

Sandeep Pillai

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Citizenship – Canadian

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENT

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Management and Technology, Bocconi University

2019 -

EDUCATION

Ph.D. (Strategic Management & Entrepreneurship)

University of Maryland, 2019

Committee chairs: B. Goldfarb, D. Kirsch

Committee members: R. Agarwal, S. Braguinsky, D. Sicilia

Master of Business Administration

University of Toronto, 2014

Master of Engineering (Electric Power Engineering)

University of Waterloo, 2011

Bachelor of Applied Science (Honors Electrical Engineering)

University of Waterloo, 2009

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Industry evolution, Agglomeration, Entrepreneurship, Historical methods, Abduction, Philosophy of Science

PUBLICATIONS

Pillai, S.D., Goldfarb, B., and Kirsch, D., (2024). Lovely and Likely: Using Historical Methods to Improve Inference to the Best Explanation in Strategy, *Strategic Management Journal*. <http://doi.org/10.1002/smj.3593>

Pillai, S.D., Goldfarb, B., and Kirsch, D., (2020). The Origins of Firm Strategy: Learning by Economic Experimentation and Strategic Pivots in the Early Automobile Industry, *Strategic Management Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.3102>

Goldfarb, B., Zavyalova, A., and Pillai, S.D., (2018). Did Victories in Certification Contests Affect the Survival of Organizations in the American Automobile Industry During 1895-1912, *Strategic Management Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.2911>

- Best Paper Runner-up, SMS Annual Conference, 2016

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Pillai, S.D., Goldfarb, B., Kirsch, D., King, A., Starr, E., Kim, S., Wormald, A. From Hypothesis Testing Towards Inference to Best Explanation: Testimonial Structure for Abductive Studies in Strategy

- Invited article at *Strategic Management Journal's* Special Research Forum on Abduction in Strategic Management Scholarship: Theory and Methods
- Publication is expected in January 2026 ([Link](#) to preliminary draft)

Pillai, S.D., Kirsch, D. Determinants of Early-Stage Scaling in the American Automobile Industry

- Reject and Resubmit at *Strategic Management Journal*
 - Being re-written for re-submission by Dec 2024 – [Link](#) to the previous version
- Best Paper Finalist, DRUID-2022
- Best Doctoral Paper in Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Snider Center for Enterprise & Markets, University of Maryland

Frost, A., Pillai, S.D., Khanna, T., Selective Deinstitutionalization: Informal institutional adaptation in Maoist China ([Link](#))

- Under Review at *Academy of Management Journal*

Pillai, S.D., Giacomini, V., From a Creative Cluster to a Creative Hub: Prêt-à-porter's Emergence in Italy and Milan's Transition to a Fashion Hub ([Link](#))

- Winner of €40K (2024), €50K (in 2022) and €10K (in 2021) Bocconi research grants
- Under appeal at *Organization Science*

Pillai, S.D., Datar, A., Detroit's Emergence as the Capital of the Early American Automobile Industry: The Role of Firm Scale ([Link](#))

- Target: *Management Science*

Goldfarb, B., Kirsch, D., Pillai, S.D., Causal Inference in Strategy Research: Lovely or Likely?

- Stage: Preparing draft ([Link](#) to conference draft)
- Target: *Academy of Management Review*

Opper, S., Pillai, S.D., From cultural Brokerage to Cosmopolitan Cultures: Where Foreign Production Thrives

- Stage: Preparing draft.
- Target: *Strategic Management Journal*

Peltoniemi, M., Sihvonen, A., Taipale, T., Pillai, S.D., Learning from non-market experiments by incumbents in the Finnish pulp and paper industry

- Stage: Data analysis; Target: *Organization Science*

Venkataraman V., Pillai, S.D., Organization Location in the US Medical Device Manufacturing Industry: Destiny or Strategy?

