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"GENDER BIAS IN FAMILY FIRMS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ITALY AND TURKEY"

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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

The aim of this thesis is to explore and investigate the degree of gender bias within family firms, comparing two countries in particular, Italy and Turkey. From this study, it is evident that both nations exhibit high percentages of family enterprises within their economy (precisely, 85% of the Italian organizations are family owned, while 95% of Turkish ones are controlled by family groups), confirming the significance that these types of businesses have worldwide. Even though the two countries are located relatively close to each other, they show different cultural and social environments. For this reason, family firms are characterized by different features and attributes that are expressively deep-rooted in each nation. The Italian culture is described as individualistic and democratic, where individuals are used to be autonomous and self-reliant and encourage principles of equality and power decentralization. On the opposite side, the Turkish society is denoted by collectivist approaches and hierarchical structures, where people tend to achieve group's objectives and authority is highly respected and centralized. Although there are many differences, both countries are deeply influenced by the central role that family plays within their cultures. That is why I decided to specifically examine the levels of gender discrimination within family businesses. According to the empirical results, it is clear that gender disparity is still strong within the family working environment: more than 80% of the Italian family organizations examined have male founders and successors, while the trend showed by the Turkish ones is even more pronounced with more than 90% of males in those categories. The final aim of this thesis is to draw attention to the problem of gender discrimination, showing how negatively impactful can be for women.

The first chapter of the following thesis presents the general information about Italy and Turkey, focusing on the cultural and socio-economic characteristics that affect each country. The first part of the second chapter investigates the current literature that exists, providing meaningful considerations about the structure of family firms in both nations, the presence of gender bias in the workplace, and the different possibilities that women have within leadership positions; the second part is more focused on the family firms' theories and how they can impact the degree of gender bias. The third chapter is about the methodology used for the empirical study and shows the reader how the research was conducted. Chapter four describes the findings of the analysis and illustrates some possible remedies for the problem. The final chapter summarizes the study and defines the outlook of the entire research.

Finally, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Professor Alessandra Tognazzo for the invaluable guidance and support throughout the development of this thesis.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The focus of this thesis is investigating the existence of gender bias in family firms, analyzing and comparing the countries of Italy and Turkey. In order to have a better understanding of the topic discussed, the reader must be informed of the research issues and objectives, as well as the economic and cultural status of both nations. Therefore, the purpose of the first chapter is to present the subject, offering clear and comprehensive context for its discussion.

1.1 Research Problems and Objectives

The issue of gender bias is well known, and it is discussed and researched in several fields of study. In this case, I will take into account family firms, and especially the nations of Turkey and Italy. Even though the human species have gradually evolved throughout the centuries and decades, the labor market is still full of discrimination towards the female figure. As described by Boucher (2021), it is a phenomenon that touches both democratic and non-democratic countries; moreover, the working disparities between men and women are extremely visible and they are attributable to several organizational characteristics, such as general impediments to women's engagement in the workforce and discriminations in terms of training and development inside the business group. These traits lead to both horizontal and vertical segregation: the first one indicates that women are employed in specific sectors (which are very often different from those of men), while the second term describes the problems and differences between female and male figures in the progression of leadership positions (Boucher, 2021). It is thus straightforward that men are predominantly employed in the working space, and they are able to achieve more rapid advancements in their professional careers compared to women (Boucher, 2021).

Because gender bias is such a vast issue, this study specifically investigates gender discrimination in family firms. It is important to identify and try to minimize the escalation of the problem, in order to attempt avoiding future bias problematic circumstances. For this reason, a comparative analysis between Italy and Turkey will study, examine, and evaluate the overall business framework of family firms. Since the two countries are different, they exhibit distinct cultural, economic and social traits. Separate biases and challenges can be found within both nations, where there are different major characteristics capable of changing business dynamics within families. Therefore, the main reason behind the selection of this topic is linked with the relevancy that family firms have on the economy of both countries and the impact they can have towards social norms and values. The following chapters will describe how family enterprises are a significant part of the business landscape and how much gender bias is still entrenched within the working environment. Consequently, I have considered this subject to be stimulating for further analysis and investigations, capable of discovering meaningful economic and cultural results. Finally, the study has given me the opportunity to strengthen my skills through the utilization of statistical tools such as SPSS, enhancing my capabilities in data analysis.

In order to analyze and study the issue of gender discrimination and its repercussions towards both family businesses and the external environment, a clear and distinctive group of companies were taken into further consideration. It is important to evidently clarify the scope and boundaries of the thesis, so that the reader is well informed and can cautiously elaborate the findings. Family enterprises represent in both countries a substantial portion of the overall industry scenario, improving significantly the general economy and offering numerous employment opportunities across different business segments. According to AIDAF (Associazione Italiana delle Aziende Familiari), 85% of the Italian organizations are family owned, contributing 80% to the national GDP, with a turnover of 260 billion euros; furthermore, the association recorded in 2021 and 2022 a revenue trend that surpassed the growth observed in non-family firms (AIDAF, 2022). The group of regions with the highest revenue growth rate include Marche, Lombardia, and Liguria, while the segments that demonstrated the strongest performance are furniture, metal products, rubber and plastic, and chemical (AIDAF, 2022). In addition, Italian family companies exhibit high levels of longevity among the world: between the top 100 oldest family firms, 13 are Italian (AIDAF, 2022). On the other hand, according to the EY Report (2020), almost 95% of companies in Turkey are controlled by family groups and they contribute for 74% of the national employment. More than 50% of Turkish family enterprises are in the production sector, 16% belong to the construction and real estate development sector, and 6% are in the consumer products sector (Yilmaz & Karsu, 2021). In other words, family enterprises essentially constitute the economic foundation for both nations.

Within family firms, there are different and unique ownership and governance structures. The organizational system can be influenced by each family group and, since they are also business owners, they can determine the overall framework, transforming the cultural and decision-making aspects of the enterprise. For these reasons, gender bias can spread rapidly within the work environment with the help of traditional gender rules, simplifications, and succession disputes that are specific to each country. Sometimes these characteristics are shared between different nations, however often it is not the case. This study wants to investigate the presence of gender discrimination inside family businesses and implement the study's findings with the existing ones. Particularly, this thesis will analyze the existence of gender gap in the Italian and Turkish workplace, and it will focus on possible comparisons within diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Both nations exhibit a strict correlation between gender, family, and business dynamics, giving space to possible comparisons and further examinations.

In conclusion, the final explanatory research question that this thesis is aiming to answer is the following:

What is the level of gender discrimination within Italian and Turkish family firms?

In order to obtain a more accurate and detailed analysis, the research question just mentioned has been differentiated in two specific subquestions:

1- Is there a significant difference between the two countries taken into analysis?
2- What implications emerge from the regression analysis?

In this way, the reader is able to better understand the comparisons between the two nations regarding gender bias within family firms.

1.2 Country Profile: Italy vs. Turkey

This section aims to provide comprehensive and clear screening for both nations, so that the reader can be informed about general information regarding the two countries. Italy and Turkey have both an optimal geographical position, the first one located in the center of Europe and the second one on the intersection between Europe and Asia. They present historically diverse yet interrelated profiles in terms of culture, history, and socio-economic characteristics. The two countries are similar because of their influence on the development of the European continent, as well as the areas nearby. Both nations are considered to be fundamental actors in their respective areas since they have strong traditions, complex socio-economic dynamics, and a long-standing history.

The following section will provide a general screening of both countries in terms of cultural, social, and economic dimensions, offering, at the end, a comparative analysis. By studying the cultural traditions, as well as the socio-economic factors of Italy and Turkey, the reader will be able to have a well-defined idea of their positions in the contemporary world.

1.2.1 General Information

Italy

It is the third largest nation in Europe (after Germany and France) in terms of population and GDP growth rate (The World Bank, 2023). Italy is a southern European country located in the center of the Mediterranean Sea, and, in the north, it is protected by the Alps (Treccani, n.d.). The nation is composed by 20 regions, from north to south: Valle D'Aosta, Piemonte, Liguria, Lombardia, Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Veneto, Emilia-Romagna, Toscana, Umbria, Marche, Abruzzo, Lazio, Molise, Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicilia, and Sardegna. Italy has a long and intricated history: it is the place where the Roman Empire developed and matured throughout the centuries, which laid the foundation for the Western values as we know them today; additionally, in the 16^{th} and 17^{th} centuries the so-called "Renaissance Era", Italy became one of the central points in Europe and it was capable of influencing various artists, thinkers, and innovators with its culture and way of living (Treccani, n.d.). In the modern age, it was involved in the first and second world war and experienced the birth and rise of a dictatorship called "Fascismo", led by Mussolini; after that dark period, Italy transitioned towards an era of development and progression and, in 1946, the Constitution was signed which represented the start of the era of the Italian Republic (Treccani, n.d.). In summary, Italy has always been able to influence other people and countries with its long history and traditions, even though it has faced several challenges throughout the ages.

Moreover, Italy has been a member of the European Union since January 1958, and it estimates a population of almost 60 million people; the official language is Italian, and the currency used is the Euro (European Union, 2024). Finally, Italy has been a member of the Schengen area since 1997, which allows people from associated states to travel freely with no constraints across the borders, without need for further inspection (European Union, 2024).

Turkey

The nation stands between the European and Asian continents (it is defined as a transcontinental country), at the entrance of a very important region, the Black Sea (BBC News, 2023). For this specific reason, its unique geographical position has allowed Turkey to become a natural bridge between West and East areas, significantly shaping its historical and socio-economic traditions. Turkey is composed by seven regions: Marmara Region, Mediterranean Region, Black Sea Region, Aegean Region, Central Anatolian Region, Eastern Anatolian Region, and Southern Anatolian Region (BBC News, 2023). Just like the Italian culture, the Turkish one is influenced by profound traditions and historic events. The most influential period was under the Ottoman Empire in the 12th century, which lasted for almost 600 years and stretched across Europe, Asia, and Africa; it had the ability to inspire numerous populations across multiple and diverse domains, including political and governance theories, as well as art and architectural movements (BBC News, 2023). During WWI, the nation became a military dictatorship, and in 1923, it was converted into the modern Republic of Turkey, thanks to Mustafa Kemal (BBC News, 2023). In 2014, the Prime Minister Erdogan won the election; he has, since that day, became the most important person in all of Turkey (BBC News, 2023). In summary, Turkey's strategic and geopolitical position, combined with its cultural and socio-economic heritage, has enabled it to emerge as a key player at the regional and global affairs.

Currently, Turkey is not part of the European Union. As stated in BBC News (2023), its population is roughly 85 million people, and the official language is the Turkish (even though there are some minority languages such as Kurdish and Arabic). In contrast to Italy, the nation is not part of the Schengen area.

1.2.2 Cultural and Socio-Economic Factors

Italy

The Italian culture is powerful, multidimensional, and deeply correlated with the historical events that occurred within the country. It is a curious mixture of old traditions and modern innovation, which fascinate people all around the world. The family plays a pivotal role in the Italian culture and society. It is very usual for families to live in proximity and sometimes even in the same physical household. This shows that families' ties are intense, and people care about them. Furthermore, social gatherings with family members occur very often for many occasions, such as birthdays, holidays (like Christmas and Easter), weddings, and so on. Nevertheless, in the last 20 years several issues have impacted family customs and traditions; there are three main challenges that disrupt the structure of families: 1) the overall decrease in the number of weddings within the young generations, and the common use of civil ceremonies instead of religious ones; 2) the decrease in birth rates, which puts Italy in one of the first positions in Europe in terms of having many elderly people; and 3) the increase in marriage instability, which has a direct effect on the rise of separations and divorces (Luciano, M. et al., 2012). Italian culture means also cuisine and food. As described above, meals play a key role in the life of Italians and are used as a way of gathering around for important moments: they are considered as social events at all effects. Furthermore, Italy is well-known around the globe for its influence in the fashion and design industry. As discussed by Conti and Zanolla Mancini (2011), food, furniture, and fashion are the fundamental pillars of the so-called "Made in Italy" (the three "*f*"s). Essentially, "Made in Italy" is a synonym of quality and innovative creation and is imitated by everyone; in Italy, original and modern design has continuously manifested throughout the decades with products that are characterized by both the uniquely Italian creative techniques and the high standards for reaching excellence (Conti and Zanolla Mancini, 2011). Beyond being a brand itself, "Made in Italy" is a guarantee of authenticity and prestige, strengthening Italy's reputation as a leader in the production of high-quality artefacts (Conti and Zanolla Mancini, 2011). In terms of religion matters, Italy is predominantly populated by Catholic people. The nation is famous because of the presence of the Vatican State (which is situated in the heart of Rome, the Italian capitol) where the Pope lives and represents a religious center for pilgrimage. For these reasons, religious traditions and holidays are deeply rooted and influence the Italian culture.

Italy is a developed country and is characterized by a versatile economy which combines both modern manufacturing industries and traditional sectors, such as agriculture and craftsmanship. As discussed in the previous paragraph, the nation is well-established in the production of high-quality manufacturing items, especially in the luxury and design industry. Nevertheless, the Italian economy is highly modelled around small-medium enterprises (SMEs). Salvatore (2013) describes SMEs as a different form of company compared to larger ones: they tend to attract less funding because of their size, not giving them the opportunity to invest in new technologies and innovative manufacturing processes. In addition, due to their different organizational and governance structures, SMEs have lower capabilities in terms of achieving high levels of productivity; however, being small does not mean that they are disadvantaged: small enterprises are able to resist better and respond quickly in occasions of market changes and customers' demand, being more resilient towards unplanned alterations (Salvatore, 2013). One of Italy's defining socio-economic characteristics is the difference and dualism between the northern and southern part of the peninsula. Northern regions are more industrialized and economically sophisticated, encompassing several Italian multinational organizations which contribute to the country's GDP; on the other hand, southern regions tend to be more unsophisticated and have less developed infrastructures (Xiong, 2022). This dualism is extremely visible in the labor market: southern areas are 24% below the average rate of employment in the European Union, and, in addition, the long-term unemployment rate is nearly four times higher than the EU standards, while the youth unemployment rate is about three times higher (Cirilloa & Reljicb, 2021). While Italy benefits from the "Made in Italy" recognition and is fortunate to have highly skilled employees in different sectors, the nation's economic performance is often damaged by rigid labor laws, high taxation, and a political structure which discourages entrepreneurship (Xiong, 2022).

In conclusion, Italy's socio-economic characteristics are very much correlated with and influenced by the culture and ways of living. Furthermore, family plays a key role both at the social and economic levels, fostering the development of strong values and principles.

Turkey

The Turkish culture is very old and, because of its geographical location, encompasses a mixture of different influences, from Western and Eastern traditions. Nonetheless, the country was able to develop its distinctive cultural identity which replicates its geographic, historical, and social challenges. The Turkish culture is deeply shaped by the Ottoman Empire's heritage, the Islamic principles, and the central role of family's values (Sunar & Fisek, 2005). Turkish family's structures are traditionally patriarchal, demonstrating a clear hierarchical organization. As debated by Sunar and Fisek (2005), the hierarchical approach affects also the generational system: men's dominance is very strong and widespread, as women are considered less powerful and valuable. This point of view influences the overall structure of the Turkish society and culture. Respect towards the elderly people is very strong and, as already seen for Italian families, it is common for Turkish households as well to live under the same roof, encompassing different generations (Sunar & Fisek, 2005). In Turkey marriage still plays a crucial role and it is accepted also by the new generations; furthermore, divorce is gradually gaining acceptance, reflecting a shift towards more democratic relationships which include different emotional dynamics (Kavas & Thornton, 2013). Additionally, the decline in fertility rates has been induced by ideological and structural factors, and the belief that regulated population growth reforms can actually contribute to the development of the nation (Kavas & Thornton, 2013). The Turkish culture is highly influenced by the Islamic religion and its traditions are widely observed especially in the rural areas; nevertheless, with the establishment of the modern Republic of Turkey in 1923, Mustafa Kemal helped with the diffusion of secularism, trying to set a clear division between religion and governmental affairs (Yavuz and Öztürk, 2019). The dichotomy between Islam and secularism forms a hybrid socio-cultural landscape where conservative religious traditions coexist with modern and innovative principles (Yavuz and Öztürk, 2019).

Turkey is a nation which is characterized by a diverse and dynamic socio-economic environment, influenced by its long-standing heritage, geopolitical location, and continuing developing reforms. According to Kaya and Çiçekçi (2023), half of the country's economic growth since the 1980s can be attributed to the increase in labor productivity, which is primarily possible thanks to the advancements of the industrial sectors and exports. In the period between 1980 and 2022, Turkey has experienced a profound and significant economic transformation, transitioning from a closed and agriculture-based financial system to one focused on industry and trades (Kaya & Çiçekçi, 2023). In this period of evolvement and growth, the Turkish economy has confronted several problems, such as the pandemic of Covid-19, internal financial crises, and the war between Russia and Ukraine which represented the country's two largest associates in terms of trade (Kaya and Çiçekçi, 2023). Nonetheless, Turkey was able to continue its process of incorporation within the global economy. Even though the nation's labor market is constituted by a moderately young and growing population, it faces high unemployment rates, especially among young people (Yenilmez, 2014). Consequently, effective labor strategies that incorporate social protection are implemented and supported by macroeconomic policies capable of promoting the increase and development of labor productivity (Yenilmez, 2014).As it is the case with Italy, Turkey too suffers from regional disparities, particularly between the western and eastern part of the nation: the western division of the country includes important cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir which are economically developed and support the growth of the nation's GDP; these areas benefit from higher levels of investment, developed infrastructures and urbanization, and greater access to education and healthcare (Çınar, 2023). On the other hand, the eastern part of the country is known to be less developed and characterized by high unemployment rates: these regions tend to be more rural and therefore depend primarily on agriculture (Çınar, 2023). In addition, these areas are particularly tense because of the presence of Kurdish people. Very often some hostilities have happened between the two populations (Çınar, 2023).

In summary, Turkish culture is strictly connected with and influenced by the country's socio-economic characteristics. In addition, its geographical position has had a clear effect on its history, which encompasses both western and eastern practices and rituals. Similarly to Italy, families play a crucial role in preserving the nation's traditions and customs, while shaping the overall social and financial system.

