

**NICHOLAS POGGIOLI**  
**PhD Candidate, University of Minnesota**  
poggi005@umn.edu

## **Research Statement**

I am a strategy and entrepreneurship scholar who applies strategy, sustainability, and stakeholder theories to study firm performance, sustainability, and social responsibility. I prioritize matching research methods to research questions to make defensible, generalizable inferences. My overriding research interests are to understand the structure and performance of corporate strategies, the nature of sustainability and responsibility challenges facing firm managers, and how to more deeply integrate sustainability and responsibility into business education, especially in entrepreneurship.

I currently work in two research streams, with additional papers on research methods. In the first stream, I study the role of stakeholder characteristics in the relationship between social responsibility performance and financial performance. In the second stream, I study new cooperative strategies firms are using to manage business risks from the natural environment. My work contributes to the interrelated literatures on corporate sustainability, stakeholder management, and corporate social responsibility. My findings have practical implications for managing material sustainability while navigating complex stakeholder demands and changing marketplace conditions. To support my empirical work, I collect archival datasets on sustainability and responsibility and am collecting a primary dataset on the emergence and structure of cooperative natural resource system strategies.

### **I. Stakeholders and the Social-Financial Performance Relationship**

Firms face multiple, often conflicting demands from increasingly sophisticated stakeholder groups. Many firms respond with social responsibility initiatives, but research has not reached a consensus view of the relationship between social responsibility and financial performance. My dissertation contributes to an ongoing convergence of stakeholder and social responsibility theory by examining stakeholder-based mechanisms that connect social performance to financial performance. To do so, I build on recent research conceptualizing responsibility performance as a firm's ability to satisfy multiple stakeholder groups by analyzing new, more finely detailed responsibility performance data.

My first dissertation chapter derives hypotheses from stakeholder and social responsibility theory predicting the role of stakeholder characteristics in the social-financial performance relationship. The second dissertation chapter, "**Does It (Still) Pay to Be Really Good: Six Replications of Barnett and Salomon (2012)**," explores the main social-financial performance relationship by using new data and statistical methods to replicate and extend Barnett and Salomon's (2012) study reporting a U-shaped social-financial performance relationship. The main contribution is to extend beyond the original within-firm estimation by using hybrid regression models capable of also estimating between-firm associations. Preliminary results suggest between-firm associations are much larger in magnitude than within-firm associations. These results suggest differences in contextual factors between firms are powerful and understudied influences on the social-financial

performance relationship. The third dissertation chapter expands on these findings by examining the contextual factors of stakeholder characteristics and social issues, contributing to the literature on the management of heterogeneous stakeholder preferences.

## **II. Cooperative Strategies for Natural Environment Business Risks**

My second stream of work examines cooperative strategies firms are using to manage the productivity of natural resource systems on which they depend for natural resource inputs. Firms face increasing business risks from changes in the natural environment, especially the declining productivity of natural resource systems. I combine theory from strategy, economics, and political science to examine cooperative strategies going beyond managing natural resource inputs like timber and cotton to managing entire natural resource systems like forests and agro-ecological soil systems. This work seeks to fill gaps in strategy theory and empirical research related to tangible, material ecological constraints on supply chains and corporate strategies.

My theoretical paper "**Extending Resource-based Theory to Common-pool Resources**" demonstrates that resource-based theory (RBT) remains somewhat limited to consideration of private resources and is only beginning to consider how firms manage common-pool resources like natural resource systems. Private resources are characterized by low costs of control for firms and single-use for consumers. RBT assumes firms deal primarily in private resources with these characteristics. However, technological changes have created business opportunities in other types of resources, and these changes are slowly being incorporated into RBT by considering phenomena like open innovation (public resources) and technology platforms (toll resources). I contribute to this conversation by considering whether and how common-pool resources contribute to competitive advantage within RBT logic.

I also have early-stage empirical work in this area. I am collecting data on the emergence, structure, and performance of cooperative natural resource system strategies. These strategies typically take the form of self-governing, multi-sector partnerships between firms and other organizations with an explicit purpose of managing natural resource systems. I will analyze these data with a combination of quantitative analyses and comparative case study methods to understand the emergence, structure, and performance of these strategies, both for firm economic outcomes and for natural resource system productivity.

## **III. Other Papers and Co-authored Projects**

In addition to work in my two main research streams, I have additional papers and co-authored projects. These projects can be grouped into two areas: (1) research methods and (2) foreign direct investment.

My paper, "**A New Type of Research Relevance: Career Relevance and Closing the Relevance Gap**," (presented at the Academy of Management 2017) assesses whether top strategy journals have publication norms and rules supporting open, transparent, and replicable science. I find most top strategy journals lack any norms or rules supporting open science, suggesting the body of work published in these journals might contain a higher percentage of Type 2 errors than would be

expected under conditions of openness and replicability. These findings have serious implications for the veracity of knowledge produced through publication in these journals.

Another methods-related paper, "**What Stays Fixed in Fixed Effects Regression? Simulating the Empirical Consequences of Fixed Effects Assumption Failures**," uses computer simulation to highlight critical assumptions required in fixed effects regression models, a popular statistical method used in strategy research. Specifically, fixed effects regression controls for time-invariant confounds of the relationship of interest. However, little attention is paid to the likelihood of confounds remaining unchanged given the period of the data being analyzed. I demonstrate the consequences of time invariance assumption failures and recommend a more robust approach.

My working paper, "**Improving the Use of Ratings in CSR Research: Metaratings and the CSRHub Dataset**," responds to recent criticism of standard KLD measures of CSR by describing a new dataset capable of overcoming some of the limitations of KLD. Specifically, I describe the CSRHub dataset and describe how its construction as a "metaratings" dataset overcomes some limitations of single-measure datasets like KLD. Metaratings, like polls of polls in political science, can offer more robust measures of CSR performance by combining multiple individual measures into a composite measure. Composite measures can reduce measurement error of any single dataset like KLD by averaging over multiple datasets, in the same way polls of polls can produce more accurate assessments of political support by incorporating information from multiple polls. The CSRHub dataset has the potential to become a robust measure of CSR performance, something sorely needed as deficiencies continue to be identified in datasets like KLD, ASSET4, TruCost, and others.

In the area of foreign direct investment, I am a co-author on the paper, "**Signaling Calm after Conflict: Multinational Investment in Post-Conflict Environments**," that examines the relationship between foreign direct investment activity, armed conflict within nation-states, and peace agreements. The study contributes to the international business literature on foreign entry choice and host-country characteristics by considering how the institutional structure of peace agreements relates to changes in FDI flows. The paper is at the data analysis stage and will be presented at the 2018 SMS Conference.