Preface

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This set of reviews is the intended result of a Professional Development Workshop (PDW) held at the Academy of Management 2009 conference in Chicago, entitled, 'Future Research Paths for Green International Management Studies'. I organized the participants into four groups, representing areas of interest related to sustainability: Corporate Social Responsibility; NGOs, IGOs, Government and Sustainability in Developing Nations; Environmental Innovation and Talent; and Academic Theory. The first three subfields are phenomena-centered and the fourth group ties the broader field of sustainability together from a theoretical perspective. The latter group's purpose was to summarize the theories it found prevalent in the sustainability literature and make suggestions regarding which theory(ies) may be most promising for future sustainability research.

Prior to the conference meeting, participants who volunteered to be involved, based on their interests, chose for review three high-quality academic journal articles related to one of the subfields. The reviews were completed before the meeting so that all participants could read all the reviews. At the PDW meeting, the groups discussed what they found in common based on their reviews so that they could make summary recommendations as to where future research in their subfield should go. They were to first examine the current state of the literature, next, to find gaps in it, and following this, make future research recommendations. The overviews at the beginning of each section of reviews in this book were written after these discussions to capture them. They present some main ideas for area guidance.

The set-up of this PDW is instructive for other areas; the same framework and set-up, organizing many people to research the current state of a field may be replicated; other areas will need the same review and consolidated direction for future research. It's also a way for those who are interested in an area to bring themselves up to speed very quickly in a field; no previous knowledge is required, just a willingness to contribute some reviews. However, most of the participants in this PDW were dedicated experts. Another advantage is that this approach promotes an emerging field, precisely by getting a wide range of people together – from those who are already experts to those who are interested.

Why read the result of this group's work? While admittedly not covering everything, it is a large compendium summarizing and reviewing many excellent articles in the field. Broad themes are outlined, suggesting opportunities for future research and the critiques by the participant authors provide valuable insights. They also refer to other articles not reviewed, integrating literature that someone reading the reviews can refer to for further reading. It's a wonderful springboard for researchers who are searching for inspiration and a quick way to help decide which articles to read. Many of the participants are focused researchers in this area and have already conveniently narrowed down the choices. Also interesting to note is that the reviews combine the views of a very diverse international group of scholars. Additionally, it makes excellent PhD-level course material. Whether it's for a course in sustainability, a related area, or a demonstration of how to critique articles, scholars will find this helpful in guiding their students. Mentors may ask their PhD students to review articles listed in the book and then reflect on what the authors in this book have to say as a comparison and point of discussion – excellent review practice.

Also, practitioners who intend to be leaders in their field will refer to this book. Rather than struggling to read many academic articles without the requisite training, they can learn about the latest ideas and learn about the debates. Consultants may read it and be thought leaders, sharing the ideas with their client managers. Corporate leaders and top managers in firms who want to obtain the big strategic picture will also gain insight; a competitive advantage is gained when the firm is set on the right track.

Each subfield offers some interesting themes and research opportunities to ponder, currently existing in the research and for future work. The Corporate Social Responsibility group (CSR), facilitated by Oana Branzei and Patricia Vidal, tells us that there are four main themes it can use to identify gaps; it is a holistic approach to explaining how the field may move forward. It suggests that researchers may address gaps by experimenting with other theories and approaches such as institutional theory and the use of narratives. Qualitative research is a popular suggestion amongst the researcher participants, in general. Searching for ways to make CSR, as a substantive and not ceremonial change, part of the manager's normal repertoire is a practical concern; the researchers' direction reflects grounded views – they want to discover how we can align interests so as to make real change. Perhaps, refining CSR concepts so as to develop a common language that all parties can understand may help them to communicate clearly and align interests.

The main purpose of the subfield, NGOs, IGOs, Government and Sustainability in Developing Nations, is to examine how various international actors and governments influence and promote sustainable

practices by firms in developing nations. The group, facilitated by me, discussed the problem and opportunity of this being a multidisciplinary field including, but not limited to: political science, development, sustainability, strategy and organizations fields. This presents challenges for integration when, for example, definitions, such as that for sustainability, are not uniformly agreed upon. Also, dominant theories used in sustainability are the resource-based view and stakeholder theory, but given the level of analysis – international and related organizations – the researcher participants see an opportunity for testing and application of other theories such as institutional theory, as did the first group. Moreover, research has found it convenient to study the Triad nations whereas developing nations have not received much attention. Thus, this is an area ripe for future research.

The title of the third subfield, Environmental Innovation and Talent, is meant to group research relating to firms that adopt and develop environmental innovation; this must include the challenge of finding talented human resources to work on environmental innovation. The subfield group, facilitated by Claire Simmers, discovered many questions to ask and, as an example, wonders what drives firms to adopt environmental innovations. In addition to questions about firms and how they may attract/develop employees, the group recognized the environment – stakeholders – as an important influence on firm innovation. Theory development at the firm level is scarce and the group has identified a currently economic orientation to explanations for innovation in firms. Also, similar to the other subfields, definitions and measurement of seemingly the most basic of constructs – even environmental innovation – are deterring the field's inquiry. At the human resource level, more work has been undertaken, using leadership and core competence theories.

Finally, the mandate of the Academic Theory group, facilitated by Dan Caprar, was to examine all papers reviewed in order to prompt discussion about which theories are being used in the sustainability literature and to think about which theories make most sense to use in research going forward. Also, the area of sustainability may be one that is opportune for testing some theories more so than others. This is a big task and the expectation was that it would start a valuable discussion rather than come to solid conclusions. As we know, the field of organizational theory, the area from which most theories in use are derived, is multi-theoretical and while it has discussions about which theory should be of focus, no lasting conclusions have been or are expected to be reached. This group finds that most organizational theories are being used in sustainability studies; for example, a dominant theory is the resource-based view at the firm level, as was found by other groups. The group debated whether a new theory for the field is needed and did not come to a clear conclusion. However,

it valued the contradictions in sustainability theorizing as opportunities, not barriers.

The participants did a tremendous amount of work and had lively discussions to reach a higher understanding of and to make recommendations for useful future research in an exciting emerging field that is critical at this time in the world's history and will be for generations to come; we have to make permanent behavioral changes and our organizations – whether firms, governments, or international organizations – are places of great influence. I believe that all my colleagues in this endeavor will agree that change is a main motivation for coming together to examine this academic field that has such great potential to make an impact on a world clearly in trouble and in need of solutions – today.