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Stakeholder engagement in construction: exploring corporate social responsibility (CSR), ethical behaviours and practices

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Abstract

Stakeholder engagement is an under theorized area of construction project management research. Often simplified as an act of corporate social responsibility, the complexity of the engagement concept, its` processes and consequences evades closer scrutiny and analysis. This paper provides an in-depth analysis of stakeholder engagement to reveal its` theoretical and practical complexity; two complimentary models of stakeholder engagement (Greenwood, 2007; Lane and Devin, 2018) being mobilized to empirical data from a hospital case study project. The result is a re-theorization of stakeholder engagement as a complex, entwining process of responsibility, organizational action and work package requirements where stakeholder engagement and agency (i.e. ethical treatment of stakeholders) are understood as separate variables that result in shifts between responsible, paternalistic, neoclassic and strategic behaviours. The contribution lies in a more sophisticated understanding of stakeholder engagement being attained: shifts between stakeholder engagement and agency defining relations between parties in CSR terms; the ethical aspirations of AEC organizations being impacted by daily project activities; the unique

characteristics of stakeholder engagement in construction (e.g. binding of party interests; effect of subcontractor entry; collective blame/praise) being brought into focus. Resulting recommendations include periodic review of engagement activity to ensure the CSR strategic objectives of organisations are aligned to stakeholder engagement work.

Keywords: stakeholder management; stakeholder engagement; stakeholder theory; corporate social responsibility; CSR.

Introduction

Stakeholder engagement is traditionally considered a key stage of stakeholder management work (together with stakeholder identification, analysis, planning: action implementation: APM, 2012). However, whilst stakeholder management continues to be recognised as important for project management success (c.f. APM, 2012; Turner, 2009), stakeholder engagement often evades closer scrutiny as an activity, being under theorized and often misunderstood in the construction project management literature. Moreover, the relation between stakeholder engagement, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and ethical behaviours of construction companies is seldom recognized as significant. Indeed, stakeholder engagement is often simply considered to be an act of corporate social responsibility (Lane and Devin, 2018), when in fact it may be morally neutral practice (Greenwood, 2007). The vagueness surrounding stakeholder engagement and its` relation with corporate social responsibility in construction merits closer analysis so that a fuller comprehension of its` effect and consequence may be established.

This paper aims to clarify stakeholder engagement in a construction context by revealing the multifaceted nature of CSR in action. It explores how stakeholder engagement is a complex entwining of responsibility, actions of multiple parties (e.g. lead contractor; subcontractor) and work package requirements, so that engagement is theoretically lifted for a construction

project setting. Through application of the complimentary frameworks of Greenwood (2007) and Lane and Devin (2008), the connections between CSR, ethics and stakeholder engagement comes into clearer focus. The paper serves a dual purpose of informing practitioners of the complexity of stakeholder engagement (to better inform the implementation practices) whilst illuminating the connection with CSR and responsible behaviours. The paper therefore follows the contention of scholars who argue that focused examination of practices is necessary to advance scholarship (c.f. Trevino & Weaver, 1999; Freeman, 1999; Friedman and Miles, 2002); the proposal of any practical recommendations from research having sound theoretical and conceptual foundations (e.g. Yang et al., 2011a; Smyth, 2008). The theoretically informed model is also informative and useful for the project management community as a basis for further research; stakeholder engagement being better understood and potentially managed in practice as a result.

The paper begins by reviewing stakeholder management scholarship in construction. Stakeholder engagement is then examined more closely as a theoretical construct with reference to the work of Greenwood (2007) and Lane and Devin (2018). A research methods section details the empirical work undertaken and how the data collected was related to the model and the concepts of stakeholder engagement. A series of vignettes then clarify how stakeholders are engaged during construction project work; the variability and shifting movements between levels of engagement occurring and stakeholder agency (i.e. the responsible treatment of stakeholders) being mapped against concepts of CSR behaviours (i.e. responsible; paternalistic; neoclassical; strategic). A following discussion examines the insights further, raising understanding of stakeholder engagement as an evolving process between project work packages, organisations (e.g. lead contractor; subcontractors) and actions of parties on the ground; the nature and complexity of stakeholder engagement in

74 construction being clarified as a result. A closing summary draws the insights of the paper
75 together.

76 **Stakeholder management in literature**

77 There is now a large corpus of work addressing stakeholder management in construction (see
78 Chinyio and Olomolaiye (2010); Atkin and Skitmore (2008); Chinyio & Akintoye (2008);
79 Fraser & Zhu (2008) and Olander & Landin (2008) for broad overviews and primary
80 examples of research work). In fact, as Yang et al. (2011a) note, the construction
81 management field is amongst the most active in researching and examining stakeholder
82 management. However, despite the large body of literature, there remains potential for
83 deeper understandings of primary stakeholder management practices (i.e. stakeholder
84 identification, engagement, communication). Indeed, whilst stakeholder engagement is
85 recognised to be a critical aspect of stakeholder management, there has been little
86 investigation of how stakeholder engagement is implemented, nor its` theoretical or
87 conceptual underpinning. It can also be argued that whilst projects are unique in terms of
88 actors, objectives and requirements (Turner, 2009), there remain opportunities for cross-
89 fertilization of ideas into project management from other fields of research (e.g. strategic
90 management; organizational studies). In this respect, the paper follows the lead of scholars
91 from outside project management in arguing that stakeholder engagement can best be
92 understood as a process (c.f. Greenwood, 2007; Lane and Devin, 2018; Johnston, 2010) with
93 multi-faceted implications for the corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities of
94 companies (Bowen et al. 2010) involved. Indeed, the paper demonstrates how scholarship
95 and learning can be enhanced by exploring models and concepts from outside the project
96 management boundary.

97 **Stakeholder Engagement**

Stakeholder engagement is considered a key aspect of stakeholder management work (APM, 2012, p.116). It may be understood in a variety of ways and from different perspectives and research work has emanated from both the construction and broader business management domains. In reviewing the literature, it is revealed that theoretical understanding of stakeholder engagement in construction remains relatively immature, and there remains much potential for advances in scholarship.

Many construction scholars look toward the broader project management and business studies literature for inspiration. For example, Missonier and Loufrani-Fedida (2014) propose a stakeholder relational ontology, anchored in Actor-Network Theory (ANT), as an improved way for understanding stakeholder engagements than more traditional relational perspectives rooted in Social Network Theory. From a longitudinal case study of an Information System project, the authors argue that ANT illuminates how dynamic relationships emerge over time on a project; the idea that relationships are dynamic and change over time over the course of a project can be applied to stakeholder management work in construction.

From a strategic management perspective, stakeholder engagement may be viewed as a mechanism for reducing conflict, encouraging innovation and facilitating spin-off partnerships (Yu and Leung, 2018). From an ethical perspective, it can be understood as a way for enhancing inclusive decision making and promoting equity (Yang et al. 2011a). Mathur et al. (2008) call for fresh approaches for understanding stakeholder engagement in construction so that concepts such as these can coalesce around sustainability in the built environment. The concepts identified by Mathur et al. (2008) align well with the work of Greenwood (2007) in her model of stakeholder engagement (discussed below), highlighting the multifaceted nature of the engagement concept.

