

Proposal for Research Lab: Structures of Sustainable Management Programs

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Our research question

While many business schools are eager to respond to calls made from society to reconceptualize business’s role, the nuances between conceptualizations and perspectives leads to many potential ways in which and ERS-focused management program could look. As the popularity of entire management programs dedicated to ethics, responsibility, and sustainability (ERS) themes grows (Hart et al., 2015¹; Fornes et al., 2019²), there is need for schools to understand the most salient dimensions on which such programs are structured as they begin to (re)develop such programs in their curricular repertoire. In this research project, we distilled the defining attributes of ERS-related management programs to offer such a blueprint for schools (re)designing such programs. We were inspired by our own journey(s) in creating curricular program(s), and the lack of overarching frameworks in the literature to help in the development process. Making explicit the different ways in which such a program could manifest is helpful for business schools during discussions to develop such programs.

Our approach and findings

The first major consideration we focus on is how ERS is structured in a program. We employ a literature review to synthesize, and add to, previous conceptual frameworks on program structure presented in responsible management literature (e.g., Ruskino, 2010³, Painter-Morland et al.⁴, 2016, Séto-Pamies-Papaoikonomou, 2016⁵). Secondly, we employ qualitative content analysis to analyze a sample of European ERS management programs to delineate the most salient dimensions that differentiates approaches. We add to the previous work of Thomas (2005)⁶ and Cullen (2019)⁷, to describe these, and we develop typographies for how ERS can be structured in a program. It is the intention that the resulting conceptual framework and typologies are useful for the (re)development of management programs through the lens(es) of ERS.

A Micro, Meso, Macro Approach INSEAD MBA

Ethics: To build awareness of issues of ethics and responsibility that students are likely to confront in business at the level of the individual, the business organization, and the organization in society.

Political Environment: To understand a firm’s non-market strategies in creating competitive advantage from the ability of a firm to influence and adapt to the non-market business environment - the rules, regulations, domestic institutions, and international institutions that define the context of the market and the social issues they are trying to address.

Public Policy: To understand the roles of markets and government in a market economy by examining markets, market failures, the role of government in correcting market failures, and government/regulatory failures, plus the role of business in such situations.

Individual → Organizational → Societal

• **Moral Philosophy: A Primer:** three core themes: justice and equality, reason and passion, and meaning and the good life. Reflect on the significance of those ideas in their personal and professional lives.

- Holistic
- Critical

SDG Bootcamp: Building Impact Business: Intensive project-based course using the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Ethical Decision-making in Business: view on ethics, which is not based on subjective values (often based on politics and religion) but finds its roots in economic theory.

Social Entrepreneurship & Innovation: focus on enterprises whose businesses concentrate on improving the lives of people living at the bottom of the wealth pyramid in emerging markets.

Capitalism: Historical, Comparative and Critical Perspectives

Plans for an engaging session

We hope that our work not only add to further theorization in RME about the structure and perspective of ERS-focused programs, but that our work also can serve as a basis for schools (re)developing programs can commence their internal dialogues.

As curricular innovations for ERS are emerging across the educational landscape (courses, minor/specializations/programs), the topic of salient dimensions can be of interest to a broad range of participants (instructors/learning line coordinators/program directors/deans). After our presentation of the conceptual framework and analysis that led to the delineation of salient dimensions, we will invite participants to engage in a mapping exercise for reflection of their own program(s) and envisioning possible future evolutions of it based on this research.

¹ Hart, T., Fox, C., Ede, K. and Korstad, J. (2015). Do, but Don't Tell: The Search for Social Responsibility and Sustainability in the Websites of the Top-100 US MBA Programs. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* 16(5): 706-728.

² Fornes, G., Monfort, A., Ilie, C., Koo, C.K., and Cardoza, G. (2019). Ethics, Responsibility, and Sustainability in MBAs. Understanding the Motivations for the Incorporation of ERS in Less Traditional Markets. *Sustainability*, 11(24), 7060.

³ Rusinko, C.A. (2010). Integrating sustainability in management and business education: a matrix approach. *Academy of Management Learning and Education* 9(3), 507-519.

⁴ Painter-Morland, M., Sabet, E., Molthan-Hill, P., Goworek, H., and De Leeuw, S. (2016). Beyond the Curriculum: Integrating Sustainability into Business Schools. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 139(4), 737-754.

⁵ Setó-Pamies, D. and Papaoikonomou, E. (2016). A Multi-level Perspective for the Integration of Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability (ECSRS) in Management Education. *Journal of Business Ethics* 136(3): 523-538.

⁶ Thomas, T. (2005). Are business students buying it? A theoretical framework for measuring attitudes toward the legitimacy of environmental sustainability. *Business Strategy and the Environment* 14(3): 186-197.

⁷ Cullen, J. (2020). Varieties of Responsible Management Learning: A Review, Typology and Research Agenda. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 162(4), 759-773.