Strategic Environmental Sustainability Management: Highlighting the Need and Opportunities to Recognize Environmentally-Hidden Economic Sectors

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Abstract
Strategic environmental sustainability management is and can be practiced in a wide variety of economic sectors worldwide, but many such sectors have yet to be recognized for doing so. This paper identifies three global economic sectors --- the direct selling, sports, and military sectors --- as exhibiting “environmentally-hidden” profiles, and discusses reasons why that situation exists, why it deserves attention, and how it can be addressed. In addition, the paper forwards several suggestions that emanate from that analysis on how strategic environmental sustainability management can be upgraded to produce better environmentally sustainable results. Finally, implications are advanced for researchers to explore and for practitioners to encourage other “environmentally-hidden” economic sectors to upgrade their environmental profiles for more significant and urgently necessary societal greening.

Keywords: Environmental Sustainability, Innovation, Strategic Environmental Management, Environmentally-Hidden Economic Sectors

JEL Classifications: Q56, O31, P48, N50, M14, L1
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Introduction

For the past two decades, most economies around the world have increased their attention to environmental sustainability (defined here as the capacity for long-term biophysical quality of life). Business, government, and non-profit organizations operating in many environments, from local to global, have developed environmental sustainability policies and programs, and have implemented and upgraded these to achieve sustainability improvements, including in their energy, water, waste, and health impacts (Steffan 2011).

The organizations that have achieved the most attention from academics, practitioners, media, and members of the public have tended to be associated with a handful of economic sectors, especially those primarily operating in extraction (e.g. BP, Newmont, and Weyerhaeuser), chemicals (e.g. DuPont, Dow, and Occidental Petroleum), retail (e.g. Wal-Mart, Starbucks, and McDonalds), manufacturing (e.g. General Motors, General Electric, and Xerox), agriculture (e.g. Monsanto, John Deere, and Archer-Daniels) and electric and gas utilities (e.g. Pacific Gas & Electric, Florida Power & Light, and Commonwealth Edison). This environmental attention can be explained by several factors including scale, visibility, and criticality, among others (Miles 1987).

As crucial as these sectors are in participating in and highlighting the general trend in the “greening” of the world’s cultures (Worldwatch 2010), numerous other economic sectors either have been or could be contributing to progress toward this overall environmental sustainability ideal. Such sectors may garner significant attention in the cultures in which they are embedded, for reasons other than their greening efforts, so focusing on the latter may have beneficial impacts in the overall advancement of sustainability.

Three of these “greening” sectors are direct selling, sports, and military organizations. “Greening” is broadly used to refer to environmental strategy or values in government, business, economics, communities, education, religion and other areas of society (Worldwatch 2010). The use of “greening” (and other variants of that term) in this paper is meant to connote that perceptions, decisions, and/or actions are expressions of intended or actual environmental improvement, that is, those which tend to enhance rather than reduce the restorative capacity of natural and human biophysical systems. Individually and collectively, because of their cultural popularity, these sectors can play important, unique roles in advancing world cultures in environmentally sustainable directions.

This paper identifies the opportunities and challenges in the “greening” of these sectors by employing a strategic management framework first introduced in the context of organizational effectiveness several decades ago (Peters & Waterman 1982) and then “greened” to adapt it to the emerging phenomenon of organizational environmental effectiveness (Starik 1995). This model is one of many environmental management approaches that have been developed and applied to the world’s organizations in the past two decades. A number of these, such as ISO 14001, the Natural Step, and SCORE, as well as the Strategic Environmental Management (SEM/7S) framework advanced in this
paper could potentially contribute to the development and application of a new theory of sustainability management. This new theory posits that the more individuals, organizations, and societies cultivate biophysical and socio-economic long-term improvement values, perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors, the greater the likelihood that those entities will collectively contribute to more sustainable biophysical and socio-economic inputs, processes, and outputs (Starik 2010). Examples drawn from publicly available data are presented for each sector to illustrate the current state of strategic environmental sustainability management activity, followed by a discussion of the similarities and differences among these sectors, as well as between this sector set and those sectors that have received significant “greening” attention. The paper concludes with a set of macro-suggestions, limitations, and implications, including recommendations for future research on and practice in these and other environmentally-hidden sectors in the world’s cultures and economies.