In a recent practice focused paper, Yu and Leung (2018) explore how public engagement (PE) has emerged as a prerequisite for collecting stakeholders' opinions to involve them in the decision making of construction development projects. Their study shows how different forms of power and interest influence final engagement outcomes (either directly or indirectly), illustrating the potential to advance stakeholder satisfaction for construction development projects. Also addressing practical issues, Yang et al. (2011b) formulate a typology of approaches for practitioner stakeholder engagement in construction from interviews and a questionnaire survey conducted in Hong Kong. The implication is that appropriate approach selection is an art requiring practitioners' judgments (each approach having its` strengths and limitations). Such work reminds us that stakeholder engagement is a practical activity, closely bound to forms of communication. This aspect of stakeholder engagement has been noted by scholars; Collinge and Harty (2014), for example, noting how in briefing work, stakeholders engage with design artefacts to interpret issues using personal cognitive frames of reference. Leung and Liang (2013) note how the unbalanced distribution of power interests on a project inevitably causes tensions between multiple stakeholders, often connected with various levels of communicative engagement on a project. The authors argue to include more representatives from different stakeholder groups in the decision-making process to enable active engagement. Understanding stakeholder relationships is potentially fruitful in construction as projects are characterised by multiple parties (e.g. contractors; subcontractors; consultants) coming together under various "terms of cooperation" (e.g. contractual; non-contractual) in different sets of circumstance (e.g. pre-construction design work; building phase work packages). However, it is a valid criticism that too many accounts of stakeholder management focus on attributes of organisations or stakeholders (i.e. stakeholder power, interest, influence) rather than the *attributes of the relationship* between organisations and stakeholders. This paper contends that understanding

147 the relationship between parties is important in appreciating how responsible behaviour and
148 stakeholder management is realised. Moreover, construction stakeholder management
149 scholarship generally takes more of a macro than a micro view: the individual work packages
150 of project management activity seldom providing a focus of attention despite their
151 significance in project management work.

152 The relationship between morality, strategic management and stakeholder engagement was
153 explored by Noland and Phillips (2010), from two distinct scholarly perspectives: the
154 Habermasian and Ethical Strategist perspectives. The authors contend that for Habermasians,
155 moral engagement is marked by communications that ensure power differences and strategic
156 motivations between parties are subordinate to finding the optimal morally acceptable
157 solution. In contrast, Ethical Strategists contend that distinctions between strategy and
158 morality is unnecessary as good strategy should encompass moral concerns. Ultimately,
159 Noland and Phillips argue for the Ethical Strategist position, owing to its` confluence of
160 conceptual and practical concerns. The confluence between the conceptual and practical
161 underlies many academic explorations into stakeholder engagement. For example, Kaler
162 (2002) suggests that moral duties of an organisation towards stakeholders can be delineated
163 by defining stakeholders as either "claimant" or "influencer" in their orientation: claimant
164 stakeholders invoking a moral duty on an organisation that is stronger than any claims based
165 on power or urgency (Mitchell et al., 1997). Influencer stakeholders, in contrast, have
166 stronger power/urgency claims than moral legitimacy for an organisation. Phillips` (1999)
167 invokes the principle of fairness to determine how best to respond to such claims (p.321); a
168 claim or appeal from a stakeholder potentially invoking a moral duty to respond, with
169 obligations being in proportion to the benefits accrued.

170 These contributions indicate how closer understanding of the engagement concept requires
171 examination of engagement processes and outcomes of engagements. Such focused accounts

have been generally lacking in the construction project management domain, and as a result, this paper takes inspiration from work focusing upon engagement processes and the outcomes of engagement. In their work, Lane and Devin (2018) reference the work of Johnston (2010), who applied a process model approach for understanding stakeholder engagement, resulting in a typology of practice. The three baseline elements of Johnston`s (2010) model are antecedents, engagement relationship strategies and consequences (as discussed below). In her work Greenwood (2007) argues that engagement is not simply "corporate responsibility in action", but is actually morally neutral, in that it does not follow that responsible treatment of stakeholders must follow engagement activity. Therefore, stakeholder engagement may be used in a moral or immoral way, but it is not necessarily either of these:

"It may be a morally positive practice when it enables co-operation in the context of a mutually benefitting relationship. However, it may also be morally negative (immoral) practice used as a deceptive control mechanism when masquerading as corporate responsibility." (p.320)

The work of both Lane and Devin (2018) and Greenwood (2007) are now examined in more detail as providing a theoretical and conceptual framework for understanding stakeholder engagement as a process that defines CSR relations between different stakeholders on a project.

Stakeholder Engagement and Social Responsibility

The model of Greenwood (2007) (figure 1) brings into focus how stakeholder engagement may be considered a separate variable from the responsible treatment of stakeholders (labelled as "agency" on figure 1). Greenwood explores how there is a relation between levels of engagement and the responsible treatment of stakeholders, noting how stakeholder

engagement itself is a process (or set of processes) of communication, dialogue and exchange,

"High engagement is where these activities are numerous and/or these activities are of high quality. Low engagement is the opposite of high engagement. No engagement is possible, but highly improbable." (p.321)

The construct of stakeholder agency is used as a proxy for the responsible treatment of stakeholders, which may also be considered a variable that can fluctuate. The four quadrants of the model (responsibility, paternalism, neoclassic and strategic) are defined in Table 1. The four quadrants are further sub-divided by a hypothetical "optimal" line, Greenwood contending that an optimal level exists for the constructs of engagement and moral treatment of stakeholders (following Wicks et al. 1999). Definitions of the segments (labelled A-H) are given in Table 2. The most widely known definition of positive stakeholder management practice, corporate social responsibility (CSR), occupies segment A of the model. The model indicates how stakeholder engagement may be understood in a variety of ways, such as a mechanism for consent; a mechanism for control; a mechanism for cooperation; a mechanism for enhancing trust, etc. The actions of an organisation towards stakeholders can theoretically be charted as variables on the model to clarify how actions relate to engagement and responsible treatment; such classifications of actions could essentially assist an organisation reflect on, improve and refine its` stakeholder management actions. Although Greenwood does not mobilize or test the framework with any empirical data, she notes the model could be applied to different contexts to explore relations between parties, stating,

"A model that proposes a probable relationship (between engagement and responsible treatment of stakeholders) has been provided. This model allows for the possibility of

corporate irresponsibility and offers a stepping stone for further theoretical and empirical exploration of this multifaceted relationship." (p.325)

This paper will apply the model to a construction domain, and in so doing, shows how engagement can perform several different functions; for example as a mechanism for proving organisational responsibility; as a way to manage risks (Deegan, 2002) or as a form of organisational control (Owen et al. 2000).

In their paper, Lane and Devin (2018) discuss how engagement itself is made up of several activities; engagement being a process over time that can be defined into distinct stages of activity: identification/selection; engaging and securing interest; implementing engagement strategies. Lane and Devin (2018) offer a process model of the operationalization of stakeholder engagement, with distinct phases of engagement activity being broken down as separate areas of concern for an organisation pursuing its` own CSR agenda. Although their study is based on the CSR reports of nine different Australian companies outside of construction (banking; energy; consumer goods), Lane and Devin offer insights into stakeholder engagement practices that are of potential interest to the construction industry, as detailed below:

- Stakeholder engagement can be broken down into a series of tasks
- The sequencing and linkages between tasks are significant for stakeholder engagement
- Understanding stakeholder engagement as a process can assist in identification of "checks" and "balance points" for periodic review of events
- Reviewing engagement processes can provide a lens on the conduct of stakeholder engagement as part of an organisation`s CSR efforts

Whilst Lane and Devin`s (2018) work examines the operationalisation of stakeholder engagement, Greenwood`s theoretical model (2007) relates more to the consequences of that engagement. The paper takes forward insights from Greenwood (2002) and Lane and Devin (2018), contending they are relevant for a construction project context. Of particular note are the following points:

- Stakeholder engagement is a "process" (not a single one-off activity) (Greenwood, 2007)
- Stakeholder engagement consists of a series of "steps" (i.e. the antecedent context; the process of engagement; consequences of engagement) (Lane and Devin, 2018)
- A processual view of stakeholder engagement provides a framework for "checks and balance points" (Lane and Devin, 2018, p.278), increasing the chance for problem identification/rectification

The paper now details the research method and analytical approach employed.

Research Method

A study of hospital construction project stakeholder management in the UK set out to understand stakeholder engagement practices. Hospital projects are fertile contexts for stakeholder management research due to the diversity of stakeholder interests engaged on both client (e.g. clinicians; patients; visitors; community groups) and practitioner (e.g. engineers; architects; designers; medical planners) (Prasad, 2008) sides.

