

Can Transparency Improve Board Diversity? Evidence from the Non-Financial Reporting Directive

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Methodology

Results

Discussion

Wall Street Journal

Where Was Lehman Board?

Firm's External Directors Had Relied on Experiences Of a Bygone Financial Era

By Dennis K. Berman Sept. 18, 2008 12:01 am ET

Nine of them are retired. Four are over 75 years old. One is a theater producer, another a former Navy admiral. Only two have direct experience in the financial-services industry.

Meet the <u>Lehman Brothers Holdings</u> external board directors, a group of 10 people who, perhaps unknowingly, carried the health of the world's financial system on their shoulders the past 18 months.

(Berman, 2008)



Board of directors

Most **important long-term decision-making body** in a corporation (Ferreira, 2010)

Represents shareholders/investors, monitors and challenges executive management

- approve strategic/financial decisions
- hire/fire top executives



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Failure by boards of financial institutions seen as catalyst in the global financial crisis (Commission, 2010)

- lack of **diversity** singled out as contributing factor
- board diversity especially important in times of distress (Engelen et al., 2012)

Board diversity

Why board diversity?

• business case and ethical case



Board diversity

Why board diversity?

• business case and ethical case

Business case

- **double-edged sword**: opportunities and challenges (Milliken and Martins, 1996)
- empirical results represent ambiguity (Pletzer et al., 2015; Ozgen, 2021; Webber and Donahue, 2001)
- better to discuss potential societal benefits beyond narrow firm profitability (Ferreira, 2015)



Board diversity

Ethical case

- major advances in female education attainment, professional development, and political participation, no significant increases in the representation of women in leadership positions (Pande and Ford, 2012)
- women directors have better attendance records and are tougher monitors of CEOs (Adams and Ferreira, 2009; Ferreira, 2015)
- EU board gender composition graph rate of progress by country



Board of directors

EU needed **legislation** that harmonizes and increases the level of **corporate transparency** with respect to corporate governance and CSR \Rightarrow NFR Directive

- amends Accounting Directive
- in force since 2017
- mandatory reporting CSR matters (large & public-interest, \geq 500 employees)
- mandatory reporting board diversity policy (large & listed)
 - recommended: quantitative targets and timeframes
 - comply or explain



Research question

Non-Financial Reporting (NFR) Directive: certain firms have to disclose their **diversity objectives** for the board of directors



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Non-Financial Reporting (NFR) Directive: certain firms have to disclose their **diversity objectives** for the board of directors

Goal NFR Directive

"Inform the market of corporate governance practices and thus put indirect pressure on undertakings to have more diversified boards" (European Commission, 2014)



Research question

Non-Financial Reporting (NFR) Directive: certain firms have to disclose their **diversity objectives** for the board of directors

Goal NFR Directive

"Inform the market of corporate governance practices and thus put indirect pressure on undertakings to have more diversified boards" (European Commission, 2014)

Research question

Does the NFR Directive affect the board diversity of firms with a reporting obligation?



Corporate disclosure

Inform the market, indirect pressure from shareholders

- compliance, informative to investors (Healy and Palepu, 2001; Manes-Rossi et al., 2018; Ottenstein et al., 2022; Singhvi and Desai, 1971)
- affects firm behavior (Arena et al., 2015; De Simone and Olbert, 2021; Dyreng et al., 2016; Gao et al., 2016; Jackson et al., 2020; Joshi, 2020)



Corporate disclosure

Inform the market, indirect pressure from shareholders

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Transparency vs. **quotas**: depends on enforcement (Pande and Ford, 2012)

- Norway: full compliance (Storvik, 2011)
- Spain: 5% compliance (Mateos de Cabo et al., 2019)



Contribution

First to study **board diversity effects** of the NFR Directive, one of the first to combine Orbis & BoardEx

- Poland: environmental, social score ↑, governance score = (Aluchna et al., 2022)
- financial outcomes: profitability \$\\$ (Cupertino et al., 2021)



