

The Value of Environmental Social Responsibility to Facility Managers: Revealing the Perceptions and Motives for Adopting ESR

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Abstract This study is grounded in the debate surrounding the perceived value of environmental social responsibility (ESR). Applying the *Managerial Theory of the Firm*, in-depth interviews were conducted to identify managerial motives, perceptions, and perceived value of ESR. Using sport and public assembly facilities as the research context, environmentally responsible information was obtained from facility managers who were members of the International Association of Venue Managers. In total, 15 one-hour, interviews with key facility personnel demonstrate that (1) internal stakeholder pressure, (2) organizational culture, (3) financial cost-benefit, (4) competitiveness, and (5) ethical motives were the drivers for ESR engagement. Taken together, the findings suggest that establishing a culture of ESR, the “business case” for environmental responsibility, and ethical concerns offered the most value for the sport and public assembly facility managers.

Keywords Environmental social responsibility · Sustainability · Sport and public assembly facility management

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... Climate change is the predominant moral issue of the 21st century, comparable to slavery faced by Lincoln and the response to Nazism faced by Churchill.

-Dr. James Hansen, NASA Climatologist (Koch 2010).

The value of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been a much-debated topic because measuring the costs and benefits of socially responsible activities on organizational stakeholders can be difficult. Many factors influencing an organizations social engagement have been grounded in business pragmatism discussions centered on the correlation between “doing good” and financial performance. While research on this connection has shown that little financial benefit is realized from CSR, Orlitzky et al. (2003) meta-analysis suggested that a positive effect of CSR on financial performance does exist. On the surface, these data bring some closure to the debate (Margolis and Walsh 2001; Waddock and Graves 1997) about whether it is in an organization’s best interest, at least financially, to engage in CSR (Aguilera et al. 2007). However, these findings have spawned new line of inquiry, not focused on if CSR works but rather what catalyzes organizations to engage in social initiatives. From this question, sub-dimensions of CSR scholarship have emerged with one area receiving a great deal of recent attention—environmental social responsibility (ESR).

This paradigm shift is due in part to the visibility of new green markets in “... an enabling environment for responsibility” (Fox et al. 2003, p. iii), which could foster a competitive advantage because both social and financial ends can be achieved by “going green”. However, conventional wisdom concerning the environment is that ESR is a cost item encumbered by the firm, which may erode

competitiveness (Ambec and Lanoie 2008). During the last decade, a shift in thinking has suggested that ESR can lead to improved financial performance and not necessarily increased costs (Porter and Van der Linde 1995; Reinhardt 2000). Research on this topic is still limited leaving the question of whether, in the aggregate, it pays to be environmentally responsible somewhat insufficient. However, under what circumstances does ESR pay (Schaltegger and Synnestvedt 2002), is a more critical question that researchers are beginning to explore. Siegel (2009) maintained that managers have a responsibility to adopt ESR practices only if they complement the organization's existing strategies. And such activities should not be forwarded in response to societal pressure or business ethics but in response to demands for ESR from stakeholders that directly benefit the firm (Siegel 2009).

Extant research has pointed to how external groups (e.g., the consumer, community members, and corporate watchdog groups) perceive, react, and influence the type of social and environmental programs organizations adopt. However, few studies have explored the internal dynamics, perceptions, and competency areas that organizations utilize to deliver responsible initiatives (Babiak and Wolfe 2009). Furthermore, little (if any) research has explored the motives behind ESR engagement. The purpose of this study was to explore the value of pursuing ESR as a business strategy to sport and public assembly facility managers. Using qualitative methods to test the research question, we capture, code, and analyze the reasons why facility managers adopt and foster ESR and provide theoretical justification as support. To further delineate the boundaries of ESR, we pay particular attention to facility manager decisions regarding the allocation of resources and concerns related to ESR. In addition, we consider the implications of ESR practices, as well as functional and policy areas affected by those decisions. This objective is fulfilled by revealing the facility manager's motives to respond to ESR demands as well as the perceived advantages associated with satisfying this demand.

This article is organized into several sections. First, ESR is holistically discussed, which is followed by the phenomenon's manifestation in sport. Second, the theoretical framework is presented. Third, the qualitative methodology is described. Next, the findings and discussion are presented together followed by several concluding points.

Environmental Social Responsibility

For almost 40 years, the conservation of natural resources, proper disposal of waste, and reduction of carbon emissions have become worldwide concerns (Ambec and Lanoie 2008). These (and many other) environmental

issues have come to the forefront as the primary global challenge in the 21st century (Goldman Sachs 2007). The essence of this challenge lies in what Hardin (1968, p. 1245) referred to as "... the tragedy of the common good" in his classic piece almost half a century ago:

... The rational man finds his share of the cost of the waste he discharges into the commons is less than the cost of purifying his wastes before releasing them. Since this is true for everyone, we are locked into a system of 'fouling our own nest' so long as we behave only as independent, rational, free-enterprisers.

Current agreements to prevent further global warming are locked in this tragedy as well as the struggle to protect diminishing wildlife populations (Zobor 2009). When transposing this idea to the corporate world, we find a similar tragedy. For example, based on the rationale provided by Porter and Kramer (2002), ESR practices should be regarded as valuable as long as they benefit the organization. It, therefore, stands to reason that the abstract notion of the environment might offer firms a less immediate return on investment than similar investments in health and workplace practices, resource management, education, or community enhancement programs.

While research on ESR is gaining momentum (e.g., Husted and de Jesus Salazar 2006; Siegel and Vitaliano 2007), environmental research specific to sport and tourism is still in its infancy. Much of the work in these fields have focused on the environmental drain of golf courses (Schmidt 2006) and environmental issues associated with sport mega-events (e.g., Berkaak 1999; Getz 2005; Leopkey and Parent 2009; Stubbs 2001). In addition, while conceptual calls for research on the environmental impact of sport have been forwarded (e.g., Hums 2010; Thibault 2009), little attention has been paid to how facilities and arenas are addressing environmental issues. This is somewhat surprising since these buildings are where the largest and most visible environmental challenges loom for sport industry practitioners. For example, recycling (e.g., cans, cups, food wrappers, discarded game programs, etc.), waste water control (e.g., irrigation, sewage, etc.), kilowatt monitoring (e.g., lighting, heating, ventilation, etc.), all influence the environmental impact of the venue. Thus, ESR decisions facing facility managers underscore the need for empirical inquiry to guide theoretical development to inform environmental practice.

