"Paradigm Change" or No Real Change At All? A Critical Reading of the U.N. Principles for Responsible Management Education

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Abstract

Proponents of the transformative potential of the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) claim that their adoption could lead to a "paradigm change" in business schools, thus addressing many of the sustained critiques of the sector in recent years. However, this claim and the PRME themselves have to date not been subjected to systematic scrutiny from a Critical Management Education perspective. Applying a critical discourse analysis methodology, this article evaluates how business schools and management education are positioned in key PRME documentation and the Sharing Information on Progress reports of U.K. business school signatories to the PRME. A key finding is that the PRME discourse assumes and promotes a problematic understanding of management education that includes a positioning of business schools as servants of the corporate sector. The impact of this and other assumptions undermines any "paradigm change" claim. Conclusions identify potential discursive and organizational strategies to nurture a more critical, learning-centered PRME discourse.

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Introduction

The Critical Management Education (CME) field (Boje & Al Avkoubi, 2009; Perriton, 2007) has generated multiple critiques of the assumptions underlying management education—especially of its moral failings (Grey, 2004) and the way its assertion of objective, values-free, scientific research has obscured how the "ideological basis of managerialism determines the nature of the discourse in which some interests dominate and others are ignored" (Mir, 2003, p. 737). Moreover, scholars within and outside this tradition suggest that business schools must take responsibility for the contribution of the elites they have trained to many of the recent spectacular failings of corporate governance and financial institutions (Ghoshal 2005; Locke & Spender, 2011; Mintzberg, 2004; Pfeffer, 2005). CME critics (Grey, 2004; Locke & Spender, 2011) also point to how business schools provide a very particular, corporatized manifestation of the wider introduction of market values into higher education discourse (Fairclough, 1993; Lynch, 2006).

While, as will be argued below, market, corporate, and managerial discourses may be prevalent in business schools, Wagenaar (2011, p. 145) reminds us that all discourses should be considered perpetually at risk, unstable and "inherently open textured." Indeed such instability is evident in CME and wider critiques of management education, where two foci have been education for responsible leadership and for sustainability. These critiques have penetrated into the mainstream to the extent that the United Nations, supported by a wide range of leading business schools and their accrediting bodies, in 2007 launched the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME, 2007). Having attracted just more than 500 business school signatories world-wide by June 2013, the PRME are claimed to represent a "paradigm change" in business education by their proponents (Alcaraz & Thiruvattal, 2010, p. 548).

This article addresses two principal questions: How do the PRME position business schools and management education, and to what extent can the "paradigm change" claim be justified? The methodology used is a critical discourse analysis (CDA) in the Fairclough (2010) tradition. Following Fairclough, I seek to address in the PRME context "social wrongs in their discursive aspects and possible ways of righting or mitigating them" (2010, p. 11). After a brief contextualization and then outline of CDA precepts, this article follows a text-centered approach that pursues CDA's fundamental

concerns with critique, power, history, and ideology (Wodak, 2007). A focus on the dialectical relationship between semiosis and other aspects of social process seeks to clarify to what extent the PRME discourse reproduces or challenges dominant beliefs and values within management education. This approach uses analysis of genre (Askehave, 2007; Fairclough, 2010) as well as presuppositions (Saarinen, 2008; Wodak, 2007). Texts include the PRME declaration and extracts from PRME progress reports of U.K. universities. Concluding reflections propose various "conditions of possibility" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 367) which if satisfied might assist in the operationalization of a more critical, learning-orientated PRME discourse.

Constructing the Research Object: PRME Within the Contested Terrain That Is Management Education

The PRME project, the "first large-scale global initiative for change in business education" (Forray & Leigh, 2012, p.301), can be variously conceptualized and contextualized. The approach chosen is shaped by the principal interest here in the conception of management education articulated in the PRME and how this relates to the body of critical debate (Rosanas, 2006) on this topic. So the aim here is neither to chart the detailed U.N. institutional evolution of the Principles, nor to map the wider history of international declarations on education, business ethics, and sustainability (Perry & Win, 2013). Rather, in a manner consistent with a CDA, the aim is to outline a conceptual and discourse context appropriate to an examination of the PRME as a response to past and current critiques of management education.

Among these significant contextual discourses, those of the market and the corporate sector are especially salient. An escalating phenomenon whereby universities as a whole have become "hostage to the imperatives of business culture" (Giroux, 2011, p. 150) has been the focus of critiques of neoliberal ideology and marketized discourses in higher education worldwide (Fairclough, 1993; Lynch, 2006; Marginson, 2004; Munene, 2008). The impact of such marketization can be found in government policies such as the U.K. Education Act 2011 (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011); in the emphasis on the economic and entrepreneurial rather than educational, cultural, or social contribution of universities to society (Collini, 2012; Ozga, 1998); at the behavioral level in the form of corporate practices that discourage critique and dissent (Giroux, 2011; Locke & Spender, 2011); and at discourse level in terms of encouraging an ethos of competitiveness between and within universities and repositioning students as consumers for

whom education provides private rather than public benefit (Lynch, 2006; Saunders, 2012). This discourse emphasis on competition derives from its proponents' perception of the need to compete successfully in a global knowledge economy (Jessop, 2008). A manifestation of these competitive market forces in the form of an accreditation and rankings culture (Khurana, 2007) is visible in business schools internationally, where the Triple Crown of AACSB, EQUIS, and AMBA accreditation is deemed the pathway to a top place in global rankings (Financial Times, 2013). Corporate partnership including involvement in business school governance is a key indicator for such accreditation (European Foundation for Management Development, 2013).