Contribution

First to study **board diversity effects** of the NFR Directive, one of the first to combine Orbis & BoardEx

- Poland: environmental, social score ↑, governance score = (Aluchna et al., 2022)
- financial outcomes: profitability \$\\$ (Cupertino et al., 2021)

Driving factors board diversity least studied, especially the role of political institutions (Kent Baker et al., 2020; Terjesen et al., 2015)

 no differences between countries with reporting requirements and countries without regulation (Sojo et al., 2016)

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Data

Orbis (Bureau van Dijk)

- firm financials
- listed status
- industry classification (2-digit)
- BoardEx
 - board composition: gender, age, nationality, number of directors
- 21,747 firm-year observations, EU, 2010-2021 . descriptives
 - diversity: **2 3 board members**
 - listed companies (3,491 companies)

Methodology

Identification strategy

Treatment group: large & listed firms have reporting obligation

- ≥ 20 million assets
- \geq 40 million **revenue** 2 out of 3 in two consecutive years
- > 250 employees



Identification strategy

Treatment group: large & listed firms have reporting obligation

- 20 million assets
- \geq 40 million **revenue** 2 out of 3 in two consecutive years
- > 250 employees

 \Rightarrow fuzzy regression discontinuity (RD) with assets, revenue, or employees as running variable/instrument (Imbens, 2017)

 fuzzy RD: running variable as instrument for treatment probability (Hahn et al., 2001)



Methodology

Treatment probability





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Methodology

Treatment manipulation tests (McCrary, 2008)

12/20





Fuzzy RD specification

data-driven bandwidth selection procedure (mse-optimal)

- bias-corrected point estimates (Calonico et al., 2015; Cattaneo et al., 2019)
- local linear polynomial
- triangular kernel
- cluster standard errors at firm level
- FE (year, country, industry) and control variables (board size)



Methodology

Results

Discussion

First stage

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Variable	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment
Revenue	0.647***	0.610***				
	(0.0316)	(0.0354)				
Assets			0.224***	0.255***		
			(0.0277)	(0.0381)		
Employees					0.0953*	0.161***
					(0.0557)	(0.0537)
Industry FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Country FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Board size	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Bandwidth	206.4	333.9	264.0	306.4	710.4	941.4
Observations	5,074	4,465	4,376	3,544	4,590	3,638
Assets Employees Industry FE Country FE Year FE Board size Bandwidth Observations	(0.0316) No No 206.4 5,074	(0.0354) Yes Yes Yes Yes 333.9 4,465	0.224*** (0.0277) No No No 264.0 4,376	0.255*** (0.0381) Yes Yes Yes Yes 306.4 3,544	0.0953* (0.0557) No No No 710.4 4,590	0.161* (0.0537 Yes Yes Yes Yes 941.4 3,638

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

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Fuzzy RD (gender) • first stage

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variable	GenderRatio	GenderRatio	GenderRatio	GenderRatio	GenderRatio
Fuzzy RD instrument	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
NFR	-0.0331	-0.0347	-0.0363	-0.00754	-0.0253
	(0.0288)	(0.0286)	(0.0287)	(0.0229)	(0.0251)
Industry FE	no	no	no	no	yes
Country FE	no	no	no	yes	yes
Year FE	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Board size	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bandwidth	206.4	206.4	206.4	206.4	206.4
Observations	5,074	5,074	5,074	5,074	3,888
	0	and a data data series data data data data data data data dat			

Standard errors in parentheses



Fuzzy RD (at least one woman) • first stage

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variable	WomanOnBoard	WomanOnBoard	WomanOnBoard	WomanOnBoard	WomanOnBoard
Fuzzy RD instrument	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
NFR	-0.0426	-0.0491	-0.0531	-0.0181	-0.0582
	(0.0727)	(0.0700)	(0.0700)	(0.0609)	(0.0682)
Industry FE	no	no	no	no	yes
Country FE	no	no	no	yes	yes
Year FE	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Covariates	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bandwidth	179.3	179.3	179.3	179.3	179.3
Observations	4,829	4,829	4,829	4,829	3,692