The “Greening” of Environmentally-Hidden Economic Sectors

Organizations associated with extractive, chemical, retail, manufacturing, agriculture, and utility sectors have received significant attention in their need for, and in some cases, demonstration of environmental sustainability efforts, although, many other economic sectors deserve increased recognition for similar efforts. As the human world attempts to move toward better alignment of environmental and human systems these so-called “environmentally-hidden” sectors have made or can make valuable contributions to overall environmental sustainability goals. They may also be associated with unique features that could leverage their greening capacity, on the one hand, and with the resulting researcher and practitioner deliberation they might receive, leverage this capacity at least to the extent of more environmentally-associated sectors, on the other.

Few of the organizations and individuals who participate in these sectors have a reputation for advancing environmental sustainability throughout the subcultures in which they operate. In the direct selling economic sector, for instance, some of the best known companies, such as Mary Kay and Shaklee, are far better known for their sales techniques and products than for their orientation toward environmental sustainability. Similarly, the sports and military economic sectors in most societies are far better known for their competitive activities and outcomes than for their energy-, water-, and waste-saving efforts.

However, multiple benefits appear to flow from studying, encouraging, and promoting the greening of environmentally-hidden economic sectors. One major benefit is the interaction with individuals and organizations who are not often involved in or do not give frequent or substantive consideration of environmental activities, whether they are operating in these sectors as owners, managers, employees, contractors, customers, or suppliers in these sectors (Tilikidou & Delistavrou 2004). A second major advantage in paying attention to the greening of these environmentally-hidden sectors is that each has multiple, lengthy and numerous supply chains, so that the impact of the greening the sectors can be wide-reaching and culture-influencing compared to other sectors. A related third major positive feature of the greening of these environmentally-hidden sectors is that this phenomenon, because of the apparent popularity of these sectors, has the potential to prompt, even challenge, individuals and organizations in other economic sectors, whether environmentally-hidden or not, to also examine and perhaps upgrade
their own greening efforts. The embarrassment factor has often been identified as a potential motivator of human individual and organizational behavior, and, in this case, might take the form of “if Avon (or the Phillies, or the Air Force) is greening, why aren’t (or can’t) we?”, while a legacy (or imitation) motive of comparing an organization’s sustainability effort to the best it can be for the benefit of future generations is on the other end of the motive spectrum (Fox, Tost & Wade-Benzoni 2010).

**Highlighting the Greening of Environmentally-Hidden Economic Sectors Via the Strategic Environmental Management (SEM/7S) Approach**

Sustainability management scholars and practitioner-assessors have chronicled the greening of organizations since at least the late 1980s (Buchholz, Marcus & Post 1992) and have developed a wide range of models or frameworks that have been used to describe and evaluate these organizational greening efforts. This paper uses a framework that was initially designed and used by some well-known consultants in the early 1980s to highlight 7 features of what they saw as effective American business organizations, irrespective of their greening features. This framework, known as the McKinsey 7S “In Search of Excellence Model” was “greened” in the 1990s (Starik 1995), and termed Strategic Environmental Management (SEM), (see Table 1 for an alignment between the McKinsey 7S and SEM approaches). The 7S/SEM model shared a number of characteristics with other (integrated, internal/external) environmental management approaches. The 7S framework, though, has the likely advantage of being better known (and easier to recall, given the “S” mnemonic device employed) by business school alumni, many of whom may have never taken an environmental business course but may be involved in the greening activities of organizations, both in the environmentally-hidden sectors that are the subject of this paper, and in many others throughout the world’s economies.

The 7S model is quite simple, which is another of its advantages. It suggests that 7 organizational characteristics (the term for each which begins with the letter “s”) both need to be strong for organizations to be effective and need to be integrated with one another, so that, for instance, an organization’s “strategy” fits with its “structure”. These 7 traits are: super-ordinate goals (also known as shared values), strategies, structures, staff (potentially extended to “stakeholders”), skills, systems, and styles. In the “greened” SEM/7S model, as examples only, sustainability super-ordinate goals could include environmental motives, values, missions, goals, and objectives; sustainability strategies could include environmental patterns of decisions and actions, crisis management, and entrepreneurship; sustainability structures could include environmental positions, teams, and responsibilities; and sustainability skills could include environmental auditing, marketing, and cost-benefit analysis. Similarly, sustainability staff/stakeholders could include environmental managers, suppliers, and customers, systems could include environmental recruitment, product development, and recycling; and sustainability styles could include environmental culture, events, and awards.

