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The Interplay of Conflicting and Complementing Institutional Logics in Sustainability Practices

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Abstract

The impact of institutional environments on sustainability is well documented in the international business literature. However, how multiple and occasionally conflicting institutional logics shape sustainability as it is practiced by individuals across countries remains undertheorized. Our study contributes to this line of research by examining how multiple institutional logics inform the comprehension of sustain- ability practices in two high-hazard organizations in the Republic of Serbia and Canada. In doing so, our findings explicate three multi-level mechanisms – pulling down (1st level), relating (2nd level), and aligning (2nd level) – through which individuals in these organizations across two countries construct a localized understanding of sustainability. In both countries, individuals *pull down* elements of the state and organizational logics to construct meso-level logics they use to comprehend sustain- ability practices, albeit differently. In Serbia, due to the conflict between the current state logic and dominant high-hazard organizational logic, individuals pull down elements of the high-hazard organizational logic and the enduring legacy state logic to construct a community logic and *align* sustainability practices with it. In Canada, the state logic complements the high-hazard organizational logic, resulting in individuals pulling down elements of both logics to construct the professional logic and *aligning* their practice with it. In both countries, due to the dominance of the high- hazard organizational logic, individuals *relate* their practices to the well-being of others. Based on our comparative case analysis, we create a general model and a country-specific model depicting how individuals embed multiple institutional logics into their sustainability practices.

Keywords Cross-country comparison · High-hazard organization · Institutional logics · Qualitative · Sustainability

1 Introduction

The international business literature has recognized the important role institutions play in cross-country variation of sustainability practices (Aragon-Correa et al., 2020; Doh & Guay, 2006; Fransen, 2013; Marano & Kostova, 2016). For example, Ioannou and Serafeim (2012) highlighted that variation in national-level institutions significantly impacts an organization's sustainability performance, while Tashman and et al., (2019) found that more developed host countries impose greater pressures on organizations to adopt sustainability practices. This line of research views institutions as higher-order structures (Zilber, 2016) that drive isomorphism among organizations (i.e., organizations within a particular institutional environment adopt similar sustainability practices, Martínez-Ferrero & García-Sánchez, 2017) or investigates how organizations decouple from these pressures (i.e., organizations engage in sustainability ceremoniously (Bromley & Powell, 2012).

In relying on a neoinstitutional lens (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977), the current literature tends to overemphasize firms' choices and related practices while underestimating the significance of the institutions them- selves as well as how they shape sustainability practices at the individual level. This is an important omission as the institutional logics literature suggests that institutional environments consist of multiple, complex, only sometimes complementary, often conflicting, and sticky logics (Durand & Thornton, 2018; Reay & Hinings, 2005; Thornton, 2002), requiring individuals to navigate them through hybridization (Jay, 2013), segmenting, bridging, and demarcating (Smets et al., 2015); and resisting (Reay & Hinings, 2005) among others. Despite this insight, how these multiple complex institutional logics distinctly shape individual sustainability practices across countries remains undertheorized (Fransen, 2013; Silva & Figueiredo, 2017).

Our study aims to address this gap by developing a multilevel model that illustrates how institutional logics distinctly shape sustainability practices at the individual level. To do so, we conducted a comparative case study of two energy producers (high-hazard organizations) in two national contexts: a developed economy (Canada) and an economy in transition (The Republic of Serbia, Serbia). We specifically focused on energy producers for two reasons. First, energy producers are high-hazard

organizations due to both their dependence on natural resources for operations (i.e., hydrocarbons/freshwater) as well as their potential to create hazardous events in surrounding communities (Demers & Gond, 2020; Leveson et al., 2009; Milosevic et al., 2018). Given this, sustainability concerns are highly visible in this context, allowing a more nuanced understanding of how sustainability is practiced (Demers & Gond, 2020; Frynas, 2010). Second, by exploring our research question in two energy producers in two countries with a similar focus on sustainability but differing cultural contexts, we were positioned to uncover the interplay of multiple logics and how that interplay distinctly shapes sustainability practices at the individual level.

In doing so, we offer two main contributions. First, our findings contribute to the international business literature by illustrating how (and when) logics complement and conflict and, as a result, how individuals comprehend sustain- ability practices. We empirically demonstrate that individuals disaggregate elements of multiple logics (Lounsbury et al., 2021; McPherson & Sauder, 2013), pulling down some elements while discarding others to construct meso-level logics relevant to their sustainability practices. We also illustrate how this process differs across countries. In doing so, our findings also point to the "stickiness" of logics (Kroezen & Heugens, 2019; Waeger & Weber, 2019), where the relevance of the logic endures long after it has been replaced. This elicits suspicion of the current institutional environment, and individuals construct alternative logics to reconcile experienced conflicts among logics.

Second, in venturing deeper into this process, our findings contribute to the sustainability literature by illustrating how sustainability operates inside the organization (Hengst et al., 2020; Silva & Figueiredo, 2017). We show that individuals embed different elements of institutional logics within sustainability practices, rendering them comprehendible (Martin, 2011) via two mechanisms: aligning and relating. Aligning entails comprehending sustainability practices through congruence between sustainability meanings and meanings imposed through relevant institutional logics – the community logic in Serbia and the professional logic in Canada. Relating entails embedding the elements of high-hazard organizational logics into sustainability practices, thus comprehending them as appropriate to lessen the impact of potential hazards. In doing so, our findings provide insight into how sustainability is practiced at

the individual level in the face of imminent hazards. The result of our work is a general model and a country-specific model depicting how individuals embed multiple institutional logics into their sustainability practices. We discuss the relevant theoretical background next.

2 Theoretical Background

Sustainability in organizations has become an increasingly important global concern receiving attention within management studies (Ferraro et al., 2015; Reinecke et al., 2012), international business (Kolk & Van Tulder, 2010; Strike et al., 2006), and business ethics (Kok et al., 2019; Van Marrewijk & Werre, 2003), among other disciplines. Given its diffuse nature across multiple fields of inquiry, sustainability has numerous definitions, but all are oriented toward organizations attending inter-dependently to financial, social, and environmental objectives (Kok et al., 2019). Indeed, Valente (2012, p. 568) calls for "the integrity of multiple social and eco- logical systems [as] embedded equitably and interdependently," and Montiel (2008, p. 259) suggests that "the economic, social, and environmental pillars are interconnected." To this end, the literature has focused on the drivers of sustainability or why organizations engage in sustainable practices (Ioannou & Serafeim, 2012; Tashman et al., 2019).

Relevant to this study, scholars have pointed to the important impact of the institutional environment on organizations' sustainability practices either by driving isomorphism among organizations within the same country (Ioannou & Serafeim, 2012; Matten & Moon, 2008; Tashman, 2021) or facilitating decoupling processes (Bromley & Powell, 2012; Fransen, 2013; Hengst et al., 2020). For example, Ioannou and Serafeim (2012) find that institutional variation in a country's political, cultural, labor and education systems impacts an organization's sustainability practices. Conversely, studies have suggested that organizations decouple from these pressures, resulting in variations in sustainability practices (Haack & Schoeneborn, 2015). Decoupling occurs when the organization embraces sustainability to gain legitimacy from stakeholders but does so in largely symbolic ways, separate from their dominant strategic pursuits (Bromley & Powell, 2012; Crilly et al., 2016). Despite these insights, how multiple institutional prescriptions inform the comprehension of sustainability practices at the individual level

across contexts remains undertheorized. This is highly important for the continuous advancement of sustainability objectives because, as Silva and Figueiredo (2017, p. 1–2) point out, “sustainability relies on the practice of the agents in daily life, in the regular course of operations” rather than on structures imposed by organizations and governments.

To understand how different institutions shape sustainability practices at the individual level, we borrow from institutional logics literature which has provided important insight into how field-level processes shape individual-level actions (Durand & Thornton, 2018; Friedland & Alford, 1991; Lounsbury et al., 2021; Thornton et al, 2012). This perspective provides a framework for analyzing “the interrelationships among individuals, organizations, and institutions in social systems” (Durand & Thornton, 2018, p. 632) and thus is an appropriate lens to examine how multiple logics, and in particular, changes in logics and their interconnections, shape sustainability practices as observed in our study. We discuss this next.