1.3 Comparisons

This section aims to provide a comparative analysis of the cultural and socio-economic characteristics of Italy and Turkey with the utilization of the Hofstede's Cultural Theory (Hofstede, 2010). By exploring significant cultural dimensions such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, short vs. long term orientation, and indulgence vs. restraint, I was able to provide a comparative analysis of the two countries, presenting the cultural differences and similarities, and their respective socio-economic landscapes. The final goal of this outline is to examine the complexities amongst cultural principles and economic structures, giving useful insights into both nations.

First, the reader must be informed of the general characteristics of all dimensions that compose the Hofstede's system theory (Hofstede, 2010):

- "Power Distance" refers to the extent that less powerful individuals of a defined society accept and assume that power is distributed unequally.
- "Uncertainty Avoidance" describes the level of feeling uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity, and how often the individuals try to avoid these specific situations with the help of fixed habits and rituals.
- "Individualism vs. Collectivism" measures the degree to which each person feels independent and emphasizes individual selections or accepts social cohesion.

- "Masculinity vs. Femininity" measures the importance of expected emotional gender roles: a society driven by competition and toughness is expressed to be masculine, on the other hand, one compelled with emotional closeness is said to be feminine.
- "Short vs. Long-Term Orientation" refers to time change and how it is considered (whether long-term planning orientations prevail to traditions and short-term results).
- "Indulgence vs. Restraint" measures the level of freedom within society; indulgent cultures emphasize having fun and enjoying life, whether restraint societies see existence as duty and dominated by strict rules.

Having described in general the six dimensions of the framework, the research can now proceed with the comparison between the two countries.

Italy

As discussed by Milosevic (2019), the following traits have been discovered about Italian society and are all based on the assumptions described above (Hofstede, 2010):

- "Power Distance": Italy prefers a democratic approach, where the principles of equality and power decentralization are core attributes. In addition, there is a preference towards teamwork and a management structure that encourages openness. Nonetheless, people exhibit aversion to being controlled and told what to do, appreciating independence. Italy shows a moderate level of power distance.
- "Uncertainty Avoidance": there is general distress when ambiguous and uncertain situations happen. As a way to avoid these situations individuals tend to plan extensively. Furthermore, emotions are important and are emphasized with the usage of body language. The nation has a moderately high level of uncertainty avoidance.
- "Individualism vs. Collectivism": Italian society is predominantly individualistic since people tend to be very autonomous and self-reliant. Nonetheless, family and friends play a crucial role in providing emotional support and assistance when life gets hard. Overall, Italy expresses mostly individualistic traits.
- "Masculinity vs. Femininity": the country is considered to have a more masculine approach towards social achievements and results, where success and competition are admired. Oftentimes, individuals tend to care a lot about material wealth and social appreciation. Nevertheless, in some cases, people can become intimate with one

another, developing intellectual connection. Masculinity prevails over femininity in the Italian culture.

- “Short vs. Long-Term Orientation”: the Italian culture follows a pragmatic approach, in which there is a clear balance between traditions and future-oriented mentality. Although, the attitude is very much affected by the context and time of the situation. In other words, Italy shows a moderate level of long-term orientation.
- “Indulgence vs. Restraint”: in terms of freedom and desires, Italy shows a restraint culture. Individuals prefer to follow specific patterns and behavioral norms, as a way to avoid troubles and social distress. As a result, there is a slight prevalence of cynical attitudes and pessimistic thinking, aspects that contribute to a dominant culture of restraint rather than indulgence.

Turkey

According to Cuhadar and Rudnák (2022), the characteristics below describe the six dimensions of the Turkish culture which are based on the Hofstede’s system theory previously explained (Hofstede, 2010):

- “Power Distance”: hierarchical structures are deeply rooted in the Turkish society. Authority is highly respected, and control is mostly centralized. In addition, in the workplace, superiors lead and make decisions, while subordinates don’t hesitate when following directions and rules. Turkey exhibits a relatively high level of power distance.
- “Uncertainty Avoidance”: the country is significantly influenced and guided by social rules and regulations. There is a tendency to avoid ambiguous situations with the utilization of social structures. Traditions and established procedures help individuals in following precise guidelines, encouraging stability and planning. The level of uncertainty avoidance is therefore elevated.
- “Individualism vs. Collectivism”: the interests of the group prevail over the ones of the single members. In other words, people are inclined towards building relationships and pursuing common harmony with other components, while individual ambitions are not admired. Overall, the country is considered to follow a collectivist approach.
- “Masculinity vs. Femininity”: in terms of this dimension, the Turkish culture exhibits a more feminine orientation. There is an equilibrium between personal successes and the pursuing of a quality life, individuals significantly value the development of

relationships and cooperative associations. In other words, maintaining social harmony and mutual support are core characteristics of society. Therefore, Turkey is thought to be a feminine culture.

- "Short vs. Long-Term Orientation": there is a moderate balance between the two traits. The country exhibits a deep connection with both traditions and historical events, however, at the same time, it shows an inclination towards innovation and modern approaches. For these reasons, Turkey shows a moderate level of short vs. long-term orientation.
- "Indulgence vs. Restraint": similarly to the previous dimension, also in this case Turkey reveals a moderate level of indulgence and restraint aspects within its culture. Turkish people have a sense of balance regarding enjoying life through social events and respecting social norms which regulate their relationships and behaviors.

To sum up, Italy and Turkey show high levels of avoidance uncertainty, which tell us that both cultures are significantly influenced by social norms and the attitude of planning things out. On the other hand, the two nations differ significantly regarding individualism, masculinity, power distance and indulgence. Italy reveals a more individualistic culture where the person is very autonomous, while Turkey prefers a more group-oriented way of living. Furthermore, the Italian society seems to adopt a more masculine approach which respect personal achievements and high competition, whereas Turkey favors a more cooperative ideology which is a core characteristic of a feminine culture. Moreover, the Italian society is considered to respect independence and fairness, while the Turkish one is oriented towards a more hierarchical and authoritarian civilization. In conclusion, Italy exhibits traits that are typical of a restraint culture, whereas Turkey seems capable of balancing out social distractions with regulated behaviors.

These differences help us to understand the dissimilar social and economic landscapes that influence each country's society. Overall, Italy and Turkey present a distinct culture which shape differently the workspace dynamics and decision-making, as well as the social relationships and the founding principles.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review is a fundamental part in every study because it explains the theoretical framework and context of the research. It identifies potential gaps from previous studies, significant key findings, and provides an overall assessment of the topic being discussed. The purpose of this chapter is to comprehend what insights and results have been already collected throughout the years, demonstrating how this thesis can positively impact and challenge the theoretical landscape. The first part of this section is focused on describing and explaining family firms in each nation, exploring which factors actually characterize the business environment and defining possible comparisons between Italy and Turkey. The second part is specifically about gender bias and how it is perceived and considered from a global perspective. The third part of the chapter will take into consideration how different the two countries think about women within the workplace, describing possible challenges that they face in the advancement of leadership roles and in the succession's planning. Finally, the fourth part of this section will talk about three academic concepts which I consider significant for a deeper understanding of gender discrimination and enable the reader to better comprehend the findings explained in Chapter 3.

2.1 Definition and Overview of Family Firms

Because of their impact and fundamental role in the overall economy, family businesses are of particular interest to scholars of business and organizational studies. Even though there is not a clear and common definition of family firms that is accepted worldwide, a family organization is described as an enterprise which is constantly influenced by the funding family particularly in the management and ownership dimension (Chua et al, 1999). Due to the complexity and difficulty of the subject, family firm's theoretical outlook is continually changing and evolving; moreover, there exist different and diverse governance approaches and family involvement frameworks across the globe. According to Chua et al. (1999), the fundamental difference between family and non-family enterprises is beyond the involvement of the family within the business. This specific relationship between the enterprise and the family is capable of uniquely modifying the outline of critical organizational dimensions such as ownership, governance, and succession; in addition, these adjustments transform the firm's objectives, values, and approaches (Chua et al., 1999).

As previously mentioned, family firms encompass a distinct group of businesses which are characterized by the unique interaction between family and the organizational structure. For this reason, there are different dynamics and features that differentiate and separate family organizations from nonfamily firms, especially in terms of succession planning, financial objectives, and organizational and ownership structures (Daspit et al, 2021). One of the main characteristics of family enterprises is the involvement of the family throughout the process of decision making, which contributes to having a different governance framework compared to the established system (Mustakallio et al, 2002). In this scenario, the workforce is usually composed of family representatives, internal and external top managers, and the board of directors, who work together to achieve the same final results (Mustakallio et al, 2002). However, most of the time, family members have direct ownership or voting rights that permit them to exercise high degrees of influence on important decisions; in this way, family principles and objectives are clearly followed and respected in the organizational culture and operational framework (Mustakallio et al, 2002). Family organizations exhibit governance problems unlike every other business: these conflicts are more accentuated between shareholders and managers (who can be family members as well as external professionals) and controlling and non-controlling shareholders (the distinction depends on the percentage of voting rights that each member has); while the relationship between shareholders and creditors is usually better and stronger in these environments because of the shared focus that both categories have towards long-term objectives (Villalonga et al, 2015).

Another important aspect to take into consideration when studying family firms is the succession process and how it is managed. According to Sharma et al. (2001), satisfaction towards succession planning is correlated with numerous organizational, behavioral, and financial characteristics typical of each enterprise; nonetheless, there are five shared dimensions that are capable of directly influencing the process:

1- the inclination of the incumbent to leave the business
2- the desire of the successor to lead the business
3- the common arrangement between family members to carry on with the business
4- the acceptance of separate roles
5- the succession planning.

Very often, what characterizes non-family organizations within the practice of succession is the preference of meritocratic and non-biased approaches, where individuals are mostly measured in terms of their working abilities and attitudes (which need to be analogous with those of the enterprise). Conversely, since family organizations tend to have a long-term horizon, family members are selected to take over the business in order to preserve the familiar influence within the business. Furthermore, due to the closeness of the funding family towards the organization (there is the tendency between founders to consider the business solely theirs), the logic behind several managerial decisions is based on nepotism and altruism (Dawson, 2014). In conclusion, the focus in family firms regarding the succession plan is to favor intergenerational continuity.

A third aspect that needs to be taken into account when studying family businesses is the existence of non-financial goals, frequently referred to as socioemotional wealth (SEW). The SEW framework suggests what affects and drives family organizations, in particular, non-financial objectives remain very important since they are strictly related to the brand and image of the business; therefore, the conservation of their SEW (considering how it could be positively or negatively impacted) influences the way they take significant assessments and major policy decisions (Berrone et al., 2012). In other words, trying to preserve the family's reputation while maintaining overall control of the business are key aspects that tend to be prioritized compared to financial goals and outcomes, and that is what essentially distinguishes nonfamily from family firms. As discussed by Berrone et al. (2012), there are mainly five different aspects of SEW:

1) the first one denotes the level of control (direct vs. indirect) and influence that family members have towards strategic decisions compared to financial ones
2) the second feature explains the degree of identification that each family member exhibits in relation to the firm, showing a strong correlation because of the connection between the family and the brand
3) the third characteristic is defined by the organizational associations that the family has built throughout the years with the outside world in terms of social trust and bond
4) the fourth dimension is about the emotional attachment that family members have towards the business (in particular, it takes into consideration past experiences and historical events which can directly transform the organizational "modus operandi")
5) the fifth, and final aspect, describes the intergenerational continuity and the aim of pursuing a long-term accomplishment within the family.

In conclusion, family enterprises are more likely to engage in lasting relationships as a way to sustain the business in the long-term, instead of pursuing short-term achievements.

The following subsections will examine the current literature on the following themes:

- The core characteristics of the organizational framework
- Key strengths and weaknesses
- Factors that provide successful outcomes
- Considerations about possible failures

These points will be discussed for both Italy and Turkey, providing a short comparative analysis at the end of the section.

2.1.1 Italy vs. Turkey: Organizational Structure Differences

When studying the organizational structure of family firms within different countries, it is crucial to take into consideration the differences in the cultural values and principles, as well as the national context that influence each state. Furthermore, family businesses need to cooperate with the institutional organizations, which define what is considered to be socially adequate (Soleimanof et al., 2018). When enterprises follow precise social directions and rules, they are considered to be legitimate; while using fair and clear methods of operations, family firms avoid external pressures and can benefit from advantageous relationships, which can help them obtain greater opportunities and achieve superior financial outcomes (Soleimanof et al., 2018). Summing up, distinctive national socio-economic environments are capable of influencing the structure and governance outlook of family organizations. As mentioned in the previous chapter, both Italy and Turkey exhibit a long-standing tradition of family firms, and they tend to reflect the national domestic approaches.

Italian Family Firms' Structures

According to Minichilli et al. (2010), Italian family enterprises tend to have a centralized decision-making framework, where the oldest members of the family (who are usually the founders or the second generations) retain central managerial roles and are capable of affecting the organizational strategic approach. Very often, the position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is in the hands of a family member, who emphasizes the utilization and implementation of altruistic ways to affect financial results and decisions; in other words, familiar nepotism and altruism are two key features that characterize the delegation process (Minichilli et al., 2010). Nevertheless, the importance of having external individuals in managerial roles is considered significant because it enables the organization to have a different perspective throughout the decision process. As discussed by D'Angelo et al. (2016), family managers may be harmful for the organization's accomplishments and internationalization process. Because of the tendency to limit the investments in family members regarding education and training, oftentimes they can make errors which negatively impact the overall business (Bloom, & Van Reenen, 2007). Therefore, there is a growing propensity among Italian family firms in recruiting external executives to compensate for the missing abilities of family managers, as a way to improve the organizational decision outlook; in other words, enterprises try to pursue "managerial professionalization" in order to grow homogeneously (D'Angelo et al., 2016, 534-535). In the Italian landscape, it is believed that trust and commitment within the family are relevant factors because of their impact on management approaches and brand's image (Schillaci et al., 2013). Many Italian family enterprises exhibit a hierarchical organizational structure, where decision-making is built around a top-down approach in which authority is in the hands of senior family members (Schillaci et al., 2013). Nonetheless, often the development of more open governance structures includes the establishment of family councils or boards of directors that consist of both family and non-family members; this hybrid approach allows outside professionals to improve their business performance, while avoiding the decrease of family control (Schillaci et al., 2013).

Turkish Family Firms' Structures

Similarly to Italy, a significant part of the Turkish economy is dominated by family firms, which seems to be more established in specific sectors such as service, manufacturing, and retail segments (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2002). Just like Italian family organizations, Turkish ones employ centralized decision-making approaches in most circumstances, where the power is held by senior members of the family; however, most of them show a more authoritarian structure compared to Italian enterprises: there is a clear distinction between senior family members and other workers (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2002). According to Çetin (2021), Turkish family firms tend to rely heavily on informal governance mechanisms. As discussed in the previous chapter, the traditional nature of the Turkish culture directly influences the business, where familiar bonds are often preferred over professional abilities; as it was previously mentioned for Italian family firms, also for Turkish ones there are high levels of nepotism and altruism within the workplace. Additionally, there are distinctive characteristics that affect managerial approaches, such as extremely centralized organizational outlooks, unclear managerial processes, and vertical relationships preferences (Tatoglu et al., 2008). Sozen and Shaw (2002) claim that such hierarchical and authoritarian features, combined with avoidance of initiative and innovation, come from a cultural and educational perspective that approves patriarchal dominance; for these reasons, it has been argued that the traditional management approach in Turkey is not up to date. Family is at the center of the Turkish society, that is why trust is of fundamental importance between family members, and supports core familiar values (Tatoglu et al., 2008). These family relationships are central in Turkish people lives and, therefore, have a strong impact on the way business is conducted within the country (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2002).

Understanding the differences mentioned above provides indispensable insights for scholars and practitioners who seek to engage with family businesses in dissimilar cultural environments.

2.1.2 Key Strengths and Weaknesses

Family firms exhibit both advantages and disadvantages that come from the specific organizational structures adopted in each country. The following section will describe the most significant strengths and weaknesses for both Italian and Turkish family organizations.

Strengths

Innovation plays a crucial role in family firms because it gives them the possibility to maintain the focus over the future generations: improvement and sustainability are strictly correlated with the long-term attitude and endurance that characterize familiar businesses (Cesaroni et al., 2021). In their research, Corbetta and Salvato (2004) emphasize that the most consistent goal pursued by family entrepreneurs is to maintain the continuity of the family involvement within the business, influencing their future generations to manage and control the organization. Additionally, the two researchers affirm that family firms would rather support stability than pursue rapid growth: for the same reason, family enterprises tend to be resilient to economic instability (Corbetta & Salvato, 2004). Another strength that Italian family firms show is the social capital that they develop within their working environment: by being influenced by regional economies, family businesses enjoy close connections with suppliers, customers, and employees who continuously develop trust and loyalty towards them (Minichilli et al., 2010). Furthermore, the authors discuss that this local integration leads Italian family firms in gaining some useful comparative advantages about the marketplace (Minichilli et al., 2010). Additionally, the flexibility and adaptability of Italian family enterprises (especially the smaller ones) enable them to quickly implement changes when variations happen in the market environment; such agility is sometimes attributed to a more centralized decision-making structure where senior family members can make rapid decisions without bureaucratic obstacles in the way (Corbetta & Salvato, 2004).

As discussed by Kabasakal and Bodur (2002), one of the distinctive strengths of Turkish family firms is strong loyalty and trust in the family, which considerably shape the business dynamics. Moreover, family members demonstrate high commitment toward the organization's success, leading to a strong leadership structure: family members are more inclined to devote their efforts toward the growth and sustainability of the business (Kabasakal and Bodur, 2002). Another strength of Turkish family firms is the high level of entrepreneurial spirit among the generations involved in the business, even though it is difficult to maintain it throughout the years (Harris & Ozdemir, 2020). Furthermore, the two authors indicate that most of the Turkish family businesses have ambitious leaders who strive to attain growth opportunities especially in domestic markets, while providing useful training to the next generations (Harris & Ozdemir, 2020). It is an entrepreneurial response to the dynamic economic environment that has characterized Turkey through industrialization and economic liberalization throughout the last decades (Harris & Ozdemir, 2020). Another considerable strength of family firms in Turkey is related to organizational flexibility, as it was discovered also for Italian family businesses. These firms are easily adaptable to changes in the market environment since they exhibit relatively flat organizational structures and direct involvement of family members in management (Kabasakal and Bodur, 2002). The two authors describe that Turkish family businesses are often more agile compared to larger ones: with less complicated administrative structures, they are able to act efficiently in relation to new business opportunities or challenges coming from the external settings (Kabasakal and Bodur, 2002).

