Nataliya Langburd Wright

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Research summary

I study entrepreneurial strategy, particularly how local environments can push startups toward suboptimal strategies and make them harder to change, contributing to a global startup scaling gap. I use field, econometric, and AI/ML methods.

Appointments

Columbia Business School — New York, NY
Assistant Professor of Business (Management) — 2023–Present
Chazen Senior Scholar, Chazen Institute for Global Business — 2025–Present
Faculty Affiliate, AI in Business Initiative — 2023–Present

Microsoft AI Economy Institute — Seattle, WA
Senior Fellow — 2026–Present

Harvard Extension School — Cambridge, MA
Instructor (Management) — 2021–2023

White House Council of Economic Advisers — Washington, DC
Staff Economist — 2016–2018

Education

Harvard Business School — Cambridge, MA
PhD in Business Administration (Strategy)

University of Cambridge — Cambridge, UK
MPhil in International Relations & Politics

Yale University — New Haven, CT
BA in Economics & Global Affairs (Phi Beta Kappa)

Publications

[1] **Wright, N.L.** (2026). When local learning scales: Entrepreneurs' initial users and market expansion. *Organization Science*, 37(1), 377-401.

[2] **Wright, N.L.** (2026). When does a strategic approach to entrepreneurship matter? *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal (Accepted).*

[3] Cowgill, B., Hernandez-Lagos, P., & **Wright, N.L.** (2026). Does AI cheapen talk? Theory and evidence from global entrepreneurship and hiring. *Management Science. (Authors listed in alphabetical order)*

[4] **Wright, N.L.**, Koning, R., & Khanna, T. (2023). Judging foreign startups. *Strategic Management Journal*, 44(9), 2195-2225.

[5] **Wright, N.L.**, Nagle, F., & Greenstein, S. (2023). Open source software and global entrepreneurship. *Research Policy*, 52(9), 104846.

Under Review

[6] **Wright, N.L.** The cost of mistakes and entrepreneurial strategic decision-making. Columbia Business School Research Paper, *SSRN 5767463. (R&R)*

[7] **Wright, N.L.** & Saiedi, E. The mid-sized market trap in entrepreneurial scaling. Columbia Business School Research Paper, *SSRN 5078041. (R&R)*

[8] **Wright, N.L.** & Eaglin, F.C. Communicating entrepreneurial strategy. Columbia Business School Research Paper, *SSRN 4939687. (Second R&R)*

[9] **Wright, N.L.**, Nagle, F. & Greenstein, S. Contributing to growth? How geography shapes the role of open source software in entrepreneurial scaling, Columbia Business School Research Paper, *SSRN 4699182. (R&R)*

[10] Impink, M., **Wright, N.L.**, & Seamans, R. Innovation on a leash: The tradeoffs of corporate accelerators for entrepreneurial growth, Columbia Business School Research Paper, *SSRN 5291626. (R&R)*

[11] **Wright, N.L.** & Miller, A. Aligning entrepreneurial strategy. Columbia Business School Research Paper, *SSRN 5868443. (Rej&R)*

[12] Bearson, D. & **Wright, N.L.** Strategic targeting and unequal global adoption of artificial intelligence. Columbia Business School Research Paper, *SSRN 5187851. (Under Review)*

[13] **Wright, N.L.** & Miller, A. The strategic choice observatory: AI infrastructure for measuring coherence at scale. *(Under Review)*

[14] Apostoloski, N., Foley, A., Kristal, A., Spina, C., & **Wright, N.L.** From prediction to explanation: Using AI to design counterfactual experiments of human judgment. *(Under Review)*

Working Papers

[15] **Wright, N.L.** The irreversibility trap: A theory of entrepreneurial scaling disparities.

[16] **Wright, N.L.** Structural constraints, irreversibility, and entrepreneurial experimentation.

[17] Teng, N., **Wright, N.L.**, & Kacperczyk, O. Do disruptive startups attract more talent? Evidence from a field experiment in India. Columbia Business School Research Paper, *SSRN 5231552.*

[18] Xu, W., **Wright, N.L.**, & Kacperczyk, O. Collaborate or compete? The impact of strategic framing on employee ideas. Columbia Business School Research Paper, *SSRN 6684339.*

[19] **Wright, N.L.**, Grodal, S., & Huang, L. International exposure and entrepreneurial pivoting. Columbia Business School Research Paper, *SSRN 4909596.*

[20] Impink, M. & **Wright, N.L.** Can startups generate a competitive advantage with AI tools? Columbia Business School Research Paper, *SSRN 5386212.*

[21] Choi, J. & **Wright, N.L.** Big or small customer? Balancing resources and bureaucracy in startup collaborations.