Institutional logics form the underlying, taken-for-granted assumptions that actors within a particular institutional context share and, in doing so, provide templates individuals use to organize their activities and interpret material and symbolic cues for appropriate behaviors (Kyratsis et al., 2017; Lounsbury et al., 2021; Thornton et al., 2012). More specifically, they define “the appropriateness of organizational practices in given settings” (Greenwood et al., 2010, p. 522), which enables individuals to alter the boundaries and requirements of their practices by connecting them to relevant logics (Abdelnour et al., 2017). In this way, institutional logics may provide needed guidelines to individuals on how to perform their work in a way that enhances its positive social and environmental impacts (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Central to this argument is that logics may enable agency in individual actions by not just rendering them “intelligible and appropriate” but also by clearly fitting them “into sequences of action that make sense in the context of performing a given set of practices” (Lounsbury et al., 2021, p. 270). More specifically, each institutional logic embodies principles that provide individuals with the necessary vocabularies to elaborate on and use to their advantage (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Kyrat- sis et al., 2017; Steele, 2021; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). For example, studies have illustrated

how individuals engage elements of professional logics to make sense of their work (Marquis & Lounsbury, 2007) and drive change when incompatibilities emerge between logics and their work practices (Kyratsis et al., 2017). In this view, rather than a static element of institutional environments, logics are continually accomplished through interactions, impacting and being impacted by individual practices (Steele, 2021).

However, studies have also recognized that multiple logics give rise to multiple schemas, not all of which are aligned, creating space for individuals to differentially "pull down" elements of institutional structures in their sustainability practices (Kyratsis et al., 2017; Lounsbury et al., 2021; Thornton et al., 2012). Individuals adjust their behaviors in response to different logics – confirming, adjusting, or deviating from them (Durand & Thornton, 2018; Thornton et al., 2012). For example, Kok et al. (2019) illustrate how the conflict between cultural norms and institutional logics creates space for the emergence of differential sustainability practices, further amplifying the schism between the two. Lee & Lounsbury (2015) consider how the community logic amplifies or dampens the influence of the state and market logics on organizational waste transmissions. Further, Marano & Kostova (2016) find that the national context shapes institutional logics with more relevance and salience relative to other contexts, creating differences in the adoption of sustainability practices across borders.

Despite these insights, how individuals pull down elements of multiple logics to comprehend sustainability practices remain underexplored. Indeed, Durand & Thornton (2018) call for future studies to consider whether and how individuals and organizations follow or reject institutional logics. Lounsbury et al. (2021) emphasize the need to understand the interplay of the logics and how that interplay shapes action. We aim to contribute to this call by examining how the interplay of state, market, and organizational logics inform the comprehension of sustainability practices differently across two national contexts: Serbia and Canada. We present our research context next.

3 Research Context

In this study, we employ a comparative case study methodology to explore

sustainability practices while remaining sensitive to the contextual contingencies in which this occurs (Creswell, 2012; Welch et al., 2011). The case study methodology is appropriate for exploring a question that is bounded in the context where the context informs the nuances of the exploration (Creswell et al., 2007). In this way, case study methodology enables us to consider how multiple levels (individual, organizational/meso, and national/macro) interweave to shape the central phenomenon of interest. The case study methodology also provides space for abductive theorizing, enabling us to make sense of surprising and unusual insights from the data in a theoretically relevant manner (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013; Welch et al., 2011). We situate the study in the relevant context below and discuss how we circulated between theory and data in our data analysis section.

3.1 Macro Level Institutional Context: The National Contexts of Serbia and Canada

We conducted our comparative case study of two high-hazard organizations in Serbia and Canada because their cultural and historical contexts contain some common elements but are also unique, thus providing nuanced insight into how the interplay between institutional logics informs the comprehension of sustainability practices at the individual level. In both contexts, the governments have mandated high corporate environmental and social sustainability levels. This manifests through a renewed focus on environmental impact in Canada (Ostroff, 2015; Zietsma et al., 2018) and revisions to environmental guidelines in Serbia in preparation for the E.U. accession that began in 2014 (Filipovic & Mackedon, 2021; European Commission, 2019; Ministry of European Integration report, 2018; see also Table 1 for a sampling of relevant regulations for each country). However, economic stability and employment security differences provide a unique context for understanding the nature of sustainability practices and how different logics across the two countries inform the comprehension of sustainability practices. We present brief information about two countries relevant for contextualizing our findings next and more extensively in Table 1.

Serbia. Following the slow collapse of communist Yugoslavia, Serbia embraced a socialist state logic rooted in a centralized, bureaucratic system with limited, if any, private ownership and continued dominance of large state-owned enterprises (SOEs) (Ramet, 2002). Ongoing economic decline fueled by the first arms embargo and

subsequent full economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia by the National Security Council resulted in the emergence of a gray economy that weakened legitimate entrepreneurial attempts (Andreas, 2005; Scharf & Dorosin, 1993). In this context, SOEs were the only option for secure employment – a sentiment that persists today (see Table 1 for additional information).

Given this, the economic transition in Serbia away from communism did not fully commence until 2000 and, even then, was frail, fueled by the impact of civil unrest. Although the transition created some opportunities for legitimate entrepreneurial endeavors, the new market logic entailed a fundamental shift that was difficult for many SOEs to navigate. Once a pinnacle of secure employment, SOEs struggled with decreasing resources, new market-oriented mandates, and work decentralization, leading to growing mistrust of the state. At the same time, these organizations remained a driving force in their communities economic and environmental health – a fact that shapes our participants' understanding of sustainability. Indeed, the high unemployment and the poor eco- nomic situation in Serbia created a feeling of being an "oasis in the desert" for SOEs – a place that "everyone wants to work [for]." Consequently, our participants described the pressure to create positive environmental and social impacts, albeit embedded within a multiplicity of current and legacy logics.

Canada. Unlike Serbia, Canada's economy is one of stability and growth. Canada's GDP steadily increased over the time of our study from 1.4 to 2.2 billion Canadian Dollars (2014–2018) (Global Affairs Canada, 2019). The energy industry continues to be one of the most important sectors of the Canadian economy, representing nearly 8.0% of the nation's GDP in 2018 (Global Affairs Canada, 2019). Because of the importance of this sector, and like that of Serbia, the government and public focus continue to be on reducing environmental impact. This environmental focus was evident in our participants' descriptions of sustainability as something that is simply "built-in" (see Table 1 for additional information): "Working in the United States in the gold mining industry, I felt like it was a lot different than what is happening in [Canada], and I think our regulations are a little bit stricter, so [companies] kind of have to be a little bit more socially responsible." [Engineer, Canada] Canada's focus on the environment can be traced to its historical dependence on land and natural resources

and the evolution of the “Duty to Consult” doctrine.[1] Although the Duty to Consult was initially an economic policy, it transformed over time into a cultural norm that permeated how organizations (and individuals therein) approached their daily work. In other words, the Duty to Consult created space between organizations and First Nations communities to open dialogue about using and conserving Canada’s land and natural resources. This

[1] The Duty to Consult is a federal regulation enacted by the Government of Canada to in which entities (government, business, education, etc.) are required to seek input from First Nations regarding the creation and implementation of both private and public policies, programs, and legislative and commercial initiatives. Official documentation provided here: https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1307644732392/ 1307644769769.

triggered a change in how energy producers do business and ultimately altered the dominant cultural norms (Joyce & Thomson, 2000). Like the evolution in the Serbian context discussed above, this renewed approach to environmental concerns profoundly impacted how individuals understand and practice sustainability.

3.2 Meso Level Organizational Context: The Nature of High-Hazard

Sustainable business has become an increasingly global concern, and no more so than for high-hazard organizations, such as energy producers and chemical plants, that have the potential to generate hazardous consequences for a multitude of stakeholders (Carroll et al., 2002; Milosevic et al., 2018; Perrow, 1984). Hazards in these organizations stem from unplanned, unexpected, not immediately comprehensible, and tightly coupled interactions between people, machines, and the environment. When unintended events such as an equipment malfunction or a gas leak emerge under these conditions, they may easily escalate into sizeable environmental and social hazards (Leveson et al., 2009; Milosevic et al., 2018). As such, day-to-day practices and their impacts on the environment and society are inseparable, making sustainability an ongoing and immanent concern (Demers & Gond, 2020; Valente, 2012; Whiteman & Cooper, 2000).

Given this insightful context, we chose two high-hazard organizations with strong records of sustainable performance and commitments to sustainability for our research:

an oil and gas company in Canada and a hydroelectric energy producer in Serbia (see Table 2 for additional information). These are appropriate contexts for our research because, in addition to everyday practices common to most organizations, workers in these contexts also face the possibility that their practices may trigger or escalate socially or environmentally hazardous events (Milosevic et al., 2018; Weick & Roberts, 1993). For example, accidents such as fire, explosion (e.g., of pressure vessels), electrocution, flood, toxic chemicals leak (e.g., sulfur hexafluoride, hydrogen sulfide), and hazardous products (e.g., asbestos) are hazardous impacts that can occur as a result of activities in hydroelectric energy producers and drilling leaks, explosions, and oils spill are hazardous impacts that can occur as a result of activities in oil and gas organizations (US Department of Energy, 2022). However, what made the chosen organizations particularly interesting for further study is the juxtaposition of these hazards with their commitments to and records of sustainability, making the sustainability practices particularly salient (see Table 2).

