



Gender diversity and company leadership

Workshop, University Paris 7 Diderot, October 18th 2016, 14h-19h

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Promoting gender diversity in corporate leadership has become a central issue in OECD countries. Female under-representation in executive or director positions is indeed an important driver of gender inequality. Besides, it is a source of inefficiencies, preventing firms from the use of highly qualified skills in top positions. Gender diversity is therefore commonly perceived as a way to improve corporate decision-making and governance, ultimately increasing firm economic and social performances. Without surprise, it has come to the forefront of policy-makers. Corporate boards have recently attracted much of the attention. Following Norway and a European Directive project setting an objective of 40% of female directors in boards, a number of countries have adopted mandatory gender quotas, including Italy, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Germany. Other countries have favored a “comply or explain” approach, with national corporate governance codes promoting board gender diversity.

For academic researchers in management or economics, understanding the precise drivers of gender inequality in business firms and documenting the impact of improving gender balance in top positions are complex issues – both from theoretical and empirical perspectives. It raises in particular the following questions:

- How does gender inequality operate within companies? Do we observe discrimination on compensation? What is the magnitude of occupational segregation, with gender differences in access to executive jobs or board of directors’ sub-committees?
- What are the precise characteristics of female candidates to leadership positions? How does directors’ bundle of characteristics affect firm decisions?
- Should we expect female leaders to have different attitudes as compared to their male counterparts?
- What is the effect of improving gender balance on decision-making and/or board functioning, and ultimately on firm social and economic performances?

Understanding those issues should help to ground the business case for gender diversity in company leadership, and to better inform policy makers when attempting to improve the gender balance.

The objective of this workshop is to present ongoing academic researches in the field, and to favor an informed discussion with corporate professionals involved in programs favoring gender diversity within business firms. In particular, a specific attention will be dedicated to methods and to cross-link literatures in corporate governance and labor economics.

Organizing committee:

Patricia Crifo (University Paris Nanterre-Economix, Ecole Polytechnique & CIRANO)

Antoine Rebérioux (University Paris 7-Ladyss & CREDDI/LEAD)

Gwenael Roudaut (Ecole Polytechnique)

Preliminary program

- 14h00-14h15 Introduction
- 14h15-15h00 Keynote speech Renée Adams (UNSW Australia Business School) “Women and company leadership”
- 15h00-15h15 questions
- 15h14-15h30 coffee break
- 15h30-17h30 Presentations
 - Dominique Meurs (University Paris Nanterre-EconomiX, INED) “Gender Differences in Access to Jobs”
 - Thomas Breda (CNRS, PSE) “Gender diversity and firm performance”
 - Antoine Rebérioux (University Paris 7 – Ladyss) & Gwenael Roudaut (Ecole Polytechnique) “Women in boards: the French experience”
 - Edith Ginglinger (Université Paris-Dauphine, PSL Research University) “The Effect of Board Quotas on Female Director Turnover”
- 17h00-17h30 discussion

17h30-18h30 Panel Public Policy and Gender diversity. Chair: Patricia Crifo (University Paris Nanterre-Economix, Ecole Polytechnique & CIRANO)

- Marie-Pierre Peillon , Head of Research Groupama AM
- Fianna Jurdant, OECD, Corporate Affairs Division
- Ministry of Environment, Energy and Sea* or French Agency of State Ownership*

* To be confirmed

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