

# **SELF-REGULATION OF CORPORATE REPUTATION TO DETER “GREEN- WASHING” IN SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE: A CASE STUDY**

Ian D Parkman, Loyola University Maryland, USA

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper describes the use of self-regulation to deter green-washing in the sustainable architecture context. While “sustainability” and “greenness” have emerged as powerful competitive forces in the architecture industry, no clear institutional standards allow legitimate firms to differentiate themselves from green-washing competitors. This creates a potential “tragedy of the commons” environment, where firms and other stakeholders have an interest in self-regulating the green marketing activities of peers to protect the industry’s shared reputation. Drawing on case study methodology we propose an analytic framework that describes the self-regulation of reputational incentives in the sustainable architecture context to deter green-washing based on four themes: (1) An organization’s ability to appear above commercial considerations, (2) An organization’s ability to frame their production methods as craft (3) An organization’s appropriate use of Corporate Visual Identity, and (4) The industry’s use of formal (e.g., awards and other recognition) and informal (e.g., peer acclaim and “street cred”[ibility]) classifications of in-/out-group membership. Theoretical, managerial, and societal implications and opportunities to generalize our framework are discussed.

References available upon request