Empirical data was collected from a case study project: three sets of interviews with hospital managerial and AEC (architecture, engineering, construction) company staff being collected, transcribed and analysed in a thematic manner. To provide as rich a picture as possible regarding the different incidents of stakeholder engagement occurring, interviewees were interviewed on 3 separate occasions, each successive interview focusing in more detail on

incidents of stakeholder engagement. Several vignettes of stakeholder engagement practice were identified from the first round of interviews, and these were then followed up in a second round of interviews.

Initial interview questions queried the strategies and methods of stakeholder engagement employed, probing how stakeholders were represented and managed. The second round of interviews drilled down into the vignettes in much greater detail to explore the actions and consequences of stakeholder engagement in much more detail. Brief follow on telephone interviews resolved any remaining questions the researcher had regarding stakeholder engagement work practices. The interview transcripts were uploaded to a qualitative software package and then coded against the concepts of stakeholder engagement listed in Tables 1 and 2. The empirical insights indicate how hospitals employ their own stakeholder strategies through the course of a construction project (e.g. internal meetings; group discussions); the methods by which stakeholders are identified, defined and engaged reflecting particular views of the stakeholder conception by organisations (Greenwood, 2007, p.320). For example, the Patient Advisory Liaison Services (PALS) is often identified as a conduit of patient stakeholder opinion about impending or current construction work in NHS (National Health Service) hospitals. However, viewed objectively, there is no guarantee that the PALS service will always represent or convey stakeholder group concerns fairly and accurately.

Separate project work packages provided focal points of analysis, whilst discussion of stakeholder engagement work by practitioners was retrospective in that interviewees were reflecting back on past events. Whilst the researcher chose certain vignettes of practice that were particularly rich in information and detail, use of Greenwood`s model required certain methodological decisions to be made regarding data analysis.

289 *Data Analysis*

290 The data itself was the opinion and recollections of interviewees regarding stakeholder
291 engagement work in action on project work tasks. To assess the data and facilitate its`
292 reference against the framework, excerpts of data were coded against the definitional
293 concepts in Table 1 and 2. Stakeholder engagement practices could then be related to the
294 framework concepts based upon the frequency/intensity of actions indicated and strength of
295 opinion regarding the agency factors (i.e. responsible treatment of stakeholder) conveyed by
296 interviewees. The researcher related data to the framework himself, personal judgement
297 coming into play at this stage of the analysis. Frequently, unequivocal opinions could be
298 easily matched to the concepts, such as,

299 "the subcontractors didn`t speak to the client first, so we all got the blame for the mess
300 created" (Irresponsible behaviour)

301 At other times, opinions were more subtle, requiring the researcher to interpret data carefully
302 against the framework concepts. Key to this methodological approach was identification of
303 stakeholder engagement actions (or lack of actions) and responsible behaviour being
304 displayed in order to relate incidents to the framework of Greenwood (figure 1). Different
305 project work packages and different phases of project work provided key entry points in order
306 to examine and analyse what was going on in stakeholder engagement terms; the researcher
307 placing each vignette on to the model at different stages of the construction project cycle
308 (figures 2-5). Four distinct versions of the model are presented for different phases of work
309 (figure 2 to 5: pre-construction; commencement of work; subcontractor engagement;
310 completion); these phases roughly corresponding to stages 3/4, 5 and 6 of the RIBA PoW
311 (2013). These successive models clarify the shifts and changes in stakeholder engagement
312 work through the course of a project as different work packages evolve and develop. The

model highlights the attributes of the relationship between parties in CSR and ethical terms that are triggered by stakeholder engagement activities. Whilst this approach is open to critique and criticism, it does demonstrate how the model can start to be used to conduct useful analysis of stakeholder engagement work: the model retaining its` flexibility for further researcher experimentation and refinement.

Vignette 1: Construction of a new fire escape

Construction of a new fire escape for the hospital required openings to be made through stone and brickwork on seven separate floors. Multiple stakeholder groups would be affected by this task (e.g. patients, clinical staff, general public); the implications being considerable as construction was to occur only metres away from patients, with a high impact in terms of noise, dust and disruption. As the Client Relations Manager related,

"These buildings were still occupied, so some people had to be moved into other ones so building could occur. We couldn`t just knock it down and build it."

Engagement work on this task began with brief pre-construction discussions between designers and the hospital client, accelerating quickly as the responsibility of the lead contractor of the construction team. The contractor communicated closely with staff, agreeing a ten week programme of works for construction activity to occur (i.e. during meal times; during doctors rounds). The resulting sequencing programme was integrated into the work programme for each hospital area: understanding the effect of construction activity being an important driving principle directing contractor activity. Visits were also made to staff to reinforce the impact of the impending work and to agree steps to minimize disruption. Numerous NHS interviewees commented positively on the pre-construction engagement work done, and as a result, in relation to the stakeholder engagement model for pre-construction phase work (figure 2), the vignette may be located in quadrant A at an optimal

level of engagement and responsible treatment of stakeholder interests, as an example of responsible contractor behaviour.

With commencement of work, the lead contractor initiated the work as agreed in pre-construction discussions. Responsible treatment now translated into real actions on site. For example, existing fire escapes were used to minimize movement through wards; work was executed externally whenever possible and workers announced their presence when accessing clinical areas. Further measures included the wearing of overshoes to stop dust transmission, partitions in wards and regular monitoring of work areas through daily visits. Disturbance of hospital staff was minimal, which was appreciated. Figure 3 indicates how the vignette now shifts to the "limited paternalism" quadrant. There is now little stakeholder engagement, but the contractor is still acting in the interests of the hospital with limited consultation. Hospital stakeholders are still being treated responsibly. With the introduction of subcontractors, the vignette does not shift in position on the stakeholder engagement model (figure 4): contractor and subcontractors work closely together on the construction of the new fire escape and there is no significant deviation in actions resulting in changes to the stakeholder engagement model.

Following completion, several visits were made to ensure hospital staff were satisfied with the work done: close liaison with internal stakeholder parties (e.g. nurses, cleaners, medics), the long lead-in time, careful sequencing of events and monitoring of work contributing overall to an effective stakeholder management strategy. The increase in engagement is reflected in figure 5, as the vignette returns to quadrant A/B: an ideal and optimal level of engagement being achieved. Engagement was judged as not excessive (anti-capitalism: sector B), but at the right level so that legitimate stakeholders were consulted prior to the commencement of construction work. Engagement was effective because the contractor created a specific role for stakeholder work (the Client Relations Manager) and also because

the hospital was proactive in assisting the contractor with stakeholder management work. The engagement strategy resulted in a positive perception of the contractor and subcontractor teams; the actions equating to those of a "corporate responsible" organisation. The vignette indicates how stakeholder engagement on this task can be understood as an ongoing, unfolding process; the nature of stakeholder engagement being traced through time as work progressed. It also allows us to begin to mobilize Greenwoods` model and observe how its` associated concepts for a construction project domain manifest themselves.

Vignette 2: Waiting room / Renal unit ramp

To create a new waiting room for an existing Renal Unit, a new mezzanine floor had to be constructed. Close liaison with the Unit manager and staff was essential from the beginning of this task as work needed to be executed during the Unit`s operational hours. A hospital manager expressed her concerns,

"The prospect of major structural change to the Unit caused us great concern regarding noise, dust and workers in a clinical area. But the contractors were unfailingly courteous, flexible and kept us well informed when works were happening. They communicated with us and answered our concerns to the best of their abilities. The work had a minimal impact on our work, which was remarkable."

Such positive work began with pre-construction discussions: a long lead in period and sequence of works being explained to hospital staff by the contractor, with anticipated noise levels and disruptive activities being explained. Concerns of hospital staff were discussed openly (such as dialysis treatment times); the two work projects to be executed simultaneously (the mezzanine floor construction and external ramp for wheelchair access to the Unit). Therefore, the vignette may be initially located at quadrant A/B (figure 2): an optimal level of engagement and responsible treatment being achieved.

