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# MANAGING SUSTAINABILITY IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

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# Presentation

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1. Background: Sustainability in mgmt. education
2. Research interest: CSR in mgmt. education
3. Methodology: Conceptual analysis of CSR
4. Findings: Towards a complex model of CSR
5. Conclusion: Summing up and implications

# 1. Background

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## The expansion of management education

- › Professionally and conceptually
  - i. Technical control
  - ii. Organizational cost-effectiveness
  - iii. Productive collaboration
  - iv. Coherent culture
  - v. Continuous learning
  - vi. ...

# 1. Background

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## The expansion of management education

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  - vi. ...
  - vii. Corporate social responsibility, incl. sustainability

## 2. Research question

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*What* to teach about CSR regarding sustainability in management education?

- › Sustainability is a contested concept
  - a. Popular: It is used a lot! Is it used too much?
  - b. Complex: It is given many forms/formulas! Is et everything?
  - c. Normative: It is a panacea for modern ills! Is it only good?
  - d. ...

## Ad.2. Defining "sustainability"

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Sustainability is an “essentially contested concept” with no clearly defined general use

- i. Refers to “some kind of valued achievement”,
- ii. Which is “internally complex”
- iii. Which allows “a number of possible rival descriptions”
- iv. And “considerable modification”

(Gallie, 1956)

(Connolly, 1993)

# 3. Methodology

## Conceptual analysis of corporates responsibilities

- › Changing business discourses on CSR

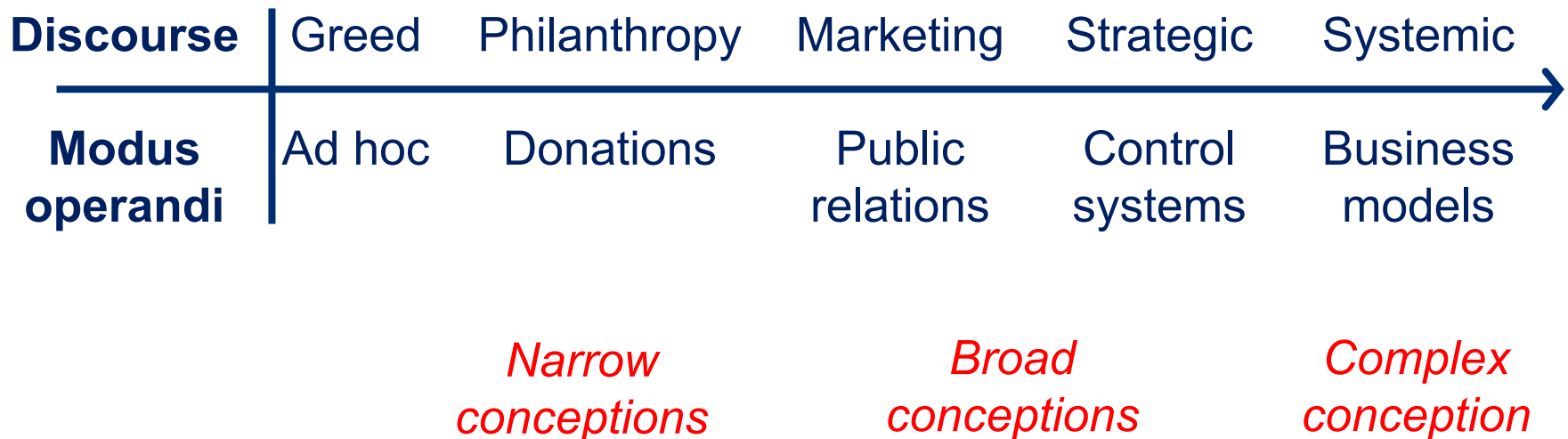


(Visser, 2011:18)

# 3. Methodology

## Conceptual analysis of corporates responsibilities

- › Changing business discourses on CSR





# 4. Findings

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## Conceptual analysis of corporates responsibilities

- › Narrow conceptions
  - Legal responsibilities and possibilities
- › Broad conceptions
  - A list of different responsibilities and possibilities
- › Complex conceptions
  - An awareness of unforeseen responsibilities and possibilities

