

Independent director incentives: Where do talented directors spend their limited time and energy?

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Abstract

We study reputation incentives in the director labor market and find that directors with multiple directorships distribute their effort unequally based on the directorship's relative prestige. When directors experience an exogenous increase in a directorship's relative ranking, their board attendance rate increases and subsequent firm performance improves. Also, directors are less willing to relinquish their relatively more prestigious directorships, even when firm performance declines. Finally, forced Chief Executive Officer departure sensitivity to poor performance rises when a larger fraction of independent directors view the board as relatively more prestigious. We conclude that director reputation is a powerful incentive for independent directors.

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1. Introduction

What motivates corporate directors to monitor senior management carefully? Recent empirical research that examines the financial incentives of outside directors (Adams and Ferreira, 2008 and Yermack, 2004) concludes that these incentives are not especially strong. In this study, we examine another important source of incentives: director reputation. Fama and Jensen (1983) argue that preserving and enhancing reputation in the labor market for directorships is a primary motivation of directors. They argue that directors want to build a reputation as a diligent monitor of management because it directly affects the value of their human capital and the likelihood of obtaining future directorships (Fama, 1980).

Firm size is a natural source of director reputation incentives given that larger firms afford a director greater visibility, prestige (Adam and Ferreira, 2008; and Shivdasani, 1993), compensation (Ryan and Wiggins, 2004), and likelihood of obtaining additional directorships (Yermack, 2004; and Fich, 2005). Hence, it is reasonable to expect directorships in firms of differing sizes to create differential incentives to monitor senior management closely. Specifically, the incentive to be judged as a valuable director is likely to be strongest in a director's most visible and prestigious directorship. This supply-side perspective on the directorship market suggests that differences in reputation incentives can be important. Consistent with this perspective, Knyazeva, Knyazeva, and Masulis (2013) find that larger firms tend to draw busy director candidates from more distant locations. Fahlenbrach, Low, and Stulz (2010) find that independent directors are more prone to resign from poorly performing firms, which offer lower prestige and greater workloads. This body of evidence suggests that directors view board seats as varying in attractiveness and that reputation considerations can have a large effect on the supply of outside director services available to a firm. Given that most directors have heavy demands on their time, it is only natural to expect them to prioritize which boards to serve on and then how they allocate their time and energy across these boards.

The primary goal of this study is to investigate whether outside directors with multiple directorships value each directorship differently based on the relative reputation benefits a board offers. Our focus is on independent directors because they are best able to monitor and discipline management.

We start by identifying all independent directors who hold multiple directorships on the boards of Standard and Poor's (S&P) 1500 firms between 1997 and 2006 using the RiskMetrics director database. Then we rank each of their directorships based on each firm's market capitalization. Given this ranking, we examine several measures of a director's expenditure of effort and commitment to board responsibilities.

Our first measure is his or her attendance at regular board meetings. We find that after controlling for firm size, directors are significantly less (more) likely to miss meetings in their relatively higher (lower) ranked directorships. Moreover, when a directorship's relative ranking increases, board attendance rises significantly. Expanding on the Fahlenbrach, Low, and Stulz (2010) finding, we show that departures are more prevalent in a director's lower ranked directorships. We find directors are quick to relinquish lower ranked directorships when performance suffers, presumably to avoid the negative reputation effects, but they are less willing to relinquish their higher ranked ones.

To capture these varying reputation incentive effects of directors at the firm level, we use either the percentage of independent directors on the board for whom this directorship is one of their highest ranked (i.e., at least 10% larger than their smallest directorship) or an indicator variable for when a majority of a firm's independent directors view this as one of their highest ranked boards. These measures capture board representation by more talented independent directors, who hold multiple outside directorships, and firms in which these talented directors have the greatest incentives to work diligently.

We find that firms with a greater proportion of independent directors who rank this directorship highly are associated with better operating performance and higher values of Tobin's q . We also examine board monitoring and disciplining outcomes, measured by forced Chief Executive Officer (CEO) departures, and find that these firms are also associated with a lower likelihood of forced CEO departure, but greater forced CEO turnover sensitivity to performance.

To the degree that director incentives are affected by the external market for directorships and not internal firm decisions, endogeneity is less problematic. Nonetheless, for robustness and to address the concern that some of our results could be driven by firm size, we conduct several additional tests. First,

we create a matched sample based on firm size and industry and repeat our primary analysis. Second, we employ a difference-in-differences (DID) approach to the director attendance test and the firm-level performance tests using exogenous shocks that lead to a director's ranking of a directorship to increase. The robustness of our primary results to these tests decreases concerns that firm size or endogeneity is the primary cause for the results. Finally, we explore alternative ranking measures based on market value of total assets, book value of total assets, total sales, total shareholder return and the number of employees. We find that these alternative ranking measures provide qualitatively similar, albeit weaker, results than those found when ranking directorships by a firm's equity market capitalization.

Our findings make several important contributions to the literature. First, we provide new evidence on the predicted, yet empirically elusive, positive relation between board independence and firm performance and value (Bhagat and Black, 1999; and Hermalin and Weisbach, 2003). Prior research has uncovered several factors that can adversely affect a director's ability to provide reliable monitoring services such as their social connections to the CEO (Hwang and Kim, 2009), the number of directors on the board (Yermack, 1996), and their other directorships (Fich and Shivdasani, 2006). Our results deepen the understanding of the role of reputation as a strong motivating force in enhancing a director's monitoring incentives. They are also important in light of the large literature on director actions that assumes that director reputation is a strong motivator by viewing subsequent changes in directorships held as a reward or penalty for director performance.¹ Yet, to our knowledge, no studies in the literature directly examine how reputation incentives arising from current board appointments affect director actions. Our results indicate that not all directorships are equal in terms of the reputation incentives they offer, which can help to explain why some studies such as Ertimur, Ferri, and Maber (2012) find weak evidence of the directorship market rewarding or punishing directors.

¹ See Brickley, Linck, and Coles (1999), Farrell and Whidbee (2000), Yermack (2004), Kaplan and Reishus (1990), Gilson (1990), Del Guercio, Seery, and Woidtke (2008), Fich and Shivdasani (2007), Srinivasan (2005), and others.

Second, we provide new evidence on the influence of a board's relative prestige, which furthers the understanding of director incentives. Fama and Jensen (1983) argue that holding a directorship creates strong incentives to perform well in the boardroom because there is "substantial devaluation of human capital" (page 315) when directors neglect their monitoring duties. In contrast, Mace (1971) argues that compensation, prestige and experience are outside directors' primary motives, so that directors focus their efforts on retaining their directorships, instead of closely monitoring CEOs. Our evidence is consistent with directors having strong incentives to be viewed by the external labor market for directorships as careful monitors in their relatively more prestigious directorships. Further, we find little support for outside directors' direct compensation having the same incentive effects.

Third, finding that directors do not give equal priority to all their directorships contributes to the understanding of busy directors. Despite the frequent use of multiple directorships as an indicator of the most valued and reputable directors, only one strand of literature has directly examined the effect of multiple board seats on director incentives, and it focuses on the negative aspects of directors being too busy (Ferris, Jagannathan, and Pritchard, 2003; Fich and Shivdasani, 2006; Core, Holthausen, and Larcker, 1999; and Beasley, 1996).² However, by simply summing the number of directorships, these prior studies implicitly assume that directors distribute their time and energy equally across all their directorships. Our results yield a more nuanced view that directors distribute their efforts depending on a board's relative contribution to a director's reputation. More broadly, our findings contribute to the literature on agent's effort dispersion. For example, Agarwal and Ma (2011) find that when mutual fund managers oversee multiple funds their efforts are not uniformly distributed across those funds.

Our findings are also related to a contemporaneous study by Field, Lowry, and Mkrtychyan (2013). They find that younger firms can benefit from the advice, expertise, and contacts of busy

² For studies that use multiple directorships, see for example, Kaplan and Reishus (1990), Gilson (1990), Shivdasani (1993), Chidambaran, Kedia, and Prabhala (2011), Shivdasani and Yermack (1999), Masulis and Mobbs (2011), and Mobbs (2013).

directors. Their findings, like ours, reveal that busy directors are not equally detrimental for all firms. However, unlike our study, they do not examine the varying reputation incentives of busy directors to be active monitors, although holding a directorship in a highly visible growth firm could be another way to build reputation.

Finally, this study contributes to a broader understanding of the role of reputation in financial markets. The prior literature uses firm size and market share as reputation measures for investment banks, venture capitalists, accounting firms, and other institutions (Carter and Manaster, 1990; Carter, Dark, and Singh, 1998; Chemmanur and Fulghieri, 1994; Megginson and Weiss, 1991; Fang, 2005; Krishnan, Ivanov, Masulis, and Singh, 2011; Titman and Trueman, 1986; and Beatty, 1989). Our measure of director-level reputation incentives is similar in spirit to the reputation metrics in these studies and offers an easy to calculate measure of how directors are likely to allocate their time and energy across multiple boards. In fact, in a follow-on study of a wide range of important firm-level actions (Masulis and Mobbs, 2013), we find evidence that boards with greater director reputation incentives lead to a greater likelihood of positive firm outcomes and a lower likelihood of negative firm outcomes. For example, boards with greater reputation incentives are less likely to reduce dividends or to be the target of a shareholder class action lawsuit and are more likely to select better performing new CEOs following a forced turnover.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. The next section develops our hypotheses. Section 3 discusses the sample data and descriptive statistics for the directors and the firms. Section 4 presents director-level analysis. Section 5 focuses on firm-level analysis, and Section 6 discusses added robustness analyses. Section 7 summarizes our conclusions. Variable definitions are in the Appendix.

2. Hypotheses development

Reputation is a valuable asset for executives (Alchian and Demsetz, 1972). Likewise, director reputation is often mentioned as an important incentive in the board of director literature. For example, Yermack (2004), Fich (2005), Ryan and Wiggins (2004), Adams and Ferreira (2008) and Fich and Shivdasani (2007) each control for director reputation incentives, measured by firm size. Furthermore,

Fama and Jensen (1983) argue that the larger the firm, the more visibility, prestige and thus reputation value the directorship holds, which increases a director's incentive to be viewed as a competent monitor.

Directors with multiple directorships face a dilemma of how to allocate their limited time and energy across their boards. We argue that if prestige rises with firm size, then directors on multiple boards have stronger incentives to monitor the managers of their relatively larger firms, leading to these firms capturing more of a director's time and energy. For example, Vernon Loucks, a director in our sample who held at least three directorships throughout our sample period, attended at least 75% of the meetings each year for his largest directorship, Anheuser Busch, while he missed more than 25% of board meetings in two separate years as a director a smaller firm, Affymetrix. It is also important to recognize that each individual director can find the same firm to be relatively more or less prestigious depending on the status of the director's other boards. This leads us to our first director-level hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1. *Independent directors are more active on the boards of their relatively more prestigious firms.*

Director commitment is also revealed in their willingness to remain on the board of a firm facing serious difficulties. Fahlenbrach, Low, and Stulz (2010) find evidence that outside directors are more likely to relinquish their directorships prior to poor performance, which they interpret as an effort to protect their reputation. However, giving up a directorship can also lower a director's reputation. Thus, each director has to decide which choice is more damaging. This trade-off generally varies across their directorships. For example, if a troubled firm is relatively small, a director can risk reputation damage from both being on the board of a poor performing firm and reducing the time and energy he gives to his higher ranked directorships, which is being reallocated to the struggling smaller firm. Alternatively, a director can simply choose to walk away from a smaller troubled firm and avoid both forms of reputation damage. In contrast, if the troubled firm is a higher ranked firm, a director has greater incentives to work hard to help resolve the firm's troubles and to ensure that it has better performance given the greater visibility and reputation impact of this prestigious directorship. This leads to our next set of director-level hypotheses.

Hypothesis 2a. *Independent directors are more likely to leave the boards of their relatively less prestigious firms before departing from the boards of relatively more prestigious firms.*

Hypothesis 2b. *Independent director departures from their relatively more (less) prestigious firms are less (more) sensitive to poor firm performance.*

Prior research uses the external market for directorships to identify more talented directors by measuring demand for a director's services. For example, Shivdasani and Yermack (1999) argue that director talent and reputation is correlated with the number of boards an individual sits on, while Mobbs (2013) shows that holding outside directorships raises an executive's chances of becoming a CEO. While directors on multiple boards can be more talented, these boards do not necessarily benefit equally from their talent because performance incentives vary with a board's relative visibility and prestige.