Standard errors in parentheses



	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variable	STDEVAge	STDEVAge	STDEVAge	STDEVAge	STDEVAge
Fuzzy RD instrument	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
NFR	-0.374	-0.429	-0.403	-0.412	-0.956
	(0.620)	(0.606)	(0.605)	(0.583)	(0.650)
Industry FE	no	no	no	no	yes
Country FE	no	no	no	yes	yes
Year FE	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Covariates	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bandwidth	169.8	169.8	169.8	169.8	169.8
Observations	4,657	4,657	4,657	4,657	3,542
	01	1 1 1			

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Fuzzy RD (age) • first stage

Fuzzy RD (nationality) • first stage

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variable	NationalityMix	NationalityMix	NationalityMix	NationalityMix	NationalityMix
Fuzzy RD instrument	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
NFR	0.0170	0.0155	0.0194	0.00435	-0.0113
	(0.0486)	(0.0499)	(0.0495)	(0.0468)	(0.0507)
Industry FE	no	no	no	no	yes
Country FE	no	no	no	yes	yes
Year FE	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Covariates	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bandwidth	136.8	136.8	136.8	136.8	136.8
Observations	3,848	3,848	3,848	3,848	2,894

Standard errors in parentheses



Additional results

Robustness tests

- alternative bandwidths: 50%, 100% of threshold
 first stage
 fuzzy RD
- other running variables

 first stage

 fuzzy RD
- donut
- \geq 5 board members \Rightarrow no significant effects

Alternatively timed effects

- announcement period: 2014-2016
 first stage
- pre-announcement period (falsification)
 first stage
 fuzzy RD
- if changes take time to take effect: from 2020 onwards ⇒ no significant results

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Preliminary

- DiD, event study \Rightarrow no significant results
- Appointment-level ⇒ no significant gender effects

Methodology

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Conclusion

Mandatory reporting of board diversity policies does **not** have a direct effect on board diversity

 December 2022: EU agreement reached on mandatory gender balance goals (40%) for large & listed firms from 2026



Discussion

Thank you for your attention!

Questions, feedback, suggestions?

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Descriptive statistics • back

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
VARIABLES	Ň	mean	sd	min	max
GenderRatio	21,744	0.197	0.160	0	0.800
STDEVAge	21,596	7.918	3.104	0	25.50
NationalityMix	20,344	0.259	0.271	0	0.900
NumberDirectors	21,747	8.702	4.091	3	30
cons_revenue	20,512	3,583	14,253	-422	363,375
cons_assets	21,234	6,262	25,621	0	680,036
cons_employees	16,876	11,942	41,428	0	692,830
uncons_revenue	15,384	977.2	5,475	-767.2	113,863
uncons_assets	15,783	4,770	55,166	0	6.527e+06
uncons_employees	13,532	2,170	10,458	0	190,087
large	21,747	0.819	0.385	0	1
post	21,747	0.532	0.499	0	1
large_post	21,747	0.417	0.493	0	1

Descriptive statistics (post-implementation)

