

**“AN EXTENDED ABSTRACT OF”  
THE DIFFUSION OF CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY IN GLOBAL  
SUPPLY NETWORKS: AN EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF THE  
GLOBAL AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the diffusion process of corporate sustainability (CS) in the global automotive industry. It discusses the different roles played by the automakers, as the industry's focal firms, in diffusing CS strategies throughout their respective supply networks. Studies have explained this phenomenon as being the result of the higher levels of stakeholder exposure faced by focal firms, which generate higher levels of supplier sustainability risk. In this context, we examine the effects of three network-related firm characteristics—resource dominance, resource substitutability, and network centrality—in determining the effectiveness of a firm in diffusing CS in its network. For that purpose, we present a theoretical framework from which we derive a set of hypotheses and test them on a final sample of the global automotive supply network containing 2,457 firms. The results lend significant support to the argument that these network-related firm attributes are crucial mechanisms to the process of diffusion of CS strategies in a supply network, thus contributing to extant literatures in strategic management, international business, and sustainable supply chain management. The paper is available from the authors.

**Keywords:** Global Supply Chains, Corporate Sustainability, Networks