Related research finds that having many directorships can place a large strain on directors' time and reduce their effectiveness as monitors (e.g., Fich and Shivdasani, 2006; and Core, Holthausen, and Larcker, 1999). However, if directors do not distribute their talent uniformly, but rather shift more of their time and energy toward their most visible directorships and away from their less prestigious directorships, then it should be expected that the boards of their more prestigious firms benefit more from their greater ability and their stronger incentives to be viewed as a talented and conscientious directors on these boards where their reputation effects are maximized. Thus, firms with a board made up of a greater portion of directors for whom this board is one of their most prestigious are expected to perform better. This economic reasoning leads to Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 3. *Firms with more independent directors for whom this is a relatively more prestigious directorship are associated with better operating performance and a higher Tobin's q.*

Greater incentives by talented directors to put forth effort in the oversight of their more prestigious boards provide both positive and negative effects on a firm's CEO. First, due to their greater interest in the long-run success of the firm in their more prestigious directorships, directors are likely to be more careful in their selection and grooming of the CEO, increasing the CEO's likelihood of success. Second, due to more careful board monitoring of the CEO, the CEO exerts greater effort, leading to better firm performance. Both of these factors lower the likelihood that the CEO is fired. However, because firm

performance is also more important to a director's reputation in his more prestigious directorships and because he has strong reputation incentives to be viewed externally as a careful monitor, when performance does suffer this same director is likely to move more quickly to fire the current CEO. In this case, CEO turnover is more sensitive to performance. The following summarizes this CEO monitoring hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4. *Firms with more independent directors for whom this is a relatively more prestigious directorship are associated with CEOs having lower forced turnover in general, but higher forced turnover sensitivity to performance.*

3. Sample data and descriptive statistics

Director data are drawn from the RiskMetrics database for the years 1997 to 2006. RiskMetrics contains individual director information for the S&P 1500 firms resulting in 131,325 director-firm-year observations. Using the "classification" variable, we exclude directors who are either firm employees, former employees, or otherwise affiliated with the firm or its management. This leaves 86,330 independent outside directors-years for 17,525 unique directors. Table 1 reports descriptive statistics for the sample of S&P 1500 independent directors. The mean (median) age is 60.4 (61). Of our sample firms, 18% of the directors hold the position of CEO, 18% hold the title of chairman or vice chairman, 22% are non-CEO officers in other firms, 3% are founders, and 2% own blocks of 5% or more shares. Over 51% of all independent directors are on the audit committee, with 49% and 38% serving on the compensation committee and nominating committee, respectively. The mean (median) committee membership for the independent directors in the sample is 1.7 (2). Only 2% miss more than 25% of board meetings. The mean (median) board tenure for independent directors is 7.7 (6) years. The average independent director owns 0.22% of the firm's outstanding shares.

Insert Table 1 near here

RiskMetrics provides the number of additional directorships in large public companies each director holds. While many of the directorships are also in S&P 1500 firms, some are not, and because our primary interest is in the boards of the most visible and prestigious firms, we focus on directorships

within the RiskMetrics database. The average number of other outside board seats in public firms held by an independent director is approximately one, while the average independent director holds 1.74 directorships within the RiskMetrics database (including his own firm). Thus, our approach understates the total number of directorships held, in its focus on directorships in the largest public firms, which are arguably the most important. Nearly half of all independent directors, i.e., 47%, hold only one directorship. Of the independent directors on multiple boards, on average they hold 2.41 directorships (including their own) in the RiskMetrics sample and they have an average of 1.88 additional board seats as indicated by the broader *outside public boards* variable reported by Risk Metrics.

Finally, market capitalization of the firms where an individual holds multiple independent directorships varies widely. The mean (median) percentage difference in the size of the largest directorship to that of the smallest is 1,905% (269%) for such directors. Thus, significant differences in reputation incentives for an individual director can exist in his or her largest and smallest directorships, while independent directors on the same board can experience very different reputation incentives.

The sample of independent directors contains 15,215 firm-years for 2,832 different firms. Table 2 presents firm-level descriptive statistics. The average firm controls \$11.847 billion (\$5.258 billion) in total assets (in the subsample of 12,166 firms that exclude Fama and French defined finance and utility industries). The average firm also has an equity market capitalization of \$7.163 billion (\$7.011 billion).³ In almost 80% of firms, independent directors represent a majority of the board.

Insert Table 2 near here

To capture the relative importance of the director incentive effects associated with a specific firm for directors with multiple directorships, we compare the relative size of equity market capitalization in each firm where the director serves. The most (least) prestigious directorship, which represents the largest (smallest) fraction of the total market capitalization under a director's oversight, is simply referred to as

³ We also conducted the analysis adjusting for 2001 dollars and find that all our results are invariant to this adjustment.

Highest (Lowest). However, to provide greater variability and to capture the relative reputation benefits to individuals with more than two independent directorships, we also create a variable High (Low), which is an indicator variable for when a directorship is in a firm that is at least 10% larger (smaller) than the firm representing their least (most) prestigious directorship. Because having a greater portion of better (less) motivated directors on a board can improve (worsen) board decision making, we aggregate the director level measures to the board level to obtain the fractions of independent directors who classified this directorship as High or Low.

Panel A of Table 2 shows that across all boards the mean percent of directors for whom this is a low ranked directorship is 14.28% (15.29% excluding finance and utilities). In 15% of firms, a majority of the independent directors classify this as a low ranked directorship (17% excluding finance and utilities). The mean percentage of directors for whom this is a high ranked directorship is 12.7% (12.43% excluding finance and utilities). Also, in 15% of the firms, a majority of the independent directors rank this firm as relatively more prestigious, or larger, than the smallest firm where they are independent directors (including or excluding finance and utilities). Finally, 12% of boards are classified as busy (i.e., when a majority of independent directors hold three or more directorships).

We separately measure representation by directors with only one directorship. We distinguish such independent directors because they could have stronger incentives to retain their only directorship. The average board has almost 29% independent directors for whom this is their sole directorship and in 45% of our sample firms a majority of independent directors hold no other outside directorships.

Panel B of Table 2 reports descriptive statistics for the three subsamples of firms that have a majority of independent directors for whom this is a high or low ranked directorship or their sole directorship. As expected, boards with a majority of independent directors for whom this represents a high ranked directorship are generally those of larger firms, and boards with a majority of independent directors for whom this is their only directorship are generally those of smaller firms. This highlights the importance of controlling for firm size in the subsequent analysis. Firms with a majority of independent directors for whom this directorship is one of their highest ranked directorships have a slightly larger

fraction of independent directors and have a greater fraction of busy boards. They also have higher mean return on assets (ROA) and Tobin's q ratios. Interestingly, the firm subsample with boards composed of a majority of independent directors for whom this is a low ranked directorship has slightly lower mean ROA and Tobin's q ratios than the firm subsample with a majority of independent directors for whom this is their only directorship.

4. Director-level analysis

In this section, we examine the time and energy a director spends in his directorships. We start with board meeting attendance. We then consider service on some of the board's most time consuming committees. Finally, we explore director willingness to stay on the board when greater demands are placed on their time and the board's reputation benefits decline.

4.1. Board meeting attendance

Their attendance record at board meetings is a measure of a director's commitment to his directorship responsibilities. As a general rule, firms do not report actual meeting attendance by director, which can be in person or by teleconferencing, but in their annual proxy statements they are required by Securities and Exchange Commission disclosure rules to report when a director misses more than 25% of board meetings during the year. RiskMetrics reports this disclosed absence indicator variable for each director-firm-year. Panel A of Figure 1 plots the mean absence statistic for independent directors in the sample based on a director's relative board ranking. Absences decline as a board's relative ranking goes from low (ranking ≥ 5) to high (ranking = 1).

Insert Figure 1. near here

In untabulated univariate results, we test the difference in mean attendance rates between a director's largest and smallest directorships. The frequency with which directors miss more than 25% of board meetings in their most prestigious directorship is 2.13% while it is 3.08% in their least prestigious directorship. The difference of -0.94 percentage points is statistically significant at the 1% level. We also examine board meeting attendance rates before and after the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (SOX). Greater

scrutiny of directors by regulators and investors in the post-SOX era can raise director incentives to attend board meetings. Although attendance does improve post-Sox for both the director's most and least important boards, meeting absences remain significantly larger in their least prestigious directorships relative to their most prestigious directorships. We also split the sample by board size and observe that while larger boards tend to suffer from greater absence rates, perhaps due to an exacerbated free-rider problem, a director's most prestigious directorship continues to exhibit a higher attendance rate. When we alternatively split the sample of independent directors by whether they are current executives in other firms, we again find that the least prestigious directorships exhibit the highest absence rates in both subsamples.

Next we examine board meeting absences in a multivariate setting. In addition to relative firm size, a director's level of commitment to a firm can be affected by characteristics such as board size and director age, which can have a negative effect on a director's attendance rate. Other characteristics such as a director's share ownership and board tenure can have a positive effect on his attendance rate. Firm size (Adams and Ferreira, 2008) and performance can also influence a director's attendance incentives. Directors are less likely to miss meetings when firm performance is poor, while there are fewer incentives to attend meetings when firm performance is strong.

Table 3 presents results from independent director-level probit regressions, where the dependent variable equals one if the director attended less than 75% of the meetings during the year. The standard errors are robust and are clustered by director. In Model 1, the indicator for a more prestigious directorship is negative and significant at the 1% level. In contrast, the indicator for a less prestigious directorship is positive and significant at the 1% level. The coefficient on firm size is also significantly negative. It is important to recognize that our analysis shows that it is not just firm size that matters, but also firm size relative to the firm size of the other boards a director sits on. Even after controlling for firm size, a director's relatively more prestigious directorships are associated with fewer absences and his relatively less prestigious directorships are associated with more absences. Other control variables have expected signs. Directors on larger boards have more absences. Directors who are older, have longer

tenures, have no other directorship, or are serving in the post-SOX era have fewer absences. Finally, the positive coefficient on Tobin's q is consistent with directors having less incentive to attend board meetings when a firm is performing well, as reflected in this valuation measure. Share ownership and operating performance [measured by return on assets (ROA)] are not significantly related to attendance.

Insert Table 3 near here

Are busy directors more prone to miss meetings at all of the boards they sit on? To address this question, Model 2 adds controls for the number of other directorships held by a director. The coefficient of the number of directorships is positive as expected, but interestingly it is insignificant. The coefficients of more and less prestigious directorships remain significantly negative and positive, respectively.

Model 3 is limited to directors with multiple directorships and finds similar results. By excluding directors with single directorships, we can more clearly examine the economic differences of the resulting coefficient estimates. The predicted probability of a director missing more than 25% of the meetings in a sample year is 2.164%. The corresponding marginal effects from Model 3 for high and low ranked directorships are -0.00525 (24.26% lower than the predicted value) and +0.00302 (13.96% higher than the predicted value) respectively. Thus, the predicted probability of missing more than 25% of board meetings is on average 33% lower $((0.01639 - 0.02466) / 0.02466)$ for a typical independent director who ranks the directorship high relative to a director who ranks the directorship low.

In Model 4, we include an indicator that equals one if the director is a member of a major board committee (nominating, compensation, audit, or corporate governance). These committees represent key board functions and, thus, indicate a greater level of active involvement by a director. As expected, major committee membership is associated with significantly fewer absences. Yet, even after controlling for major committee membership, more prestigious directorships continue to have fewer absences.⁴

Another motivation for attending board meetings is incremental compensation. Although compensation is relatively small for many directors, Adams and Ferreira (2008) find that higher meeting

⁴ This control is excluded from our initial models of director attendance given its potential endogeneity.

attendance fees significantly reduce meeting absences. In Model 5, we include firm-level controls for the annual director retainer and meeting attendance fees as reported in the ExecuComp database. Unfortunately, this information is not reported by all firms and the data are unavailable after fiscal year 2006, which considerably reduces the number of observations that can be analyzed. Consistent with Adams and Ferreria (2008), we find higher director meeting fees and annual retainers are associated with a lower likelihood of missed board meetings. After controlling for these financial incentives, we still find strong support for the relative ranking of a directorship having a significant association with board meeting attendance, for both high and low ranked directorships, consistent with the prior evidence.

Finally, the number of meetings held during the year can affect meeting attendance. For example, if the firm is performing poorly or going through a significant transition, then the board is likely to meet more often and the seriousness of the situation can create heightened director incentives to attend more meetings. In Model 6, we add a control for the number of board meetings held per year. As with the director compensation variables, data on the number of board meetings are not available for all firm-years in the sample, so we lose further observations. Nonetheless, the coefficient estimate for the number of board meetings in Model 6 is negative and significant, which suggests that when boards meet more often, directors are less likely to miss meetings. Again, we continue to find strong support for the proposition that directors are more reluctant to miss meetings in their higher ranked directorships.⁵

4.2. Exogenous shocks to directorship rankings

In this subsection we analyze firm size changes in one directorship that affect a director's relative ranking of other directorships he holds to minimize concerns about endogenous effects. Specifically, we focus on independent directors with multiple directorships and identify all instances in which firm market

⁵ In unreported results, we include firm capital expenditures to sales, leverage, the number of business segments, and the percentage of tangible assets to capture the greater need for directors to attend more meetings in complex firms, but we find no significant evidence in favor of this hypothesis. We also control for an insider-dominated board and the presence of a founder family member. We find evidence consistent with independent directors being less inclined to attend meetings when insiders are in control, unless an influential insider is present to motivate them.

capitalization falls in a given year for one of a director's firms.⁶ The fall in firm size can occur for a number of reasons, such as a spin-off or poor performance, which are firm specific causes. Thus, a change in firm size should be largely independent of the director's involvement on other boards in the years before or after the event.⁷ However, a fall in firm size can increase a director's relative rankings of his or her other directorships. These other directorships are the focus of the analysis in this subsection.

