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Discrimination or Diversity?

A Balanced Score Card review of perceptions of gender quotas

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Author Note

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### Abstract

Creating an economy where gender equality is at the forefront could be claimed to be beneficial to most, if not all, citizens and countries. Recent mandates of gender reporting at the Director and Officer levels have created a dichotomous environment in New Zealand. Taking learnings from other countries experiences with quotas, with a particular focus on Norway, adds insight into what could happen if implementation were to occur. Using qualitative interviews across a diverse group of participants, this study investigates current perspectives and implications of gender quotas. Understanding the role of the board to govern and design organisational strategy, the Balanced Score Card was selected as a clear instrument for analysis and recommendations. This exploration showcases the complexity of equity strategy as a component of board construction and the realisation that gender alone will not deliver a diverse board of directors. Empowered by the BSC structure, this effort delivers a recommendation for driving organisational change through diversity programming and contributes to academic discourse through a business outcome focused approach to qualitative research. Findings display that social policy does have a place in the boardroom, but that efforts must be measured and documented consistently over time, a process that is lacking in many NZ firms. Further, outcomes from the study show that quotas are not preferred as a tool for gender equity with just 27.78% of participants supporting the concept.

This study makes a three-fold contribution: first, it investigates a broader range of participants than does existing NZ work, second, it leverages the Balanced Score Card for analysis to support real-time application of findings by practitioners outside of the academic sphere, and third, it introduces gender diversity as an element of gender quotas.

*Keywords:* gender equality, corporate governance, equity, New Zealand, Norway, stereotypes, diversity management, leadership strategy, balanced score card, human resource management, employment relations, business strategy

## Acronyms

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>AICD:</b>  | Australian Institute of Company Directors             |
| <b>BSC:</b>   | Balanced Score Card                                   |
| <b>BDO:</b>   | Board Directors/Trustees and Officers                 |
| <b>CEO:</b>   | Chief Executive Officer                               |
| <b>CFO:</b>   | Chief Financial Officer                               |
| <b>CLIF:</b>  | Customer Learning Internal Financial                  |
| <b>CLO:</b>   | Chief Legal Officer                                   |
| <b>CSR:</b>   | Corporate Social Responsibility                       |
| <b>EU:</b>    | European Union  |
| <b>HRM:</b>   | Human Resources Management                            |
| <b>ILO:</b>   | International Labour Organisation                     |
| <b>IoD:</b>   | Institute of Directors                                |
| <b>KPI:</b>   | Key Performance Indicators                            |
| <b>MfW:</b>   | Ministry for Women                                    |
| <b>MUHEC:</b> | Massey University Human Ethics Conduct                |
| <b>NZ:</b>    | New Zealand   |
| <b>NZHRC:</b> | New Zealand Human Rights Commission                   |
| <b>NZTE:</b>  | New Zealand Trade and Enterprise                      |
| <b>NZX:</b>   | New Zealand Stock Exchange                            |
| <b>OECD:</b>  | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| <b>PTF:</b>   | Publicly Traded Firms                                 |
| <b>ROI:</b>   | Return on Investment                                  |
| <b>SOE:</b>   | State Owned Enterprises                               |
| <b>VRIO:</b>  | Value Rarity Imitability Organisation                 |