With the commencement of construction work, the lead contractor took immediate actions to address stakeholder needs. For example, to mitigate dust dispersal, windows to one side of the unit were sealed shut and to protect patient privacy, mirror film was placed on the windows so that contractors could not see patients, and in the event of hot and uncomfortable weather, fans were supplied to patients and staff as windows would be closed. The interviewed Client Relations Manager explained how stakeholder management work very much depends upon the construction work task at hand,

"Sometimes you will be busier than others and it is dependent on what work is happening. If the work has a lot of impact on the hospital, there will be more meetings. Meetings can be fortnightly or weekly if something critical is happening…If only senior staff in the hospital know about an issue it is then up to them to disseminate information down to their team. But we try to cover all communication channels."

A variety of client relations tools were used during this construction task (e.g. notices; hand-outs; comments cards), contributing to effective stakeholder management work. Here we see stakeholder engagement remaining responsible and balanced, the contractor needing to remain in close communication with the client due to proximity to patients and services (figure 3). A number of different subcontractor teams then entered the hospital work zones, and whilst some spoke directly with staff and visitors, others preferred not to. For the majority of hospital staff interviewed, no distinctions were made between the various construction teams: they were all viewed as one and the same entity. In terms of stakeholder engagement in construction, this is significant as such a view may translate into both shared praise and shared blame for multiple parties working on the same task (as will be observed later). As work commenced on the waiting room/renal ramp, there was more praise than blame to be shared amongst the contractor teams, although occasionally subcontractors had to be cautioned not to plug in and activate fans without staff permission.

411 Therefore, for the subcontractor engagement phase (figure 4), the vignette shifts to a position
412 between segment C (limited paternalism) and segment D (strong paternalism) as stakeholders
413 were generally treated responsibly, but engagement decreased and was occasionally sub-
414 optimal (i.e. subcontractors not engaging with hospital staff to verify actions). The actions of
415 the construction team may be described as fluctuating paternalistic, in that engagement was
416 occasionally removed from responsibility. For example, the distribution of fans to patients
417 (done without prior engagement with hospital staff), could be construed as limited
418 paternalism (C); whilst plugging and switching on the fans without stakeholder permission
419 would be adjudged as strong paternalism (D). This vignette highlights the complexity of the
420 engagement construct when multiple parties are engaged on the same construction project
421 work task, and how the client may not make distinctions between the various organisational
422 entities employed. Moreover, it illustrates how actions on the ground can be interpreted as
423 responsible or irresponsible behaviour. As construction work concluded, engagement
424 increased again as communications resumed with the hospital and the work was signed off as
425 satisfactory (figure 5).

426 **Vignette 3: Electrical wiring in corridor**

427 Construction work often results in supplementary activities for completion, such as services
428 upgrades, movements of equipment, refurbishments and re-signage. The next two vignettes
429 each relate to such work. To install some electrical wiring in a section of the hospital
430 following machinery upgrade work, a subcontractor team took the initiative and opted to
431 execute the work at night to minimize disruption to hospital staff and visitors. As a result, the
432 subcontractors decided not to engage or consult stakeholders about this task as it appeared
433 simple and straightforward to them. The subcontractors accessed the corridor lighting spaces
434 using step-ladders, and having completed their task, left the hospital by early morning.
435 Hospital staff returning to work in the morning found the corridors dirty with dust and

material offcuts, necessitating a deep clean of the corridors, with consequent knock-on effects to personnel and service movements. A complaint to the lead contractor resulted, which was passed onto the subcontractor team. The subcontractors subsequently apologised to both lead contractor and hospital, but the incident soured relations between all parties for a short period.

This vignette initially appears on figure 4 (subcontractor engagement) in segment F as an example of low engagement/low stakeholder agency as s task completed in the interests of the subcontractor team without consultation with the hospital client stakeholders (or lead contractor). The subcontractors actually misjudged the impact of their work on the hospital, although they believed themselves to be acting responsibly in the interests of the hospital. The vignette highlights several issues of note. Firstly, the use of multiple subcontractor teams means direct engagement with the client is not always possible (or considered necessary) by those doing the work. As a result, subcontractors may make decisions and take actions without wider consultation. Secondly, multiple stakeholders can be negatively affected by the actions of one team of subcontractors; the lead contractor (with managerial responsibility for subcontractors) shouldering some blame for the incident (contractual arrangements binding multiple organisations together in stakeholder management terms). At task completion (figure 5) engagement had necessarily increased due to the complaints, with the construction team acting more responsibly toward the hospital stakeholders.

Vignette 4: Laundry trolleys overflow

Similar in nature, but relating to pre-construction work, is the following vignette. Anticipated construction work to heating and boiler areas resulted in contractors moving fully loaded laundry trolleys into normal hospital service corridors from the plantrooms (often used as quick storage space for hospital services (e.g. laundry). As a result, the laundry trolleys

460 blocked and impeded staff, patient and service movements within the hospital, causing
461 disruption and inconvenience. Following several complaints, the contractors moved the
462 trolleys to an adjacent building following further negotiations with hospital staff. Despite the
463 initial delay, engineering work itself was completed to plan without further problems. The
464 vignette may be located in segment F of the stakeholder engagement model (figure 2) as
465 behaviour outside the accepted norm: the contractors not engaging with staff prior to moving
466 the trolleys as they did not consider their actions as problematic. As work commenced on the
467 plantroom, a compromise regarding the trolleys had been identified, and as a result,
468 stakeholder engagement and agency improved (figures 3-5). By completion, the contractors
469 had redeemed themselves in the views of the hospital, although negative recollections of the
470 incident lingered in the memory of those interviewed. Both the laundry trolleys and electrical
471 wiring vignettes indicate another reality of construction stakeholder management: that
472 supplementary activities preceding/resulting from the main construction project tasks also
473 have a potential to impact stakeholder relations and perceptions of companies.

474 **Vignette 5: Secondary glazing**

475 The final vignette relates to installation of secondary glazing across two hospital wings
476 containing live clinical areas and consultation rooms. This was a challenging project task in
477 terms of stakeholder engagement; each wing being 5 floors in height, containing a
478 multiplicity of patient rooms, medical services and staff educational areas. Work required the
479 transportation of equipment and materials to the hospital on large trucks, with consequent
480 effects for hospital services and transportation links. These issues were identified at pre-
481 construction stage, with the lead contractor communicating closely with the hospital
482 (responsible behaviour: figure 2). The lead contractor Client Relations Manager explained
483 initial engagement work,

"Our priority was to ensure the community knew the road would be busier with our construction traffic, so I walked around and took a list of all the businesses and residents. We did 120 letter drops informing them of the upcoming work."

An adjacent investment bank required clarification of how any resulting vibrations might affect their trading room operations in their basement; the construction team following the enquiry up and meeting directly with the business,

"Our experience told us the bank would not be affected. However, the bank insisted our heavy equipment should go on roads unsuitable for our needs. The only way to convince him was to show him we were right…He was finally happy once he saw that our trucks had no effect on the bank`s operations." (Client Relations Manager)

Here we see an example of an external stakeholder attempting to change construction activity in their favour, to the potential detriment of the project. Pre-construction stakeholder engagement work was not limited to external stakeholders. For example, the need to mitigate potential dust contagion across all occupied space overlooking the construction site required a detailed programme of works to be produced in consultation with hospital staff (which was revisited several times over). Through daily communication, it was possible to identify beds and equipment needing to be moved in advance, thus minimising disruption to staff, patients and services. This up-front lead contractor time investment equates to responsible corporate behaviour.