Weaknesses

One of the most frequent criticisms of Italian family firms is the excessive power concentration among one or few family members, who are often older. In many Italian family companies, according to Colarossi et al. (2008), the decision-making process is highly centralized, and major decisions affecting the future of the business are made by the head of the family; therefore, fixed management structures are very common, and not enough authority is delegated to younger family members or professional managers. The challenge of succession planning is considered one of the most critical concerns facing family firms all over the world, including in Italy. Succession in the Italian family organization's setting can generally be poorly planned or even delayed, thus causing considerable instability during times of generational transition (Ferrari, 2023). In the author's opinion, Italian family firms often have difficulties in transferring leadership and ownership from one generation to another, which usually may lead to conflicts within the family members (Ferrari, 2023). Another weakness is that family businesses often manifest excessive dependence on traditional markets and well-established regional business networks, which decrease their ability to compete on the global level. As described in the previous paragraph, Minichilli et al. (2010) comments that several organizations have strong relationships with local suppliers, customers, and a variety of other stakeholders because of their affinity with the regional area; even though it can be considered as an advantage, it acts as a weakness when the firm fails or is unable to expand beyond these traditional markets.

The fact that many Turkish family firms are not international is a significant weakness. Considering the strategic geographic position of Turkey, it would generate great opportunities for export and international trade. Studies by Karaevli and Yurtoglu (2021) found that generally Turkish family firms are reluctant to expand internationally due to several reasons such as risk aversion, resource limitations, and lack of experience in overseas market. Additionally, limited international experience might also make them more vulnerable to internal fluctuations within the domestic economy. Through internationalization strategies, which are focused on developing partnerships with global firms, investing in external resources, and recruiting foreign managers, Turkish family firms will increase their visibility worldwide (Karaevli & Yurtoglu, 2021). Another disadvantage of Turkish family businesses is that they are relatively more anchored within national heritage. According to Selekler-Goksen and Yildirim Öktem (2009), they give priority to traditions and continuity instead of innovation and modernization; this potentially puts the organizations at a competitive disadvantage, especially within industries undergoing rapid change due to technological improvements and globalization. The failure of family firms to innovate their business models puts them at risk of being outcompeted by more agile rivals willing to invest in new technologies, research and development, and international expansion (Selekler-Goksen & Yildirim Öktem, 2009).

2.1.3 Success Factors

This section looks at the main success factors that influence both nations in achieving great results in terms of family businesses.

As discussed in the previous paragraph, succession can be one of the major issues a family firm has to face. Therefore, good succession planning is considered significant amongst the positive factors related to Italian family firms. Studies by Nigri and Di Stefano (2021) show that an effective succession process involves not only the transfer of power from the old to the new generation, but also the preservation of family values and business knowledge, as well as key stakeholder relationships. Frequently, for several years before succession occurs, families prepare the next generation on how to behave in leadership roles, combining formal and informal education and training courses (Nigri & Di Stefano, 2021). Moreover, the two authors explain how the establishment of the so called "Patto di famiglia" (translated in English as "Family Pact") may avoid conflict amongst family members and make the transfer process smoother (Nigri & Di Stefano, 2021). Another meaningful characteristic that Italian family organizations should take into consideration in order to succeed is the implementation of reliable governance structures, which allow balanced involvement of family and non-family members. Having family members involved in strategic management, together with professionals, guarantees that the business will improve both its brand image as a family firm and also its professionalization at the management level (Minichilli et al., 2010). According to the authors, this hybrid approach that encompasses family ownership with external governance could offer significant support in the long-run continuity goal (Minichilli et al., 2010). A third factor that facilitates the success of Italian family firms is the maintenance of strong family values and principles (the so called SEW), which sometimes easily translates into common visions and commitments toward company success. As discussed by Kotlar and De Massis (2013), family harmony based on common goals supports the growth of the organization's performance; furthermore, family-shared objectives should be adopted by external managers and nonfamily shareholders as well. It is in this regard that the strength of culture can be particularly manifested in multi-generational family businesses, where knowledge and values are passed from one generation to the other to support the continuity and stability of the business (Kotlar & De Massis, 2013).

A key factor explaining family firm success in Turkey is long-term orientation, which influences strategic decisions and investment priorities. Tatoglu et al. (2008) explain the argument that family firms in Turkey tend to have a long-term outlook because of their interest in transmitting the business to successive generations. Again, this long-term orientation bases its efficiency on positive succession planning. In this respect, most of the Turkish family firms show their interest in the preparation of successors by providing the next-generation leaders with all the necessary abilities in order to take over the business (Tatoglu et al., 2008). In particular, in many Turkish family organizations, there is usually a structured succession plan for a smoother transfer of knowledge capable of reducing possibles challenges (Tatoglu et al., 2008). Another relevant success factor for family firms in Turkey is their ability to adapt to difficult situations. In many cases, family firms can make decisions quicker and, therefore, adjust faster to changing market circumstances compared with larger and more bureaucratic organizations; it is this flexibility that enables the adjustment to new opportunities or challenges in the market and ensures that the business remains relevant and competitive (Yilmaz & Karsu, 2021). Moreover, the two writers explain that the presence of family members in key management positions allows the enterprise to make decisions and implement them quickly, since communication among family members is usually fast (Yilmaz & Karsu, 2021). It is this flexibility, connected with great personal commitment by family members, that positively influences the firm's ability to survive during crises (Yilmaz & Karsu, 2021). A third defining strength of Turkish family firms is their strong cohesion and commitment to the business, which plays a very important role in reaching future success. The members of the family share values and goals that are similar: traditional principles are still very relevant in many familiar organizational cultures (Erdogan et al., 2020). Nonetheless, the entrepreneurial culture shows a proactive attitude toward new opportunities: on several occasions, Turkish family members are able to recognize the chances capable of improving the business outlook and development. The authors (Erdogan et al., 2020, 39-41) explain four main strategies which allow both tradition and innovation to co-exist in the same environment:

1- "Protecting the Heritage"
2- "Maintaining the Essence"
3- "Embracing Nostalgia"

4- "Restoring the Legacy"

This attitude has influenced the way family businesses behave and act, adopting approaches that are able of balancing entrepreneurial objectives with family traditions and practices (Erdogan et al., 2020).

2.1.4 Failure Factors

Failure factors, when they are not taken into consideration and immediately improved, can have a negative impact on the overall performance of the business. That is why a clear understanding of what makes the firm weaker is important, especially when talking about family enterprises which encompass family and business in one organization. Below there are listed some of the most important failure factors for family firms in Italy and Turkey.

Governance issues can be the driving causes of failure in family businesses. According to Cucculelli et al. (2014), several family firms in Italy, especially smaller ones, rely on a few family members to make decisions for the firm; the result is that power is held by a small number of individuals, which normally creates inefficiencies, poor decision-making, and malfunctions. Resistance to professionalization is also a very relevant issue concerning governance. Cucculelli and Micucci (2008) suggest that family firms usually refuse to introduce external advisors or professional managers to avoid the possibility of losing family influence and control over the business: such unwillingness of professionalization might decrease the ability of the enterprise to undertake innovative strategies which result fundamental for long-term growth. On this aspect though, Italian family enterprises are increasingly trying to improve as mentioned above. Interpersonal conflicts and family dynamics are commonly reported as significant causes of family business downfall as well. Conflicts arise in different ways: generational disputes, sibling rivalry, and disagreement over the company's future strategic direction; they are stronger in family firms than in other settings because of the presence of familiar bonds: the older generation may refuse innovation's request proposed by the younger generation (D'Angelo et al., 2016). Additionally, the interests of family members may collide with those of external managers: the first supports long-term objectives capable of assuring the well-being of the family, while the second prefers short-term goals that improve the organization's rapid economic efficiency (D'Angelo et al., 2016).

Like in Italian family businesses, family conflicts and emotional dynamics have negatively impacted organizations within Turkey. In such situations, family affairs mixed with business operations lead to personal conflicts that harmfully affect decision-making and business performance (Yilmaz & Karsu, 2021). The writers explain that decisions can be made based on personal preference or loyalty rather than on what is best for the business; consequently, unresolved family conflicts may escalate to such a degree that they result in negative business performance or even dissolution (Yilmaz & Karsu, 2021). Another important challenge faced by family firms relates to the lack of suitable governance. According to Tasavori et al. (2018), most of the Turkish family businesses operate utilizing informal decision-making processes, with a small number of family members running the business ("Autocratic style of management", Marcoulides et al., 1998). A highly concentrated power might exist inside the family, which may cause a total lack of transparency, inefficient decision making, and inability to effectively respond to external challenges (Tasavori et al., 2018).

2.1.5 Comparative Analysis

The case of family firms in Italy and Turkey allows us to discover and explore two different organizational structures shaped by each country's unique cultural contexts. Italian family firms are typically characterized by a centralized ownership structure where the leading position is often held by a family member, who favors altruistic behaviors towards family members. At the same time, family managers are capable of influencing financial decisions and affecting the overall performance. Additionally, according to D'Angelo et al. (2016), trust, commitment, and loyalty at the family level define the various management methods. On the other hand, while Turkish family firms also depend on a centralized decision-making structure, the organizational outlook is more hierarchical and paternalistic. The fact that the Turkish family firms are more authoritarian is related to the traditional social structure of the country, which can also negatively impact the innovation process (Sozen & Shaw, 2002).

The strengths of Italian and Turkish family organizations include resilience and adaptability, but they face different challenges that are strictly linked with their unique cultural and organizational contexts. Among key strengths that Italian family firms enjoy are their ability of concentrating on long-term continuity, where stability is preferred over rapid growth, and their flexible attitude that allows them to respond quickly to changes in the market. On the other hand, Turkish family firms are characterized by strong familiar ties and trust amongst family members which enable them to positively influence and support business processes. Italian family firms tend to not be adequately prepared in terms of corporate governance structures and often end up with internal conflict and instability. Whereas Turkish family enterprises strongly direct their attention to the domestic market and, therefore, have low international experience, making them vulnerable to domestic economic fluctuations.

A positive succession planning in both Italy and Turkey is an essential parameter that ensures the long-term success of family businesses. Studies have shown that well-planned succession processes are not only relevant for the correct transference of leadership, but also for the transmission of the family values and business knowledge that are key factors for the continuity of the business. Moreover, the presence in both nations of high family culture and shared values within these types of businesses allow unity and direction, which are helpful for the general performance. On the negative side, both countries show corporate governance issues, which range from resistance to professionalization to the concentration of power inside the small family group, leading to inefficient and conflicting decision-making.

2.2 Definition and Overview of Gender Bias in Family firms

Worldwide, women are underrepresented in managerial positions: the higher the level in the company, the fewer the number of women (International Labour Office, 2017). The paper outlines various factors standing in the way of women in managerial positions: the two most relevant features are gender discrimination and unconscious biases associated with sexuality. Unconscious gender bias entails immediate mental links to gender as learned from traditions, cultural norms, values, and personal experiences; the automatic associations partially influence decision-making because they involve fast conclusions based on one's gender and related stereotypes (International Labour Office, 2017). Over the last decades, women have gained a lot of ground in the job market and infiltrated spheres previously thought to be men's domains; although they have actually improved their working position, women are still often disadvantaged by organizational practices and structures that favor men (International Labour Office, 2017). How is gender bias defined? The Cambridge Dictionary defines it as the “unfair difference in the way women and men are treated” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). As we mentioned above, this type of unfair treatment happens especially in the workplace, where men are considered differently and in a better way compared to women.

Like any other business organization, family firms too are not free from gender-related discrimination. Since business families operate at a social level and the fact that gender discrimination often expands into the public community, family firms are equally vulnerable to the issues of gender bias because of the close involvement of family and business in one organism; in this respect, the study of gender issues in family organizations presents certain opportunities for in-depth examination and academic research (Bang et al., 2023). Many family firms are based on patriarchal traditions in which leadership roles and decision-making commands are transferred through the male descendant of the family (Martinez Jimenez, 2009). The author identifies how family firms still perpetuate male dominance, with men as the natural successors of the business and women relegated to secondary roles, often handling non-strategic or support functions (Martinez Jimenez, 2009).

This second part of the chapter explores the literature on gender bias in the working environment, considering the various rationales for such implications through the analysis of key academic studies particularly related to family businesses. This section will be divided into the following segments:

- First, the existence of gender bias in the workplace will be examined from a global perspective
- Then, a literature review about gender discrimination in family enterprises will be conducted on both nations
- Lastly, there will be a breakdown on how the cultural context can affect the “glass ceiling” effect, giving insights on how women can be excluded from high-level roles.

2.2.1 Gender and the Workplace: Global Perspective

It is important to remember that gender discrimination is a real issue, and it affects women in different aspects throughout their working life, especially in terms of achieving advancements throughout the career, avoiding job uncertainties, and generally improving their professional knowledge. Baxter and Wright (2000) write about the “glass ceiling” effect: they argue that there exists a sort of transparent separation that divides women and men in the organizational hierarchy; they also discuss that women encounter more obstacles and challenges to enhance their working position compared to men. Many issues related to gender bias are connected to the prejudices that come from specific gender norms and cultural outlooks that harm the overall visibility of women; therefore, female individuals tend to be excluded or significantly ignored when important decisions about the business are made (Baxter & Wright, 2000). The problem of gender gap is also discussed by Cotter et al. (2001): the writers think that the issue of discrimination is significantly visible in sectors which are traditionally governed and directed by male figures (especially those sectors involving technical and manufacturing knowledge), where women tend to be left behind and are not seriously taken into consideration throughout the decision-making process, which increase their problem of relegation to low-end functions. This problem is not only noticeable in male-dominated segments, but also in female-dominated one: according to Diehl et al. (2022), many female workers don’t receive the same treatment as men get and experience discrimination because of their sex, even though they represent the majority of the workforce (specifically the authors identify four industries dominated by women: “law”, “higher education”, “faith-based nonprofits”, and “health care”), and many important decisions are often made by male individuals. Furthermore, several women have to step back from important roles because the organization doesn’t provide the right environment to pursue both working and personal obligations: oftentimes, there is not a positive link between work and family (Diehl et al., 2022). According to Ammerman and Groysberg (2022), women encounter a higher level of discrimination and work-related prejudice in the middle of their career. Furthermore, their research shows three different kinds of discriminating behaviors experienced by many of the participants: “Unfair Assumptions”, “Unhelpful Attention”, and “Unequal Access” (Ammerman & Groysberg, 2022). The first one describes how females play a crucial role within family settings and the consequent negative impact that they experience: in fact, leadership roles are often not given to women because there is the common tendency to think that they are not committed enough towards the organizational objectives and that they are not capable of successfully finding the right work-life balance (Ammerman & Groysberg, 2022). The second assumption talks about how women are often under examination for what they do and achieve: they tend to be less liked in case of critical decisions or less considered when they reach successful results compared to men; for these reasons, women don’t get the right considerations and have to wait longer in order to receive important promotions (Ammerman & Groysberg, 2022). Finally, the researchers explain that ladies are not able to build a strong working network compared to men because, at high levels, senior managers tend to prefer male colleagues compared to female ones; this unfair treatment reduces women’s chances to improve their position and advance in their professional life (Ammerman & Groysberg, 2022).

2.2.2 Gender Bias in Italian Family Firms

Gender discrimination is not an issue shared only by giant corporate organizations: as it is embedded in the whole society, it affects also family businesses. In this subsection I will analyze the presence of gender bias in family firms in the Italian marketplace through a comprehensive literature review.

Within the working environment, the challenge of gender discrimination and prejudices is probably one of the most common ones: when thinking about women, several people still consider them differently from men because of the existence of stereotypes about women's strong attachment to family roles (Dettori & Floris, 2023). Essentially, the authors explain how female individuals have to make huge sacrifices in their life in order to make sure that the household is well taken care off: there is this social perception that women must dedicate themselves to the family and then, if they have enough time left, to their working ambitions (Dettori & Floris, 2023). In these settings, females have less possibilities to improve their working careers and achieve results within the business, preferring low-level roles with less responsibilities (Dettori & Floris, 2023). Additionally, there is not a clear equilibrium between work and family duties, and therefore oftentimes if women succeed in the family firm context it is because they have been helped or inspired by the founding fathers or husbands (Dettori & Floris, 2023). A very important milestone for the Italian working landscape was the deliberation in 2011 of the so called "Golfo-Mosca" law, which has improved the involvement of women inside the board of directors of listed companies (Camera dei Deputati, 2024). More specifically, the regulation wants to achieve a greater gender balance of representatives within the board: at least one third of the seats must be reserved for female directors (Camera dei Deputati, 2024). Even though the presence of female managers and executives has improved also within family enterprises since the legal obligation (the number of ladies occupying these specific positions are higher in family than non-family firms), the overall perception and influence of women is still limited (Cesaroni & Sentuti, 2014). The two authors describe how women can significantly impact the business and still don't receive the right recognition and respect for their efforts, which also affect negatively their earning's growth (Cesaroni & Sentuti, 2014). This problem of visibility and awareness is strictly correlated to the cultural dynamics and traditions of the specific country: in Italy, it's common that females are perceived as the ones that assist and help male individuals who, on the other hand, detain control and accountability positions; this dichotomy is even more noticeable in family businesses, where it is not unusual for it to exist a blurred distinction between family and professional roles (Cesaroni & Sentuti, 2014).

The presence of females within the board of directors has increased in the last decades all around the world and eventually it happened in Italy too, even though the growth has been slow and mostly steady (Chamochumbi Diaz et al., 2018). According to the World Gender Gap report of 2024 (WEF, 2024), Italy is ranked in the 111th position out of 146 countries regarding the participation and opportunity of females in the local economy. The statistics show that there is still a profound gap between men and women in the working environment and the existence of discrimination in terms of gender diversity within the corporate governance (Chamochumbi Diaz et al., 2018). The Italian family enterprises after the Covid-19 crisis have exhibited a strong growth in terms of women involvement within the business: almost four out of ten firms have more than one-third of females as directors; this progress has increased the overall business performance and in particular, it has improved innovation aspects regarding sustainability and digitalization matters (Il Sole 24 Ore, 2024). Overall, gender diversity in family firms is more accentuated than in non-family ones: even though Italy still needs to improve the gap that exists between men and women within the working environment (sometimes women are part of the household, and they don't obtain many responsibilities compared to men), there are signs of progress (Chamochumbi Diaz et al., 2018).