In addition, the embeddedness of both organizations within the natural environment further enhances the potential hazards and heightens our participants' com- prehension of how their work practices impact their surroundings. In this view, sustainability practices are a tool these individuals use to connect to others, making sense of and minimizing the probable hazards of their organizations. The embedded- ness was particularly impactful in Serbia where the plants are physically built into the mountains surrounding the lakes (see Photograph 1 for a visual depiction of the environmental embeddedness). This physical embeddedness and dependence on the environment for the organization's operations shape how our participants comprehend sustainability practices.

Table 1 The National Contexts of Serbia and Canada

Key dates	Events/Descriptions
Key events relevant to the contextualization of the findings in Serbia[a]	
1980–1990	Beginning of the slow collapse of Communist Yugoslavia (Estrin, 1991; Ramet, 2019) Emergence of opportunities for conflict and an unclear national identity spurred by cultural, religious, and historical differences (Kesic, 2019; Ramet, 2002)
October 18, 1990	NIE Report on the imminent collapse published: "Yugoslavia will cease to function as a federal state within a year and will probably dissolve within two. Economic reform will not stave off the breakup… The violence will be intractable and bitter. There is little the United States and its European allies can do to preserve Yugoslav unity" (National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) 15–90, p. 656)
1990–2000	Accelerated collapse and emergent crisis due to conflict and economic sanctions Sweeping economic sanctions resulted in vicious illegitimate actions as the government struggled to obtain the necessary resources that endured long after the sanctions were abolished (Andreas, 2005)
Early 2000	Slow transition from communism and socialism to democracy and open markets begins Difficult period that preceded it made the transition significantly slower and more painful relative to countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Estrin, 1991; Ramet, 2019) Serbia faces challenges associated with growing unemployment, economic uncertainty, and outdated environmental regulations (European Commission, 2019)
2008–2014	Painful transition accelerates with limited wide-reaching gains Increasing privatization and the emergence of the market logic trigger widespread changes to employment and business ownership (Table 6; Zdravković et al., 2010) The 2008/2009 global economic crisis commences delaying transition gains, further increasing unemployment, and slowing growth (Bartlett & Prica, 2012; Hood et al., 2011) Gross domestic product (GDP) growth remains volatile, occasionally recording negative values with unemployment remaining in double digits from the beginning of the transition (World Economic Situation & Prospects, 2020)
2014–2018	Economic and political reform commences to prepare for EU integration. Key steps are taken to align sustainability policies with that of the EU. In particular Provision 9 of Article 97 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia ensures: "sustainable development; the system of protection and advancement of the environment; protection and advancement of flora and fauna; production, trade, and transport of weapons, poisonous, flammable, explosive, radioactive and other hazardous materials" while remaining committed to "balanced and tenable regional [economic] development" (Article 94) (Serbian Constitution). And the enactment of regulation No: 021-14201/2015, adopting the Open Government Joint Declaration for the Implementation of Agenda for Sustainable Development until 2030, as of 30 December 2015 (Ministry of European Integration report)

Table 1 (continued)

Key dates	Events/Descriptions
Key events relevant to contextualization of the findings in Canada	
1763	Royal Proclamation of 1763 articulated the need to protect First Nations' land and restrict European settlement and land use (Flanagan, et al., 2010; Fraser & Viswanathan, 2013). This proclamation attempted to consider the property rights of Canada's First Nations and the role of government in protecting these rights This proclamation invited negotiations to determine the land use and the boundaries of that use to protect First Nations' rights. Despite this, the negotiation process was problematic, and the rights continued to be violated (Fraser & Viswanathan, 2013)
1982	The Sect. 35 of the Constitution Act Formation The Act stated that First Nations' rights could not be violated (Coyle, 2005). In the seminal cases of R. v. Sparrow, R v. Van der Peet, and R. v. Gladstone R. v. Sparrow, the first Supreme Court of Canada determined that the Crown was legally accountable to First Nations and is limited in its exercise of legislative power (Coyle, 2005; Fraser & Viswanathan, 2013; Rowinski, 2009)
2002–2005	Duty to Consult federal regulation requires all organizations that propose to use land resources (water, oil, gas, timber, etc.) to consult with and obtain approval from the First Nations communities. The Duty to Consult embodies the collective environmental values enforced through an economic policy. Central to these values was recognizing the environmental resources (i.e., land, water) as the principal concern in stakeholder-firm relations. Although the Duty to Consult was initially an economic policy, it transformed over time into a cultural norm that permeated the way organizations (and individuals therein) approached their daily work practices associated with the use of land resources and engagement with First Nations communities
2010–2016	Government and public focus continue to be on reducing environmental impact. During his political campaign, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated that the economy and the environment are inseparable. Upon election, Trudeau appointed Ms. Catherine McKenna as the lead of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (Ostroff, 2015) to further advance the country's focus on the environment During this time, the Environmental Enforcement Act was passed to strengthen and find synergies among enforcement around nine critical areas of sustainability The Government of Canada and local First Nations communities partnered to create and deploy the Oil Sands Monitoring Program to assess the effects of oil sands development activities on Canada's natural environment Canada is one of 196 Parties to adopt the Paris Agreement

[a]Data collection occurred between 2014 and 2018

Table 2 The Juxtaposition of Sustainability and Hazard in Two Organizations and Institutional Contexts

Theoretical sources of hazard observed in the two cases	Description of hazard as manifested across the two cases	Example from the data
Tightly coupled interactions with probability for sudden disruptions (see also: Carroll et al., 2002; Gephart, 2004; Perrow, 1984)	Daily operations involving complex, tightly coupled machinery and technology require considerable knowledge, attention, and careful handling. Multiple components exist and interact, where failure in one component may trigger a series of small events, individually unnoticeable but collectively capable of producing considerable environmental hazards	Observation recording in Serbia: "The power and complexity of machines participants interact with daily is considerable. Even from a safe distance, danger lurks in how machines interact." Participant in Canada: "Older pieces of equipment would have required you to enter a vessel and do manual inspections, and going into a vessel is a confined space where there is potentially limited oxygen, or there could be other hazards. Going into a confined space is really, in my mind, a high-risk event or could be a high-risk event."
Environmental embeddedness/dependence (see also: Milosevic et al., 2018; Whiteman & Cooper, 2000)	When unintended events emerge – such as a plant malfunction or a gas leak – they may quickly escalate into sizeable environmental and social hazards due to the physical proximity/embeddedness of the plants/operations and their dependence on the environmental resources for operation	Participant in Canada: "we're drilling down two kilometers into high-pressured rocks, so we have to make sure that their constant drilling operations are overbound, so none of that pressure comes back or gives a kick or boils out because then we have a huge mess and its potentially unsafe for anyone who is living nearby." Archival records Serbia: "The organization is fully aware of the importance of its role in the future strong economic development as well as the environmental protection of the community."
Handling of Toxic Materials (see also: Clarke & Short, 1993; Weick, 2010)	Daily interaction with and efforts to contain toxic materials (fumes, liquids, dust) to prevent ground and water pollution. Instances requiring interactions and timely information sharing to prevent spills/spread of toxic material to others and the environment	Participant in Serbia: "reliability in work is [critical]…. we are all dealing with dangerous materials. We are working with products that can be dangerous for the environment and the employees." Participant in Canada: "I think that is probably on the forefront of our minds all the time…if there is any kind of oil or gas spill or leak, it's dealt with immediately and cleaned up, and the soil is taken to a facility where they clean it up."