[22] Wang, D.J., Jain, N.M., Burbano, V., Guzman, J., Keum, D., Kim, S., Kogut, B., & **Wright, N.L.** How assigned AI use before class shapes active student engagement in class. Columbia Business School Research Paper, *SSRN 7585318*.

Other Publications

Wright, N.L. (2026). "AI and the global startup scaling gap." *Accepted chapter in forthcoming book on the impact of AI on the economy.* Wiley & Sons.

Wright, N.L. (2026). "The global scaling gap: Why strategic clarity is crucial in the age of AI." *MIT Sloan Management Review.*

Wright, N.L. (2026). "The best customers to study when scaling into a new market." *MIT Sloan Management Review.*

Wright, N.L. & Saiedi, E. (2024). How startups scale into new markets: Large-scale evidence from digital language tools. *Academy of Management Best Paper Proceedings.*

Goh, L. and **Wright, N.L.** (2024). "Nurturing entrepreneurial scaling." In *Foresight Africa 2024.* The Brookings Institution.

Psyhogeos, N. and **Wright, N.L.** (2021). "Our labor market in crisis: Paving a new path to the future of work." Harvard Weatherhead Center for International Affairs: Epicenter.

Kaiser, K., Trang, H., Goh, L., and **Wright, N.L.** (2021). *Digital government transformation in Vietnam: Global lessons and policy implications.* World Bank Group.

Goh, L., Kaiser, K., and **Wright, N.L.** (2020). "The rise of open source to spur digital government." World Bank Blogs.

Tayler, Y. and **Wright, N.L.** (2018)."The future of public procurement in the era of digitalization." World Bank Blogs.

Tayler, Y. and **Wright, N.L.** (2018)."Yes they can: SMEs filling the infrastructure gap in fragile countries." World Bank Blogs.

Cases

Nagle, F., Greenstein, S., Roche, M., and **Wright, N.L.** (2023). "Copilot(s): Generative AI at Microsoft and GitHub." Harvard Business School Case 624-010.

Koning, R., Wu, A., **Wright, N.L.**, and Khanna, T. (2020). "MassChallenge." Harvard Business School Case 720-469.

Jones, G., Khanna, T., **Wright, N.L.**, and Spencer, M. (2019). "Innovation and business in emerging markets." Harvard Business School Case 319-110.

Jones, G., Khanna, T., **Wright, N.L.**, and Spencer, M. (2019). "Innovation and business in emerging markets." Harvard Business School Teaching Plan 319-111.

Jones, G., Khanna, T., and **Wright, N.L.** (2018). "Corruption and business in emerging markets." Harvard Business School Case 319-054.

Jones, G., Khanna, T., and **Wright, N.L.** (2018). "Corruption and business in emerging markets." Harvard Business School Teaching Plan 319-055.

Awards

Best Paper Prize Winner, SMS Strategy & Entrepreneurship Interest Group (2026)
Best Paper Prize Finalist, Strategic Management Society Annual Conference (2026)
Strategy & Entrepreneurship Service Award, Strategic Management Society (2026)
Senior Fellowship Award, Microsoft AI Economy Institute (2026)
Researcher of the Month, Columbia University (2026)
Research in Strategic Management Grant, SMS Strategy Research Foundation (2026)
Atlantik Brücke Young Leader (2025)
Best Paper in Entrepreneurial Cognition Award Finalist, Academy of Management (2025)
Digital Future Initiative Grant, Columbia Business School (2025)
Harambeans Service Leadership Award (2025)
Chazen Institute Faculty Research Grant (2024)
Academy of Management Best Paper Proceedings, Strategic Management Division (2024)
Digital Future Initiative Grant, Columbia Business School (2023)
Top-Rated Accepted Proposal, SMS Annual Conference (2023)
Best Conference PhD Paper Prize Finalist, SMS Annual Conference (2022)
Top-Rated Accepted Proposal, SMS Annual Conference (2022)
Dissertation Scholar, SMS Strategy Research Foundation (2022)
Emerging Scholar Award, Pacific Telecommunications Council (2021)
Best Paper in Emerging Economies Research Finalist, AIB Annual Meeting (2019)
Doctoral Fellowship, Harvard Business School (2018–2023)
White House Special Service Award (2017)
North American Foundation, University of Cambridge (2015)
Parry Dutton Student Fund, University of Cambridge (2015)
Fox International Fellowship, Yale University (2014–2015)
Studies in Grand Strategy Fellowship, Yale University (2013)
Les Aspin Fellowship for Public Service, Yale University (2013)
International Politics Summer Scholarship, University of Oxford (2012)
McDonald Cadet Leadership Conference Student Fellow, West Point Academy (2012)

Presentations

2027: MIT (TIES); University of Notre Dame

2026: AOM Annual Conference; Bayesian Entrepreneurship Conference (Toronto); Columbia Management, Analytics, and Data Conference; Global Strategy Workshop; INSEAD (Strategy and Entrepreneurship); SMS Annual Conference; Tuck Strategy Junior Faculty Summer Conference