2.2.3 Gender Bias in Turkish Family Firms

According to TUIK (2024), the overall employment rate in Turkey is 49.7% and the distinction within the working environment between the two genders is the following: 67.1% are males and 32.3% are females; the statistics show a clear gap where men are employed more than two times compared to women. Furthermore, Turkey is the last European-recognized country (Italy is the second to last one) in the 133rd position in the Global Gender Gap Index regarding women's economic participation and possibility (WEF, 2024). These insights demonstrate that the issue of gender discrimination within the Turkish social and working environment is evident and more widespread compared to other countries. The following subsection will concentrate on a deeper understanding of gender bias within family organizations.

It's not uncommon to think that family roles are clear and gender-related, and when the spheres of family and business are linked together within the family business, often these perceptions and behavioral arrangements are unconsciously transferred in the working environment: females are seen as spouses and mothers, while males are considered the ones that provide and take care economically for the family (Danes & Olson, 2003). Over time, working environments and relationships have evolved and the dichotomy between women and men is slowly decreasing; this change has affected family enterprises as well and it has created new contrasts between family members, where there are emotions and feelings that can harm the business setting (Danes & Olson, 2003). There exist two different kinds of Turkish females within the working landscape: "independent entrepreneurs" and "dependent entrepreneurs" (Kutanis & Bayraktaroglu, 2003, 1). The two authors explain that the main distinction between the two categories is that the first one is the creator and owner of a business, while the second one has inherited what was already established (Kutanis & Bayraktaroglu, 2003). In Turkey, there exist specific factors that impede and limit women in achieving significant results within family businesses, such as the constant male-controlled reality in which social principles and traditional values favor strict gender norms, the inadequate possibilities in terms of learning and acquiring functional and operational knowledge, the unfair distribution of social and financial help, and the absence of practical opportunities to better understand working dynamics (Karataş-Özkan et al., 2011). The business culture in Turkey is still strongly male-dominated, where women tend to have the issue of being ignored and not taken seriously when important managerial decisions have to be made (Karataş-Özkan et al., 2011). Furthermore, the authors explain how oftentimes female managers in family organizations don't have any wise person to learn from and talk to because of the strong tendency from men to socialize and build useful relationships with other male figures and the non-existence of former female executives within the household (Karataş-Özkan et al., 2011). As was previously noticed with Italy, in Turkey there is still this cultural preconception that women have more familiar obligations compared to men and therefore need to carefully balance out working and domestic responsibilities; in many instances, this situation cause female members to prefer flexible positions and consequently have a lower-level job with less restraints (Bozoğlu Batı & Armutlulu, 2020). Succession is a significant aspect to take into consideration especially when talking about family firms, where there exists the constant tendency of desiring the longevity of the organization. In the Turkish society, the succession procedure is strictly influenced by gender norms and discrimination: the founder carefully evaluates the possible successor based on the person's sex (Ozdemir & Harris, 2019). Furthermore, the two authors have discovered that several owners nominate male successors over female ones because of the issues and challenges that women constantly face within the business environment (since it is strongly male dominated) and their natural instinct to protect their daughters from external adversities (Ozdemir & Harris, 2019).

2.2.4 The Role of Culture and Organizational Structure

It is evident that female and male individuals enter and experience the labor market in very different ways, and their gender influences how they are treated. This happens in several aspects of working life such as when the hiring process begins, when they strive for professional education support, and when their accomplishments are valued as a way to get promotions or any organizational bonus (Heilman et al., 2024). Even though the reasons behind it are very complex and vast, cultural values and social norms play a determinant role in the development of gender discrimination within countries (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011). Consequently, people tend to convert shared opinions into general conducts that differentiate and categorize individuals based on their gender, strengthening rules and prejudices that increase the distinction between the two sexes (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011). Both culture and gender are multifaceted social features that are constantly changing and evolving overtime, that is why it is fundamental to encourage egalitarianism by more inclusive behavioral norms and cultural rules (UNESCO, 2023). Since gender bias is defined and considered differently across countries and cultures, organizations need to adapt specific social dynamics and systems in order to prevent favoritism and avoid prejudices (UNESCO, 2023). On this regard, enterprises must focus their attention in building a workforce that is aware of the problem by humanizing the existence of gender bias; in this way, people are capable of identifying and comprehending the problems linked to gender discrimination and are more inclined to create a supportive and inclusive workplace (Yanıkoglu, 2024). Furthermore, businesses must build an organizational structure that avoids “job ladders” (which are formed through unfair treatments among genders) between different departments since they can limit women’s visibility to important managerial positions and accessibility to better conditions (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015, 6). According to Eden and Gupta (2017), the development and implementation of principles and rules capable of creating a more inclusive and fairer workplace environment are core aspects of the organizational change that businesses must adopt as a way to achieve egalitarian levels. Moreover, the two writers explain how social values and traditions need to be comprehended in order to foster unbiased business dynamics and structures, which require the support of national governments and local administrations (Eden & Gupta, 2017). To sum up, cultural features and organizational systems need to be understood and linked together as a way to diminish the possibilities of gender bias.

2.2.5 Family Firms and Women Leadership Opportunities

As mentioned above, women are influenced by the so-called "glass ceiling" effect which describes a figurative invisible barrier that prevents them from achieving high level positions such as managers and executives' roles (Cotter et al., 2001). This problem is not only visible in big corporations, but it also affects family-owned businesses and their organizational structure; moreover, since family enterprises encompass in one organism ownership, family, and management, it is easier to analyze such problematic characteristics at all leadership levels (Songini & Gnan, 2014). The two authors have analyzed both family and non-family SMEs: they have discovered that women are mostly assigned to operational and functional working positions when they are employed in non-family businesses, while they are involved also in leadership roles such as manager and administrative directors when they are work within family firms (Songini & Gnan, 2014). Additionally, Songini & Gnan (2014) have determined that the relationship between women's responsibility and the level of formal managerial mechanisms adopted by the business is stronger in non-family firms, even though family enterprises have previously showed to be less gender biased. Even after the glass ceiling effect is surpassed, female family members tend to discourage the utilization of formalized managerial systems to improve the business performance; as a matter of fact, high-ranking positions are frequently occupied by relatives based on family bonds rather than any meaningful managerial competence and experience (Songini & Gnan, 2014). Campopiano et al. (2017) have analyzed numerous articles which describe women's participation within family firms, identifying possible features and insights that increase their involvement. There exist specific interpersonal drivers that are capable of influencing the organizational advancement of female individuals within family firms: it has been shown that women tend to be more risk-averse compared to men and, because of their long-term horizon objective, family businesses are more interested in risk-averse workers (Campopiano et al., 2017). Furthermore, the authors explain that, even when women are faced with a predominantly male-dominated working environment that forces them to adjust their typical feminine traits when they reach high-level roles, they prefer working in family firms compared to non-family ones (Campopiano et al., 2017). Another important personal characteristic to take into consideration is the tendency of women to create and establish relational linkages with other female workers to improve their career advancement and longevity within the organization; this predisposition helps them to motivate one another to reach better working conditions and stability between job and familiar obligations (Campopiano et al., 2017).

2.3 Family Firms' Theories and Gender Bias

The aim of this section is to implement the findings obtained through the review described in the above paragraphs by discussing and explaining some academic concepts that I consider significant for a deeper understanding of the subject treated in this thesis and that allow the reader to better contextualize the empirical results discussed in Chapter 4. The first two theories are strictly correlated with family businesses: they explain how gender discrimination can be amplified because of the presence of traditional roles and boundary management; both concepts clarify that women tend to have harder times within the working environment compared to men because of the strong influence that families have towards the managerial decisions. In other words, the family workplace may be highly affected by stereotyped assessments, which can negatively affect the career path of female family members. In conclusion, the final paragraph of this section will talk about implicit gender bias theory, explaining that there exist intrinsic social behaviors and procedures that harmfully impact female workers.

2.3.1 Social Role Theory

According to the social role theory, people tend to believe that gender differences are derived from the observation of social roles in which women and men are normally engaged in the everyday activities; additionally, this distinction is strengthened by the strong perception that humans behave in predictable ways and are socially inclined to respect their deep-rooted positions (Eagly et al., 2000). As discussed by Gupta et al. (2019), both women and men are used to adopt cultural principles and gender stereotypes, however men tend to tolerate them more than women since they are better supported and favored. Moreover, the authors conceive that if women desire to achieve superior working conditions and positions, they cannot accept these gender-based principles because of their constraint power towards them (Gupta et al., 2019). For these reasons, it is believed that women have a more balanced view about gender roles and stereotypes compared to men (Gupta et al., 2019). Conventional gender roles are frequently established in family enterprises: the workplace within family businesses is deeply affected and influenced by cultural stereotypes that allocate women and men with diverse social characteristics that shape their working and familiar obligations (Vadnjal & Zupan, 2009). It is common that, when ladies select different routes that don't reflect and respect traditional standards, internal pressures generate conflicts among family members (Vadnjal & Zupan, 2009).

The Social Role Theory can affect the succession planning within family firms: according to Feldmann et al. (2022), it is possible that female successors may avoid taking over the business within several sectors (for example, the construction industry) because they are still considered to be controlled by male individuals and therefore, prefer to choose less discriminated career paths. Furthermore, since women don't want to be oppressed and blocked by men, they aspire to start their own business instead of managing a family enterprise that works in a biased industry (Schröder et al., 2011). Nevertheless, it is evident and clear that family firms prefer male over female members within their succession process; in most circumstances, women tend to have less relevant and powerful positions compared to men, who are selected for leadership and managerial roles (Kubíček & Machek, 2019). Gender norms can negatively impact and affect succession's procedures: because these traditional rules are very strong and accepted within society, family owners are not willing to risk the brand's image preferring their daughters over their sons; additionally, these norms can actually influence the way women consider themselves, lowering their working standards and goals within the family organization (Feldmann et al., 2022). In other words, female family members may prefer exiting the business in order to find better opportunities within the outside working environment or even creating and building their own enterprise (Feldmann et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the ways family members are socially perceived have a significant impact on their working responsibilities within the business: men are considered to be more suitable for managerial and executive roles, while women tend to be left behind occupying less responsible and central positions. Consequently, this distinction also negatively influences the succession planning, where most of the times family owners prefer their sons over their daughters.

2.3.2 Boundary Theory

Since I am analyzing family firms, it is fundamental to explain the so-called boundary theory in order to better understand why there are particular dynamics and conflicts within these kinds of businesses. The theory describes how humans are capable of balancing their working and personal responsibilities and, through a socio-cognitive approach, it expresses how they can reduce the tensions that are generated by the interrelation of roles; furthermore, the theory supports the idea that borders can help people transition from one social position to the other, reducing conflicts (Cobb et al., 2022). In order to increase the level of stewardship and social care for the business of the family members, family firms experience a higher degree of permeability between the work-family boundaries; for this reason, there are frequent interpersonal disagreements that negatively impact the workplace, generating pressure, harmful conducts, and destructive feelings towards each other (Cooper et al., 2013). The authors discuss how it is essential for family enterprises to clearly separate work and family roles as a way to avoid detrimental behaviors for the organization: when family members experience negative emotions and are frustrated, they tend to act in opportunistic ways and without social care (Cooper et al., 2013). According to Zody et al. (2006, 188-189), there exist two different kinds of boundary frameworks: “diffuse boundary” which describes the situation in which family and business systems become intertwined and there are no clear borders and individual requirements; and “rigid boundary” which, on the other hand, defines the state where the two systems are evidently separated, and they care only about their specific necessities. The authors clarify that border outlooks and concepts are constantly evolving; due to this dynamic nature, firms need to clearly outline their ambitions before effectively focusing on the challenges of boundaries between work and family domains (Zody et al., 2006).

When business and family are grouped together in one organism such as in family organizations, it is very difficult to balance work and life; this is even harder in those countries where there are specific expectations of how male and female family members should behave (Alsos et al., 2016). This way of thinking constrains and limits the possibilities of women in the business world: oftentimes, females may be influenced by these preconceptions, leading them to be concerned for the well-being of their family; it’s not uncommon to think that finding an equilibrium between work and personal needs is a women’s job, giving men more opportunities to focus on their working careers (Alsos et al., 2016).

2.3.3 Implicit Gender Bias Theory

It is well known that women are underrepresented in the global workplace compared to men and that they encounter difficult barriers and challenges in order to reach high level roles, which are strongly affected by the existence of both gender-established stereotypes and implicit gender bias. According to ILO (2017), unconscious gender judgement is described as the mental approach that connects automatically and involuntarily determined situations to gender distinctions, which are derived from traditional principles, cultural values, social norms, and personal experiences. This unintentional attitude towards women can affect negatively their hiring and promotion evaluation and it is strictly connected with the previously mentioned "glass ceiling" effect (Espinosa & Ferreira, 2022). Furthermore, organizations have to quantify and adopt specific methods to prevent implicit gender bias to take form within the business, impartially influencing the decision-making process (Ayari, 2023). The author delineates three main procedures capable of mitigating unconscious gender discrimination when taking managerial assessments (Ayari, 2023, 10-11):

1- "Blind evaluation" which requires managers to judge the employees' work content without previous information regarding their identity
2- "Structured recruitment and performance evaluation" which explains the need for organized recruitment processes that utilizes systematic interviews and impartial procedures
3- "Accountability and openness to inspection" which favors companies to have a direct relationship with their workers in terms of deciding which learning opportunities could actually enhance their working performance.

2.4 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to give a better understanding of the existing literature about family businesses in both Italy and Turkey, focusing on their specific organizational structures and their level of gender discrimination. It is evident that in both countries the presence of family enterprises is very strong and deeply interrelated with the cultural context. The two nations exhibit similar characteristics such as their tendency to adapt in case of external changes, but for the most part the familiar business settings are different since they are influenced and modelled by the culture and traditions, which clearly differ between the two countries. Turkish family firms tend to be extremely authoritarian and patriarchal and show a strongly vertical organizational hierarchy; on the other hand, even though Italian family firms are normally centralized, they present more moderate business arrangements. On the positive side, Italian family businesses are more concerned about the longevity of the firm compared to the rapid growth, which shows a distinctive long-term vision; while Turkish family organizations are more inclined to preserve familiar bonds, building stronger relationships and interpersonal dynamics. On the negative side, both nations need to improve their governance structures, avoiding inefficient decision-making processes by involving more managerial professionals. In terms of gender discrimination, both countries exhibit a working environment where female employees tend to be categorized and discriminated against males: according to the 2024 World Gender Gap report, Italy and Turkey are the last European-labelled countries for women's possibilities within the national economy. Both nations (particularly Italy) show a slow and steady improvement concerning the "glass ceiling" effect, especially in family firms' settings where female members are more motivated and encouraged to take leadership roles compared to non-family ones. Finally, three theories about family firms and gender bias were described as a way to better comprehend the findings of the empirical study.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY FOR THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to describe the methodology and procedure used for the collection of data that combines the dataset, and to illustrate the way in which the analysis was conducted. First, some clarifications are needed to avoid false interpretations. There are three main methods of research: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed search.

Gelo et al. (2008) affirm that quantitative and qualitative methods differ in how they handle sampling, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the obtained results. More specifically, as for data collection, quantitative research uses systematic and statistical tools such as tests, standardized questionnaires, and structured interviews. On the other hand, qualitative research is less standardized, and it employs open-ended interviews and group discussions. Gelo et al. (2008) distinguish the two methods also in explaining how they use and analyze the collected data. Between variables, while quantitative research involves the use of statistical techniques to assess the hypothesis and discover possible associations, qualitative research tries to identify recurrent patterns in order to make conclusions.

Eyisi (2016) identifies different advantages of the quantitative research approach. In terms of advantages, the method is considered optimal in terms of time and resource-saving, and it allows the user to arrange a large number of variables. With the advancement of technology, statistical tools are able to accomplish difficult tasks reducing time and errors. Furthermore, the research approach helps the operator to gather large amounts of information, making a specific pattern to generalize them and simplifying the interpretation process. Denscombe (1998) points out that the quantitative technique has almost no bias since the analysis is conducted by an independent statistical tool which is not contaminated with the researcher's point of view.

Queirós et al. (2017) describe how the qualitative research does not take into consideration the numerical representativity, but it is focused on understanding the given problem. Throughout the process, the researcher plays a dual role, acting both as the observer and the participant in their own study. Rather than relying on numerical data, qualitative research seeks to comprehend and interpret the underlying dynamics of social relationships.

Lastly, the mixed approach is the one that includes both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. According to Van Griensven et al. (2014), MMR ("Mixed Methods Research") enables the user to gain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the topic being analyzed. The quantitative and qualitative phases typically occur either in sequence or simultaneously. How these different methods are integrated depends on the goals and objectives of the research.

3.2 Research Design and Approach

In order to answer more effectively to the question "What is the level of gender discrimination within Italian and Turkish family firms?", a quantitative research method was used to develop the analysis. This approach allows us to derive robust and objective conclusions regarding the existence and extent of gender bias in family firms. Furthermore, it facilitates a systematic approach to comparing the results of the two countries taken into consideration. This study is able to produce useful insights that illustrate the differences between Italy and Turkey regarding gender discrimination within family firms. In conclusion, a quantitative research study can identify clearly the statistical results, illustrating if there exist possible correlations and disparities.

While qualitative research offers valuable insights into individual experiences and perspectives, in this specific context it is not adequate because of the high level of research bias and subjective participant interpretation. Relying on qualitative data might limit the objectivity of the findings. On the other hand, quantitative research emphasizes empirical evidence and gives significant importance on statistical validation.