- Stage: Data analysis; Target: *Management Science*

Pillai, S.D., Cillo, P., Pozzo, I., Evolution of cultural and creative industries: A theoretical framework

- Stage: Ideation; Target: *Academy of Management Review*

PDW/SYMPOSIA (CO-) ORGANIZED AT CONFERENCES

How to be a good reviewer, SMS	2024
Future of Geographic and Technological Emergence, AOM	2024
Using Abductive Methods in Management Research, AOM	2024
Studying Creative Industries: Opportunities and Challenges, AOM	2024
Using Historical Methods to Improve Inference In Strategy Research, SMS	2023
Facts, Papers, and the Future of Strategy Research, SMS	2023
Studying the Fashion Industry: Opportunities and Challenges, AOM	2023
Publishing Mixed-Methods Studies: Challenges and Opportunities, AOM	2023
Novel Methods and Data in Studying Industry Emergence and Evolution, AOM	2023
Geographies of Innovation: Challenges and Opportunities, AOM	2022
Entrepreneurial Strategies in Developing Economies, AOM	2022
Research design and the problem of inference from extreme events, SMS	2021
Re-integration of History in Strategy research, SMS	2020
From special issues to regular contributions: Next steps on the path to the re-integration of History in Management research, AOM	2020
Abduction and the problem of null, AOM	2020
Using Historical methods to improve inference in Strategy research, AOM	2018
Experimentation and innovation: Individuals, firms, and economies, AOM	2018

Experimentation strategy and industry evolution, AOM 2017

INVITED CONFERENCES & INSTITUTIONS

Business History Conference, Neoma Business School, Smith Entrepreneurship Research Conference, DRUID, AOM, University of Cambridge History & OT Wksp., SMS, INSEAD Doriot Entrepreneurship Conf. 2024

University of Jyväskylä HiMOS Conf., INSEAD Doriot Entrepreneurship Conf., Strategy Science, DRUID, ZHAW School of Mgmt., AOM, SMS, INSEAD Creative Industries Conf. 2023

University College London, Business History Conference, EGOS, AOM, SMS, SMS-Oxford Industry Evolution Wksp, SMS-Milan, Israel Strategy Conference, 2022

Business History Collective, SMS workshop on “Best Practices for Reliable Quantitative Research”, DRUID 2021

BYU/Utah Winter Strategy Conference, IIM-Bangalore, AOM, SMS 2020

SMS, Historical approaches to Entrepreneurship and Organizational Change - USC 2019

SMS, AOM, Strategy Science, CCC, West Coast Research Consortium, SERC, East Coast Doctoral 2018

Job talks at MIT Sloan (TIES), London Business School, HEC Paris, Pennsylvania State, Oklahoma State, George Mason, Bocconi University 2018

Israel Strategy Conference, SMS, West Coast Research Consortium, AOM, Medici Summer School 2017

SMS, AOM, Strategy Research Initiative Bootcamp 2016

TEACHING

Ph.D. What, Why, and How of Abduction, University of Maryland, Co-Instructor 2024-

Ph.D. Advances in Entrepreneurship Seminar 2022

Master Entrepreneurship and Business Planning (20335), Course Director 2019-

Master Empirical Methods for Innovation Strategies (20568), Course Director 2019-

Bachelor Entrepreneurship & New Business Startup (30492), Course Director 2024-

Bachelor Fundamentals of Management (30450), Course Director 2019-2023

Bachelor Entrepreneurship Lab (30501), Bocconi Summer School 2022-

Bachelor Strategic Management, Under-graduate elective, University of Maryland 2017

SERVICE

Member, AOM-TIM Research Committee, 2024-2025

Rep-at-Large, Research Methods Community, SMS, 2023-2024

Co-organizer, Workshop on Historical Methods, Bocconi U., 2023

Co-organizer, Bocconi Assembly for Innovation and Cooperation (BAIC), 2022 & 2023

Member, Junior job market committee, Management and Technology Department, 2021, 2022 and 2023

Delegate, Equal Opportunities Committee, Inclusion Disability and Well-Being Committee, Sustainability Committee, Bocconi University, 2023, 2024

Reviewer, Leading journals and conferences, 2018-

Thesis advisor, Master’s students (40), Bocconi U., 2019-

Member, Online teaching transition committee, Management and Technology Department, 2020

President, Association of Business School Doctoral Students, University of Maryland, 2017

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Electrical Engineer, Hydro One Networks Inc., Toronto, Canada 2009-2014

4-month internships (Co-op terms) at Ontario Power Generation, Toronto Hydro, 2005-2008

Independent Electricity System Operator, Ontario Power Authority, Hydro One

Toilet cleaner / Dishwasher (Tim Hortons, Canada), Door-to-door toy sales, Tele-marketing 2003-2004