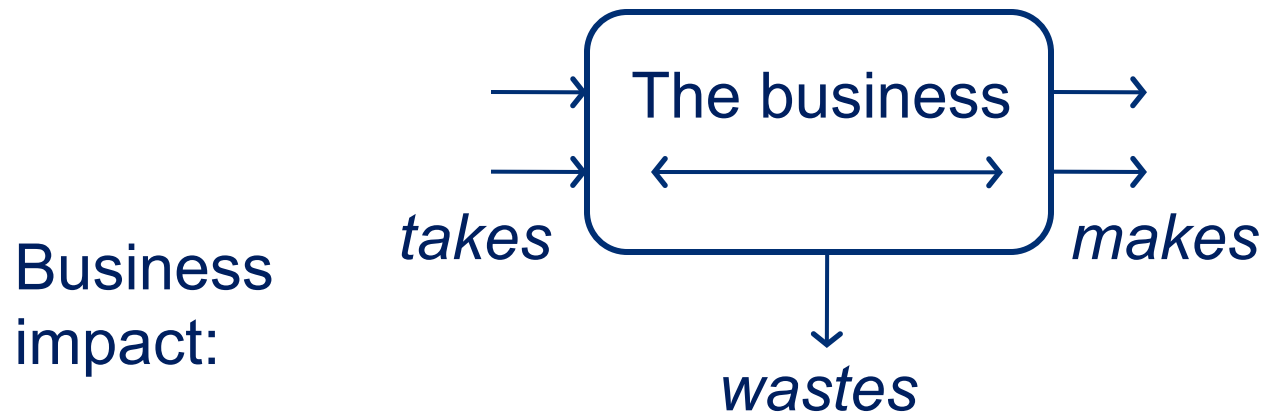
“The view that has been gaining widespread acceptance [is] that corporate officials [...] have a responsibility that goes beyond serving the interest of their stockholder. [...] This view shows a fundamental misconception of the character and nature of a free economy. In such an economy, **there is one and only one responsibility of business – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits as long as it stays within the rules of the game**, which is to say, engage in open and free competition, without deception and fraud. [...] Few trends could so thoroughly undermine the very foundations of our free society as the acceptance of corporate officials of a social responsibility other than to make as much money for their stockholders as possible.”

Friedman (1962:133)

## 4a. A narrow conception

Sustainability is the responsibility to stay in business

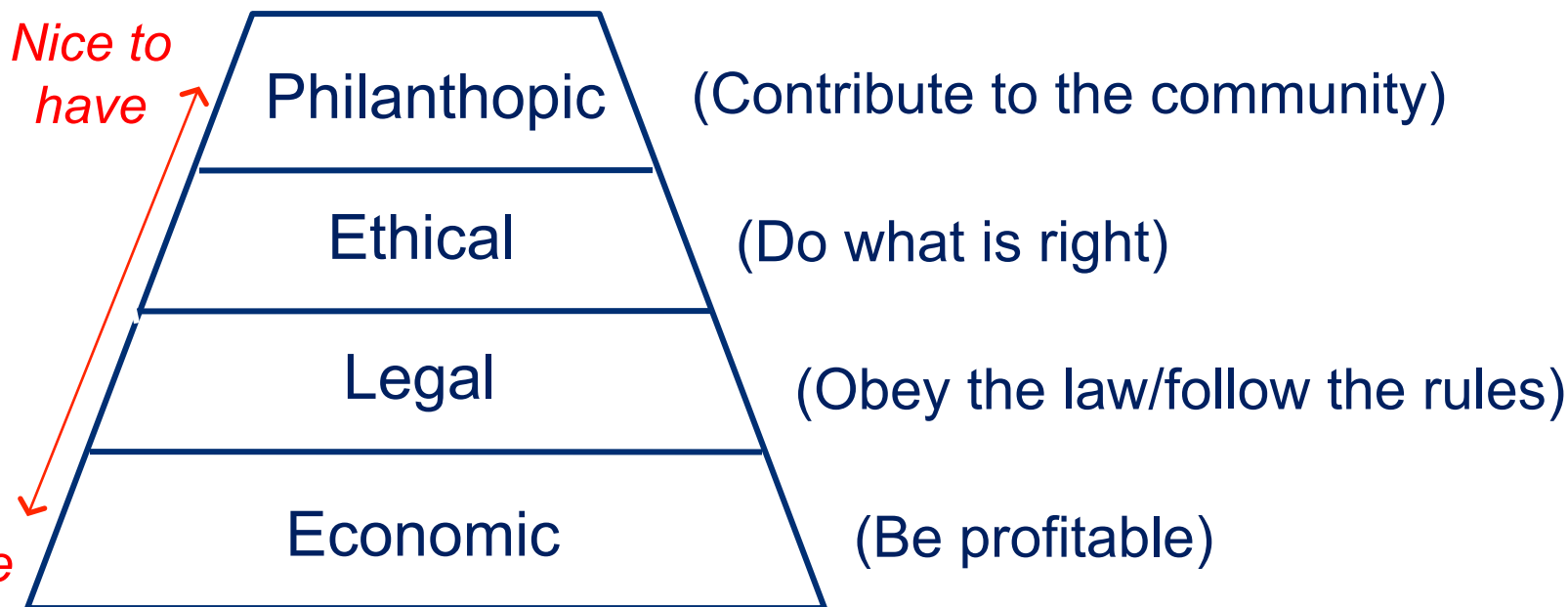
- › “The rules of the game”: External PESTLE-factors
  - Political, Economical, Social, Technological, Legal and Ethical factors



