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The managerial role of women in modern China:

a response to women's new leadership
in Chinese political and economic context

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本论文旨在分析女性在中国的管理地位，而我们首先需要了解女性在政治和经济背景下的发展和目标。

如今，中国，仅次于印度，是世界上人口最多的国家，男性人口超过女性人口将近 5000 万。

论文的重点在于后续叙述的刻板印象中的经济政策类型，也是能将这个国家和其他国家拥有同样全球化经济背景的基础。我最终的目标是在开始研究之前回答对自己问的七个问题，例如：

1. 假如毛泽东时期的妇女们真的是“能顶撑半边天”的女人，为什么中国几十年后的高级政治女性仍然很少？
2. 这些评论中经常提到的男女领导风格的差异是否真的存在？
3. 为什么领导者总是与男性联系在一起？
4. 女性领导出现后，公司业绩有何变化？他们克服了哪些障碍？
5. 中国立法的作用是什么？中国政策的实施如何照顾妇女的权利？
6. 这些经理的表现在中国如何呢？
7. 影响领导类型的主要差异是什么？亚洲国家和西方国家之间真的有区别吗？或者这种领导方式开始变得更加全球化了？

这七个问题将是我学习的主题。

本论文分为三章叙述而分析了对于中国女性形象的主题。

第一章专注于中国妇女在政治环境中的领导地位、她们过去的发展、以及近年进行的政策。这些变化将填补中国一直以来重男轻女的观念而政府没完全应用过自己所引入政策的事实所产生的性别差距。

从社会最早时期中，妇女在中国与在其他国家，都一直被认为是较低级的性别，所以多年来在家庭中一直履行着绝对局限的角色。

显而易见，正如许多人所知，虽然已制定了增加妇女数量的政策，去年在北京举行的中国全国人民代表大会仍然再一次以男性为主角。

从这一点，我的第一个问题自发地出现了。毛泽东不断试图检测出了妇女在各个方面的地位。按照他所使用的那句名言“妇女能顶半边天”给大家一点希望。但

是，在 2018 年记录到的极少女性人数，又是遇到了哪些障碍和问题呢？对此，我将尝试通过历史提示给出答案，并且更详细地分析是否存在任何障碍。

第二章基于女性人物在经济背景里的地位而更加注重领导风格的观念。我们将进行一则简短的导论，这篇文章将介绍中国妇女在今日担任领导职务的主要原因。通过孔子的学问和霍夫斯泰德¹的研究，我们能对中国过去的社会结构拥有着更清楚的认知。接下来，我们将更具体地分析不同类型的性别领导风格，以及他们之间是否存在的任何差异。我们的确有理由可以认为女人因为一直被误认为是较低性别而可能在走向主导权的过程当中常遇到障碍。

因此，我们将进行更深入的分析，并且更加了解那些决定从事与男性形象相关的职业女性们所面临的困难。随后，将简单参考中国立法和他长期以来不断试图通过的新法规和提高女性存在水平的「粉红配额女性」政策。最后，为了更深入了解中国女性管理的表现，我们将进行分析以上海证券交易所上市的 50 抽样；将对于董事会进行分析而评论指出对于这些公司里女性们存在的的数据。

第三章将把更多的注意力放在中国境外，关注一个更为人所知的现实，也就是说义大利。我将尽力回答之前提过的最后一个问题。各种各样的领导风格往往以他们出生的国家的文化为特征。但是这些真的是一个国家独有的吗？或者它们能更普遍一点？我的目的是了解是否有领导风格因文化及他的影响而不同，还是这些风格是否都在适应着标准流程。然后，通过霍夫斯泰德的帮助来特别分析义大利，我们可以判断义大利女人，比起中国女人，是否早拥有着铺好向往领导角色的道路而成功的拥有主导地位，还是其实中国和义大利女人的情况是很相似的——这将会是一个很有趣的主题。

最后，论文里会提出和上一个分析研究几乎相似的另一个分析研究，那就是在米兰证券交易所上市的其中 50 家股份公司上进行分析。研究的目的是为了分析义大利董事会中女性存在的情况，然后相比收集的数据来判断义大利和中国之间是否有差异。

以上所有讯息基于学术文章、其他论文和网站查询的资料。关于第二章和第三章的两个研究，数据处理是根据上海和米兰证券交易所网站所进行的调查报告。

¹ Hostede [proper noun, translation]

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Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the managerial position of women in China, and first of all understand what the evolutions and goals were achieved in the political and economic context.

Nowadays China, after India, is the most populous country in the world and its male population exceeds the female population by almost 50 million.

My thesis will focus on the latter, a stereotyped category in fact fundamental to reach a standard of globalization like the other countries. The final goal of my work will be to answer to seven short questions that I asked myself, before starting my research such as:

1. Why if in Mao's period "women hold up half the sky" after decades there are still few senior political women in China?
2. Did these differences in style between female and male leadership, that are always mentioned in these reviews, really exist?
3. Why has the figure of leaders always been connected to a male?
4. How have the performance of the company changed since the emergence of women as leaders? Which kind of obstacles have they overcome?
5. What is the role of Chinese legislation? How does the implementation of Chinese policies take care women's rights?
6. How are the managers' performances in China?
7. What are the main differences that influence the type of leadership? Is there really a difference between the Asian and the Western countries, or is the kind of leadership that starts to be more globalized?

These seven questions will be the main theme of my study.

This thesis is divided into three chapters in which more themes and situations concerning the female figure in China are being analyzed and studied.

The first chapter will focus on the prominent position of Chinese women in the political context, on their past developments and changes, and on the policies that have been implemented in recent years. These changes were made in order to fill up the existing gender gap, given by the culture that characterizes China, a strongly male-oriented country, and by government policies that have been introduced but not fully applied. From early days, women of the Chinese society have always, as in other

countries considered the inferior gender for many years, played only a limited role at home. As many people know, the National People Congress of China held last year in Beijing was again, characterized by a major male component, even though policies due to increase the number of women have been issued.

This is the point where spontaneously my first question arises. Mao Zedong has always tried to detect the position of women in all areas, giving a little hope with his famous motto: "women hold up half the sky". However, what were the obstacles and problems encountered to ensure that even in the year 2018 a minimum of female presence has ever been recorded? To this, I will try to give an answer by looking through historical hints and analyzing better in order to conclude whether or not there were really any obstacles.

The second chapter will be based on the female figure in the economic context, focusing more on the concept of leadership. In the beginning, a brief excursus will be made to introduce the main causes that led to define the position of a female leader in China today. Through concepts such as Confucius's thoughts and the studies of Hofstede, it is possible to understand how Chinese society was structured in the past. Next, a detailed analysis will be made on the various types of gender leadership and the differences between them. In fact, often considered as an inferior gender, women encountered great obstacles on their way to a dominant role.

Therefore, a more in-depth analysis will be carried out to better understand the difficulties faced by women who decided to embark on a career often associated with a male figure. Then, a brief reference will be made to the Chinese legislation, which has long sought to increase the level of female presence through new regulations and "pink" policies.

Finally, to better understand how women's managerial performance will be in China, a detailed analysis will be conducted, which will take as an example 50 companies listed on the Shanghai Stock Exchange. The Board of Directors will be analyzed and the data relating to the presence of women within these will be reported and commented.

The third chapter will put more attention on the countries beyond the Chinese borders, towards a reality more known to all, such as Italy. At this point, I will try to answer the last question previously announced in my study. If the various leadership

styles are often characterized by the culture of the country itself, are they therefore, exclusive for each single country or can they be more universal?

My intention is to understand whether there are styles of leadership that vary according to culture and its influences, or whether they are too, adapting a globalized and standard process. Analyzing Italy in particular, with the help of Hofstede, we will understand whether Italian women have a paved road towards the role of leadership, succeeding in having a more dominant role comparing to women of China, or if the two are actually similar.

Finally, there will be a new analytical study, which will be almost identical to the previous one, in which 50 companies listed on the Milan Stock Exchange will be analyzed. The purpose of this analysis is to comprehend more deeply the Italian situation concerning the presence of women on the Board of Directors and also to compare the data collected in order to make a comparison between Italy and China.

All the information contained in this thesis were based on the academic articles, essays and websites. Regarding the two analysis from chapters two and three, data processing took place thanks to the consultation of websites of Shanghai and Milan stock exchanges.

CHAPTER 1

History of Women's status changing in People's Republic of China

The nineteenth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party was held in Beijing last October. Among the 89 million members of the party, more than two thousand delegates were asked to analyse the international and internal situation and to appoint new leaders in key government positions. How many of these delegates, however, were women?

The woman's role within the history of Chinese country has undergone many changes since the beginning of 90s. It is important to mention that women remained strictly bounded, until 1911², to the traditional society characterized by a patriarchal structure and culture. "The most systematic, institutionalized and deep-rooted sexist ideologies and practices in China originated from the philosophy of "filial piety"³ of Confucius (551-479 B.C)"⁴. For many years, this philosophy helped to maintain a patriarchal social order in China.

The expression "men are primarily outside the home, women are primarily inside the home"⁵ is useful to highlight that women are assigned to handle household works, such as cooking and raising children, besides their activities are limited to the domestic sphere. Otherwise, men handled public and social affairs such as holding government office, and this is the main reason why we rarely find women in political contexts.

Since the foundation of The Republic of China (1911 – 1949), women began to seek their own independence and emancipation because suffering their low status, but without any success. Those women who fought hard for the foundation of the Republic just received disappointment and false hopes.

² 1911 in this year, the Chinese Empire of Qing dynasty came to end.

³ "Filial piety" is composed by three components: women must obey man, citizens must obey ruler and young must obey the elderly.

⁴ Li, Y., (2000), "Women's Movement and Change of Women's Status in China", *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 1 (1).

⁵ "男主外女主内, nán zhǔ wài nǚ zhǔ nèi". [translation]

Chiang Kai Shek's⁶ repressive attitude, as well as the limited ability of Chinese Government to manage the Japanese situation within national borders⁷, led to the birth of the first feminist movement -most of the militants were students- known as May Fourth Feminism (Beijing, 1919, 4th May). Thanks to this movement women began to slowly enter a male-oriented society and raised their voices on the rights of emancipation. "This movement started challenging the gender stratification of Chinese society in an open and systematic fashion and it was seen as revolutionary force"⁸. Starting from this movement women began to be not only a different group in the Party but also different from the male communist members which were spread over several generations of students. Women in this movement were seen as pioneers with the aim of bringing about a change in the country's political and social contest.

Soon after the First Party Congress in July 1921, Communist male leaders started to consider about recruiting women into their political organization. They admitted the importance of female political participation, but their Party's membership remained primarily male- composed, indeed only two out of fifty-seven members were women.

Before 1949, women within political context had always been subordinated but in 1949 they made a small step forward in their emancipation.

1.1 The Maoist era

In order to transform the Chinese society, communist revolutionaries took into consideration not only the gender equality but also the emancipation of women. From the early years of the revolution, China's Communist Party recruited women and gave them the opportunity to break the chains that tied them to tradition and family.

With the birth of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on 1st October 1949, the position of women in political contest began to change and became more centralized thanks to Mao Zedong (1893-1976 毛泽东) at the head of the Chinese Communist Party

⁶ Chiang Kai Shek (蒋介石 1887- 1975) was a political and military leader, who has succeeded Sun Yatsen after his death. He served as the leader of the Republic of China 1928 and 1975.

⁷ During the end of the First World War, China as defeat country signed an agreement called the "Twenty- One Demands" in 1915, through which Japanese country obliged China to leave several territories to the Japanese enemy.

⁸ Li, Y. (2000), "Women's Movement and Change of Women's Status in China", *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 1 (1), pp. 31.

(CCP). He wanted - during that important moment in Tian an' men square - the support of his wife Jiang Qing.

In the past years, Chinese women were exposed to oppression by feudal society and in addition they were labelled as "inferior sex". In 1949 though, Chinese women gained true social equality with men thanks to the presence of Mao's wife in the opening ceremony. Her presence signed a starting point for women into political context, as well as in legal context. From that moment for instance, several laws would be promulgated in defence of women's rights such as the Marriage Law, in 1950.

The Party leader was arguably the father of Chinese feminism and his famous expression "Women hold up half the sky" not only summed up the will of the Government to improve the status of women and place them in contexts that before were only dedicated to men, but it also reflected Mao's idea of elevating their value and dignity that had been previously discredited.

One of the articles (Art.6) of the Common Program of new Chinese legislation states what follows:

"The People's Republic of China shall abolish the feudal system which holds women in bondage. Women shall enjoy equal rights with men in political, economic, cultural, educational and social life. Freedom of marriage for men and women shall be put into effect".

According to this article it is possible to state that women finally held a position in the society like men used to do. Reaching the concept of equality however meant that women in that period had started a process of "masculinization" because even if the word "equal" means to have the same opportunities and rights as the opposite gender, in this case this term refers to be similar to men, in the everyday sphere. Undoubtedly, this statement contrasted the idea based on male-oriented society, which highlighted gender differentiation, but in any case, did not give women the importance they deserved.

"When the Communist Party assumed the power in 1949, it faced the formidable tasks of economic reconstruction, political consolidation and re-establishing social order. To carry out radical reforms such as land redistribution, rapid industrialisation and nationalisation, it was crucial to mobilise women for its goal. For this, the party

⁹ Women in New China, Foreign Language Press, Peking 1949.

established a special national's women organisation, the All China Women Federation¹⁰, which was one of several mass organisations founded at that time to mediate between the party and the society"¹¹.

Still in the year 1949, 3rd of April, it was founded the first Federation focused on a society centred on equality in order to take women through their emancipation process and to connect the society sphere with the political one, the main goal of All China Women Federation during the first years, was based on Marxist- Leninist ideology.

This ideology is based on the idea that women had to break the chains and live outside their home, and due to this thought several revolutionary movements had been echoed in these years. This was not enough though to improve their status. Women in fact continued to stay in their own home doing usual housework. However, several women joined to Federation.

In the early 50s, Chinese Communist Party started to provide equal rights to women and in 1950 adopted one of the most important legislative documents: The Marriage Law. From the promulgation of this law, Federation achieved success.

1.1.1 The marriage Law, 1950

This Law was promulgated on 1st May 1950, and it triggered an improvement into women' s position. Thanks to this innovative law, the marriage was only based on consenting marriage. For this reason, Yuhui Li in his article said that "several women who were not happy with their marriage, started to ask for divorce".

"Women were socially and physically bounded by norms of femininity—they were limited to a domestic role [...]. In addition to protecting women and girls from feudal practices, the law also extended the representation of women by guaranteeing women equal right"¹².

According to this law, women were protected from the injustices that had received in the past years as forced marriage, bride- price¹³, concubinage and child betrothal.

¹⁰ ACWF, *All China Women Federation*, 中华全国妇女联合会 [Zhōnghuá quánguó fùnǚ liánhéhuì] is women's rights organisation established in China on 24 March 1949.

¹¹ Howell, J., (2002), "Women's Political Participation in China: Struggling to Hold up Half the Sky", *Parliamentary Affairs* (2002), 55, pp.44-45.

¹² Hu, A.C. (2016), "Half the Sky, But Not Yet Equal", *Harvard international review*.

¹³ The term *brideprice* refers to money given by the groom's family for a bride.

Besides having for a long time imagined the female liberation, Mao Zedong believed that women had been a wasted reserve of labour¹⁴ and this led to an increasing of women in political and governmental participation. Despite Mao had this thought, judicial personnel who were delegated to perform this law continued to be hostile about it, and so women were not fully emancipated. Connected to this Law, there was also the Land Law that requested a higher number of women into labour force. They were obliged to move from rural area to the city and this mobilisation signed an important milestone for women in the work place.

However, the Marriage Law was abandoned in 1953, because it was considered too stressful for family harmonisation and was stated that divorce would be granted only in exceptional cases. With this new line, the classic feudal family became the focus of what is right, emphasizing the union and the harmonization of family.

During the first Five- Year Plan, Chinese women assumed the same status as the Soviet ones and in order to upgrade their status they had to take part in the economic sector, even if there were several problems in recruiting women to jobs. Women always lived in the domestic sphere, and this led to an unfair situation between paid work and domestic work, which would not be socialized. However, the unemployment rate remained even higher, although the purpose of its plan was the opposite. Furthermore, during this period was throwing discordant signals among them. On one hand it said that women needed to find their emancipation joining into labour force, on the other hand the few women that found a job, were divided between the responsibilities of work and those concerning the family (housework and childcare in this case).