What is immediately observable is that many sport and assembly facilities have made laudable and concerted efforts toward ESR. For some managers, however, there exists increased tension between the environment and profit than there is congruence (Hussain 1999) because the upfront costs can outweigh the long-term impact on savings. Although an organization's failure to devise

conservation methods could be viewed as immoral, Hardin's (1968) assertion that the morality of an act is a function of the system at the time it is performed, illustrates that this passive orientation is not altogether unexpected. By most accounts, the core of ESR rests in the assumption that environmental responsibility leads to an improved bottom-line through long-term efficiency and image-related rewards (Henricks 2007). Nonetheless, a profit-maximizing approach still allows for latitude in formulating initiatives that advance both societal and environmental goals. Thus, under certain conditions, facility managers could maximize profits, satisfy societal concerns, and improve the environment by adopting ESR (Siegel 2009). Given the potential organizational and community impacts from adopting ESR, it is important to understand the motives behind environmental practice and the perceived impact that environmental responsibility has on sport and public assembly facility operations.

ESR in Sport

The US, the green building movement can be traced back to the first Earth Day in 1970 and the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the same year (Kibert 2004). Not until recently, have sport organizations made environmental initiatives a priority. Jagemann (2003) argued that sport can be a considerable cause of damage to the environment and during the early 1990s, the linkage between sport and the environment was almost nonexistent (Falt 2006). Today, "... sports and the environment are indelibly linked, from the glitziest athletic spectacles to the everyday games played by billions of ordinary people" (Schmidt 2006, p. 295). For example, the 1994 Centennial Olympic Congress of Paris established the environment as the "Third Pillar" of the Olympic charter. As a result, the 1994 Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer were dubbed the first "green games" (Schmidt 2006). Since that time, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has made the Games a showcase for environmental responsibility.

The National Football league has joined in the environmental movement by incorporating ESR into their business model. The NFL's efforts began with recycling programs and have since grown to include carbon neutral programs (Brus 2007) and programs intended to minimize the impact of the Super Bowl (e.g., recycling, prepared food recovery, material donations, greenhouse gas reduction, renewable energy, and reforestation projects). Similarly, Major League Baseball (MLB) developed a *Green Teaming Program* in 2008 (Helming 2009) and then Commissioner Bud Selig was quoted by Buranen (2009) as saying:

... Baseball is a social institution with social responsibilities and caring for the environment is inextricably linked to all aspects of our game. Sound environmental practices make sense in every way to protect our natural resources for future generations of baseball fans.

Since the program's inception, several MLB teams have adopted recycling programs, installed solar panels, and purchased Renewable Energy Credits (REC). The league has also adopted a program that will see all 30 clubs begin collecting and analyzing stadium operations data to formulate a best practices manual for ESR.

A 2009 report released by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) noted that a majority (52%) of NCAA athletic departments are now making environmental initiatives a priority (McSherry 2009). More than one-third of the participating schools said their departments have already considered, or are actively considering, developing ESR plans. As examples, Penn State boasts the first college baseball stadium to receive a LEED certification, the University of Minnesota's TCF Bank Stadium was awarded the LEED Silver Certification, and the University of Florida's football stadium was recently certified as a LEED platinum facility (Reichard 2009).

Currently, little empirical research is available regarding seasonal sports (e.g., professional, baseball, football, etc.) and the impacts that day-to-day operations have on the environment (Dickson and Arcodia 2010; Laing and Frost 2010). However, a host of information is available regarding mega-events (Collins et al. 2009; Collins et al. 2007; Dickson and Arcodia 2010; Roper 2006), which include the Olympic Games, the Football Association Cup Final, and various and public festivals (Collins et al. 2007, 2009; Dickson and Arcodia 2010; Jones 2010; Laing and Frost 2010). A potential contributing factor to the lack of literature regarding ESR in professional sport, particularly among managers of sport and public assembly facilities, stems from a limited understanding of how to develop ESR policy and practice.

While environmental protection strategies have been developed and adopted at nearly all sporting levels, ESR facility initiatives are among the most important strategies that sport organizations can adopt to counter adverse environmental issues. Guterman (2009, p. 1170) wrote that "... very little information exists about the impact or extent of green initiatives in the facility industry. After their assessment of the 2004 Football Association Final Cup, Collins et al. (2007, p. 457) indicated that the study was "... set in the context of a shortage of tools with which to assess the environmental effects of events and facilities". The authors further noted that no widely accepted strategy

(or list of possible drivers) by which the environmental consequences of sport can be assessed.

Dickson and Arcodia (2010, p. 242) reported a need "... within the facility and events industry to work together to establish sustainable guidelines and policies". As well, Adema and Roehl (2010, p. 200) noted a continued need for "... top management to perceive correctly, monitor systematically, scan consistently, and interpret accurately" the happenings within and around sport facilities to "... accurately predict the forces driving environmental change". The aforementioned concerns have been echoed in both the popular press and the academic literature pointing to the need to understand the forces that stimulate ESR policies and practice, and the larger social issue of environmental management in sport.

Theory of the Firm

The framework used to guide the study on ESR is grounded in the idea of new institutionalism (Peng et al. 2009). Accordingly, business institutions are no longer viewed as background conditions. Rather, they help to determine and preserve certain competency areas as they are used to formulate and implement strategy (Ingram and Silverman 2002; Oliver 1997; Peng and Heath 1996). This enables the institution to serve as a touchstone for accountability and further indicates that an institution-based view is one of the leading perspectives guiding social and economic policy for business.

The *Theory of the Firm* perspective outlined by McWilliams and Siegel (2001) provides an understanding of this institutional view. From this perspective, the *Theory of the Firm* should be considered when attempting to assess the uses of ESR, which include quantifying demand, profit maximization, differentiation, industry impacts, and the role of management. We begin theorizing about ESR by relating it to this theory, where it is assumed that sport and public assembly facilities attempt to streamline costs, maximize profits, and appease certain stakeholder concerns (Jensen 1988). In addition to these outcomes, McWilliams and Siegel (2001) described a situation where the firm adds an additional social attribute that is demanded by its clients and consumers. They argued that managers seeking to understand social impacts should conduct cost/benefit analyses to determine demand, what level of resources to devote to the demand (i.e., costs), and evaluate the potential benefits. Based on this logic, we hypothesize three sources of demand for ESR among facility managers: (1) financial demand, (2) stakeholder demand (e.g., investors, employees, and the community), and (3) moral and ethical demands.