Table 2 (continued)

Theoretical sources of hazard observed in the two cases	Description of hazard as manifested across the two cases	Example from the data
Commitment to Sustainability Evidence	Hydroelectric Energy Producer in Serbia	Oil and Gas Organization in Canada
	Our approach to sustainability is evident in the commitment to all-encompassing actions… to protect the environment, minimize the negative impact of company operations, the transfer of toxic materials, and other hazardous consequences on the 'immediate and more distanced environment – particularly in terms of water, land, and air pollution, as well as the health of the public (Archival Data Sources – Serbia)	[The company] is committed to achieving a high standard of health, safety, and environmental ("HS&E") stewardship throughout all phases of its operations. The company will conduct its activities in a manner that will protect the health and safety of its employees, contractors, and the public, as well as the protection of property and the environment. (Archival Data Sources – Canada)

4 Methods

4.1 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection proceeded in two phases: the first phase in the hydroelectric energy producer in Serbia and the second phase in the oil and gas company in Canada (see Table 3 for the chronological account and additional details on data collection). In both settings, we identified and interviewed key informants. The first key informant for each company was an individual who allowed our access (Chief Legal Officer in Serbia and Chief Operating Officer in Canada). Subsequently, we identified two other key informants in each context (the Health and Safety Manager in Serbia and the Vice President of Exploration in Canada) who were highly knowledgeable about sustainability and organizational efforts to be sustainable (the central phenome- non). Key informant interviews were, thus, a critical starting point for understanding the two organizations and their sustainability efforts. Due to their positions, the key informants were also a critical source of archival information and subsequent clarifications of the findings. We used a snowballing technique (a technique that entails concluding each interview with a request for participant recommendations) to expand our sample and continued until we reached theoretical saturation. We also engaged in informal discussions with participants during the observations to clarify insights and ensure that the recording adequately captured the participants' experiences (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

A total of 34 formal interviews were completed (17 in Serbia and 17 in Canada). The interviews lasted between 45 min and 1.5 h and were audio recorded and professionally transcribed. We began the interviews with questions about participants' backgrounds and roles to establish rapport (Creswell, 2012). Subsequently, we inquired into their work practices and probed into how they experience sustainability in their work. At the time of the data collection, we considered sustainability an organizational-level phenomenon and were interested in learning how corporate sustainability shapes individual work. However, as participants shared examples of sustainability practices, it became clearer that these practices are emergent and only partially informed by corporate mandates. In further following this insight (Jarzabkowski, 2020), we uncovered the complexities within sustainability practices due to multiple logics and how individuals engage with them differentially across the two contexts.

Table 3 Detailed Data Collection Efforts

The first phase – Serbia hydroelectric energy producer	
Interviews	We contacted our two key informants – the Health and Safety Manager and the Chief Legal Officer We conducted the key informant interviews. In these interviews, we asked them to identify others in the organization that might be knowledgeable/ have additional insights related to the research We used the same snowballing technique at the end of each interview We completed 17 formal interviews (45 min–1.5 h in length). Formal interviews were recorded and transcribed and started with general questions about participants' backgrounds and roles to establish rapport (Creswell, 2012). We then inquired into their work practices and probed into how they experience corporate sustainability relative to their work. We used probes to ask for additional information or clarity. We also asked for examples whenever participants described a sustainability practice ("Can you tell me more about that?" "Can you think of a specific example?") We also engaged in informal discussions with participants during the observations (informal interviews)
Archival material	We asked for organizational materials during interviews and observation if they were referenced ("Do you have that process that you just described in an organizational document that you could share with us?"). This included a document detailing the history of the organization, historical performance data, and recent hazardous or near-hazardous (events that could have escalated but were contained due to proper action) events written as reports We also collected publicly available information on the organization, including government reports from the federal government and third-party reports and analyses of the institutional context and its relevance to Serbia's history and economy
Observation	The first author spent four weeks on-site, spending time with employees both inside and outside work During this observation period, the first author attended meetings to observe employee interactions, record notes about work practices and discussions, toured the organization's multiple plants, and observed plant operations in real time

Table 3 (continued)

Preliminary analyses between the first and second phases	
We engaged in a preliminary analysis after the first phase of data collection We discovered that individuals seemed to employ multiple logics to proactively drive the social and environmental impact of their work practices We continued our data collection effort to gain richer insight into the unique distinction between individual and corporate sustainability and probe further into the contextual contingencies we uncovered in the first phase. The second author had five years of work experience in Canada's oil and gas industry and intimate knowledge of industry dynamics and industry contacts. We leveraged their network to identify individuals regarded by peers as industry advocates for social and environmental sustainability We identified two highly regarded industry leaders with 35 years of experience in large oil and gas companies and working together in this environmentally focused oil and gas company at the time of the research	
The second phase – Canada oil and gas company	
Interviews	We contacted our two key informants – the Chief Operating Officer and the Vice President of Exploration We conducted the key informant interviews and used the same snowballing technique as the first phase to identify knowledgeable others We completed 17 formal interviews (45 min–1.5 h in length). The first and second authors jointly completed all but four of the interviews (four interviews were completed by the second author alone). All interviews were recorded and transcribed. We followed the same interview approach as with the first phase We also engaged in informal discussions with participants during the observations (informal interviews)
Archival material	As with the first phase, we similarly asked for organizational materials if they were referenced during interviews and observation. This included proprietary reports and sketches provided by the participants We also collected publicly available information on the organization, including news articles, government reports from the federal government, and third-party reports primarily related to the Duty to Consult
Observation	The second author engaged in three separate observation instances: one that consisted of touring the operational facilities, including an oil rig and a gas plant, another that included a tour of the headquarters and attendance of four meetings, and one other that was a town hall hosted by the organization at a local community center that invited public comment on a project in the community

Table 4 Overview of Data Sources

Phenomenon explored	Sources and types of data
Institutional dynamics	Government reports Historical assessments and political analysis (relevant policy, practitioner, and scholarly articles) Third-party reports (World Bank, IMF, UN) Interviews
Organizational dynamics	Observations Interviews Organizational proprietary reports Publicly available reports and news articles on the organization Photographs (archival and investigator recorded) Participant sketches Interviews
Sustainability dynamics	Interviews (34) Informal conversations (23) Observations Organizational proprietary reports Government sustainability reports

Although interviews were our primary data source, we also collected archival material and engaged in on-site observation. For archival data, we collected publicly available information and internal documents that detailed the histories of the organizations, performance data, and recent hazardous or near-hazardous events (events that could have escalated but, due to proper action, were contained). In addition, we collected government reports, news articles, and publicly available third-party analyses of the institutional contexts. We also collected photographs and sketches our participants shared with us to illustrate a particular procedure or visually explain a hazardous incident.

For observation, we spent four weeks on-site in Serbia and visited the Canadian site three times, spending time with employees inside and outside work. The observation in Serbia included tours of the plants, meetings to observe employee interactions and record notes about work practices and discussions, and general plant operations. Observation in Canada included touring the headquarters, an active rig, and a gas plant, attending four meetings, and one town hall. See Table 3 for a detailed

chronological account of data collection steps and Table 4 for additional information on the sources of data collected.

4.2 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis proceeded over several steps. Preliminary analysis commenced after the first stage of data collection in Serbia. Following abductive logic, we identified critical events in our data and circled back and forth between theory and data to build our understanding. For example, we recorded the practical nature of sustain- ability as it was practiced by individuals aligning with arguments made by Silva and Figueiredo (2017). However, we also noted the degree of complexity within sustain- ability practices stemming from its embeddedness within context. As we continued the analysis, we remained reflexive, seeking a new understanding of theory through a continuous dialogue between our theoretical understanding and the data, as suggested by Mantere and Ketokivi (2013).

Table 5 Examples of Sustainability Practices across Two Contexts

Examples of sustainability practices in Serbia	Examples of sustainability practices in Canada
Observation, measurement, and analysis of the reservoir and water quality (reservoirs, water flows, groundwater), as well as regimes and sediment flow, protection against erosion, torrents, sediments, ice, and floods	Posting of natural resources maps (water flows, reservoirs, etc.) and environmental conservation efforts
Greening of the catchment area	Monitoring of groundwater before, during, and after drilling
Development of cadaster of water and system pollutants	Core sampling of ground
Monitoring of reservoirs and coastal areas	Meetings with community members
Introduction of an information system for the protection of waters and the coast	Posting of timelines with touchpoints to stakeholders in surrounding communities

Once the formal data collection was complete in Canada,[2] we immersed ourselves in the data to further enrich our understanding of our participants' experiences and create *in-vivo* first-order codes using the participants' words without imposing theory on them (Creswell, 2012). For example, one informant from Canada discussed how his professional engineer identity shaped his approach to sustainability practices.

[2] Data collection was completed in 2016.

We coded this instance as *aligning sustainability with identity*. A participant from Serbia discussed that he does not fully trust current regulations concerning sustainability, which we coded as *mistrust in regulations.* The coding process enabled us to ground the data extrapolation within our participants' words (Creswell, 2012) and identify emergent themes from our data.

In the subsequent stages, we restarted circling between theory and the data to refine the emergent themes further and provide a rich narrative (Gioia et al., 2013). For example, *embedding identity meanings into sustainability practices* and *sustain- ability as a meaningful part of their role (community/profession)* were first-order codes grouped under the second-level code of *Aligning of Professional/Community Logics*. We further categorized second-level codes using Creswell's (2012) frame- work of expected, surprising, and unusual codes to capture elements in our findings that affirm existing theory (expected codes) but also those elements that challenge existing theory (surprising and unusual codes). In doing so, we discovered that individuals in high-hazard organizations adopt a multiplicity of logics – some of which are complementary while others are conflicting – in their sustainability practices (see Table 5 for examples of sustainability practices and Table 6 for the visual presentation of the findings with exemplary evidence). We present our findings next.

