

Duke University
Fuqua School of Business
100 Fuqua Drive
Durham, NC 27708

Email: john.w.barry@duke.edu
Phone: (+1) 346-228-2292
Web: <https://johnwbarry.info/>

EDUCATION

Duke University, Fuqua School of Business	Durham, NC
PhD, Finance	2018-
Barcelona School of Economics	Barcelona, Spain
MS, International Trade, Finance and Development (ITFD)	2015-2016
Trinity College Dublin	Dublin, Ireland
BA, Philosophy, Politics, Economics & Sociology (PPES)	2009-2013

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Corporate finance, corporate investment, discount rates and capital budgeting, project horizon, executive compensation, shareholder voting, structural estimation

WORKING PAPERS

Shareholder Voice and Executive Compensation (Job market paper)

[Latest version](#) (August 2023)

Can non-binding shareholder votes impact corporate policies? Answering this requires understanding how much the *threat* of a failed vote impacts corporate decision-makers. I estimate a model of CEO compensation with non-binding shareholder approval votes ("Say-on-Pay"). CEO pay is set by the Board of Directors, which is imperfectly informed of CEO skill and biased towards offering a high wage. Shareholders, whose beliefs about the CEO may differ from the Board's, decide to pass or fail the Say-on-Pay (SOP). Failed votes are perceived as costly by the Board and shareholders. To match observed pay levels and failure rates, the cost of SOP failure to the Board (shareholders) must be equivalent to 2.06% (0.76%) of firm value. The Board cost reveals that the (off-equilibrium) threat of SOP failure disciplines wages, even with high SOP support; yet shareholder impact on wages is limited by their own cost. Using my estimates, I construct a counterfactual SOP mechanism in which a focal shareholder holds an advisory position on the Board; this mechanism lowers the SOP failure rate, decreases wages and increases firm value.

Project Development with Delegated Bargaining: The Role of Elevated Hurdle Rates

with Bruce Carlin, Alan Crane and John Graham

[SSRN](#) (April 2023)

During project development, investment costs are endogenously determined through delegated bargaining with counterparties. In surveys, nearly 80% of CFOs report using an elevated hurdle rate, the implications of which we build a model to explore. We show that elevated hurdle rates can convey a bargaining advantage that exceeds the opportunity cost of forgone projects, whether these hurdle rate buffers arise for strategic or non-strategic reasons. Using CFO survey data, we find buffer use is negatively related to the cost of capital and to bargaining power, consistent with our model's predictions, and that realized returns are associated with "beat the hurdle rate benchmark" behavior.

PUBLICATIONS

Corporate Flexibility in a Time of Crisis

with Murillo Campello, John Graham and Yueran Ma

Journal of Financial Economics (June 2022)

We use the COVID shock to study direct and interactive effects of several forms of corporate flexibility on short- and long-term real business plans. We find that i) *workplace flexibility*, namely the ability for employees to work remotely, plays a central role in determining firms' employment plans during the health crisis; ii) *investment flexibility* allows firms to increase or decrease capital spending based on their business prospects in the crisis, with effects shaped by workplace flexibility; and iii) *financial flexibility* contributes to stronger employment and investment, in particular when fixed costs are high. While the role of workplace flexibility is new to COVID, CFOs expect lasting effects for years to come: high workplace flexibility firms foresee continuation of remote work, stronger employment recovery, and shifting away from traditional capital investment, whereas low workplace flexibility firms rely more on automation to replace labor.

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

2023: AFA, LBS TADC, Inter-Finance PhD Seminar, Duke University (scheduled)

2022: Duke University

2021: AFA, ITAM Finance Conference

2020: Duke University (×2)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Fuqua School of Business

Durham, NC

Research Assistant for John Graham

2019-2023

Head RA for the [2021 AFA Presidential Address](#)

Research Assistant for Adriano Rampini & S. Vish Viswanathan

2019-2020

Research Assistant for Alon Brav

2018-2019

Harvard Business School

Boston, MA

Research Associate

2017-2018

Princeton University

Princeton, NJ

Research Associate

2016-2017

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Fuqua School of Business

Durham, NC

Head Teaching Assistant

Corporate Finance (MBA)

2019-2023

John Graham

Empirical Methods in Corporate Finance (PhD)

2019-2023

Manuel Adelino and Jillian Grennan

Other

Advanced Corporate Finance (MBA)

2019-2023

S. Vish Viswanathan

Foundations of Capital Markets (MMS)

2021

Alon Brav

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Python, Julia, R, SQL, Stata, SAS, Git

Machine learning, neural networks, efficient algorithm design, structural estimation

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Referee: American Economic Review: Insights

REFERENCES

John R. Graham (chair)

Professor of Finance

Duke University

Fuqua School of Business

Email: john.graham@duke.edu

Simon Gervais

Professor of Finance

Duke University

Fuqua School of Business

Email: simon.gervais@duke.edu

S. Vish Viswanathan

Professor of Finance

Duke University

Fuqua School of Business

Email: viswanat@duke.edu

Alon Brav

Professor of Finance

Duke University

Fuqua School of Business

Email: brav@duke.edu