1.1.2 Women in 1958, the Great Leap Forward

The period of The Great Leap Forward, affected women's role more than other groups and this led to a changeset in their way of life. As a result of massive propaganda campaign in which it was claimed that "women were equally capable of working as men", they began to be engaged mainly in sectors such as agriculture and commerce, while men were mobilised to work in industry. Most of their household

¹⁴ Leader, S. G., (October 1973), "The emancipation of Chinese Women", *World Politics*, vol.26, No. 1, pp. 59.

duties were socialized following the introduction of several incentives as the creation of nurseries and laundries.

In this period Mao's beliefs did not evolve. He presumed that women needed to work, to give not only a contribution in the economic development of China but also to set them free from patriarchal society. Women became more important than in the past and improved in term of status. They started looking for their own independence and as S.G, Leader said in this article "Working women acquire economic independence and are not as susceptible to the authority of their fathers and husbands"¹⁵, so this new movement deeply contrasted the older patriarchal structure. Besides, in term of education, working women were more educated than housewives, and they were not bounded to combined marriage, but they could find a husband based on their common interests and experiences. Undoubtedly, women have benefitted from numerous incentives that the Party reserved for them such as childcare facilities and training course. For this reason, in that period, over 80% of rural and urban women between 16 and 60 years of age were employed, and other women were introduced into political bodies.

Anyway, although there was such emancipation, the Party actually felt that women were not yet fully emancipated. One of the reasons was that even if they performed the same tasks and jobs as men, they were still not considered equal to them and this idea limited the total emancipation of women. On support to this idea, Leader in his article said that "Women were not free because their technical and cultural levels were too low to meet the needs of socialist development"¹⁶. Moreover, between 1950s and 1970s, women had denied access to men's roles, but they were allowed in certain occupations that had already designed.

At the end of the Great Leap Forward, the participation of women into a workforce achieved a saturated level which persisted even during the years of the Cultural Revolution (1966- 1976) as well as after this period, known as the period of the chaotic change. Before the Cultural revolution began, the years between 1961 and 1963 experienced a rapid progress on the status of women in terms of gender equality, even if they continued indeed to suffer from their low status. Later on, for a positive development of the Chinese economy, Chinese women have continued to suffer from

¹⁵ Leader, S. G., (October 1973), "The emancipation of Chinese Women", *World Politics*, vol.26, No. 1 pp.64.

¹⁶ Leader, S. G., (October 1973), "The emancipation of Chinese Women", *World Politics*, vol.26, No. 1 pp.64.

unequal employment opportunities and income distribution disparities. To take care for this situation, there were Chinese organizations (United Nations Development Program) that provided funds and project to prevent women from being fired.

In any case, once again the status of women changed during the period of the Cultural revolution, which introduced them into a political contest. Paladin of this period was Jiang Qing, Mao's wife, and member of the Gang of Four, who was the first to have the possibility to be a member of the Politburo at the Party Congress of 1969. In order to accelerate the position of women in economic production and in the political contest she promoted an agenda with this aim.

In 1970, women were included in the new political commitment. The political authorities started a campaign to enhance their political participation and develop the role of their leadership. In this perspective, women occupied at least one place in new committees.

The development of the Chinese economy had a strange effect on the position of women. In addition to an increasing in the rate of prostitution and divorce, even after the decollectivisation of rural areas in 1980s, a large part of women who were engaged into labour force, returned to their domestic sphere "within their house". Consequently, women employment rate started falling down dramatically.

Not only in economic contest, but also in politics emerged a decrease of women in all levels of the Party. During the Party Congress of 1977 and 1982 the only woman in the Politburo was Zhou Enlai's wife, Deng Ying Chao. In contrast to the period of the Cultural revolution in which almost a half of directors and deputies were women, in these years participation rate of women was less than the 10%.

Here again, it is possible to state that women in political contest were always linked to their husband and relatives who were members of Chinese Communist Party. In addition, once in the leadership position, women were given a less important portfolio such as issued related to children or women.

In this first part of the chapter, it is explained what are the changes that the role of women has received for 70 years, but in order to see the number of the Government documents, it is important to focus on what were the obstacles that women had to overcome during these years.

1.2 The Barriers that women have to face

Connecting to the first paragraph of this chapter, the aim is to analyse various problems that women, during their research for emancipation, have come across through their way. Analysing the data collected from government documents, that are reported and commented on later, the most frequent question was: why if the Mao's period "women hold up half the sky" after decades there are still few senior political women in China? In this paragraph I want to focus my attention on three causes and obstacles that in the past, and even nowadays women have to deal with, such as discriminatory policies, the Baijiu culture, and the glass ceiling.

1.2.1 Discriminatory Policies

Although China has made progress in terms of gender equality, women also in modern time are still suffering discriminatory policies. China has male-political culture and of course, men are not interested in filling this gap. In particular, it is possible to say that retirement policy is related to this gap and is a barrier against women.

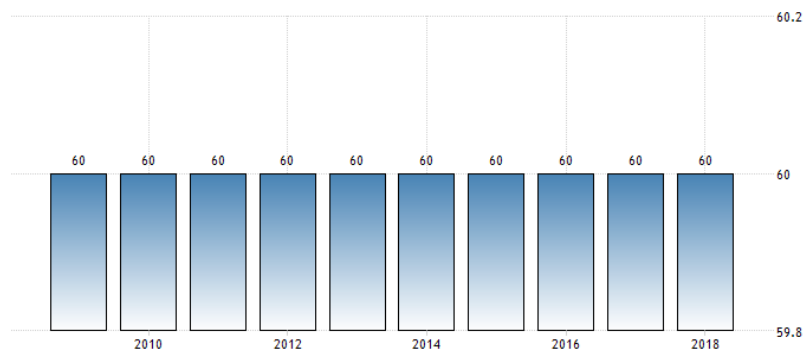
Actually, since 1951 China's retirement policies require that the retirement age in the same occupation is 60 for man, while for women is 50-55. This policy is strongly discriminant against women situation, who at that age are still able to work and give a contribution to their families and to the country. In addition in 1980s, the main reason for this early retirement was that young people were unemployed, and this early retirement of the previous generation would give a field of work for new coming. Another reason is to take care of their grandchildren, their household chores and also even their grandparent, so in other words dedicate an important part of their life to the family.

Figure 1 Women's retirement age



Source: *Trading Economics* (2018) website available at <https://it.tradingeconomics.com/china/retirement-age-women>

Figure 2 Men's retirement age



Source: *Trading Economics* (2018) website available at <https://it.tradingeconomics.com/china/retirement-age-men>

As it is possible to see in Figure 1 and Figure 2, the problem is that women have to retire ten years before men. For some experts, women may be physically unable to work as long as men and this prevent the employment of women allows long-term position. (Y. Sun, 2017).

Moreover, this policy obliges women to miss out on carrier progress, because the important roles in the political contest are assigned to people who have already exceed the age of 60 years.

Indeed, there is an incentive for the correction of this regulation by the State at the elite level. Women who have received higher education than men (that have received an ordinary education level) enter into the work environment five or ten years

later. Adding this to an early retirement age, it is possible to state that women have a working life of fifteen years shorter than man.

However, there are different situations depending on requirement of organizations. <<The Ministry of Personnel has, in the last two decades, issued a number of documents (e.g. Document 153/1983; Document 141/1983; Document 5/1990) which stipulate that professional experts can carry on working till age of 60 if they wish and their health permits. These documents also stipulate that minority of female experts can carry on working after they are 60 if they are needed by their organization>>¹⁷. So, in this case, if the organization needs women to work more than the age of 60, and they are able to perform their tasks, obviously their retirement age will be extended. On the contrary, female managers and cadres in governmental organizations have to retire at 50, even if their health permits. For all the others it depends on the rank, so for those women who are below a certain rank the retirement age will be 55, for other women that are above it will be 60. Of course, there are pros on early retirement, but the fact that women are not able to work at all, even if they are able to do it, in their perspective will be a policy that will hinder their desire to make carrier and also could be seen as discriminatory policy that bring women “within home” again.

1.2.2 Baijiu Culture

As China political context is composed predominantly by men, and culture is male-oriented, Chinese women are obliged to play men’s rules. During meetings and banquets, men used to drink *baijiu*¹⁸, and this put women in front of a crossroads: if they had drunk together with men, they could have been misunderstood their role and they could have been judged, otherwise if they had refused drinking together, they could have missed a lot of opportunities because the aim of these meetings was to create connections between the parties.

Cheng Li is a China expert at Washington Brookings Institutions, and states that “especially at dinner tables and in meeting rooms” it is possible to have a discriminatory influence on women role, while Feng Yuan- a women’s rights activist

¹⁷ Luo, 2000 in Cook, F.L. (2003), “Equal opportunity? Women’s managerial careers in governmental organizations in China”, *international Journal of Human Resources Management*, 14:2, 317-333.

¹⁸ *Baijiu* is a typical Chinese highly alcoholic grain spirit.

declared that “more women want to be involved more than the positions they already have” and she added also “many women do not want to adjust themselves to the current political culture- the boy’s club, the drinking culture”¹⁹. In these sentences is possible to understand the paradox that affected Chinese culture. On the one hand there are women that want their emancipation, but when they get it, they feel an immense awkwardness due to men’s political habits.

Certainly, this is a problem that can be found both in political and in economic contexts. In this case, women who work in two different environments have the same barrier at the same time and they need to face the problem in the same way.

Honestly, I think that this problem can be resolved only when society become more female-oriented, when women can freely do everything, and they are not judged if they want to drink at the meeting table or if they do not.

In my opinion, the *Baijiu culture* as well as discriminatory policies -which I mentioned above can be gather together under the term *glass ceiling*.

1.2.3 Glass Ceiling

Merriam- Webster dictionary define the term *Glass ceiling* as “an intangible barrier within a hierarchy that prevents women or minorities from obtaining upper-level positions”²⁰.

Women in Chinese society are always classified as “second”, for instance women are less educated than men or, in political settings, practices are often directed at men and it is hard for women to break through the glass ceiling. Moreover, in this case, it is raising a *paradox*, even if women gain new political rights, yet they play only peripheral roles, instead of men that always perform the highest level of leadership in the Government. All important positions within the Chinese Government, such as the security of the State, are dominated by men, while roles within family planning are delegated to women.

¹⁹ Richburg K.B., (2012), “In a Communist China, women officially equal but lagging far behind politically”, *The Washington Post*

article available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/in-communist-china-women-officially-equal-but-lagging-far-behind-politically/2012/11/01/4af037a8-21da-11e2-92f8-7f9c4daf276a_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.1b99956ab719

²⁰ Available at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/glass%20ceiling>

The belief that “women are of low quality”²¹ has a very sexist attitude but remains in the thinking of Chinese society. Focusing on the term “quality” it is possible to understand that it refers to the psychological internalisation of inferiority of women, in addition to the lower performance of women in terms of education and culture²². From this discrimination the term “leftover women”²³ was born, which classified all women over the age of 20, who did not marry and did not yet had children. The fear of being a “leftover women” affects all Chinese women. Furthermore, the persistent campaign made by Government encourages women to prevail in the domestic sphere instead the career.

In order to prevent false stereotypes women are protected by this thought of the All- China Women’s Federation, that promote self-awareness, self-confidence and women’s attitudes, rather than defining women as problematic.

Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, only two women have broken the political glass ceiling. Historically there were only a few women including Mao’s wife. Later, there would not be more women represented in Politburo. Since last year, the women who made up the Politburo were two, Sun Chunlan and Liu Yandong, the latter retired from the Politburo. Nowadays, only Sun Chunlan is the only female member of Political Bureau of Chinese Communist Party.

²¹ *Suzhi di*, 素质低.

²² Howell, J., (2002), “Women’s Political Participation in China: Struggling to Hold up Half the Sky”, *Parliamentary Affairs* (2002), 55, pp. 49.

²³ *Shengnu*, 剩女, chinese character 剩 *Sheng* refers to spoiled food, that must be threw. In this contest, this term takes an emotional meaning.

1.3 Women’s Political Participation in China

According to the last statistics of “Women in National Parliaments”²⁴ the situation at 1st September 2018, the Chinese Parliament includes 742 women delegates, 24.9% of the total, ranking in 71st position. Whereas, Italy is ranking the 28th position, with 225 female delegates out of 630 members that make up the total of the Parliament and 113 female delegates out of 315 (5 senators for life) that make up the total of the Senate.

Figure 3 Word classification ranking in political context

WORLD CLASSIFICATION									
Rank	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats*	Women	% W	Elections	Seats*	Women	% W
28	Italy	04.03.2018	630	225	35.7%	04.03.2018	320	113	35.3%
71	China	05.03.2018	2980	742	24.9%	--	--	--	--

Since the founding of the People’s republic of China in 1949, progresses in the field of women’s political participation could be divided in three stages. The establishment of the PRC marked the first stage, that ended until the mid of 1960s. This period was characterized by a mandatory adoption that helped women to increase their status in the structure of political power structure. Measures worth of note, such as measure of quota, protected the representation of women in politics. After these years, the number of delegated women would rapidly increase.

The data collected by academic journals show that the presence of female delegates since 1954 has increased a lot, and women have begun to take positions and make decisions. The data come from the National People’s Congress (NPC) and the Conference of Chinese People’s Political Consultant (CPPCC), also called “National *lianghui* 全国两会”, are two plenary sessions.

The government of the People’s Republic of China is the State Council, which is the most central and powerful body with executive power and is accountable to the National People’s Congress and the Standing Committee.

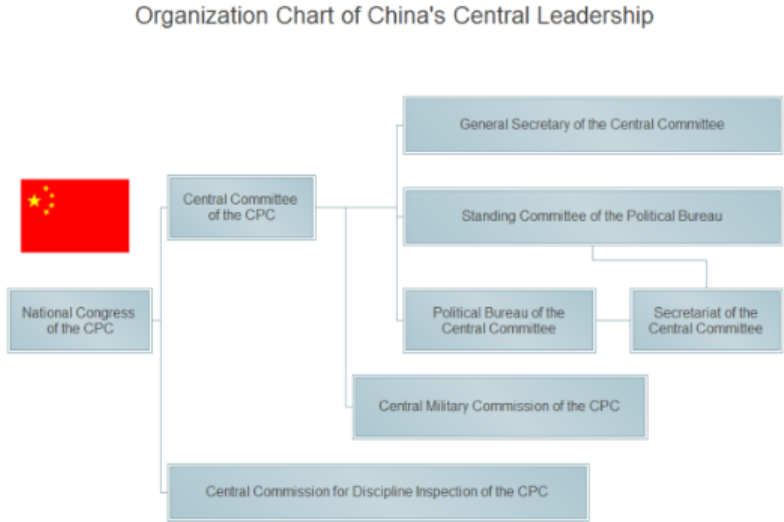
The latter is the permanent organ and has considerable power. It is composed by 150 members of the NPC and is responsible not only for the interpretation of laws,

²⁴ Available at <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif010918.htm>

the enactment of decrees and the management of international treaties, but also for diplomatic appointments.

The National People’s Congress is composed by deputies from all over the world, and it is the legislative body. Its main tasks are to make laws, amend the Constitution, approve the state budget and appoint the Premier and the members of the State Council. This Congress should also emulate the sex, economic and social composition of China.²⁵

Figure 4 Organization Chart of China’s Central Leadership



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²⁵ Hong, L.K., (1976), “The Role of Women in the People’s Republic of China: Legacy and Change”, *Social Problems*, vol. 23, No.5, Oxford University Press on behalf of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, pp. 549-550.

²⁶ Image from <https://www.edrawsoft.com/chinese-government-guide.php>

Figure 5 Female Representatives in National People Congress (1954-1993)²⁷

FEMALE REPRESENTATIVES IN THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS				
Congress	Female Representatives	% of All Representatives	Female Members of The Standing Committee	% of All Standing Committee Members
1st (1954) ^a	147	12%	4	5%
2nd (1959) ^a	150	12.2%	5	6.3%
3rd (1964) ^a	542	17.8%	20	17.4%
4th (1975) ^a	653	22.6%	42	25.1%
5th (1978) ^a	742	21.2%	33	21%
6th (1983) ^a	632	21.2%	14	9%
7th (1988) ^a	634	21.3%	16	11.6%
8th (1993) ^b	626	21.03%	17	12.68%

According to the data on the Figure 5, on the left side, women who have joined the NPC have increased gradually in subsequent years. The first NPC (1954) had 147 female delegates whom composed the 12% of the total Representatives. During the second one (1959), women delegates were 150, who composed 12.2% of the total Representatives, while in the third one (1964) the number increased considerably, given that 542 women counted 17.8%. In the 1950s, local governments in China had at least one female member.