3.2.1 Data Collection Process: Orbis as a Dataset

The data collection process is crucial in every quantitative research analysis, since it builds the foundation on which conclusions, generalizations, and forecasting are based. As explained in the previous paragraph, the purpose of conducting a quantitative analysis is to collect variables and inspect possible relationships between them, possibly using statistical tools. For this reason, the reliability and coherence of data directly influence the overall quality and robustness of the research results. As discussed by Khalid et al. (2012), the significance of reliability depends on the recognition of the presence of random errors and the consequent abolition of any possible situation that gives rise to deviations and mistakes. The final aim of the analysis is to develop steady and compatible results. Therefore, careful planning and validating the data during the collection process enables the analysis to be more accurate and unbiased.

In order to collect most of the information that constitutes the first two sheets in Excel, the dataset Orbis was used. Bajgar et al. (2020) describe Orbis as the biggest database that proposes firm-level details across multiple nations and is, at the same time, widely used for economic and financial studies. The dataset includes both private and public companies and contains information regarding ownership structures and board composition. Other than providing reliable data regarding revenues and employees numbers, the tool is capable of identifying board members' information (including data on whether board members are family members) and gender details (which allows us to assess the presence of women in leadership positions within family firms). Both traits are fundamental for the construction of the database and the fulfilment of the research question mentioned in Chapter 1.

The researcher was not involved in any fieldwork in order to construct the database and study the object of this thesis. Due to the inability of traveling around Italy and Turkey, digital tools of data collection were employed.

3.2.2 Construction of the Dataset: Variables and Sample Selection

The procedure of building a dataset for a study is vital since the overall analysis is based on it. For this specific reason, preventive measures were taken into account to diminish the possibility of making mistakes and errors. Therefore, in order to conduct a reliable and consistent investigation regarding the presence of gender bias in family firms in Turkey and Italy, the database was built around the following variables:

- Name of the company
- Year of the company's founding
- Name of the founder
- Region where the company was founded
- Industrial sector of operation
- Status: global vs. local (a company to be considered "global" needs to encompass at least one production facility in a foreign country)
- Number of employees as of 2023 (estimated in thousands)

- Revenues for 2023 (estimated in millions of Euros).

Additional variables connected to the companies were taken under analysis:

- Age of the company (in the current year 2024)
- Number of generations involved (which takes into account the generation actually engaged in running the business).

Finally, the data set incorporates some variables that are considered crucial to investigate the presence of gender bias in family firms:

- Gender of the founder (described as “Female” if the company was founded by a couple or a group of siblings where there was at least one female figure)
- Gender of the successor (described as “Female” if at least one female family member is labeled as “President” in the list of the Board of Directors)
- Gender of the family director (described as “Female” if at least one female family member is present in the Board of Directors).

The gathering and structuring of all the information were done using Excel. Through the software, I was able to organize efficiently all the data and execute the various descriptive statistics analysis. In particular, the file is formed by the following sheets:

- “TURKEY_dataset”, which conglomerates all the information about the Turkish family firms
- “ITALY_dataset”, which is the equivalent of the previous sheet, except that it gathers the data about Italian family firms
- “SPSS_dataset”, which encompasses together the values of the previous two dataset (this was done in order to compare the two nations utilizing the statistical software SPSS)
- “Descriptive _Statistics”, which contains all statistical analysis done for both countries and it is divided in four specific areas of examination: 1- Demographic Analysis; 2- Industry Analysis; 3- Gender and Generational Analysis; 4- Size Analysis.
- “Gender Bias Score”, which contains a gender gap scorecard for both countries (it is described in more depth in the following section).

The population considered for the study includes Italian and Turkish family businesses operating in different sectors and regions. In regard to both surveyed countries, namely Italy and Turkey, the amount of examined companies has been 75 for each totally: in this way, a valid and accurate database outlook has been chosen. Initially, 150 Turkish family firms were identified with the help of TAIDER (Türkiye Aile İşletmeleri Derneği) which is a Magazine of Turkish family firms; however, the list was subsequently reduced. The reduction was essential due to the challenges in discovering and obtaining comprehensive and reliable information on Turkish family firms through the dataset Orbis. Many firms that were considered in the initial population sample composed of 150 organizations did not present any relevant information regarding the characteristics and variables explored throughout the analysis. Therefore, it was possible to analyze in a detailed way just 75 enterprises out of 150. In addition, the companies' websites were used to discover more information about the generations involved in the family businesses. The sample size of the Italian family firms incorporates 75 entities as well: this decision was made to match the number presented in the Turkish database in order to have a balanced quantity of enterprises to further analyze and compare. If the two datasets were not numerically identical and expressed different variables, it would have been impossible and unmeaningful to make comparisons between the two nations. Therefore, in order to obtain significant results, I found it logical to have analogous databases which encompassed 75 firms each. Since my nationality is Italian, it was easier to select the Italian population sample, and it was done without the help of any family firms' magazine (such as AIDAF). The selection process is very straightforward: the organizations included in the analysis are mostly recognized enterprises within the national economic context and they tend to represent social and business models of success. The reason behind the choice was to reduce the complexity of the study, trying to obtain useful and explicit results. Additionally, since this analysis aims to have a broad picture of gender discrimination in both countries, the firms collected are distributed across different regions, encompassing businesses from the northern to the southern territories. The data regarding the Italian sample size were primarily sourced from Orbis and, in part, from the companies' websites (used in particular for learning the number of generations involved in the business). Finally, the group of companies involved in the research for both countries were managed by at least the second generation. This arrangement helped me in studying the successor's gender and the present ownership involved in the business, which are two fundamental characteristics of the research. In conclusion, the amount analyzed is thought to be enough to discover useful insights and comparisons between the two nations capable of answering the two subquestions expressed in Chapter 1.

3.2.3 Quantitative Analysis: Statistical Tools and Techniques

This section aims to describe the importance and usefulness of statistical tools when performing quantitative research. As mentioned above, the researcher in order to be able to show possible disparities among different objects of analysis needs to collect data. Collecting data can be difficult and time consuming since it can include interviews and surveys. But this is not the case. The investigation has been computed with the use of the dataset Orbis and, for the most hidden and buried information, the company's websites. Consequently, it is essential to differentiate and distinguish primary and secondary data, even though sometimes the crossing line can be unclear. Boslaugh and Boslaugh (2007) define as primary data all the variables that are directly collected by the researcher. Therefore, the definition encompasses all those activities such as surveys, observations, experiments, questionnaires, and personal interviews. On the other hand, secondary data labels all information that is gathered together by someone else and for another purpose; in this case, the sources of evidence are government publications, journal articles, public websites, books, and internal records (Boslaugh and Boslaugh, 2007). For the project conducted and analyzed in this thesis, secondary sources were managed.

I decided to employ secondary data because of their impact on the questions analyzed. Carefully selecting the appropriate approach for conducting the research is of critical importance. For the same reason, I selected data which were suitable for the questions being studied on the thesis and the resources available. As discussed by Boslaugh and Boslaugh (2007), one of the major advantages of secondary data is time saving: since someone else has already collected the information, the investigator has more time to compute a more accurate and complete analysis. Furthermore, accumulating data to construct a base to examine and interpret is not simple; very often researchers don't have the right tools and resources capable of gathering insightful information, especially when managing financial and delicate information (Boslaugh & Boslaugh, 2007). Additionally, the lack of expertise and professionalism has induced me to opt for a more straightforward approach.

Statistics is a field of study which is widely used to gather, organize, and interpret data, as well as formulate deductions and assumptions about an entire population (Ali & Bhaskar, 2016).

Consequently, it is logical that it plays a crucial role in the formulation of this thesis. A suitable knowledge of the subject is essential for a clear understanding of the proper design for the study. There are different statistical techniques and tools capable of showing possible synergies and similarities between the objects considered. In particular this research has mainly employed descriptive statistics and regression analysis. As debated by Ali and Bhaskar (2016), both techniques aim to explain the possible relation between variables of the population being analyzed. The other procedure utilized is called inferential statistics, and it refers to the usage of random sampling; it is applied when the population encompasses a vast group of items, and it is difficult to investigate all of them (Ali & Bhaskar, 2016).

It is essential for the researcher to have a thorough understanding of the basic concepts that describe and explain statistical methods in order to conduct a more complete and comprehensive study. Furthermore, the ability to implement the right tools and techniques avoids potential biases and permits possible comparisons between the findings. Abusing statistical methods can result in incorrect conclusions which can consequently compromise the overall study.

As already mentioned above, one of the two approaches that was utilized throughout the study was descriptive analysis. The method was used to examine the characteristics of Italian and Turkish family firms by utilizing frequency tables and crosstabulations.

Specifically, the statistical analysis focuses on two main areas of interest:

1. Fundamental traits of Italian and Turkish family firms: regarding this subject, the following analysis were incorporated:
    - Descriptive analysis of the company's age, number of employees, and revenues
    - Frequency tables for region, industry, status ("global" vs. "local") and number of generations involved
2. Presence of gender bias and variations between Italy and Turkey, which encompasses the following measurements:
    - Frequency tables for founder's gender, successor's gender, and family director's gender
    - Crosstabulations in order to obtain a clearer image of the dispersion of gender bias across different regions and sectors.

Additionally, with the data collected, I was able to build a Gender Bias Score in order to develop a score/index to measure the gender gap in Italian and Turkish family firms considered. Moreover, it helped me to establish a clear differentiation among the subjects studied, answering the first question mentioned at the beginning of the Chapter 1. This approach has allowed me to summarize and compare the overall results and levels of gender bias between the two nations. In other words, it has helped me to quantify the data collected and distinguish which country exhibits the strongest bias.

The Gender Bias Score takes into account the percentages of male and female representation in the following categories: "Founder", "Successor", and "Family Director" (in order to allow a comparative analysis, the two nations have been examined separately). Thereafter, the gender bias ratio was calculated for each category mentioned above and it considered the percentage of female divided by the percentage of male. The results were then converted into scores by using a scoring system capable of assessing the level of gender bias (see *Table 1*). The logic behind the system was attempting to evaluate how close the ratios are to 1 (the outcome of 1 represents perfect gender balance: 50% female and 50% male). Finally, I was able to calculate the overall gender bias score for each country by summing up the grades obtained by every category. The average of the three results characterized the final score: taking into account the scoring system shown in *Table 1*, the higher the score the lower the existence of the gender bias. Further explanations will be described in Chapter 4.

Bias Ratio	Score	Interpretation
0.9 - 1.1	10	No Bias (near perfect equality)
0.7-0.9 or 1.1-1.3	8	Mild Bias
0.5-0.7 or 1.3-1.5	6	Moderate Bias
0.3-0.5 or 1.5-1.7	4	Strong Bias
<0.3 or >1.7	2	Extreme Bias

Table 1. Gender Bias Scoring System

The final statistical approach used in this study is logistic binary regression analysis, with dependent variables represented by "Successor's Gender" and "Family Director's Gender", and the independent ones identified by "Status", "Number of Employees", "Revenues of 2023", and "Country". The reason behind the choice of this specific regression is associated with the decision of using dependent variables that are binary and categorical; therefore, in order to investigate in a comprehensive way the level of influence that independent variables could have towards dependent ones, the best option was to employ the regression analysis mentioned above. This kind of examination was possible using statistical software called SPSS, which has allowed me to make all the possible empirical analysis of the case. In order to obtain comprehensive results, I had to make some changes to the existing dataset of both countries, creating a new one called "SPSS_dataset". Firstly, all the categorical variables were transformed into dummy variables:

- The two dependent variables "Successor's Gender" and "Family Director's Gender" were identified using the value 0 to denote male individuals and 1 for the female ones
- In the case of "Status", the value 0 represented global, while 1 represented local
- The last independent variable "Country" was categorized with the value 0 if the country of origin was Turkey and with 1 if it was Italy.

Secondly, in order to have values that could be compared and analyzed within the regression model, the other two independent variables were adapted as well. The categories "Number of Employees" and "Revenue of 2023" were initially classified in the Excel file using two different scales: the first one was expressed in thousands, while the second one in millions. For this reason, to ensure that the values were homogeneous with a single scale unit, the "Number of Employees" was divided by one thousand and the "Revenue of 2023" by one million. Furthermore, the same two variables were also standardized using the SPSS software, so that the model was more stable and capable of finding significant coefficients. After making all the adjustments mentioned above, I was able to have a well-defined dataset to utilize for the logistic binary regression investigation. All the results will be discussed in the following chapter.

3.2.4 Justification of the Methodological Choice

In order to consider the study valid and acceptable in terms of analysis and evaluations, it seems natural to justify the methodology chosen throughout the research, otherwise, the researcher might lose credibility and reliability in the eyes of the reader. As already mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the logic behind the approach used is strictly related to the questions that the research is trying to investigate. For this specific thesis, the main focus is trying to understand if there are possible distinctions between the level of gender bias in family firms in Italy and Turkey. Consequently, the assessment is focused on the analysis of several variables, it especially takes into account the gender of the founder, the number of generations involved, the presence of female family members in the board of directors, and the overall dimension of the business (i.e. number of employees and total revenues in Euro in 2023).

Methodology indicates the practical process behind the collection of variables and data useful for the analysis (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). In other words, the system adopted is critical for the reliability, validity, and accuracy of the final outcomes. The methodology helps the researcher to create a well-established and structured framework which allows for careful examination and interpretation of the data (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). Furthermore, the outlined approach facilitates the minimization of bias and errors, ensuring that the data are an accurate image of the variables being studied. In order to do that, appropriate statistical tools are necessary to test the hypothesis and guarantee that the outcomes are not due to random chance. In summary, methodology is the skeleton of quantitative research. It certifies that the research method is systematic, objective, and rigorous, which are all characteristics essential for producing valid and reliable results.

In contrast, a qualitative method is influenced by the researcher's experience and perceptions. One of the main differences between quantitative and qualitative research is that, when adopting a qualitative approach, the investigator aims to analyze the most inner perspective of the group under study (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). To put it differently, the reality is very fragmented, and the researcher investigates every little aspect to formulate a pattern of relations.

For the characteristics described in the paragraphs above, I have chosen the study to be more empirical and rational. The main reason behind that is trying to avoid biased results capable of influencing negatively the overall outcome.

3.2.5 Validity and Reliability of Data

Since I believe that a quantitative approach is the most suitable system for the topic being studied, validity and reliability are fundamental aspects to consider. Their relevancy relies on guaranteeing that the findings are credible, coherent, and meaningful.

Lawson and Philpott (2008) describe validity by relying on two core concepts: first, the sample taken into consideration must characterize a clear group of the whole population; second, the measurement tools and statistics used throughout the study must be correlated with the topic being analyzed. I have placed careful thoughts in both aspects. Regarding the sample, it has been chosen following a procedure of random sampling in order to reduce the possibility of under-representation. In this way, the sample population avoids any bias tendencies, and it is balanced overall. Concerning the measurement instruments operated, the utilization of descriptive statistics and regression analysis are coherent with the subject. Furthermore, they facilitate the researcher in finding a rational path in order to discover possible correlations valuable to prove the rightfulness of the results.

When talking about researching and analyzing, reliability is strictly related to validity: data in order to be reliable must be valid. The utilization of information collected must follow a rational logic because otherwise the analysis might be absurd in terms of accuracy. For this reason, when conducting a quantitative study, the investigator must avoid contemplating information that might be meaningless and ambiguous (Lawson & Philpott, 2008).

In summary, the collection of data and the analysis conducted afterwards show the importance of focusing on both validity and reliability. The power of a study stems from the accuracy of the information and the consistency of the measurements used. Consequently, the outcomes can be considered trustworthy and useful to inform practical decision-making or further research on the subject.

3.2.6 Limitations of Research Methodology

These significant insights that were achieved through this research had some limitations throughout the progression process. First, while collecting the data, I encountered some restraints in terms of the extent and richness of information collected, particularly for Turkish family firms. Due to some limitations in accessing recent and consistent materials, I had to utilize individual websites. For this reason, the study may not fully capture the degree of differentiation specifically of these businesses. Second, the sample size of 150 firms (75 for each country) might represent a relatively small number of the whole population that encompasses family companies in both countries. While the sample provides useful insights and correlations, it might be insufficiently big to permit a generalization of the findings across the whole population. In summary, caution must be considered when exploiting the outcomes of this specific study as entirely representative of the broader framework.

3.3 Conclusion

Chapter 3's final aim is to describe in detail the methodology that was behind the construction of the database used for the research. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were mainly used in order to reach consistent and valid outcomes capable of satisfying the study's objectives. For this reason, I have decided to rely on quantitative analysis, trying, at the same time, to reduce possible biased errors and misleading solutions. Orbis was mainly used as a dataset to collect significant information, and it played a crucial role in performing a reliable and acceptable examination. As in every research, there were also some constraints throughout the process: the lack of up-to-date information regarding Turkish family firms (which led to implementation of TAIDER and company's private websites), and the restricted sample size taken into consideration. Overall, I was able to find correlations and disparities between Italy and Turkey, while using valid measurements and a clear method. In the following chapter, these findings will be described and interpreted.

CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter analyzed in detail the methodology used for the research. At this point, it is essential to share and thoroughly describe the main findings that have been obtained from the investigation. Therefore, Chapter 4 will systematically talk about the following objectives:

1- First, it will provide a careful examination of the main characteristics of Italian and Turkish family firms, investigating the level of gender discrimination within the variables taken into considerations
2- Second, it will describe the main findings obtained with the software SPSS, exhibiting possible correlations through regression analysis
3- Lastly, it will offer a comparative analysis between the two countries in order to establish if there are significant changes between them.

Structuring the chapter this way will allow for a comprehensive and clear presentation of the study's results, allowing for a critical assessment of the research question cited in Chapter 1 ("What is the level of gender discrimination within Italian and Turkish family firms?"). In conclusion, the principles of transparency, neutrality, and validity were applied to examine the findings, leaving no room for subjectivity and bias judgments.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

In order to have a better understanding of the basic characteristics of family firms in Italy and Turkey, I have examined the results dividing the data in four main areas of analysis.

1- Demographic Analysis

Two significant variables were identified and taken into consideration for this specific breakdown: the company's age and the region where the firm was founded.

The first feature helps the investigator to gain useful insights about the longevity of the companies, showing that both countries exhibit a long-standing history in terms of family businesses. In particular, Italy presents significant longevity within the companies examined: the minimum age calculated was 27 years, while the maximum was 147 years. Additionally, the average denoted in *Table 2* is notably high, with a value of 76.24 years, while the median is slightly lower, at 73 years.