## 4b. A broad conception

Sustainability is a hierarchy of responsibilities

- › Hierarchy of corporate responsibilities



(Carroll, 1991)

# Ex.: Carrolls responsibility matrix

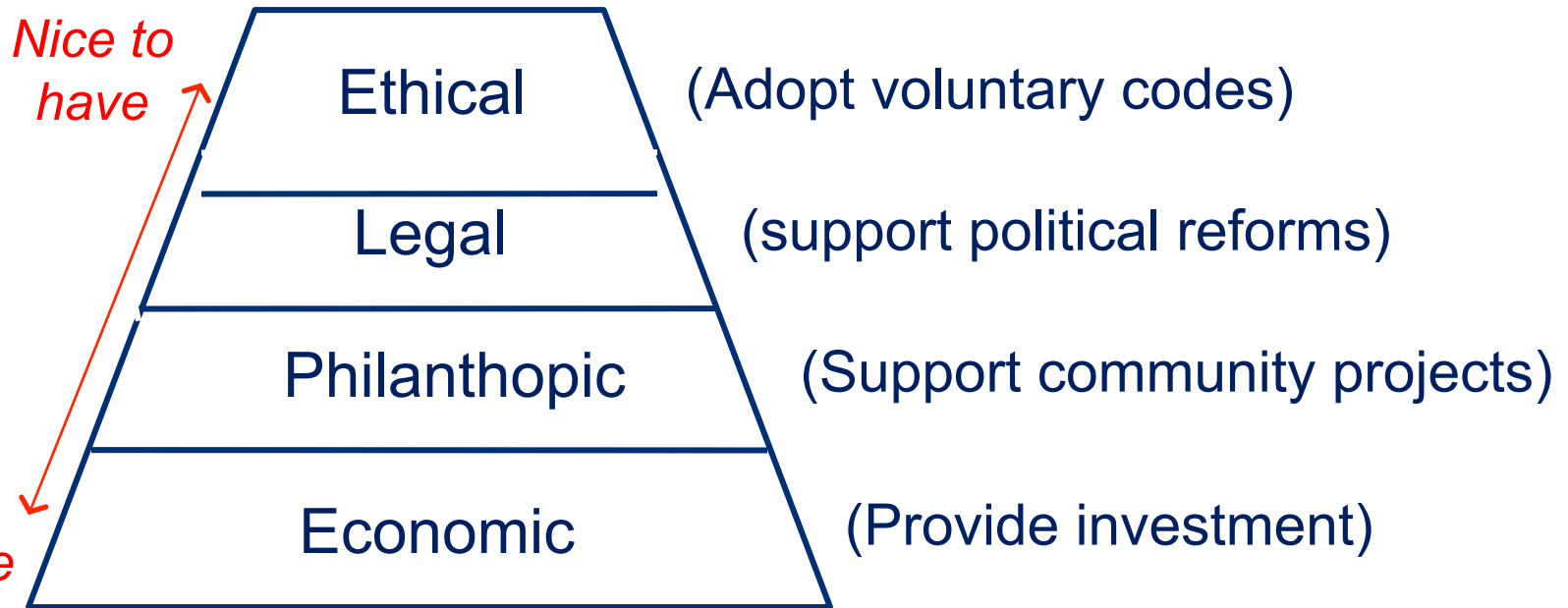
<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Legal</b>	<b>Ethical</b>	<b>Philanthropic</b>
Owners				
Customers				
Employees				
Community				
Competitors				
Suppliers				
Social activists				
Public at large				
Others				