We identify treatment directors as those directors for whom a directorship increased in ranking due to a drop in the ranking of another directorship because of a decline in that firm's size.⁸ We also restrict our analysis to treatment directors on the boards of firms that did not themselves rise in market capitalization by more than 10%. This restriction excludes contaminating events at the treatment firm, such as mergers and acquisitions. We further require our treatment directors to not gain or lose a directorship during the event year. This restriction excludes rank changes due to a loss or gain of directorships and allows us to focus directly on changes in relative rankings. We identify 319 treatment firms using these criteria. When we limit treatment firms to not have any increase in market capitalization so as to rule out any possibility that a firm's own actions lead to a rise in its directorship relative ranking, we are left with 81 exogenous treatment directorships. For this analysis, the remaining independent directors on the boards with treatment directors are defined as the control sample. For the main sample and the smaller restricted sample, we have 1,713 and 464 control directorships, respectively.

Table 4 reports the results of a director-level difference in differences analysis of absences at board meetings using the directorship treatment and control samples. The Treatment indicator variable equals one for treatment director-years and zero for control director-years. The Post-Treatment indicator equals zero in the penultimate year prior to the ranking increase and one in the two years following. We exclude the year prior to the change to reduce the concern that events at the firm decreasing in equity capitalization could also affect the attendance of directors at the treatment firm in that year. The

⁶ We find consistent results or stronger when we restrict the drop to be at least 5%, even though sample size falls.

⁷ If events that decrease firm size require more director time this would bias us against finding our reported results.

⁸ We focus on board rank increases as they are more likely to motivate director behavioral changes than decreases.

interaction of these two variables represents the effect of an exogenous rise in relative ranking. If an increase in a director's relative ranking due to a rank-reducing event at another one of his directorships causes him to value this directorship more, then we expect absences in these directorships to drop after the ranking shock relative to other independent directors in the same firm.

Insert Table 4 near here

Model 1 in Table 4 reports results using the key indicators for the DID model without additional controls. The coefficient for the interaction is negative and significant, suggesting that directors whose relative ranking of this directorship increased due to a shock at another of their directorships are significantly less likely to miss meetings at this directorship after the shock. Model 2 includes the same controls used in Table 3 and finds stronger treatment effects, both statistically and economically.

Some matched directorships are likely to be individuals with only one directorship, who tend to have high attendance records (shown in Table 3), which could bias against finding significant differences in the treatment directorships. To avoid this potential bias, Model 3 uses only directorship-years of directors holding more than one directorship. Again the coefficient estimate on the interaction term is negative and significant (p -value = 0.02). Finally, Models 4 and 5 of Table 4 use the smaller, more restrictive sample of treatment directorships, in which an increase in ranking is most certainly driven by an exogenous shock in the ranking of another one of a director's directorships and we find an even stronger treatment effect. Moreover, the positive and significant coefficient on the treatment indicator implies that prior to an exogenous rank-increasing shock, these directors are likely to miss meetings more frequently relative to the matched directors. Thus, after a rise in a directorship's relative importance, directors appear to put in more effort at the firm, which is in part manifested by missing fewer meetings relative to before the rank-increasing shock.

To address the possibility that unobserved director characteristics are endogenously determining the observed relations between relative directorship prestige and board meeting absence rates, we repeat the analysis of Tables 3 and 4 using director fixed effects. In this analysis we exclude firm size as a control because including firm size along with director fixed effects would capture variation in firm size

across a director's directorships, which is precisely what our High and Low directorship rank variables are designed to measure. These tests have fewer observations because director-firm observations with no variation in absence rates during our sample are excluded. In untabulated results, we continue to find more prestigious directorships are associated with a significantly lower absence rate; and less prestigious directorships, a significantly higher absence rate.

In summary, the attendance evidence indicates that independent directors place a greater priority and are more active in their higher ranked directorships. This evidence reveals that directors do not view all directorships equally and, thus, do not distribute their efforts, skill, and attention equally across all of their directorships, as is often implicitly presumed. Given this finding, it follows that directors who are busy on multiple boards are not necessarily equally detrimental to all the firms where they are directors.

4.3. Board committee service

Another measure of a director's contribution of time and energy is board committee service at a particular directorship. Specifically, the audit and compensation committees are viewed as more time-consuming.⁹ Model 1 in Table 5 reports estimates of a probit regression model in which the dependent variable is one if the independent director serves on either the audit or the compensation committee, using the same controls used in Table 3, Model 1. We find evidence that, in their more prestigious directorships, directors are significantly more likely to serve on these more demanding committees, while on their less prestigious boards they are no more likely than other directors to serve. The predicted probability of a

⁹ See p. 1513 of Corporate Director's Guidebook, Fifth Edition, a report by Committee on Corporate Laws, American Bar Association Section of Business Law published in *Business Lawyer*, 62, (4) (August 2007), 1479 to 1553, which states that "the time required of directors of public companies is significant, *particularly for members of the audit committee and the compensation committee*. It is not uncommon for a director's total time commitment to involve 250 hours or more a year." Directors "should carefully consider how much time will be required to meet their responsibilities, *particularly if they are members of the audit or compensation committees*." [Italics added for emphasis.]

director being on either the audit or the compensation committee is 0.83. The corresponding marginal effect for a more prestigious directorship is 0.016, representing a 1.9% increase ($0.016 / 0.83$) in the probability of an independent director being on one of these more time intensive committees.

Insert Table 5 near here

Given the potentially greater demand upon a director's time from both the audit and the compensation committees, a stronger indicator of director effort spent on a particular board is simultaneous membership on these two committees. Thus, the dependent variable in Model 2 equals one only if the director serves on both the audit committee and the compensation committee. We continue to find a positive relation between a director's most prestigious directorship and service on both the audit and the compensation committees, though the estimate is not statistically significant. However, we also find that in their relatively less prestigious directorships, independent directors are significantly less likely to serve on both of these time-consuming committees. In unreported results we also include controls for director pay and the number of board meetings, and we find the importance of our relative ranking measures is unchanged. In addition, director pay and number of board meeting variables are not significantly related to audit or compensation committee membership.

In Model 3 of Table 5 we estimate a Poisson count regression in which the dependent variable is zero if the director does not serve on either the audit or the compensation committee, one if he serves on one of these time-consuming committees, and two if he serves on both. We find that directors in their more prestigious directorships are significantly more likely to serve on either or both of these committees, whereas in their less prestigious directorships they are less likely to serve in these more demanding committees, though the coefficient estimate is not significant at traditional levels (p -value = 0.15).¹⁰ Finally, in Model 4 we repeat the DID analysis from Table 4 and find evidence that, prior to an exogenous directorship reputation shock, the treatment directors are less likely to serve on either of these

¹⁰ In unreported results, we estimate a Tobit model for audit and compensation committee membership and find the coefficient of a director's more (less) prestigious directorships is again significantly positive (significantly negative).

committees. However, following a rank increasing shock, they are more likely to serve on these two more onerous committees, though the increase is statistically similar to that of the non-treated control directors.

These findings complement the earlier evidence on board meeting attendance and represent another dimension in which directors do not distribute their energy uniformly across their directorships. While attendance rates and committee service are only two measures of director contribution to the board, they are likely to be correlated with a director's overall expenditure of effort and thus, provide insights into how directors prioritize their commitment of time and energy across multiple boards.

4.4. Relinquished directorships

In Table 6 we examine director's commitment to their directorships by their willingness to hold on to a directorship when times get tough. In Panel A, we find that the independent directors relinquish their lowest ranked directorship significantly more frequently than their highest ranked directorship. The results also hold in both the subsample of directors who are and are not executive officers in another firm. This is consistent with lower ranked directorships being less beneficial than higher ranked directorships.

Insert Table 6 near here

Panel B of Table 6 reports the results of a stronger test in which the likelihood of director departure is conditioned on firm performance and other variables that can influence a departure decision. In these probit regression estimates, the sample is limited to independent directors with multiple directorships and the dependent variable is defined as one if the director does not hold the directorship in the following year. Firm performance is measured by annual stock returns and return on assets.¹¹ The key explanatory variables are the interactions of firm performance with the director reputation incentive measures. The standard errors are robust and clustered by director.

In Models 1 and 2 of Table 6, Panel B, firm performance is measured by annual stock returns. In Model 1, the coefficients for the low and high ranked directorship indicators are both positive and significant, although the low ranked directorship coefficient is significantly greater (p -value < 0.01). In addition, the coefficient on annual firm stock performance is negative and significant, consistent with

¹¹ In robustness, we find similar results when using industry-adjusted or market-adjusted performance measures.

Fahlenbrach, Low, and Stulz (2010) and Yermack (2004). Turning to the relations between directorship exits and directorship incentives and firm performance, we find the coefficient on the interaction of annual stock returns and a high ranked directorship indicator is significantly positive, whereas the interaction between stock performance and a low ranked directorship indicator is significantly negative. These findings reveal that directors do not react uniformly to firm performance declines across their independent directorships.

To obtain a clearer economic interpretation, Panel C of Table 6 reports the implied probabilities of a directorship being lost in the next year for high and low ranked directorships, conditioning on when stock performance is in the top or bottom quartile. In Model 1, when annual stock performance drops from the top to the bottom quartile, there is no statistically significant change in the likelihood of losing a highly ranked directorship. Thus, weakening stock performance per se does not seem to affect the likelihood of relinquishing a highly ranked directorship. However, when stock performance drops from the top to the bottom quartile for low ranked directorships, the likelihood that the director will leave the board in the next period increases from 10.5% to 13.1%, a statistically significant rise in probability of 25% (p -value < 0.01). These findings reveal that directors are less willing to continue their service in their less prestigious directorships when these firms are struggling.

Moving to Model 2 of Table 6, Panel B, we add controls for other factors associated with directors relinquishing their directorships. We find that directors are less likely to depart larger firms in general. A surprising result is that directors are more likely to depart as their board tenure increases and as their share ownership rises. Possible explanations are that tenure acts as a proxy for directors near retirement age, who could face mandatory retirement or simply older directors facing declining health or wanting to pursue less demanding activities. Also, the number of directorships held increases the likelihood that a director will relinquish one of his board seats due to overall time pressures. A director is more likely to depart when the CEO tenure is shorter, perhaps following a CEO turnover (Farrell and Whidbee, 2000), and when fewer independent directors are on the board, which can increase the monitoring load on the independent directors. In unreported robustness analysis, we add controls for

director pay and number of annual board meetings and find that our results are unchanged in this smaller sample. Both components of director pay, the annual retainer and per meeting fee, are associated with a significantly lower likelihood of director departure. However, board meeting frequency significantly increases the likelihood of the director departing, consistent with the directorship's greater time demands making it less attractive.

Models 3 and 4 of Table 6, Panel B, report on operating performance measured by ROA. While ROA is not significantly related to independent director departures, its interaction terms with directorship rankings are revealing. Independent directors exhibit significantly greater departure sensitivity to performance at their lower ranked directorships, but no significant sensitivity at their higher ranked directorships. Turning to Table 6, Panel C, the implied probabilities of losing a high or low ranked directorship both increase when firm operating performance drops from the top to the bottom quartile. However, the lower ranked directorships, which already face a greater likelihood of being relinquished, experience a rise in departure frequency that is twice that of high ranked directorships (8% versus 4%).

The evidence thus far indicates that directors are less willing to put forth time and energy in their less prestigious directorships and are more willing to work harder in their relatively more prestigious directorships. If independent directors are expending more time and energy on their higher ranked directorships, then this additional effort should reflect itself in greater firm performance and higher firm value.

5. Firm-level analysis

In this section, we aggregate up independent director reputation incentives to the board level to take into account the proportion of independent directors on a board that have strong or weak reputation incentives.

5.1. Firm performance and value

Table 7 reports estimates from multivariate regressions on our two firm performance measures. Firm performance is measured by earnings before interests taxes depreciation and amortization

(EBITDA) scaled by total assets (ROA), and firm value is measured by the natural logarithm of the equity market to book value ratio to approximate Tobin's q .¹² We exclude finance and utility firms from this analysis due to their highly regulated nature. Each regression has either firm or industry fixed effects as indicated, and all the standard errors are robust and clustered by firm. Each model includes other controls common to the literature on firm performance (e.g., Coles, Daniel, and Naveen, 2008; Anderson and Reeb, 2003; and Fich and Shivdasani, 2006). In Models 1 and 5, the key explanatory variables are the percentage of all board members for whom this represents either a more prestigious or less prestigious board seat. Estimates from both Models 1 (ROA) and 5 (Q) yield similar conclusions about the relations between these two strong and weak board reputation incentive variables and either firm performance measure. A greater portion of directors for whom this directorship represents one of their most (least) prestigious is associated with significantly better (worse) operating performance and higher (lower) firm valuation.

Insert Table 7 near here

To interpret the economic significance of these results, first recall that boards in our sample have nine directors on average. Thus, if a single independent director's ranking shifts to High, this is equivalent to an 11% increase in our primary measure of improved independent director reputation incentives. The coefficient estimate in Model 1 implies that an increase of one independent director who is strongly (weakly) motivated is associated with a 2.09 percentage point increase (1.43 percentage point decrease) in ROA.¹³ Similarly, the coefficient estimate for Model 5 implies that the same change is associated with a 10.34% rise (5.06% fall) in Tobin's q .¹⁴ Because the average board has six independent directors, if even one of these directors has stronger (weaker) incentives to monitor, the increased (decreased) monitoring

¹² We use logs to adjust for outliers. However, all the models in Table 7 are robust to not using logs.

