

SUMMARY

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The purpose of the project was to learn about general voting behavior by looking at the voting of shareholders in corporations. By doing so we can isolate one issue, which in this case is increasing shareholder value. The project thus looked at mergers and acquisitions propositions, examining factors leading up to the vote, then the outcome of the vote.

For my personal part, I was responsible for a variety of tasks throughout the summer. These included from looking up details on particular mergers and acquisitions over the last 20 years and coding those details into a spreadsheet, downloading and cleaning up large data sets to prepare them for analysis, and examining the companies that advise institutional investors on voting policy. Projects were generally assigned for a week to be completed by the next week.

What I learned through this experience can best be described as data retrieval. I was exposed to several different sources of information from online databases of stock prices to the collections of Mudd and the Social Science Library. I also gained some experience in manipulating data in STATA and Excel, and converting data between different format types. In addition, I was asked to find as many worldwide indices of various measurements from economic growth to women's rights to corruption, which gave me more familiarity with online sources of data.

My overall experience was mixed. On one hand I did gain valuable expertise and knowledge in the fields that I previously mentioned. This experience could prove very useful in any futures papers or projects that I may encounter. I was a little disappointed, however, with a complete lack of economics present in my work. At no point did I do any analysis or use or encounter any economic or finance theory. I came to no conclusions and was not asked to do any analytic thinking. On the whole, then, I clearly gained experience in certain specific areas - areas in which I sought to gain experience - but didn't gain a whole lot in terms of economic understanding.