

Educating Responsible Business Persons:

**Textbooks, teachers' expected learning outcomes,
teachers' actions and classroom practices**

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A physicist, an engineer and an economist are stranded in the desert. They are hungry and find a can of corn. They want to open it, but how?

The physicist says: “Let’s start a fire and place the can inside the flames. It will explode and then we will all be able to eat”.

“Are you crazy?” says the engineer. “All the corn will burn and scatter, and we will have nothing. We should use a metal wire, attach it to a base, push it in and crack the can open.”

“Both of you are wrong!” states the economist. “Where the hell do we find a metal wire in the desert?”

The solution is simple: Assume we have a can opener...



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The Responsible Business Person

Studies of Business Education for Sustainability

Pernilla Andersson

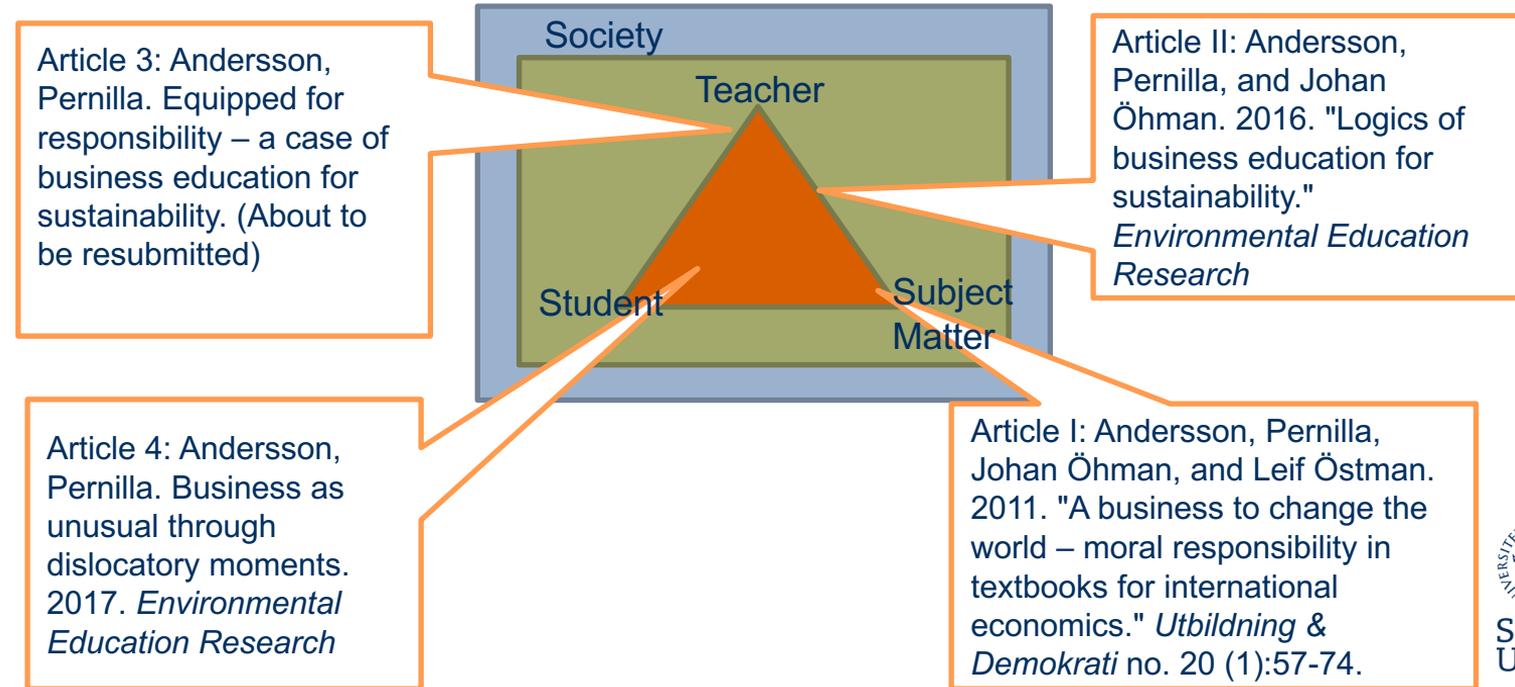


STOCKHOLM DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS



Overview of thesis

Overarching purpose: to identify the roles of a responsible business person that are articulated when the concept 'sustainable development' is included in the curriculum and to discuss how these roles could enable business students to address sustainability issues