¹³ An increase from an intermediate to a high rank equates to $(0.0019 \times 11) = 0.0209$ higher ROA level.

¹⁴ An increase from an intermediate to a high rank equates to $(0.0094 \times 11) = 0.1034$ increase in Tobin's q .

efforts over multiple years can imply a significant improvement (deterioration) in firm governance, leading to a rise (fall) in shareholder value, which is reflected in a significant rise (or fall) in Tobin's q.

Models 2 and 6 present results using indicators for firms with a majority of independent directors for whom this is a more or less prestigious directorship as key explanatory variables and obtain stronger economic effects, consistent with our prior conclusions. Models 3 and 7 add firm fixed effects to control for any time-invariant unobserved factors that could be associated with firm performance and board composition, and we obtain similar results. Models 4 and 8 use industry-adjusted measures of ROA and Tobin's q as the dependent variable and add an indicator for when a majority of the independent directors on the board are busy, with a busy director defined as holding three or more directorships. Fich and Shivadasani (2006) find evidence that when a majority of independent directors are busy, these firms are associated with worse operating performance. Model 4 reveals a similar finding. The coefficient for a busy board has a significant negative association with ROA. More important, after controlling for busy boards, the indicators for a majority of independent directors with strong or weak reputation incentives continue to have the same significant associations with firm performance.¹⁵

Table 8 presents a stronger set of evidence on director reputation incentives. It reports the results of a firm level analysis of firms with treatment directors, who are identified as independent directors experiencing an exogenous negative shock to the ranking of one of their other directorships, which are the same events analyzed in Table 4. In this analysis we include the firm-year prior to the rise in a director's relative ranking of the board. Control firms are selected from the same Fama and French defined industry as the treatment firms. They have no treatment directors on their boards and are closest in market capitalization to the treatment firm. In addition, firms triggering the drop in a director's relative ranking of a directorship are excluded from the analysis. There are 448 treatment firms and 446 control firms. We estimate similar DID models for firm performance and firm value. The dependent variables are industry-

¹⁵ The results are unchanged if we control for the potentially endogenous fraction of independent directors who miss more than 25% of the board meetings during the year.

adjusted, and the controls are the same as in Table 7 (though suppressed for brevity). For this analysis, the post-treatment indicator variable is zero in the year prior to the exogenous rank increase and is one in the following two years. We truncate the post-treatment period after two years to minimize the confounding effects of later events on firm performance.¹⁶ The ranking change year is excluded to allow some time for the incentive change to manifest itself. The treatment indicator variable equals one for firms with a treatment director and is zero for the matched control firms. Again, the interaction between the treatment firm and post-treatment period indicators represents the effect on firm performance of a relative ranking increase by an independent director.

Insert Table 8 near here

Model 1 in Table 8 reports the results for industry-adjusted ROA, using only the director-firm treatment and the post-rank increase indicator variables and their interaction term as regressors. The interaction term has a significant positive coefficient indicating that these firms exhibit significantly improved operating performance following an exogenous positive ranking shock compared with control firms whose independent directors experience no change in relative directorship rankings. In addition, the post-treatment indicator has a significant negative coefficient, indicating that the control firms experienced a drop in operating performance over the period. Together these findings imply that treatment firms exhibit a 0.3 ($0.017 - 0.014 = 0.003$) percentage point rise in industry-adjusted ROA after a positive reputation shock, resulting in a 1.7 percentage point gain in ROA relative to the matched firms. Model 2 includes all the Table 7 controls. The interaction term is no longer significant, though it remains positive. This could be due to some of the controls capturing part of the treatment effect because they are rising in the post-treatment period.

In Table 8, Model 3, the dependent variable is the industry-adjusted natural logarithm of Tobin's q . The findings are stronger, perhaps due to the market's ability to capitalize expected future benefits arising from improved board reputation incentives. Specifically, the interaction term coefficient is positive and significant at the 1% level. The coefficient estimate of the treatment indicator is significantly

¹⁶ The results are robust to including all years following the exogenous rank increase.

negative, suggesting that, prior to the improved board incentives, these firms had lower market values, but following an exogenous rise in board incentives, firm value rises. Specifically, the coefficient estimates suggest that for an unexpected rise in board ranking, the treatment firms experience an average increase in Tobin's q of 2.2 percentage points (0.089 - 0.067), resulting in an 8.9% gain in value relative to the matched control firms. This is consistent with increased attention by talented directors leading to improved firm performance and valuation. Model 4 includes all of the controls used in Table 7 and draws similar conclusions. Finally, in Table 8, Models 5 and 6, we consider a larger sample that includes observations in which the treatment firm in question also increases in size. The control firm selection process is the same. For both ROA and Tobin's q, the interaction term has a positive and significant coefficient.

In summary, the Table 8 results provide further confidence that endogenous effects are not driving our primary results. Together, the evidence from Tables 7 and 8 supports the proposition that a rise in the proportion of independent directors having relatively stronger reputation motives is associated with better firm performance and value. Thus, we have further evidence that directors with multiple directorships do not distribute their efforts uniformly across all their directorships. Instead they prioritize their efforts and employ more of their energy and attention on their more prestigious boards, where their reputation benefits are greatest, at the expense of their other boards.

5.2. Forced CEO turnover

Next, we examine a direct measure of director monitoring effort, forced CEO turnover. CEO turnovers are clearly a time-consuming process for independent directors given their high visibility, potential legal liability, and the time needed to find and recruit a replacement. We identified 380 occurrences of forced CEO turnover within our sample firm-years after excluding turnovers due to mergers. Forced turnovers are identified from searches of press releases in Factiva that directly state a CEO's departure was forced. Also, if a CEO is under 60 years old and there is no news of a new job acceptance, poor health, or death, and a retirement decision is not announced at least six months prior to

the departure press release, then this is also treated as forced (Parrino, 1997; Huson, Malatesta and Parrino, 2004; and Hazarika, Karpoff, and Nahata, 2012).

Table 9 reports the estimates from logit regressions in which the dependent variable is one if a firm's CEO is forced out during the year. To capture other causes of CEO departures, we control for board size, number of outside directorships, an above median outside director shareholding indicator, institutional shareholdings, firm size, CEO tenure, and an indicator for CEOs in the retirement age range (60 to 70 years old). The explanatory variables are all lagged one year to capture firm conditions existing prior to the forced departure decision. All regressions report robust standard errors clustered by firm.

Insert Table 9 near here

In the first model of Table 9, Panel A, we find that the percentage of independent directors with relatively strong reputation incentives is negatively related to the probability of a forced CEO turnover. This is consistent with better motivated directors selecting better qualified CEOs. However, we also recognize that fewer forced CEO departures can be consistent with weaker monitoring. One view is that though directors want to be seen as strong monitors, they do not always act accordingly because they are simply too busy and thus, they are less likely to detect or act on poor performance and fire a poor performing CEO (Fich and Shivdasani, 2006). Another view is that independent directors in their relatively more prestigious directorships are less willing to rock the boat or otherwise attempt to discipline the current CEO because annoying a CEO with probing questions could endanger a director's renomination (Warther, 1998; and Adams, Hermalin, and Weisbach, 2010). This is also consistent with the Holmström (1999) suggestion that reputation concerns create incentives for directors to avoid risky actions, such as confronting the CEO, which could have negative consequences for their future directorships. To distinguish between the stronger monitoring hypothesis and these two weak monitoring hypotheses, we consider how these reputation measures affect the sensitivity of CEO turnover to firm performance, as the stronger and weaker monitoring hypotheses have opposite predictions.

Industry-adjusted stock return performance has a significant negative relation with forced CEO departures, consistent with earlier studies of CEO turnover (Warner, Watts, and Wruck, 1988 and

Weisbach, 1988). The coefficient on the interaction between prior stock performance and the percentage of independent directors that rank the board relatively highly is significantly negative, indicating that as the fraction of independent directors with strong reputation incentives rises, sensitivity of forced CEO turnover to stock performance also rises. No evidence exists that a larger fraction of independent directors that rank the directorship relatively low has a significant relation with this sensitivity to stock performance. This is consistent with a director's incentive to be viewed externally as a stronger monitor on average dominating his desire to please the CEO or to shirk as a result being overcommitted.

Panel C of Table 9 reports the implied probabilities of forced CEO departures based on the coefficient estimates of Model 1 for the top and bottom quartiles of firm stock performance. Holding the percentage of independent directors with high reputation incentives equal to the population mean, a large decline from the top to the bottom quartile in stock performance increases the threat of a forced CEO turnover by 126%. Conditional on this same large drop in stock performance, but with no independent directors with strong reputation incentives present, the likelihood of forced turnover increases, but at a smaller 97%, reflecting weaker CEO turnover sensitivity to stock performance.

Models 2 and 3 of Table 9, Panel A, include year and industry fixed effects, respectively, and yield similar results. Model 4 uses the indicator variables for a majority of independent directors having strong and weak reputation incentives and reveals consistent results. Model 5 includes an indicator for boards with a majority of independent directors (Weisbach, 1988), and it shows that such boards are positively associated with the likelihood of forced CEO departures and significantly greater sensitivity of forced turnover to stock performance. Nevertheless, our primary findings for boards with a greater proportion of independent directors with strong reputation motivates continue to hold.

Panel B of Table 9 uses operating performance, measured by ROA, as the key firm performance measure. In Model 1, firms with a greater portion of independent directors who highly rank the directorship are again associated with significantly lower likelihood of forced CEO departures and a greater CEO turnover sensitivity to operating performance. Greater sensitivity of forced CEO turnovers to operating performance is also evident when ROA drops from the top to bottom quartile, given the larger

increase in the probability of a forced CEO departure observed in Panel C. Model 2 exhibits similar results when year and industry fixed effects are included. Models 3 and 4 use indicators for when a majority of independent directors have each type of reputation incentive. Model 3 adds an indicator for boards having a majority of independent directors and a corresponding interaction term with operating performance. Both the indicator and the interaction terms are insignificant.

Model 4 of Table 9, Panel B, adds a busy board indicator that equals one if a majority of independent directors have three or more directorships, as in Fich and Shivdasani (2006). Consistent with their earlier findings, the interaction between the busy board indicator and firm operating performance is positive, though insignificant, suggesting that busy directors weaken the sensitivity of forced CEO departures to firm performance. After controlling for busy boards, we continue to find that boards having a majority of independent directors with stronger reputation incentives are associated with a significantly greater sensitivity of forced CEO departure to ROA. Thus, when directors are overly busy, some of their directorships are likely to suffer from less attention, but their higher ranked directorships, where their reputation incentives are stronger, do not exhibit evidence of reduced monitoring activity.

6. Further robustness

In this section, we further examine the effect of firm size on the study's primary findings, explore alternative measures of firm size to rank a director's directorships, and reexamine the earlier main results when ranking directorships by director compensation.

6.1. A further examination of firm size effects

In this subsection we match each firm having a majority of independent directors who highly rank the directorship with a control firm in the same Fama and French industry that is closest in firm size (equity market capitalization) and having a majority of independent directors who rank the directorship low. Using this approach of comparing similar firms, we reduce the likelihood that other endogenously determined firm characteristics or industry shocks are causing the prior results. Further, the matched sample addresses the concern that the prior results are driven by firm size.

Using this matched sample we continue to find that a greater percentage of independent directors who ranked the directorship High (Low) is positively (negatively) associated with ROA and Tobin's q. We find the proportion of independent directors who highly rank a directorship has significant positive relation to sensitivity of forced CEO turnover to performance using either firm performance measure, and it is negatively related to the unconditional likelihood of a forced CEO departure.

6.2. Alternative directorship ranking measures

We consider a firm's market value of total assets, book value of total assets, total sales, number of employees, and total shareholder return as alternative measures of board prestige. Panel B of Figure 1 shows the average absentee rate at board meetings based on a directorship's relative ranking using these measures, along with our primary measure. The patterns of director absences based on firm market value or book value of total assets and total sales are similar to our earlier findings and reveal a clear increase in board meeting absences as the director's board ranking declines. Total shareholder return and the number of employees reveal similar inverse relations, though the associations are not as strong.

Next, we reexamine our primary findings using each of these alternative measures to rank directorships. In the analysis of independent director meeting attendance rates, we find that market value of total assets yield similar results to our primary measure. High ranked directorships under the remaining alternative ranking measures are all associated with fewer board meeting absences, though these differences are not significant at conventional levels. Low ranked directorships have a significant positive relation to a director's absence rate at board meetings for all these measures, except for total shareholder return. For the board committee membership analysis, we find robust results for all the measures, except total shareholder return and number of employees. We also find similar results for the analysis of directorships relinquished when using market assets, total sales, and total shareholder return as our reputation measures, although the coefficient of the interaction of the high rank board measure based on sales and firm performance is not significant.

At the firm level, we find that ranking directorships based on market value of total assets and total shareholder return provides results similar to our primary ROA and Tobin's q analysis. Ranking

directorships by total sales also yields similar results in the ROA analysis. We also find similar results for the forced CEO turnover analysis. Specifically, when ranking directorships by book or market value of total assets or by total shareholder return, we continue to find a significantly lower likelihood of a forced CEO departure when more independent directors rank the board highly. Moreover, when directorships are ranked by market or book value of total assets, we find significantly greater sensitivity of forced CEO departures to stock performance.