	Oldest	Youngest	Average	Median
Company's Age	147	27	76,24	73

Table 2. Italian Companies' Age

The outcomes regarding Turkish family firms are very similar, although they exhibit lower levels of longevity overall. From *Table 3*, it is possible to note that the minimum age calculated among the firms examined was 21 years, while the maximum was 136 years. They show analogous results compared with Italian companies; however, they have slightly different results in terms of average and median: the average age obtained was 61.79 years (more than ten years difference with Italy) and the median was 62 years (almost ten years lower compared to the other group investigated).

	Oldest	Youngest	Average	Median
Company's Age	136	21	61,79	62

Table 3. Turkish Companies' Age

The second characteristic analyzed was the region where the company was founded, which helps the reader to understand if there are some specific areas where family businesses are more common and widespread. In the case of Italy, it is possible to notice from *Table 4* that more than 80% of the firms examined were founded in Veneto, Emilia Romagna, Piemonte and Lombardia, which are all regions located in the north of the country. The only southern region that shows a marginally significant percentage of relevancy is Campania with 8%, the others are below 3%.

Region	Frequency	Percentage
Veneto	23	31%
Lombardia	18	24%
Emilia-Romagna	13	17%
Umbria	2	3%
Marche	1	1%
Campania	6	8%
Piemonte	7	9%
Friuli Venezia Giulia	1	1%
Toscana	1	1%
Trentino Alto Adige	1	1%
Liguaria	1	1%
Lazio	1	1%
TOT	75	100%

Table 4. Italian Regions and Family Firms

As it is visible from *Table 5*, Turkey exhibits a similar pattern: 41% of the companies involved were founded in the north of the country. However, 50% of them are located in the center and western part of the nation, which together represent the biggest area considered in the sample. As it was for Italy, the south part of Turkey shows lower levels of involvement with less than 4%.

Region	Frequency	Percentage
Marmara	31	41%
Aegean Region	22	29%
Central Anatolia	16	21%
Black Sea Region	3	4%
Southeastern Anatolia	2	3%
Mediterranean Region	1	1%
TOT	75	100%

Table 5. Turkish Regions and Family Firms

2- Industry Analysis

In this specific investigation, two other variables were taken into consideration: the industry of operation and the company's status.

The Italian companies involved in the study are concentrated in 8 distinctive industrial segments: from *Table 6*, it is visible that the manufacturing sector is the most represented one with 35% and it is immediately followed by the food and beverage one with 31% and the textile one with 20%. The least represented sectors are the transportation and pharmaceutical ones with just 1%. Overall, the distribution of family firms is not homogeneous.

Industry	Frequency	Percentage
Manufacturing	26	35%
Textile	15	20%
Food and Beverage	23	31%
Industrial	5	7%
Transportation	1	1%
Pharmaceutical	1	1%
Retail	2	3%
Automotive	2	3%
TOT	75	100%

Table 6. Italian Sectors and Family Firms

On the other hand, the Turkish family organizations analyzed in the study come from 14 different sectors. Below, *Table 7* shows how they are actually distributed: the industrial segment that exhibits the highest percentage of representation is the construction one with more than 20%; the second most common one is the industrial one with 16%; and finally, textile and food and beverage sectors are the third most represented ones with both 13%. On the opposite side, the energy, transportation, and service industrial segments are the least frequent, each with just 1%. Compared to the previous situation analyzed, Turkish family enterprises are a bit more distributed and widespread across the financial system; even so, they are consistent in every sector.

Industry	Frequency	Percentage
Construction	16	21%
Retail	4	5%
Agriculture	2	3%
Food and Beverage	10	13%
Industrial	12	16%
Textile	10	13%
Electronics	3	4%
Energy	1	1%
Automotive	3	4%
Manufacturing	8	11%
Media	2	3%
Transportation	1	1%
Services	1	1%
Finance	2	3%
TOT	75	100%

Table 7. Turkish Sectors and Family Firms

The other meaningful variable is the one that describe the status of the firm: if the business has at least one production facility in a foreign country it is denominated “Global”, otherwise it is called “Local”. In the case of Italy, *Table 8* exhibits moderate results: 55% of the companies involved can be considered to be multinationals, while the remaining 45% of businesses follow a more limited and local operational approach. In other words, there exists a balanced reality where companies are willing to take risks going internationally and, at the same time, benefit from a more regionally focused approach.

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Global	41	55%
Local	34	45%
TOT	75	100%

Table 8. Status of Italian Family Firms

On the contrary, Turkish family firms show a more regional business attitude: just 29% of the enterprises have a production site in a foreign country, while 71% of them are based within the country’s borders and rely merely on the national economy. The results are expressed in *Table 9* below.

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Global	22	29%
Local	53	71%
TOT	75	100%

Table 9. Status of Turkish Family Firms

3- Gender and Generational Analysis

Within the third area of analysis, I wanted to shed light on the differences and similarities that the two nations exhibited regarding the gender of the founder, the number of generations involved in the family business, the gender of the successor, and the gender of the family director. Below, I will describe the outcomes concerning the variables just mentioned.

The sample of Italian family firms examined show a significant gap between the number of firms founded by male and the ones founded by female: from *Table 10*, it is possible to notice that just 12% of them have a female founder, while almost 90% of the businesses have male founders. These results suggest that in Italy the male figure of the family has more possibilities and power to create an enterprise.

Founder's Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	9	12%
Male	66	88%
TOT	75	100%

Table 10. Italian Founder's Gender

In order to have a deeper understanding of the frequency tables about the variables "Founder's Gender", "Successor's Gender", and "Family Director's Gender", I have used crosstabulations as a way to get more comprehensive insights regarding the level of gender bias across different regions and sectors. Therefore, from *Table 11* below, it is possible to notice that the majority of the Italian male founders are concentrated in mainly three northern regions: Veneto, Lombardia, and Emilia Romagna; conversely, out of the total 9 female founders, 5 of them based in Veneto. In both circumstances, the northern part of the country exhibits the highest percentages of representation for both genders.

Crosstab: Founder's Gender * Region

			REGION												
			Campania	Emilia-Romagna	Friuli Venezia Giulia	Lazio	Liguria	Lombardia	Marche	Piemonte	Toscana	Trentino Alto Adige	Umbria	Veneto	Total
FOUNDER'S GENDER	0	Count	6	13	1	1	0	17	0	6	1	1	2	18	66
		% within FOUNDER'S GENDER	9,1%	19,7%	1,5%	1,5%	0,0%	25,8%	0,0%	9,1%	1,5%	1,5%	3,0%	27,3%	100,0%
		% within REGION	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	0,0%	94,4%	0,0%	85,7%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	78,3%	88,0%
	1	Count	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	5	9
		% within FOUNDER'S GENDER	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	11,1%	11,1%	11,1%	11,1%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	55,6%	100,0%
		% within REGION	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%	5,6%	100,0%	14,3%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	21,7%	12,0%
Total		Count	6	13	1	1	1	18	1	7	1	1	2	23	75
		% within FOUNDER'S GENDER	8,0%	17,3%	1,3%	1,3%	1,3%	24,0%	1,3%	9,3%	1,3%	1,3%	2,7%	30,7%	100,0%
		% within REGION	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

*Table 11. Crosstab: Founder's Gender * Region within Italian Family Firms*

Table 12 shows the percentages of male and female founders in correlation with the industry: it is visible that the two most masculine sectors among the Italian family firms analyzed are manufacturing with almost 38% of representation and food and beverage with 29%, while the most feminine ones are again food and beverage with 44% and textile with 33%.

Crosstab: Founder's Gender * Industry

			INDUSTRY								
			Automotive	Food and Beverage	Industrial	Manufacturing	Pharmaceutical	Retail	Textile	Transportation	Total
FOUNDER'S GENDER	0	Count	2	19	5	25	1	1	12	1	66
		% within FOUNDER'S GENDER	3,0%	28,8%	7,6%	37,9%	1,5%	1,5%	18,2%	1,5%	100,0%
		% within INDUSTRY	100,0%	82,6%	100,0%	96,2%	100,0%	50,0%	80,0%	100,0%	88,0%
	1	Count	0	4	0	1	0	1	3	0	9
		% within FOUNDER'S GENDER	0,0%	44,4%	0,0%	11,1%	0,0%	11,1%	33,3%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within INDUSTRY	0,0%	17,4%	0,0%	3,8%	0,0%	50,0%	20,0%	0,0%	12,0%
Total		Count	2	23	5	26	1	2	15	1	75
		% within FOUNDER'S GENDER	2,7%	30,7%	6,7%	34,7%	1,3%	2,7%	20,0%	1,3%	100,0%
		% within INDUSTRY	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

*Table 12. Crosstab: Founder's Gender * Industry within Italian Family Firms*

As it was described in Chapter 2, Turkey is a male-dominated country, and the same trend is visible from *Table 13*: 100% of the firms taken into consideration for the study were established by male figures. Compared to Italy, these results indicate an even stronger perception of men within the business context: they have more power than women to manage and influence a company within the Turkish territory.

Founder's Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	0	0%
Male	75	100%
TOT	75	100%

Table 13. Turkish Founder's Gender

Since all Turkish founders are men, I have decided to not make any crosstabulation analysis because it would have not given any insightful information regarding the presence of gender disparity among different regions and sectors. For this specific category, the entire sample population is strongly male dominated.

Another important variable to take into consideration when talking about family firms is the number of generations involved within the business. In the case of Italy, more than 80% of the population has at most 3 generations that are part of the company and only 16% of it has more than 4 generations involved. These outcomes show that it is challenging to sustain a family enterprise in the long term and there is no guarantee that future generations will have the desire to be part of it and continue the business. The results are described in *Table 14* below.

N. of Generations	Frequency	Percentage
2	32	43%
3	31	41%
4	10	13%
5	2	3%
TOT	75	100%

Table 14. Number of Generations within Italian Family Firms

According to the results shown in *Table 15*, almost 80% of the Turkish family firms are in the second generation and only 21% are in the third and fourth generation. Compared to the Italian sample, these outcomes illustrate that it is even more difficult for future generations in Turkey to participate in the business. That is probably connected to the strong presence of authoritarian founders that are unwilling to let go of the business to the younger and unexpert generations.

N. of Generations	Frequency	Percentage
2	59	79%
3	14	19%
4	2	2%
TOT	75	100%

Table 15. Number of Generations within Turkish Family Firms

The third significant variable taken into account is the gender of the successor. As it was described in the previous chapter, in this analysis the gender was expressed as "Female" if at least one female family member was labeled as "President" in the list of the Board of Directors. According to the outcomes, Italian family businesses exhibit a strong attitude towards male successors: *Table 16* shows us that just 17% of the successors were female, while more than 80% were male. Even in this case, the dominance of men over women within family firms is substantial.

Successor's Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	13	17%
Male	62	83%
TOT	75	100%

Table 16. Italian Successor's Gender

Table 17 below exhibits the disparity between female and male successors across different regions in Italy: for this category, it is noticeable that, even in this circumstance, the three most represented areas for men are Veneto, Lombardia, and Emilia Romagna; on the other hand, women seem to be more widespread across different regions, such as Campania, Emilia Romagna, Lombardia, Piemonte, Umbria, and Veneto. In other words, the majority of male successors is from the northern part of the country, while female ones are not limited to one specific area and are more distributed across the nation compared to men.

Crosstab: Successor's Gender * Region

			REGION												
			Campania	Emilia-Romagna	Friuli Venezia Giulia	Lazio	Liguria	Lombardia	Marche	Piemonte	Toscana	Trentino Alto Adige	Umbria	Veneto	Total
SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	0	Count	4	11	1	1	1	14	1	5	1	1	1	21	62
		% within SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	6,5%	17,7%	1,6%	1,6%	1,6%	22,6%	1,6%	8,1%	1,6%	1,6%	1,6%	33,9%	100,0%
		% within REGION	66,7%	84,6%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	77,8%	100,0%	71,4%	100,0%	100,0%	50,0%	91,3%	82,7%
	1	Count	2	2	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	0	1	2	13
		% within SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	15,4%	15,4%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	30,8%	0,0%	15,4%	0,0%	0,0%	7,7%	15,4%	100,0%
		% within REGION	33,3%	15,4%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	22,2%	0,0%	28,6%	0,0%	0,0%	50,0%	8,7%	17,3%
Total		Count	6	13	1	1	1	18	1	7	1	1	2	23	75
		% within SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	8,0%	17,3%	1,3%	1,3%	1,3%	24,0%	1,3%	9,3%	1,3%	1,3%	2,7%	30,7%	100,0%
		% within REGION	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

*Table 17. Crosstab: Successor's Gender * Region within Italian Family Firms*

From the table underneath (*Table 18*), it is visible that for both genders the industrial sectors that are more represented in the Italian sample are the manufacturing and food and beverage: in the case of men, the first one counts for 35.5% of the total male successors, while the second one is about 27%; conversely, females correspond to 46% in the food and beverage and almost 31% in the manufacturing sector. That is very interesting because the two segments are both masculine and feminine: that can be attributable to the fact that there are strong traditional traits, which reflect the stereotyped belief that men are more suitable to control and manage the business, and modernized features that respect inclusivity and sustainability, showing a more open-minded workplace. Therefore, there is not a clear distinction among the sectors where gender bias is more perceptible.

Crosstab: Successor's Gender * Industry

			INDUSTRY								
			Automotive	Food and Beverage	Industrial	Manufacturing	Pharmaceutical	Retail	Textile	Transportation	Total
SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	0	Count	2	17	4	22	1	2	13	1	62
		% within SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	3,2%	27,4%	6,5%	35,5%	1,6%	3,2%	21,0%	1,6%	100,0%
		% within INDUSTRY	100,0%	73,9%	80,0%	84,6%	100,0%	100,0%	86,7%	100,0%	82,7%
	1	Count	0	6	1	4	0	0	2	0	13
		% within SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	0,0%	46,2%	7,7%	30,8%	0,0%	0,0%	15,4%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within INDUSTRY	0,0%	26,1%	20,0%	15,4%	0,0%	0,0%	13,3%	0,0%	17,3%
Total		Count	2	23	5	26	1	2	15	1	75
		% within SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	2,7%	30,7%	6,7%	34,7%	1,3%	2,7%	20,0%	1,3%	100,0%
		% within INDUSTRY	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

*Table 18. Crosstab: Successor's Gender * Industry within Italian Family Firms*

In the case of Turkey, the gender gap between men and women is more accentuated compared to the Italian situation: only 8% of the sample exhibited female successors, while more than 90% were male. These results, shown in *Table 19*, indicate that the perception of women is weaker compared to the one of men, and family firms prefer male heirs during a generational transition.

Successor's Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	6	8%
Male	69	92%
TOT	75	100%

Table 19. Turkish Successor's Gender

Below, *Table 20* shows the correlation between the Turkish regions and the successor's gender. It is visible that the areas with more male successors among the sample are Marmara and Aegean Region, which are both located in the western part of the country. Female successors are mainly from one region which is Marmara with almost 67% of representation. Even in this case, even though the western area of the nation is supposed to be the most modernized and developed part, it exhibits high degrees of inequality.

Crosstab: Successor's Gender * Region

			REGION						
			Aegean Region	Black Sea Region	Central Anatolia	Marmara	Mediterranean Region	Southeastern Anatolia	Total
SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	0	Count	21	3	16	27	0	2	69
		% within SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	30,4%	4,3%	23,2%	39,1%	0,0%	2,9%	100,0%
		% within REGION	95,5%	100,0%	100,0%	87,1%	0,0%	100,0%	92,0%
	1	Count	1	0	0	4	1	0	6
		% within SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	16,7%	0,0%	0,0%	66,7%	16,7%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within REGION	4,5%	0,0%	0,0%	12,9%	100,0%	0,0%	8,0%
Total		Count	22	3	16	31	1	2	75
		% within SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	29,3%	4,0%	21,3%	41,3%	1,3%	2,7%	100,0%
		% within REGION	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

*Table 20. Successor's Gender * Region within Turkish Family Firms*

Furthermore, from *Table 21*, it is possible to notice that three most represented sectors for male successors are construction with almost 22% of representation and food and beverage and industrial with 14.5% respectively. On the opposite side, although women are much less represented compared to men, they are homogeneously distributed across industrial sector with 33% and construction, finance, retail, and textile with less than 17% each. This image shows us that the most traditional sectors are male centered and that women are not considered enough throughout the succession process.

Crosstab: Successor's Gender * Industry

			INDUSTRY														
			Agriculture	Automotive	Construction	Electronics	Energy	Finance	Food and Beverage	Industrial	Manufacturing	Media	Retail	Services	Textile	Transportation	Total
SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	0	Count	2	3	15	3	1	1	10	10	8	2	3	1	9	1	69
		% within SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	2,9%	4,3%	21,7%	4,3%	1,4%	1,4%	14,5%	14,5%	11,6%	2,9%	4,3%	1,4%	13,0%	1,4%	100,0%
		% within INDUSTRY	100,0%	100,0%	93,8%	100,0%	100,0%	50,0%	100,0%	83,3%	100,0%	100,0%	75,0%	100,0%	90,0%	100,0%	92,0%
	1	Count	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	6
		% within SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	0,0%	0,0%	16,7%	0,0%	0,0%	16,7%	0,0%	33,3%	0,0%	0,0%	16,7%	0,0%	16,7%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within INDUSTRY	0,0%	0,0%	6,3%	0,0%	0,0%	50,0%	0,0%	16,7%	0,0%	0,0%	25,0%	0,0%	10,0%	0,0%	8,0%
Total		Count	2	3	16	3	1	2	10	12	8	2	4	1	10	1	75
		% within SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	2,7%	4,0%	21,3%	4,0%	1,3%	2,7%	13,3%	16,0%	10,7%	2,7%	5,3%	1,3%	13,3%	1,3%	100,0%
		% within INDUSTRY	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

*Table 21. Successor's Gender * Industry within Turkish Family Firms*

The last variable taken into consideration within the gender and generational analysis is the "Family Director's Gender". Throughout the study, the term "Female" was used if at least one female family member was listed in the Board of Directors. This variable indicates the level of inclusivity exhibited by family enterprises, reflecting if there are any circumstances of gender discrimination between family members when executive roles need to be appointed.