Empirical material

Type	Date	Volume
Textbooks on International Economics for use in upper secondary schools in Sweden	Published 1994-2008	6 textbooks
Interviews	2012-2013	8 teachers (55 minutes on average), 112 pages/59,300 words transcribed in total.
Video/audio recordings of classroom practices	2013-2014	5 teachers, 20 lessons (77 minutes on average), 134 pages/52,000 words transcribed in total.
Field notes, educational materials, teachers' written instructions, students' written assignments and group interviews.	2013-2014	-

Perspectives on the economy, environment and education

- the role of a business person is socially constructed (Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Jason Glynos, David Howarth, Julie A. Nelson)
- 'sustainability issues' are often uncertain and complex, and responsiveness and reflexivity are important qualities to address such issues (John S. Dryzek, Luigi Pellizzoni)
- scope for students subjectivities, 'the political', or to be a moral subject, is important from an educational perspective (Carl Anders Säfström, Gert Biesta)

The role of the researcher (taken in this thesis)

- ...to facilitate critical reflection by pointing to the contingent nature of educational practice, i.e. that what is perceived as 'natural' could be otherwise. (David Howarth 2013)
- ... to illuminate places, moments and institutions where certain perceptions of environmental change and social development emerge and are reproduced. (Maarten Hajer 1995)

Welche Thiere gleichen ein-
ander am meisten?



Kaninchen und Ente.

Poststructuralist discourse theory

- Discourse = a shared way of apprehending the world ...
- ... that matters because it affects what kind of (business) decisions that are possible

(Laclau and Mouffe, Glynos and Howarth)

Research questions

1. Which **roles** of a responsible business person are articulated in educational practice?
2. How and in what kind of **situations** are specific roles privileged, articulated or taken up?
3. How and in what kind of situations can the role of business **change**?
4. How do these roles **equip** business students to address sustainability issues?
5. How should or could a business person deal with personal **feelings** relating to sustainability issues when making business decisions?
6. How and in which situations is there scope for business students' **subjectivities**?

A logics approach to discourse analysis

- A logics approach (Glynos and Howarth 2007)
- Logics can be perceived as social or political, and they have a 'fantasmatic' dimension.
- Starting in the empirical material
- Analysis of rules, presuppositions, assumptions and conditions (relating to doing business sustainably) to identify logics positioning a business person in relation to sustainability.

Results

- Which roles of a responsible business person are articulated in educational practice? (RQ1)

Three categories of roles implying that a business person is expected to either: adapt to, add or create ethical values.

- How and in what kind of situations are specific roles privileged, articulated or taken up? (RQ2)

The adapting role – in textbooks

Environmental consciousness has increased in the developed countries, but in the less developed countries the development is often the opposite. They can not afford to care for the environment because of poor economies. This has led to many businesses from developed countries dumping environmentally hazardous waste in the less developed countries. ...

Sometimes businesses choose to place environmentally hazardous production in the less developed countries, which do not have as stringent environmental demands or laws to protect employees. (TB-1996)

The adapting role – in classroom practice

T (3.1.1): ... so, we have a Swedish company working very hard with this [environmental and social issues] in Sweden that has partners far away that in turn hire people to work for them. ... How far is it reasonable to extend this CSR responsibility? We have had this with H&M that were 'hard hit' by awful working conditions in their factories in Bangladesh. ... The question is: how far is it really reasonable for a business to oversee the environment and working conditions of the sub-contractors? What do you say? Should every tiny supplier be investigated?