The influence of corporate priorities in management education is central to the debate about whose values and interests business schools represent. Khurana (2007) addresses this debate in an historical analysis suggesting that USA business schools used their institutional legitimacy to advance a discourse of professionalism (with its accompanying normative emphasis on moral codes) as a means to legitimize a new management class as well as the role of corporations in modern capitalism. His thesis is that the failure, for many reasons, to legitimize management as a profession combined with the rise of neoliberal free market ideologies since the 1980s has meant that business schools have "capitulated to a view of management as agents of shareholders" (p. 6), with a related loss of professional and moral ideals. In the CME and related Critical Management Studies (CMS) traditions (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992; Grey & Willmott, 2005; Rowlinson & Hassard, 2011), others similarly depict business schools as having renounced "their moral and political responsibility to society" (Locke & Spender, 2011, p. xix). As Grey (2004) notes, CMS proponents make the "core claim . . . that management studies is . . . irredeemably political" (p. 179), that management education works in the interests of corporations and that an espoused "scientific approach" conceals an unstated set of managerial values. A commitment to a utilitarian rather than critical view of management education (Grey & French, 1996) means that such values lead to the absence of critical questioning about modern capitalism and its consequences (Zald, 2002). Grey (2004) advocates for the "need to decouple management education from its traditional interests and values" (p. 185) and argues for a renewed "moral positioning" of management education that is cognizant of the wider public interest. Management education's relevance to such wider needs, argues Bridgman (2007), comes only with the CME emphasis on a critical orientation, an orientation to educate about management rather than for management (Watson, 2001) and more attention than in the past to education in critical thinking (Antonacopoulou, 2010; Mingers, 2000; Smith, 2003).

The call for such a morally informed and critical approach to management and management education is avowedly normative and is helpfully read in the context of wider discourses about the role of universities in moral and values education. As Harland and Pickering (2011) note, there are established traditions within higher education (HE) that claim academic teaching and research to be in their truest form norm and value free. The attachment to "scientific method" within business studies is consistent with this rejection of a normative mind-set. As Blasco (2012) and Millar and Price (2012) also suggest, the insights of critical pedagogy in the CMS and CME traditions into the unstated norms in the "hidden curriculum" have made limited inroads into the collective consciousness of the business academy. Thus, what will below be shown to be a normative framework within the PRME poses a significant challenge within an academy that may neither accept its own normative culture nor agree that management education should pursue an explicitly moral purpose (Blasco, 2012; Millar & Price, 2012; Waddock, Werhane, & Rasche, 2010).

Research Method: Critical Discourse Analysis

Wodak and Meyer (2009) propose that "CDA can be defined as being fundamentally interested in analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (p. 10). CDA takes its twin interests in critique and discourse from its approach to the social, political, or educational problems or wrongs (Fairclough, 2010) that are the starting point for its analysis. This approach derives from the wider field of Critical Inquiry that has sought to develop social theory with the goal of enabling humankind to "emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection" (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 7). This tradition foregrounds an understanding of the role of ideology and culture in contributing to entrenched patterns of domination and control in society. Such patterns are central to Gramsci's (1971) notion of hegemony that in turn forms a significant emphasis within Fairclough's application of CDA.

Critical discourse analysts, working with postmodern perspectives on the inevitability of competing ways of understanding social phenomena, would of course contest the modernist assumption of a single worldview implicit in the notion of a paradigm. To undertake a CDA of the extent of any "paradigm change" promised by the PRME may thus seem a little inconsistent. My decision nonetheless to use the term has been rhetorically driven. Amid many claims for the far-reaching change potential of the PRME, that of "paradigm change" has stood out as particularly arresting. It suggests that the PRME

have the intrinsic qualities necessary to engender fundamental change in the belief systems, values, and practices of business schools. Such a claim, it seems to me, needs systematic scrutiny.

In my overall research design and execution, I draw particularly on Fairclough's "dialectical-relational approach" (2010, p. 230). This approach focuses on analyzing the close relations between semiotic and other elements of the social process, highlighting, for instance, how institutions such as business schools are different from but not separate from the semiosis, for example language and visual imagery, that pervade them. Fairclough's emphasis on economic and social structures as well as class interests has particular resonance for an analysis of a field, management education, in which corporate interests are influential. I have also found his four stage methodology, influenced by Bhaskar's (1986) concept of "explanatory critique," to be useful. Summarizing Fairclough (2010, pp. 234-239), this methodology encourages the researcher to

1. focus on a social wrong in its semiotic aspect, and then to construct a research object informed by theoretical considerations
2. identify obstacles in the way social life, including orders of discourse, is structured that make it difficult to address the social wrong
3. consider whether the social wrong is inherent in the social order, and whether the wrong can be addressed within this order or only by changing it
4. identify possible ways past the obstacles, with a focus on dialectical relations between semiosis and other elements.

