Conscious Brand Leadership
Course Syllabus

Version: 05/01/2024
Please note: material currently under peer review

Introduction into Conscious Business Education

Our purpose is to educate the current and next generation of business leaders and entrepreneurs in Europe to conduct business consciously. *Consciously* refers to conducting business in a way that is purpose-driven, ethical, human-centered, sustainable, and inclusive, and where all Business Stakeholders (not only shareholders and managers) benefit. For the last 10-15 years, researchers are increasingly demonstrating that consciously led companies create benefits for all stakeholders while prospering financially above and beyond shareholder-driven companies in many cases. Consciously led companies break through the false choice of *either* you are financially successful, *or* you do good. Conscious businesses have shown to be financially highly successful *and* generate benefits for all stakeholders at the same time. However, the practices of conscious business – and what might be different from a traditional view of business – is not yet an explicit part of business education in Europe.

The current economic system is under rising pressure because of unsustainable exploitation of resources and increasing pollution of our planet. Climate change, resource exhaustion, societal inequalities in wealth and access to opportunities are rising. These problems are not separate crises – they can all be rooted in fundamental flaws of the current economic system. A conscious business approach implies a fundamental change towards an economy that is sustainable, circular, prosperous, and inclusive.

Many of the challenges Europe faces require businesses, or support from businesses to create innovative solutions. Businesses are the dominant drivers for innovation, jobs, and economic wealth, which in turn address real problems of real people. Conscious businesses can do this while making healthy profits and without causing 'collateral' damage to nature, employees, health, equality, or local communities. Currently, too many businesses are still operating in the old paradigm of material gain while depleting resources, making them (major) contributors to some of our biggest problems such as climate change, inequality, public health, and loss of biodiversity.

We believe businesses can be drivers of good, if they design, organize, and create their business consciously. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to educate current and future business leaders regarding how to manage more consciously so that potential damage is eliminated or minimized, and to increase benefits to society and the planet. We aim to address this challenge by creating and teaching an innovative business syllabus which includes Conscious Business Practices for bachelor-, master- and executive-level education. Based upon the Syllabus, Conscious Business Education trains current business teachers how to incorporate the Syllabus into their business education courses and/or programs.

Goals for the complete syllabus on Conscious Business (21 courses):
1. Describe and teach innovative methodologies to help business students become more conscious leaders.
2. Understand tools and methodologies for conscious business.
3. Apply tools and methodologies to manage businesses better.
4. Embed ethics and ethical dilemmas in every course.
5. Stimulate reflection and development of leaders to become more system-oriented, ethical, inclusive, and conscious.
6. Highlight the superiority of purpose-driven companies.

Overview

Course Code	TBD
Course Title	Conscious Brand Leadership (Conscious Business Education)
Degree	Master
Course Length	60 academic hours
Number of ECTS Credits	2 ECTS
Total workload	20 hours on-site lectures (module 1 & 3 = 5 hours each, module 2 = 10 hours) 20 hours of private study (reading exercises) 20 hours of assignments <u>60 hours total</u>
Prerequisites	None
Teaching and Learning Methods	• Course activity (e.g., word cloud, clustering, voting, video) • Course discussion • Group work (e.g., reflection, opinion and decision making, examples, poster, presentation) • Peer work (e.g., poster, essay, canvas, presentation)

	• Individual work (e.g., stakeholder map)
Assignments	Suggested weighting of assignments, to be adjusted by course instructor: • Group assignment 1: Poster (incl. presentation) (10% of grade) • Peer assignment 1: Essay and poster (incl. presentation) (20% of grade) • Peer assignment 2: Canvas (incl. presentation) (10% of grade) • Individual assignment 1: Final exam (60% of grade)
Course Creators from Conscious Business Education	Creator: Dr. Susanne Veldung, University of Wuerzburg, susanne.veldung@uni-wuerzburg.de *Academic peer: Jacqueline Scheidsbach, Impact Centre Erasmus,* scheidsbach@ese.eur.nl *(please note: material currently under peer review)*
Course Material Language	English

Introduction to the Course

Marketing experts are facing several new circumstances and challenges but also opportunities. So, what do future CMOs need to know? They should know how to counter challenges, conduct brand leadership consciously and realize opportunities. This is a call for Conscious Brand Leadership! Insights from marketing experts from practice and science can help to make future CMOs aware of conscious brand models and prepare them for their tasks. Applying the principles on examples acts as a dry run.