The remainder of this section describes a number of green SEM/7S components (which are bolded) in each of three environmentally-hidden sectors.

**Direct selling.** First, the direct selling sector includes individuals and organizations, many operating worldwide, in several different industries, including
personal care products, home products, wellness, services, and clothing, among others, all of which have environmental sustainability-related, impacts related to energy, water, waste, and health, among others. In the U.S., about 200 companies comprise the Direct Selling Association, and in 2009, their estimated total revenues were more than $28 billion, with an estimated number of sales people just over 16 million. The distinguishing feature of direct selling sector firms is that they generally only market directly (face-to-face, often in the consumer’s home) to end-use customers, with no (or relatively few) wholesale or retail operations or contractors between themselves and consumers of their products (Direct Selling Association 2011). Avon, which is a leader in the personal care products segment of the direct selling sector, has recently launched a new environmental strategy that included a rainforest philanthropy program, called “Hello Green Tomorrow” (Prior 2010). This builds on its environmental management (ISO 14001) system certification, its packaging reduction strategy, and its use of a Task Force (staff/stakeholders) to implement these programs. The Shaklee organization has been active in all three direct selling sector segments, and has led their sector’s environmental sustainability effort for many years, including by winning environmental awards (style), formulating and implementing greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies, developing staff/stakeholder partnerships with environmental NGOs, and using 100% green power for its energy system (PR Newswire 2009).

Sports. The environmentally-hidden sports sector includes individuals and organizations who are involved in a wide variety of athletic activities, whether as players, fans, teams, leagues, or associations, at the recreational, amateur, scholastic, or professional levels, as well as those connected with sports-related facilities, products, or services. This sector has been estimated to involve more than $410 billion in annual sales in just the U.S. (Plunkett Research Ltd. 2010). Again, similar to direct selling sector entities, sports sector individuals and organizations can have environmental sustainability impacts related at least to energy, water, waste, and health. AEG, a sports and entertainment conglomerate that owns the L.A. Kings and L.A. Lakers sports teams recently announced a set of environmentally-oriented super-ordinate goals/shared values for 2020, including a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, a commitment to 15% electricity usage derived from renewable energy sources, and diversion of 25% of its solid waste stream from landfills through increased recycling system efforts (PR Newswire 2010). While the athletic footwear and sportswear company Nike is certainly not “hidden” from view as a consumer product organization, most consumers probably do not know that the company is quite advanced in its sustainability profile. Nike recently announced its Environmental Apparel Design Tool, which is an environmental software system that has allowed them, for example, to produce 100% recycled fabric football jerseys for the South Africa 2010 games from recycled plastic bottles (Business Wire 2010) and is making this tool available to the entire apparel industry. And, according to one researcher who conducted a survey of major American pro sports teams, over 80% plan to increase their emphasis in the next few years on implementing a strategy of developing environmental sustainability programs. Sixty percent of those pro sports team respondents indicated that they had formed “green teams” which highlight the staff/stakeholder excellence factor (ProGreen Sports 2009).

Professional sports have sometimes addressed environmental issues in a more fragmented manner. Major events, which one could characterize as a set of sub-systems
have undertaken individual initiatives addressing specific issues. For example, North America’s National Hockey League pledged a super-ordinate goal/shared value to make the 2011 Stanley Cup Final “water neutral”, by purchasing Water Restoration Certificates from the Bonneville Environmental Foundation (SustainableBusiness.com, 2011).

Recently, a multi-sport collaboration of staff/stakeholders formed in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States to help professional sports teams and their sponsors “reduce the environmental impact of professional sports and to inspire fans to join us in those efforts.” (Green Sports Alliance 2011). In promoting an environmental structure, the alliance brings together professional sports teams from six different leagues, along with sporting venue operators, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Portland State University Institute for Sustainable Solutions.

The Alliance’s Executive Director observed that, “the sports industry represents a vast opportunity to make meaningful strides towards environmental responsibility and sustainability”. The Alliance promotes actions to advance environmental systems by helping members to “reduce energy and carbon emissions, conserve water, increase recycling, and promote renewable energy and alternative transportation policies’ and to promote greening efforts in their leagues (NRDC 2011).