With commencement of construction, responsible behaviour continued, although intensity of stakeholder engagement work decreased; each hospital floor area needing a minimum of 3 visits to complete measuring, fitting and installation of the glazing, with dialogue between parties being critical at every stage. Stakeholder engagement remained responsible throughout the construction cycle for this vignette, engagement activity increasing again at

the end of the work package (both NHS and construction interviewees giving positive recollections). However, risks were present throughout the cycle of this vignette. For example, the request from a bank for favourable treatment on their terms could have potentially shifted the vignette from A (responsible behaviour) to B (anti-capitalism). However, the lead contractor resisted this request: the demands of the bank for alternative construction transportation potentially compromising the primary objectives of the contractor on the project. Similarly, subcontractor engagement continued to be appropriate through the work package (limited paternalism: figure 4); the possibility of it shifting remaining real, but held in check through effective communication with the lead contractor and correct execution of tasks.

Discussion

Through a series of vignettes, the complexities of stakeholder engagement have been clarified in the context of a fast moving construction project with multiple concurrent work packages and multiple organizational involvement. By mobilizing Greenwood`s model, a more sophisticated understanding of stakeholder engagement in construction was reached, revealing how engagement activities define relationships between parties in corporate social responsibility terms. Whereas Lane and Devin`s (2018) process model of operationalizing stakeholder engagement focuses upon practical issues of engagement, Greenwood`s (2007) model scopes out the consequences of engagement activities, and this paper furthers understanding of both aspects. This discussion now takes forward the analysis of empirical evidence, revisiting the insights to explore issues theoretically, practically and from a methodological perspective.

Theoretical Insights

Whilst maintaining positive relations with stakeholders and treating them in a responsible and ethical way should be considered a part of any organisation`s CSR work, the vignettes illustrated how this is not always possible or simple to achieve in construction. The multiplicity of tasks and entry of multiple teams on site complicate the picture considerably, as revealed by the vignettes. For example, low engagement activities can drift into paternalistic behaviours from contractors, if they don`t double check their actions with another party, with potential dangers accruing. It is true that hospitals are particularly complex organisations, and it is unlikely that the electrical wiring/laundry trolleys vignettes would have resulted in such negative repercussions in other project environments. However, it can be argued that lower levels of engagement are more likely to result in paternalistic or neoclassic behaviours. There are dangers to an organisation`s CSR credentials when actions drift into these quadrants of the model. It is recommended that further stakeholder engagement work can assist in preventing such instances.

The unique nature of stakeholder engagement work in construction also needs to be re-emphasized as the paper identified how associations between engagement action and consequence in CSR terms are important. For example, the use of subcontractor teams is a common occurrence on projects, but the impact of subcontractor engagement is seldom recognised. Whilst subcontractors often have no immediate link with the client, the use of subcontractors immediately binds the lead contractor with other parties on the construction side in stakeholder management terms; so that poor practices have repercussions for more than one organisation (the converse may also be said to be true). So, whilst stakeholder engagement may lie with a single organisation at some stage of the project lifecycle, responsibility for actions will be shared amongst the construction project team: the client being unlikely to make distinctions between parties.

555 Greenwood (2007) argues that stakeholder engagement is morally neutral practice, in that it
556 may be used in a moral or immoral way, but is not necessarily either of these (although
557 having the potential to be both). In construction, stakeholder engagement may be morally
558 positive when it enables cooperation through a mutually beneficial relationship. For
559 example, the subcontractor initiative to provide fans to patients was mutually beneficial for
560 several stakeholder groups. Conversely, engagement may be morally negative (immoral
561 practice) when used as a deceptive control mechanism when masquerading as corporate
562 responsibility. There were no clear examples of this from the hospital case study projects.
563 What is clear is that in construction, stakeholder engagement may be high, but not result in
564 any tangibly positive responsible treatment of stakeholders. This is because stakeholder
565 engagement is essentially morally neutral, requiring further actions in order to have any
566 potentially positive effect. It can also be noted that stakeholder engagement may be low, but
567 stakeholder interests may be being served (by efficient subcontractor teams completing work
568 effectively). Theoretically, the insights also inform stakeholder management in construction
569 scholarship generally, especially in relation to CSR, ethics and relations between parties.

570 *Practical Insights*

571 The insights of the paper align with the argument of Missonier and Loufrani-Fedida (2014)
572 that projects are characterized by dynamic and emergent relationships between stakeholders,
573 where relations between parties co-evolve with project work trajectories. In several of the
574 vignettes, the Client Relations Manager provided a consistent line of communication between
575 constructors and stakeholders and this had positive effects on relations between parties.
576 Employing an individual for stakeholder work has obvious resource implications for the
577 project, but the lead contractor judged this work important enough to justify the cost. It is
578 interesting to note that in the vignettes where engagement work drifted into negative
579 conceptual quadrants (electrical rewiring/laundry trolleys), that extra level of communication

was missing. Communication channels with stakeholders (i.e. regular meetings; letter-drops; posters) are also intrinsic mechanisms of engagement, so their importance should not be underplayed in the overall assessment of what works effectively on projects. It is also clear from the research evidence gathered that although the dominant idea in the literature is that a Project Manager performs stakeholder management work (c.f. Newcombe, 2003; Chinyio and Olomolaiye, 2010; Walker et al., 2008), it is evident that on large public sector projects (e.g. hospitals) a different approach is justified.

Stakeholder engagement activity brings specific practical demands on parties engaged in construction, prompting specific measures (e.g. screening of patients; provision of fans; moving of patients) to be taken. However, responsible treatment of stakeholders does not necessarily follow engagement work and can also be judged differently depending upon points of view. For example, the installation of secondary glazing (vignette 5) engaged multiple stakeholder groups, with certain groups (e.g. the bank) pulling the lead contractor in a certain directions, only to be counter-balanced by other stakeholder interests. When there were no significantly different competing stakeholder demands relating to a work task (e.g. resolution of the laundry trolleys overflow), the lead contractor was not pulled in different directions. In many ways, vignette 1 provides an ideal model of stakeholder engagement: early and detailed preconstruction discussions with the client by the lead contractor, followed by efficient completion of work with minimal subcontractor engagement, and then re-engagement with the client on task completion.

However, stakeholder opinion can change over time, with a positive opinion of one manager not necessarily being shared with others. Rowan (2000) argues that organisations should fulfil their stakeholder obligations by showing the greatest respect for persons, although there will be a hierarchy of claims with corresponding duties. The empirical insights validate this contention, as when responsible behaviour was lacking (vignette 3 and 4), it was recognised

and rectified. In the secondary glazing vignette, lead contractor engagement with the bank was morally responsible, but the decision to reject bank demands for re-routing construction traffic was made by balancing competing stakeholder needs (which are inevitably bound to project demands) to reach a decision that prioritised hospital client needs. This is not surprising, but if we focus on the *attributes of the relationship* between the hospital and bank through the vignette, it can be observed how the bank was always treated responsibly (quadrant B, figure 2), from initial engagement, dialogue and rejection of demand through to physical demonstration of truck movements. Therefore, the variables of stakeholder agency and engagement levels can fluctuate as a construction task evolves. Here we see clearly how stakeholder engagement in construction is an unfolding process defined by the relationship between parties.

If we refer to the contentions of Lane and Devin (2018) and Greenwood (2007) again regarding stakeholder engagement practice, we can identify definite connections with a construction project context. For example, viewing stakeholder engagement work as a process through the project cycle, and understanding how different work activities and different parties can impact other organisations (e.g. the client; external stakeholders) viewpoint of responsible, ethical behaviours, the importance of stakeholder engagement work for AEC organisations are brought into a fresh light. A better informed theoretical understanding of stakeholder engagement work can therefore have significant practical implications.

That stakeholder engagement may be considered an evolving, ongoing process with antecedents (e.g. strategic definition/ business case), with a series of "steps" providing a framework for potential "checks and balance points" (Lane and Devin, 2018, p.278), increases the chance for problem identification/rectification. Project work packages offer an obvious possible checkpoint for reviewing what is happening, as do entry of subcontractor

teams to a construction site. Periodic review of stakeholder engagement work on a project is certainly beneficial for all parties concerned.