In summary, the alternative reputation measures we examine yield similar findings, but they appear to be noisier measures of a director's relative incentives across boards, leading to less precision in the relations with firm performance and value. Equity market capitalization and market value of total assets reflect a market assessment of a firm's relative importance. Thus, these two measures facilitate a clearer ranking of boards that directors are likely to use when allocating their time and energy.

6.3. Relative ranking of directorships by compensation

Because director compensation is correlated with firm size (Ryan and Wiggins, 2004), the variation in relative pay across an individual director's board positions could create incentives to work harder at larger firms and hold onto those directorships simply because they offer relatively higher rents. To consider the impact of these incentives on our primary tests, we rank a director's board positions by director pay, which is measured by the sum of the annual retainer fee and the board meeting fee multiplied by the number of meetings in the prior year.

In multivariate analysis, we find no significant relation between board meeting attendance and high or low ranked directorships based on director pay. We do find evidence of a significantly greater likelihood of a director being on the audit or compensation committee in his higher ranked directorships based on director pay, which is consistent with a greater willingness to serve when compensation is relatively higher. However, we find no significant differences in high or low ranked directorships based on director pay and the likelihood of a director relinquishing an independent directorship.

In the firm-level analysis, we uncover no significant evidence that directorship rankings based on director pay are associated with either measures of firm performance and value or forced CEO turnover

sensitivity to stock performance. Given the lack of significant relations across most of our tests when using relative director compensation to rank a director's board seats, we conclude that reputation incentives are stronger than the compensation incentives in motivating independent directors.

7. Conclusions

Reputation is a valuable commodity, which generates strong incentives on the part of economic agents to protect it. Given the importance of reputation incentives, and especially given the serious concerns about the limited incentive effects of director compensation, it is essential to understand the multidimensional nature of director reputation incentives. Furthermore, given directors' limited time and energy, an understanding is needed of how they prioritize among competing directorship responsibilities. We study this question by examining independent directors with multiple directorships. The fact that a director's skills are demanded by several firms is a positive signal of his talent and experience. Yet, the primary incentive explored in the literature is the negative effect of multiple directorships reducing a director's monitoring effectiveness. We explore a different aspect of holding multiple directorships by considering the differential reputation incentives a director faces across these directorships. We argue that the reputation of a board relative to that of the other firms on whose boards a director sits is a positive function of firm prestige and visibility, which are correlated with a firm's equity market capitalization. Given the competing time demands on directors holding multiple directorships, rational directors should expend more effort where the rewards are greatest, namely, their more prestigious directorships.

By focusing on the relative size of the firms supervised by an independent director, we find board meeting attendance is greater in a director's more prestigious directorship and it increases when a directorship's relative ranking rises due to an exogenous shock at another firm where this same director sits. We also find independent directors are more willing to serve on the time-consuming audit and compensation committees in their relatively more prestigious directorships, where their talents are potentially more visible to the external labor market. We also find evidence that directors have stronger incentives to hold on to their most visible directorships, even when firm performance is weak.

At the firm level, we find that as the portion of independent directors who have a relatively high (low) ranking of the board increases, firm value and operating performance improve (deteriorate). These findings are robust to firm fixed effects, difference-in-differences analysis of an exogenous increase in a directorship's relative ranking, and a matched sample analysis, reducing concerns that endogenous relations are driving the results. Examining forced CEO turnover, we find that greater representation by independent directors with relatively strong reputation incentives is associated with a lower unconditional probability of forced CEO departure, but that departure is more sensitive to firm performance, consistent with independent director reputations as strong monitors weighing more heavily in more visible firms.

In summary, these findings underscore the importance of considering individual director-firm-level incentives when examining the quality of director monitoring. It also offers a different perspective on the effects of busy boards by illustrating that directors do not uniformly distribute their effort across all the boards they sit on. Instead, these talented directors tend to concentrate their efforts in the directorships where they stand to gain the most reputation benefit. Likewise, shareholders of firms that have more directors who consider this their most important directorship stand to benefit from the greater effort these skilled directors are likely to make. The main findings of this study indicate that director reputation concerns have a strong influence on director behavior and as such represent a new dimension of director incentives that researchers and shareholders should take into account in analyzing boards of directors.

Appendix

This Appendix provides variable definitions and data sources. All data variables refer to the corresponding variable identifiers in the Compustat annual data base.

A.1 Director characteristics

High Ranked Directorship - Indicator variable that equals one if the directorship is 10% larger than the director's smallest directorship measured by the market capitalization of the firm. Source: RiskMetrics.

Low Ranked Directorship - Indicator variable that equals one if the directorship is 10% smaller than the director's largest directorship measured by the market capitalization of the firm. Source: RiskMetrics.

Highest Ranked Directorship - Indicator variable that equals one if the directorship is the director's largest directorship measured by the market capitalization of the firm. Source: RiskMetrics.

Lowest Ranked Directorship - Indicator variable that equals one if the directorship is the director's smallest directorship measured by the market capitalization of the firm. Source: RiskMetrics.

Board Tenure - Number of years a director has served on the board. Source: RiskMetrics.

Director Age - Director age. Source: RiskMetrics.

Director Ownership - Percent of common shares outstanding held by the director, including stock options. Source: RiskMetrics.

Major Committee - Indicator variable that equals one if the director is a nominating, audit, compensation or corporate governance committee member. Source: RiskMetrics.

Missed >75% of Meetings - Indicator variable that equals one if the director missed more than 75% of the meetings during the year. Reported in the proxy statement. Source: RiskMetrics.

Number of Directorships - Number of additional directorship identified within the Risk Metrics data set. Source: RiskMetrics.

Sole Directorship - Indicator variable that equals one if the directorship is the director's only directorship. Source: RiskMetrics.

A.2 Board Characteristics

Majority Independent - Indicator variable that equals one if the percent independent outside directors is greater than 50% and is zero otherwise. Source: RiskMetrics.

Percent Independent Low Ranked - Percentage of board members who are independent outside directors and the directorship is 10% smaller than their largest directorship measured by the market capitalization of the firm. Source: RiskMetrics

Percent Independent High Ranked - Percentage of board members who are independent outside directors and the directorship is 10% larger than their smallest directorship measured by the market capitalization of the firm. Source: RiskMetrics.

Majority Independent Low Ranked - Indicator variable that equals one if the percent of independent outside directors for whom this is directorship is 10% smaller than their largest directorship by market capitalization of the firm is greater than 50% and is zero otherwise. Source: RiskMetrics.

Majority Independent High - Indicator variable that equals one if the percent of independent outside directors for whom this is directorship is 10% larger than their smallest directorship by market capitalization of the firm is greater than 50% and is zero otherwise. Source: RiskMetrics.

Majority Independent Lowest - Indicator variable that equals one if the percent of independent outside

directors for whom this is directorship is their smallest directorship by market capitalization of the firm is greater than 50% and is zero otherwise. Source: RiskMetrics.

Majority Independent Highest - Indicator variable that equals one if the percent of independent outside directors for whom this is directorship is their largest directorship by market capitalization of the firm is greater than 50% and is zero otherwise. Source: RiskMetrics.

Percent Independent (Only) - Percentage of board members for whom this directorship is their only directorship. Source: RiskMetrics.

Majority Independent (Only) - Indicator variable that equals one if for more than 50% of the independent outside directors, this directorship is their only directorship. Source: RiskMetrics.

Board Size - Number of directors on the board at year-end. Source: RiskMetrics.

Busy Board - Indicator variable that equals one if a majority of the independent outside directors each holds 3 or more directorships. Source: RiskMetrics.

Director Pay - Sum of the annual retainer fee and the meeting attendance fee at the firm level. Source: ExecuComp.

Founder Family Director Present - Indicator variable that equals one if one of the directors is a member of the founding family. Source: Hand collected.

Founder-Director Present - Indicator variable that equals one if one of the directors is the founder. Source: Hand collected.

High Outside Director Holdings - Indicator variable that equals one if the outside directors own more than the median outside director ownership. Source: RiskMetrics.

Number of Board Meetings - Number of board meetings during the fiscal year. Source: ExecuComp.

Outside Director Ownership - Percent of common shares outstanding held by all outside directors of the board at year-end, including stock options. Source: RiskMetrics.

Percent Independent - Percentage of the board who are independent outside directors. Source: RiskMetrics.

A.3 CEO Characteristics

CEO Age (60-70) - Indicator variable that equals one if the CEO is 60 to 70 years old.

CEO Chair - Indicator variable that equals one if the CEO is also the chairperson and is zero otherwise. Source: RiskMetrics

CEO Ownership - Percent of common shares outstanding held by the CEO at year-end, including stock options. Source: RiskMetrics.

CEO Tenure - Number of years the CEO has served on the board. Source: RiskMetrics

Forced CEO Departure - Indicator variable that equals one if the CEO was forced out during the fiscal year. Source: Hand collected from press releases.

A.4 Firm Characteristics

Annual Stock Return - Twelve month monthly compounded return during the fiscal year. Source: Center for Research in Security Prices (CRSP).

Assets - Year-end assets: (data6). Source: Compustat.

Capital Expenditure / Sales - Capital Expense / Sales: Year-end Capital Expenditure / Year-end Total Assets: (data128 / data12). Source: Compustat.

Depreciation Expense / Sales - Year-end Depreciation Expense / Year-end Total Sales: (data14 / data12). Source: Compustat.

Firm Age - Number of years a firm is listed in CRSP.

Growth Rate of Assets - Growth rate in total assets from prior year to current year. Source: Compustat.

Institutional Holdings - Percent ownership from institutions. Source: RiskMetrics and Thompson Financial.

Leverage - (Year-end Long-term Debt plus Debt in Current Liabilities) / Year-end Total Assets: [(data9 + data34) / data6]. Source: Compustat.

Market Assets - Equity Capitalization plus Book Debt [(data25 x data199) + (data9 + data34)]. Source: Compustat.

Market Capitalization - Market value of equity at year-end: (data25 x data199). Source: Compustat.

Number of Business Segments - Number of business segments listed in Compustat.

Operating Cash Flow (CF) - Annual Cash Flow from Operations / Beginning-year Total Assets: data308 / lag(data6). Source: Compustat.

Post-SOX - Indicator variable that equals one if the observations occurs in fiscal year 2001 or later and zero otherwise.

R&D / Assets - Research and Development (R&D) / Assets: Max(year-end R&D expense,0) / Year-end Total Assets: max(data46,0) / data6. Source: Compustat.

ROA - EBITDA / Beginning-year Total Assets: data13 / lag(data6). Source: Compustat.

Sales - Year-end sales: (data12). Source: Compustat.

Tangible Assets - Percentage of year-end total assets that are tangible: [(1 - data33) / data6] * 100%. Source: Compustat.

Tobin's q - (Total Assets - Book Equity + Market Value of Equity) / Total Assets: [data6 - data60 + (data199*data25)] / data6. All are year-end values. Source: Compustat.

Total Shareholder Return (TSR) - Annual stock return with dividend reinvestment, calculated from monthly compounded returns. Source: CRSP.

Volatility - Standard deviation of most recent three years of monthly stock returns from CRSP.

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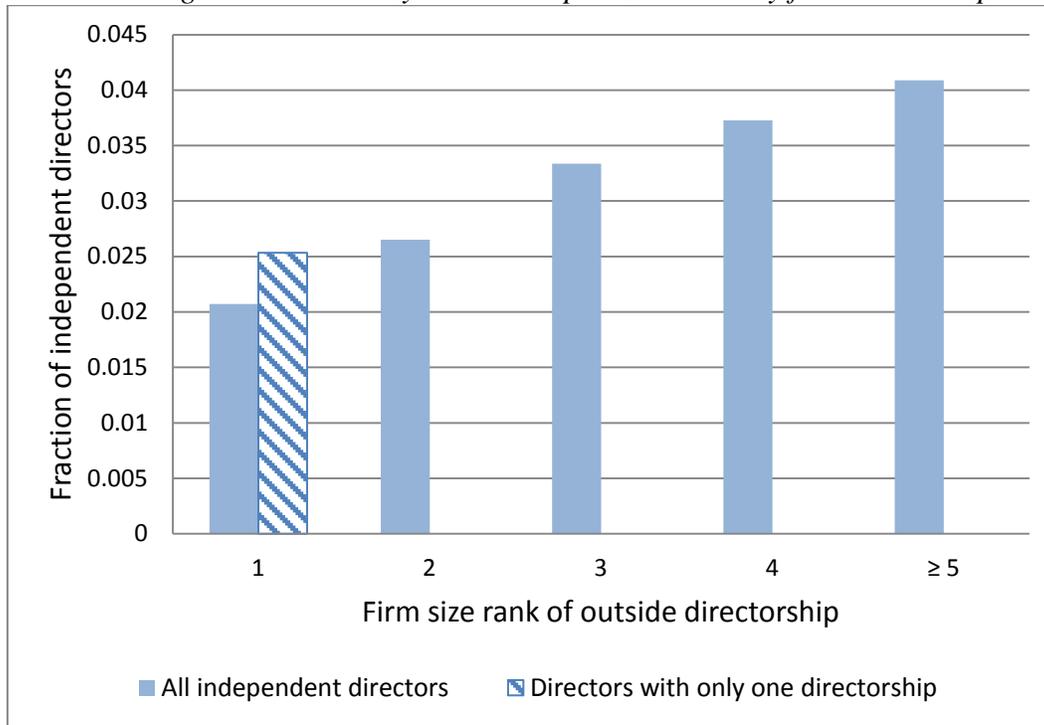
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Panel A: Board meeting absence rates by directorships size ranked by firm market capitalization