Military. Finally, many military establishments have begun the process of moving their large bases and operations toward environmental sustainability in numerous ways though their efforts are largely hidden from view except from those sustainability-oriented individuals and organizations who are directly involved. These establishments range from national armies, navies, and air forces, to coastal, foreign-based, and domestic militia entities in most of the world’s countries. In 2009, world military spending was estimated at more than $1.5 trillion, which was a 6% increase over the previous year (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2010). Regarding the U.S. military, the Office of Secretary of Defense indicates that it has incorporated environmental values into its structure, integrating environmental management planning and training staff/stakeholders on its military bases, and creating environmental management systems (Durant 2007). The U.S. National Guard (or domestic militia) has developed what it calls an “eMS” or “everyone Management System”, in which all personnel are expected to be involved in advancing environmental sustainability via continuous environmental planning, implementation, and evaluation of environmental aspects of operations, maintenance, logistics, and staff/stakeholders support (Breitenfeldt 2005). One study found that, while a number of environmental sustainability strategies could be considered for implementation at U.S. military bases to manage their solid waste challenges, the most sustainable solutions for their facilities were source reduction and recycling systems (Borglin, Shore, Worden & Jain 2010).

As can be seen from the previous several paragraphs, though these three generally popular economic sectors may not have the reputation for being actively involved in environmental sustainability policies, programs, and practices, that is, that they are essentially “environmentally-hidden”, many individuals and organizations within them are engaged in activities that can be identified and organized using the green SEM/7S framework.
Discussion and Suggestions

That at least some environmental management and cultural-ecosystems greening has occurred on the planet since the late 1980s is indisputable. The challenge for individuals, organizations, and societies is that human-induced destruction and deterioration of ecosystems is also occurring, often at a faster pace and on a more significant scale than restoration (Brown 2009). Everyday, Earth has more than 200,000 more human mouths to feed, bodies to clothe, and individual biophysical and other needs of many kinds to meet. As the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (UNEP 2005) found, most of the planet’s ecosystems are under severe stress, which, among other things, is prompting human individuals, organizations, and societies to step up their environmental sustainability management efforts and increase their probabilities for successful ecosystem outcomes (see EDF 2010, as just one of many sources which help make this point).

One of a multitude of ways that can address this civilization-threatening situation is to participate in or encourage participation in this global endeavor and to promote the resulting successes for potential customization and replication. As mentioned earlier, while a number of highly visible economic sectors have indeed moved in these directions, many less visible, even “environmentally-hidden” sectors around the world, even in 2011, have the opportunity to be engage more actively in this “global greening project”, either through changes to their operations, products, or services or to their stealthy approaches to communicating and/or promoting their respective successes. This paper identified just three such sectors, but many more operate in our planet’s economies on an on-going basis.

As its contribution to the overall discussion of strategic environmental sustainability management, this paper forwards four macro suggestions that could be cast in either proposition or resolution form. The first macro suggestion is: All human economic sectors need to continuously evaluate and upgrade (through on-going planning and implementation stages) their environmental sustainability profiles, including their policies, programs, practices, and performance. While the SEM/7S approach highlighted in this paper could be used by the world’s economic sectors, the use of any of a large number of other greening strategies are also possible (e.g. Hitchcock & Willard 2009; Dunphy, Griffiths & Benn 2007, Townsend 2006, Stead & Stead 2004).

For the economic sectors on which this paper focused, all of which contain organizations that have reduced their energy, water, waste, and harmful health impacts, the most significant and perhaps toughest environmental sustainability activity would likely be discouraging “overconsumption” of its goods and services (Assadourian 2010). Given that the human population increases by nearly 1.5 million individuals every single week, and that most of these new human beings will be born and live in developing countries, some of the largest of which have economies growing at very fast annual rates (Friedman 2008), discouraging overconsumption to prevent continued planetary deterioration and destruction may be the single most important environmental sustainability action they could plan and implement. This might especially be the case regarding one of the economic sectors highlighted in this paper, the world’s military sector (Clark 2008), given its role in environmental (including human) devastation resulting from the armed conflict aspects of their missions.