Between the first and the second stage, a framework management system was set up in China, through which women's rights were protected. According to this system, the cadres of the party were appointed by the State and consequently, the number of women in political cadres increased a lot at the beginning of 1970s.

The second phase started in the 1970s, when the highest number of women in political participation was registered. Thanks to mandatory measures, during the Fourth NPC in 1975, the number of women reached its peak with 22.6% of the total of all Representatives. In Standing Committee also, the number is the highest number achieved at all, and at least one-woman would-be in.

The third stage began in the mid-1990s. During these years there was a re-establishment of positive action, in addition to a centralized China placed in international community before and after the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing. In the 1990s, female cadres further increased.

²⁷ Rosen, S. (1995), "Women and Political Participation in China", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.68, No.3 pp. 320.

Figure 6 The percentage of Women representatives in the NPC and its Standing Committee (%)²⁸

Year	1954	1959	1964	1975	1978	1983	1988	1993	1998	2003	2008
Woman Representatives	12	12.3	17.8	22.6	21.2	21.1	21.3	21.0	21.8	20.2	21.3
Women in Standing Committee	5	6.3	17.4	25.1	21	9	11.9	12.3	12.7	13.2	16.6

In 1993, during the Eighth NPC, there were 626 female representative accounting for 21.0% and 17 women in Standing Committee, accounting for 12.3% of the total.

The cornerstone of this increase was not only the affirmative action taken by the State, but also a series of policies promoted in order to focusing on women’s political participation, which highlighted the importance of doing training and making a selection for women cadres. To select in detail, an index was established, that could provide an incentive for policy.

Figure 7 Female Members of the Political Bureau after 1949²⁹

FEMALE MEMBERS OF THE POLITICAL BUREAU IN POST-1949 CHINA			
Central Committee	Total Members	Female Members	Percentage of Female Members
8th (1956)	17	0	0%
9th (1969)	19	2	10.5%
10th (1973)	21	1	4.8%
11th (1977)	26	0	0%
12th (1982)	25	1	4%
13th (1987)	14	0	0%
14th (1992)	20	0	0%

Figure 7 show female that would be part in Political Bureau in Post- 1949, after the establishment of PRC. As it possible to see, in 1956 there were no women representing the Chinese Politburo, but after the cultural revolution of 1969, two women- called Jiang Qing and Ye Chun, Zhou Enlai’s wife - entered for the first time, accounting for 10.5% of the total.

Four years later, in 1973 Mao’s wife remained to represent the Politburo women.

²⁸ Zheng, Y., Guo, X., Zhao, L. (2009), “Women’s political participation in China”, EAI Background Brief No.453 pp.10.

²⁹ Rosen, S. (1995), “Women and Political Participation in China”, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.68, No.3, pp 318.

Figure 8 Female Members of the Party Central Committee after 1949 ³⁰

FEMALE MEMBERS OF THE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE IN POST-1949 CHINA						
Central Committee	Total Members	Female Members	Percentage of Female Members	Alternate Members	Female Alternate Members	Percentage of Female Alternate Members
8th (1956) ¹	97	4	4.1%	73	4	5.5%
9th (1969) ¹	170	13	7.6%	109	10	9.2%
10th (1973) ¹	195	20	10.3%	124	21	16.9%
11th (1977) ¹	201	14	7.0%	132	24	18.2%
12th (1982) ¹	210	11	5.2%	138	13	9.4%
13th (1987) ¹	175	10	5.7%	110	12	10.9%
14th (1992) ²	189	12	6.4%	130	12	9.2%

As Figure 8 says, during the years of Cultural Reform (1969-1977) the number of women in Central Committee³¹ achieved its peak, giving 20 women on 195 of total member, accounting for 10.3% of the total. In 1977 before the Deng Xiaoping reform the percentage of female substitute was 18.2%. However, during this year, no women would have been present in the Politburo (Figure 7).

The development of women's political participation has been determined by the general policies issued by the party- State. Despite the State has made a strong effort to implement these policies, they have met various resistances during the years. For instance, when China's main goal was economic growth, gender equity remained hidden. "The gendered effects of economic reconstruction in turn are reflected in the political sphere" ³². Consequently, the number of female delegates decreased. The greater decline was in 1983. (Figure 6)

In any case, only the number of women represented in high level decreased, while the number of women in grassroot levels, remained stable.

³⁰ Rosen, S. (1995), "Women and Political Participation in China", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.68, No.3, pp 319.

³¹ Nowadays Party Central Committee of China Communist Party is composed by 205 full members, and 171 alternative members, both nominated by NPC very five years. This Committee substitutes the National Congress when is not in session and is held at least once in a year.

³² Zheng, Y., Guo, X., Zhao, L. (2009), "Women's political participation in china", *EAI Background Brief No.453*, pp. 9.

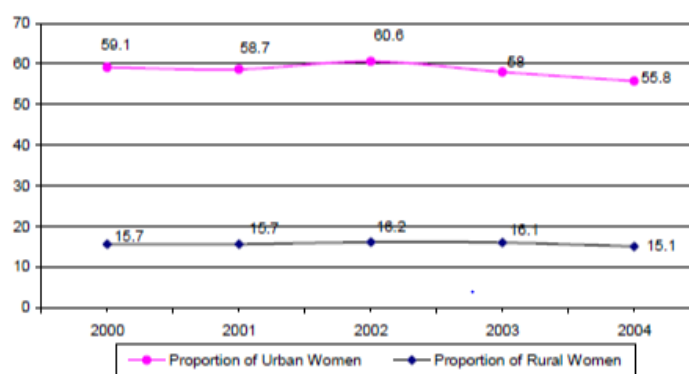
Figure 9 Proportion of Women at Top Levels of Chinese Power Structure [from 1982 (3) to 2012 (3)]³³



As well Figure 9 shows the decrease occurred in 1983, although later, there was a period of stability, which collapsed again in the beginning of 2000s.

In order to describe the real situation about of the distribution of women participating in the political contest in the early 1990s the statement “One low ad three small”³⁴ was used. *Low* in proportion of participating women; *small* in the number of women holding the upper-level positions; *small* in the number of women holding leader positions; *small* in the number of women managing positions in important sectors.

Figure 10 Women proportion in rural and urban communities (2000-2004) (%)³⁵



Women’s political participation is based not only on the high-level position, but also on grassroots level. Women in that level were always more than in the high-level

³³ Zeng, B., (2014), “Women’s Political Participation in China: Improved or Not?”, *Journal of International Women’s Studies*, 15 (1), pp.139.

³⁴ 一低三少, *Yi Di San Shao*.

³⁵ Zheng, Y., Guo, X., Zhao, L. (2009), “Women’s political participation in China”, *EAI Background Brief No.453* pp.12.

ones. However, according to Figure 10, the number of women in the rural community decreased in 2000s, whereas the proportion of female members at the rural level remained stable at low level.

According to a White Paper published by the Chinese Government in 2005, it was possible to enounce that the state started a process of selecting and training women cadres. For this reason, in 2001 a document was issued entitled “Opinions on taking further measures to do well in works to train and select female cadres and to develop female Party members” stating that generally, is it normal to have at least one-woman cadres at local level³⁶.

In conclusion, due to an existing gender policy which covering only the “four main bodies” such as NPC, CPPCC, government and Party, the number of women participating in political contest is rather low. These policies provide only a general view on this matter, while there is not another index which measures the number of women participating in the Party and the Committees.

In 1995 a third modified version was promulgated called Law of Elections for NPC and Provincial People’s Congress which declared that all political levels should have an appropriate number of women, so according to this amendment should have “at least one woman” represented in level. The problem is that “at least” became “only one” and this led to an ineffective implementation of gender policy. However, All China Women Federation continued to make efforts in order to promote positive actions. The Federation promulgated several policies for the purpose of formulating compulsory indexes into practical actions concerning the involvement of women in political participation. These actions were implemented thanks to the Programme for Women Development in China (2001-2010) which stated that major objectives were:

(1) Improving women’s participation in the administration, management, and decision- making in public and state affairs;

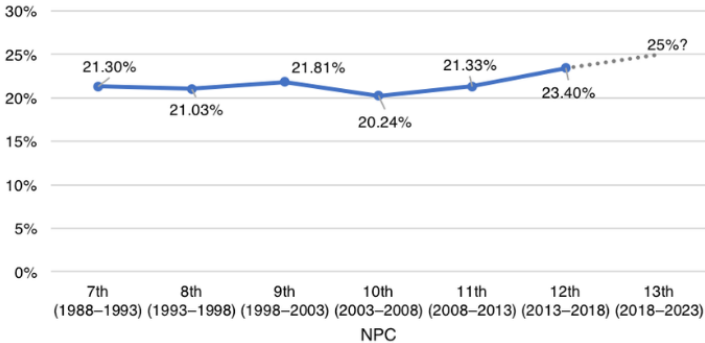
(2) Increasing the proportion of women in the administration. Make efforts to ensure that there is more than one woman in main governing bodies at all levels [...]; introduce measures to ensure a significant increase in the number of women holding main offices position of primary importance;

³⁶ Zheng, Y., Guo, X., Zhao, L. (2009), “Women’s political participation in China”, *EAI Background Brief No.453*, pp. 13.

(3) Working to ensure a gradual increase in the percentage of female cadres among the overall strength of the group.

These three objectives are focused on issues concerning women’s involvement in political environment³⁷.

Figure 11 Proportion of Female Delegates in National People Congress³⁸



As it possible to see in this Table, the target of next NPC will increase the number of women represented in National People’s Congress, for this reason it is expected that there will be an increasing from the 12th NPC (2013-2018), accounted for 23.4% to at least 25% for the following NPC.

This prediction is very important in order to understand the Government’s goal of increasing the women’s political participation, implementing positive actions and putting women in important positions they deserve and maybe, eventually, they could hold up half a sky.

³⁷ Program for the Development of Chinese Women (2001-2010).

³⁸ Source: NPCSC Credentials Committee.

CHAPTER 2

The Concept of Leadership applied in economical context: a scenario of Chinese business women

The aim of this chapter will be to observe and critically analyze the roles that women play within Chinese company. To do that, is fundamental to understand how Chinese companies has been developed and influenced by Chinese culture.

However, before focusing on what Chinese culture is and what influences managerial performance of the leader, from the point of view of female leadership, it is necessary to briefly introduce what is culture, and how cultures differ from one country to another. The origin of the term *Culture* comes from the Latin culture, which means “care”. From an anthropology point of view, this term was explained by the anthropologist Henry Pratt Fairchild, who defined it as: “A collective name for all behavior patterns socially acquired and socially transmitted by means of symbols; hence a name for all the distinctive achievements of human groups, including not only such items as language, tool-making, industry, art, science, law, government, morals and religion, but also the material instruments or artifacts in which cultural achievements are embodied and by which intellectual cultural features are given practical effects[...]”³⁹. According to this definition, individuals are influenced both by culture since birth and by contexts such as family, work, and friends-relations where they play an important role in the effectiveness of the transmission. They are always within a group and they learned how to deal with and compare themselves with other different cultures, and different way of thinking.

Therefore, many researchers agree on the fact that gender roles are defined by culture and learning. In fact, the culture of the country really affected people’s values, assumptions and ways of doing actions, moreover there were studies based on the gender specific roles which demonstrated that gender roles are rooted at an early age for males and females and they are connected to different norms, characteristics,

³⁹ Fairchild, H.P. (1944), “Dictionary of Sociology”, *philosophical library*.
https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.279941/2015.279941.Dictionary-Of_djvu.txt
Berger, A.A. (2000), “The Meanings of Culture”, *volume 3, issue 2*.
available at <http://journal.media-culture.org.au/0005/meaning.php>

values and behaviours for both sexes (Maddock, Parkin, 1993)⁴⁰. The researches done by Hofstede in the early of 1980s and after in 1991 identified how culture relates to workplace values and eventually classified six dimensions of culture: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, long term *vs.* short- term orientation and indulgence *vs.* restraint, masculinity *vs.* femininity, individualism *vs.* collectivism. *Power distance* refers to the extent to which less powerful members of institutions and organizations accept that power is unequally distributed, and according to Hofstede's mentality, the unequal distribution of power is accepted by Chinese society based on the basis that all men are born unequal (K.F. Pun, K.S. Chin, H. Lau 2000; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). *Uncertainty avoidance* describes how cultures manage the fact that future is unpredictable. *Long vs. short term orientation* suggests whether the focus on cultural values is on the future or on the past or present. *Indulgence vs. restraint* refers to the fact that indulgence society encouraging instant gratification of the needs and desires within society while restrained culture regulate and control behaviour based on social norms. The main focus in this chapter is on the term *masculinity vs. femininity* that emphasizing a culture poses on practices or qualities traditionally considered masculine or feminine, and *individualism vs. collectivism* that describes the strength of the relation between an individual and other individual within society. If in a society the interests of the group prevail on the interests of the single person, this society will be labelled as collectivistic. Collectivism in a society is a factor that leads to avoiding uncertainty about change. People composing collectivistic society- as Chinese people- are surrounded by a culture defined as intuitive, self-restrained, dependent, implicit and patient (C.A. Rarick).

2.1 The influences of Confucianism in Chinese management

Almost all Asian countries have been influenced by traditional Chinese ideas, institutions and culture (K.F. Pun, K.S. Chin, H. Lau 2000) and mostly Confucian-thinking. The establishment China's cultural foundation made by Confucius lay the basis for modern Chinese managerial system. Confucius's value as loyalty, mutual obligation, hard work, social order and dedication always rooted in Chinese thinking

⁴⁰ Turesky, E.F., Cloutier, K.S, Turesky, M.F., (2011), "Feminine Paths to Leadership in Italy: Perceptions of Female Italian Leaders in a Masculine Society", *Integral leadership Review*, available at <http://integrallleadershipreview.com/3995-feminine-paths-to-leadership-in-italy-perceptions-of-female-italian-leaders-in-a-masculine-society/>

in cultural and traditional aspects as in Chinese company's policies, even if Confucius's mentality has always denigrated by Mao (C.A. Rarick). According to these values, Confucianism focuses on the importance of a place that an individual has in the social hierarchy of social relationships. Individual is not seen as isolated entities, but actually as part of a system of interdependent relations. Furthermore, society is described as a hierarchical pyramid based on well-established roles and norms that regulate the way people should act within a group (K.F. Pun, K.S. Chin, H. Lau 2000). The individual is always seen as a part of the group because China is based on collectivistic society, and the value that a company's manager has, is always orientated toward a collectivistic society as teamwork, family's business and harmony over the conflict⁴¹.

Very important among these terms is the term of mutual obligation term, which is based on *guanxi*. This terminology refers to network of relationship supported by mutual obligations. This term is also described as the creation of connection between two independent individuals who have a bilateral flow of personal or social transaction (K.F. Pun, *et al.* 2000)⁴². Furthermore, it is an important mechanism of building long-term business relationship and doing business in China.

A sort of factor that affected, in the past but also nowadays, the role of Chinese leaders is the "Five virtues" of Confucius. How are managers expected to play their managerial role according to Confucius mindset? Basically, he based his thinking on the harmony between the society through the relationship, besides he created these five virtues known as: benevolence (*rén* 人), righteousness (*yì* 义), ritual (*lǐ* 礼), wisdom (*zhì* 智), trustworthiness (*xìn* 信).

A Chinese manager is expected to have all these five virtues to best perform his role, which is maintaining harmonization within the corporate organization. He always been on the front line, and this is sign of righteousness. The Chinese managerial role is always based on long-term orientation and patience due to social processes and ceremonies imposed by culture. Moreover, wisdom is a virtue that manager need to have to make a correct decision, in addition to the last virtue that covers managerial role that is expected to be faithful to the company's mission, how to maintain policies

⁴¹ Rarick, C.A., "Confucius on Management: understanding Chinese Cultural Values and Managerial Practices", Andreas School of Business, Barry University.

⁴² Pun, K.F., Chin, K.S., Lau, H., 2000, "A review of the Chinese cultural influences on Chinese enterprise management", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, volume 2, Issue 4, pag 325-338.

and control within the organization (C.A. Rarick). Therefore, paternalistic style was always rooted in the leadership's model of Chinese business.