According to the results, Italian family firms have a balanced degree of inclusivity: as noticeable from *Table 22*, the level of female family director is higher compared to the male one (53% and 47% correspondingly). Compared with the previous variables, for the first time throughout this analysis female individuals are actually more than male members, showing that Italian family businesses suggest a perceptible improvement regarding gender bias perceptions.

Family Director's Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	40	53%
Male	35	47%
TOT	75	100%

Table 22. Italian Family Director's Gender

As it was the case for the previous two variables, the level of male family directors within Italian family organizations is high in mostly three northern regions: Veneto, Lombardia, and Emilia Romagna. On the contrary, the percentages of female family directors are evenly distributed in different areas such as Campania, Emilia-Romagna, Lombardia, Piemonte, Umbria, and Veneto. However, the northern part of the country has the highest percentage for both genders, showing that it is partially influenced by traditional values and unbiased standards. The results are shown in *Table 23* below.

Crosstab: Family Director's Gender * Region

			REGION												
			Campania	Emilia-Romagna	Friuli Venezia Giulia	Lazio	Liguria	Lombardia	Marche	Piemonte	Toscana	Trentino Alto Adige	Umbria	Veneto	Total
FAMILY DIRECTOR GENDER	0	Count	3	8	0	0	0	9	0	3	0	0	0	12	35
		% within FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER	8,6%	22,9%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	25,7%	0,0%	8,6%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	34,3%	100,0%
		% within REGION	50,0%	61,5%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	50,0%	0,0%	42,9%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	52,2%	46,7%
	1	Count	3	5	1	1	1	9	1	4	1	1	2	11	40
		% within FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER	7,5%	12,5%	2,5%	2,5%	2,5%	22,5%	2,5%	10,0%	2,5%	2,5%	5,0%	27,5%	100,0%
		% within REGION	50,0%	38,5%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	50,0%	100,0%	57,1%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	47,8%	53,3%
Total		Count	6	13	1	1	1	18	1	7	1	1	2	23	75
		% within FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER	8,0%	17,3%	1,3%	1,3%	1,3%	24,0%	1,3%	9,3%	1,3%	1,3%	2,7%	30,7%	100,0%
		% within REGION	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

*Table 23. Family Director's Gender * Region within Italian Family Firms*

Regarding the distribution of Italian family director's genders within the industry, *Table 24* underneath shows that most of the males belong to the food and beverage with almost 26% of representation, manufacturing with 28%, and textile sector with 25%, while females are mostly represented in the manufacturing and food and beverage segments with 40% and 35% respectively.

Crosstab: Family Director's Gender * Industry

			INDUSTRY								
			Automotive	Food and Beverage	Industrial	Manufacturing	Pharmaceutical	Retail	Textile	Transportation	Total
FAMILY DIRECTOR GENDER	0	Count	2	9	4	10	0	1	9	0	35
		% within FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER	5,7%	25,7%	11,4%	28,6%	0,0%	2,9%	25,7%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within INDUSTRY	100,0%	39,1%	80,0%	38,5%	0,0%	50,0%	60,0%	0,0%	46,7%
	1	Count	0	14	1	16	1	1	6	1	40
		% within FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER	0,0%	35,0%	2,5%	40,0%	2,5%	2,5%	15,0%	2,5%	100,0%
		% within INDUSTRY	0,0%	60,9%	20,0%	61,5%	100,0%	50,0%	40,0%	100,0%	53,3%
Total		Count	2	23	5	26	1	2	15	1	75
		% within FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER	2,7%	30,7%	6,7%	34,7%	1,3%	2,7%	20,0%	1,3%	100,0%
		% within INDUSTRY	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

*Table 24. Family Director's Gender * Industry within Italian Family Firms*

In the case of the Turkish sample, the distinction between women and men is still substantial: only 27% of the family enterprises involved in the analysis exhibits female family directors, while more than 70% of them have male family directors. The results, which are shown in *Table 25*, are very clear and similar to the previous ones obtained for the other variables, denoting the fact that the Turkish family marketplace is strongly male dominated.

Family Director's Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	20	27%
Male	55	73%
TOT	75	100%

Table 25. Turkish Family Director's Gender

As was previously done for the other variables, also in this case I employed crosstabulation in order to understand the distribution of Turkish family director's genders across different regions. Below, *Table 26* exhibits similar results compared to the successor's gender: even though the proportion between men and women is not homogeneous, both genders are strongly represented in Marmara and Aegean Region which are located in the western part of the nation. Although these areas are considered to be innovative compared to the rest of the country, the results show us that the presence of traditional norms and values are still widespread and strongly recognized across the nation, meaning that male individuals have better opportunities than female ones.

Crosstab: Family Director's Gender * Region

			REGION						
			Aegean Region	Black Sea Region	Central Anatolia	Marmara	Mediterranean Region	Southeastern Anatolia	Total
FAMILY DIRECTOR GENDER	0	Count	16	3	14	20	0	2	55
		% within FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER	29,1%	5,5%	25,5%	36,4%	0,0%	3,6%	100,0%
		% within REGION	72,7%	100,0%	87,5%	64,5%	0,0%	100,0%	73,3%
	1	Count	6	0	2	11	1	0	20
		% within FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER	30,0%	0,0%	10,0%	55,0%	5,0%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within REGION	27,3%	0,0%	12,5%	35,5%	100,0%	0,0%	26,7%
Total		Count	22	3	16	31	1	2	75
		% within FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER	29,3%	4,0%	21,3%	41,3%	1,3%	2,7%	100,0%
		% within REGION	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

*Table 26. Family Director's Gender * Region within Turkish Family Firms*

Finally, the last dimension taken into further analysis is the degree of disparity among different sectors: from *Table 27*, it is possible to notice that the most male dominated ones are construction, food and beverage, and industrial with 25% and 16% of representation correspondingly, while the situation is more even in the case of female directors since they are distributed across several segments such as construction, finance, industrial, manufacturing, retail, and textile.

Crosstab: Family Director's Gender * Industry

			INDUSTRY														
			Agriculture	Automotive	Construction	Electronics	Energy	Finance	Food and Beverage	Industrial	Manufacturing	Media	Retail	Services	Textile	Transportation	Total
FAMILY DIRECTOR GENDER	0	Count	2	3	14	2	0	0	9	9	5	1	2	0	8	0	55
		% within FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER	3,6%	5,5%	25,5%	3,6%	0,0%	0,0%	16,4%	16,4%	9,1%	1,8%	3,6%	0,0%	14,5%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within INDUSTRY	100,0%	100,0%	87,5%	66,7%	0,0%	0,0%	90,0%	75,0%	62,5%	50,0%	50,0%	0,0%	80,0%	0,0%	73,3%
	1	Count	0	0	2	1	1	2	1	3	3	1	2	1	2	1	20
		% within FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER	0,0%	0,0%	10,0%	5,0%	5,0%	10,0%	5,0%	15,0%	15,0%	5,0%	10,0%	5,0%	10,0%	5,0%	100,0%
		% within INDUSTRY	0,0%	0,0%	12,5%	33,3%	100,0%	100,0%	10,0%	25,0%	37,5%	50,0%	50,0%	100,0%	20,0%	100,0%	26,7%
Total		Count	2	3	16	3	1	2	10	12	8	2	4	1	10	1	75
		% within FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER	2,7%	4,0%	21,3%	4,0%	1,3%	2,7%	13,3%	16,0%	10,7%	2,7%	5,3%	1,3%	13,3%	1,3%	100,0%
		% within INDUSTRY	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

*Table 27. Family Director's Gender * Industry within Turkish Family Firms*

Summing up, although women tend to be more protected and considered in modernized areas compared to underdeveloped and rural ones, the influence of traditional values and social norms is still strongly established within both countries, and it negatively impacts their career path and involvement in the family business. This is significantly interlinked with the Social Role Theory previously explained in Chapter 2, describing that men are considered to be more suitable for managerial and executive roles, while women tend to be left behind occupying less responsible and secondary positions. At the same time, this state of mind influences also the succession process, where family owners generally prefer their sons over their daughters. Furthermore, the results obtained about the family director's gender variable may be related to the Boundary Theory, which explains that in familiar business contexts female members have less possibilities to advance within their career's path because of the preconception that women will have a family to take care of and consequently less time to dedicate for the enhancement of the business. As a result, within all three categories (founder, successor, and family director), women are less represented compared to men.

4- Size Analysis

The last dimension analyzed encompasses two variables that describe the size of the organizations investigated: the first one indicates the number of employees, while the second one specifies the revenues regarding the financial year of 2023. Both characteristics were taken into consideration throughout the study as a way to compare and differentiate the organizations in both samples.

The Italian sample of family firms shows a range of size that is considered varied and broad: as visible from *Table 28*, the minimum number of employees engaged is 12, while the maximum is around 45 thousand; additionally, the average number of workers is slightly over 2 thousand and the median is around 600.

	Min	Max	Average	Median
N. of Employees	12	45094	2234	567

Table 28. N. of Employees in Italian Family Firms

Even when considering the Turkish sample, the number of workers involved is wide and distributed: as noticeable from *Table 29*, the minimum number of employees is 80, while the maximum number is 95 thousand; furthermore, the average number of workers employed is 8 thousand and the median is slightly over 2 thousand (compared to the Italian sample, the results are four times larger).

	Min	Max	Average	Median
N. of Employees	80	95000	8017	2100

Table 29. N. of Employees in Turkish Family Firms

The last variable taken into consideration is financial revenue for 2023, which is expressed in millions of euros. Italian family firms exhibit a diverse and mixed selection: the minimum considered is 17 million of euros, while the maximum is almost 6 billion; moreover, the average revenues calculated is slightly over 700 million and the median is 200 million. The results are expressed in *Table 30* below.

	Min	Max	Average	Median
Revenues 2023 (mln €)	17	5860	732	236

Table 30. Revenues of Italian Family Firms

The Turkish sample shows higher levels of revenues compared to the Italian one: the minimum level of profit analyzed is 2 million of euros, while the maximum is over 16 billion; additionally, the average size of the businesses involved surpass 1 billion in revenues and the median is almost 200 million. The results are indicated in *Table 31* below.

	Min	Max	Average	Median
Revenues 2023 (mln €)	2	16500	1021	160

Table 31. Revenues of Turkish Family Firms

Conclusion

Summing up, from this descriptive analysis it is possible to understand the similarities and differences that characterize family firms in both nations across demographic, industrial, generational, and size dimensions. In both cases, family organizations exhibit high levels of longevity and are concentrated mostly in the northern and western areas of the two nations, verifying that, as already observed in Chapter 1, there are significant disparities across the Italian and Turkish national territories. Furthermore, Italian family firms are grouped in mainly three segments (manufacturing, food and beverage, and textile) and show a moderate international extent, while Turkish enterprises are slightly more widespread in different sectors and exhibit a more domestic business approach. Even in this case, the results confirm what was already assessed within the literature review in Chapter 2, evidencing that Turkish family firms tend to prefer local marketplace as a way to avoid potential risks and downfalls, whereas Italian organizations are more evenly distributed across international and domestic financial systems. Additionally, according to the data both nations are characterized by a male dominated family business context, which demonstrate that the workplace is still substantially discriminating, and women tend to have less opportunities compared to men. Though, according to the results Italian family firms exhibit higher degrees of inclusivity in executive roles: more than 50% of the sample analyzed has at least one female family member present in the Board of Directors. The results examined in this paragraph are fundamental for a more comprehensive understanding of family firms in Italy and Turkey and can be used for further analysis.

4.3 Gender Bias in Family Firms

In order to have a deeper understanding of the results obtained throughout the analysis, I was able to build a gender bias scorecard capable of describing the degrees of gender discrimination within family firms and compare the scores of the two countries. As it was already described in the previous chapter, Italy and Turkey have been analyzed separately and three main variables were taken into further consideration: “Founder’s Gender”, “Successor’s Gender”, and “Family Director’s Gender”.

Below in *Table 32*, it is possible to notice the differences between women and men within Italian family firms: the “Founder” and “Successor” categories show a clear and substantial discrepancy between the percentages of male and females, as in both cases more than 80% of the founders and successors are men while not even 20% are women; the only category that exhibits a balanced proportion between male and female is the "Family Director" one. Through these results, I was able to build a gender ratio variable dividing the female percentage by the male one for each category as a way to quantify the gender bias score examined afterwards.

ITALY	Male %	Female %	Gender Ratio (Female/Male)
Founder	88	12	0,14
Successor	83	17	0,21
Family Director	47	53	1,14

Table 32. Gender Ratios in Italian Family Firms

In *Table 33*, it is possible to observe that the situation regarding gender bias in Turkish family businesses is even worse than the Italian one: all three groups show a significant male dominance over female family members; moreover, in two cases the percentage of men surpasses 90%, which strongly emphasizes the problem of gender discrimination within the working environment in Turkey.

TURKEY	Male %	Female %	Bias Ratio (Female/Male)
Founder	100	0	0,00
Successor	92	8	0,09
Family Director	73	27	0,36

Table 33. Gender Ratios in Turkish Family Firms

Dividing the percentage of female by the one of male and utilizing the scorecard already presented in Chapter 3 (*Table 1*), it was possible to build an overall gender bias score that included all three categories for both nations. Essentially, the scorecard examines how close the bias ratio is to 1: in other words, if the proportion of females over males is 1 it means that there is balance between the two genders (50% are men and 50% are women); otherwise, if the ratio moves away from 1 towards 0 and 2, it means that there is no equilibrium between male and female family members. Thus, the closer the ratio is to 1 the higher the score and the higher the score the lower is the gender bias perceived (e.g. a score of 10 points means that there is perfect equilibrium, and no gender discrimination is perceived). Below, *Table 34* shows the results of the analysis: in both nations family firms are still characterized with a significant discriminated and biased workplace, which gives less opportunities to female family members. The only positive difference between Italy and Turkey is that the first one exhibits relatively better results in terms of female family directors, other than that there is still room for improvement: Turkey exhibits a score of 2.67, while Italy of 4 out of 10.

Country	Founder Bias Score	Successor Bias Score	Family Director Bias Score	**Overall Gender Bias Score**
TURKEY	2	2	4	**2,67**
ITALY	2	2	8	**4**

Table 34. Gender Bias Score: Italy vs. Turkey

4.4 Italian Family Firms: Regression Analysis

From the previous paragraph, it is evident and clear that the distinction between women and men is still significant in both countries: according to the results, Italy has exhibited a pattern of improvement, while Turkey remains a male centered country where men have more possibilities to manage and control family businesses. In this section, I will examine the results that I have obtained using the software SPSS. The main reason behind the utilization of this specific tool is to understand if there are certain variables that can influence the presence of gender bias within family organizations. For this reason, I conducted a regression analysis which is capable of giving us useful insights to further examine.

As already described in the previous chapter, the two dependent variables taken into consideration are "Successor's Gender" and "Family Director's Gender", while the independent variables are "Status", "Number of Employees", and "Revenues of 2023". In order to answer in a clear and comprehensive way the question presented in Chapter 1, I wanted to recognize if there are specific patterns of influence that can explain the presence of gender discrimination within family firms, analyzing the degree of impact that independent variables can have towards dependent ones. Both dependent variables are nominal and binary values, which means that they describe the gender of successor and family director using 0 to identify male individuals and 1 for females. For this exact reason, I opted to utilize a specific regression analysis in both cases which is called binary logistic regression. The method is used when there are targeted variables that are dummy, which specifically represent categories and not numerical values.

The first variable taken into consideration is the "Successor's Gender" within Italian family businesses and it is confronted with the three independent variables mentioned above. From *Table 35* below, it is possible to notice the classification table which shows the distinction between male and female successors, and it gives predictions about the gender without taking into consideration the independent variables (Block 0). In the case exhibited below, the overall accuracy of the model is around 82%: since in the dataset the proportion of male and female is not balanced, the model is able to predict with perfect accuracy the most frequent value (in this case male, which is 0) and with no precision the one labelled as 1 (e.g. female individuals). The model makes a prevision only based on the frequency of values, showing that the disparity between men and women is substantial.

Classification Table[a,b]

Observed			Predicted: SUCCESSOR'S GENDER 0	Predicted: SUCCESSOR'S GENDER 1	Predicted: Percentage Correct
Step 0	SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	0	62	0	100,0
		1	13	0	0,0
	Overall Percentage				82,7

a. Constant is included in the model.

b. The cut value is ,500

Table 35. Italian Successor's Gender Model without Independent Variables

Table 36 underneath shows how the predictions of the model change taking into account the independent variables (Block 1). In this circumstance, all three variables don't have any influence on the dependent one: it is very clear that the overall percentage of the model's estimate has not changed from the previous one (both models have an overall percentage of 82.7).

Classification Table[a]

Observed			Predicted: SUCCESSOR'S GENDER 0	Predicted: SUCCESSOR'S GENDER 1	Predicted: Percentage Correct
Step 1	SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	0	62	0	100,0
		1	13	0	0,0
	Overall Percentage				82,7

a. The cut value is ,500

Table 36. Italian Successor's Gender Model with Independent Variables

From *Table 37*, it is more evident that the three independent variables don't considerably affect the "Successor's Gender". The significance levels for the values taken into account for this specific analysis are not smaller than 0.05, meaning that the threshold of correlation between dependent and independent variables is not respected and therefore, the model cannot be significantly relevant.

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	STATUS	0,111	0,658	0,029	1	0,866	1,118
	Zscore: NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	-0,149	0,461	0,104	1	0,747	0,862
	Zscore: REVENUES 2023	0,179	0,360	0,248	1	0,619	1,196
	Constant	-1,620	0,435	13,854	1	0,000	0,198

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STATUS, Zscore: NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, Zscore: REVENUES 2023.

Table 37. Significance Levels of the Independent Variables within Italian Family Firms

The second dependent variable to be considered in the study is the one entitled "Family Director's Gender", which describes the presence of male and female family members within the Board of Directors. In this second case, the presence of female family directors is slightly higher compared to the one of male, for this reason the model in Block 0 has an overall percentage of prediction (53%) that is lower compared with the previous situation. Since the number of women and men is almost balanced, the accuracy of the framework is not very high. The results are visible from *Table 38* below.