Learning Outcomes / Objectives

Learning about the main characteristics of Conscious Brand Leadership and how to apply them.

1) **Knowledge:** Recall the main characteristics and concepts of Conscious Brand Leadership
2) **Comprehension:** Understand the relevance and diversity of Conscious Brand Leadership concepts including opportunities and challenges
3) **Application:** Apply the main characteristics and concepts of Conscious Brand Leadership on selected examples
4) **Analysis:** Develop, discuss and compare principles of Conscious Brand Leadership via a poster
5) **Synthesis:** Create a canvas of Conscious Brand Leadership for a brand from a selected industry
6) **Evaluation:** Evaluate principles of Conscious Brand Leadership for a selected industry via an essay and poster

Course Content (incl. Module Description, Teaching and Learning Methods, Assignments, Required Reading, Suggested Reading)

1) Principles of Conscious Brand Leadership (5 hours on-site lectures)

Module Description

In the first module, the focus is on the development of Conscious Brand Leadership principles and the insights from a conducted panel with marketing experts from companies and agencies on Conscious Brand Leadership. First, students should define in groups their own principles of Conscious Brand Leadership. Afterwards, they will get to know the "Conscious Brand Leadership Model" and map their principles to its four tenets. Together, the top principles of Conscious Brand Leadership for the whole course are identified. In a second step,

the students learn about ten principles of Conscious Brand Leadership from a conducted panel with marketing experts from companies and agencies. In a group assignment, the students discuss, create a poster for one of the ten principles from the panel and present it to the course (in module 2). Finally, they compare their own principles of Conscious Brand Leadership with the principles from the panel.

Teaching and Learning Methods
- Group work – five principles of Conscious Brand Leadership
- Clustering – principles to Conscious Brand Leadership to "Conscious Brand Leadership Model"
- Voting – top principles of Conscious Brand Leadership
- Course discussion – reflection on own principles of Conscious Brand Leadership and principles from the panel

Assignments
- Group assignment 1: Poster (incl. presentation in module 2) – principle from panel on Conscious Brand Leadership

2) Deep Dives on Conscious Brand Leadership (10 hours on-site lectures)

Module Description
In the second module, the focus is on deep dives on five overarching topics from the panel on Conscious Brand Leadership. To identify these overarching topics, the ten principles mentioned in the panel were clustered. The five identified overarching topics are: Conscious Consumers, Conscious Branding, Conscious Communication, Conscious Transformation and Conscious Ecosystem. After the deep dives, the students get a summary that brings all five topics together. Then the students work with a peer, decide on an industry and evaluate in an essay the ten principles from panel for this industry. Based on the essay, they also create a poster and present it to the course. In a final step, the students choose a brand from the investigated industry and fill "The Sustainable Brand Model Canvas" for it.

Assignments
- Peer assignment 1: Essay and poster (incl. presentation) – principles from panel on Conscious Brand Leadership
- Peer assignment 2: Canvas (incl. presentation) – "The Sustainable Brand Model Canvas"

Required Reading
- Sheth/Parvatiyar (2021): Sustainable Marketing: Market-Driving, Not Market-Driven
- WFA/Kantar (2023): Sustainable Marketing 2030

Suggested Reading
- Firstwater (2023a): https://firstwateradvisory.com/blog/the-sustainable-brand-model-canvas
- Firstwater (2023b): https://firstwater.ae/brand-clarity-assessment
- Veldung (2018): Conscious Capitalism – Verantwortungsbewusste Unternehmens- und Markenführung. Eine konzeptionelle, praktische, theoretische und empirische Untersuchung

2.1) Deep Dive – Conscious Consumers

Module Description
The two principles / insights / statements for the deep dive on Conscious Consumers are:

#1 Push and pull for sustainability: Brands and consumers want to be more sustainable and conscious, but each side wants the other side to start.