2.2 The Business women

As for the position of women in companies around the world, in the *Fortune 500* companies, women who still held the position of CEO were only 1.2% in 2002, and 71% of corporation did not have women directors (Glaser,2002; Morton, 2003). However, these data contrast very much with the idea discussed by Rosner in the 1990 *Harvard Business Review* article, which suggested that in managerial world, the most appropriate managerial behaviour was the female one- with nurturance and collaboration, more than the male one- with a predominance of power and control⁴³. Most of all economies of Asian countries increased a lot over the latest decades and led several changes such as the position and the development of women in management. In terms of labour market, women made up less than half of the labour force and, were often employed in low-level jobs, in addition to the few opportunities characterized it. From certain case studied, was possible to argue that the percentage of women in managers was lower than their male counterpart, even if they took part in low-level positions. A study conducted by Cooke shown that in China in 1995, although the promotion on equally opportunities in job position was taken in the past decades by Chinese government, however 19% of labour force in managerial position dominated by men, while only 2% women were in similar position, (J.Benson, V.Yukongdi, 2005)⁴⁴.

2.2.1 "Think manager- think male", a leadership theory to overcome

Generally speaking, in the case of women' management profile, several studies are made to determine what kind of influences the leadership theories has had on women's role. Firstly, it is important to focus on the meaning of the word leadership. This word was used for the first time in the early 1800s, in order to describe the political influence and control of British Parliament during the first half of the 19th century.

⁴³ Robinson, J.L., Lipman-Blumen, J., (2003), "Leadership Behaviour of Male and Female Managers", *Journal of Education for Business*, 79:1, 28-33.

⁴⁴ Benson, J., Yukongdi, V., 2005, "Asian Women Managers: Participation, Barriers and Future Prospects", *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 11:2, 283.29.

Consequently, authors as Tannenbaum in 1961 defined this word “as an interpersonal influence, exercised in situations and directed, through the communication process toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals”. In 1990, Michener *et al.* defined this word “as a process that takes place in groups in which one member influences and controls the behaviour of the other members towards some goals” (cited in U.D. Jogulu, G.J.Wood, 2006)⁴⁵. Nowadays, the definition given by the Business Dictionary is “the activity of leading a group of people or an organization or ability to do this [...]”. Moreover, is defined as “[...] the act of inspiring subordinates to perform and engage in achieving a goal”⁴⁶. As you can see, words like “group” and “goal” are present in the statements and this suggests how a good leader must act to exercise his role in the best way within a group with his employees. Furthermore, a good leader is able to motivate and to help his group achieve their goals. However, many times women are not considered as possible leader. Besides, Denmark in its research defined the leadership model as a “Great Man” in 1993, only taking into consideration the possibility of having a man in position of leadership. Actually, in this period, caring and nurturing characteristics were labelled to women, and consequently, they were not seen as appropriate in the leadership role (U.D. Jogulu, G.J.Wood, 2006). Schein in 1970s based his empirical studies on “think manager- think male”. According to his research, he wanted to argue that managerial success was held by men than by women because of managerial position requires masculine characteristics. This would be a psychological obstacle to promoting women in management. In order to strengthen this thesis, they made a research focused on Asian countries as China and Japan. The results of this research show that men has more characteristics, attitudes and temperament than women. Therefore, these results gave great support to the statement “think manager- think male” that it is considered a global phenomenon (V.E. Schein *et al.* 1996). Chinese male has had a very strong degree of managerial sex typing, and in addition Chinese women who achieve this position are labelled as “iron women”, a term that defines women as male or without innate female characteristics (Xiao-tian, 1992 in V.E. Schein *et al* 1996, pp. 39)⁴⁷.

⁴⁵ (Bass, 1990), (Tannenbaum *et al.* 1961) and (Michener *et.al* 1990) cited in Jogulu, U.D., Wood, G.J., 2006 “The role of leadership theory in raising the profile of women in management”, *Equal Opportunities International*, Vol, 25 No. 4, 2006 pp. 236- 237.

⁴⁶ <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/leadership.html>

⁴⁷ V. E. Schein, R. Mueller, T. Lituchy, J.Liu, 1996, “Think manager- Think male: a global Phenomenon?”, *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, Vol. 17, No. 1.

Certainly, Confucianism influenced the role of women in the organization. The hierarchical nature of Chinese society based on harmony and obligation and bonds between individuals, is useful for maintaining the traditional role of women, based on family responsibilities, supporting the decisions of husband, father or brother and passive behaviour (J.Benson & V.Yukongdi, 2011).

As already mentioned, although the growing number of women in managerial position have aroused interest in the role of women as leaders (Klenke, 1996), however the presence of women leader in worldwide economies is still quite rare. Although progress has been made in advancing the managerial position held by women, the main leadership position in the organization is still actually male-dominated. Although there is general agreement about women who usually face more obstacles than men achieve a leadership position, however there is no common opinion about what the most appropriate behaviour they need to have in order to achieve these roles. Regarding this topic, it is appropriate to link the meaning of *leadership style*, referring to stable pattern of behaviour that one leader has⁴⁸. According to these reviews, they focalised their attention on women's leadership on critically regarding the perception of sex differences in leadership that allowing an exclusion of women from male dominated leadership role. In this case, it is obvious mentioning the *gender role*, that is useful to understand leadership (Eagly *et.al*, 2000). They use two different terms describing the characteristics of men and women. Using *agentive* characteristic, Eagly *et. al* referring to men's behaviours such as assertive, controlling and confident tendency, with several adjectives such as aggressive, competitive, self-confident. Independent dominant and ambitious. On the contrary, they described women with *communal* characteristic, that is more concerning with the welfare of other, using adjectives as sensitive, gentle, nurturant, interpersonally sensitive, helpful and affectionate.

These two characteristics give Eagly *et.al* 1994 the basis for arguing that gender role and the leadership style create a sort of prejudice that supports a less favourable assessment of women's potential for leadership than men, due to the fact that, stereotypically, men are more able to perform a leadership role (Eagly, Karau *et al.*, 1994).

In addition, from this study Bales define in 1950 different types of leaderships, classified in two distinctive approaches: (1) task-oriented, defined as a concern for the

⁴⁸ A.H. Eagly, M.C. Johannesen- Schmidt, 2001, "The Leadership Styles of Women and Men", *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 57, No.4, pp.781-797.

fulfilment of assigned tasks by organizing task-relevant activities; (2) style of interpersonal oriented, that referred to that maintenance of the interpersonal relationships ending to the moral and well-being of others (Eagly *et.al*, 2001). According to these two different approaches, it could be stated that from a point of view of female leadership, the latter is more appropriate, as it is more interpersonally oriented, democratic and transformational. This term is properly used referring to a leader who can put himself in the role of a model for his followers gaining trust and confidence. Compare to female point of view, male leadership has been classified in the task- oriented approach, as it is more autocratic.

Another study, made by Ronit Kark in 2004⁴⁹, concerns the different type of leadership that partially influences the results at the organizational level (Avolio *et al.*, 1999). He gave this research a new definition of the concept of transformational leadership with gender. Here as well, leadership theories have shift from the basic theory of leader as extraordinary and the followers as dependent on leader (Yukl, 1998) to a new transformational leader as one who empowers followers and argues them to perform in the best way, more than exceed the expectations and working hard in order to achieve the collective goals, rather than focusing only on personal achievements.

The leadership style of new companies has become less hierarchical, more flexible and team oriented than in the past (Fondas, Rosener, 1995), and this new style is much closer to female leadership. Actually, the increasing of female leaderships has led to these changes and development of the conceptualization of leadership.

Did these differences in style between female and male leadership, that are always mentioned in these reviews, really exist? Actually, many authors stated that these kind of differences in leadership style did not exist (Bass, 1990; Dobbins and Platz, 1986). Contrary to what was the thought of Eagly *et.al* in 2001, another study also conducted by Eagly and Johnson in 1990, argued that there were no differences between what was expected to be the female leadership style, that is more interpersonally oriented, and the male leadership style, that is more task- oriented.

From a literature point of view, there have been researches that focused their studies on the examination of which kind of leaderships -transformational or transactional- women and men apply more. Several studies have founded that women

⁴⁹ R. Kark, 2004, "The transformational leader, who is (s)he? A feminist perspective", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol.17, issue:2, pp. 160-176.

are perceived themselves, using transformational leadership styles more than men (Bass *et al.*, 1996; Druskat, 1994; Rosener, 1990). However, there have also been studies that contradict these theories.

It is possible to find prejudice in Calàs and Smircich study in 1990. They analysed the problem of female subject in leadership position focusing on the relationship between the terms “to lead” and “to seduce”. They showed that “to seduce” is the hidden underside of the term “to lead”, and that leadership depends on seduction, but that this link between concepts was concealed. Besides, through the use of Oxford English Dictionary they claimed that the term seduction is attribute to women, while the term leadership is much closer to men.

2.2.2 Obstacles derived from Cultural tightness

Although women often occupy lower-level position than men in leadership, however there are some societies where women emerged as leaders without too many obstacles. This emergence typically depends on ‘*Cultural tightness*’. This term was introduced to explain a force in social norms and sanctions that provide resistance to changing a deeply-rooted cultural practices that hinder the emergence of women as leaders in some cultures. According to the review proposed by Toh and Leonardelli⁵⁰, is possible to identify two different processes that affect the emergence of women as leaders. The first, is connected to the *emergent leadership theory* through which a person becomes a leader fitting the follower’s idea of leader. So, if an individual reflects the concept of ideal leader imagined by followers, there will be more chances to be identified as leader. The second process concerns the leader’s volunteer to lead or be recognized as leader. Many times, women prefer to give the leadership position to male -colleagues although they have the right temperament to be a leader, just because there is a stereotype way of thinking that being male is more leader-like.

Why, however, the figure of leader has always been connected to a male? Long ago, primitive society was always based on a clear working-structure, and the division of labour was already determinate during that period. Men were designed to hunt food, while women were designed to harvest roots, seeds, and other useful things for plantation. In this division of labour, men were seen as predominant sex with a role of

⁵⁰ S.M. Toh., G.J. Leonardelli, (2012), “Cultural constrains on the emergence of women as leaders”, *Journal of World Business* 47 (2012) 604-611.

hunter and protector, while women depended on men. From this archaic society, women have always been subordinated to men in a culture dominated by men. Thus, men tend to have more of a leader's figure than women because of these early origins.

The concept of '*cultural tightness*' mentioned above, had always played a major role in male-oriented society such as China and Japan affected by tight cultures. The perception of leadership role and the capability to understand if women could be suitable for that role or not have always been affected by this concept. In China, as a tight culture, men and women always shares the concept that leading role was assigned to men instead of women, who did not want to be appointed as leaders within organizations. As a result, in tight cultures women always emerge as leader less than men.

In modern China, after a rapid economic growth that has influenced almost the entire Western economics, the number of women in top level positions increased enormously. In order to motivate women and promote self-reliant and to pursue their career in an excellent way, there was a Chinese award called "Mulan in Business" provided a series of models. A list of 30 women engaged in private and state-owned company was analysed and it was compared the different kind of attitudes they used in leadership position. Men showed an aggressive style, individual heroism, short-term gains and quick decision making, while women covered a defensive position, committed to building a strong team, had a long-term perspectives and thought holistically⁵¹.

How have the company's performance changed since the emergence of women as leaders? Which kind of obstacles they overcame?

As Shimin Liu mentioned in his article, executive teams better performed if there was at least one woman within the team. Recently, there were also researches studying the impact of the female representation on board of directors on the financial performance of the companies. These beliefs came from the idea that companies that are composed by gender diversity achieve better results.

In his article, Shimin Liu (2013) cited a research by Eagly and Carli (2007), although he highlighted three obstacles that block the rise of women in the leadership position as concrete wall, glass ceiling and labyrinth. With the term '*concrete wall*', he

⁵¹ S. Liu., (2013), "A few good women at the top: The China case", Business school, University of international Business and Economics, Beijing 10029 China, Business Horizon (2013) 56, 483-490.

defined a set of explicit rules and clear-cut norms that deprived women of equal education and job opportunities, he used the term 'glass ceiling' to introduce the concept of invisible barriers, and the terms 'labyrinth' as the complexity causes of the glass-ceiling effect. In the United States many studies have been done on this subject, and many were the definition of glass ceiling used by research. For instance, this term is defined as "a transparent barrier that [keeps] women from rising above a certain level in corporations" (Morrison, White, Van Velsor, and the Center for Creative Leadership, 1987 :13). This group of researchers considered it a barrier that women have to face, because they are women rather than they lack the ability to handle jobs at higher levels (G. N. Powell, A. Butterfield, 1994)⁵².

Figure 12 Factors that influenced women within an organization

Social	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Gender role stereotypes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Socially accepted behavior of men and women ● Attitudes toward women
Organizational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Male-dominated organizational culture ● Perceptions of role congruence regarding leadership ● HR practices
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Career aspirations of women ● Women's beliefs about glass ceilings

According to this Figure⁵³ is possible to understand that there are social and cultural factors that influenced the role of women within an organisation. The stereotypes of gender roles negatively affected the career ladder of women. As a result, men improved their male appearance of being in charge with aggression and fulfilment, while women highlighted behaviours such as affiliation and nurturing. In addition, he focused on China's case, mentioning that Chinese traditional culture was held against women, who were always under the sense of inferiority complex, according to the Confucian mindset: "women with no ability has a virtue".

⁵² G.N. Powell, A. Butterfield, (1994), "Investigating the "glass ceiling" phenomenon: an empirical study of actual promotions to top management", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 37, No.1, 68- 86.

⁵³ S. Liu., (2013), "A few good women at the top: The China case", Business school, University of international Business and Economics, Beijing 10029 China, *Business Horizon* (2013) 56, pp. 484.

With organizational factors, he pointed out another problem as the reinforce of the presence of glass ceiling. There were organizational practices and even social structures that reserved access to the top-level position only to man part. Women were excluded from the positions held by man, due to the lack of an organizational cultural context. Furthermore, there was also the prejudice that men's roles were more suitable for leadership position than women's role. Moreover, in roles that cover male qualities or that are male-oriented, the prejudice against female leaders should emerge more frequently (Eagly, Johannesen- Schmidt, 2001). In the end, certainly, is possible to say that there were Human Resources practices that often worked against the upward mobility of women.

Finally, with an individual factor he indicated a different way of thinking in the perspective career. A career aspiration was linked to the female and male mindset, for instance women were sometimes less motivated than men in climbing the career ladder as they preferred dealing more with relations.

Basing on the fact that many studies have been made concerning the influences of culture on women's managerial behaviour, what are the individual barriers that women, especially in Chinese countries, have to overcome? First of all, as I already mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the Confucian system that affect Chinese society has greatly influenced the fate of women in their professional development, framed between individual choice and ambition. They need to overcome the traditional beliefs that Chinese man are more skilled than women to play a leadership role. In fact, many times women show a lack of ambition in the professional path, just because the male presence strongly dominates the market. This gender stereotypes greatly affect women's self-confidence. For example, when women have to make an important and instant decisions, the prudence they use to analyse the issue could be seen as deficient in risk-taking and consequently, their role appear to be weak. This situation of uncertainty leads women to remain in their 'comfort- zone', and very few have the courage and the ambition to be promoted, even if there are reviews promulgated by Korabik (1994) and Chen and Yu (1997) enouncing that managerial motivation of Chinese women was as high as that of Chinese men. Actually, women's students have been affected by a pessimistic influence about their career progression. (B. M. Kitching, P.A. Jackson, 2002, pp.149)⁵⁴.

⁵⁴ Korabik (1994) and Chen and Yu (1997) cited in B. M. Kitching, P.A. Jackson, 2002, "Female entrepreneurs in a transitional economy", *Businesswomen China*.

There are also other differences in managerial approach between men and women, for example, according to a Chinese study developed by Yu and Zhu in 2000, it is possible to highlight that the management of time is elaborated in two different ways in the case of women and man. They mentioned that women spent less time on decision making, controlling foreign affairs, working while they spend more time in domestic duties such as nurturing, this due to the fact that China has always been based on patriarchal society where men are in charge for the outside world, and women are in charge of the house (Yu and Zhu, 2000)⁵⁵. In China as all over the world, women are always expected to fulfil a dichotomous role, the family role and the work role. Western individualistic society and collectivist society differ greatly from one another. This topic was also underlined by J. Benson *et al.* showing that Chinese women have not only organization role, but domestic responsibilities to be carried out. This division of domestic work based on gender has left very few opportunities and choices for women, and it has turned their ambition in order to fit with their family needs (Chou, Fosh & Foster). The chances of covering a managerial role for women were a few, they could simply leave after childbirth, get a temporary job or give up marriage or childbirth. Focusing on the first two choices, a path in managerial career was lost, while the third option preclude a different kind of women, with different life perspectives (Kang, Rowley).

In the event that women are successful in managerial positions there are, however, organizational barriers that affect their daily work life.