2025: ACERE; AOM Annual Conference; Bayesian Entrepreneurship Conference at Bocconi University; Global Strategy Workshop; Harambeans Global Summit; Melbourne Business School; Rotman Management in Emerging Markets Conference; Stevens Institute of Technology; SMS Annual Conference; Temple Global Institute for AI and Business Analytics (Distinguished Speaker); Tuck Strategy Junior Faculty Summer Conference

2024: AOM Annual Conference; Cornell Emerging Markets Conference (Keynote Presentation); Columbia Business School; Columbia Management, Analytics, and Data Conference; Conference on Field Experiments in Strategy; Duke Strategy Conference; East Coast Doctoral Conference (Discussant); HBS Strategy Alumni Conference; INSEAD Doriot Entrepreneurship Conference; MIT TIES Seminar; NYU Global Strategy Workshop; Smith Entrepreneurship Research Conference; OECD Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Benchmarking Workshop (Discussant); SMS Annual Conference; SMS Extension on Disruptive Digital Technologies, Data and AI; Strategy Science Conference; Think Bigger Innovation Summit (Panel Moderator); Tuck Strategy Junior Faculty Summer Conference; Wharton's AI and Future of Work Conference

2023: CBS Meet Your Neighbor Lunch; Conference on Field Experiments in Strategy; CUNY Business and Economics; DRUID; Global Strategy and Emerging Markets Conference; HBS Digital, Data, & Design Institute Research Day; NYU-SMS Conference on the Benefits and Challenges of Open Source; OpenForum Academy Symposium; SMS Annual Conference; Wharton/Columbia Management, Analytics, & Data Conference

2022: AOM Annual Conference; CCC Doctoral Conference; Columbia Business School; Cornell Emerging Markets Institute PhD Conference; Cornell SC Johnson College of Business; DRUID; HEC Montréal; HEC Paris; HBS Strategy Alumni Conference; HBS Strategy Unit Internal Faculty Seminar; IESE; INSEAD Doriot Entrepreneurship Conference; London Business School; NYU Stern School of Business; NUS Business School; Productivity Seminar; Rice Jones Graduate School of Business; SMS Annual Conference; Stockholm School of Economics; University of Toronto Rotman School of Management; Wharton/Columbia Management, Analytics, & Data Conference; Wharton Technology and Innovation Conference

2021: Academy of Management (AOM) Annual Conference; DRUID Conference; Open & User Innovation Conference; SMS Special Conference on "Governing Knowledge and Imagination in The Digital Era;" SMS Annual Conference; Strategy Science Conference; UN Internet Governance Forum

2020: The Boston Field Research Conference; HBS Digital Workshop; Innovation Growth Lab Winter Research Meeting

2019: Academy of International Business Annual Meeting; University of San Andres and Yale University Conference on "Perspectives on Poverty and Human Development"

Invited Consortia

OpenAI Enterprise Research Workshop (October 2025)
Regional Disparities in AI Adoption Conference (July 2024)
Bayesian Entrepreneurship Conference (March 2024)
OECD Entrepreneurial Ecosystems Benchmarking Workshop (December 2023)
Wharton Innovation Doctoral Symposium (March 2023)
AOM Strategic Management Dissertation Consortium (August 2022)
AOM Tech. & Innovation Management Doctoral Consortium (August 2022)
EGOS PhD Workshop (July 2022)
NBER Digitization Tutorial (March 2021, 2022)
Smith Entrepreneurship Research Conference Doctoral Consortium (April 2021)
Strategy Science Doctoral Workshop (April 2021)
NBER Young Scholars Workshop on the Economics of AI (September 2020)

AOM Doctoral Consortium in Entrepreneurship (August 2020)
NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp (August 2020)
PhD Workshop, Innovation Growth Lab (November 2020)

Teaching

Strategy Formulation (Columbia Business School MBA), Instructor, 2024–Present

Scaling Strategically (Columbia Entrepreneurship & Competitiveness Program, Summer Startup Track, Alumni Virtual Accelerator, Startup Lab, Senior Executive Program), Lead/Instructor, 2023–Present

Proseminar (Columbia Business School PhD), Instructor, 2025

Management of Technology: Strategies for the Digital Economy (Harvard Extension School Master's course), Instructor, Fall 2021; Spring 2023
Average Student Rating: 4.9/5

How to Plan Platform Strategy in a Global Digital Landscape (HBS Alumni Angels Association), Guest Lecturer, November 2020
Top Five Educational Webinar

Strategy and Technology (HBS MBA Case Course), Teaching Fellow, Fall 2019
Average Student Rating: 4.8/5

Program for Research in Markets & Organizations (HBS Undergrad Program), Guest Lecturer, Summers 2019–21