#2 Second row syndrome of sustainability: Sustainability is not the main driver when consumers are purchasing a product or service.

First, the students learn about the interaction between businesses, brands and consumers – with a focus on the push and pull effect. In a second step, the learn about the relevance of sustainability for consumers in

purchase situations. Additionally, they are reflecting on their own value-action-gap when it comes to sustainability and consciousness on an individual basis but also within the course.

Teaching and Learning Methods
- Course discussion – sustainability values, actions and barriers

Required Reading
- O'Rourke/Ringer (2015): The Impact of Sustainability Information on Consumer Decision Making
- Zhang/Dong (2020): Why Do Consumers Make Green Purchase Decisions? Insights from a Systematic Review

Suggested Reading
- Carrington/Neville/Whitwell (2014): Lost in translation: exploring the ethical consumer intention-behavior gap
- Chauhan (2020): Value-Action Gap Towards Green Consumer Behavior: A Theoretical Review and Analysis
- EY (2021): The CEO Imperative: Make sustainability accessible to the consumer
- Kantar (2021): Sustainability Konferenz 2021
- Kantar (2021): Sustainability: The European Story
- IBM Institute for Business Value (2022): Balancing sustainability and profitability – How businesses can protect people, planet, and the bottom line
- Simon-Kucher & Partners (2021): Global Sustainability Study 2021 – Consumers are key players for a sustainable future
- Terlau/Hirsch (2015): Sustainable Consumption and the Attitude-Behaviour-Gap Phenomenon - Causes and Measurements towards a Sustainable Development
- WBCSD (2008): Sustainable consumption facts and trends from a business perspective. The business role focus area. World Business Council for Sustainable Development
- White/Hardisty/Habib (2019): The Elusive Green Consumer
- Zagar (2022): Role and Responsibility of the Consumer(s) in Sustainable Consumption

2.2) Deep Dive – Conscious Branding
Module Description
The two principles / insights / statements for the deep dive on Conscious Branding are:
#3 Sustainable education is everything: Brands have the responsibility to educate consumers about the advantages and disadvantages of their products or services.
#4 Proof of sustainability: Certifications and labels support brands to proof their sustainability and help consumers to make a more conscious choice.
First, the students learn about the obligation of brands to inform their consumers. Additionally, they get to know examples and discuss about the barriers to educate properly. In a second step, the get to know the current development on EU level regarding certifications and labels by learning about the EU Green Claim Directive. Based on that, they also learn about the EU Eco Label and B Corporation.

Teaching and Learning Methods
- Group work – examples regarding education of consumers
- Word cloud – barriers regarding education of consumers
- Video – EU Green Claim Directive
- Video – B Corporation

Required Reading
- McKinsey & Company (2023): Consumers care about sustainability—and back it up with their wallets

- European Commission (2023d): https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

Suggested Reading
- B Corporation (2023): https://www.bcorporation.net/en-us/
- Ettenson/Conrado/Knowles (2013): Rethinking the 4 P's
- European Commission (2023a): Green claims, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/circular-economy/green-claims_en
- European Commission (2023b): Circular economy: new criteria to enable sustainable choices and protect consumers and companies from greenwashing, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2779/826535
- European Commission (2023c): About the EU Ecolabel, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/circular-economy/eu-ecolabel-home/about-eu-ecolabel_en
- Mackey/Sisodia (2013): Conscious Capitalism – Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business
- Patagonia (2011): https://eu.patagonia.com/at/de/stories/dont-buy-this-jacket-black-friday-and-the-new-york-times/story-18615.html

2.3) Deep Dive – Conscious Communication
Module Description
The two principles / insights / statements for the deep dive on Conscious Communication are:
#5 Sustainable storytelling: Smaller sustainable brands have the better stories but established mainstream brands have the better budgets.
#6 Sustainable marketing dilemma: Sustainable brands need to be on unsustainable marketing channels to reach the consumers and spread their word.
First, the students learn about different types of CSR communication – also via an interview with Dr. Judith Scholz. Afterwards, they should find examples for the different types of CSR communication and reflect on them. Then the evaluate reasons for one specific type of CSR communication: Greenwashing. Afterwards, they get to know further examples of Greenwashing. Finally, the students learn about social media as relevant channel for sustainability communication – also via examples.