Given that profits are an incomplete measure of social performance and, therefore, an inaccurate measure for resource allocation (Lantos 2001; Rivoli 1996), this ESR demand model should be thought of as an investment for the organization. Siegel (2009) maintained that such investments should only be undertaken after careful consideration of the private and social costs of a firm's actions. The author further explained that societal costs are the private costs to the organization in addition to the external costs associated with service delivery, not incurred by the producer. This paradox is important when considering external costs (e.g., pollution, environmental degradation, etc.) incurred by managerial motives. For example, the side effects of business activity that result in a cost to society (Lantos 2001). The issue here is that ESR, as a concept, is often intended to simplify some complex arguments between society and the organization (i.e., who is responsible, and for what?). Consequently, managers implementing ESR fail to acknowledge the trade-offs between the organization's financial health and environmental outcomes (Doane 2005). Thus, when environmental policy decisions are made, profit might undoubtedly win out over societal benefits (Baron 2001).

Adding further complexity, economists have noted that one of the primary conditions for a competitive market operation is perfect information (e.g., Frenzen and Nakamoto 1993; Kreps and Wilson 1982). The condition of perfect knowledge is often violated in the real world, however, because information can be costly (Graafland and Smid 2004) and not actively sought by consumers (Meijer and Schuyt 2005; Webb and co-workers 2001). Given the general lack of awareness of both CSR and ESR, opportunistic managers may use asymmetric information to their advantage because it allows them to shape their social message aimed at less-informed parties (Du et al. 2007). This can lead to market failure because the less-informed party may purchase goods or spread positive sentiments about an organization, which they would not have done if well-informed, perhaps by an independent information source (e.g., *Forbes Top 100* or *Americas Most Admired Companies* reports). Under this guise of imperfect information, facility managers could perceive the benefits of ESR differently, and whether or not a firm elects to engage in ESR depends on the perceived opportunities and threats. Nevertheless, organizations frequently cited as "responsible" are often relieved of some competitive burdens, suggesting departure from competitive optimality is the price to be paid for ESR (Cottrill 1990).

Method

Due to the limited research regarding the motives that stimulate ESR in the facility context, a qualitative

investigation was undertaken. This research involved two phases. The first phase entailed the gathering and analyzing secondary information, which involved an extensive review of the academic literature, popular press articles and press releases, websites, reports, and other documents relating to facility ESR practices. The analysis of secondary information provided the background for generating the interview questions, in addition to assisting with the interpretation of the data collected during the second phase of the research.

An interview guide was developed based on two additional sources: (1) review of managerial statements regarding the benefits of ESR and (2) general discussions with sport and public assembly facility practitioners. From these sources of information, an open-ended interview guide was developed containing 21 questions. The guide included topics that ranged from environmental perceptions to ESR policy development and deployment. Before the interviews, the interview guide was refined to gather the most pertinent information from the individuals involved in the study. Likewise, questions were eliminated that were repetitive and did not provide additional (e.g., insightful) information. Based on this final review of the interview guide, 18 questions were retained.

The second phase involved interviews with managers from sport and public assembly facilities that were current members of International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM) and featured at the 2010 IAVM “Sustainability Showcase”. IAVM represents public assembly facilities with membership consisting of managers from auditoriums, arenas, convention centers, exhibit halls, stadiums, performing arts theaters, and amphitheaters. Member facilities represent substantial expenditures of public and private funds to conduct their operations and they attract millions of patrons to a variety of events (e.g., sport contests, rock concerts, conventions, conferences, ballets, etc.). While there is a close working relationship between facility managers and the anchor tenants (e.g., sport teams), facility managers generally do not work directly for the individual teams, but rather for sport authorities, local governments, and/or private management companies. In other words, they work with, and not for, their anchor tenants.

To select the most appropriate sample to reveal ESR motives, purposive sampling was used. This method was preferred over random sampling because the typical (or average) case does not often yield the richest in information (Flyvbjerg 2007). Conversely, extreme (or atypical) cases often reveal more detailed information because this strategy triggers more basic means and actors in the situation being studied. The purposive technique allowed the researchers to select a small number of rich cases needed to gain a deeper understanding of ESR motivations. Therefore, information both broad and deep enough to ensure a

rich accumulation from which to draw inferences was sought. To this end, multiple facilities were identified as potential data collection sites. Individual cases were selected by approaching each facility featured at the 2010 IAVM “Sustainability Showcase” and requesting their involvement. The Showcase featured 20 of the leading sustainable facilities in the US as voted on by their peers. Our selection criteria was also based on the key informants’ position in the facility (e.g., General Manager, Assistant General Manager, or Director of Operations) as well as their knowledge of the facility’s environmental initiatives.

Fifteen of the top twenty environmentally responsible facilities were identified ($N = 15$; $n = 6$ sport facilities, $n = 5$ convention centers, $n = 3$ performing arts centers, and $n = 1$ equestrian facility), resulting in 15 in-depth one-hour interviews. All interviews were conducted over the telephone due to logistical and financial constraints (see Bernard 2002; Burke and Miller 2001; Burnard 1994). Although the interviewer could not physically see the interviewee, there were enough social cues (e.g., voice inflection and intonation) available to create a rapport with each respondent. All of the interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and sent back to the participant to ensure that the information provided was correct. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the participants by facility type and the informant’s position in the facility.

Table 1 Participant breakdown by facility (pseudonyms included)

Facility _(type,location)	Position	Pseudonym
Sport specific _(football)	Director of Environmental Projects	R1
Sport specific _(football)	Director of Operations	R2
Sport specific _(football)	Director of Operations	R3
Sport specific _(baseball)	General Manager	R4
Sport specific _(baseball)	General Manager	R5
Sport specific _(basketball/hockey)	Assistant General Manager	R6
Convention center _(west)	Director of Operations	R7
Convention center _(west)	General Manager	R8
Convention center _(midwest)	Assistant General Manager	R9
Convention center _(midwest)	Environmental Specialist	R10
Convention center _(east)	General Manager	R11
Performing arts center _(midwest)	Assistant General Manager	R12
Performing arts center _(west)	General Manager	R13
Performing arts center _(east)	Assistant General Manager	R14
Equestrian center _(west)	Director of Operations	R15

The interview questions were broad to allow the respondent to freely discuss each topic area. In an effort to explore a range of motivations, the interviewer began by asking the participant to provide examples of ESR implementation. In addition, respondents were asked about internal catalyst factors as well as their key decision-making strategies. Within a given facility, employees at various levels are able to initiate small initiatives and enlist help to fulfill the prescribed practices. In some cases it may be the same person, while in others it may be two to three different people. It is important to understand the initiatives' genesis to discern the motivational hierarchy within a facility. Relationships with stakeholders and other key aspects of organizational strategy, structure, and operations were also explored. Interviews were recorded verbatim, transcribed, and then thematically coded by the researchers.