Media Mentions

CBS Research In Brief. Where startups should test to scale. October 2026.
AI Insider. Microsoft's Latest AI Economy Institute Fellows to Look at Frontier AI Firms and the Transformation of Work. July 2026.
INFORMS. Want to Succeed Globally? Start by Learning Locally. June 2026.
CBS Thought Leadership. AI in 2025: Word of the Year. December 2025.
CBS Thought Leadership. AI in 2025: AI as a Research Partner. December 2025.
Justified Posteriors. Does AI Cheapen Talk? November 2025.
The Boston Globe. Job seekers and hiring managers are using AI. September 2025.
AInvest. AI's global divide: HR at the crossroads of innovation and equity. Sep. 2025.
CBS Research In Brief. AI's global blind spot. September 2025.
Bus. Insider. Southeast Asia's tech startups are chasing the American dream. June 2025.
CBS Research In Brief. Did AI write that pitch? The impact of generative AI on hiring and startup evaluation. May 2025.
CBS Newsroom. AI's wrench in the job application process: New research exposes the global hiring dilemma. February 2025.
Success. How AI tools are interfering with the hiring process. February 2025.
BBC News. Tech decoded newsletter. February 2025.
Business Talks. Scaling globally. December 2024.
Wharton AI Horizons. AI's effect on the workforce. December 2024.
Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve. Artificial intelligence, big data, and the path ahead for productivity. October 2024.
CBS Bus. & Society. New York City's remarkable rise as an innovation hub. July 2024.
CBS Research In Brief. Breaking down walls: How open source software drives entrepreneurial activity. May 2024.

HBS Working Knowledge. Open source software: The $9 trillion resource companies take for granted. March 2024.
CBS Magazine. Fresh frontiers in entrepreneurship and innovation. December 2023.
GitHub. Open source creates value, but how do you measure it? January 2022.
GitHub. GitHub at the UN Internet Governance Forum. December 2021.
World Bank Group. Mobilizing technology for development: An assessment of World Bank Group preparedness. April 2021.
MassChallenge. In new HBS report: MassChallenge judges top industry for identifying high potential startups. March 2021.
CHAOSScast Blog. Managing risks and opportunities in open source. July 2020.

Service

Co-Founder, NYC Entrepreneurial Strategy Workshop (2025-)
Member, Academy of Management STR Research Committee (2025-)
Representative-at-Large, Strategic Management Society (2025-)
Faculty Adviser/Curriculum Director, CBS Entrep. & Competitiveness Program (2024-)
Faculty Adviser, Chazen Global Study Tour (2024-)
Faculty Liaison, Management Predoctoral Program (2024-)
Co-Organizer, Strategic Management Society Panel/PDW (2025-2026)
Faculty Sponsor, CBS MBA Independent Study (2024-2025)
Co-Organizer, Academy of Management Symposium/PDW (2021, 2022, 2024, 2025)
Member, Columbia Business School Entrepreneurship Task Force (2023–2024)
Member, Columbia Business School PhD Review Committee (2023—2024)
Lead, Columbia Business School Strategy Course Mapping (2023–2024)
Co-Organizer, HBS Strategy Alumni Conference (2023–2024)
Co-Organizer, HBS Digital Doctoral Workshop (2018–2022)
Program Rep., Harvard Graduate Student Council (2018–2021)
Student Advisery Board, HBS Digital Initiative (2018–2020)
Alumni Interviewer, Yale College (2014–2022)

Review Board

Organization Science

Ad-Hoc Reviewing

Management Science, Strategic Management Journal, Administrative Science Quarterly, Research Policy, Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, Academy of Management Perspectives, Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, Strategic Management Society Annual Conference, Academy of International Business Annual Conference, Research Council of KU Leuven

Doctoral Advising

Xinni Wu (Columbia Business School PhD Candidate). Second Year Paper Reader.
Nina Teng (London Business School PhD Candidate). Committee Member.
Inara Tareque (Columbia Business School PhD Candidate). Committee Member.
Jinkyong Choi (Columbia Business School PhD Candidate). Committee Member.
Ahmed Zahlan (Africa Business School PhD Candidate). Thesis Referee.

Former Industry

Senior Technology Consultant, World Bank Group
Co-Founder, COO, and Board Member, Fork, Inc.
Adviser, Opportunity@Work

Outside Activities

Startup Lead Mentor, Techstars
Advisory Board Member, SeedX
Startup Fellow, Expert, & Mentor, MassChallenge

Board Member, IDCA
Startup Mentor, StartEd Education and Tech Workforce Accelerator
Event Speaker, PIP Consulting Group
Strategic Advisory Board Member, Plexis.AI

SKILLS

Russian/English; Computing: STATA, Python, R, LaTeX, HTML, MS Office, Bloomberg Terminal; Certified Yoga Instructor