J. Benson *et al.*, pointed out Lee's opinion concerning the role of women between daily and working spheres, and they argued that organizations provide very few policies in childcare or family friendly policies to solve the dichotomy between domestic and professional responsibilities of women. Secondly, women were often isolated due to a lack of networks or support policies by the organizations (Chou, Fosh & Foster). In addition, there were studies that pointed out that, due to the fact that men are more skilled than women, the latter were denied promotions within managerial ranks (Cooke; Kang and Rowley; Lee).

⁵⁵ Yu and Zhu (2000) cited in B. M. Kitching, P.A. Jackson, 2002, "Female entrepreneurs in a transitional economy", *Businesswomen China*.

2.2.3 Legislation

For what concerns collectivistic and individualistic society, Shimin Liu (2013) in his review stressed that in individualistic societies, as the Western one, family and work are seen as two distinctive domains. Otherwise, he considered the family and work as independent domains. In the first case, doing overtime at work is classified as sacrifice that one family is constrained to do, at least once in their lifetime, in order to enhance a career's advancement. On the other hand, in collectivistic society, working overtime is seen as a sacrifice of an individual, who needs to increase the financial situation of his family. Thus, in China grandparents often take care of nephews, to help parents perform their jobs in the best way, but this situation is justified by the family only because they will benefit from it. All these problems have been regulated by Chinese legislation.

Legislative reform is a fundamental element for achieving equality in employment. Legislation can establish a community standard and it is needed to illustrate what is acceptable behaviour, however it cannot provide a quick remedy (J. Benson, V. Yukongdi, 2005). What is the role of Chinese legislation though? How does the implementation of Chinese policies take care women's rights? After the economic reform of Deng Xiaoping, with the promulgation of open-door policy, a series of legal regulations were issued. But, even if these regulations were promulgated, actually their implementation was not effective at all. Moreover since 1978, Chinese economy, that has evolved from a planned to market economy, led to rapid and constantly economic growth. Even if personal standards of living were all increased, however the inequality between rich and poor already existed, and women were placed in disadvantages position because of the fact the traditional social division of labour still existed, in addition to the dichotomy of working and family sphere. The United Nation system in China issued a document in 2014 entitled "Gender equality in China's Economic Transformation"⁵⁶. This document is a fundamental part of this thesis, because it provides all the major information to better understand the evolution and the development of women's policies from legislative point of view is.

Since 1949, with the foundation of People's Republic of China, women's participation in employment increased enormously and the State was obliged to make an effort to promote new regulations and official policies in order to protect women's

⁵⁶<http://www.un.org.cn/uploads/20180326/2063f2493b160cd25bb79ce54fe8dcc1.pdf>.

rights and their family-sphere. Moreover, during that time media and advertisements were all based on promoting the independency of women from men, and they encouraged the equity between status.

Anyway, since the market oriented economic reform, the participation of women in labour market has decreased a lot, due to many factors such as State policies, the income gap between wife and husband, the working environment of the family and the low educational system.

After the market oriented economic reform, Chinese government has also promulgated a number of conventions covering female employers' rights, as ILO conventions (International Labour Organization) or UN Convention, in addition to policies as the replacement of men with women workers, the job inheritance that allowed women to get parents off-spring or institutionalized quota of men and women in job assignments that were all official policies which have all increased significantly the presence of women in Chinese labour market. This just because of "the Chinese government considers the respect of the human rights- and in this case in the rights of women- as an obligation and responsibility of the State" (UN Convention, 2014).

In the 90s, particular attention was paid the protection of women's rights through the implementation of *Labour Law of China* (1994) and another regulation called "*Trial Method of Childbearing Insurance for Enterprise workers*", which dealt with issue such as pregnancy, maternity or post- partum period. The main goal of this law was to protect women throughout their period of maternity, giving them the appropriate compensation and medical care, they needed.

For instance, article n°62 of the Labour Law of China (1994) stated that: "birth-giving women shall be entitled to maternity leaves no shorter than 90days"⁵⁷, while the Chinese Labour Law updated at current year states that: "female employee who gives birth shall have 98 days of maternity leave, of which 15 days of maternity leave may be taken before giving birth"⁵⁸.

⁵⁷*Labour Law of China (1994)*, was adopted at the Eight Meeting of Standing Committee of the Eight NPC on July5, 1994 and it entered into effect on 1st January 1995.

Available at: <https://www.jus.uio.no/lm/china.labor.law.1994/doc.html#191>

⁵⁸*Labour Law of China (2018)* <https://iclg.com/practice-areas/employment-and-labour-laws-and-regulations/china>

All these regulations have positively influenced the right's matter. The participation rate of women in the labour market has increased a lot over the years, and their participation has become step by step essential for Chinese economic growth.

However, the presence of these regulations did not mean that women joined the same benefits as men, and inequality of these policies still persisted even today. Indeed, barriers that women need to overcome to gain a career advancement, often lead them into a disadvantageous position. Normal steps as recruitment, treatment in the employment period and retirement age in women's perspectives could be seen as obstacles to their male counterpart.

In the first step, men have always been considered more capable than the female counterpart. Male figure can guarantee the employer a long-work life, mobility, strong adaptability and higher participation rates while, as far as female workers are concerned, employers often considered their inferior to men and believed that women could be a waste of money, as they have to endure more treatments and cures.

Article 13 in Labour Law of China (1994) stated that:

<<Women shall enjoy equal rights as men in employment. Sex should not be used as a pretext for excluding women from employment during recruitment of workers unless the types of jobs or posts for which workers are recruited are not suitable for women under State regulations. Neither the recruitment standards should be raised when it comes to women>>.

Certainly, this statement does not fit the reality. In reality, gender discrimination is often part of recruitment advertising, which always specified age limits and gender requirement. Women who are more graduated than men today, in any case encounter problem in job search process only because of their sex. Many job advertisements from well-known companies as Baidu or Alibaba used to make discriminating job advertisements against women.

As you can see in this figure below, Baidu website clearly specified that only men could apply for this position. It seems that this job advertisement could be done in the past, but actually dated 2017⁵⁹.

⁵⁹ Image available at:

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/04/23/only-men-need-apply/gender-discrimination-job-advertisements-china>

Figure 13 Example of job ad

Job Ad Example 1		
A Job ad on technology company Baidu's website:		
Information feed reviewer		
Department: Baidu	Work location: Beijing	Number of recruitments: several
Company: Baidu	Position type: management support	Date of publication: March 16, 2017
Job responsibilities:		
Responsible for legal department information feed review work		
Maintain, analyze, and report reviewed information regularly		
Organize, categorize, investigate, and report harmful information promptly		
Give suggestions on platform tools, processes, strategies, etc.; assist in enhancing the efficiency of the platform		
Job requirements:		
Associate's degree or above, men , any major, have relevant work experience		
Passionate about the internet, detail-oriented and patient, strong sense of responsibility, good communication and coordination skills		
Excellent data processing, analysis, and summarization skills		
Strong ability to work under pressure, able to work on weekends, holidays, and night shifts		

In many cases, women must be single or under 25, at worst, women have to agree not only in inhuman terms and conditions, but also need to pay a risk- deposit as the only way to be employed.

Retirement age is also present as problem in this chapter, because in both political and economic contexts the legislation is the same and certainly, China's entry in WTO (World Trade Organization) intensifies this situation. Women were often not recruited because of their domestic duties, which made them less productive than men (B. M. Kitching, P.A. Jackson, 2002, pp. 149). Women aged of 55 or 60 have to retire. However, they became more higher educated and enter the working life five to ten years after male counterpart. In this case, female managers have to step down at the age of 50. However, those who are below a certain rank retire five years later (at the age of 55) and if requested by company at the age of 60. This early retirement has double face, just because in one hand women can benefit from it, on the other hand, they cannot have the career advancement that they have always dreamed.

How are these women manager's performances in Chinese by the way?

Although government policy declared equality between men and women, men still have more power and *de facto* inequality still exists (CASS Institute of Population Studies, 1994 cited in B. M. Kitching, P.A. Jackson, 2002, pp.151). Many times, women are obliged to emulate men's power to progress within an organisation. Men and women have very few differences in managerial approach, just because women since they started the managerial role, need to eliminate their female attitudes and acquires

the male power. This situation created the term *she-male*⁶⁰, and consequently could be brought to a negative influence, because the attitudes that characterized women, such as communication and cooperation, affiliation and nurturance were lost.

Communication refers to the fact that women are very good at communicating within a group, they are often an excellent means of conciliation, while men prefer to be involved in a confrontation. Several studies have shown that the difference between male and female during a conversation, is that when a group of men begins a conversation, leadership process starts according to which only one can win, while in a conversation among women all of them take part to it. Furthermore, this ability of well- communicating is very important for good cooperation. In this way, having a democratic decision- making process, in which all the employers within company are willing to lead to a discussion with a cooperative attitude, is more constructive and useful for team progress.

The main aim that China has nowadays is to eliminate all gender inequalities that currently affect the mainland, and it has become one of the main countries that is counting a highest rate of female employment all over the world. This is a positive result of the continuous policies of social equality enforced by the State and the incessant effort that State makes to promote them. Women no longer have to see their marriage as an obstacle to their working life, just as men do. After the great enforcement of several policies and regulations in the 1990s and an economic boom in private sector, some changes have arisen and consequently have led women to have greater implication in their working-life.

An article in the *Financial Times* (2018) states that a new corporate culture was born in the technological industries in China. Due to the increasing in technology the correspondence with market reforms has led not only private companies to increase their business but also to give a powerful voice to the new female leadership, despite the rooted patriarchal culture.

Albeit recently the proportion of women on the Board of Directors of Chinese high- tech industries has increased a lot compared to the past decades, however the data that I collected for my case study partially contradicted this superficial increase.

⁶⁰ J. Grant., "Women as Managers: What they can offer to Organizations", pp. 57.

2.3 The Case Study of China

I wanted to highlight all the obstacles that women have in managerial role all over the world, with particular attention to China and after analysing the legislation promulgated by Chinese government to overcome most of the many obstacles, actually in this last part of the second chapter my main goal is to demonstrate through the support of real data, what is the main role of Chinese women in the Board of Director in China. Furthermore, the decision to focus my research on Shanghai Stock Exchange List is based on the fact that all the companies, that are included in this list, are the most important and biggest companies of China. Actually, I expect to find more managerial position held by women in this research, as for the new policies of gender equity.

Procedures: I got data on women within the Board of Director of 50 listed companies listed in Shanghai Stock Exchange. Subsequently, I created table below focused on the number of people composing the Board of Director, how many of them are women what is their age and which kind of role they play. All these companies are easily available using codes that I entered in the Table 1. However, I found some companies whose data had not been updated for two years, and this may give my studies a margin of error.

Table 1 Board of Directors of companies listed in Shanghai Stock Exchange⁶¹

	Code	Short Name of Company	Total number of BOD	Number of males in BOD	Number of women in BOD	Age	Main Position
1	600000	SPD BANK 浦发银行	23	23	-	-	-
2	600004	GBIAC 白云机场	12	11	1	53	Shareholder Representative Member of Supervisory Board
3	600006	DFAC 东风汽车	11	11	-	-	-
4	600007	CWTC Co., Ltd.	16	14	2	49	Secretary of the board

⁶¹ <https://www.wsj.com/europe>
<http://english.sse.com.cn/listed/company/>

		中国国贸				64	Independent Director
5	600008	BEIJING CAPITAL 首创股份	22	19	3	43	Director of the Company
						42	Secretary of the Board
						47	Chief Financial Officer
6	600009	SIA 上海机场	14	13	1	71	Independent Director
7	600010	BSU 宝钢股份	24	22	2	50	Director & Deputy General Manager
						45	Member-Supervisory Board
8	600011	HPI 华能国际	25	23	2	54	Member-Supervisory Board
						58	Member-Supervisory Board
9	600012	Anhui Expressway 皖通高速	18	16	2	55	Supervisory Board Chairman
						50	Secretary to the Board
10	600015	HUAXIA BANK 华夏银行	16	14	2	54	Director
						59	Independent Director
11	600016	CMBC 民生银行	9	8	1	55	Chief Financial Officer and Board Secretary
12	600017	RIZHAO PORT 日照港	16	15	1	59	Independent Director
13	600018	SIPG 上海集团	13	12	1	47	Director

14	600019	Baosteel 宝钢股份	18	16	2	65	Independent Director
						53	Member Supervisory Board
15	600020	Zhongyuan Expressway 中原高速	10	10	-	-	-
16	600021	SEP 上海电力	16	13	3	50	Member- Supervisory Board
						49	Independent Director
						74	Independent Director
17	600022	SHANDONG STEEL 山东钢铁	13	13	-	-	-
18	600023	Zhejiang Energy Electric Power 浙江电力	11	9	2	53	Chairman- Supervisory Board
						53	Independent Director
19	600025	Huaneng Hydropower 华能水电	20	* no data found	-	-	-
20	600026	CSET 中远海能	13	11	2	39	Member- Supervisory Board
						52	Non- Executive Director
21	600027	HDPI 华电国际	14	12	2	56	Vice Chairman
						52	Member- Supervisory Board
22	600028	Sinopec Corp. 中国石化	18	17	1	62	Independent Non -Executive Director
23	600029	CHINA SOUTH AIR 南方航空	10	9	1	*no Data	Member- Supervisory
24	600030	CITIC Securities Co., Ltd.	12	-	-	-	-

		中信证券					
25	600031	SANY 三一重工	13	-	-	-	-
26	600033	Fujian Expressway 福建高速	*no data	*no data	*no data	*no data	*no data
27	600035	ChuTian Expwy 楚天高速	18	13	5	49	Chairman- Supervisory Board 49 Member- Supervisory Board 60 Independent Director 50 Deputy General Manager 41 Chief Financial Officer
28	600036	CMB 招商银行	30	26	4	50	Member- Supervisory Board 60 Non- Executive Director 48 Non- Executive Director - Joint Secretary
29	600037	BGCTV 歌华有线	21	16	5	45	Securities Representative 40 Independent Director 52 Member- Supervisory Board 47 Member- Supervisory Board 43 Independent Director

30	600038	AVICOPTER PLC 中直股份	14	11	3	51	Director and Chief Accountant
						53	Independent Director
						58	Independent Director
31	600039	SRBC 四川路桥	22	21	1	-	Securities representative and IR contact
32	600048	PRE 保利地产	18	16	2	58	Chairman
						54	Deputy General Manager
33	600050	China Unicom 中国联通	19	19	-	-	-
34	600051	NUG 宁波联合	11	8	3	52	Member-supervisory Board
						52	Independent Director
						53	Director
35	600052	ZJGS 浙江广厦	15	8	7	49	Chairman-Supervisory Board
						47	Director
						41	Member-Supervisory Board
						52	Independent Director
						34	Board Secretary
						42	Vice Chairman
39	Chairman and General Manager						
36	600053	JD Capital 九鼎投资	14	11	3	-	Member-supervisory

						40	Board and VP administration
						33	Member-supervisory Board
							Independent Director
37	600054	HSTD 黄山旅游	12	11	1	46	Member-Supervisory Board
38	600055	WDM 万东医疗	12	11	1	44	Member-Supervisory Board
39	600056	中国医药 CHINA MEHECO	14	12	2	46	Member-Supervisory Board
						54	Member-Supervisory Board
40	600057	XIANGYU 厦门象屿	14	11	3	42	Member-Supervisory Board
						40	Member-Supervisory Board
						42	Member-Supervisory Board
41	600058	MINLIST 五矿发展	12	10	2	50	Member-Supervisory Board
						62	Independent Director
42	600059	GYLS 古越龙山	3	2	1	52	Secretary, Director & General Manager
43	600060	HXDQ 海信电器	8	7	1	-	Member-Supervisory Board
44	600061	SDIC Capital 国投资本	13	10	3	43	CFO, Board Secretary & Deputy

						54	General Manager
						63	Director
						63	Independent Director
45	600062	CR Double- Crane 华润双鹤	16	10	6	43	Member- Supervisory Board
						41	Director
						38	Member- Supervisory Board
						-	Securities Representative
						40	Member- Supervisory Board
						41	Director
46	600063	Wwgx 皖维高新	9	9	-	-	-
47	600064	NJGK 南京高科	10	10	-	-	-
48	600066	YTCO 宇通客车	14	13	1	42	Board Secretary & Director
49	600067	CITYCHAMP DT 冠城大通	12	8	4	48	Director & Executive Vice President
						52	Member- Supervisory Board
						40	Director
						63	Independent Director

50	600068	CGGC 葛洲坝	20	17	3	59	Deputy General Manager
						51	Member- Supervisory Board
						62	Independent Director

Findings: Figure 14 shows the percentage of women and man on average, within the 50 Chinese listed companies that I collected in the previously table. As we can see, only 13% of women cover a position within the Board of Director of these companies, while the male counterpart covered almost all the position with 87% of presence. The position varied from different role according to different tasks, to the member of the Board to the Director, to the financial one.