Data Analysis

To reveal the overarching themes, a provisional "start list" of codes was created from the theoretical framework, list of research questions, problem areas, and other information found in the literature (Miles and Huberman 1994). The start list included topics such as industry and government legislation, stakeholder pressures (i.e., internal and external), economic opportunities, ethical and moral motives, corporate value, organizational climate, social responsibility, marketing, and legitimation. Identifying these areas a priori assisted the researchers in moving the raw data from general to more specific themes.

The transcribed interviews were entered as data files into the NVivo 7 qualitative statistical package and analyzed separately by each researcher. Procedures for coding were also developed to improve intercoder reliability. In particular, two independent coders developed coding categories for the open-ended questions based on a review of the responses. The second step was to develop the coding categories and instructions. Based on the prior review of literature and the start list of categories, the responses could be sorted into coding categories to develop a smaller final set of categories for each theme. Coding instructions for the final set of categories were developed. Once the final coding instructions were developed, the responses were coded by two additional coders.

Categories were established by identifying general themes derived from the literature and additional themes (and subthemes) were identified as they emerged from the selectively coded data. Various motives of ESR were identified by each coder independently by sorting the informants' statements into thematic piles. The researchers then used cluster analyses on the "pile-sort" data to

identify subthemes shared across coders. Following this process, the researchers then met to review, confirm, and if necessary, revise the codes and categories to identify major and minor themes (i.e., categories and subcategories) to establish consistency.

During the initial round of coding, descriptive categories were developed (e.g., profits, doing the right thing, stakeholder pressures, obligations, etc.). After this initial round, all textual data were re-analyzed and more analytical categories were developed by summarizing the codes for each facility and discriminating attributes of ends, means, and decision points among the revealed motives. For example, one respondent stated several motivations for ESR: "... it was the right thing to do," "... it would set us apart from other facilities," or "... we are part of the community and have to take care it". When this was the case, the researchers went back to the literature to develop constructs that were supported conceptually. Thus, the categories of *Doing the Right Thing* and *Community Partners* were condensed into one *Ethical Motives* category. All remaining coding issues were discussed by the researchers with the primary author acting as the final arbiter in the coding process.

During the analysis, it was evident that both internal and external factors motivated the facility managers to adopt ESR practices. In addition, the motives underpinning ESR engagement were not simply tied to profit maximization as the traditional *Theory of the Firm* and much of the ESR literature suggests. Based on this observation, we reviewed the literature and adopted the more specific *Managerial Theory of the Firm* to explain the nuances of engaging in ESR among the facility managers. The contemporary *Managerial Theory of the Firm* suggests that the firm is controlled by its managers who do not simply aim to maximize profits. Although profits play an important role in this theory, the tie to fiduciary success is not the dominant motive. Rather, more attention is paid to organizational stakeholders and business-to-business clients. From the coding and subsequent theoretical review, five subcategories emerged as primary drivers of ESR that are tied to this theory: (1) internal stakeholder pressure, (2) organizational culture, (3) financial cost-benefit, (4) competitiveness, and (5) ethical motives (see Fig. 1).

Findings and Discussion

More than a decade ago, Berry and Rondinelli (1998, p. 38) suggested that "... progressive companies are shifting rapidly from a strategy of regulatory compliance to one of proactive environmental management". More recently, Marcus and Fremeth (2009, p. 17) noted that "... green management matters" because people now expect

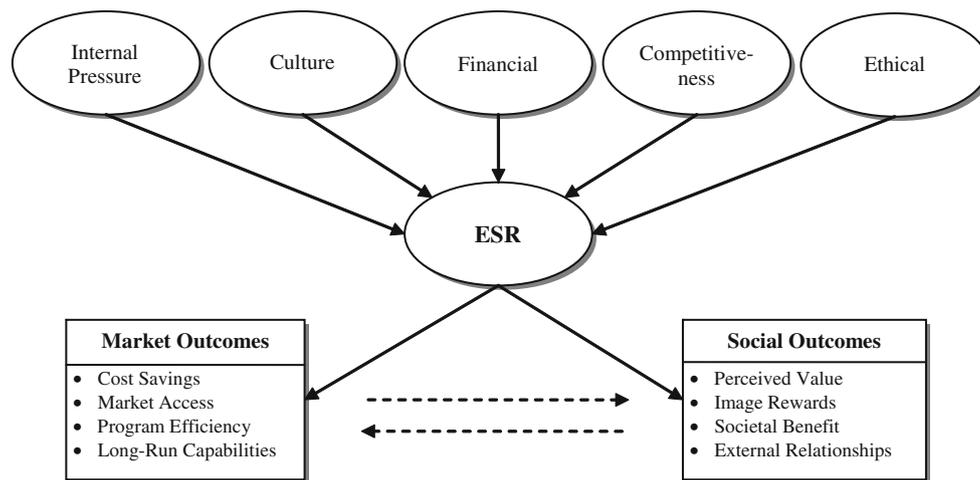


Fig. 1 Motives and perceived outcomes for ESR

corporate managers to use resources wisely and responsibly. The authors suggested that ESR is a value embraced by most competitive and successful multinational companies, beyond what is required by law. This shift in organizational thinking has not, however, been reflected in the academic literature. And while conceptual calls for environmental research on sport have been forwarded, little work has been published.

The extant literature points to a number of reasons why organizations are engaged in ESR. Examples include cost savings (Howes et al. 1997; Saha and Darnton 2005), legislation (Bansal and Roth 2000), competitive advantages (Bansal and Roth 2000; Howes et al. 1997), community responsibility (Howes et al. 1997), and external pressure (Chan and Wong 2006; Khanna and Anton 2002). While somewhat consistent with previous research, the current findings indicate that the motivations of facility manager's to support ESR are also slightly different. These differences are based on the complexities in this industry segment and the motives are mixed because of who the facility serves. The motives that emerged from the interviews are best understood as interactions among economics, social responsibility, and environmental concern, all of which improve our understanding of core concepts of ESR in the facility management context.