4.3 Findings

Our comparative case study allows us to venture "under the carpet" (Creswell, 2012, p. 76) and uncover the complexities of sustainability practices in two high-hazard organizations in Serbia and Canada and how they emerged. We discovered that sustainability is *accomplished through ongoing practices at the individual level,* as individuals consider how to perform their work. However, we also noted how individuals comprehend sustainability partially differed across the two countries, shaped by the uniqueness of their cultural and historical experiences. We present our overarching model in Fig. 1, which graphically depicts a general model of how individuals comprehend multiple institutional logics to enact them in their sustainability practices. In exploring our central phenomenon – sustainability practices – across institutional contexts, we uncover that individuals pull down elements of multiple institutional logics

Table 6 Visual Presentation of the Findings with Additional Exemplary Evidence

First-level codes[a]	Second-level codes	Evidence
Relevance of national regulations in corporate sustainability (perceptions of regulations as a guideline to proper action) The connections between regulation and sustainable organizational performance Relevance of regulations in the context of high hazard/ prevention of danger Acting according to regulations to minimize hazards Sustainability practices are a proper way to perform work	The emergence of Professional Logic (Canada)	I've been involved where we've gone into well sites where *we've had to do soil reclamation and clean up spills* that maybe someone else didn't quite look after as good as they should have. I think that is happening more and more now than it may have in the past … I think now it's a new generation coming in, so it's not like the old days where it maybe got overlooked, but now *with the way regulations are* and *people just wanting to be more environmentally responsible*, that people aren't letting that slide through (Participant interview) We just know it's safe to operate by Canadian standards. *We know it's a good practice;* it might be more expensive, but I think there is more value for the company and the stakeholders of the land … *if we operate by Canadian standards*. (Participant interview)
Deference to past norms Felt responsibility for others and the environment as members of the organization due to the past Incompleteness/vagueness of current regulations Mistrust in current regulations	The emergence of the Community Logic (Serbia)	According to our legal standing, no, we should not play this role [as a social actor]. It should be the role of the municipality to deal with these issues. *But the reality is different because people look up to us and expect us to assume this role*. In a certain way, we have to play this role, and it is just the way it is (Participant interview) The difficult legacy of the [Government Energy Institution] includes the problems in environmental protection, which are a consequence of the long-lasting crisis in the latter decades of the twentieth century. During those difficult years, *[name of the company] had a task only to produce electricity, and the protection of the environment was, unfortunately, in the background*. This left a mark on the immediate environment facilities of the [name of the company], but also beyond (formal company report)

Table 6 (continued)

First-level codes[a]	Second-level codes	Evidence
Embedding identity meanings into sustainability practices Sustainability as a meaningful part of their role (community/profession) Enacting one's identity (as a member of a community/profession) in sustainability work Aligning what sustainability means with meanings in the role as an engineer/scientist/employee in the organization	Aligning Professional/Community Logics	*As a geologist, I've made the well plan,* and I'm directing them how to drill it and if, at any point, the well is unsafe, or we start losing circulation or something…… [we] just abandon that well *and pull out of there and made sure everything was safe.* (Canada) Our plant does not seem as old as it is – and that is 56 years – because *its employees through generations worked hard on reliability and sustainability…* The most important moment was *when a fellow engineer* who was older than me praised all the work we did – asking why changes [to make it more sustainable] are even needed. (Serbia)

to comprehend their sustainability practices. This finding partially aligned with the extant literature that suggests that individuals link their practices to a broader social context to illustrate them as appropriate (Reay et al., 2006; Selmier et al., 2015). However, we extend this reasoning by illustrating how multiple logics interact and how individuals disaggregate and pull different elements of logics to construct their local understanding of sustainability and align their practices to it (see Table 7).

We followed this surprising insight and uncovered three multilevel mechanisms: pulling down (1st level), aligning (2nd level), and relating (2nd level) mechanisms that, although present in both institutional contexts, uniquely shape the sustainability practices of individuals in each context. First, our findings illustrate that individuals *pull down* elements of institutional logics differently across countries. In Serbia, we uncover that mistrust in current state logics, together with the legacy socialist logic that endures due to its prevalence in the company's formative years, shapes how individuals disaggregate logics and pull down different elements to comprehend sustainability. More specifically, we uncover that individuals pull down and combine elements of socialist (legacy) state logic (an influence that endures) as well as the high-hazard organizational logic to form the meso-level community logic (see Fig. 2a). In Canada, current state and high-hazard organizational logics complement one another, resulting in employees relatively seamlessly *pulling down* elements of the state logic and the high-hazard organizational logic to form the meso- level professional logic (see Fig. 2b). Second, our findings suggest that individuals comprehend sustainability practices by *aligning* them with their identity standards (informed by the meso-level logics – community (Serbia) and professional (Canada)) and *relating* them to the well-being of others (informed by the organizational logic of hazard) (see Figs. 1, 2a and b). We present our findings below.

4.4 When Multiple Institutional Logics Conflict: The Emergence of Community Logic in Serbia

The analysis of interviews in the context of archival data in Serbia (see Table 1) suggested strong deference to the community logic constructed through past experiences and narratives of the organization. The community logic encompasses "relations of affect, loyalty, common values, and/or personal concern" (Brint, 2001, p. 8)

Table 7 Multiplicity of Logics across Two National Contexts

Serbia		Canada	
Type of logic	Key elements of the logic[a]	Type of logic	Key elements of the logic
Socialist[b] (Legacy) state Logic	*Source of legitimacy* State (primacy of public ownership) *Source of authority* State-owned enterprises (SOEs) as an extension of government control Centralized control and top-down planning *Source of Identity* Collective/State *Basis of norms* Collectivist cultural norms Implicit local sustainability norms *Basis of attention* Focus on social progress Limited individual autonomy *Basis of strategy* Increase collective welfare	State Logic	*Source of legitimacy* Primacy of private ownership *Source of authority* Distribution of control to provinces and localized planning *Source of Identity* Individual within collective *Basis of norms* Collectivist cultural norms/collective wellbeing Strong sustainability norms *Basis of attention* Social and economic progress Historical commitment to land protection *Basis of strategy* Increase economic welfare
State logic[c]	*Source of legitimacy* State/ EU recognition *Source of authority* EU/Regional centralized authority *Source of Identity* Contested identity claims *Basis of norms* Sustainability as compliance with EU demands Changing focus from collective to individual *Basis of attention* Primacy of economic development Primacy of foreign direct investments *Basis of strategy* Increase economic welfare		

Table 7 (continued)

Serbia		Canada	
Type of logic	Key elements of the logic[a]	Type of logic	Key elements of the logic
High-hazard organizational logic	*Source of legitimacy* Specialized expertise *Source of authority* Hierarchy and direct control *Source of Identity* Organizational membership *Basis of norms* Strict rules and procedures vs. local action *Basis of attention* Continual awareness of the context Embeddedness in the environment *Basis of strategy* Increase reliability Increase collective wellbeing	High-Hazard Organizational Logic	*Source of legitimacy* Specialized expertise *Source of authority* Distribution of control *Source of Identity* Professional membership *Basis of norms* Strict rules and procedures vs. local action *Basis of attention* Continual awareness of the context Embeddedness in the environment *Basis of strategy* Sustainable profits Increase reliability
Community[d] logic	*Source of legitimacy* Primacy of local expertise *Source of authority* Dominant position in the community *Source of Identity* Community membership *Basis of norms* Personal standards of conduct *Basis of attention* Collective wellbeing Communal responsibility Durability of employment and worker protection *Basis of strategy* Performing work according to local collective standards	Professional[a] Logic	*Source of legitimacy* Primacy of expertise beyond local contingencies *Source of authority* Science and Training *Source of Identity* Occupational/professional membership *Basis of norms* Professional standards of conduct *Basis of attention* Collective wellbeing Commitment to land protection Continual awareness of the context Embeddedness in the environment *Basis of strategy* Performing work according to scientific standards

Table 7 (continued)

Serbia		Canada	
Type of logic	Key elements of the logic[a]	Type of logic	Key elements of the logic
Market logic[c]	*Source of legitimacy* Wealth and prosperity *Source of authority* Economic market *Source of Identity* Self-interested individual *Basis of norms* Self-interest *Basis of attention* Increasing financial gains *Basis of strategy* Increase profitability	Market Logic[c]	*Source of legitimacy* Wealth and prosperity *Source of authority* Economic market *Source of Identity* Self-interested individual *Basis of norms* Self-interest *Basis of attention* Increasing financial gains *Basis of strategy* Increase profitability

[a]We recognize that institutional logics are complex with multiple embedded and interacting elements. In the table we record elements of the institutional logics germane to our findings

[b]See Estrin, S. (1991). Yugoslavia: The case of self-managing market socialism. Journal of Economic Perspectives, 5(4), 187–194

[c]This logic was evident in the archival data collection; however, our participants did not reference pulling elements of this logic as they comprehended their sustainability practices, thus it is recorded here but not included in our final model

[d]The community logic emerged through the convergence of the high-hazard organizational and socialist (legacy) state logics in Serbia; whereas the professional logic emerged through the convergence of the state and high-hazard organizational logics in Canada. Consequently, both the community and professional logics embody common elements with other logics

to “community members who are connected and accountable to one another” (Thornton et al., 2012, p. 73). For example, an engineer in Serbia explained that sustainability directives that cascade down from the government are problematic because they are “primarily focused on optimal production levels and *not* how operations impact others.” During a casual conversation, a different participant, a mechanical engineer, explained that corruption and turbulent changes fractured the trust in government mandates and triggered skepticism of their usefulness: “The situation is that nobody [outside the organization] knows what they are doing what the regulations are, and what needs to be done. Yes, there are environmental standards, but when it comes to practice – how are these to be implemented – nobody knows it, and they [external guidance and man- dates] are always too late.”

