

Hello. My name is **Michel Anteby** and I am a **professor of organizational behaviour in Boston University**. I decided to take part in this lesson on responsible consumption because as I soon as I heard about this project, I said to myself that we also needed **to talk about responsible production**. **In fact, as consumers, we are part of an ecosystem, but as producers, business leaders in particular are the main players in these issues and dynamics**. This is because they have to produce goods in a responsible manner, goods that we can buy, but also because they themselves are consumers, via their subcontractors, of goods and services which are very important in the national and world economy. **I should like to share some ideas with you about the production of business leaders and more specifically, about the socialization of business leaders in American business schools. I have written a book entitled L'Ecole des Patrons which deals with the socialization of professors at Harvard Business School in the USA, but also with the socialization of students. This book shows that it is very difficult, at least in the context that I have studied, to fix an ethical or moral standpoint, for example on responsible consumption, in this academic context.**

The main reason for this, is that the process in place for socializing students and teachers encompasses the most diverse points of views possible. At first sight, it is interesting and it is a laudable project, but at the same time it creates a sometimes rather perverse dynamic which makes it very difficult, even impossible, to take an institutional standpoint on a given subject, particularly on sustainable consumption, because this standpoint is likely to be in opposition to that of another person. It is in this sense that there are mechanisms that I call **"meaningful silence"** which make these sorts of discussions very delicate and prevent an institutional standpoint. **I shall give you a specific example of what I mean by "meaningful silence"**.

In the type of teaching done at Harvard Business School, students have to analyse case studies in each session which then become the subject of a group discussion. These case studies or *teaching notes*, are the basis of teaching in the school. But more importantly for us, the case studies are also provided with teaching notes for professor use only, to show them how to teach the case studies. I did an in-depth analysis of these notes and I noted that **the notes give a precise step-by-step guide of the explanation of a lesson, i.e.,** how to start the first five minutes, how to make transitions between the various parts of the lesson, and so on.

On the other hand, what the notes do not do is present a final conclusion or a moral or ethical standpoint to solve a problem within a company. And this intentional silence aims at allowing many viewpoints to emerge. At the same time, it prevents a firm institutional standpoint. This lack of standpoint was made glaringly obvious during a period a few years ago in the school where there was a discussion on gender equity in the teaching body. Initiatives were started and committees set up, but what was rarely heard was a collective standpoint on the subject, and in fact, there cannot be one as taking a standpoint on this subject also implies taking an opposite view from other people on the same subject.

Avoiding conflict, "meaningful silence", and many other dynamics, all contribute to this incapacity, I believe, to adopt stronger standpoints. If you are interested in these issues, I encourage you to delve a little deeper in the tunnels of the school, literally, because there are tunnels, and to read a little about this dynamic in L'Ecole des Patrons. **Without responsible production, we cannot talk about responsible consumption. To understand how to produce responsibly you have to see through the eyes of the business leaders.**