Particular attention in this approach to CDA is paid to the function of genre, the interdiscursive or intertextual nature of texts, the role of language in representing and valuing, modality and positioning.

In the consideration of genre, the definition of Swales (1990) is adopted. This emphasizes genre as comprising "a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes." These purposes "constitute the rationale for the genre." Such a rationale then "shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style" (Swales, 1990, p. 58). Examples of genre might include newspaper editorials, press releases, or university prospectuses. In terms of interdiscursivity or intertextuality, Fairclough (2010) uses these terms to denote "the constitution of a text from diverse discourses and genres" (p. 96). In this regard, CDA is particularly influenced by the writing of Bakhtin (1981) and Volosinov (1986), who depict all language use as ideological and emphasize the dialogical properties of texts, that is, the idea that all texts are

links in a chain of texts. Wodak and Meyer (2009, p. 10) suggest in turn that such properties make texts "sites of struggle."

Drawing on Wodak (2007), attention is also paid to the use of presuppositions—the "explicit and implicit background knowledge that the producer of the text offers the reader as the joint starting point for communication" (Saarinen, 2008, p. 342). As Wodak (2007, p. 213) also notes, "The analysis of presuppositions . . . makes it possible to make explicit the implicit assumptions and intertextual relations that underlie text production." Their framing of the audience's interpretation includes the potential for concealing value assumptions and ideological positions (Fairclough, 2010)—particularly germane given the values-based critiques of management education highlighted earlier.

Data

Semiotic entry points are often to be found where texts lay out their authors' key positioning or argument (Fairclough, 2010). Guided by this, I chose two forms of data to investigate the positioning of business schools and understanding of management education in the PRME. First, three texts on the PRME website central to any decision to become a signatory were chosen for analysis:

- Principles for Responsible Management Education (the preamble and statement of principles which form the PRME declaration or charter; PRME, 2007)
- Why participate in the PRME? (PRME, 2013a)
- Policy on Sharing Information on Progress (PRME, 2013b)

Second, the responses of individual U.K. business schools were investigated based on their obligatory, biennial Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) reports. As of June 1, 2013, 45 U.K. Higher Education Institutions had signed up to PRME. A purposive sample of these was selected on the following criteria:

- That the business school was also AMBA (Association of MBAs) accredited. As AMBA is one of the three business school accreditation bodies recognized worldwide, this was a criterion related to general standing in the sector.
- That the institution of which the business school was a part had signed up to the voluntary Public Engagement Manifesto of the UK NCCPE (National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement). This was a criterion related to an espoused institution-wide commitment to contributing more widely to society.

Fifteen U.K. business schools met both these criteria; however, by June 1, 2013 they had produced just 14 SIP reports, totaling 203 pages.

Analysis and Discussion

The PRME Declaration (PRME, 2007)

The Principles for Responsible Management Education

As institutions of higher education involved in the development of current and future managers we declare our willingness to progress in the implementation, within our institution, of the following Principles, starting with those that are more relevant to our capacities and mission. We will report on progress to all our stakeholders and exchange effective practices related to these principles with other academic institutions:

Principle 1 | Purpose: We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy.

Principle 2 | Values: We will incorporate into our academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.

Principle 3 | Method: We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes, and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

Principle 4 | Research: We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental, and economic value.

Principle 5 | Partnership: We will interact with managers of business corporations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.

Principle 6 | Dialogue: We will facilitate and support dialog and debate among educators, students, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organizations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.

We understand that our own organizational practices should serve as an example of the values and attitudes we convey to our students.

The genre of the PRME is that of the joint declaration of principles and institutional intent. The extent of the PRME declaration's shared communicative purposes and schematic structure (Swales, 1990) with other such declarations in HE is noted by Perry and Win (2013). From the initial "we declare" through the emphatic, seven times repeated "we will," the genre appears to be

clearly established through its categorical, normative modality. The listing approach confirms the core genre, while also in the general way of lists serving to understate complexity and restrict the development of argument (Fairclough, 2010). However, while the core genre is generally suggestive of far-reaching commitments, this manifestation is remarkably tentative and limited in its scope. As Perry and Win (2013) also note, the specific commitments to action are notably modest, being to "develop . . . incorporate . . . create . . . engage in . . . interact with . . . (and) facilitate and support." Rather than specific milestones, the signatories commit to "report on progress" and "exchange effective practices."