Panel B: Board meeting absence rates by directorships size with various ranking measures

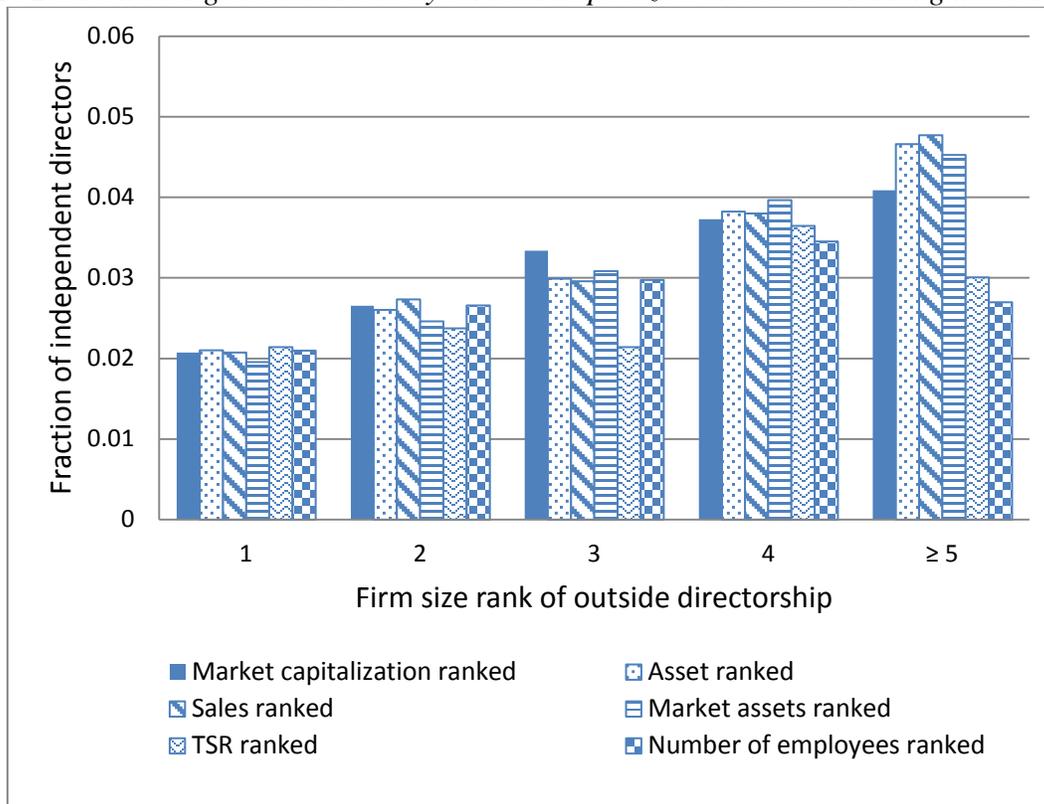


Fig. 1. Board meeting absence rates of independent directors conditioning on relative board ranking

This figure reports the fraction of all independent directors who attended less than 75% of the board meetings in a given year based on the relative size of their directorships with rankings based on market capitalization. The data are for fiscal years 1997 to 2006. Directorship size is ranked from largest (1) to smallest (≥ 5). The textured column in Panel A indicates the meeting attendance of independent directors with only one directorship. In Panel B, the rankings are based on firm market capitalization, market value of total assets, book value of total assets, total sales, total shareholder return (TSR), or the number of firm employees.

Table 1 Director-level descriptive statistics

This table reports means and medians for various director-firm-year-level variables for the 17,525 independent directors from fiscal years 1997 to 2006. *CEO* is the Chief Executive Officer. *Outside public boards* is the variable within the RiskMetrics director database that provides the number of additional directorships held by a director, which could include directorships outside of the RiskMetrics universe. The variable *Number of outside directorships within RiskMetrics* is the total number of directorships held by the director within the RiskMetrics sample of firms. *Sole directorship* is an indicator variable that equals one if the director has only one directorship listed within the RiskMetrics sample. Variable definitions are also reported in the Appendix.

| Director characteristics | Independent directors | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|--------|
| | N | Mean | Median |
| Age | 86,310 | 60.42 | 61.0 |
| Chairman or vice chairman | 86,330 | 0.18 | - |
| CEO | 86,330 | 0.18 | - |
| Non-CEO officer | 86,330 | 0.22 | - |
| Founder | 86,330 | 0.03 | - |
| 5% ownership block | 86,330 | 0.02 | - |
| Nominating committee member | 86,330 | 0.38 | - |
| Compensation committee member | 86,330 | 0.49 | - |
| Audit committee member | 86,330 | 0.51 | - |
| Governance committee member | 86,324 | 0.29 | - |
| Number of committee memberships | 86,324 | 1.70 | 2.0 |
| Attended <75% of meetings | 86,330 | 0.02 | - |
| Board tenure | 86,277 | 7.66 | 6.0 |
| Ownership | 86,284 | 0.22 | 0.02 |
| Outside public boards | 86,330 | 0.99 | 1.0 |
| Number of outside directorships within RiskMetrics | 86,330 | 1.74 | 1.0 |
| Sole directorship | 86,330 | 0.47 | - |
| <u>Directors with multiple boards</u> | | | |
| Outside public boards | 45,606 | 1.88 | 2.0 |
| Number of outside directorships within RiskMetrics | 45,606 | 2.41 | 2.0 |
| Maximum - minimum (market capitalization) | 45,596 | 20,740 | 3,455 |
| Maximum as percent of minimum (market capitalization) | 45,596 | 1,905 | 269 |

Table 2 Firm-level descriptive statistics

This table reports means and medians for various firm-year level variables based on 2,832 separate firms from fiscal years 1997 to 2006. Panel A reports results for the full sample and for the subsample excluding finance and utility firms. Panel B reports results for the three subsamples of firms with a majority of independent directors for whom this is a high ranked directorship, majority of independent directors for whom this is a low ranked directorship, and majority of independent directors for whom this is their only directorship. *Percent independent high (low) ranked* is the percentage of board members who are independent outside directors and this directorship is 10% larger (smaller) than their smallest (highest) ranked directorship measured by a firm's market capitalization. *Majority of independent high (low) ranked* is an indicator variable that equals one if a majority of independent outside directors rank this directorship high (low) based on a firm's market capitalization being 10% larger (smaller) than their smallest (largest) directorship and the variable is zero otherwise. *Majority of independent highest (lowest) ranked* is an indicator variable that equals one if a majority of independent outside directors ranks this directorship their highest (lowest) based on a firm's market capitalization and is zero otherwise. *Percent independent (Only)* is the percentage of independent directors for whom this is their only directorship. *Majority independent (Only)* is an indicator variable that equals one if a majority of the firm's independent directors have no other directorship and is zero otherwise. *Busy Board* is an indicator variable that equals one if a majority of the independent outside directors each holds three or more directorships and is zero otherwise. All variable definitions are reported in the Appendix.

| <i>Panel A: Full sample</i> | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------|--------|------------------------------------|-------|--------|
| Firm characteristics | All firms | | | Excluding financials and utilities | | |
| | N | Mean | Median | N | Mean | Median |
| Assets | 15,107 | 11,847 | 1,559 | 12,077 | 5,258 | 1,112 |
| Market capitalization | 15,074 | 7,163 | 1,516 | 12,047 | 7,011 | 1,327 |
| Board size | 15,215 | 9.40 | 9.0 | 12,166 | 8.92 | 9.0 |
| Percent outside directors | 15,215 | 79.56 | 83.3 | 12,166 | 78.94 | 82.8 |
| Percent independent directors | 15,215 | 66.15 | 69.2 | 12,166 | 65.39 | 66.7 |
| Majority independent directors | 15,215 | 0.79 | 1.0 | 12,166 | 0.77 | 1.0 |
| Percent independent low ranked | 15,215 | 15.05 | 11.1 | 12,166 | 16.05 | 12.5 |
| Majority of independent low ranked | 15,215 | 0.14 | 0.0 | 12,166 | 0.15 | 0.0 |
| Majority of independent lowest ranked | 15,215 | 0.08 | 0.0 | 12,166 | 0.09 | 0.0 |
| Percent independent high ranked | 15,215 | 13.54 | 9.1 | 12,166 | 13.33 | 9.1 |
| Majority of independent high ranked | 15,215 | 0.14 | 0.0 | 12,166 | 0.14 | 0.0 |
| Majority of independent highest ranked | 15,215 | 0.07 | 0.0 | 12,166 | 0.07 | 0.0 |
| Percent independent (Only): Sole directorship | 15,215 | 28.87 | 28.6 | 12,166 | 27.36 | 27.3 |
| Majority independent (Only): Sole directorship | 15,215 | 0.44 | 0.0 | 12,166 | 0.41 | 0.0 |
| Busy board | 15,215 | 0.12 | 0.0 | 12,166 | 0.13 | 0.0 |
| ROA | 14,813 | 0.15 | 0.1 | 12,022 | 0.17 | 0.2 |
| Tobin's q | 15,071 | 2.13 | 1.5 | 12,044 | 2.32 | 1.7 |

| <i>Panel B: Subsamples</i> | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|------------------------------------|-------|--------|------------------------------------------------|-------|--------|
| Firm characteristics | Majority of independent high ranked | | | Majority of independent low ranked | | | Majority independent (Only): Sole directorship | | |
| | N | Mean | Median | N | Mean | Median | N | Mean | Median |
| Assets | 2,235 | 45,654 | 8,668 | 2,222 | 7,242 | 1,404 | 6,916 | 4,538 | 1,024 |
| Market capitalization | 2,235 | 27,528 | 9,592 | 2,222 | 3,329 | 1,156 | 6,910 | 2,529 | 1,010 |
| Board size | 2,235 | 10.73 | 10.0 | 2,222 | 9.12 | 9.0 | 6,916 | 9.09 | 9.0 |
| Percent outside directors | 2,235 | 81.16 | 83.3 | 2,222 | 79.90 | 83.3 | 6,916 | 77.23 | 80.0 |
| Percent independent directors | 2,235 | 65.30 | 70.0 | 2,222 | 63.76 | 66.7 | 6,916 | 62.44 | 64.3 |
| Majority independent directors | 2,235 | 0.78 | 1.0 | 2,222 | 0.75 | 1.0 | 6,916 | 0.73 | 1.0 |
| Busy board | 2,235 | 0.43 | 0.0 | 2,222 | 0.34 | 0.0 | 6,916 | 0.00 | 0.0 |
| ROA | 2,212 | 0.17 | 0.2 | 2,209 | 0.14 | 0.1 | 6,775 | 0.15 | 0.1 |
| Tobin's q | 2,235 | 2.64 | 1.8 | 2,222 | 1.84 | 1.4 | 6,907 | 2.01 | 1.4 |

Table 3 Frequent board meeting absences by independent directors

This table reports results from multivariate probit regression analysis of board meeting attendance for independent directors conditioning on the relative size of the directorship from fiscal years 1997 to 2006. The dependent variable is one if the director attended less than 75% of the meetings for the year and zero otherwise. *Sole directorship* equals one if this is the director's only directorship. *Low (High) ranked directorship* equals one if the directorship is 10% smaller (larger) than the director's largest (smallest) and zero otherwise. *Major committee membership* equals one if the director is a member of the nominating, compensation, audit or corporate governance committees. All other variable definitions are reported in the Appendix. Model 3 uses only director-firm-year observations for individuals with multiple directorships. Relative size is measured by market capitalization. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity (White, 1980) and clustered by director with *p*-values in parentheses. *, **, and *** indicate significance at the 10%, 5% and 1% level, respectively.