S: [firmly] Yes

T (3.1.2): Why?

S: I think you have that responsibility if you say that you are environmentally friendly.

T (3.1.3): Yes, is that reasonable? [silence] Then, how much should it cost? ... How much is the customer prepared to pay for the control? ... What they talked about now before the election to the European Parliament was pig farming in Denmark, where they can hardly move, but it means that the meat can be sold for 20-25% less than in Sweden. Leading to Swedish pig farmers shutting down. Because most consumers do not choose Swedish meat but the cheaper Danish, despite the fact that we know about the situation... and this is what you must consider... [...]

The adding role – in textbooks

‘Even if businesses in the West stipulate that child labour is not allowed, it is no guarantee that this will be the case. It is hard to control how manufacturing is done in practice. Big businesses like IKEA and Hennes & Mauritz have been hard hit by this issue.’ (TB 2008)

The adding role – in classroom practice

T(4.2.2): ... in principle no [student] business stands a chance in these competitions if it does not include this [sustainability] aspect ... although there is little evidence at present, it can be regarded as indicating what is to come ... those businesses that do ‘business sustainably’ from the beginning are much more likely to succeed and survive ... so you can explore this for yourselves, especially by investigating your customers’ preferences by including such [sustainability] questions in your [market] survey ... they might even consider paying more ...

The creating role – in teachers' reasoning

... sure profit can be fun but making business can be about wanting to cooperate and change something to.

Expected learning outcome: 'Know that doing business can be about cooperation and willingness to make change'

The creating role – in classroom practice

T (10.5.1): So here are the small fluffy sheep [shows a beautiful picture of a sheep], ... we find them in Australia and New Zealand and it is clear that one gets warm and cosy and that is how we like to see ourselves ... but then when they look like that [shows a graphic picture of a sheep with bloody breech] before they come to us it is pretty awful.

[...]

T (10.5.2): ... you are a wearer of a brand but you are also co-creators of a brand ... do I need to consider whether the sheep have a bum or not? Yes, somehow you have to ... What you do today when you make consumption decisions matter ... and this will become even more important when you are working for a business and its brand, i.e. what does the brand, the business stand for?

Implications of these results

- Additional theories are needed...
- Theory about what is important in order to be able to address current environmental and social issues – Pellizzoni.
- Theory about what good education involves – Biesta.

Results (RQ3)

- How and in what kind of situations can the role of business change?

An methodological approach for the analysis of the emergence and closure of a (students) dislocatory moments and the changing role of a business person.

Is it sustainable to make trade with Bangladesh?



But that is what businesses do!

Results (RQ4)

- How do the articulated roles equip business students to address sustainability issues?

*unequipped (the adapting role),
ill-equipped (the adding role) or
better equipped (the creating role)*

to address uncertain and complex sustainability issues.

Results (RQ5)

- How should or could a business person deal with personal feelings relating to sustainability issues when making business decisions? (Table 4. p. 86)

The adapting role: should refrain from involving personal feelings when making business decisions

The adding role: has scope for personal feelings when making business decisions

The creating role: has to involve personal feelings when making business decisions

Results (RQ6)

- How and in which situations is there scope for business students' subjectivities?

Scope for subjectivity when the creating role comes into play and risk for de-subjectification when the adapting role comes into play.

A dislocatory moment (facilitates change and) provide scope for subjectivity

Discussion, implications for teachers, teacher educators and researchers

- Reaching the audience? (which journals, conferences?)
- No change of logics was identified in classroom practice. Could this be dependent on teachers, aspect of subject matter ,both?, or something else?
- Which roles are more or less prevalent (among teachers, students, educational materials)?
- If the 'creating role' could make students better equipped to address uncertain and complex sustainability issues, what are the obstacles and potential pitfalls? ...
- Considering that the 'adapting' (a-political) role could make students un-equipped to address uncertain and complex sustainability issues and implies a risk for de-subjectification ...
- ...
- ...



Keep in touch!

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