Figure 14 Percentage of gender in Board of Directors

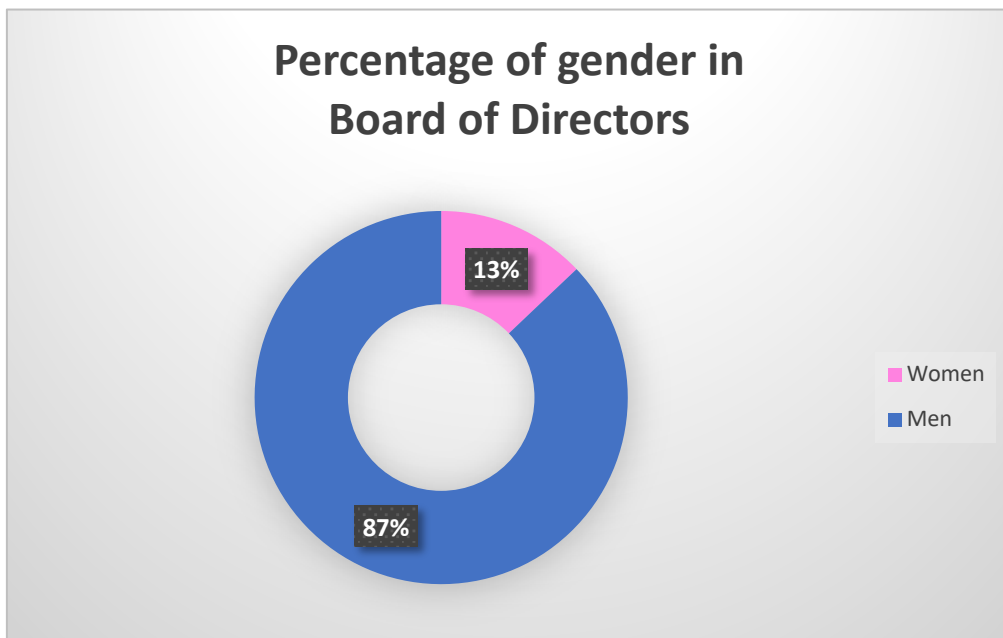
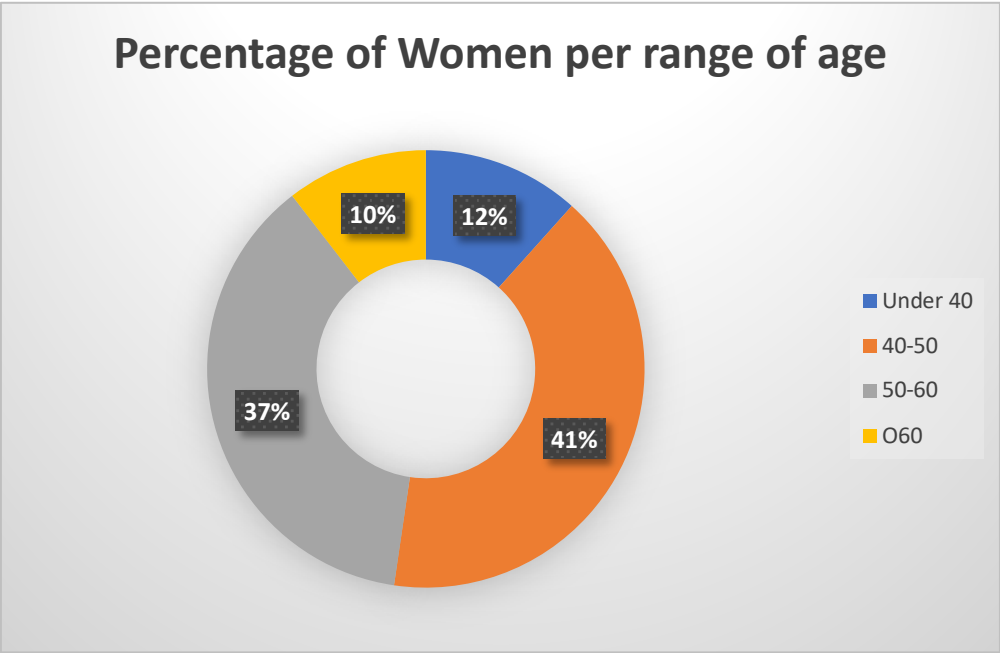


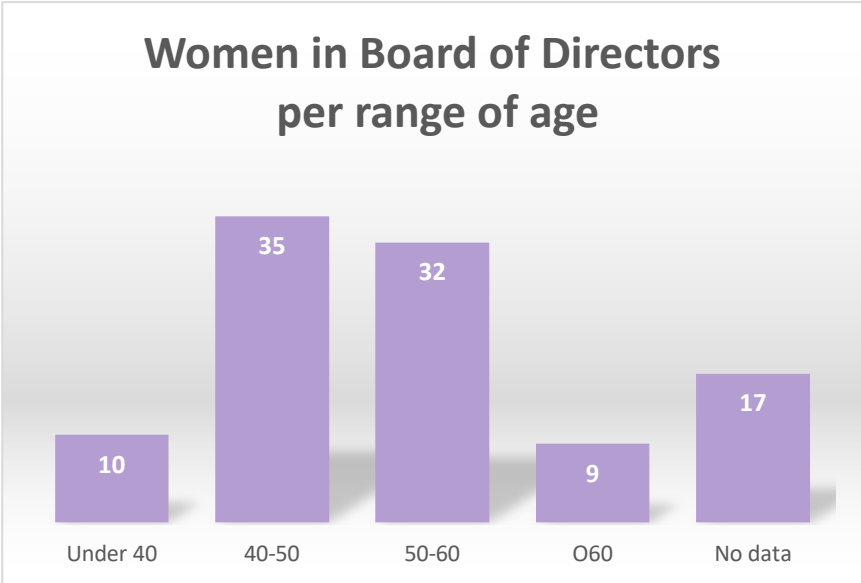
Figure 15 show in detail the age range that women have in these companies. More are women between forty and fifty, followed quickly by the range of fifty to sixty with a 37% on average. As I discussed in the first chapter, this two age groups are the most important years for women in a working life. They are in in the years preceding the retirement age strongly supported by the State, and in these years, they are at the top of their career paths. As I expected, under 40's range constitutes only the 12%, due to the fact the women enter later than men and over 60's range makes up 10%, because of the State's retirement, which plans a retirement age of women between the 55 and the 60.

Figure 15 Percentage of Women per range of age



In the following Figure 16, is clearly shown how many women composed these roles, not in term of percentage but in term of real number. It has been a tough task to find all the data about the age of women and unfortunately for 17 of them it was not possible to find out their ages. There are only ten under 40 and there are nine over 60 the highest and most crowded position is in the age group between 40 and 50 where there is a number of 35 women, while 32 have a range between 50 and 60.

Figure 16 Women in Board of Directors per range of age



Conclusion: The data analysis shows that even if there was an implementation of the Chinese government on the issue of equal policies, however the data are still far from a western point of view, as for instance the Italian one. Fortunately, is not possible to determinate this situation for all companies located in China. In recent years, according to Bloomberg research in 2016 women in venture capital industry made a large part of the labour force in management positions. Nowadays, women are becoming more independent and daring, since the field of new technology industries, start-up s are mainly made by women, who consequently recruit more women in their companies. In China, more than 17 percent are women’s investor and almost the 80 percent of venture companies have at least one woman within it. In addition, according to a report promulgated by the national Bureau of Statistics we came to know that China has already achieved the targets set in the *National Program for Child Development in China (2011-2020)* and the *National Program for Women’s Development in China (2011-2020)*. The targets defined in these programs show that it has already achieved the target that was given for the year 2020, with over 40% exceeding, and this

result continues to grow over the years. In contrast, the percentage of impoverished women in the rural Chinese has decreased⁶².

Women founders of Chinese technological industry are over 55%, compare to the American women who represent only the 22%⁶³. I hope that in the next research they will find a new data in the coming years that show an increase in the managerial role of women also in these Chinese listed companies. Maybe, it is starting a new process and a new renewal of women's leadership role thanks to this increase in the high- tech industries, which will lead to a new woman- oriented management.

⁶² <http://www.womenofchina.cn/womenofchina/html1/survey/1811/6292-1.htm>

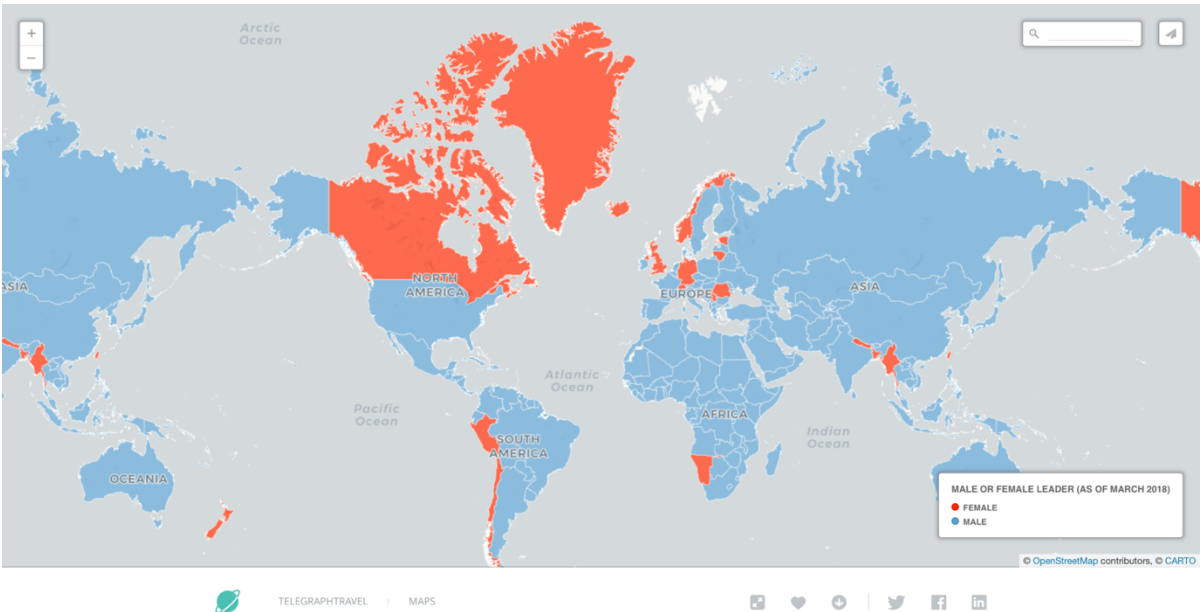
⁶³ <https://www.bloomberg.com/technology>

CHAPTER 3

The comparison between China and western country, a main focus on Italy

All around the world, the number of countries ruled by women, unless it is a small proportion, has reached the pinnacle of history in recent years. In fact, 26 of them out of more than 190 have a woman in the lead position. Countries in Europe as the United Kingdom, with the Queen, Germany with Angela Merkel fall into this list of countries ruled by a woman. However, focusing our attention in Italy, rather than in America or China, there is not difference among them. In fact, it seems that all these countries have a greater focus on gender inequalities, however they present the same “blue colour” of countries ruled by men. In the previous chapter, I discussed some of the main problems that China has in the issue of gender inequalities, both in the political and in the economical contexts. However, after a deeper research, I discovered that Italy has practically same problems. Italy as much as the United States has recorded data on “the number of Women in leadership position” that are lower than the number registered in China.

Figure 17 Distribution of male or female leader

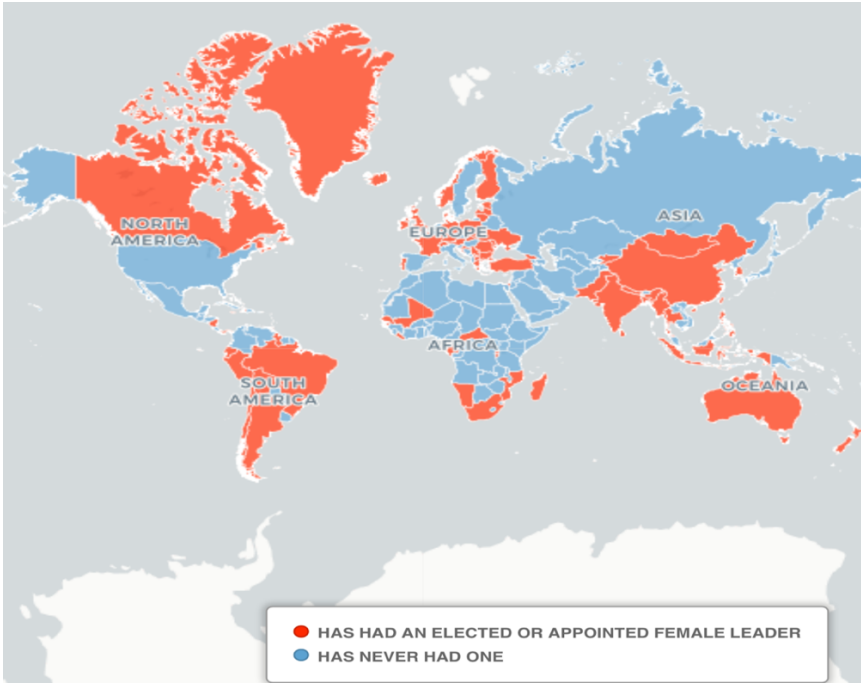


⁶⁴ https://telegraphtravel.carto.com/viz/abbd841c-0355-11e7-a7bb-0e98b61680bf/public_map

For example, from a political point of view, the percentage of government participation in Chinese women are equal to, if not higher than, in Europe and the United States. The collected data show that in Europe there is a 19% female participation in parliament, and 19.5% in the United States, while in Asian-Pacific countries the percentage reached 19.6%⁶⁵. The list that *Forbes*⁶⁶ published on the 100 most powerful women in the world, more than 20, are Chinese.

However, the situation becomes more critical when we focus on the table below. Indeed, this Figure shows which countries had almost one female leader in the history. China, with the election of the first Taiwanese female president named Cai Yingwen in the Republic of China had one, while Italy remains marked by the “blue colour” of the society dominated by men. This situation, in my research is quite unexpected, because I have always based my conviction on the fact that Italy has always been a country with special treatment in female leadership policies, but actually it was collecting less percentage than China.⁶⁷

Figure 18 Countries which had female leader in the history



⁶⁵ Z. Kinias, (2018), “Layers of Diversity: Women’s leadership in Asia”, *EVE web magazine*.

⁶⁶ <https://www.forbes.com/power-women/list/#tab:overall>

⁶⁷ https://telegraphtravel.carto.com/viz/f73c62ae-0356-11e7-a0aa-0e98b61680bf/public_map

The main aim at the end of this chapter will be to understand more deeply whether, among western and Asian societies there is a different management of female leadership. What are the main differences that influence the type of leadership? Is there really a difference between the Asian and the Western countries, or is the kind of leadership that starts to be more globalized?

More references will be appointed thanks to Hofstede's studies on femininity *vs.* masculinity, which allow an in-depth analysis of the point of view on the management of female leadership in Italy, which still is a strongly male oriented society. In the end, another diagram will be shown, drawn in the same way as in the second chapter, representing the female presence on the Italian Board of Directors of 50 listed company stocked in Milan Stock exchange, in that way is possible to see the real differences between the analysis of the case study in the previous chapter and the analysis of the Italian situation in this chapter.

3.1 Asian and Western comparison of leadership style

Since the market economy HAS been adopted by China in 1979⁶⁸, the country was ranked in the three major world economies. Certainly, China has had to improve in terms of management tools and has started to adopt various western management tools and market principles instead of Confucius traditional principles. In contrast, western countries have become more aware of Chinese management ideas (P.King, W.Zhang, 2014).

From the literature prospective, the word "*leadership*", that is already mentioned in the previous chapter, is also used in this chapter to talk about the different management style between Asian and Western countries. Each country has different cultures, and consequently, different approaches in terms of leadership management. *Leaders* are responsible to manage cultures, and culture are strictly related to people (Chhokar et al., 2007; House et al., 2004; Hofstede, 2001; Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk & Gelfand, 1995; King, Zhang, 2014), while *leadership* is related to the culture in which

⁶⁸ in 1979, the leader of People Republic of China decided to draft the "open door" policy. Starting from this point, China shifted its economy from planned economy to the market economy. This period of transaction and new reforms led China to become one of the most powerful countries all over the world.

the leader manages his position (Chin & Sanchez-hucles, 2007; Yooyanyong & Muenjohn,2010; King, Zhang, 2014).