With reference to how stakeholder engagement relates to conceptions of ethics and strategic management (c.f. Noland and Phillips, 2010; Lane and Devin, 2018), the paper contends that in a construction project setting, engagement of stakeholders must be integral to a firm`s strategy (here labelled as an Ethical Strategist perspective). A good strategic approach therefore encompasses moral concerns that create value for as many stakeholders as possible. Ideally, construction companies engaging on a project should adopt an Ethical Strategist perspective to embrace both the conceptual and practical concerns of stakeholders they engage with; AEC companies with aspirations to be "socially responsible" should examine their stakeholder engagement actions as much as their production economies as both are important in CSR terms.

Methodological Insights

Application of Greenwood`s model to a construction context provides a richer understanding of how engagement behaviours may be assessed in qualitative terms: both stakeholder engagement actions and the responsible treatment of stakeholders being considered as separate variables that fluctuate through the project lifecycle. The methodological approach is now briefly revisited for further reflection.

Whilst the approach of the paper is open to criticism and critique (data being drawn from a single hospital project; a particular theoretical lens being used; researcher judgement being used to relate empirical data to conceptual framework), the flexibility of the model for exploring stakeholder engagement and CSR issues should be reiterated. The model is potentially adaptable to multiple engineering management contexts, and could be evolved from a qualitative tool into a quantitative or measures based model. In this paper, no

654 formulae or calculations were used, but such applications are feasible and possible. For
655 example, the actions of individuals or utility of certain stakeholder management tools could
656 conceivably be placed on the model to assess their engagement and agency credentials.

657 One particular area for exploration is BIM (Building Information Modelling). Whilst there is
658 potential for using BIM technologies for stakeholder management for facilities management
659 on existing buildings, this is seldom evident, as noted by numerous scholars, including Volk
660 at al. (2014), Ghaffarianhoseini et al. (2017), Parn et al. (2017), He et al. (2017) and Zou et
661 al. (2017). An in-depth exploration of how stakeholder management issues associated with
662 different construction tasks may be mobilized around an evolving digital model is beyond the
663 scope of this paper. However, it is reasonable to argue that proactive use of BIM for each of
664 the vignettes described could potentially have made a positive difference; a more considered
665 understanding of how construction activity could impact hospital operations potentially
666 accruing from BIM use.

667 **Conclusion**

668 The paper demonstrated how it is possible to theorize a more complex relationship between
669 stakeholder engagement and agency (i.e. the ethical, responsible treatment of stakeholders) in
670 a construction project context. The models of Greenwood (2007) and Lane and Devin (2018)
671 provided a framework and template upon which stakeholder engagement in construction
672 could be usefully cross-referenced and understood in its` own way. When empirical data was
673 applied to the models, the unique nature of stakeholder engagement in construction came into
674 clearer focus; stakeholder engagement being a complex, entwining process of responsibility,
675 organizational action and work package requirements where stakeholder engagement and
676 agency may be understood as separate variables that result in shifts between responsible,
677 paternalistic, neoclassic and strategic behaviours. Examination of the vignettes also affirmed

678 that stakeholder engagement is an evolving process, where it is possible to identify, track and
679 monitor the impact and effect of engagement activity on the corporate social responsibility
680 (CSR) credentials of AEC companies engaged in construction project work. Such a micro
681 view of stakeholder engagement in action brings a fresh perspective to the impact of daily
682 project work activities on the CSR performance of companies engaged on a project.

683 The unique characteristics of stakeholder engagement in construction were also drawn out by
684 the paper. Of particular note were how shifts in stakeholder engagement and agency can
685 define relations between parties in CSR terms and how the ethical aspirations of AEC
686 organizations are impacted by daily project activities. On live construction projects, multiple
687 party interests are routinely bound together through engagement work, with collective
688 blame/praise often resulting from a client who makes no distinction between who is being
689 employed to do what. The vignettes also highlighted the effect and impact of subcontractor
690 entry into a project situation and the importance of communication between parties at
691 multiple levels.

692 A number of practical and methodological insights were also made by the paper. The separate
693 steps of stakeholder engagement were identified as well as execution of these steps (through
694 construction project work package activities). The recognition that stakeholder engagement
695 is an evolving process recommends the use of periodic reviews of engagement activity
696 (perhaps pivoting around project work packages) to ensure the CSR strategic objectives of
697 organisations are aligned to stakeholder engagement work actually occurring. That
698 stakeholder engagement work in construction may be understood as variables on scales of
699 axes (relating to stakeholder engagement and stakeholder agency) was a further contribution
700 of the paper; the methodological opportunities for future work being open for future
701 exploration.

By modelling and theorizing the implementation of stakeholder engagement in construction, the paper makes a contribution to an area of stakeholder management scholarship that is in need of more attention. The framework of analysis itself provides a potential referential tool for AEC companies and contractors assessing stakeholder management issues ahead of and during project work, so that stakeholder engagement is better understood as an evolving, complex process with shifting and multiple inter-organisational effects. The findings point towards further applied research to explore and expand understanding and use of the engagement concept in different engineering and project management contexts.

Data Availability

Some or all data, models, or code generated or used during the study are proprietary or confidential in nature and may only be provided with restrictions (e.g. anonymized data).

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Responsibility	When levels of stakeholder engagement combine with levels of responsible treatment towards those stakeholders. Sector A is labelled "corporate social responsibility": the foundation of stakeholder theory; Sector B "anti-capitalism": disproportionate stakeholder engagement or involvement of stakeholders without a legitimate claim.
Paternalism	When stakeholder interests are addressed without direct engagement of the stakeholders. Sector C "limited paternalism" equates to some limited engagement with stakeholders such as consultation; Sector D "strong paternalism" relates to high intervention with no engagement. Such actions risk impinging on stakeholder`s autonomy and self-determination.
Neoclassical	Organisations with little interest in the needs of stakeholders or engaging with them, undertake actions that may be labelled "neo-classic". "Market" neo-classic behaviour (Sector E) equates to treating stakeholders as an economic exchange, although still legal. "Illegal" (Sector F) implies actions beyond acceptable societal norms: stakeholders being defrauded or their rights being abused.
Strategic	When an organisation responds to the needs of stakeholders in order to further their own interests, such actions may be understood as strategic in nature (Sector G). Irresponsible behaviour (Sector H) occurs when organisations act on the pretext of stakeholder interests, when not doing so.

Table 1: stakeholder engagement/agency quadrant definitions (see Greenwood, 2007, p.322)

	TITLE	STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	STAKEHOLDER AGENCY	RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND STAKEHOLDER AGENCY
A	Responsibility (traditional corporate social responsibility)	Comprehensive engagement of stakeholders	Acts in the interest of legitimate stakeholder	Optimal level of engagement with optimal level number of stakeholders, enhancing responsibility
B	Anti-capitalism	Extensive engagement with stakeholders	Acts in the interest of all stakeholder including illegitimate	Participation of so many (including illegitimate) stakeholders that the purpose of the firm is compromised
C	Limited Paternalism	Little stakeholder engagement as determined by the company	Acts in the interest of legitimate stakeholder as determined by the company	Acting in the perceived interest of the stakeholders with limited consultation
D	Strong Paternalism	No stakeholder engagement as determined by the company	Acts in the interest of legitimate stakeholder as determined by the company	Acting in the perceived interest of the stakeholders without consultation to the point of interference and reduction of liberty
E	Market	Little stakeholder engagement in response to market demand	Does not act in the interest of legitimate stakeholder	Low engagement to further the interests of the owners. Organisation and stakeholders as economic enemies
F	Illegal (outside the boundary of the law or accepted custom)	No stakeholder engagement as determined by agents in control of the company	Does not act in the interest of legitimate stakeholder	Agents act in their or principals interests either illegally or outside moral minimum norms. Could include fraud, theft, and abuse of human rights
G	Reputation / Legitimacy	Engaging with legitimate stakeholders to further shareholder interests	Appears to act in the interest of all stakeholders	Engaging stakeholders enhances strategic alignment, reputation and legitimacy with stakeholders
H	Irresponsibility (bad faith)	Extensive engagement without accountability or responsibility towards stakeholders	Appears to act in the interest of only influential stakeholders	Engaging with stakeholders under deceptive conditions, acting "as if" the aim is to meet stakeholder interests