Teaching and Learning Methods
- Video – interview with Dr. Judith Scholz
- Group work – examples of selected CSR communication type
- Word cloud – reasons for Greenwashing

Required Reading
- Lyon/Montgomery (2013): Tweetjacked: The Impact of Social Media on Corporate Greenwash
- The Sustainable Agency (2021): https://thesustainableagency.com/blog/greenwashing-examples/

Suggested Reading
- Dutot/Galvez/Versailles (2016): CSR communications strategies through social media and influence on e-reputation: An exploratory study
- Good On You (2023): https://goodonyou.eco/
- Knight/Haddoud/Megicks (2021): Determinants of corporate sustainability message sharing on social media: A configuration approach
- Mackey/Sisodia (2013): Conscious Capitalism – Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business
- Meyer (2015): Globale Markenführung und Corporate Social Responsibility Communication (CSRC) in sozialen Netzwerken. Theoretische Ansätze und verhaltenswissenschaftliche, empirische Befunde
- Sisodia/Sheth/Wolfe (2014): Firms of Endearment – How World-Class Companies Profit from Passion and Purpose

- Too Good To Go (2023): https://www.toogoodtogo.com/en-us
- Urlaub (2016a): How Social Media Is Revolutionizing Communication For Positive Change
- Urlaub (2016b): How To Build Trust Among Younger Generations Through Social Media
- Urlaub (2016c): Success Strategies: Social Media For Conscious Brands
- Williams/Page/Petrosky (2014): Green Sustainability and New Social Media

2.4) Deep Dive – Conscious Transformation

Module Description

The two principles / insights / statements for the deep dive on Conscious Transformation are:

#7 Sharing is caring: Brands should put the common interest before their own interest and share insights on sustainable innovations and methods with competitors.

#8 Greening an industry: An industry can only be transformed towards sustainability and consciousness when established mainstream and sustainable start-up brands work together.

First, the students learn about the opportunities and challenges of sharing knowledge within an industry and with competitors – also via an example. Afterwards, they explore Conscious Transformation via an interview with Thorsten Harstall. Based on this, get to know the four types of business sustainability to experience the different stages of sustainability transformation. Finally, they learn about the role of green start-up brands and established mainstream brands in transforming an industry.

Teaching and Learning Methods
- Video – The E.V.A. initiative
- Video – Thomas Dyllick and Katrin Muff
- Video – interview with Thorsten Harstall
- Group work – examples of Greening Goliaths and Emerging Davids

Required Reading
- Dyllick/Muff (2015): Clarifying the Meaning of Sustainable Business: Introducing a Typology From Business-as-Usual to True Business Sustainability
- Hockerts/Wüstenhagen (2010): Greening Goliaths versus emerging Davids – Theorizing about the role of incumbents and new entrants in sustainable entrepreneurship

Suggested Reading
- Forsman&Bodenfors (2023): https://www.forsman.com/work/volvo-cars-the-eva-initiative
- Mackey/Sisodia (2013): Conscious Capitalism – Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business
- Volvo Cars (2023): https://www.volvocars.com/us/v/car-safety/eva-initiative-cars-equally-safe

2.5 Deep Dive – Conscious Ecosystem

Module Description

The two principles / insights / statements for the deep dive on Conscious Ecosystem are:

#9 Best employees for best businesses: Purpose-driven brands are able to win the best employees.

#10 Ecosystem for sustainability: Not only brands and consumers also governments have a responsibility to drive sustainable development.

First, the students explore that more stakeholders than the consumers are influenced by sustainable and conscious behaviour of brands. As an introduction, they reflect on companies they would identify with and be loyal to. They learn that employees are attracted by purpose-driven companies. Afterwards, the students create a stakeholder map for the company they would identify with and be loyal to. Finally, they evaluate the relevance of the stakeholder group governments for promoting sustainable and conscious behaviour of companies and other stakeholders.