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Panel A. Post-implementation, control group					
GenderRatio	2,502	0.211	0.181	0	0.800
STDEVAge	2,417	7.235	3.819	0	19.70
NationalityMix	2,094	0.219	0.266	0	0.800
NumberDirectors	2,505	5.940	2.205	3	21
cons_revenue	2,214	19.66	73.95	-16.91	2,780
cons_assets	2,290	145.2	942.1	0	31,696
cons_employees	1,896	95.82	356.2	0	11,532
uncons_revenue	1,955	9.085	32.88	-767.2	1,042
uncons_assets	1,980	138.4	719.8	0.00662	23,308
uncons_employees	1,718	42.33	52.11	0	775
Panel B. Post-implementation, treatment group					
GenderRatio	9,073	0.248	0.160	0	0.800
STDEVAge	9,030	7.849	3.070	0	25.50
NationalityMix	8,535	0.257	0.272	0	0.900
NumberDirectors	9,073	9.027	4.054	3	30
cons_revenue	8,683	3,916	14,769	-422	339,286
cons_assets	8,955	7,336	28,904	1.00e-06	680,036
cons_employees	7,299	13,362	45,200	0	692,830
uncons_revenue	6,533	1,031	5,510	-575.9	113,863
uncons_assets	6,759	5,935	81,891	0	6.527e+06
uncons_employees	5,830	2,370	10,636	0	190,087

Board gender composition • back



Figure: Percentage of female board members in the EU28 for large & listed companies. Source: European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) database.

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Board gender composition rate of progress • back



Figure: Percentage of female board members in the EU28 for large & listed companies. Source: EIGE (Statistical brief: gender balance in business and finance 2021).

Board gender composition by country • back



Figure: Percentage of female board members in the EU28 for large & listed companies. Source: EIGE (Statistical brief: gender balance in business and finance 2021).



First stage (gender) • back

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variable	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment
Revenue	0.647***	0.646***	0.646***	0.633***	0.618***
	(0.0316)	(0.0316)	(0.0315)	(0.0310)	(0.343)
Industry FE	no	no	no	no	yes
Country FE	no	no	no	yes	yes
Year FE	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Board size	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bandwidth	206.4	206.4	206.4	206.4	206.4
Observations	5,074	5,074	5,074	5,074	3,888

Standard errors in parentheses



	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variable	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment
Revenue	0.611***	0.610***	0.610***	0.598***	0.583***
	(0.0336)	(0.0336)	(0.0336)	(0.0329)	(0.0362)
Industry FE	no	no	no	no	yes
Country FE	no	no	no	yes	yes
Year FE	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Board size	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bandwidth	179.3	179.3	179.3	179.3	179.3
Observations	4,829	4,829	4,829	4,829	4,829





	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variable	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment
Revenue	0.601***	0.601***	0.601***	0.588***	0.578***
	(0.0349)	(0.0349)	(0.0348)	(0.0341)	(0.0385)
Industry FE	no	no	no	no	yes
Country FE	no	no	no	yes	yes
Year FE	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Board size	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bandwidth	169.8	169.8	169.8	169.8	169.8
Observations	4,657	4,657	4,657	4,657	3,542



First stage (nationality) • back

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variable	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment
Revenue	0.504***	0.503***	0.504***	0.494***	0.477***
	(0.0447)	(0.0447)	(0.0480)	(0.0441)	(0.0491)
Industry FE	no	no	no	no	yes
Country FE	no	no	no	yes	yes
Year FE	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Board size	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bandwidth	136.8	136.8	136.8	136.8	136.8
Observations	3,848	3,848	3,848	3,848	2,894

Standard errors in parentheses



First stage alternative bandwidths • back

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Variable	Treatment							
Revenue	0.210**	0.210**	0.251***	0.179*	0.260***	0.260***	0.271***	0.246***
	(0.0951)	(0.0951)	(0.0954)	(0.102)	(0.0707)	(0.0707)	(0.0717)	(0.0767)
Industry FE	yes							
Country FE	yes							
Year FE	yes							
Board size	yes							
Bandwidth	20	20	20	20	40	40	40	40
Observations	830	830	812	700	2,272	2,272	2,195	1,890