828

829 Table 2: stakeholder engagement model segments (Greenwood, 2007, p.323)

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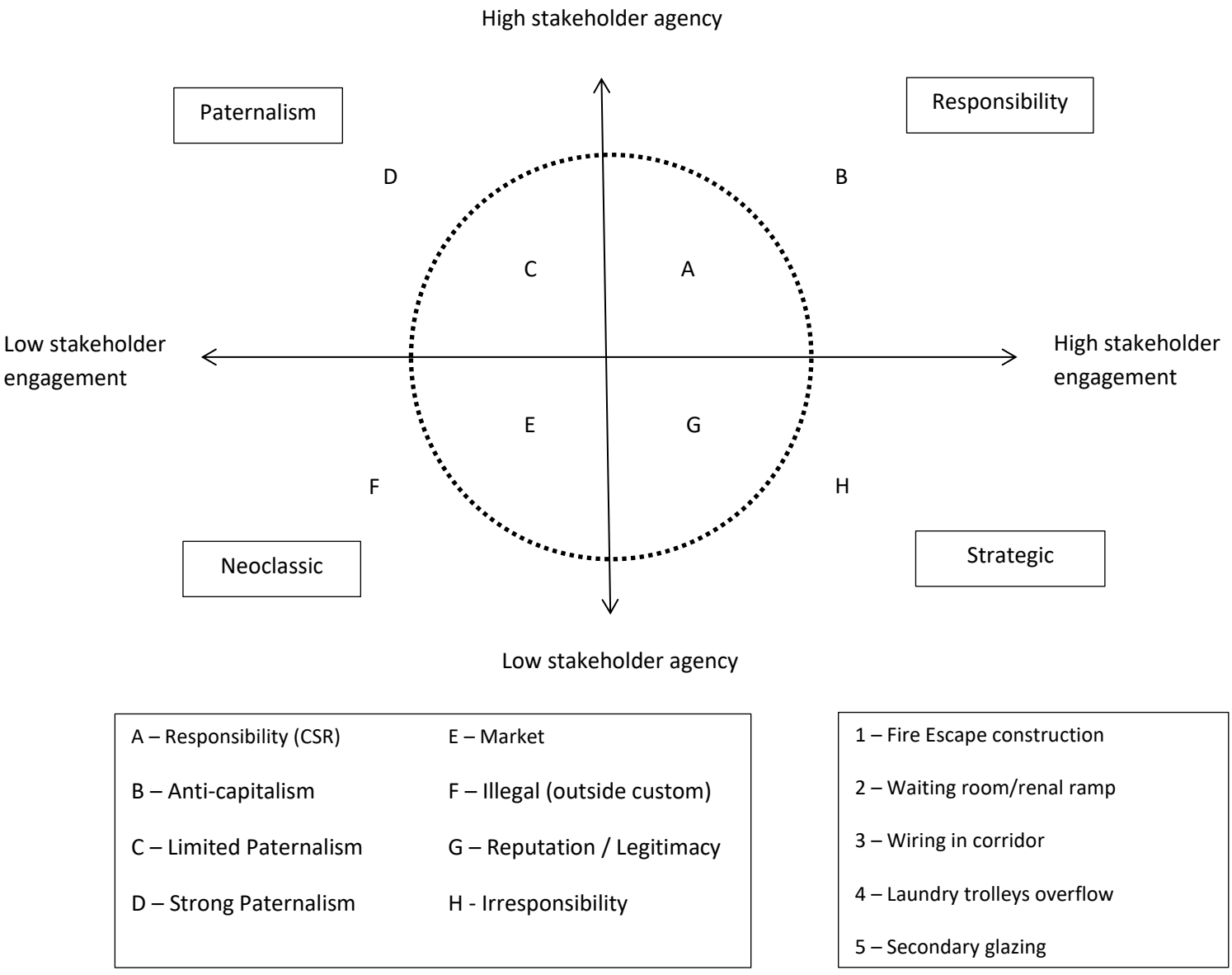

Figure 1: model of stakeholder engagement (Greenwood, 2007, p.322)