A second macro suggestion, following from the first, is: All human economic sectors need to learn from one another how to evaluate and upgrade their environmental
sustainability profiles, so that best policy/program/practice/performance profiles are transferred among them and are shared as widely as possible among human individuals, organizations, and societies. Both within and between human economic sectors, an ever-increasing amount of information is being produced about how individuals, organizations, and societies can advance in more environmentally sustainable directions. Through both formal institutions, such as sustainability programs in universities, colleges, high schools, and elementary schools, and through informal mechanisms such as the mass and social media and environmentally-oriented non-profit organizations, cultures have learned and will continue to learn how to plan, operate, and upgrade their activities in more sustainable directions. Individuals and organizations within economic sectors, such as those highlighted in this paper, can share sustainability information both within and beyond those sectors by using mechanisms such as industry-wide and professional associations. What appears to be needed is a scaling up (and out) of this sustainability information-sharing to broaden its reach and an intensification of effort to ensure this sustainability learning translates to sustainability action.

Assuming the first two suggestions are adopted by entities in all economic sectors, a third macro suggestion is: All human economic sectors need to actively publicize their environmental sustainability successes widely and frequently, including engaging their respective stakeholder networks. At least part of the reason that the sustainability activities identified in this paper are not more widely known by, and in extreme cases are “hidden” from, wider audiences is that publicizing these activities have not been seen to be directly connected to the goods and services produced by these sectors. The Washington Nationals major league baseball team, for instance, readily and visibly promotes its in-park recycling program, but other aspects of its green facility were at the time of this writing, not easily identifiable, either at the facility or on the organization’s website. Other features of these sectors’ outputs besides sustainability have been, of course, highlighted using these channels, and some of these features, such as fun, competition, and security, intuitively deserve such highlighting. But, given the environmental threats that human civilizations now appear to be facing, focusing more attention on a sector’s sustainability profile appears increasingly appropriate. While care needs to be taken not to exaggerate environmental claims, also known as “green-washing”, neither is it advisable to downplay sustainability efforts, approaches, and results, since “hidden” or “stealth” lessons necessarily restrict their utility, diffusion, and ongoing upgrade (Biloslavo & Trnavcevic 2009).

Finally, our fourth suggestion applies specifically to the three “environmentally-hidden” sectors discussed in this paper. As discussed previously, these three sectors have been important drivers of social change in the United States. A fourth macro suggestion is: Specific environmentally-hidden sectors need to recognize the importance of their ability to promote environmentally sustainable behaviors in the general public and begin to accept a visible leadership role in the world’s societies by ensuring their related efforts are genuine in nature, significant in scale, and enduring through time. These three sectors have exhibited numerous social change phenomena, so they also seem well-suited to adopting leadership positions in the environmental sustainability movement.

For instance, the sports sector (Dodson, 1954; Regalado, 2003) and the U.S. military (Butler and Wilson, 1978; Lawrence and Kane, 1995) have played a significant
role in bringing racial integration to U.S. society. Both sectors forced U.S. citizens to acknowledge the talent of African Americans who had been systematically excluded from full participation in both sectors.

The integration of U.S. Army units in World War II forced Caucasian and other soldiers to work side by side with their African American counterparts, and led many to return to civilian life with modified views of integration (Lawrence and Kane, 1995). The emergence of the Negro Leagues, followed by the integration of baseball’s minor leagues, and subsequently of baseball’s major leagues forced Americans to come to terms with the unmistakable talents of players who previously been excluded from opportunities (Knee, 2003). The integration of both the military and the professional sports leagues helped set the stage for the U.S. civil rights movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The direct sales industry has played a significant role in empowering women by providing opportunities for advancement and self-employment, when other sectors provided more limited opportunities. The California Perfume Association, a precursor to the modern Avon company, turned to women to help overcome the negative perceptions of male door-to-door salesmen. In the process the company created a new role for women and provided access to financial independence for women, decades before the start of the modern Women’s Movement (Manko, 1997 and 2001).

**Environmentally-hidden Sectors as Accelerators of Progress toward Sustainability**

Promotion of environmental sustainability in these three sectors may have much greater potential for promoting behavioral change in the general public than many of the resource intensive and more polluting sectors. All three sectors engage the general public, and create more direct experience of changing social norms than in many other industries.