Such phraseology reflects the influence of other genres, in particular that of HE strategy documents with their managerial ("stakeholder" orientated), research, and teaching and learning discourses. So in Principle 3 (Method) there is no call to discovery and insight but the injunction to develop "frameworks, materials, processes and environments." Attention to the style of writing likewise shows how its HE managerial taskforce authorship is projected into the more rhetorical traditions of the core genre throughout. For instance, the syntactical structure of the preamble—with its multiple qualifiers—reflects institutional caution and simultaneously acts to downplay reader expectations. Signatories' sole locus for action, we are told, is in their "development of current and future managers." They circumspectly "declare their willingness to progress" but their intended reach is only ever "within our institution" and, in a modest way, "starting with those that are more relevant to our capacities and missions." Drawing on the notion of "technologisation of discourse" that Fairclough (2010, p. 137) adopts from Foucault, we, arguably, see here in the PRME the beginnings of an "attempt to shape a new synthesis between discursive practice, sociocultural practice and texts" but one limited by a decidedly weak imaginary or "representation of how things might or could or should be" (p. 266).

An examination of the assumptions (Fairclough, 2010) or presuppositions (Saarinen, 2008; Wodak, 2007) underpinning this weak imaginary helps identify the many constraints on any reframing of the purposes of management education. What is most striking is how the PRME position business schools almost exclusively as a support service to "business corporations," that is, big business (Principle 5). The use of this existential presupposition (Yule, 1996)—business schools are there to serve corporate interests—assumes shared frames of reference, occludes other possible purposes, and is so prevalent as to be conducive to triggering consent (Wodak, 2007). The recontextualization into the Principles of the only international initiative specifically referenced is that orientated to multinational corporations (MNCs), the U.N. Global Compact. There is no mention, for example, of the UNESCO

declaration on higher education (UNESCO, 1998) with its equally relevant but very different emphases. Research commitments extend only to those that "advance our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of . . . value." Partnership is restricted to that with "managers of business corporations." All other stakeholders, including the public sector and civil society, will be engaged not in partnership but in "dialogue and debate" (Principle 6). This naturalizes or makes seem like "common sense" and ideology-free (Fairclough, 2010, p. 31) the notion that it is only corporate managers whose perspectives really matter. The absence of possibility that business schools might seek partnership with groups such as employees or trades unions is, moreover, a reminder of the taboos that Wodak (2007) invokes as central to her notion of "discourses of silence" (p. 208).

The declaration also makes a set of normative assumptions about what Neal and Finlay (2008, p. 39) in a related context denote as "progressive Western business values" being universal, shared values and priorities (Waddock et al., 2010), despite just 4 of the 60 strong drafting group coming from the Middle East and Africa. Its genesis in the MNC-orientated U.N. Global Compact and high ranking, largely Western, business school world is evidenced in its preoccupation throughout with the global economy. This "globalized" lexicon provides, it might be suggested, an implicit endorsement of an MNC-led globalization agenda. This, together with the explicit sole interest in serving "business corporations," attaches the PRME to a very particular and far from universal value base. Rasche and Escudero's (2010) claim in explaining and defending the PRME that "there is a certain *necessary* contextual emptiness when developing and implementing *global* principles because the contexts that business schools operate in may differ" (p. 247) is thus an interesting one. Although their citing of the need to respect factors such as local laws and educational values is uncontroversial, these Principles are, I would argue, anything but empty of context as consideration of their universalist claims and underlying corporate discourse suggests.

Also evident is the presupposition that there is a common understanding of what responsible leadership and the values of global social responsibility entail (Millar & Price, 2012). These conceptualizations are, in fact, contested. Lourenco (2013), for example, in reviewing the contrasting and contested approaches to encouraging sustainable business practices, identifies "a move from a normative perspective to an instrumental perspective" focused on corporate self-interest (p. 296). Similarly, Windsor (2006) identifies the competing claims of, among others, utilitarian versus ethically based notions of and justifications for corporate social responsibility.

Further constraining the PRME imaginary are assumptions—with unresolved tensions between them—about the normative role of HE and

academics in values education (Harland & Pickering, 2011). The tensions center on whether it is the role of a business school to inculcate a particular set of moral values or whether the responsibility is to develop the competencies required to assess ethical and environmental issues. So, on one hand, Principle 1 focuses on the "capabilities of students" but these then elide into what is a moral commitment to "work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy." Principle 3 requires signatories to create "effective learning experiences" but they have a predetermined outcome—"responsible leadership," not the capacity to act responsibly. The final undertaking to "serve as an example" leaves it to the reader to determine whether "convey" implies "communicate" or "inculcate into." This tension is accentuated by the use of subject positioning. The institutional "we" is clear at the outset but by the final statement "we understand" an elision to "we the Deans of business schools" has manifestly occurred. Thus, the final statement encapsulates these normative tensions, invoking as it does not only institutional responsibilities but also an implied individual set of "values and attitudes."