(Carroll, 1991:44)

## 4b. An alternativ conception

Sustainability is a cultural hierarchy of responsibilities

- › Cultural specific hierarchy of corporate responsibilities



(Visser, 2011)

# 4b. A broader conception

## Three domains of CSR



(Carroll & Schwartz, 2003)

**Innovation**  
**Capital Efficiency**  
**Risk Management**  
**Margin Improvement**  
**Growth Enhancement**  
**Total Shareholder Return**

**Economic Growth**

**Job Creation**  
**Skills Enhancement**  
**Local Economic Impacts**  
**Social Investments**  
**Business Ethics**  
**Security**

**Resource Efficiency**  
**Product Stewardship**  
**Life-Cycle Management**  
**Products to Services**

**Socio-Economic**

**Eco-Efficiency**

**Sustainability**

**Social Progress**

**Socio-Environmental**

**Environmental Stewardship**

**Diversity**  
**Human Rights**  
**Community Outreach**  
**Indigenous Communities**  
**Labor Relations**

**Clean Air, Water & Land**  
**Emissions Reductions**  
**Zero Waste, Releases & Spills**  
**Biodiversity**

**Safety & Health**  
**Environmental Regulations**  
**Global Climate Change**  
**Access to Potable Water**  
**Crisis Management**



# Critique of 4a+4b

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Dominant (narrow and broad) models of CSR identify specific responsibilities

- › Strength: Fixed, ordered set of responsibilities
  - Easy to codify and account for in business settings
- › Weakness: limits CSR to pre-established standards
  - Does not describe but prescribe trade-offs (“the curse of incrementalism”)

## 4c. A complex conception

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Sustainability is a complex set of responsibilities

- › The ethics of complexity
  - Every business decision has an ethical dimension (ethics is not a separate domain)
  
- › The complexity of ethics
  - Ethical responsibilities emerge in complex networks (benefits/regulations/communities/consequences cannot be pre-determined)

“Complex thinking is not omniscient thinking. It is, on the contrary, a thinking which knows that it is always local, situated in a given time and place. Neither is it a complete thinking, for it knows in advance that there is always uncertainty.”

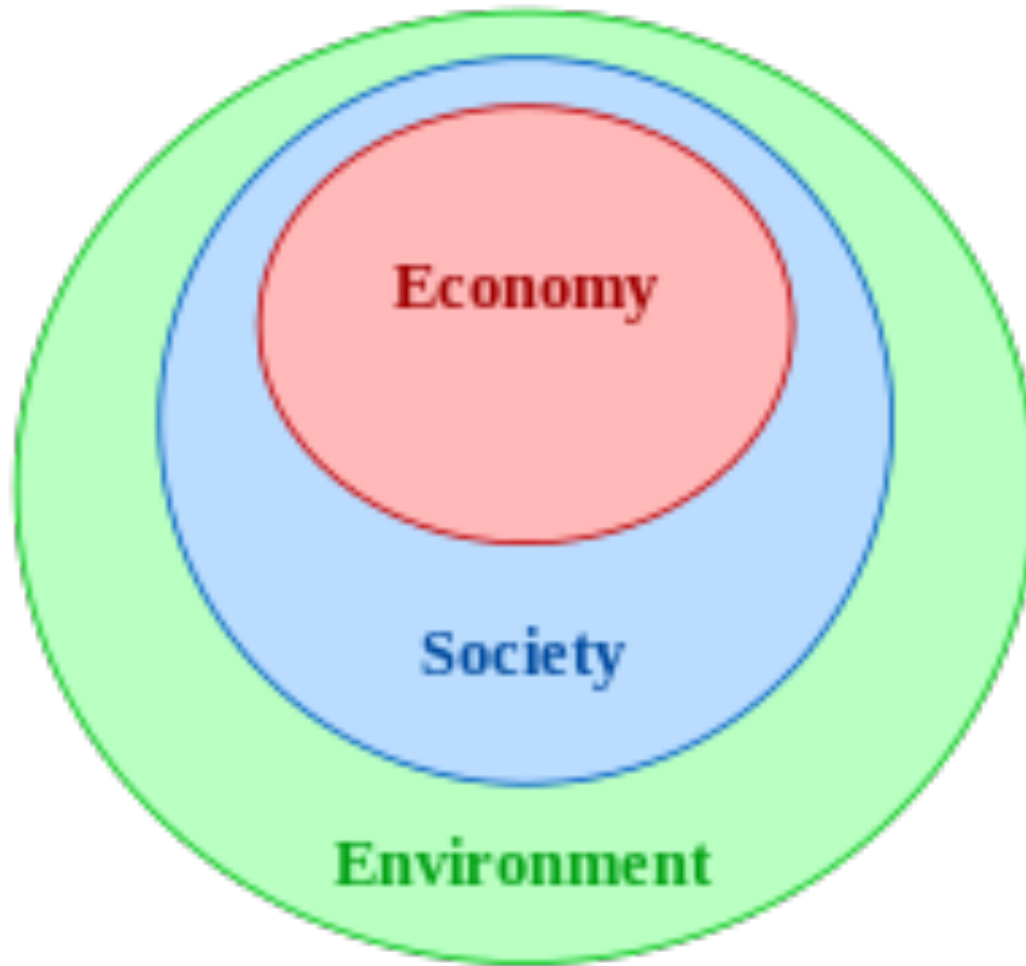
Morin (2007:97)