Environmentally–hidden sectors are potentially both targets of sustainability oriented changes and important amplifiers of change. As Figure 1 illustrates, these sectors are subject to many of the same pressures that face more visible targets of environmental pressure such as resource extraction and manufacturing industries.

However, environmentally-hidden sectors may be important accelerators of change toward sustainability. Because these firms are in many instances more closely integrated with customers’ daily lives, they may make the steps toward sustainability more tangible and personal to customers than steps toward sustainability in other industries.

For example, a sports fan choosing to attend a major event, such as a playoff competition or championship event may choose to travel by public transportation in order to avoid major delays. That event may drive the customer to consider public transportation for other events, such as their daily commute, if their trial experience proves to be convenient and comfortable. Similarly, if the customer’s favorite team emphasizes water conservation or energy efficiency at a major event, customers may become aware of the opportunity to experience environmentally friendly practices with no loss of comfort or convenience.

Similarly, the direct sales sector relies on a variety of peer-to-peer social techniques, such as the well-known Tupperware parties, to accomplish their sales objectives (Patton, 2011; Duffy, 2005). Such events provide opportunities for peers to demonstrate the environmental advantages of particular products through social
interactions. Peer pressure to behave in an environmentally preferable manner in a group setting may produce more rapid progress toward sustainability than comparable purchasing decisions made in individual settings. For example, an individual choosing whether to purchase organic milk in a grocery store may be more influenced by price, than the same person may feel in a collective sales event when surrounded by friends and peers (Didier and Lucie, 2008).

As a result, environmentally-hidden sectors may accelerate progress toward sustainability by creating exposures to practices that reframe customer conceptions of environmentally friendly practices. Experiencing such practices as recycling or water conservation in a social setting may reframe customers’ beliefs about those practices in ways that no amount of social advertising could accomplish.

These pathways suggest that key environmentally-hidden sectors may provide important opportunities for accelerating progress toward sustainability because they focus social pressure on the desired behavior changes. This motivation stands in stark contrast to the conventional focus on more resource-intensive industries because of their greater potential environmental impact.

**Limitations and Implications for Researchers and Practitioners**

**Limitations**

This paper has highlighted a number of strategic environmental sustainability management aspects of three economic sectors better known for many other phenomena than their greening activities and outcomes. Due to space and information limitations, however, this paper does not provide an in-depth analysis of how these activities evolved, how they were integrated with one another within their respective organizations and sectors, nor how much of an impact, either direct or indirect, they may have had on our society’s sustainability condition and prospects. It has hopefully, however, served to highlight not only the need to focus attention on the general class of environmentally-hidden sectors, but has also contributed to the development of a new theory of sustainability management by illustrating the use of one model (SEM/7S) that includes major elements of that theory, such as multiple sustainability levels and systems elements.

**Implications for Researchers**

Therefore, following from these contributions and limitations, first, this paper’s implications for researchers include explaining more in-depth why these sectors and others have received little attention in the sustainability management literature and how individuals and organizations within them both have developed some environmental management capacity and the need to communicate and share these more widely. For example, local government operations, such as police, emergency, and recreation functions, have yet to receive any significant amount of attention in this literature, nor have perhaps thousands of otherwise highly visible private sector operations such as gymnasiums, home furnishings stores, consultancies/think-tanks, and performing arts operations, just to name a very few. Hundreds of light manufacturing, service, and information-based industries have still largely escaped consideration as producers (and, in some cases, “reducers”) of environmental impacts. One of the main rationales of this paper is to encourage researchers and others to consider a much wider range of human activities and economic sectors in examining the greening of our cultures. In addition,
when researchers do study these activities, they might probe more in-depth than does this paper into how this environmental activity evolved, what favorable or unfavorable conditions pre-existed the activity, and what events transpired over time, regarding necessary inputs, developing and operating processes, and resulting environmental and organizational outcomes. Such an analysis would provide a more complete picture of environmentally-hidden sector greening, with the potential for both those sectors and others learning from these efforts and outcomes to develop and implement their own environmentally-improved efforts.