The assumption of consensus throughout serves to conceal contestation, whether in relation to the impetus toward business commitment to responsible practices (Lourenço, 2013) or in relation to the business school—corporate relationship (Locke & Spender, 2011; Pfeffer, 2005). The disjuncture between a contested reality and a public construal of consensus is perhaps part of an unacknowledged rationale for the limited undertakings of the PRME. The portrayal of consensus also serves to distance this "paradigm change" (Alcaraz & Thiruvittal, 2010) of a declaration and its signatories from the CME perspective on the need for business schools to be sources of critique of business practices (Grey, 2004; Mingers, 2000). Such a challenge seems to have no role in the collaborative world the PRME depict. The implications of this silence become clear if the commitments within Principle 1 are examined in any depth. The framing of these commitments is related also to the positioning of business students within the PRME that, although not a central focus of this article, is certainly relevant here. Any student of politics, environmental, or development studies would be inducted into the critiques of entrenched corporate practices and government policy that underpin debates about a "sustainable global economy." Yet in the PRME discourse such a goal is presented as uncontested. There is no reference in Principle 1 and throughout key PRME documentation to the student capabilities and analytical skills necessary to pursue such complex objectives. Arguably, this is a great disservice to business school students (Ghoshal, 2005; Grey, 2004).

Underlying these absences is the invisibility of any discourse suggesting alternatives to the particular form of capitalism that drives the modern global economy. That "responsible management education" might involve

questioning the economic order is not entertained. This is consistent with the depiction of business schools' self-defined service role to the corporate sector and, arguably, reflects the ideological nature of the role many play in maintaining such silences and discourse positions (Fairclough, 2010; Mir, 2003; Mitroff, 2004).

In all, the PRME are, I suggest, suffused by multiple presuppositions that effectively naturalize a set of highly contestable claims about the Principles themselves and about what business schools are or should be for. From a CME and CDA perspective, this confirms the extent to which a problematic, value base remains embedded in the PRME and the way this acts as a brake on any notion of "paradigm change."

PRME Reporting: The Sharing Information on Progress Reports

In the SIP Policy (PRME, 2013b) reporting is positioned as an "opportunity" to do three things—"share information with stakeholders," "create a learning community," and also "provide information on progress achieved." There is a shared understanding of who the principal readers will be—the PRME Secretariat and other business schools—and the contextual knowledge they will bring to their reading. In genre terms, these characteristics suggest a shared "set of communicative purposes . . . recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community" (Swales, 1990, p. 58). A recommended, standard "schematic structure" (p.58) that leads to largely the same elements across all the reports (statement of commitment by senior university figure, progress reports in relation to each Principle, etc.) confirms the genre status. Although the PRME Secretariat is not formally a certifying body, the broad genre is that of compliance or accountability report to an accrediting agency.

Across the SIP reports studied there are notable style and presentational differences; some displaying more of a marketing orientation with extensive use of visual imagery, a more explicit concern for market positioning and more overtly promotional prose. Others are marked more by the characteristics of institutional reports—little use of visual imagery, layouts which do not seek to attract, and what might be termed a more corporate higher education style. Despite these differences, the strong, shared, underlying genre rationale (Swales, 1990) is clear and contributes to the many common characteristics that are the principal focus of the SIP extract analyses that follow.

A considerable disparity in the extent of PRME-related endeavor is shown across the sample of 14 SIPs, confirming findings of the content analyses of various SIP report samples carried out elsewhere (Godemann, Herzig, Moon, & Powell, 2011; Perry & Win, 2013; Stachowicz-Stanusch, 2011). More

significant for this analysis, though, is that across 200 pages of reporting there is only one brief but then unexplored comment about significant obstacles to PRME implementation, when the Director of the Southampton Management School notes that

> the mind-sets underpinning many of the management theories, papers, and textbooks are still rooted in the paradigm of profit maximization and economic growth. This inevitably creates expectations and . . . makes it more challenging to embed sustainable development as a core discourse. (University of Southampton Management School, 2012, p. 3)

Notably, too, 13 out of the 14 SIP reports studied entirely omit the final section recommended by the SIP Policy—"Desired Support (helpful to PRME implementation)," the section most clearly linked to the PRME objective of being a learning community. Just one report shows a minor interest in such learning. However, this absence of attention to organizational learning should perhaps not be a surprise as the three-page "Tips on How to Submit Your SIPs" (PRME, 2013c) document focuses almost exclusively on "the best possible way to showcase publicly your competitive advantage." Likewise the document "Why Participate in the PRME?" (PRME, 2013a) places a similar emphasis on the benefits of being "ahead of the curve" and ensuring "competitiveness in the market."

PRME Reporting: Analysis of the Opening Statements of Four Submitted SIP Reports

As noted earlier, my decision on where to concentrate my textual analysis was influenced by Fairclough's (2010) recommendation to seek semiotic entry points where writers lay out their key positioning. The potential benefits for analytical focus of evaluating a common element of the shared schematic structure (Swales, 1990) also seemed clear. Thus, while I acknowledge claims could be made for the particular insights offered by other SIP components, I opted for the required introductory statements of commitment from senior university figures as a useful point of entry. Criteria for extract choice were (a) representativeness of the content of the full sample of introductory statements and (b) characteristics that facilitated the further exploration of three themes already identified: intertextuality, normativity, and the role of presuppositions. An additional reason for including Extract D was the way that it both stood out from and demonstrated conformity with the other 13 SIPs.