Standard errors in parentheses



Alternative bandwidths • back

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Variable	GenderRatio	WomanOnBoard	STDEVAge	NationalityMix	GenderRatio	WomanOnBoard	STDEVAge	NationalityMix
Fuzzy RD instrument	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
NFR	0.0927	0.319	-3.920	-0.280	0.0110	0.103	-3.530**	-0.105
	(0.106)	(0.280)	(2.568)	(0.204)	(0.0588)	(0.146)	(1.377)	(0.0982)
Industry FE	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Country FE	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Year FE	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Board size	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bandwidth	20	20	20	20	40	40	40	40
Observations	830	830	812	700	2,272	2,272	2,195	1,890

Standard errors in parentheses



	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)				
Variable	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment				
Revenue	0.602***	0.603***	0.618***	0.585***				
	(0.0639)	(0.0638)	(0.0621)	(0.0655)				
Industry FE	yes	yes	yes	yes				
Country FE	yes	yes	yes	yes				
Year FE	yes	yes	yes	yes				
Covariates	yes	yes	yes	yes				
Bandwidth	303.7	291.6	280.2	375.0				
Observations	1865	1843	1807	1819				

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

KU LEUVEN

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	
Variable	GenderRatio	WomanOnBoard	STDEVAge	NationalityMix	
Fuzzy RD instrument	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	
NFR	0.0364	0.139	1.311*	0.0459	
	(0.0320)	(0.0968)	(0.766)	(0.0623)	
Industry FE	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Country FE	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Year FE	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Covariates	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Bandwidth	303.7	291.6	280.2	375.0	
Observations	1865	1843	1807	1819	

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)				
Variable	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment				
Revenue	0.633***	0.630***	0.598***	0.627***				
	(0.0601)	(0.0607)	(0.0633)	(0.0612)				
Industry FE	yes	yes	yes	yes				
Country FE	yes	yes	yes	yes				
Year FE	yes	yes	yes	yes				
Covariates	yes	yes	yes	yes				
Bandwidth	424.9	484.0	378.3	339.8				
Observations	1794	1866	1731	1558				

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

KU LEUVEN

Pre-implementation period (before 2014) • back

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	
Variable	GenderRatio	WomanOnBoard	STDEVAge	NationalityMix	
Fuzzy RD instrument	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue	
NFR	0.0435*	0.203**	0.120	-0.0187	
	(0.0235)	(0.0863)	(0.726)	(0.0679)	
Industry FE	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Country FE	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Year FE	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Covariates	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Bandwidth	424.9	484.0	378.3	339.8	
Observations	1794	1866	1731	1558	

Standard errors in parentheses

First stage other running variables ••••

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Variable	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment	Treatment
Outcome	GenderRatio	WomanOnBoard	STDEVAge	NationalityMix	GenderRatio	WomanOnBoard	STDEVAge	NationalityMix
Assets	0255.***	0.261***	0.268***	0.288***				
	(0.0381)	(0.0379)	(0.0395)	(0.0419)				
Employees					0.161***	0.170***	0.158***	0.155**
					(0.0537)	(0.0526)	(0.0533)	(0.0546)
Industry FE	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Country FE	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Year FE	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Board size	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bandwidth	306.4	310.1	366.5	389.5	941.4	863.5	954.0	1087
Observations	3544	3562	3742	3366	3638	3555	3567	3305

Standard errors in parentheses



Other running variables • back

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Variable	GenderRatio	WomanOnBoard	STDEVAge	NationalityMix	GenderRatio	WomanOnBoard	STDEVAge	NationalityMix
Fuzzy RD instrument	Assets	Assets	Assets	Assets	Employees	Employees	Employees	Employees
NFR	0.115	0.409*	1.954	-0.104	-0.0644	-0.0511	0.653	0.157
	(0.0768)	(0.210)	(1.635)	(0.104)	(0.0770)	(0.218)	(2.115)	(0.129)
Industry FE	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Country FE	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Year FE	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Covariates	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bandwidth	306.4	310.1	366.5	389.5	941.4	863.5	954.0	1087
Observations	3544	3562	3742	3366	3638	3555	3567	3305

Standard errors in parentheses