Secondly, researchers who study the environmental sustainability management perceptions, decisions, actions, and outcomes of both sectors highlighted in this paper and other sectors could leverage the SEM/7S categories and examples in this paper and identify how they interact with one another, including whether these management effectiveness categories are integrated with one another and whether that integration can be identified as a success factor in their environmental sustainability outcomes.

Finally, researchers could also assess on a broader front whether the greening of these environmentally-hidden sectors is contributing collectively to the greening of one or more cultures, and, by implication, the long-term improvement of our natural environments. If these cultural and ecological assessments indicate positive results, researchers may want to explore how their lessons learned can be transmitted throughout our cultures effectively and efficiency, with all due urgency. If these assessments indicate little or no (or even negative) results, they may want to warn both those decision-makers in these sectors and in others that either qualitative, quantitative, or both types of changes in sector environmental management approaches should be considered as soon as possible, assuming, of course, that the researchers and those in the examined sectors are interested in supporting the greening of cultures and ecosystems. In this way, sustainability management researchers may be assisting not only in the development of a sustainability management theory but also in improving its practice.

**Implications for Practitioners**

The major set of implications in this paper for practicing managers (whether in business, government, or non-profit organizations) are that, if organizations in the environmentally-hidden sectors described here can be identified as promoting environmental sustainability, managers in these and other sectors can hopefully also identify opportunities for greening their own organizations. By using the SEM/7S approach, or something similar, all managers should be able to develop and recommend environmentally sustainable policy, program, and performance features that, if adopted and implemented effectively and efficiency (and with all due urgency), can make a non-negligible contribution to cultural and ecosystem greening.

**Summary and Conclusion**

This paper has identified several worldwide economic sectors that have not received significant attention in their respective environmental sustainability profiles. Called “environmentally-hidden sectors” in this paper, the direct selling, sports, and military economic sectors share the characteristics of being most visibly connected on widespread bases with other societal values besides environmental sustainability. Yet, they also share the trait of including a number of noteworthy organizations which have
developed, implemented, and upgraded efforts to address environmental sustainability in their respective sectors, cultures, and ecosystems with little promotion or recognition. In attempting to advance the field of sustainability management toward an integrated, useful theory, this paper used the SEM/7S organizational effectiveness approach, appropriately customized or “greened” for the purpose of identifying several key features of their environmental sustainability profiles. After three of these environmentally-hidden economic sector greening aspects were described, categorized, and discussed, a series of propositions, limitations, and implications were forwarded to encourage other individuals and organizations in these and other sectors, to help green their respective cultures and ecosystems.

The authors’ hope is that readers will identify other popular but environmentally-hidden economic sectors that have been or could be involved in cultural/ecosystem greening and give them all due attention, encouragement, and assistance to proceed as soon as possible to help humans evolve toward more environmentally sustainable societies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>McKinsey 7S “In Search of Excellence Model”</strong></th>
<th><strong>Descriptions of McKinsey 7S Components</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strategic Environmental Management (SEM) Alignment</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Super-ordinate Goals (also known as shared values)</td>
<td>Broad, long-term reasons why the organization exists (Starik &amp; Carroll 2007)</td>
<td>Environmental motives, values, missions, goals, and objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>A pattern of behavior over time that sets direction, focuses effort, defines the organization, and provides consistency (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand &amp; Lampel 1998)</td>
<td>Environmental patterns of decisions and actions, crisis management, and entrepreneurship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structures</td>
<td>Organizational or societal principles and rules that operate systems and processes, organizational frameworks, and physical structures (Giddens 1984)</td>
<td>Environmental positions, teams, and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff (potentially extended to “stakeholders”)</td>
<td>The people that comprise the organization</td>
<td>Environmental managers, suppliers, and customers</td>
</tr>
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<td>Skills</td>
<td>Technical, conceptual and relational capabilities</td>
<td>Environmental auditing, marketing, and cost-benefit analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems</td>
<td>Organizations consist of several interrelated subsystems, including (but not limited to) strategic, human, technological, structural, and managerial subsystems. (Morgan 1996)</td>
<td>Environmental recruitment, product development, and recycling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Styles</td>
<td>Leadership, commitment and culture</td>
<td>Environmental culture, events, and awards</td>
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</tbody>
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Figure 1. Conceptual Connections Between Environmentally-Hidden Sectors and Accelerated Progress Toward Sustainability
References