As such, the current state logic was perceived as complementing the market logic with its focus on production maximization yet conflicting with the organizational logic of high-hazard that prioritized reliable performance and environmental protection (see Fig. 2a and Table 7). At the same time, participants frequently referenced the past state practices [the socialist (legacy) state logic] as complementing the high-hazard organizational logic and thus more relevant to sustain- ability, as described below. Consequently, the participants *pulled down* elements of high-hazard organizational logic (what it means to work for an organization where the smallest missteps may create wide-ranging consequences, see Tables 2 and 7) and elements of legacy state logic (as explained below) to construct com- munity logic to inform the comprehension of their sustainability practices (see Fig. 2a and Table 7). We elaborate on this process below.

The vestige of the socialist (legacy) state logic for the emergence of the com- munity logic. One of the most surprising insights was the continued relevance of the socialist (legacy) state logic (see Table 7). Using extensive archival material, we related this to two reasons (see Table 1). First, the oldest plant in the system began operations in 1955 with the end of WWII and the formation of the communist government in the region. Together with three other plants in the system, the plant was among the largest in the region – growing in power and technological sophistication over decades under communist and, subsequently, socialist governments. As an SOE,

it effectively operated as an extension of the government and a key tool for achieving national objectives (archival data). Our participants' experiences as members of this organization conveyed the persistence of the socialist (legacy) state logic. A vice president (hydro-engineer) in Serbia explained that the plants within the system were still "the carriers of things in the region," impacting the region's economic and environmental health:

> "You have to understand we are a large system, and we are the carriers of things in this region. We have the financial power here, and compared to others, we can make this happen, and we have to honor that. I just do not see how we can expect that this [stewardship of the local environmental resources] can be done by someone else. There are just not enough resources around."

Second, faced with the growing ambiguity of the transition process toward a free market, increased corruption, and complex and multifaceted changes occur- ring in the macro-environment, these legacy experiences provided a microcosm of meaning that our participants leveraged to make sense of their work and their sustainability practices. The archival analysis also indicated that although sustainability seemed as one of the key objectives of the current state logic (see Table 7), our participants perceived it as an inauthentic afterthought. Indeed, although many of the individuals we interviewed saw recent changes to align with E.U. environmental standards positively, they recognized the superficial nature of government mandates, or what one participant described as a "gray zone." Gray zones are regulations the government intentionally left ill-defined to accommodate their other market or national objectives, especially for SOEs. In discussing this, a plant leader stated:

> "These pressures are good…standardization of regulations on the level of the European Union, especially in the areas of ecology and workplace safety, allowed us to do better, invest money where it should be invested and do the revitalization [of the plant] in the best possible manner."

However, he added that because of the gray zones, what is needed is "good intention in interpretation… [the standards] are so broad [to accommodate other concerns] that one must have good intentions…unless there are good intentions, there is nothing from it." In other words, individuals must actively consider their past expertise

and local circumstances to determine how to advance sustainability objectives. The stickiness of the socialist (legacy) state logic coupled with the mistrust of the current state logics [conflicting logics] and increasing hazard their organizations continue to pose (high-hazard organizational logic), led individuals to *pull down* elements of high-hazard organizational and socialist (legacy) state logics – particularly elements of collective welfare and local sustainability norms (see Table 7) – to con- struct the meso-level community logic to inform the comprehension of their sustain- ability practices (see Table 6 and Fig. 2a).

4.5 When Multiple Institutional Logics Complement: The Emergence of the Professional Logic in Canada

In contrast to Serbia, our analysis suggested substantial deference to the professional logic in Canada. Professional logic encompasses "the identities that professionals draw upon to make sense of who they are and what they do" (Kyratsis et al., 2017, p. 613) that prescribe the field-level identity dynamics related to what it means to belong to the profession (Rao et al., 2003). In Canada, professionals' focus on sustainability evolved from a regulatory response driven by the Duty to Consult man-date to a work practice shared by multiple individuals. In this view, sustainability is embedded in the responsibility these professionals have to others. For example, one of the participants, an engineer, explained that the values of their profession inform how they conduct business "out there when you're talking to the First Nations, to the contractors, and the regulatory agencies…recognizing that that's how they want to work with companies. We want to be the company of choice to *work with* through 'doing the design work that deals with all of the what ifs.'".

In Canada, our findings suggest that individuals tend to trust the state logic and perceive it as complementary to the high-hazard organizational logic they experienced working for energy producers (see Table 2 and Fig. 2b). Here, the state logic and the high-hazard organizational logic provided the necessary tools for individuals to complete their work as professionals. As such, they pull down elements of state logic – particularly the elements of collective well-being and historical commitment to land protection (see Table 7) and elements of organizational logic – particularly

elements of high-hazard – into sustainability practice through the creation of meso-level professional logic (see Table 6 and Fig. 2b). We elaborate on this process below.

State Logic. Our archival analysis and literature review suggest that in Canada, the state logic elicits trust in which regulatory mandates provide the necessary information to our participants on how to protect others and the environment. As one engineer described:

> "We are incredibly regulated, so we can't step outside…the government has guidelines for everything in terms of how we drill when we drill the size of space we can even put a location on, everything like that. We even have regulations underground."

Unlike in Serbia, in Canada, individuals trust the regulations because they are driven by science relevant to their professions. Indeed, at the time of the research, four of the seven directors of the regulatory agency in Canada had backgrounds in science, and all seven directors had extensive experience in the energy industry (ranging from 15 to 25 years). Consequently, our participants viewed the regulations as legitimate and critical to their work as professionals in this industry and, subsequently, their sustainability practices. For example, a geologist discussed how the regulatory policies form the basis of his professional work:

> "You see it actually a lot…where once their operations are complete when they are moving to the next stage, they will try to do the best they can to clean up. There are such stringent regulations with the Alberta government of soil sampling and water sampling to make sure that the soil and water is cleaner after the oil and gas operations than it was before."

Another engineer described his choice to leave an organization because the operational mandates of the organization (despite complying with regulations) did not align with professional logics. "I did a bunch of tight gas drilling with [organization] and, of course managing all of their engineering. But again, found out they were making some *very bad financial decisions* and some equally bad, we'll say, I don't know what the right word for this is…*ethical decisions on how they operated*. I resigned as an officer because an officer carries with it a lot of responsibility for how the business is operated,

and the way *they operated didn't reflect who I am*."

However, these regulations are often seen as guideposts for how to act and in some cases, the minimum requirements to be met. As with Serbia, individuals combine elements of state logic with high-hazard organizational logic. How- ever, instead of these logics constructing a community logic, in Canada, these logics converge to construct professional logic. As we continued our inquiry, each participant discussed their practices in the context of being informed by the science of geology, engineering, etc. To this end, individuals pull down elements of the state and high-hazard organizational logics to construct the professional logic used to comprehend their sustainability practices (see Table 6 and Fig. 2b).

4.6 Comprehending Sustainability Practices Across Institutional Contexts: Aligning and Relating Mechanisms

In further examining the role of logics in the two cases, our analysis suggested that engaging in sustainability practices is not always straightforward. Indeed, as one of our Canadian participants, the Chief Operating Officer, suggested, "it takes a level of skill of understanding…but also the ability to resolve conflicts in a rather heated context where interests are pitted against each other." Individuals must navigate a myriad of opposing demands to make sense of emergent complexities to engage in sustainability practices through their work. Our findings suggest that employees comprehend their sustainability practices via two mechanisms: 1) *aligning* the com- munity or professional logic with identity standards whereby sustainability practices are comprehensible because they align with their identity as a member of the com- munity/profession and 2) *relating* the high hazard organizational logic to the well- being of others whereby sustainability practices are comprehensible because they minimize hazards (see Fig. 1 and Table 2).