| Explanatory variables | Dependent variable: Attended <75% of meetings | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| High ranked directorship | -0.078*** (0.01) | -0.099*** (<0.01) | -0.101*** (<0.01) | -0.075** (0.02) | -0.082*** (0.01) | -0.085*** (<0.01) |
| Low ranked directorship | 0.085*** (<0.01) | 0.065** (0.04) | 0.0630** (0.05) | 0.088*** (<0.01) | 0.081*** (<0.01) | 0.075** (0.02) |
| Sole directorship | -0.103*** (<0.01) | -0.079** (0.03) | | -0.11*** (<0.01) | -0.11*** (<0.01) | -0.12*** (<0.01) |
| Number of outside directorships | | 0.023 (0.12) | 0.028* (0.06) | | | |
| Major committee membership | | | | -0.161*** (<0.01) | -0.144*** (<0.01) | -0.137*** (<0.01) |
| Annual director retainer | | | | | -0.002** (0.02) | -0.002** (0.03) |
| Director meeting fee | | | | | -0.060*** (<0.01) | -0.063*** (<0.01) |
| Number of board meetings | | | | | | -0.016*** (<0.01) |
| Board tenure | -0.002 (0.26) | -0.002 (0.24) | -0.0004 (0.41) | -0.001 (0.56) | -0.001 (0.69) | -0.001 (0.65) |
| Board size | 0.04*** (<0.01) | 0.04*** (<0.01) | 0.045*** (<0.01) | 0.037*** (<0.01) | 0.035*** (<0.01) | 0.035*** (<0.01) |
| Ln(Director age) | -0.329*** (<0.01) | -0.338*** (<0.01) | -0.606*** (<0.01) | -0.318*** (<0.01) | -0.341*** (<0.01) | -0.342*** (<0.01) |
| Director ownership | 0.001 (0.89) | 0.001 (0.9) | -0.0004 (0.96) | -0.001 (0.87) | 0.0009 (0.9) | 0.0015 (0.83) |
| Post-SOX | -0.263*** (<0.01) | -0.26*** (<0.01) | -0.336*** (<0.01) | -0.259*** (<0.01) | -0.23*** (<0.01) | -0.231*** (<0.01) |
| Ln(Market capitalization) | -0.047*** (<0.01) | -0.048*** (<0.01) | -0.061*** (<0.01) | -0.045*** (<0.01) | -0.031*** (<0.01) | -0.029** (0.01) |
| ROA | -0.017 (0.54) | -0.016 (0.58) | -0.005 (0.9) | -0.016 (0.57) | 0.022 (0.63) | 0.001 (0.98) |
| Tobin's q | 0.011** (0.01) | 0.011** (0.01) | 0.011** (0.03) | 0.011** (0.01) | 0.004 (0.48) | 0.004 (0.47) |
| Number of observations | 84,676 | 84,676 | 44,717 | 84,676 | 80,118 | 78,538 |
| Pseudo r ² | 3.25% | 3.27% | 4.33% | 3.42% | 3.25% | 3.40% |

Table 4 Exogenous changes in independent directorship rankings: difference-in-differences analysis of board meeting absences

This table presents difference-in-difference estimates of director meeting absences for directors experiencing an increase in directorship ranking due to a drop in the ranking of another directorship from fiscal years 1997 to 2006. A treatment director is identified as an independent director with multiple directorships for whom the firm of another one of their directorships decreased in size and this results in a rank decrease for that directorship and a corresponding rank increase for the current directorship. The treatment director-firm-year observations are the directors remaining directorships in which the size of the firm as measured by market capitalization did not increase by more than 10% (at all) in Models 1 through 3 (Models 4 and 5). Model 3 reports results using only the sample of directors with multiple directorships. The control directors are the remaining independent directors on the board of the treatment director-firm. The estimated OLS model is

$$Meeting\ Absences_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Treatment_i + \beta_2 Post-Treatment_t + \beta_3 Treatment_i * Post-Treatment_t + Controls_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t}$$

Post-Treatment_t is an indicator variable that equals zero in the penultimate year to the ranking change and one in the two years following the ranking change. *Treatment_i* equals one for treatment director-years and zero for control director-years. The coefficient estimate of the interaction term, β_3 , is the difference-in-differences estimate. The controls are the same as in model 1 of Table 3, but they are suppressed for brevity. Standard errors are robust and clustered by director with *p*-values in parentheses beneath the coefficients. *, **, and *** indicate significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level, respectively.

| Explanatory variables | Dependent variable: Attended <75% of meetings | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Treatment director | 0.187 (0.28) | 0.208 (0.25) | 0.193 (0.3) | 0.782*** (<0.01) | 0.958*** (<0.01) |
| Post-treatment indicator | 0.008 (0.93) | 0.228** (0.04) | 0.189 (0.13) | 0.159 (0.39) | 0.368* (0.1) |
| Post-treatment x Treatment director | -0.370* (0.07) | -0.473** (0.02) | -0.496** (0.02) | -0.723** (0.03) | -0.827** (0.01) |
| Number of observations | 6,157 | 5,701 | 3,753 | 1,711 | 1,079 |
| Controls | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| Pseudo r ² | 0.29% | 6.85% | 8.72% | 2.52% | 13.06% |

Table 5 Board audit and compensation committee membership by independent directors

This table reports results from a multivariate analysis of board audit and compensation committee membership, for independent directors conditioning on the relative size of the directorship from fiscal years 1997 to 2006. The dependent variable in Model 1 and Model 4 equals one if the director serves on either the audit or the compensation committee. The dependent variable in Model 2 equals one if the director serves on both the audit and the compensation committee. The dependent variable in Model 3 is zero if the director serves on neither committee, one if the director serves on one of these committees, and two if he serves on both. Models 1, 2, and 4 are probit models and Model 3 is a Poisson count model. *Sole directorship* equals one if this is the director's only directorship. *Low (High) ranked directorship* equals one if the directorship is 10% smaller (larger) than the director's largest (smallest) and zero otherwise. Relative size is measured by firm market capitalization. All other variable definitions are reported in the Appendix. All models include industry fixed effects. Standard errors are robust and clustered by director with *p*-values in parentheses. *, **, and *** indicate significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level, respectively.

| Explanatory variables | Dependent variable | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| | Probit Audit or compensation (1) | Probit Audit and compensation (2) | Poisson Number of committees (3) | Probit Audit or compensation (4) |
| High ranked directorship | 0.063*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.017 (<i>0.49</i>) | 0.022** (<i>0.01</i>) | |
| Low ranked directorship | 0.01 (<i>0.67</i>) | -0.053** (<i>0.03</i>) | -0.013 (<i>0.15</i>) | |
| Treatment director | | | | -0.193** (<i>0.03</i>) |
| Post-treatment indicator | | | | 0.119** (<i>0.02</i>) |
| Post-treatment x Treatment director | | | | 0.103 (<i>0.36</i>) |
| Sole directorship | -0.074*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.01 (<i>0.65</i>) | -0.015* (<i>0.07</i>) | -0.19*** (<i><0.01</i>) |
| Board tenure | 0.0024 (<i>0.11</i>) | 0.0011*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.0005*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.007 (<i>0.18</i>) |
| Board size | -0.084*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.122*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.056*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.073*** (<i><0.01</i>) |
| Ln(Director age) | 0.743*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.617*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.36*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.273 (<i>0.2</i>) |
| Director ownership | -0.035*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.033*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.021*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.034* (<i>0.08</i>) |
| Post-SOX | -0.022 (<i>0.12</i>) | -0.074*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.023*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.027 (<i>0.6</i>) |
| Ln(Market capitalization) | 0.001 (<i>0.92</i>) | -0.027*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.005 (<i>0.11</i>) | -0.036 (<i>0.11</i>) |
| ROA | 0.047* (<i>0.09</i>) | 0.062 (<i>0.13</i>) | 0.028* (<i>0.07</i>) | 0.223 (<i>0.4</i>) |
| Tobin's q | -0.0001 (<i>0.98</i>) | 0.0072* (<i>0.06</i>) | 0.001 (<i>0.32</i>) | -0.001 (<i>0.96</i>) |
| Number of observations | 84,676 | 84,676 | 84,676 | 6,101 |
| Pseudo r^2 / Prob $> \chi^2$ | 4.76% | 6.45% | 0.00% | 4.03% |

Table 6 Firm performance and the frequency of directorships lost

This table reports results from a univariate and multivariate analysis of net directorships lost, conditioning on the relative size of the directorship for directors with multiple directorships for fiscal years 1997 to 2006. Panel A reports univariate analysis using a director's largest and smallest directorships. The *t*-statistic is used to test for the difference in the means of the percentage of independent director-firm-years representing a lost directorship between the director's smallest and largest directorships. Panel B reports probit regression results controlling for firm performance and other variables and all lost directorships for directors with multiple directorships. Standard errors are robust and clustered by director with *p*-values in parentheses. Panel C reports the implied probabilities of not having a directorship in the subsequent year for firm performance in the top and bottom quartiles based on probit regression estimates from models 1 and 3. Relative size is based on equity market capitalization. All other variable definitions are reported in the Appendix. *, **, and *** indicate significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level, respectively.

Panel A: Univariate

| Directorship | Independent directors | | Independent director officers | | Independent director non-officers | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | N | Mean directorship lost (t+1) | N | Directorship lost (t+1) | N | Directorship lost (t+1) |
| Total | 29,847 | 12.10% | 5,423 | 10.62% | 24,424 | 12.42% |
| Highest ranked directorship | 14,479 | 10.81% | 2,736 | 8.99% | 11,743 | 11.23% |
| Lowest ranked directorship | 15,368 | 13.31% | 2,687 | 12.28% | 12,681 | 13.52% |
| Difference | | -2.5%*** | | -3.29%*** | | -2.29%*** |
| <i>p</i> -value | | (<0.01) | | (<0.01) | | (<0.01) |

Table 6 (continued)

| <i>Panel B: Multivariate</i> | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Explanatory variables | Dependent variable: Directorship lost _(t+1) | | | | | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| High ranked directorship | 0.451*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.222*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.483*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.237*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | |
| Low ranked directorship | 0.630*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.315*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.663*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.347*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | |
| Annual return | -0.108*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.102*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | | | |
| High ranked directorship x Annual return | 0.127*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.081** (<i>0.02</i>) | | | | |
| Low ranked directorship x Annual return | -0.174*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.147*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | | | |
| ROA | | | -0.003 (<i>0.98</i>) | 0.026 (<i>0.84</i>) | | |
| High ranked directorship x ROA | | | -0.165 (<i>0.25</i>) | -0.214 (<i>0.14</i>) | | |
| Low ranked directorship x ROA | | | -0.349** (<i>0.02</i>) | -0.336** (<i>0.02</i>) | | |
| Ln(Sales) | | -0.057*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | -0.047*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | |
| Board tenure | | 0.001*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | 0.001*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | |
| Director ownership | | 0.012** (<i>0.03</i>) | | 0.011* (<i>0.05</i>) | | |
| Ln(Director age) | | 0.600*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | 0.597*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | |
| Number of directorships | | 0.203*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | 0.206*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | |
| Ln(CEO board tenure) | | -0.059*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | -0.065*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | |
| Percent independent directors | | -0.0008 (<i>0.22</i>) | | -0.001** (<i>0.04</i>) | | |
| SOX | | -0.269*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | -0.272*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | |
| Number of observations | 42,742 | 42,684 | 44,927 | 44,871 | | |
| Pseudo r ² | 5.25% | 8.88% | 5.10% | 8.84% | | |
| <i>Panel C. Implied probabilities of directorship lost _(t+1)</i> | | | | | | |
| Quartile | Annual return | High ranked for Annual return | Low ranked for Annual return | Return on assets (ROA) | High ranked for ROA | Low ranked for ROA |
| 75 th | 0.3483 | 0.0921 | 0.1050 | 0.2067 | 0.0874 | 0.1123 |
| 25 th | -0.1209 | 0.0907 | 0.1312 | 0.0827 | 0.0908 | 0.1208 |
| Increase in probability | | -0.0014 | 0.0262*** | | 0.0034* | 0.0085* |
| <i>p</i> -value of difference | | (<i>0.41</i>) | (<i><0.01</i>) | | (<i>0.09</i>) | (<i>0.06</i>) |
| Percent change | | -2 | 25 | | 4 | 8 |

Table 7 Independent director reputation incentives and firm performance and value

This table presents results from a multivariate regression analysis of firm performance and value. The data are for fiscal years 1997 to 2006 and exclude financial and utility firms. Return on assets (ROA) is earnings before interests taxes depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) scaled by total assets. $\ln(Q)$ is the natural logarithm of the market-to-book approximation of Tobin's q . *Percent independent high (low) ranked* is the percentage of independent directors for whom the firm associated with this board is ranked relatively *high (low)* based on market capitalization. *Majority of independent high (low) ranked* is an indicator variable that equals one if a majority of independent directors rank this board seat as relatively *high (low)* based on firm market capitalization. All other variable definitions are reported in the Appendix. All regressions include year and either industry or firm fixed effects as indicated. Standard errors are robust and clustered by firm and p -values are in parentheses beneath the coefficients. *, **, and *** indicate significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level, respectively.