Teaching and Learning Methods

- Word cloud – brand for identification and loyalty
- Individual work – stakeholder map for brand for identification and loyalty
- Course discussion – role of governments

Required Reading
- Great Place To Work (2023): https://www.greatplacetowork.com/resources/reports/the-power-of-pur-pose-in-the-workplace
- Kramer/Pfister (2016): The Ecosystem of Shared Value

Suggested Reading
- Freeman (2010): Strategic Management – A Stakeholder Approach
- Harvard Business Review (2015): The Business Case for Purpose
- Mackey/Sisodia (2013): Conscious Capitalism – Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business
- McKinsey & Company (2021) https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-per-formance/our-insights/the-search-for-purpose-at-work
- Sheth/Parvatiyar (2021): Sustainable Marketing: Market-Driving, Not Market-Driven
- Steurer (2009): The role of governments in corporate social responsibility: characterising public poli-cies on CSR in Europe

3) Models on Conscious Brand Leadership (5 hours on-site lectures)

In the third module, the focus is on an introduction of selected concepts and models of Conscious Brand Leadership. First, the students learn about the fundaments to build a sustainable and conscious brand. In this context, especially the role and impact of purpose in brand leadership is investigated. Finally, the students get to know "The Future Brand Circularity Model" by Nina Weiss as holistic approach of building a sustainable and conscious brand. This also takes place via an introduction by and interview with Nina Weiss.

Teaching and Learning Methods
- Video – introduction on "The Future Brand Circularity Model" by Nina Weiss
- Video – interview about "The Future Brand Circularity Model" with Nina Weiss

Required Reading
- Lindgreen/Xu/Maon/Wilcock (2012): Corporate social responsibility brand leadership: a multiple case study
- Golob/Podnar (2018): Researching CSR and brands in the here and now: an integrative perspective

Suggested Reading
- Aaker (2014): Aaker on Branding: 20 Principles that Drive Success
- Smith/Milligan (2015): On Purpose: Delivering a Branded Customer Experience People Love
- Weiss (2023): https://www.nina-weiss.de/

Expectation toward the students
- Attending classes (online or on site)
- Having a sense for the relevance of consciousness and sustainability
- Being curious about the topic
- Being open to experimental activities
- Having the capability to reflect

- Sharing personal experiences
- Showing the willingness to cooperate
- Participating actively in discussions
- Completing assignments

Teaching and Learning Methods used

- Course activity (e.g., word cloud, clustering, voting, video)
- Course discussion
- Group work (e.g., reflection, opinion and decision making, examples, poster, presentation)
- Peer work (e.g., poster, essay, canvas, presentation)
- Individual work (e.g., stakeholder map)
- Reading exercise

Prerequisites

None

Special Features of this Course

- Self-reflection
- Group-focused design
- Specific panel and interviews
- Digital and analogue interaction
- Interesting examples
- Latest data
- Engaging videos

Course Length

60 academic hours

Number of ECTS Credits

2 ECTS

Total Workload

This is a 2 ECTS course. This means a 2 * 30 = 60 hours workload for students.

On-site lectures	3 modules (module 1 & 3 = 5 hours each, module 2 = 10 hours)	20 hours
Private study	Reading exercises	20 hours
Assignments	4 assignments	20 hours
TOTAL		60 hours

Assignments

Suggested weighting of assignments, to be adjusted by course instructor:

- Group assignment 1: Poster (incl. presentation) (10% of grade)
- Peer assignment 2: Essay and poster (incl. presentation) (20% of grade)
- Peer assignment 3: Canvas (10% of grade)
- Individual assignment 1: Final exam (60% of grade)