Aligning the community/professional logic to identity standards in sustain- ability practices. For professionals in high-hazard organizations, remaining true to their identities as scientists or engineers permeates all their practices. In this view, sustainability practices are comprehensible and appropriate not because they align with

organizational sustainability mandates but because they align with the meanings in their identity standards or what it means to them to be a member of the scientific profession and their local communities in Canada and Serbia, respectively. For example, an engineer in Canada explained that he looks at his work – and the sustainability practices therein – through the professional logic and his associated identity standard as an engineer (see Fig. 1b):

> I: "So, an engineer? Do you see yourself as an engineer?
>
> D: I guess petroleum engineer. It is still something I love doing and found a lot of oil and gas in my life, and that is probably my biggest driver is finding and developing energy sources."

A health and safety engineer in Serbia discussed efforts to change a situation that created a misalignment between sustainability practices and his identity standard as a community member, stemming from the community logic (see Fig. 2a). In this situation, the organization was revitalizing one of the aggregates in the plant per a government mandate. Although the revitalization was necessary to minimize future environmental hazards, the minimal time allotted for the revitalization increased the potential for an immediate hazardous impact on the community, echoing the earlier mistrust in state mandates that seem only superficially sustainable. This created a misalignment between the situation and the individual's identity standard as a community member. In response, the participant worked to change the situation through a relationship with a colleague who was a director of a governmental institution overseeing the plants. He explained:

> "She believed in us. Because she worked with us in the past, she knew that we know how to best handle the situation and that we need 15 days to implement changes to the aggregate and not five they were putting pressure on us to do. We cannot do it in five days…and she believed and supported us."

Relating the high-hazard organizational logic to the well-being of others in sustainability practices. The concern for the well-being of others – the well- being of the collective and the natural environment – stood out among our participants. In addition to aligning the logics with their identity standards, participants comprehended

sustainability practices by relating the high-hazard organizational logic and the danger that it imposed on the well-being of others. Indeed, the high- hazard organizational logic suggests that careful, thoughtful practices are often the difference between life and death – between doing things properly or "making a ticking bomb [by] releasing a highly toxic gas into the atmosphere that can obviously kill people and livestock" (engineer in Canada) or releasing "materials that are toxic for the people and the environment" (engineer in Serbia).

To this end, a mechanical engineer and a plant leader in Serbia explained how he evaluates alternative practices within his high-hazard organization in terms of their impact on the well-being of others:

> "I can talk about the situation where I choose between several solutions or compare variants. I look at the technical aspects, environmental con- sequences, and disadvantages. I then make a standard table [including all aspects] to make sure I choose the best one and can explain to others why this solution is optimal not just because of technical specifications but because it positively impacts the environment."

In Canada, when probing a geologist about why he goes beyond regulatory requirements in his work practices, he replied:

> "I can sleep more comfortably at night knowing that I've done everything I can to protect groundwater when I'm drilling the well…That's just a per- sonal choice. I don't want to contaminate anyone's groundwater. Water and air are very valuable resources, and I'm going to do everything I can to protect them."

Our cross-country comparison highlights different mechanisms in how individuals pull down elements of multiple logics to construct the community and professional logics and how these logics are used to render sustainability practices comprehensible at the individual level. Interestingly, in both Serbia and Canada, aligning and relating mechanisms help these individuals adopt multiple logics to comprehend their sustainability practices. However, differences in the logics pre- sent across these two cases and how they idiosyncratically interact result in differences in how individuals comprehend and enact sustainability through their work. We expand on the implications of our study for theory and practice below.

5 Discussion

Previous research pointed to the important role institutional environments may play in sustainability practices across countries (Bachev & Terziev, 2018; Doh & Guay, 2006; Fransen, 2013; Marano & Kostova, 2016). However, how multiple institutional logics across countries shape sustainability practices at the individual level remains undertheorized. In examining sustainability practices in two high-hazard organizations in Canada and Serbia, we found that individuals disaggregate multiple logics, embracing some elements while rejecting others, to comprehend and enact their sustainability practices distinctly. In venturing deeper into the process, we uncover three mechanisms through which individuals interweave elements of multiple institutional logics into their sustainability practices: pulling down, relating, and aligning, that operate at different levels and embody different elements due to the unique cultural and historical contexts of the two institutional contexts. We discuss our findings in the context of the relevant literature below to illustrate theoretical contributions.

5.1 The Disaggregation of Multiple Institutional Logics Across Institutional Contexts: The Pulling Down Mechanism

Previous research has provided important insight into the nature of multiple institutional logics and how they individually or collectively shape behavior (Chreim et al., 2007; Lounsbury, 2007). This line of research assumes that multiple dominant logics shape practices, such as sustainability, differentially through the cultural embeddedness within a particular social group that informs both the individual identity and cognitive schemas (Thornton et al., 2012). However, recent literature has also critiqued this research, pointing to the value-laden nature of past and future logics (Friedland, 2012; Greenwood et al., 2010; Waeger & Weber, 2019) and the decomposability of logics. This affords some agency to actors to disaggregate elements from logics and redeploy them to construct new ones (Jackall, 1988; Lounsbury et al., 2021; Thornton et al., 2012).

Our study extends this insight by illustrating ***how individuals in high-hazard organizations construct new logics by "pulling down" elements of other logics*** relevant to their sustainability practices and how this process differs across countries at

Photograph 1 Hydroelectric Plant Embeddedness in the Environment

different stages of economic development (see Figs. 1, 2a and b). In doing so, we contribute to the literature by illustrating ***the "stickiness" of logics*** (Kroezen & Heugens, 2019; Waeger & Weber, 2019), where the impact of the logic on individual practices endures long after the logic has been replaced. More specifically, our findings show that in our economy in transition, the socialist (legacy) state logic endures long after its formal demise. This is due to its imprinting into the fabric of the organization in its formative years and growing mistrust in the current state logic spurred by challenges of transition, comingling of the market and state logics, and growing corruption hidden within economic concerns. Given this, ***individuals in Serbia construct the community logic*** by pulling down elements of high-hazard organizational logic and the socialist (legacy) state logic to comprehend their sustainability practices. Conversely, our findings suggest that in Canada, individuals largely trust the state logic as consistent with and complementary to their scientific standards. As such, they pull down and combine elements of the high-hazard organizational logic and the state logic ***to construct the professional logic*** to comprehend their sustainability practices (see Fig. 2a and b).

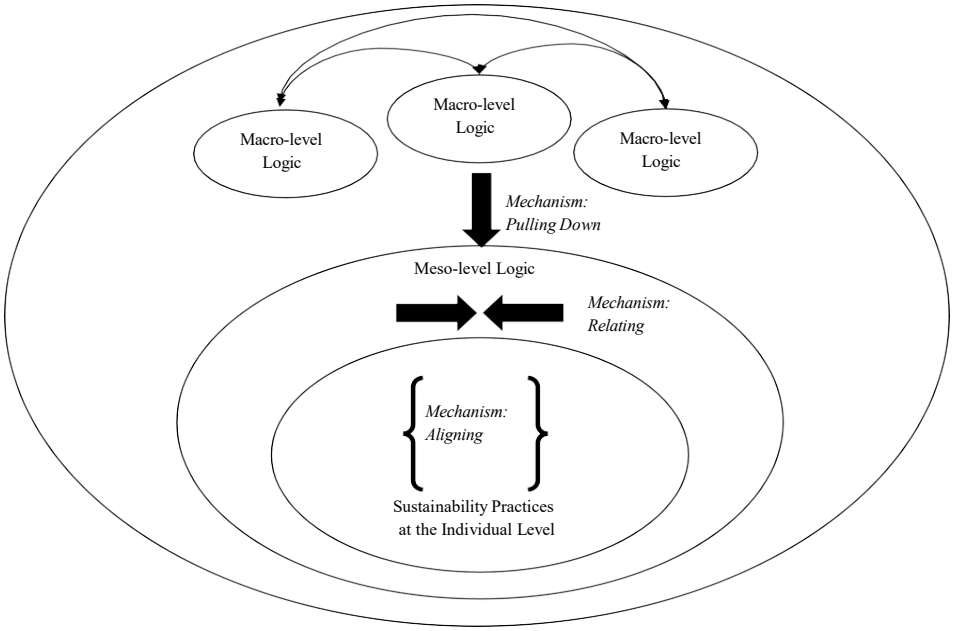
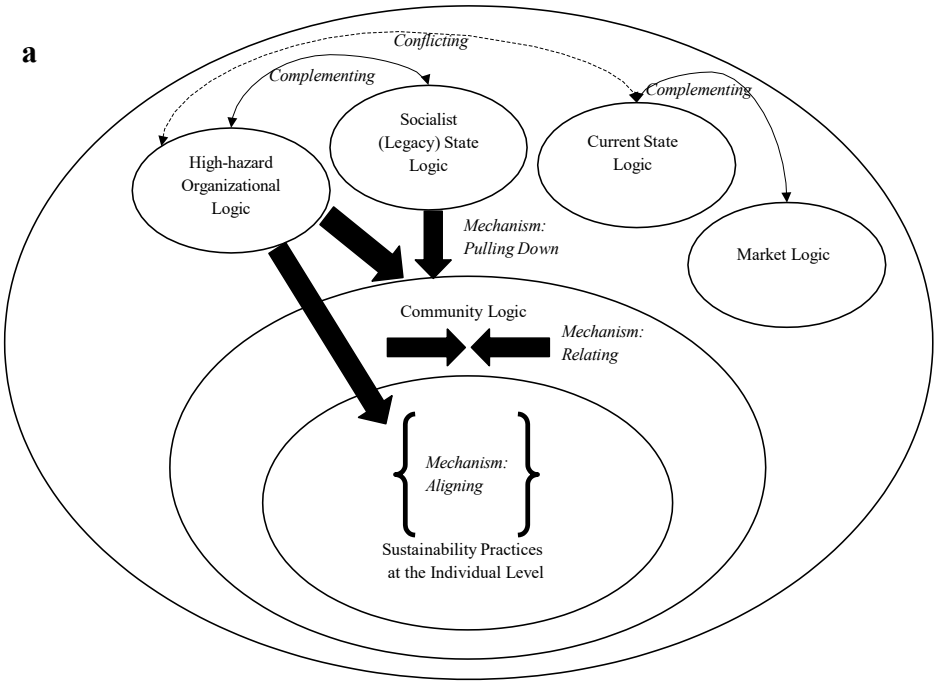