The traditional *Theory of the Firm* assumes the owners of the firm make input, output, and pricing decisions. However, in publicly limited organizations (e.g., sport and assembly facilities) the primary stakeholders in most cases are the owners who elect directors and employ managers. Accordingly, we follow the view of Bartlett and Ghoshal (1993) whereby our conceptualization of ESR is grounded in a different perspective than existing theories of the firm. This managerial theory reinforces program effectiveness inducing organizational members to take initiative,

cooperate, and learn (Bartlett and Ghoshal 1993). Based on the interview data, and the foregoing commentary, the *Managerial Theory of the Firm* is more attuned to the premises of the key facility actors that help to encompass policy and practice decisions they perceive as important, in contrast to the profit-maximization case of publicly traded firms.

Sport facilities are, at their core, social community structures. Although the activities within these structures may be largely motivated by economic ends, they nonetheless emerge through processes of interactions that are shaped by the social structure in which they reside (Bartlett and Ghoshal 1993). The *Managerial Theory of the Firm* helps to underpin the idea that social and economic outcomes were sought by management to: (1) reduce costs, (2) reinforce a positive image, (3) respond to pressures from consumers and other stakeholders, (4) appeal to clients and customers, and (5) create a sense of environmental culture. While various elements and sub-categories of these drivers have been suggested (e.g., Bansal and Roth 2000; Lynes and Dredge 2006), no work to date has captured them within the public assembly facility sector. Exemplary data supporting the motivations for ESR and indications of their pervasiveness in the interviews are provided in Table 2.

Internal Stakeholder Pressure

Organizational stakeholders are those who set goals and objectives, allocate resources and responsibilities, and gather the results to assess the outcomes. Deshpande and Webster (1989) suggested that managers embody the goals and ideas of the organization and play a critical role in shaping organizational values. The literature supports this assertion and has shown that stakeholder influences are

Table 2 Motivations for EMS

ESR motive	Exemplary quotes	Times mentioned
Stakeholder pressure	<p>It starts with our ownership. We feel like we have an obligation. We believe the planet is in trouble and believe we have an obligation as a corporate citizen and as human beings ... and when your ownership tasks you with that, you go out and find an answer</p> <p>The one that most people have to overcome is getting senior management to buy in. In the beginning, there were some, my CFO included, and he'll be the first one to tell you, and now he leads the program. He said, wait a minute, how much is this going to cost and what are we really getting out of it (all those critical questions that a CFO should ask)? When I talk to people from other organizations, that's the one item they have to overcome</p> <p>The owners and GM were ecstatic about it. Some of our staff have been here since the buildings opened and some the same people have been here literally forever ... so they've never had any life experience outside of here in terms of venues and what's happening and so it took upper management to force the change in the beginning</p> <p>It was a challenge from ownership to make a difference and it's great to see them say to us, "Hey, this was great stuff," you know, so it's that feeling of accomplishment, professionally, and that feeling of accomplishment personally</p>	<p>Sport: 4 CC: 2 PAC: 1</p>
Organizational culture	<p>Doing it together is the number one thing. This isn't something that we do to our workers, we do it with (and alongside) them. So we look for feedback from the boots on the ground folks, the people who are actually out in the field doing what we need them to do, giving us that feedback on what is working and what is not working</p> <p>You need a champion who's going to come in and provide the passion. Coming from the west, we were already involved in ESR for a number of years ... it was just part of the city's culture. It is basically infectious. In addition, we deal a lot with the city (on a day-to-day basis) so it just makes sense for us to be on par since we consider ourselves to be part of the whole</p> <p>I think the biggest one is changing people's behavior and perspective. I think that when we first got started, you know, with our program, a lot of people... I think there's a lot of people that didn't care or... that's not the right way to put it... weren't aware and I think that we've been very successful in changing awareness and behavior over the last two or three years and so I think that was probably one of the biggest obstacles, but it's working, people are becoming aware and changing their behaviors</p>	<p>Sport: 3 CC: 4 PAC: 3 E: 1</p>
Financial cost-benefit	<p>I think since 2003 (and I'll check this number right now while we're on the phone), we have had approximately 1.4 million dollars in energy savings. That usually gets my finance people in the audience to pick their heads up and listen</p> <p>Return on investment, is the number one motive. Simply, we're reducing our energy cost by doing green stuff. For example, changing out light fixtures and low flush fixtures seem simple but they are effective. Through these changes, we have seen very real changes in our utility costs. We just installed some VRDs [variable rate drives] on our air handling systems, so that's going to reduce our energy costs even further and we actually go a rebate from the utility company for doing this. I think the rebate was \$14,000 and it cost us \$10,000 to actually get it installed. So, that in itself is essentially paid for and we made money on top of it. So when thinking long-term, the return on investment, reduced utility costs, reduced costs of trash pickup going to the landfill all add up</p> <p>It's amazing and I think a lot of people have the idea that building green is expensive and it really isn't in the long-run. If you take the bottom-line approach and look at what your savings is over a period of years, it far exceeds the upfront cost.</p> <p>I mean everybody gets a utility bill so if you implement some practices and you monitor the utility bill, you can track your savings. You can work with the utility company to help you track the savings. You can look for credits from the utility bill from buying some new equipment that you will get a credit from the utility company or the federal government. It's like buying a new energy efficient refrigerator and as a result, we're saving about \$50,000 a month in utility bills just from that one control mechanism</p>	<p>Sport: 5 CC: 4 PAC: 2</p>

Table 2 continued

ESR motive	Exemplary quotes	Times mentioned
Competitiveness	<p>We see the environment from a business perspective. As I mentioned before, clients are sending out RFPs and when you're bidding on convention business or just business in general, it's become the norm that you see a checklist. It's essentially a point grading system in your proposal where you outline your recycling and ESR efforts. Granted, you may not be doing everything, but they weight it all in balance of how that's going to impact their group and the carbon footprint in your city. If you're not doing anything, you get points against you, so in that sense, that was a wakeup call</p> <p>We're losing business because we're not doing these things. When we don't win a particular bid, and when you speak to the organization, they tell you that you're not doing enough. This tells us that we need to get in the game and you only have to say that once for it to resonate</p> <p>Because most planners are our customers, they don't have a clue of what LEED certification is about. They don't care, because they're not educated about it, but they do care about recycling and the initiatives on the food and beverage side ... those are what they can see, they are tangible and can taste them, feel them, and touch them</p>	<p>Sport: 2 CC: 2 PAC: 2</p>
Ethical	<p>Just because it's the right thing ... it's also the way I grew up. I grew up in the city, and was always taught to recycle, to keep the doors closed, not to burn the lights when we're not using them so I looked at how we operated ... we started making these changes well before anyone told us we had to do them</p> <p>You're demonstrating social and corporate responsibility by keeping up with what the city's doing. It helps the local economy and it makes good business sense as well. So when you start looking at your community involvement, it makes for a big to-do and that's a huge selling point. For example, we have hybrid taxi cabs and also ped-icabs (guys riding around on bikes and towing people around) to stay in line with what the city is demanding</p> <p>It's a socially responsible thing to do. I think that there's a large circle of individuals in the organization that understand that sustainable practices is really a responsibility of everyone and, you know, at the executive management level, they identified this I think that's the motivation behind it is during the right thing</p>	<p>Sport: 6 CC: 5 PAC: 3 E: 1</p>

