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Board Diversity, Firm Risk, and Corporate Policies

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Abstract

We examine the effects of diversity in the board of directors on corporate policies and risk. Using a multidimensional measure, we find that greater board diversity leads to lower volatility and better performance. The lower risk levels are largely due to diverse boards adopting more persistent and less risky financial policies. However, consistent with diversity fostering more efficient (real) risk-taking, firms with greater board diversity also invest persistently more in research and development (R&D) and have more efficient innovation processes. Instrumental

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