Extract A. Nottingham University Business School: Extract From Statement of the Director

As part of a global university with campuses in the UK, China, and Malaysia, we take very seriously our responsibility to educate future business leaders to take a broader ethical and societal perspective on business practices and finance. Under the leadership of the School's International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility (ICCSR), our success in embedding corporate social responsibility into our curriculum fully supports this objective. Nottingham brings a distinctive global awareness and perspective to these issues that reflect the increasingly global nature of business.

—(Nottingham University Business School, 2010)

Extract B. Oxford Brookes University Business School: Extract From Statement of the Vice Chancellor

The mission, vision and values of Oxford Brookes University are closely aligned to the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME).

Brookes 2020, the university's strategy for the decade, clearly states that: We will ask our staff and students to work together to improve the human condition locally, nationally and internationally by engaging in active global citizenship and undertaking research that resonates around the world. . . . We will build on a tradition of distinction in academic, professional and social engagement to enhance our reputation as a university which educates citizens for lives of consequence. These fundamental principles are continued within the Faculty of Business in its delivery of, and research into, management education.

—(Oxford Brookes Business School, 2012)

Extract C. Newcastle University Business School: Extract From Director's Statement

The world is changing, continuing to demand new generations of leaders prepared to address the increasingly complex challenges that we face as a society. As international business schools compete for the best and brightest faculty and students, it has become increasingly clear that conventional approaches to business education can no longer meet the needs of the marketplace. Organisations today operate in environments that are

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very different from what we have seen historically—to meet the demands of the changing world, the challenge faced by business schools today calls for nothing short of a reinvention of management education. Newcastle University Business School is committed to PRME and delivering on the promise to educate responsible business leaders and outstanding global citizens . . .
—(Newcastle University Business School, 2012)

Extract D. University of Leicester School of Management: Extract From Head of School's Statement

The School of Management . . . saw in the initiative the capacity to broaden and deepen . . . reflection upon and challenge to extant organizational and managerial practice . . . Given our organizations have an enormous impact on all of us . . . we believe there is a pressing need to debate management and organizations . . . And within such debate we seek to understand whose objectives do they serve and why and how. Who benefits from what these organizations do or do not provide? Who does not? . . .

   Management and organizations have undoubtedly created many of the achievements of modern civilization, but are also profoundly implicated in the pressing global problems facing us today . . . Very little existing management research or teaching deals directly with issues such as these . . . We challenge common assumptions about the techniques and goals of organising, managing . . . (and) . . . we actively seek out and work with non-western and non-capitalist ideas . . . In short, our commitment to the principles enshrined in PRME is deep seated, long standing and thoroughly embedded in everything that we do.
—University of Leicester School of Management (2011)

   The analysis which follows offers further perspectives on three themes that have already emerged from scrutiny of the PRME declaration: intextuality and its implications, the PRME as a normative challenge, and the significance of presuppositions.

   The consideration of intertextuality takes Extracts A, B, and C as its focus. The substantially different order of discourse within Extract D is explored later in the context of normativity. A, B, and C show a preoccupation with building institutions with "global" or "world class" presence or impact,

whether through the establishment of an International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility, engaging in "active global citizenship" or reflecting on challenges as an "international business school." Here the discourses surrounding world-class research (as sought in the U.K. Research Evaluation Framework), the globalized knowledge economy (Jessop, 2008), and the international business school ratings tables are evident. All three also show the kind of HE marketing discourse that Askehave (2007) has identified in a related context. The writers assert that their institutional approaches are "distinctive," need to "meet the demands of the marketplace," or will lead to research that "resonates around the world." Further interdiscursive analysis also reveals signs in all three of the managerial preoccupations of higher education—the concern with "embedding" curriculum change, upholding "Brookes 2020, the university's strategy for the decade" or Newcastle's concern with a new variant on a common theme, "*outstanding* global citizens (italics added)."

What intertextual evaluation highlights is how the discourses of managerialism, the market and global competitiveness in HE, so strong in these three extracts and indeed throughout most of the SIP narratives, have the potential to colonize (Fairclough, 2010) the PRME project. Moreover, in these discourses challenge, critique, and alternative worldviews are neither visible nor welcome characteristics (Lynch, 2006). Yet these are the very characteristics that CME and other critiques have identified as missing in management education (Ghoshal, 2005; Grey, 2004).

In relation to the PRME normative challenge, both Extracts A (Nottingham) and B (Oxford Brookes) reflect commitments to specific, desired value sets in their graduates. For Nottingham this is framed as a moral imperative: "we take very seriously our responsibility to educate future business leaders to take a broader ethical and societal perspective." For Oxford Brookes the expectation is that staff and students will "work together to improve the human condition." These normative statements of intent are a stronger, less nuanced version of the normative assumptions in the Principles themselves. Extract C (Newcastle) is more consistent with the PRME positioning in the discourse around teaching of values. For instance, the need to educate "leaders prepared to address . . . challenges" leaves unclear whether the preparation involves developing skills, including ethical decision making ones, or whether preparedness denotes a willingness to exercise moral agency. The final Newcastle sentence emphasizing the institutional commitment serves certainly to distance the normative responsibility from the more personal "we" used previously.