among the key stimuli for socially responsible engagement (Brammer and Millington 2004). This perspective also emphasizes the relationship between managerial decision-making and the pressures brought on by an organizations external environment. However, we find that ESR for the facility manager partially stems from internal motives in order for policies, procedures, and initiatives to be enacted.

... It starts with our ownership and management. We feel like we have an obligation. We believe the planet is in trouble and believe we have an obligation as a corporate citizen, and as human beings ... and when your ownership tasks you with that, you go out and find an answer [R5].

The interviewees also indicated that the facility's ownership and other members of the management team were the main catalysts in advancing ESR. As an example, some managers mentioned that ownership went beyond telling their staff to do something; rather, they actively supported specific initiatives they deemed important. As well, some respondents indicated that without "buy-in" from the ownership and other members of management, it would not be possible to create change. For example:

... I recall the ownership saying to the staff that we'd like you to sign up for wind energy that's provided by your utility provider. We found out it was going to be an extra \$4 a month for employees to sign up for that program ... ownership puts that money back into your check for participating. Now, it's only four bucks but I it's very symbolic. I think it says something from ownership to its workers that they believe in this and we want you to as well [R1].

From the quotes, it is apparent that internal influence plays a role in the adoption of ESR through management's commitment to the environment and championing for increasing environmentalism. Thus, the internal stakeholder was regarded as the primary enabler for ESR practice. This finding supports the *Managerial Theory of the Firm*—in that—the power primarily resides with management rather than external stakeholder groups. These findings run somewhat counter to arguments in the CSR literature, however, suggesting that external stakeholders tend to exert more pressure on the organization to advance positive social change (e.g., Munilla and Miles 2005; Roberts 2003; Van Marrewijk 2003).

Organizational Culture

Organizations typically have an established set of internal policies, values, and beliefs that create a sense of organizational culture. Culture is shaped through the principles and actions of organizational leaders, institutional pressures, and the interactions among organizational members (Alvesson 2002; Schein 1985). The theory of organizational culture asserts that a shared meaning system contributes to higher levels of effectiveness due (in part) to a greater understanding of what is valued within the organization (Deal and Kennedy 1999). It has also been suggested that the most successful organizations have involvement at all levels by creating congruence between organizational subsystems and the demands of the business environment (MacIntosh et al. 2010).

According to the interviewees, ESR success was tied to managerial influence, particularly when employees had an interest in the program. It is also evident that some ESR decisions had been the result of an “environmental champion” who applied internal pressure on senior management. Beyond management, environmental champions came from all levels of the organization illustrating that a pushing phenomenon for ESR appears to exist. This finding also shows that while ESR practices may not be at the forefront of a facility manager’s agenda, there are discussions among other member of the staff to implement green policies as part of the facility’s culture. Although moral and ethical questions arose from the interviews, the importance of conveying values to organizational stakeholders emerged above them. This means that awareness and knowledge of ESR could ultimately lead to desirable behavior and operations.

Support for ESR as a cultural phenomenon is further illustrated through the internalization of an environmental philosophy, a key aspect in implementing ESR. In particular, the interviewees indicated that the first step in creating congruence was the development of a “green team”. These teams typically consisted of at least one member of each department, and in doing so each department would be responsible for promoting, gathering, and disseminating ESR information to other stakeholders. Likewise, the respondents felt that the more connected the employees were to the cause, the more likely they would exchange and respond to environmental information.

... We have an internal green committee and they’ve given us the mission. This mission is the environment and they are always looking to the next idea that we can adopt. For example, solar panels or something as simple as the manner in which we collect our trash were seemingly simple but had a huge impact. We even drew a schematic of how each decision would potentially impact each department [R2].

Furthermore, if teams were not in place, there was an “organizational champion” that took the lead in establishing ESR policies. Several of the interviewees mentioned this was not a position created by management. Rather, it was the value of ESR witnessed by the staff, and the subsequent communication of this value, that either spawned the ESR practice or helped to initiate the environmental conversation. Wilson (2000) argued that visual aspects of the organization represent espoused values but not necessarily the underlying values and assumptions of employees. Further, Jennings and Zandbergen (1995) found that consensus within an organization regarding the establishment of an ecologically sustainable organization was attributed to the success of the environmental initiative. The interviews suggested that the championing effect was central to ESR. By starting with small but visual changes, the culture of the organization regarding the environment began to evolve.

... The first step was getting everybody to understand. When I first started, the staff thought I was crazy and didn’t understand why I was a real stickler about installing door sweeps and inquiring about fuel and gas. However, 17% later it’s all paying off. Being the one to start the process and educating people around you is the toughest part ... really getting people to understand and commit to the process is, however, rewarding [R4].

These quotes compliment the *Managerial Theory of the Firm* because the facility managers encouraged ideas and supported them. It is also apparent that the creation of an internal context for ESR encouraged employees to act in the same way they would as a member of a family or sport team (Bartlett and Ghoshal 1993). This managerial process favors collaborative behavior, and enables the manager to capitalize on the motivation to learn, discuss, and share ideas through an environment that allows the employees to also do so.

Financial Cost-Benefit

Many businesses have already realized the significant financial benefits from adopting ESR. Firm-level data collected by Russo and Fouts (1997) bolsters this assertion. The authors showed that firms with higher levels of environmental performance (i.e., success in reducing and minimizing environmental impacts; Klassen and McLaughlin 1996) were rewarded through superior financial performance. Examples of environmental performance consist of technology that allows for lower production and service costs and strengthens the financial benefits of environmental management (e.g., cost savings, reducing risks, financial

gain through private and public grants, tax incentives, etc.). In keeping with this institutional model for financial austerity, return on investment was not surprisingly a key factor in deciding to adopt ESR policies.