Classification Table[a,b]

Observed			Predicted FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER 0	Predicted FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER 1	Percentage Correct
Step 0	FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER	0	0	35	0,0
		1	0	40	100,0
	Overall Percentage				53,3

a. Constant is included in the model.

b. The cut value is ,500

Table 38. Italian Family Director's Gender Model without Independent Variables

In Block 1, the overall percentage of the model has increased its accuracy to 56% with the introduction of independent variables, but it does not actually mean that the values can significantly influence the "Family Director's Gender" variable; it just denotes that the model has marginally improved its precision of prediction. The outcomes are visible from *Table 39* underneath.

Classification Table[a]

Observed			Predicted FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER 0	Predicted FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER 1	Percentage Correct
Step 1	FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER	0	6	29	17,1
		1	4	36	90,0
	Overall Percentage				56,0

a. The cut value is ,500

Table 39. Italian Family Director's Gender Model with Independent Variables

Table 40 below clearly exhibits that even in this case none of the independent variables taken into account influence in a significant way the prediction of the dependent variable. All of them are bigger than 0.05 and therefore cannot be considered impactful for the forecast of "Family Director's Gender".

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	STATUS	-0,188	0,498	0,143	1	0,706	0,829
	Zscore: NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	-0,206	0,353	0,340	1	0,560	0,814
	Zscore: REVENUES 2023	-0,111	0,303	0,134	1	0,714	0,895
	Constant	0,216	0,326	0,439	1	0,508	1,241

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STATUS, Zscore: NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, Zscore: REVENUES 2023.

Table 40. Significance Levels of the Independent Variables within Italian Family Firms

Overall, within the Italian population sample none of the two dependent variables taken into further analysis show a relevant level of significance, meaning that the three categories chosen as independent variables do not influence and impact in a meaningful way the presence of male or female successors and family directors. Perhaps there are other social and cultural variables not taken into account that affect gender bias within Italian family businesses.

4.5 Turkish Family Firms: Regression Analysis

The same approach of analysis was also used for the dataset that groped together the Turkish family enterprises; as a way to distinguish and compare the results of two countries, the dependent and independent variables used in this case were obviously taken from the Turkish framework.

"Successor's Gender" is the first dependent variable that is taken into further consideration in order to understand if the three independent variables ("Status", "Number of Employees", and "Revenues of 2023") can actually affect the prediction of the dependent one. Underneath in *Table 41*, there are visible the estimates of the model without taking into account the independent values: the overall percentage of 92% is elevated because of the discrepancy between the male and female proportion and therefore it predicts with exact accuracy the male individuals (100%), while it has difficulties in forecasting female members (0%).

Classification Table[a,b]

Observed			Predicted: SUCCESSOR'S GENDER 0	Predicted: SUCCESSOR'S GENDER 1	Percentage Correct
Step 0	SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	0	69	0	100,0
		1	6	0	0,0
	Overall Percentage				92,0

a. Constant is included in the model.

b. The cut value is ,500

Table 41. Turkish Successor's Gender Model without Independent Variables

In Block 1, with the introduction of the independent variables, the overall percentage is still at 92%, which signifies that the presence of the three values do not improve the precision of the model. The results are visible in *Table 42* below.

Classification Table[a]

Observed			Predicted: SUCCESSOR'S GENDER 0	Predicted: SUCCESSOR'S GENDER 1	Percentage Correct
Step 1	SUCCESSOR'S GENDER	0	69	0	100,0
		1	6	0	0,0
	Overall Percentage				92,0

a. The cut value is ,500

Table 42. Turkish Successor's Gender Model with Independent Variables

From *Table 43* below, it is possible to notice that the independent variable labelled as "Status" has a p-value of 0.036 and therefore, it can be considered statistically significant in this model because it is smaller than 0.05. In this circumstance, 3.6% indicates the probability that the association between "Status" and "Successor's Gender" is accidental, which recognizes the fact that the independent variable can actually affect the dependent one since it is below the threshold. Conversely, the other two estimates are not thought to be meaningful because of their high levels of significance.

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	STATUS	-2,085	0,995	4,388	1	0,036	0,124
	Zscore: NUMBER OF EMLOYEES	-1,488	1,131	1,731	1	0,188	0,226
	Zscore: REVENUES 2023	1,371	0,934	2,158	1	0,142	3,941
	Constant	-1,448	0,588	6,064	1	0,014	0,235

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STATUS, Zscore: NUMBER OF EMLOYEES, Zscore: REVENUES 2023.

Table 43. Significance Levels of the Independent Variables within Turkish Family Firms

Additionally, the table above shows us that the coefficient B is equal to -2.085, which signifies that local Turkish family organizations are less likely to have daughters as successors compared to multinationals. In other words, international companies tend to be more inclusive and open-minded than domestic ones, offering women greater possibilities for career advancement and executive positions. These results are also confirmed by *Chart 1* below, which unambiguously exhibits that female family members are considered as possible successors more in global organizations than in local ones.

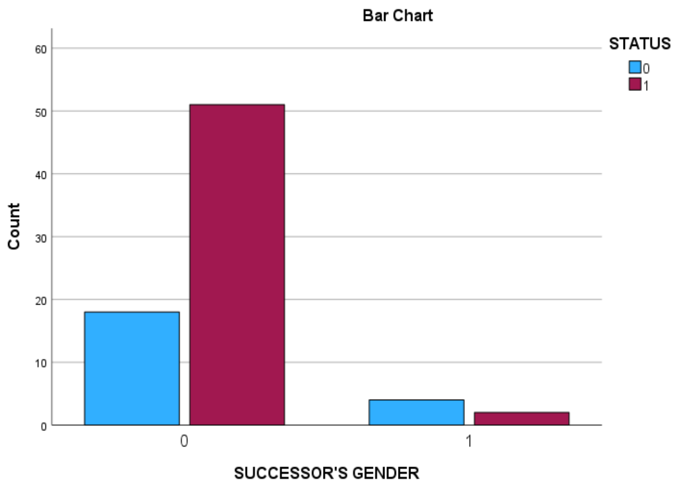

*Chart 1. Successor's Gender * Status within Turkish Family Firms*

The last variable to be taken into further analysis is the one called “Family Director’s Gender”, and it explains the disparity between men and women in executive roles within Turkish family enterprises. *Table 44* shows that the overall percentage of accuracy of the model is moderate with 73.3% and it explains with no errors the percentage of male individuals: as mentioned above, the two genders are not proportionally represented and in absence of independent variables the model takes into account just the most frequent value, which in this circumstance is the male category.

Classification Table[a,b]

Observed			Predicted FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER 0	1	Percentage Correct
Step 0	FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER	0	55	0	100,0
		1	20	0	0,0
	Overall Percentage				73,3

a. Constant is included in the model.

b. The cut value is ,500

Table 44. Turkish Family Director's Gender Model without Independent Variables

When the independent variables are taken into consideration (Block 1), the model slightly improves to 74.7%, but it still predicts with high precision the male category, while it has trouble in predicting correctly the female one. The outcomes are shown in *Table 45* below.

Classification Table[a]

Observed			Predicted FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER 0	1	Percentage Correct
Step 1	FAMILY DIRECTOR'S GENDER	0	54	1	98,2
		1	18	2	10,0
	Overall Percentage				74,7

a. The cut value is ,500

Table 45. Turkish Family Director's Gender Model with Independent Variables

In conclusion, *Table 46* underneath exhibits that the three independent variables have high levels of p-values which exceed the threshold of 0.05 in order to be considered significant. Therefore, as in this case none of the values taken into account can meaningfully impact and predict the gender of family director within Turkish family firms.

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	STATUS	0,143	0,660	0,047	1	0,828	1,154
	Zscore: NUMBER OF EMLOYEES	-0,330	0,621	0,283	1	0,595	0,719
	Zscore: REVENUES 2023	0,645	0,571	1,275	1	0,259	1,906
	Constant	-1,135	0,540	4,415	1	0,036	0,321

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STATUS, Zscore: NUMBER OF EMLOYEES, Zscore: REVENUES 2023.

Table 46. Significance Levels of the Independent Variables within Turkish Family Firms

In summary, the dependent variable "Successor's Gender" is significantly influenced by the independent one called "Status": international Turkish enterprises have more female successors compared to the local ones. This outcome can be associated with the Social Role Theory, which explains how social norms and cultural values affect the role of women within the working environment; consequently, domestic organizations tend to be highly influenced by the presence of biased traditional principles, which negatively impact the progression towards gender equality. Moreover, it is legitimate to assume that working within foreign countries decreases the degree of embedded gender discrimination, which gets us back to the Implicit Gender Bias Theory. On the other hand, the dependent variable "Family Director's Gender" shows no level of correlation with the three independent ones.

4.6 Comparative Analysis

In order to compare the two countries and to obtain more significant results, I have merged the values of the Italian and Turkish dataset in a unique one. The method of analysis used is still the binary logistic regression and the variables taken into consideration have not changed as well. I only added one independent variable called "Country" to differentiate Italy from Turkey: the first one is equal to 1, while the second is 0. Furthermore, the variable is identified as a categorical value as a way to better understand the possible disparities between the two nations; in this specific case, it is capable of improving the robustness of the model and to explain better the outcomes.

The first dependent variable to be taken into account is the "Successor's Gender": below, *Table 47* exhibits that the significance level of the model is 0.244 which is bigger than 0.05 and it expresses that there is no improvement in the model after introducing the independent variables.

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	5,450	4	0,244
	Block	5,450	4	0,244
	Model	5,450	4	0,244

Table 47. Significance Level of the Model with Independent Variables

The same results are visible in more detail in *Table 48*, where there are all the independent variables used for the regression: none of them have a p-value smaller than 0.05, meaning that there is actually no meaningful influence between the dependent variables and the independent ones.

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	STATUS	-0,485	0,542	0,801	1	0,371	0,616
	Punteggio Z: NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	-0,382	0,503	0,578	1	0,447	0,682
	Punteggio Z: REVENUES 2023	0,462	0,422	1,199	1	0,274	1,588
	COUNTRY(1)	0,658	0,596	1,221	1	0,269	1,931
	Constant	-2,101	0,575	13,345	1	0,000	0,122

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STATUS, Punteggio Z: NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, Punteggio Z: REVENUES 2023, COUNTRY.

Table 48. Significance Level of the Independent Variables

The outcomes are different when "Family Director's Gender" is the dependent variable taken into further consideration: *Table 49* shows that the overall level of significance of the model is actually relevant since it has a p-value of 0.014, which is substantially smaller than 0.05. In this circumstance, the model that includes the independent variables has improved its accuracy compared to the other one that comprises only the dependent variable.

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	12,539	4	0,014
	Block	12,539	4	0,014
	Model	12,539	4	0,014

Table 49. Significance Level of the Model with Independent Variables

Additionally, although there are three variables that are not meaningful to the model because of their high levels of p-value, there is the "Country" category that shows a high degree of significance since its p-value is well below the threshold of 0.05 (Sig.= 0.004). Moreover, from *Table 50* below, it is possible to observe that the coefficient B is positive and equal to 1.134, suggesting that Italian family firms exhibit higher probabilities to have female family directors compared to Turkish family enterprises. More specifically, the chances of noticing a woman within the role of family director in Italy is more than three times higher than in Turkey (because the model exhibits an odds ratio for the independent variable "Country", Exp(B), equal to 3.110).

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	STATUS	0,052	0,383	0,018	1	0,892	1,053
	Punteggio Z: NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	-0,160	0,337	0,227	1	0,634	0,852
	Punteggio Z: REVENUES 2023	0,302	0,314	0,925	1	0,336	1,352
	COUNTRY(1)	1,134	0,390	8,479	1	0,004	3,110
	Constant	-1,041	0,392	7,056	1	0,008	0,353

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STATUS, Punteggio Z: NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, Punteggio Z: REVENUES 2023, COUNTRY.

Table 50. Significance Level of the Independent Variables

In conclusion, from this comparative analysis it is possible to observe that the independent variable "Country" has a significant impact on the family director's gender, meaning that Italian family firms offer more chances to female members to have executive positions within the business. On the hand, "Successor's Gender" is not meaningfully influenced by any of the independent variables taken into consideration.

4.7 Possible Remedies

The sections above have deeply analyzed the extent of gender discrimination within family firms in Italy and Turkey, showing that there exist high levels of bias and different opportunities between female and male family members. Both countries need to take direct actions aimed at improving and developing unbiased working environments, where there are less differences and limitations between the genders. That is why I want to express some ideas as a way to reduce, or at least limit, the difficulties that women encounter within their working life, answering the third question mentioned in the previous chapter. First of all, I think that organizations have to invest in resources capable of making the hiring and promotion processes more standardized, adopting specific procedures that support equal treatments and approaches. In order to accomplish it, family firms need to clearly establish objective and transparent criteria of valuation capable of avoiding possible favoritism and subjective judgments. Another aspect that businesses need to take into consideration is the organizational culture which can negatively impact the perception of female workers. Consequently, enterprises have to promote an inclusive working environment, which is characterized by respect and diversity. In this case, it is crucial to organize awareness seminars and courses of sensibilization, where people can express their opinions and stories as a way to stimulate a more open mentality. Finally, I think that firms must support work-life balance policies, capable of allowing more flexible timetables and remote working. In this way, family members can actually have the possibility to achieve their working obligations and goals, while taking care of their personal needs. These three behavioral approaches could improve gender inclusiveness within family business contexts, without excessively transforming the working environment.

4.8 Conclusion

Summing up, the empirical analysis was useful in order to establish the general characteristics of family businesses and to understand the overall degree of gender discrimination in both nations. For these reasons, I decided to initially explain the results obtained through a descriptive analysis: in this way, the reader is able to better understand what can influence and affect the working environment of family organizations that are based in two different states. Both Italy and Turkey are characterized by longstanding enterprises that are mostly based in the north and west part of the countries, confirming the disparities previously mentioned in Chapter 2. Furthermore, Italian family firms seem to prefer mainly three big sectors (manufacturing, food and beverage, and textile) and are moderately attracted by international possibilities; on the other hand, Turkish family organizations belong to several distinctive economic segments and are characterized by a more local business attitude. Additionally, from the outcomes it is clear that both Italy and Turkey have high degrees of gender discrimination: in both cases, the family business workplace is significantly male dominated, and it shows no equilibrium between women and men. As a way to demonstrate these results in a more comprehensive way, I was capable of building a gender bias score which eventually expressed the necessity from both nations to improve the working conditions and possibilities for women family members. In a scale from 0 to 10 (where 0 means extreme gender bias and 10 perfect equilibrium), Turkey had a total score of 2.67, while Italy of 4; although Italian family firms have a slightly better outcome compared to the Turkish ones, there is a lot of room for development and improvement. Lastly, I conducted a logistic binary regression using the software SPSS in order to observe whether there are determined independent variables (“Status”, “Number of Employees”, “Revenues of 2023”, and “Country”) that can influence the dependent ones (“Successor’s Gender” and “Family Director’s Gender”). The analysis was initially conducted using the Italian and Turkish dataset separately: overall the independent variables were not considered significant except in one circumstance where the “Status” category had shown a moderate level of influence in relation to the Turkish “Successor’s Gender” variable. Afterwards, I performed the same investigation on the whole dataset (grouping together Italy and Turkey's values) in order to build a more meaningful model: it has indicated that Italian family organization have more probability to have a female family directors compared to the Turkish ones. Lastly, I expressed three ideas to prevent and limit gender bias in the workplace.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSIONS

The main objective of this thesis was to discover the level of gender discrimination within family firms in Italy and Turkey, focusing on the values contained in two different datasets constructed specifically for the research. The results are very straightforward and indicate that gender bias is still significantly present in both nations, limiting and constraining the opportunities for women within the family business environment.

After having carefully described both countries, it is evident that they show some peculiarities and differences. Both nations have a long history and were capable of influencing the territories around them through their values and social norms; furthermore, family plays a crucial role in both societies, making them highly familiar centric. On the other hand, the two countries exhibit different cultural and socio-economic traits: Italy is more individualistic and show a moderate level of power centralization, while Turkey is a collectivistic society and is strongly authoritarian. The initial explanation of the nations was essential to comprehend and review the existing literature, which is focused on family businesses and gender discrimination. Italian family enterprises tend to be more oriented towards international markets compared to Turkish ones, which prefer domestic financial systems; the empirical research has proposed the same results, showing a discrepancy between the level of internationalization of the two countries: more than 55% of the Italian family firms are global, while just 29% of the Turkish ones have some business in foreign countries. Family organizations in both nations are characterized by a centralized decision-making structure (although Turkey exhibits higher degrees of authority compared to Italy), where favoritism and altruist behaviors are preferred to managerial professionalization. Furthermore, there are still significant disparities between female and male family members within the working environment: both countries are male-dominated and, according to the 2024 World Gender Gap report, are the last European-labelled nations in terms of offering women opportunities within the national economy.

From the empirical research, it is possible to notice that all three variables (“Founder’s Gender”, “Successor’s Gender”, and “Family Director’s Gender”) are strongly male-prevalent (in all categories, more than 70% of the individuals are men); the only exception regards family directors within Italian family firms, where women are more represented than men (53% and 47% correspondingly). Even though there are no significant correlations within the Italian sample analyzed, the Turkish dependent variable “Successor’s Gender” is significantly influenced by the independent one called “Status”: international Turkish enterprises have more female successors compared to the local ones. This result is strongly connected with the Social Role Theory, which explains how social norms and cultural values affect the role of women within the working environment. In other words, Turkish domestic organizations tend to be highly influenced by the presence of biased traditional principles, which negatively impact the progression towards gender equality of the Turkish society. Moreover, it is apparent that working within foreign countries decreases the degree of embedded gender discrimination, which gets us back to the Implicit Gender Bias Theory. In addition, the possibilities of a female family director in Italy are more than three times higher than in Turkey, meaning that the Italian family organizations offer more opportunities to women to perform executive roles within the business. In this case, the Boundary Theory explains how family firms need to provide arrangements that are capable of ensuring work-life balance, giving female members the chances to advance within their working career.

In conclusion, despite the limitations in terms of time and number of variables taken into analysis, the following thesis answer clearly to the explanatory question mentioned at the beginning and it shows how gender bias still negatively influences the Italian and Turkish family working environment.

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