Required Literature

- Dyllick/Muff (2015): Clarifying the Meaning of Sustainable Business: Introducing a Typology From Business-as-Usual to True Business Sustainability
- European Commission (2023d): https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en
- Golob/Podnar (2018): Researching CSR and brands in the here and now: an integrative perspective
- Great Place To Work (2023): https://www.greatplacetowork.com/resources/reports/the-power-of-purpose-in-the-workplace
- Hockerts/Wüstenhagen (2010): Greening Goliaths versus emerging Davids – Theorizing about the role of incumbents and new entrants in sustainable entrepreneurship
- Kramer/Pfister (2016): The Ecosystem of Shared Value
- Lindgreen/Xu/Maon/Wilcock (2012): Corporate social responsibility brand leadership: a multiple case study
- Lyon/Montgomery (2013): Tweetjacked: The Impact of Social Media on Corporate Greenwash
- McKinsey & Company (2023): Consumers care about sustainability—and back it up with their wallets
- O'Rourke/Ringer (2015): The Impact of Sustainability Information on Consumer Decision Making
- Sheth/Parvatiyar (2021): Sustainable Marketing: Market-Driving, Not Market-Driven
- The Sustainable Agency (2021): https://thesustainableagency.com/blog/greenwashing-examples/
- WFA/Kantar (2023): Sustainable Marketing 2030
- Zhang/Dong (2020): Why Do Consumers Make Green Purchase Decisions? Insights from a Systematic Review

Suggested Literature

- Aaker (2014): Aaker on Branding: 20 Principles that Drive Success
- B Corporation (2023): https://www.bcorporation.net/en-us/
- Carrington/Neville/Whitwell (2014): Lost in translation: exploring the ethical consumer intention-behavior gap
- Chauhan (2020): Value-Action Gap Towards Green Consumer Behavior: A Theoretical Review and Analysis
- Dutot/Galvez/Versailles (2016): CSR communications strategies through social media and influence on e-reputation: An exploratory study
- European Commission (2023a): Green claims, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/circular-economy/green-claims_en
- European Commission (2023b): Circular economy: new criteria to enable sustainable choices and protect consumers and companies from greenwashing, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2779/826535
- European Commission (2023c): About the EU Ecolabel, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/circular-economy/eu-ecolabel-home/about-eu-ecolabel_en
- EY (2021): The CEO Imperative: Make sustainability accessible to the consumer
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- IBM Institute for Business Value (2022): Balancing sustainability and profitability – How businesses can protect people, planet, and the bottom line
- Kantar (2021): Sustainability Konferenz 2021
- Kantar (2021): Sustainability: The European Story
- Knight/Haddoud/Megicks (2021): Determinants of corporate sustainability message sharing on social media: A configuration approach
- Mackey/Sisodia (2013): Conscious Capitalism – Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business
- McKinsey & Company (2021) https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-search-for-purpose-at-work
- Patagonia (2011): https://eu.patagonia.com/at/de/stories/dont-buy-this-jacket-black-friday-and-the-new-york-times/story-18615.html
- Simon-Kucher & Partners (2021): Global Sustainability Study 2021 – Consumers are key players for a sustainable future
- Smith/Milligan (2015): On Purpose: Delivering a Branded Customer Experience People Love
- Steurer (2009): The role of governments in corporate social responsibility: characterising public policies on CSR in Europe
- Terlau/Hirsch (2015): Sustainable Consumption and the Attitude-Behaviour-Gap Phenomenon - Causes and Measurements towards a Sustainable Development
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- Urlaub (2016a): How Social Media Is Revolutionizing Communication For Positive Change
- Urlaub (2016b): How To Build Trust Among Younger Generations Through Social Media
- Urlaub (2016c): Success Strategies: Social Media For Conscious Brands
- Veldung (2018): Conscious Capitalism – Verantwortungsbewusste Unternehmens- und Markenführung. Eine konzeptionelle, praktische, theoretische und empirische Untersuchung
- Volvo Cars (2023): https://www.volvocars.com/us/v/car-safety/eva-initiative-cars-equally-safe
- WBCSD (2008): Sustainable consumption facts and trends from a business perspective. The business role focus area. World Business Council for Sustainable Development
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- White/Hardisty/Habib (2019): The Elusive Green Consumer
- Williams/Page/Petrosky (2014): Green Sustainability and New Social Media
- Zagar (2022): Role and Responsibility of the Consumer(s) in Sustainable Consumption

Communication
The lecturer of the course should fill in her/his individual, preferred way of communication.

Classroom rules
The lecturer of the course should fill in her/his individual, preferred set of classroom rules.

Course creators from *Conscious Business Education*

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Academic peer: Jacqueline Scheidsbach, Impact Centre Erasmus, scheidsbach@ese.eur.nl (please note: material currently under peer review)