Extract D (Leicester), though not focused on graduate outcomes, is explicitly normative in many other ways. It offers an analysis of the role of business

schools that reflects a CME value base and order of discourse substantially different from the other three universities and indeed the rest of the sample. The text emphasizes a culture of critique and "challenge to extant organizational and managerial practice." Urgency is communicated through delineation of the "pressing need to debate management," a series of rhetorical questions such as "Who benefits . . . Who does not?", phrases such as "profoundly implicated," and the long (here abbreviated) list of global problems in which organizations are said to be implicated. Moreover, the response of business schools to date is problematized—"very little existing management research or teaching deals directly with issues such as these."

What we see then are four different positionings of institutions' normative responsibilities, with only one directly reflecting that of the PRME declaration itself. However, what is common to these depictions and, as noted previously, to the SIP narratives in general, is an absence. This takes the form of a lack of engagement with the organizational complexities of adopting a new and explicit set of normative values into prevailing formal as well as hidden curricula (Blasco, 2012).

In addition to assumptions as to the normative role of business schools, analysis of the PRME declaration also identified a number of other presuppositions. The four extracts reflect these to sometimes quite varying degrees. While a dominant orientation to the needs of "business leaders" is visible in both Extracts A and C, added dimensions in Extract C are a wider conception of whom the business school is there to serve—seen in alternating references to "business" and "organizations"—and a concern also to develop "global citizens." Extract B shows an even more explicit discourse around citizenship and no presupposition about a corporate support role. In Extract D there are emphatically no assumptions about business schools being at the service of corporations. The text refers to "organizations" not "businesses" throughout. Moreover, unlike the PRME declaration and the other SIP extracts, in D there is an explicit rejection of any assumption that there are universal norms in relation to what management is and of the unquestionable status of the capitalist mode of production.

Although the presuppositions in the PRME declaration may not be uniformly present in these SIP extracts, all four authors do show a common presupposition about the self-evident value of the Principles. Extract B draws attention to the natural fit between the "mission, vision and values" of the institution and the PRME. The writer of Extract C calls for "nothing short of a reinvention of management education" and implies syntactically that the Principles constitute just such a reinvention. Extract D notes that Leicester's "commitment to the principles enshrined in PRME is deep seated, long standing and thoroughly embedded in everything that we do." What is puzzling is

how even the Leicester orientation to critique does not—in this extract and in their wider SIP report—extend to the Principles themselves. Partly this can be attributed to the genre rationale; the SIP policy requires a formal recommitment to the PRME in these reports. However, this further example of a discourse of silence (Wodak, 2007) reinforces the impression identified earlier of what might be termed a hegemony of consensus in the PRME discourse. Indeed all 14 SIP narratives studied, regardless of extent of activity, depict the PRME as axiomatically valuable as currently framed. They denote an overwhelmingly consensual environment and unchallenged progression from one PRME-related achievement to the next. Arguably, this is a direct result of the way PRME participation and its reporting genre are positioned mainly as a promotional strategy (PRME, 2013a & 2013c) in a sector preoccupied with rankings, accreditations, and market positioning (Khurana, 2007). As Fairclough (2010) also reminds us, it is the nature of genre to influence "what discourses are prompted, encouraged and/or excluded" (p. 435).

A central presupposition in much of the PRME documentation therefore seems to be that the need to address serious questions about the purpose of management education can best be justified by a marketing rationale. What then follows are SIPs in which the organizational complexities involved in addressing such questions tend to be glossed over with a view to corporate reputation enhancement. Peredo and Moore's (2008, p. 692) concern that PRME adoption might become a form of "flag" flying rather than a route to critical reflection seems apposite. In contrast, a majority of published articles on actual PRME implementation projects (e.g., Kirby, 2012; Maloni, Smith, & Napshin, 2012; Solitander, Fougère, Sobczak, & Herlin, 2012; Young & Nagpal, 2013) all identify forms of internal resistance and/or the complex organizational adaptation and learning processes required.

Conclusions

I have noted instances in the SIPs where the PRME discourse at institutional level does not uniformly reflect the presuppositions identified in the PRME declaration. This is consistent with an understanding of how discourses evolve and interdiscursivity operates. Nonetheless, my principal argument is that the core PRME discourse presupposes and promotes a consensual understanding of management education that is pervasive, problematic, and takes various forms. First, it positions business schools as the servants of the corporate sector. Second, it encourages a marketing-led rather than learning-led model of PRME adoption and practice. And third, it assigns to and assumes within business schools a clearly normative function in relation to values education but embodies unresolved tensions both in relation to the Principles

themselves and between two distinctly different goals: (a) that of producing graduates with a particular set of moral values and (b) that related to graduates developing a set of competencies to deal with the ethical and moral dimensions of organizational life.