Commonly, leadership is supposed that to be a universal phenomenon; however there are leadership practices that could be universal⁶⁹, others that depend on which cultures they are managed by, because there is the possibility that one kind of leadership practice can be succeed in one culture and fail in another, if cultural differences are not considered (Blunt & Jones,1997; Dorfman et al, 1997; Gao et al., 2011; Gutierrez et al., 2012; Jogulu, 2010; Law, 2012; King, Zhang, 2014). When we think about leadership in west and east countries, the first thought that comes to mind is that principles of leadership in these two different parts of the world have only differences; actually, western and Chinese leadership principles present also similarities (King, Zhang, 2014).

Focusing on western leadership, the authors argued that principles and management theory are based on profit generation (Wren, 2005). A leader has to perform an ethical and integrity-based behavior, which is useful for establishing trust. Trust is the core for the health of financial and economic system (Frankel,2008). Leaders must respect their subordinates and evaluate their contributions, involving through communication with them and interacting politely (King, Zhang, 2014). All these attitudes and behaviors that a western leader needs to perform are also rooted in Chinese one.

The Chinese business leadership practices are continuously based on a long-established tradition, and it is described by Wong in 2001 as *moral leadership*⁷⁰, rooted in the Confucian philosophy. In Wong's research, the differences between west and

⁶⁹ e.g. Charismatic leadership: The charismatic leadership style relies on the charm and persuasiveness of the leader. Charismatic leaders are driven by their convictions and commitment to their cause. Charismatic leaders also are sometimes called transformational leaders because they share multiple similarities. Their main difference is focus and audience. Charismatic leaders often try to make the status quo better, while transformational leaders focus on transforming organizations into the leader's vision (definition from <https://online.stu.edu/articles/education/what-is-charismatic-leadership.aspx> , 2008)

⁷⁰ Moral leadership: Moral leaders can persuade others to behave correctly, mostly by practicing what they preach. In the world of business, moral leaders avoid shortcuts to success that involve compromising moral and ethical values and breaking the law. They don't make excuses or try to rationalize their mistakes. Moral leaders generously focus on developing the skills of others rather than drawing attention to their own achievements. They aren't afraid to act as whistleblowers when the situation demands. Because moral leaders are motivated by core values of justice and fairness, their actions are service oriented (Susie Zappia)
This definition is available at <https://classroom.synonym.com/definition-moral-leader-8476450.html>

east focused their attentions on this kind of leadership. Western leadership spend time to understand the nature of morality and defined what is 'good' for us and what is an 'obligation'. Otherwise, Chinese focuses on the practical aspect of morality and so, it tries to understand how to develop ways of doing good (Wong, 2001, pp. 314). Therefore, the leaders in Chinese philosophy must to be human and use the personal development they need to improve their followers (Chen & Lee, 2008; Wang, 2006; King, Zhang, 2014). In recent years, in China, Chinese leaders have imported western techniques and have begun to mingle with communism and Confucian values, and this is why the management of Chinese leadership has similarities with that of the west.

However, these two different approaches show dissimilarities. The Western leaderships focus on leaders, whereas the Chinese one focus on collective activities of the followers (Conte, Novello, 2008). Authoritarian leadership is considered counterproductive in western management, while in China is still used (Cheng et. al, 2004).

Gender and collectivism are factors that have strongly influenced the managerial career of Chinese women. According to a study conducted in 2015 by Carol Woodhams, Huiping Xian and ben Lupton⁷¹ it is possible to learn more about the career path of women management in China, but also in western countries. This study is a confirmation of my personal thesis, due to the fact that they focused this research on points I have already mentioned in the previously chapter. Women in Chinese economy are always seen as people who do not deserve a position of leadership, so they often have a subordinate role. However, each country should be deeply analyzed, as they may present some differences. In China, the ascendancy between roles is present as in Western patterns. The vertical and horizontal upwards were characterizing the mobility of the Chinese career. However, even if the mobility among Chinese career is a matter of fact, gender stereotypes are present in the occupational sphere. Because of this problem, women are always in low-paid jobs, rather than in high-paid jobs. Although these are gender stereotypes, the presence of women in Chinese market exceeds the percentage of the women employed in another countries. Factors such as collectivism and Confucian values have been determinated by the role of women's position in management. However, due to the new market reforms and business investment, the managerial position of women has become more available

⁷¹ C. Woodhams, H. Xian, B. Lupton, (2015), "Women managers' careers in China: theorizing the influence of gender and collectivism", *Human resources management*, Vol. 54, No.6, pp. 913-931

and more full of opportunities. Although if these opportunities gave women the chance to create their career path in a leading role, however the new economic market reform has begun to segregate a part of Chinese women in low level jobs, as well as a decline of policies caring about the employment phase. The existence of patriarchal society and the '*guanxi*' are the main factors that have influenced Chinese women in their professional career. As for the '*guanxi*' factor, this could be an obstacle for women, because is hard to get for them. The time dedicated by women to the family, is the time that women should dedicate to improve their relationship and connections with other individuals.

Thanks to the globalization process, the different ways of managing female leadership have been always been influenced by different cultures. Undoubtedly, in the management of women's leadership in Europe there are influences from the Asian country and vice versa. Actually, this is an ordinary situation due to the fact that after the growth of investment, the connections have started to bind companies distributed all over the world. Although China has been influenced by European influences and has begun to consider the great efforts and obstacles that women have to face to achieve a place in the managerial role, however in most of the country they continue to not recognize women as a figure strong and suitable for the leadership role. This is certainly a factor deriving from the fact that culture, especially the Confucian one, is strongly rooted in Chinese thought, which has always been male thinking, and unfortunately, I do not think there will be any developments except in partial, in the coming years. A country that has always been in the conviction of being defined as patriarchal will never be transformed into matriarchal structure. Certainly, will be able to improve itself but not undergo drastic changes that will definitely alter it.

3.2 The Italian leadership

Italy, as well as China, has a deep lack of female representation in the economic and political context. The Global Gender Gap Reporter promoted by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in October 2015, showed Italy covered the 41st position in the global ranking, while it covered the 111th position in opportunities for women to take on a role within a company in the economic context. In October 2018, the World Economic Forum has redrafted a new report. According to the previous report, Italy has continued to decline for many years, with no signs of improvement, in fact Italy has covered the 70th position on the global ranking (2018), also has covered the 118th

position in opportunities for women to obtain a job in the economic context. The place, at the top of the rank, is covered by the Nordic countries, while China is ranked in 91st position. It is often normal to think about Italy as a much developed country than China, but there is no dissimilarities between them. For instance, from a political point of view, Italy has never had a female head of State or a Prime Minister. Certainly, in order to understand the culture in terms of national leadership, gender norms and stereotype are useful, particularly when referring to female leadership; in fact, the leadership thought of women depended on the norms of society and culture of the country in which they want to lead, and in Italy, there are more possibilities than in other countries that this factor goes out, due to the fact that this society has a culture that is male oriented, so it has to impact on the career path of female leadership (Turesky, *et al.*, 2011)⁷².

According to a research⁷³ published in 2010 by an Italian agency named Gea Consulenti Associati it emerged that in Italy only the 6.9% of the total women covered the Italian top position (Bellavigna, Zanella, 2010). The top position was held by Piedmont but only with the 8.4% of women holding top management positions, the area of Lazio and Tuscany followed with an average of 8.2%. In addition, women who hold a managerial position were only 809 out of the total of 11.730 positions previously analyzed, which compared to other developing countries, that achieved more than 35%, put Italy at a disadvantage. However, 93% of the main Italian leadership roles in companies, were covered by man. Anyhow, there were also in the past as well as currently, industrial sectors where women cover leader's positions. The Italian industrial sector such as clothing, durable goods for domestic and pharmaceutical use, has a large female presence (M.Mobilia).

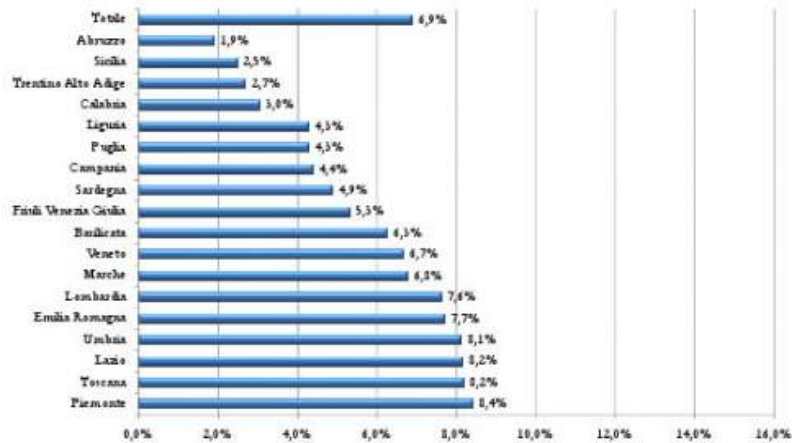
⁷² E.F. Turesky, K.S. Cloutier, M.F. Turesky, (2011), "Feminine Paths to Leadership in Italy: Perceptions of Female Italian Leaders in a Masculine Society", *Integral leadership Review*.

⁷³ <http://www.qds.it/4697-lavoro-in-rosa-sicilia-in-coda-per-numero-di-donne-manager.htm>

Figure 19 Women leader in Italy

Donne al vertice per regione

Tabella 1



Fonte: Gea-Consulenti Associati

Italy is a country influenced by religious value and laws and these influences have greatly affected social norms, were responsible for defining the role of women and men in domestic and working position spheres (Hojgaard, 2002). Indeed, outside the work context, women held roles as mother and housewives, while men covered the role and the patriarch's breadwinner, due to the male-oriented Italian society. According to Hofstede research, in particular focusing on masculinity *vs.* femininity, it is possible to better understand the society's orientation in a cultural way. This categorization refers to practices or qualities traditionally considered feminine or masculine, as well as referring to the role of nurturing of women and the assertiveness, that typically characterized men.

The Hofstede research theories published in 2004 discussed the index of masculinity in 50 countries, besides as a result he discovered that Italy belonged to those countries classified as high- masculinity. Countries that have had this high rate of masculinization fully maximized their gender differentiation among children and have tried to highlight these differences (E.F. Turesky, *et al.*, 2011). Moreover, according to another research published by Hofstede the following year, the position of women in a male oriented society is more pronounced and, in his research, he claimed that children in Italian family grown up with the idea of being ambitious, competitive and assertive. All these behavioural characteristics belonging to men's behaviour, led Italy to be classified as a male society (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

Although there is a company that supports the male part in a position of leadership, however women in Italy have started to look after themselves in Italian companies. Women within companies are those required to have a better performance. Because of this statement, in 2014 a study was conducted by Peterson Institute for International economies (Washington), which showed that corporate profits increased when companies were made up of women and the organic structure was inspired by the gender divergence. Moreover, in the political context as well as studies on the improvement of the selection process, studies have been also carried out regarding the increase in performance if there is more than one woman who made up the Board. Certainly, with the introduction of Law 120/2011, women have become to be part of Board of Directors, which until then have been made up of men. The Law 120/2011 envisaged to have a mandatory gender quota for companies listed in Italy, for this reason it states that:

“The law requires gender quotas for the three board appointments subsequent August 2012, by setting out a minimum objective of one-third of the corporate boards seats for members of the under- represented gender, lowered to one-fifth for the first term [...]” (G.S.F. Bruno, A. Ciavarella, N. Linciano, 2018)⁷⁴.

The results of this law are visible in the Board of companies, where women *held more than one-third of the seats, as well as in the companies with an independent director*. In fact, women as independent have increased significantly in recent years, and the 2016 data analysis showed that 7 out of 10 women declared themselves. Although there is this partial increase in the position held by women in Italian companies, however the obstacles that women faced are particularly similar to those in China.

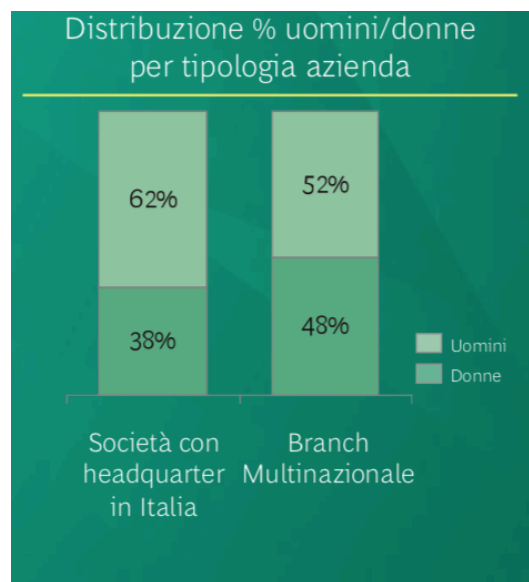
According to a study conducted in 2017 by the Boston Consulting Group entitled “Women at the top: *come riequilibrare la leadership aziendale in Italia*”⁷⁵ stated that women are penalized from the first stage of the recruitment process. In fact, the training background and work experiences in a low- level position are factors that have greatly influenced the recruitment process of Italian woman. Furthermore, also Italian organizational cultures, despites the fact the companies are very close to issue of

⁷⁴ G.S.F. Bruno, A. Ciavarella, N. Linciano, 2018, “Boardroom gender diversity and performance of listed companies in Italy”, *CONSOB, Quaderni di Finanza*, pp.17 available at <http://www.consob.it/documents/46180/46181/wp87.pdf/d733b58a-44b4-42de-98c7-3c89a82a0182>

⁷⁵ L.A. Villani, A. Ferraro, *et.al*, 2017, “Women at the top: *come riequilibrare la leadership aziendale*”, *The Boston Consulting Group*, available at: <https://valored.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Women-at-the-top-09.pdf>

gender diversity, in reality the resolution of the problem is not put into practice. This study has provided companies with some tips and solutions to overcome these problems, for example by working on organizational culture to improve well-being and work-life balance within companies. In Italy, most of all the companies have inside a company that is led by a male leader. Curiously, shifting the focus from Italian companies and multinational companies based in Italy there come out the differences. In fact, these multinationals company have an organizational structure based more on gender diversity rather than the local Italian companies and the authors of this study provide us with a diagram showing that between the Italian company based in Italy and the multinational branch, the latter has approximately the 50% of employers who are women.

Figure 20 Distribution of gender diversity in companies based in Italy



As well as in China, a problem that often appears is that women need more time to make a career and have a leadership and managerial position. In comparison with men, women tend to take more than one-year compared to men to achieve the lead position. Other problems highlighted in this research were: the lack of inclusive culture, lack of an alternative leadership model and lack of a role model as sample of identification. For these reasons, women lacked self-esteem and sought only the position available in their comfort-zone, due to the fact that there are not many women in managerial position to be taken as a model.

⁷⁶ ⁷⁶ L.A. Villani, A. Ferraro, et.al, 2017, "Women at the top: come riequilibrare la leadership aziendale", *The Boston Consulting Group*, pp. 5.

3.3 The case study of Italy

Thus, according to Hofstede's study and other researches that focus their attention on the obstacles that women nowadays need to overcome in Italian companies, it is possible to state that the Asian and in particular Chinese leadership really shares the main principles of Italian one, beyond the same obstacles.

Starting from this point of view, I decided to do a new analysis with the same characteristic of the previous one. I collected data from the '*Borsa Italiana*'⁷⁷ website, in order to select 50 listed companies to analyse. I chose these Italian companies listed on a random basis and I reformulated new data. I divided the new Table into four parties containing: the name of the company, the total number of members that make up the Italian Board of Directors, how many of them are men and how many are women. The last column provides the information about the sector. Since women in China occupy top level position in high- technologic sector, in Italy women prefer to open their business in sector as financial services or to direct their investments in the green economy business.