... The beauty of the ESR movement (in my opinion) is that capitalism has kicked in. Companies have now figured out a way to be both environmentally responsible and profitable. It's no longer a decision you have to make (i.e., do I want to be green or do I want to be profitable?). You can be both since the eventual return on investment is so great [R2].

The interviewees indicated that the ESR initiatives typically started with a cost savings outline. Once upper management understood the upfront costs and could see the long-term value, they were willing to fund new ESR initiatives. Some respondents also suggested that there is the general perception that environmental initiatives were expensive (i.e., upfront barriers suggested by Walker et al. 2008). However, after researching ESR the managers found that it was actually less expensive in the long-run, although the upfront costs were still not all that palpable. With new technology and more people demanding green products, the costs have actually come down substantially and are even competitive in some markets.

... A great example is the motion sensors we installed in our restrooms. Five years ago those were fairly expensive. But since the costs have come down, we have now retrofitted all of our buildings in the last two years because what we save offsets the cost. Those are the things that we're starting to see in the industry ... the actual products are starting to come down significantly in cost because more people are using them [R1].

Competitiveness

Another factor in supporting ESR was increased competitiveness. While not altogether surprising, this competitive push was tied more to image than strictly to profit maximization, adding further support for the *Managerial Theory of the Firm*. This motive points to the role of external pressure but at its core shows that certain image-related influences are one main way to view the outcomes of ESR. ESR research has suggested that one of the primary forces for environmental management is legislation (e.g., Berry and Rondinelli 1998; Cordano 1993; Lynes and Dredge 2006). However, the majority of respondents felt this area was less important to their ESR engagement than overall competitiveness. The interviewees indicated that while they understood the law, the majority of the compliance

was reserved for organizations that are environmentally *irresponsible* and have done little to advance their ESR policies. Since most regulatory changes are slow to evolve, none of the facilities were faced with expensive capital retrofits due to the proactive nature of their ESR programs. However, since our sample was drawn from the top performing environmental facilities, this finding was not altogether unexpected. Perhaps this aspect of the ESR engagement is more apparent among facilities that are not as responsible or proactive in their approach to ESR. This idea requires further examination and is an important avenue for future research.

Management scholars have argued that ESR is associated with a reduction in organizational competitiveness (Porter and Van der Linde 1995). Yet, the interviewees believed their facility's earning potential could be higher by appealing to clients and customers who demand a certain level of ESR. Empirical evidence has shown that customers are influenced by a company's "green" image (Chan et al. 2001), which does help sell their products. However, the facility's clients are slightly different and are not all fans or general consumers who attend the events, but rather business-to-business suppliers that provide goods, services, and rents to the facility. Therefore, the framework outlined by Ambec and Lanoie (2008) validates the interviewees' comments by suggesting that ESR can lead to increased revenues through increased market access, product differentiation, risk management, and reduced material and service costs.

The importance of competitiveness was further evidenced in the comments reflecting overall stakeholder awareness, dialog, differentiation from competitors, and image. In terms of the most salient environmental program characteristics, the interviewees expected ESR initiatives to result in a competitive advantage through a sustainable image. Hart (1995) asserted that ESR is a resource that can lead to a competitive advantage; not from cost saving but by attracting clients wanting to make a difference through their support of the environment. In addition, several interviewees indicated that many Requests for Proposals (RFP) to implement environmental initiatives have been distributed. Accordingly, ESR initiatives that sought increased competitiveness (e.g., energy and waste management, recycling programs, using "green" products, composting of food waste, and water management) were mentioned often.

... We're going to see more use of our building because we are adopting ESR. However, that's pretty hard to quantify because when somebody rents our facility, or a part of our facility, they may not necessarily say that it's because I noticed your environmental practices. They typically just focus on the

rental rates or the fact that your service came highly recommended. That said though, the ROI we're looking for is more use of our building due to the fact that we're adopting environmental policies [R5].

In addition, the ability to market (i.e., tout) their green programs was not viewed as a driver to engage in ESR. While the respondents agreed that "green marketing" might be necessary to inform the public to bolster their image, they did not want to be viewed as "greenwashers" and over-extrapolate their environmental practices, especially to groups that exert little influence on the facilities profitability (e.g., fans and sport spectators). Although the respondents indicated that ESR is now a major part of the RFP process, their organizations have yet to see the value of market segmentation with those businesses that base their decisions on environmental criteria. Previous literature has shown that the elaboration of environmental reports, sponsorship of environmental events, or the use of environmental cues in advertising have been an important motivator (e.g., Aragón-Correa 1998; Florida and Davison 2001).

The respondents generally believed that environmental management differentiated the facility's image rather than the superficial transformations easily perceived by consumers (Gonzalez-Benito and González-Benito 2005). An important caveat here is that the consumer is regarded as the current (or future) tenant of the building, rather than in the traditional sense of a fan or ticket holder. Since much of the public's perception of a facility is geared toward the event participant (e.g., the sport team), the facility tends to market itself to the tenant which then markets to the potential ticket buyer. This may be the reason facilities are spending a great deal of their marketing budgets focusing on potential tenants in specialized publications, which in turn would go virtually unnoticed by the general public. Instead, facilities leave the marketing of potential ticket buyers to the tenant (e.g., sport team, performer, etc.).

... We are trying to attract new clients through the financial benefits we saw. It's all well and good and the idea is out there that we should all be doing this for the greater good of the planet ... you can't argue with that. There are altruistic reasons to do this also, but for a business to do it you also have to find some of those dollar signs that are attached to it ... so that was probably the prime motivating factor. However, identifying ourselves as environmentally proactive and marketing this idea is important too. For example, the 'Travel Green' logo we use in our materials helps to make it known to all our new clients that we are part of this program ... so it helps in the marketing sense and that's what was kind of driving that decision [R13].

These sentiments were also discussed in terms of the perceived social and organizational costs that managers anticipated. Meaning, the costs to the community and also the culture of the organization for ESR ought to be highly considered. As mentioned, sport and public assembly facilities are social structures that can bring localized community markets together. Compared to global markets, risks for adopting new policies and practices are smaller with nearby markets, which by their very nature demand more of a focus on local conditions, local culture, and local policies. The challenge for the localized firm is that managers need to be cognizant of stakeholders' attitudes because societal level changes could impact the social trends that exist, or have the potential to exist in the future.