As a consequence of these assumptions, I contend that the PRME present a highly contestable set of propositions without acknowledging or encouraging the types of analysis, critique, or graduate capabilities essential to embedding sustainability and responsibility in organizations across all sectors, and particularly in those resistant to such goals. Moreover, the lack of clarity and unresolved tensions in relation to values education encourage, as the SIPs show, a lack of direct engagement by business schools in the challenges involved in a shift to a normative mode. As a consequence of the promotion of PRME to signatories as primarily a market positioning opportunity, I also contend that the PRME project has undermined its potential for educational change of the kind it purports to seek. In addition, linguistic analysis of PRME documentation and the SIPs suggests a PRME discourse at significant risk of colonization by more powerful HE discourses. Such analysis also points to how a strong genre rationale has encouraged in the SIPs the dominance of a marketing discourse and the silencing of critical perspectives.

In terms of Fairclough's Bhaskar-influenced (1986) research methodology, the PRME demonstrate semiotically the structural hold that the corporate sector continues to have over this attempted reframing of the purposes of management education. In Fairclough's (2010) terms, then, it would seem that the social order does indeed need the continuance of the "social wrong" (p. 235). The absence of critique of the PRME in the SIPs also suggests how institutionally weak alternative imaginaries are in the business school sector.

Nonetheless the PRME are a response to a social and discourse space that has opened as a result of challenges both to management education and, in wider society, to some of the negative consequences of corporate power in action. What then, in Fairclough's (2010) terms, might be some of the "conditions of possibility" (p. 367) that would make for the emergence of a more critical, learning-centered, PRME-related discourse? Assuming no moves to redraft the PRME to address the critiques identified, this evaluation has suggested at least three possibilities.

The first lies in the potential to develop discursive and practical strategies out of the public engagement, public sector, and civil society dialogue and partnerships that are already reflected in business schools' work. Stachowicz-Stanusch (2011) and the SIP reports studied here indicate the scope there is to strengthen such local discourse and practice. This could include developing vocal constituencies with an active interest in business schools also serving a

wider set of noncorporate stakeholders and increasingly holding them to account for so doing (Lynch, 2006). Doing so might also contribute to the realization of Bridgman's (2007) CME-located call for a critical and engaged business school, acting as a source of public comment on economic and organizational issues. As Bridgman notes, this would draw on the tradition of the "democratic function of the university as a source of independent criticism" as well as its often claimed "moral purpose" of pursuing free and open intellectual enquiry (2007, p. 426). It could also help address dilemmas of identity and purpose experienced in the CMS field more widely (Clegg, Kornberger, & Carter, 2006; Rowlinson & Hassard, 2011). Such a shift toward diversity in the order of discourse within business schools would also encourage a different student experience, potentially encouraging greater emphasis on critical engagement with, for example, contrasting public versus corporate sector value creation claims.

A second strategy could entail advocating for the reformulation both of the PRME call to participate (PRME, 2013a) and the SIP reporting process (PRME, 2013b) in order to return the project to one of its stated goals of being a learning network. At present the SIP process appears acutely compromised by its marketing orientation. For the PRME discourse and associated practices to deepen, incentives and expectations to engage with complexity and acknowledge adversity need encouragement. While this might impede PRME signatory recruitment somewhat, it would help address the quality of engagement concerns identified here and elsewhere (e.g., Peredo & Moore, 2008; Perry & Win, 2013).

Third, PRME advocates could more strategically use the organizational change processes vis a vis PRME that Godemann et al. (2011) document, so as to engage colleagues more directly with the challenges of adopting inherently normative concepts. In a similar vein, Forray and Leigh (2012) underline the need in PRME research for "more connection to the organizational development and change literatures" (p. 307). Theoretically robust approaches to change are needed to involve academics who might have traditionally eschewed a normative stance or chosen not to engage with their unstated values positions. Harland and Pickering (2011) explore such challenges in detail, identifying in particular the difficulties for academics in recognizing and articulating their own norms, and the need to confront the choice between teaching norms from foundationalist or relativist standpoints. Promising suggestions come from Millar and Price (2012) as well as Fougère, Solitander, and Young (2014). The former outline a methodology for using Habermas's communicative rationality construct as a framework for engaging with the PRME that encourages the exploration and articulation of value systems and the evolution of shared understandings of norms. With similar goals in mind,

the latter report on the application of a methodology based on Rorty's under-standing of moral imagination and his notion of final vocabularies. Further ways to engage in work on values are also suggested by Audebrand's (2010) exploration of alternatives to the root metaphor of war prevalent throughout management thinking.

Critical discourse analysts argue that no matter how hegemonic a dis-course may appear to be at a particular point in history, there will always be new and emergent discourses challenging its stability. This analysis suggests, however, that from a CME perspective the PRME, as currently conceived and enacted, have a very limited capacity to challenge the dominance of corpo-rate interests and values within management education discourse. Therefore claims of "paradigm change" seem somewhat far-fetched. Nevertheless, this study has identified potential strategies to nurture a more critical, learning-centered PRME discourse that if pursued might encourage more substantive shifts in the values and practices of business schools.

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