# Ex.: The complexity of sustainability

A corporation is embedded in a network of relations

› Continuously raising ethical questions





# 5. Conclusion

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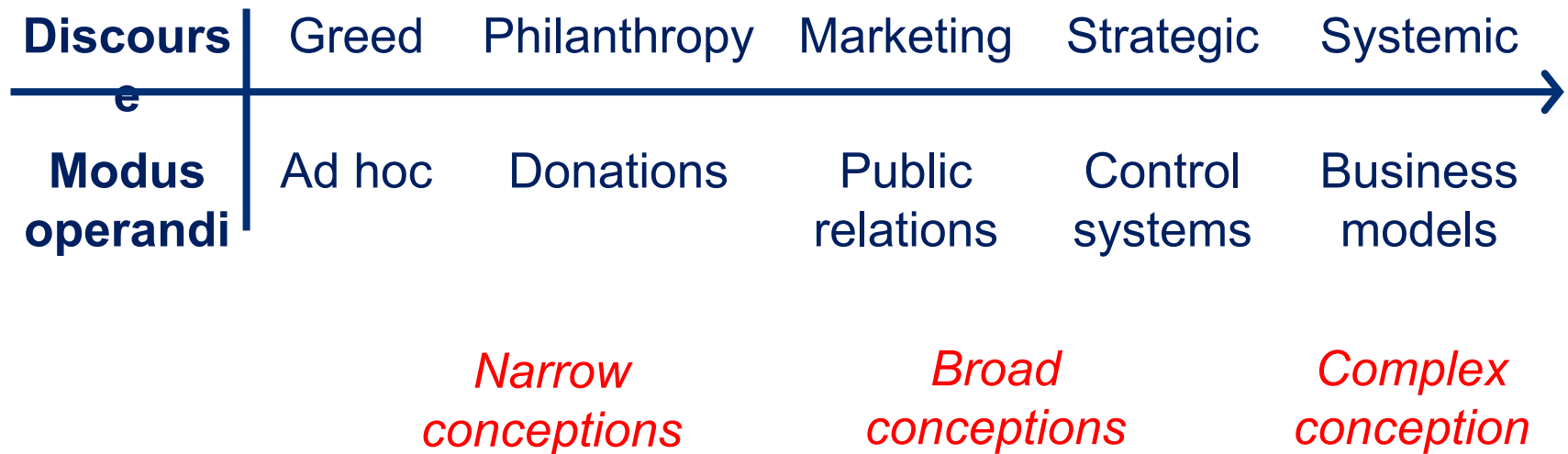
## A complex of CSR in management education

- › A complex conception describes ethical responsibilities as integral to business
  - Corporations are embedded in complex network of relations
  - CSR are not fixed (reduced to predefined contracts), but emerging, hence requiring continuous reflection

# Ad.5. Implications

## Teaching about sustainability in mgmt. education

- › Evolving discourses on CSR





# THANK YOU

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