapt their leadership styles when working in these countries. It also can be interesting for cross-cultural anthropologists and researchers who are interested in leadership development in cross-cultural contexts.

Theoretical significance of the findings

The results of the study proved the initial hypothesis about the unstable nature of the leadership choices across different countries. Moreover, the research data showed that besides culture there are other different factors that influence transformation of leadership choices and managerial practices across countries. Such factors as *globalization* and

technological advancement play important roles in the transformation of leadership choices across different countries.

While interviewing respondents and analyzing preferences in leadership traits and behaviors, I found that leadership choices vary, not only from country to country but also from generation to generation. For example, research shows the older generation of leaders is more adjusted to the certain cultural and social standards, whereas the younger generation of managers has demonstrated being more flexible and adaptable to the changing reality.

It is only partially true that cultures are collective "programming of mind" that distinguishes the members of one group of people from others (Hofstede, 2011). While it is useful to have a cultural sketch about a particular country in mind, this sketch should not be turned into a static picture. The research results indicate that *leadership choices are constantly developing, changing and transforming.* In other words, they reflect current reality. This is especially true for developing countries like Kazakhstan. This study shows that researchers and managers should be aware of the fact that managerial practices in Kazakhstan are not the same as they were twenty years ago. Yet, nomadic values and the Soviet past are imprinted in the cultural mindset of the Kazakh people and thus influence certain managerial practices. That is why it is essential to be familiar with the history and cultural features of the country.

I hope this comparative study of leadership in cross-cultural contexts will contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field of leadership development and will open discussions about the significance of the cross-cultural differences in managerial practices. In addition, I hope this research will shed a light on managerial

practices and leadership development in Kazakhstan and stimulate further cross-cultural

research about leadership transformation in Central Asia.

APPENDIX A

TABLE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The United States of America

Number of the respondent	Occupation and position	Period of leadership	Age group	Marital status/children
A-1	Chair of the School of Business, Professor	6 month	41-50 years	Married/yes
A-2	Associate Dean, Professor	7 year	41-50 years	Married/yes
A-3	Executive director of the NGO	3 years	41-50 years	Married/yes
A-4	Director of the Human Resources and Risk Management	14 years	41-50 years	Married/yes
A-5	Manager in the private company	2 years	25-30 years	Single/no
A-6	CEO at self-owned company	12 years	31-40 years	Married/no
A-7	Senior Associate Athletic Director	7 years	31-40 years	Single/no
A-8	CEO at self-owned company	14 years	41-50 years	Married/yes
A-9	Politician, Mayor of the City of Eugene	More than 30 years	41-50 years	Married/yes
A-10	Human Capital Manager in audit, accounting, and tax organization	5 years	31-40 years	Single/yes
A-11	CFP Managing Principal in financial organization	10 years	31-40 years	Married/yes
A-12	Chief of the educational programs in State Department	8 years	41-50 years	Married/yes
A-13	Regional President of the Bank	37 years 7 month	41-50 years	Married/yes

Sweden

Number of the respondent	Occupation and position	Period of leadership	Age group	Marital status/children
S-1	Professor in the university	6 years	31-40 years	Married/no
S-2	Director of the creative group in private company	1 year	25-30 years	Single/no

S-3	Leader of the NGO	2 years	31-40 years	Married/yes
S-4	CEO private business	4 years	25-30 years	Single/no
S-5	CEO	3 years	25-30 years	Single/no

Kazakhstan

Number of the respondent	Occupation and position	Period of leadership	Age group	Marital status/children
K-1	Vice President of the Community Association	1 year	25-30 years	Single/no
K-2	Director of the Educational Center	12 years	41-50 years	Single/no
K-3	Coordinator of educational programs	7 years	41-50 years	Married/yes
K-4	Publishing Editor	4 years	25-30 years	Single/no
K-5	Executive Director of the Editors organization	2 years	25-30 years	Single/no
K-6	Chair of the Linguistic Department, Professor	5 years	41-50 years	Married/yes

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

Basic information:

∑company's official name and location (private business/NGO/other)

∑core activities/products and services provided

∑your position, how long with the organization

1.   How long have you been occupying managerial position in this company/department/organization?

2.How many employees are there under your supervision?