⁷⁷ <https://www.borsaitaliana.it/homepage/homepage.htm>

Table 2 Board of Directors of companies listed in Milan Stock Exchange

1	name society	total Bod	male	female	sector
2	Autogrill	13	8	5	food& beverage
3	Autostrade Meridionali	7	3	4	infrastructure
4	Bialetti	5	3	2	food& beverage
5	Bomi Group	9	8	1	logistic
6	Brioschi	7	6	1	real estate
7	Brunello Cucinelli	11	7	4	fashion&Jewellery
8	Campari	11	7	4	food& beverage
9	Centrale del Latte d'italia	13	8	5	food& beverage
10	Damiani	7	4	3	fashion&Jewellery
11	De'longhi	12	8	4	food& beverage
12	Enel	8	5	3	Energy
13	Enervit	9	6	3	food& beverage
14	Fnm	5	3	2	logistic
15	Fintel Energia Group	7	7	0	Energy
16	Gambero Rosso	5	5	0	food& beverage
17	Grifal	9	8	1	production
18	Geox	10	6	4	fashion&Jewellery
19	Health Italia	4	3	1	pharmaceutical
20	Hera	14	11	3	Energy
21	Il Gruppo 24 ore	11	7	4	Editor& media
22	Innovatec	7	6	1	Energy
23	Juventus	9	6	3	Sport
24	Ki Group S.p.a	7	5	2	food& beverage
25	Kolinpharma	6	5	1	pharmaceutical
26	La Doria	9	6	3	food& beverage
27	Leone Film	6	4	2	production
28	Luxottica	12	8	4	fashion&Jewellery
29	Masi Agricola	9	8	1	food& beverage
30	Moncler	11	8	3	fashion&Jewellery
31	Mondadori	14	9	5	Editor& media
32	NeoDecorTech	7	5	2	Furniture&design
33	Nova Re	9	6	3	Furniture&design
34	Orsero	9	7	2	food& beverage
35	Parmalat	9	5	4	food& beverage
36	Pharmanutra	8	8	0	pharmaceutical
37	Poligrafici Editoriale	9	6	3	Editor& media
38	Ray way	9	5	4	Editor& media
39	RCS mediagroup	11	7	4	Editor& media
40	Reply	9	6	3	Editor& media
41	Safe bag	5	4	1	Logistic
42	Stefanel	7	5	2	fashion&Jewellery
43	Technogym	11	7	4	Sport
44	TerniEnergia	8	5	3	Energy
45	TOD'S	14	11	3	fashion&Jewellery
46	Unicredit	17	11	6	bank
47	Unieuro	7	7	0	Furniture&design
48	Valsoia	9	6	3	food& beverage
49	Visibilia Editore	4	3	1	Editor& media
50	Zignago Vetro	12	8	4	production
51	Zucchi	2	2	0	Furniture&design

Findings: The Figure below shows the average percentage of how many women and men are composing the Board of Directors of these listed companies. Of the total, the 72% of the Board of Directors is made up of men, while the 28% are women. In comparison with the Chinese analysis of the previous chapter, which is composed of 87% of males and 13% of women, this new data exceeds the previous data more than double (Figure 22).

Figure 21 Percentage of gender in Italian Board of Directors

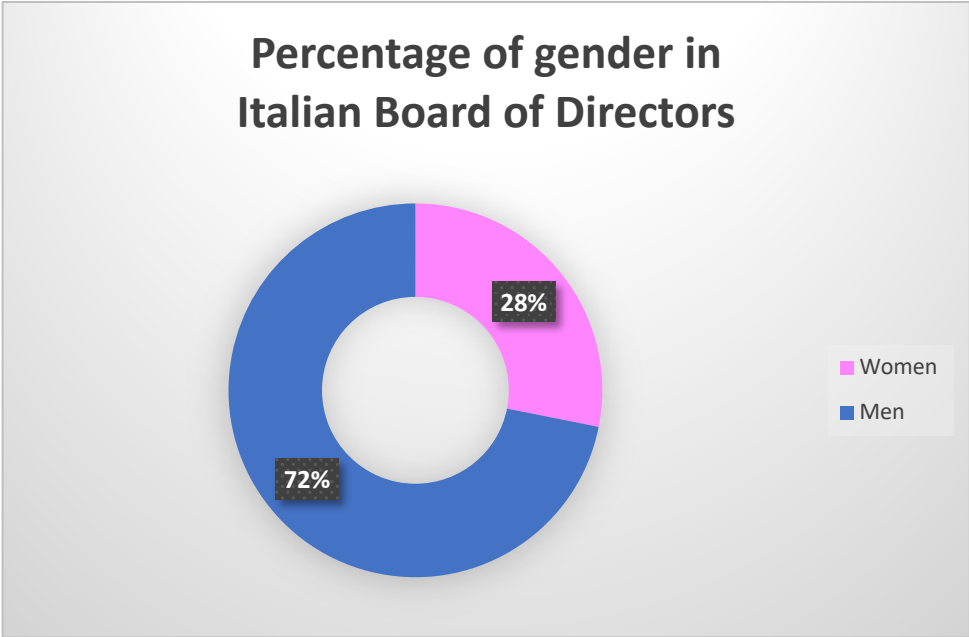
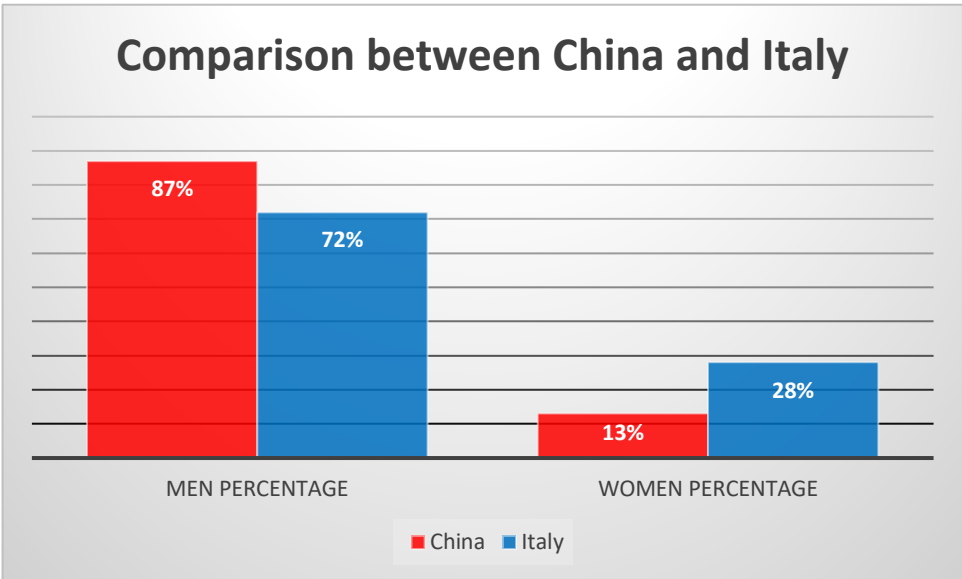
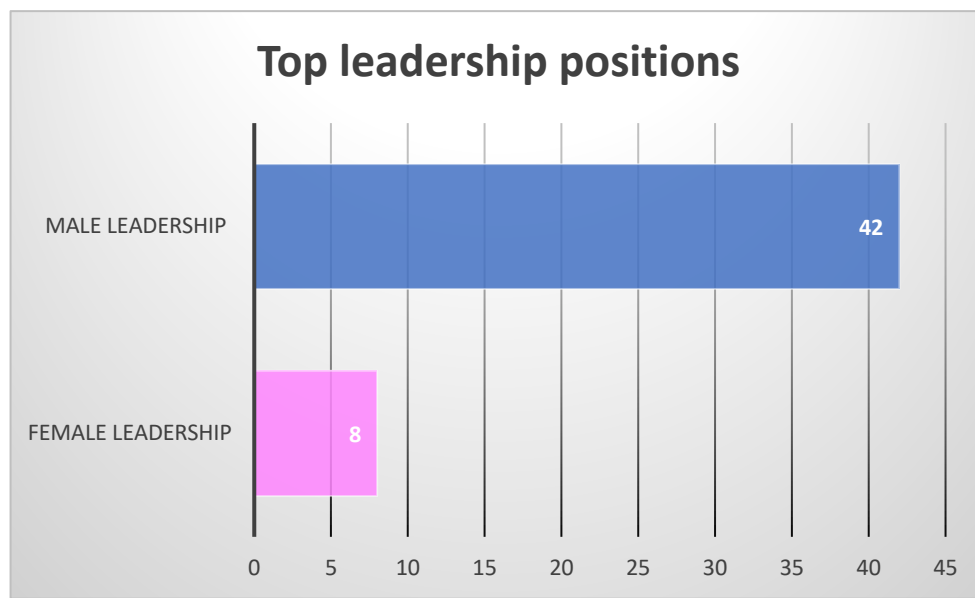


Figure 22 Comparison between China and Italy



A new data, which I had not collect before concerns companies that are leading by a woman. Out of 50 companies, 8 companies are held by a woman, while the others have a male director (see Table 2, with the name in evidence). As mentioned, the female leadership in Italy covers distinctive sector, and in this case editor and media and furniture sector is the one that recognize female leadership.

Figure 23 Top leadership positions



Although the data present a better condition than in China, however the gender gap in Italy continues to present a lack. Certainly, in term of policies, the European Union is trying to improve the gender gap terms of employment and opportunity for benefit year after year. In 2016 a report called '*Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality, 2016-2019*' was published in which the main core was to promote the equality between gender. It touched on several issues as pay work, decision making and the increase of female participation in labor-market. Regarding the latter, the main key action to achieve the goals is to balance the dichotomy of responsibilities of women in the family and work. The new policies are in charge of supporting women who have to take care of children or parents, giving some provisions in order to help them take both responsibilities. Another goal is maintaining a balance in economic leadership position. In order to improve this goal the main key actions are: continuing to collaborate and getting data with the European Institute for Gender Equality on the rate of female representation in positions with high decision-making power; continuing to seek assistance and support for the promotion of gender balance by Member States and

national activist authorities; improving gender balance in political decision making; providing a target and trying to reach it more than 40% of women in senior and middle management by the end of 2019⁷⁸.

Therefore, the European Union is starting to improve the managerial position of women in working life and expects to improve unsatisfactory data of the last years.

⁷⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/strategic_engagement_en.pdf

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyze the role played by women in both political and economic contexts around the world. A particular focus has been given to China, to be afterwards projected towards a reality which is familiar with us, such as Italy.

Many were the questions in this thesis which I tried to answer.

The first of these in the initial chapter was: *why if the women in Mao's period "women hold up half the sky?" after decades there are still few senior political women in China?* In fact, this country has a lack of female presence within the political context and this is given by various obstacles such as: discriminatory policies, the 'Baijiu culture' and the presence of glass ceiling. Concerning the discriminatory policies, it could be said that in China, the retirement age varies considerably according to gender. Since women have an early retirement age compared to men and this leads to a low presence of women leaders because of the right age to become a leader comes along with that of retirement. In addition, Chinese women nowadays have a higher education than their male counterpart and this affects the fact that women who enter work later have a much shorter career than men, even if they are able to do their job. Undoubtedly, this factor is positive because they can take better care of their children and their relatives, on the other hand, however, is a strongly discriminatory policy because it forces woman to stay within home, when they still could express their potential at work.

The 'baijiu culture' is an obstacle that all women in a managerial business context often have to deal with. In fact, the moment of the banquet at the meeting, intended to be a moment of exchange and knowledge among colleagues, becomes for the female figure a moment of extreme discomfort, in which they are forced to choose situations rather than others at risk of being judged and stereotyped. For these women the secret to aspiring to play a role in the highest ranks is precisely to break through the glass ceiling. The stereotype and the belief that the Chinese woman has had since ancient times, is always that of being considered the lower and the weaker gender, and this is the biggest obstacle to overcome. Regarding this, it emerged that different associations were born in the field of protection of women's rights, both domestic and working rights, and various laws and policies introduced over time, such as the marriage law in 1950, the birth of the All China Women's Federation association which

today is still considered the main association in terms of gender equality to protect women's rights. Although there has been an increase in this matter, however, the policies introduced have not ensured an advancement of women's status. In fact, we have analyzed how, during the course of time, the women within the parties had a presence that oscillated over time, as if the policies implemented had been promulgated only at that moment and not implemented and continued through time, so that today the National People Congress sees a not very high female presence and with a margin of improvement expected of about 2% in the next five years.

Even if the field of application changes, the same problems have also been detected at the economic level, especially in the managerial field. Thanks to the research of various authors, I have been able to make a more in-depth analysis on the subject of culture and how this can be as universal as it is exclusively applicable to a specific country. In the case of China, it has been possible to state that it is a country with strong male dominance, in which it appears to be the most successful gender in the field of leadership. This influence is given by an intrinsic Confucian culture inherent in the lifestyle of the Chinese, since the theory I mentioned was "think manager- think male", in which it was always assumed that the figure of leader should be linked to the male, while if we had a figure of female leader would be judged as "Iron Women", a stereotype that does not appreciate the woman as such, but it considers her strongly masculinized and without those female characteristics that usually characterize women.

In fact, as we could state the style of leadership between men and women changes radically. The male leadership is given assertive, dominant and independent behavior, while the female figure of a leader is often characterized by an open dialogue, a kind and sensitive character, as well as constant help towards others.

Thanks to this in-depth analysis, two different styles of leadership have been attributed to genders such as: transformational and interpersonal oriented which characterize the type of female leadership, while the transactional and task-oriented characterize the male leadership. Precisely with this study I was able to answer my second question: *"Did these differences in style between female and male leadership exist?"* Naturally, they exist. Although nowadays companies tend to assume a style of leadership much closer to that with feminine characteristics, unfortunately the stereotype of the male boss is still too rooted in society to make this evolve.

Based on this topic, a new question was asked: *"Why however the figure of leader has always been connected to male?"*. With regard to this, I was able to deeply understand how much culture influences the social structure of every society, assigning a predominant role to the male gender, and subordinated to the female gender since the archaic times. So, women in a context of leadership have encountered problems since the time of evolution, and still leave the place to the male gender because it is believed more suitable and appropriate to the role of "boss". Actually, women in managerial positions create opportunities to increase profits more than companies with only men in high level positions. In fact, this study provided us with some evidence to answer another question such as: *"How the company's performance changed since the emerging of women as leaders? Which kind of obstacles they overcame?"* Contrary to popular belief, women give benefits to companies. Companies with gender diversity will always have a better chance of getting a better performance than those made up only of males. Subsequently, it was possible to confirm that the obstacles encountered do not vary according to the contexts but are reconfirmed. Therefore, the glass ceiling, the stereotypes and the lack of courage of the woman to escape from their comfort zones are also present in the managerial context, as well as the political one. Obviously, China has been careful, so much so that in recent years has tried to influence policies towards a "pink" word.

Regarding the question: *"What is the role of Chinese legislation? How does the implementation of Chinese policies take care women's right?"* It has been possible to state that many conventions have been promulgated by the Chinese state, such as joining to the ILO convention that protects women's quotas or, for example, promulgating China's maternity and *post-partum* assistance in the Labor Law of China.

The analytical study that I decided to address later came from the question: *"How are these women managers in China doing?"*. Although the new regulations and policies mentioned above have been applied, however, gender inequalities in China are still deeply rooted in corporate culture, and the results of the analysis merely confirm what has already been announced. However, although a low percentage was recorded in the companies analyzed, further studies have revealed that a new sector managed by women is taking place in China. In fact, the high-tech sector is the sector in which there is the highest percentage of start-up companies led by women and it is expected to be the starting point for the emergence of a new female management perspective.

Finally, the final part of this study focused on analyzing the differences between various types of leadership. The last question in this paper was: *“What are the main differences that influence the type of leadership? Are there really differences between the Asian and western country or does the type of leadership begin to be more globalized?”*. As an answer to this question it can be said that, following the opening policies introduced by Deng Xiaoping in the 80s and a greater increase in investments among companies all over the world, the various types of leadership that previously were only the characteristics of a country, nowadays they have been influenced and adapted to be more standardized and globalized to management types. In fact, similarities have been found looking at the Italian managerial context. From the point of view of the analysis carried out towards our country, the results obtained have only been partially confirmed. It has been possible to state that Italy, contrary to what can be considered advanced from the point of view of protection of women's rights in the workplace as well as elsewhere, is far behind the excellent positions in the global ranking obtained by other European countries.

In fact, Italy turned out to have the same problems as China. It is also a country strongly characterized by a male society and by corporate cultures that do not highlight the female figure and gender diversity, but still prefer the classic male-leader.

Starting from this concept, this thesis carries out in the last part an analysis almost identical to that studied in the previous chapter. The results obtained from this last analysis have been useful for comparing two realities so distant from one another but at the same time so similar. In fact, even if in a European context the laws to improve the leadership role of women have been numerous, however the Italian companies analyzed have shown a rather low percentage.

Nevertheless, in the last years there was a little improvement in the protection of women's rights, both in national and Chinese terms.

I hope this thesis may be the starting point for future studies on this topic, especially for those based on the female leadership of the new emerging sectors such as the high-tech sector for Chinese companies. One last wish is that all of us in the future could have a little piece of that sky that Mao reserved to hold in our hands.

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