Table 7 (continued)

| Explanatory variables | Dependent variable | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | | | | Industry- adjusted | | Industry- adjusted | |
| | ROA | ROA | ROA | ROA | Ln(Q) | Ln(Q) | Ln(Q) | Ln(Q) |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | |
| Percent independent high ranked | 0.0019*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | | | 0.0094*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | | |
| Percent independent low ranked | -0.0013*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | | | -0.0046*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | | |
| Majority of independent high ranked | | 0.048*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.025*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.022*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | 0.252*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.131*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.109*** (<i><0.01</i>) |
| Majority of independent low ranked | | -0.035*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.0240*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.023*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | -0.123*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.096*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.083*** (<i><0.01</i>) |
| Majority of independent (Only) | | | | -0.004 (0.23) | | | | -0.008 (0.47) |
| Majority independent | 0.00091 (0.86) | 0.002 (0.74) | 0.002 (0.64) | | -0.008 (0.65) | 0.012 (0.48) | -0.003 (0.85) | |
| Busy board | | | | -0.007* (0.09) | | | | 0.013 (0.29) |
| Outside director ownership | -0.0005** (0.02) | -0.0005** (0.02) | -0.001*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.001*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.001 (0.16) | 0.001 (0.25) | -0.002** (0.02) | -0.002*** (<i><0.01</i>) |
| CEO ownership | 0.001 (0.43) | 0.001 (0.45) | 0.002** (0.03) | 0.00194** (0.03) | -0.0043 (0.14) | -0.0047 (0.10) | 0.001 (0.74) | 0.003 (0.28) |
| CEO ownership ² | -0.00003 (0.31) | -0.00002 (0.36) | -0.00005** (0.04) | -0.00005** (0.03) | 0.0001* (0.08) | 0.0002* (0.06) | -0.00007 (0.38) | -0.0001 (0.13) |
| Founder-director present | 0.019*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.02*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.004 (0.49) | 0.001 (0.92) | 0.048** (0.03) | 0.047** (0.03) | -0.033 (0.14) | -0.045** (0.03) |
| Founder family director present | -0.005 (0.4) | -0.006 (0.32) | 0.005 (0.41) | 0.003 (0.66) | -0.037 (0.14) | -0.042* (0.10) | 0.018 (0.43) | 0.048** (0.03) |
| Operating cash flow / assets | | | | | 1.595*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 1.722*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 1.121*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.915*** (<i><0.01</i>) |
| Operating cash flow / assets _(t-1) | | | | | 0.352*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.368*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.273*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.225*** (<i><0.01</i>) |
| Operating cash flow / assets _(t-2) | | | | | -0.039** (0.04) | -0.04** (0.04) | 0.027 (0.61) | -0.006 (0.90) |
| Capital expenditure / sales | | | | | 0.007*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.006*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.003*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.001*** (<i><0.01</i>) |
| R&D / assets | -0.446*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.425*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.379*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.405*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 2.297*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 2.448*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.019 (0.94) | -0.016 (0.94) |
| Depreciation / sales | -0.025** (0.01) | -0.026** (0.01) | 0.001 (0.90) | 0.0041 (0.30) | | | | |
| Ln(Assets) | -0.019*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.012*** (<i><0.01</i>) | 0.01 (0.12) | 0.003 (0.6) | -0.053*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.018*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.259*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.243*** (<i><0.01</i>) |
| Ln(Firm age) | -0.008** (0.01) | -0.007** (0.02) | -0.039*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.0273*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.045*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.04*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.192*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.127*** (<i><0.01</i>) |
| Number of business segments | -0.004*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.004*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.002* (0.06) | 0.0003 (0.8) | -0.017*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.017*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.005 (0.18) | -0.001 (0.79) |
| Volatility | -0.562*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.574*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.29*** (<i><0.01</i>) | -0.214*** (<i><0.01</i>) | | | | |
| Fixed effect | Industry | Industry | Firm | Firm | Industry | Industry | Firm | Firm |
| Number of observations | 10,566 | 10,566 | 10,566 | 10,566 | 10,363 | 10,363 | 10,363 | 10,363 |
| Adjusted r ² | 16.02% | 14.21% | 77.94% | 78.21% | 46.53% | 43.91% | 80.38% | 76.31% |

Table 8 Exogenous changes in independent directorship rankings: difference-in-differences analysis of firm performance

This table presents difference-in-differences estimates for firm level analysis of operating performance and firm value, as measured by the natural logarithm of Tobin’s q, where the treatment firms have at least one treatment director from the director level sample used in Table 4. The data are for fiscal years 1997 to 2006 and exclude financial and utility firms. Control firms are in the same Fama and French industry, with the nearest market capitalization to the treatment firm, but have no treatment directors. The estimated OLS model is

$$Firm\ Performance\ or\ Value_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Treatment_i + \beta_2 Post-Treatment_t + \beta_3 Treatment_i * Post-Treatment_t + Controls_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t}$$

Post-treatment_t is an indicator variable that equals zero in the year prior to the ranking change and one in the two years following the ranking change. *Treatment_i* equals one for treatment firm-years and zero for control firm-years. The coefficient estimate of the interaction term, β_3 , is the difference-in-differences estimate. The controls are the same as those used in models 1 and 5 of Table 7 for industry-adjusted return on assets (ROA) and Ln(Q) respectively, but are suppressed for brevity. Models 5 and 6 report results using all the increases in directorship rankings due to a decrease in ranking of another firm where an independent director is also on the board. Standard errors are robust and clustered by firm and *p*-values are in parentheses beneath the coefficients. *, **, and *** indicate significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level, respectively.

| Explanatory variables | Firm-level performance and value | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Industry- adjusted ROA | Industry- adjusted ROA | Industry- adjusted Ln(Q) | Industry- adjusted Ln(Q) | Industry- adjusted ROA | Industry- adjusted Ln(Q) |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| Treatment director | -0.007 (0.38) | -0.005 (0.52) | -0.089** (0.01) | -0.083*** (<0.01) | -0.022*** (<0.01) | -0.087*** (<0.01) |
| Post-treatment indicator | -0.014** (0.03) | -0.015* (0.07) | -0.067*** (<0.01) | -0.045 (0.12) | -0.011 (0.14) | -0.018 (0.45) |
| Post-treatment x Treatment director | 0.017** (0.04) | 0.011 (0.23) | 0.089*** (<0.01) | 0.066** (0.04) | 0.022*** (<0.01) | 0.048* (0.09) |
| Number of observations | 1,935 | 1,686 | 1,938 | 1,664 | 2,330 | 2,301 |
| Controls | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Adjusted r ² | 2.39% | 11.02% | 4.07% | 36.27% | 10.31% | 31.31% |

Table 9 Forced Chief Executive Officer (CEO) turnover sensitivity to performance

This table presents results from multivariate regression analysis of 380 forced CEO turnovers. The data are for fiscal years 1997 to 2006 and exclude financial and utility firms. *Percent independent high (low) ranked* is the percentage of independent directors for whom this board is ranked relatively high (low) based on market capitalization. *Majority of independent high (low) ranked* is an indicator variable that equals one if a majority of independent directors rank this board seat as relatively *high (low)* based on firm market capitalization. Standard errors are robust and clustered by firm and *p*-values are in parentheses beneath the coefficients. The dependent variable is one if a forced CEO departure occurred during the fiscal year and zero otherwise. All other variable definitions are reported in the Appendix. Panel A (B) reports results using stock returns (return on assets (ROA)) as a firm's performance measure. Panel C reports the implied forced CEO turnover probabilities for the top and bottom performance quartiles based on the coefficient estimates from the first model in panels A and B. *, **, and *** indicate significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level, respectively.

Table 9 (continued)

| Explanatory variables | Dependent variable | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Forced CEO departure (1) | Forced CEO departure (2) | Forced CEO departure (3) | Forced CEO departure (4) | Forced CEO departure (5) |
| Percent independent high ranked _(t-1) | -0.010** (0.05) | -0.010 (0.27) | -0.011** (0.02) | | |
| Percent independent low ranked _(t-1) | 0.001 (0.84) | 0.001 (0.85) | 0.001 (0.77) | | |
| Majority independent high ranked _(t-1) | | | | -0.24 (0.47) | -0.24 (0.46) |
| Majority independent low ranked _(t-1) | | | | 0.07 (0.75) | 0.08 (0.71) |
| Industry-adjusted stock return _(t-1 to t) | -2.21*** (<0.01) | -2.15*** (<0.01) | -2.07*** (<0.01) | -2.42*** (<0.01) | -1.6*** (<0.01) |
| Percent independent high ranked _(t-1) x Industry-adjusted stock return _(t-1 to t) | -0.032* (0.08) | -0.034*** (<0.01) | -0.030** (0.03) | | |
| Percent independent low ranked _(t-1) x Industry adjusted stock return _(t-1 to t) | -0.002 (0.92) | -0.001 (0.95) | -0.002 (0.91) | | |
| Majority independent high ranked _(t-1) x Industry-adjusted stock return _(t-1 to t) | | | | -0.65** (0.05) | -0.54* (0.06) |
| Majority independent low ranked _(t-1) x Industry-adjusted stock return _(t-1 to t) | | | | -0.222 (0.75) | -0.27 (0.71) |
| Majority independent _(t-1) | | | | | 0.122 (0.13) |
| Majority independent _(t-1) x Industry-adjusted stock return _(t-1 to t) | | | | | -1.26** (0.04) |
| Board size _(t-1) | -0.036 (0.27) | -0.038 (0.28) | -0.013 (0.64) | -0.043 (0.27) | -0.042 (0.28) |
| High outside director holdings _(t-1) | 0.114 (0.39) | 0.119 (0.43) | 0.11 (0.42) | 0.135 (0.23) | 0.165 (0.17) |
| Institutional holdings _(t-1) | 0.005* (0.07) | 0.01** (0.04) | 0.01*** (<0.01) | 0.01** (0.04) | 0.01* (0.09) |
| Ln(Sales) _(t-1) | 0.101* (0.09) | 0.101 (0.19) | 0.093* (0.10) | 0.091 (0.11) | 0.091 (0.12) |
| CEO board tenure _(t-1) | -0.06*** (<0.01) | -0.06*** (<0.01) | -0.06*** (<0.01) | -0.06*** (<0.01) | -0.06*** (<0.01) |
| CEO age (60-70) _(t-1) | -0.338* (0.06) | -0.347** (0.02) | -0.319** (0.04) | -0.342** (0.04) | -0.37** (0.02) |
| Fixed effect | None | Year | Year / Industry | Year | Year |
| Number of observations | 9,293 | 9,277 | 9,125 | 9,277 | 9,218 |
| Pseudo r ² | 9.60% | 9.83% | 10.14% | 9.63% | 10.18% |

Table 9 (continued)*Panel B: Operating performance*

| Explanatory variables | Dependent variable | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Forced CEO departure (1) | Forced CEO departure (2) | Forced CEO departure (3) | Forced CEO departure (4) |
| Percent independent high ranked _(t-1) | -0.01** (0.05) | -0.01** (0.03) | | |
| Percent independent low ranked _(t-1) | 0.001 (0.89) | 0.001 (0.81) | | |
| Majority independent high ranked _(t-1) | | | -0.27 (0.14) | -0.27 (0.16) |
| Majority independent low ranked _(t-1) | | | 0.02 (0.89) | 0.03 (0.85) |
| Industry-adjusted ROA _(t-1 to t) | -2.06** (0.01) | -1.77* (0.07) | -2.63** (0.01) | -2.42*** (<0.01) |
| Percent independent high ranked _(t-1) x Industry-adjusted ROA _(t-1 to t) | -0.069* (0.09) | -0.070** (0.05) | | |
| Percent independent low ranked _(t-1) x Industry-adjusted ROA _(t-1 to t) | -0.017 (0.61) | -0.020 (0.65) | | |
| Majority independent high ranked _(t-1) x Industry-adjusted ROA _(t-1 to t) | | | -2.34 (0.25) | -3.84* (0.08) |
| Majority independent low ranked _(t-1) x Industry-adjusted ROA _(t-1 to t) | | | -1.07 (0.22) | -1.4 (0.11) |
| Majority independent _(t-1) | | | 0.22 (0.13) | |
| Majority independent _(t-1) x Industry-adjusted ROA _(t-1 to t) | | | 0.35 (0.75) | |
| Busy board _(t-1) | | | | 0.005 (0.98) |
| Busy board _(t-1) x Industry-adjusted ROA _(t-1 to t) | | | | 2.91 (0.15) |
| Board size _(t-1) | -0.05 (0.10) | -0.03 (0.22) | -0.06* (0.05) | -0.063** (0.05) |
| High outside director holdings _(t-1) | 0.19 (0.14) | 0.20 (0.22) | 0.28** (0.03) | 0.244* (0.05) |
| Institutional holdings _(t-1) | 0.01** (0.01) | 0.01*** (<0.01) | 0.01*** (<0.01) | 0.01*** (<0.01) |
| Ln(Sales) _(t-1) | 0.16*** (<0.01) | 0.18*** (<0.01) | 0.16*** (<0.01) | 0.162*** (<0.01) |
| CEO board tenure _(t-1) | -0.07*** (<0.01) | -0.07*** (<0.01) | -0.07*** (<0.01) | -0.07*** (<0.01) |
| CEO age (60-70) _(t-1) | -0.39** (0.03) | -0.33** (0.03) | -0.39** (0.03) | -0.38** (0.03) |
| Fixed effect | None | Year / Industry | Year | Year |
| Number of observations | 9,690 | 9,520 | 9,601 | 9,690 |
| Pseudo r ² | 5.12% | 5.52% | 5.57% | 5.56% |

Table 9 (continued)

| <i>Panel C. Implied probabilities of forced CEO departure</i> | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Quartile | RET | Percent independent high ranked = 0 for Stock returns | Mean percent independent high ranked for Stock returns | ROA | Percent independent high ranked = 0 for ROA | Mean Percent independent high ranked for ROA |
| 75 th | 0.1878 | 0.0170 | 0.0136 | 0.0487 | 0.0245 | 0.0207 |
| 25 th | -0.1218 | 0.0334 | 0.0306 | -0.0411 | 0.0301 | 0.0277 |
| Increase in probability | | 0.0164*** | 0.0170*** | | 0.0056*** | 0.007* |
| <i>p</i> -value of difference | | (<0.01) | (<0.01) | | (<0.01) | (<0.01) |
| Percent change | | 97 | 126 | | 23 | 33 |