Fig. 1 How Individuals Use Multiple Logics to Comprehend Sustainability Practices



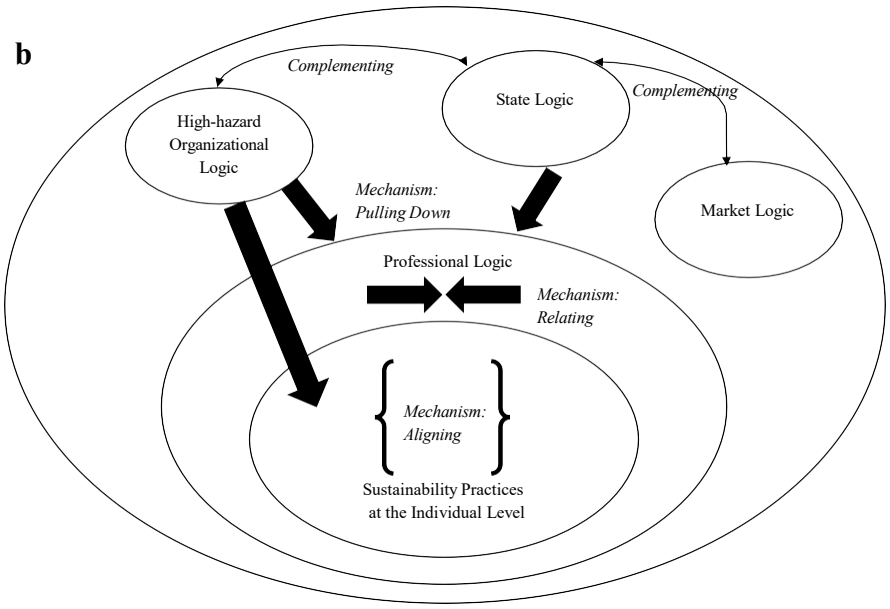


Fig. 2 **a** Using Multiple Logics to Comprehend Sustainability Practices in Serbia. **b** Using Multiple Log- ics to Comprehend Sustainability Practices in Canada

5.2 Comprehending Sustainability Practices at the Individual-level: Aligning and Relating Mechanisms

Previous research has noted how regulations, cultural norms, and social knowledge shape sustainability and do so distinctively across countries (Bachev & Terziev, 2018; Ioannou & Serafeim, 2012; Marano & Kostova, 2016). For example, research has emphasized that flexible regulations provide more opportunities for the organization to go above minimum requirements and gain a competitive advantage through sustainable innovation (Aragon-Correa et al., 2020). Although not explicitly considered, one of the key mechanisms through which these flexible regulations may shape sustainability is the process through which individuals in sustainability-oriented organizations prioritize and enact practices that embody economic, social, and environmental pillars interdependently (Kok et al., 2019; Linnenluecke et al., 2009). However, despite this insight, how more or less flexible institutional prescriptions shape sustainability practices remains undertheorized. Focusing on sustainability at the individual level in two high-hazard organizations within two institutional con- texts with unique historical and cultural contexts contributes to this literature by illustrating ***how***

individuals comprehend their practices as appropriate and predictable through relevant institutional logics (Lounsbury, 2007). Our findings suggest that individuals do so through two contextually embedded mechanisms: the ***aligning mechanism*** that facilitates the congruence between sustainability practices and the identity standard (community vs. professional) and the ***relating mechanism*** that allows members to connect sustainability to the well-being of others (informed by high-hazard organizational logic) (see Fig. 2).

More specifically, our findings illustrate that the community logic dominant in Serbia and the professional logic dominant in Canada form the organizational member's identity as a community/professional member, where ***the sustainability practices are vehicles for allowing the identity to manifest***. As such, aligning entails engaging with one's identity standard to achieve congruence between identity and sustainability meanings. To this end, sustainability practices are comprehensible and enacted because they align with the salient identity. On the other hand, the relating mechanism is shaped by the high-hazard organizational logic present in both institutional contexts and allows individuals ***to connect sustainability practices with the well-being of others***. More specifically, our findings illustrate that individuals in high-hazard organizations are actively aware of their organizations' considerable power and dependence on the external environment for resources and legitimacy (LaPorte & Consolini, 1991; Milosevic et al., 2018). This awareness orients individuals toward the well-being of others (coworkers, community, and the environment), actively adopting the high-hazard organizational logic to comprehend their sustain- ability practices.

5.3 Limitations and Future Directions

Despite several important contributions, the limitations of this study should be noted. First, our study draws from insights across different theoretical traditions. This poses two obstacles. First, because of its interdisciplinary nature, some potentially relevant insights may have been excluded. Second, to provide broad insights into the role of individuals in an organizational phenomenon, our theorizing may not be as lean as optimal. Future research should consider other facets at the micro- level, such as proactive or organizational citizenship behavior, and other macro-level facets, such as

innovation or institutionalization, in further explicating how individuals practice and comprehend sustainability. In addition, our study took place before the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the focus on sustainability to minimize hazards for others (the relating mechanism), future research should consider how the COVID- 19 pandemic shaped sustainability and how sustainability may differ across institutional contexts with different approaches and recoveries to the pandemic.

It is important to note, as well, that individuals in this study had significant autonomy in their activities by the very nature of their work. However, we recognize that might not always be the case. Whether individuals engage in sustainability and how and to what extent they do so may be at least partially a function of how much space organizations provide for sustainability. In addition, for participants in this study, being true to their identities as scientists or engineers/ community members was more important than their identities as managers or employees. Given this, future research may explicitly consider non-scientific professionals and individuals in different contexts with different identities.

Another limitation is related to our sample. In our data collection efforts, we intentionally focused on individuals regarded by their peers as having a strong socially and environmentally responsible performance record. Furthermore, organizations in Canada tend to experience stronger institutional prescriptions for corporate sustainability, resulting in a more thorough approach to corporate sustainability than their international counterparts. Meanwhile, in Serbia, recent efforts to align the national environmental policies with the E.U. have created a context of heightened awareness, thereby positioning sustainability at the core of our participant's work. Consequently, our findings may not extend to other institutional contexts where other historical experiences augment sustainability concerns. Future research might compare and contrast participants in markets that are less sustainability-oriented.

6 Conclusion

Sustainability is a global grand challenge of increasing importance to organizations, host, and home countries that is only further magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic, global inequality, and declining access to resources necessary for

sustainable development. Despite the growing focus on sustainability, studies have only begun to unpack the complex nature of sustainability within and across economies of different stages of development. Our study contributes to the dialogue in the international business literature by investigating how sustainability operates through individual work shaped by the interplay of multiple institutional logics. In venturing beneath this process, we uncover three mechanisms, pulling down, aligning, and relating, through which individuals connect elements of relevant institutional logics to their sustainability practices, rendering them comprehensible. Our findings also illustrate that these processes differ across institutional contexts due to unique national circumstances. As such, this study provides an important step toward understanding how sustainability is practiced at the individual level and uncovering how the national context shapes these practices of individuals as they seek to create positive social and environmental impacts.

Data Availability The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are not publicly available due to confidentiality reasons. Aggregate data without identifying information are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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