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TRACK 20/29: Women on Boards: Antecedents, Dynamics and Consequences of Divers Board Composition
(Cross SIG Track Corporate Governance & Gender, Race and Diversity in Organizations)

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Abstract:

“Women on Boards” – this is an issue that is gaining momentum in many European countries. Academic debate on the strategic importance of women corporate directors is widely recognized and still open. Norway had held for some time sort of a leading role in the process of getting women onto boards. Indeed, in 2005, the Norwegian government passed a quota law requiring Norwegian public limited-liability companies to have at least 40% of each gender represented on their board of directors. Other European countries as France, Italy, Netherlands and Spain have recently brought quota laws on the way. In Germany a vivid discussion on appropriate measures to involve more women in boards has developed.

We consider this the right time to get engaged into this debate as scholars and members of EURAM.

Currently, several research projects are running in Europe which should be discussed in EURAM, thus providing an arena for scholars from different countries and disciplines to share their ideas, concepts and results.

Our contribution could be to analyze antecedents, processes, dynamics and consequences/outcomes of the growing presence of women on boards on three levels:

- **Individual level:** Who are the women on boards? What resources do they rely on? How are they recruited? (Heidenreich 2010) What motivates, qualifies, or hinders them to become board members and to perform on boards? How do they deal with stereotypes and stereotype threat (Roberson & Kulik 2007)? What are the effects of their position as board-member on the individuals (further career, income, family life)?
- **Organizational level:** What are the characteristics of recruitment processes which focus on new board members from diverse back-grounds? What relevance has got the concept of “critical mass” (Torchia et al. 2011; Erkut et al. 2008)? Do women support women on boards and to which extent (Oehmichen et al. 2010)? What is going on in the “black-box” of boards with different gender composition? What governance practices and boardroom processes emanate from the presence of women on boards (Bilimoria 2008)? How can a performance-supporting culture in diverse boards be conceptualized? Is “WoB” a business case (Nielsen & Huse 2010 a + b, Hillmann et al. 2007)? How do women directors contribute to firms’ outcome?
- **Societal level:** What political strategies are appropriate in which societal settings? What are the effects of quota-laws? In which general strategy are those imbedded? In which settings diversity on boards could be increased? What effects have specific gender arrangements in different societies?

We welcome papers investigating these and other questions related to women on boards.

We are particularly interested in understanding the mechanisms of diverse boards from a multidisciplinary point of view, combining a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives.

Keywords: Gender equality; Women directors; Board diversity.