Business Ethics

Ethical motives stem from the concern that the business unit carries with it expected social obligations and values that contribute to society. As such, managers deploy responsible practices for these reasons rather than out of pure self-interest (Bansal and Roth 2000). In line with the *Managerial Theory of the Firm*, such organizations do not specifically focus on the bottom-line or return on investment but rather focus on how their decisions affect the organization and the community. Research on social consciousness has demonstrated that the process by which individuals reveal social preferences are subject to a rational process that is affected by experience, information, and opportunity (Laroche et al. 2001).

... I think that we understand the importance of being a good community partner and being a good community partner means being a good neighbor in every sense of the word. We think that being a good neighbor means being a sustainable and environmentally conscious business [R13].

All the facility managers mentioned (at least once) that helping the environment and society was the "right thing to do". This suggests that the notion of a "... concerned business citizen" is not a pre-existing category but is rendered meaningful in prevailing discourse articulated within the market and local community (Caruana and Crane 2008, p. 1499). One of the main reasons pushing managers to engage in ESR was their perceived level of self-involvement with the activity. For example, while sport and public assembly managers may possess a high level of personal social concern, they also consider the role of their organization in society and as a result, they felt that ESR should begin from this level.

... We look at what ways we can give back to the community and it's kind of funny, I had a school

group come through this summer and this one young lady asked me ‘is this [ESR] even important to you guys as a business?’ I responded by saying that there are a lot of young people in our community, such as yourself, that if we, as the older generation, don’t start doing things differently then you’re not going to have anything left. She was somewhat taken aback by that response but when you look at the scope of things that we do within our buildings as far as our events and the people that come to our events, it’s really amazing when people find out that your building is being operated green and built green [R15].

Implications and Conclusions

This article explored the factors influencing sport and public assembly facility managers to adopt certain ESR practices. The uniqueness and size of the sample limit the applicability of the findings, as does the purposeful selection of informants. These limitations should, however, be set against the contribution the study makes to the subject discipline and literature. In unearthing the dynamics involved in adopting ESR, the study addressed an under-explored area of CSR-related research, in terms of both issues and the context. The concept of ESR is making its way into the larger management literature, which has demonstrated that no longer should CSR be synonymous for all “responsible” initiatives undertaken by firms. Instead, contextual factors, based on organizational priorities and practices, should be the mechanisms by which these issues are examined. The fact that adopting ESR was not based on a decision taken at a single point of time, but rather a journey reflecting a series of informed choices made at varying levels within an organization, make the findings particularly salient. In addition, the processes are underpinned by the *Managerial Theory of the Firm*, which has seen scant use in the CSR literature. A number of CSR discussions have been grounded in the traditional *Theory of the Firm*. However, in this instance, we show that profits are an incomplete measure of performance when considering “responsible” initiatives. As such, adopting ESR was premised on knowledge and information sharing, rather than capital or scale as the key strategic resources for the sport and public assembly facility managers.

To the best of the authors’ knowledge, there has been no research on motivates to adopt ESR practices in sport and public assembly facilities. Although many of these facilities have developed formal and informal environmental systems and policies, others are still standing at the crossroads of making a decision. This study identified five factors that prompted the most “sustainable” facility

managers to adopt ESR. These factors indicate that adoption of ESR is determined more by internal rather than external forces. Gonzalez-Benito and González-Benito (2005) suggested that the implementation of an environmental policy should be clearly defined, structured, and specified. However, based on our findings, the most successful facilities developed their policies much more informally. Although many facilities may have adopted ESR with the intent to reduce costs, it is apparent that structure was needed in order to move past superficial and cost-saving initiatives. Also, creating a system for ESR allowed the facility to enhance the internal culture, which provided tools and instruments necessary for measuring goals and objectives. While a structured system allows a facility to monitor ESR, it does not necessarily enhance environmental performance. Rather this process creates a culture that reinforces the intended ESR outcomes.

An aspect of ensuring ESR success was the leadership at each facility. In each instance, the leadership projected both internal support for ESR (i.e., within the company) and external reporting practices (i.e., within the industry segment). In addition, it is clear that many of the environmental decisions were the result of environmental champions who pressured senior management. These champions also placed more emphasis on the ESR initiatives that affected daily operational decisions, which became part of the facility’s culture. The data also suggests that customers (i.e., tenants) were not wholly consistent in their requirements for environmental responsibility. Several of the interviewees noted no significant threats of losing an event due to their inability to meet certain environmental requirements. Instead, they were more concerned that attraction of future events would be hindered (e.g., acts that require certain ESR policies). To gain a competitive advantage over other facilities, managers should seek the most salient best practices because of the rising environmental demand among touring acts. Currently, the public facility industry is working to establish standards for best facility environmental practices due to the demand by consumers. In addition to acting as a guide, these standards could serve as a foundation to providing a certification system to increase the incentives for ESR, thereby adding value to the facility.

Given the minimal challenges of initiating ESR and the overwhelmingly positive sentiments that it is the right thing to do, managing judiciously an environmental policy is a critical aspect of environmentally responsible facilities to achieve the desired outcomes. Public assembly facility managers should strive to implement and maintain an education system for their employees and tenants to show how these groups play a part in the implementation and success of these initiatives. This simple act will seek to reinforce the environmental culture and increase competitiveness though greater understanding of the outcomes.

The findings lead to a number of recommendations for continued ESR research. First, future research should further explore each driver as well as other possible drivers (e.g., legislation, marketing, publicity, etc.) to gain a better understanding of the nuances between public assembly facilities (i.e., sport venues vs. convention centers). Second, since the 15 informants from the IAVM were all North American, comparing, for example, European and Asian facility managers would be an interesting follow-up to this work and add to the generalizability of the findings. Third, this study was further limited since we only queried the most sustainable public assembly facilities noted by the IAVM. It would, therefore be fruitful to examine facilities that are not currently participating in sustainable practices to understand the key determinant of adopting ESR. There is also a need to explore synergies between environmental motivations and the anchor tenants in order to gain a better understanding of how those relationships influence ESR policy-making. While external influences such as future events may have little impact, anchor tenants may assume a greater role when it comes to initiating environmental programs due to the publicity and notoriety they garner. Finally, while there have been shifts in consumer behavior regarding ESR practices, the overall pattern in the global economy is still far short of widespread sustainable marketing activity (Peattie and Crane 2005). Providing insights into management perceived “realities” should provide an understanding of the rationale for the green strategies that were pursued by facility management.

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