3.   What is the proportion of male and female employees in your organization /department/company?

4.   How did you come for this sphere of business? What was your motivation?

5.What challenges did you face in the beginning of your leadership career?

6.Can you name a person who has had a tremendous impact on you as a leader? Maybe some one who has been a mentor to you? Why and how did this person impact your life?

7.What are the most important decisions you make as a leader of your organization?

8.As an organization gets larger there can be a tendency for the "institution" to dampen the "inspiration." How do you keep this from happening?

9.How do you encourage creative thinking within your organization?

10.How do you encourage participation in decision making?

11.Where do the great ideas come from in your organization?

12.Which is most important to your organization—mission, core values or vision?

13.How do you or other leaders in your organization communicate the "core values"?

14.How do you encourage others in your organization to communicate the "core values"?

15.   If there is a conflict among workers, how do you react to manage it effectively? Please, describe mechanisms of conflict prevention in your organization?

16.   How do you help a new employee understand the culture of your organization?

17.   How often do you and your co-workers spend time together outside the office?

18.When faced with two equally-qualified candidates, how do you determine whom to hire?

19.What is one characteristic that you believe every leader should possess?

20.What is the biggest challenge facing leaders today (and female leaders, in particular)?

21.What is one mistake you witness leaders making more frequently than others?

22.What is the one behavior or trait that you have seen derail more leaders' careers?

23.What are a few resources you would recommend to someone looking to gain

insight into becoming a better leader?

24. What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?

25. What are you doing to ensure you continue to grow and develop as a leader?

APPENDIX C

GRAPH 1 – FIGURES FOR HOFSTEDE'S DIMENSIONS

The Graph compares the U.S. and Swedish culture through the lens of the

Hofstede's 5-D Model. The figures for Kazakhstan based on my own observations and

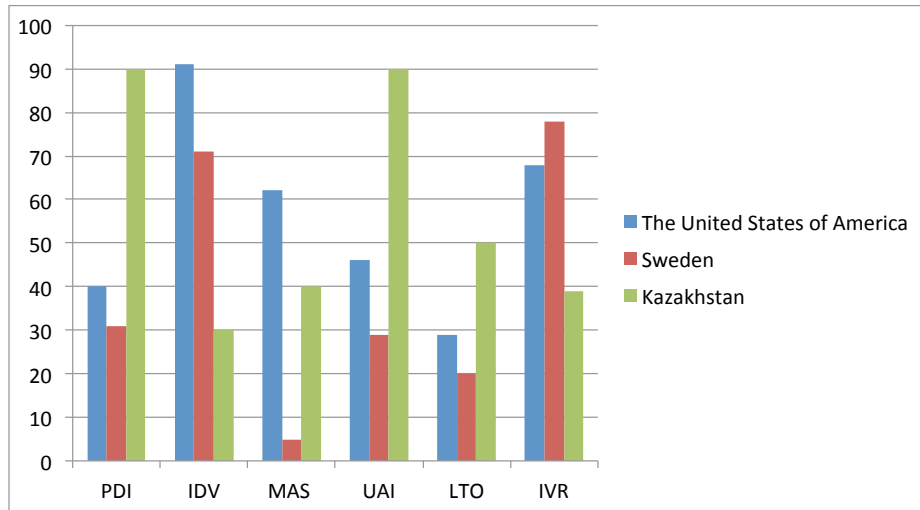investigations of the Kazakh culture and managerial practices.

Table 2

The table provides figures shown above in the Graph 1.

N	Dimension	USA	Sweden	Kazakhstan
1.	Power distance index	40	31	90
1.	Individuality index	91	71	30
1.	Masculinity index	62	5	50
1.	Uncertainty avoidance index	46	29	90
1.	Long-term orientation index	29	20	50

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