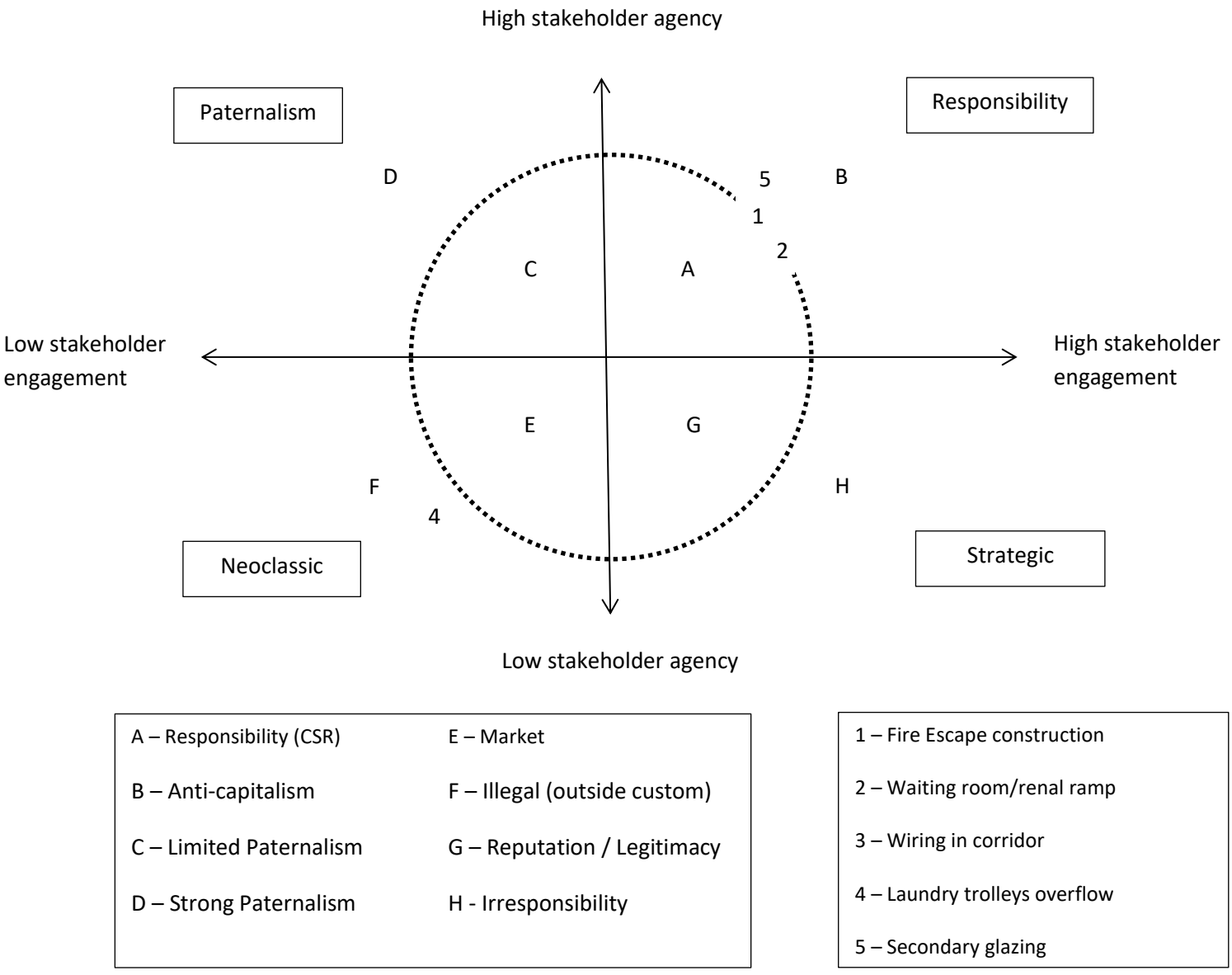

Figure 2: pre-construction: positioning of vignettes

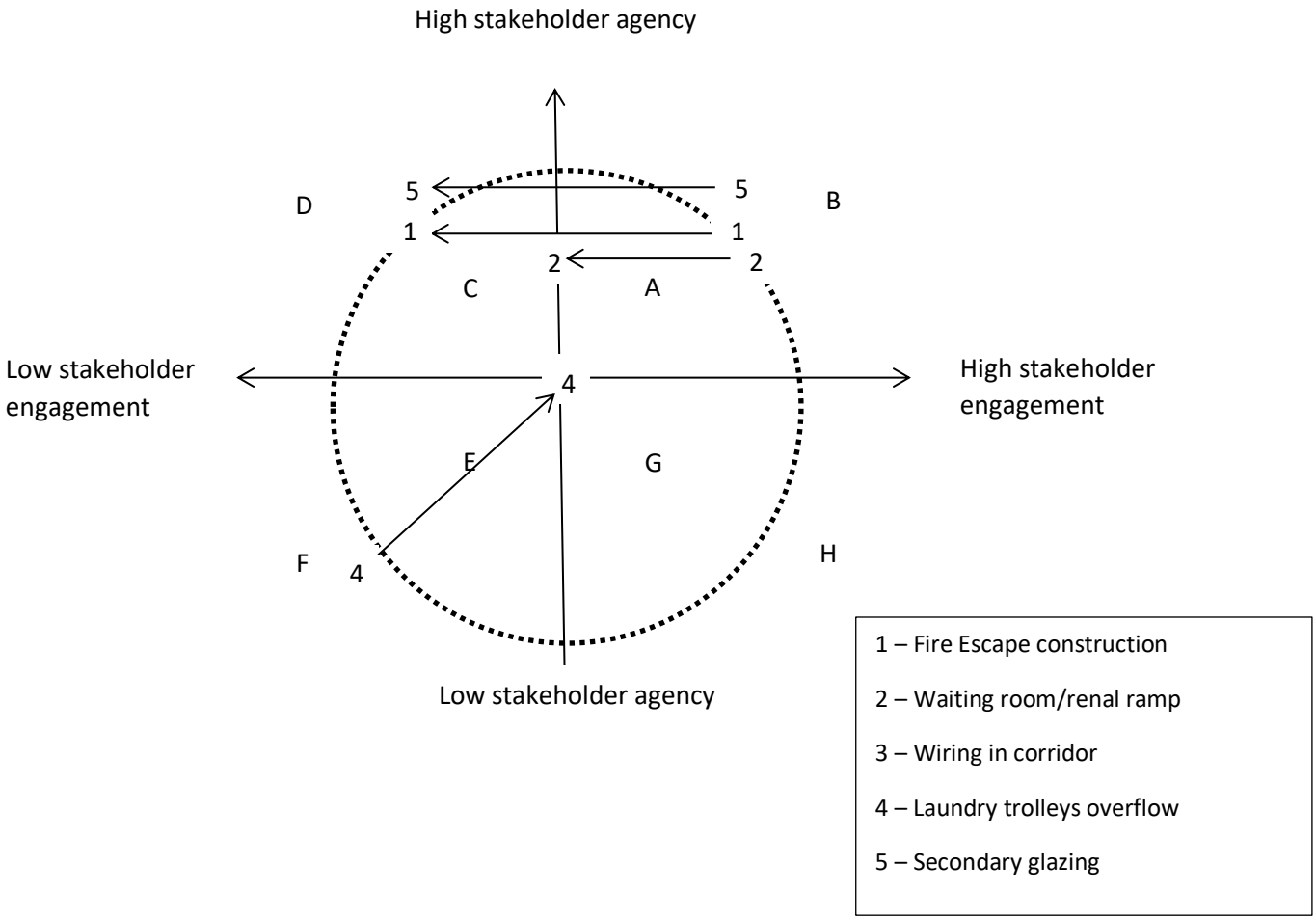

Figure 3: commencement of work: positioning of vignettes

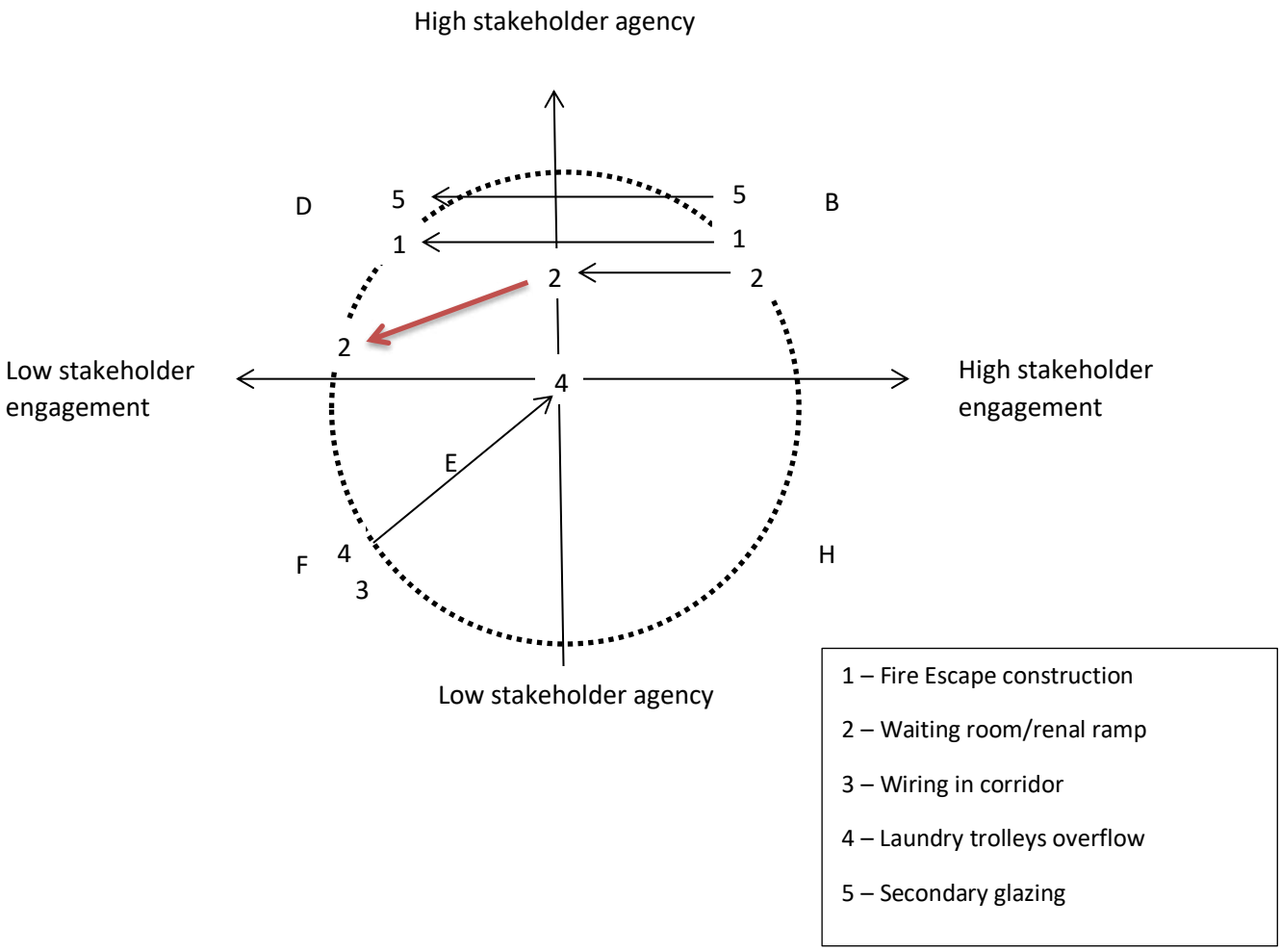

Figure 4: subcontractor phase: positioning of vignettes

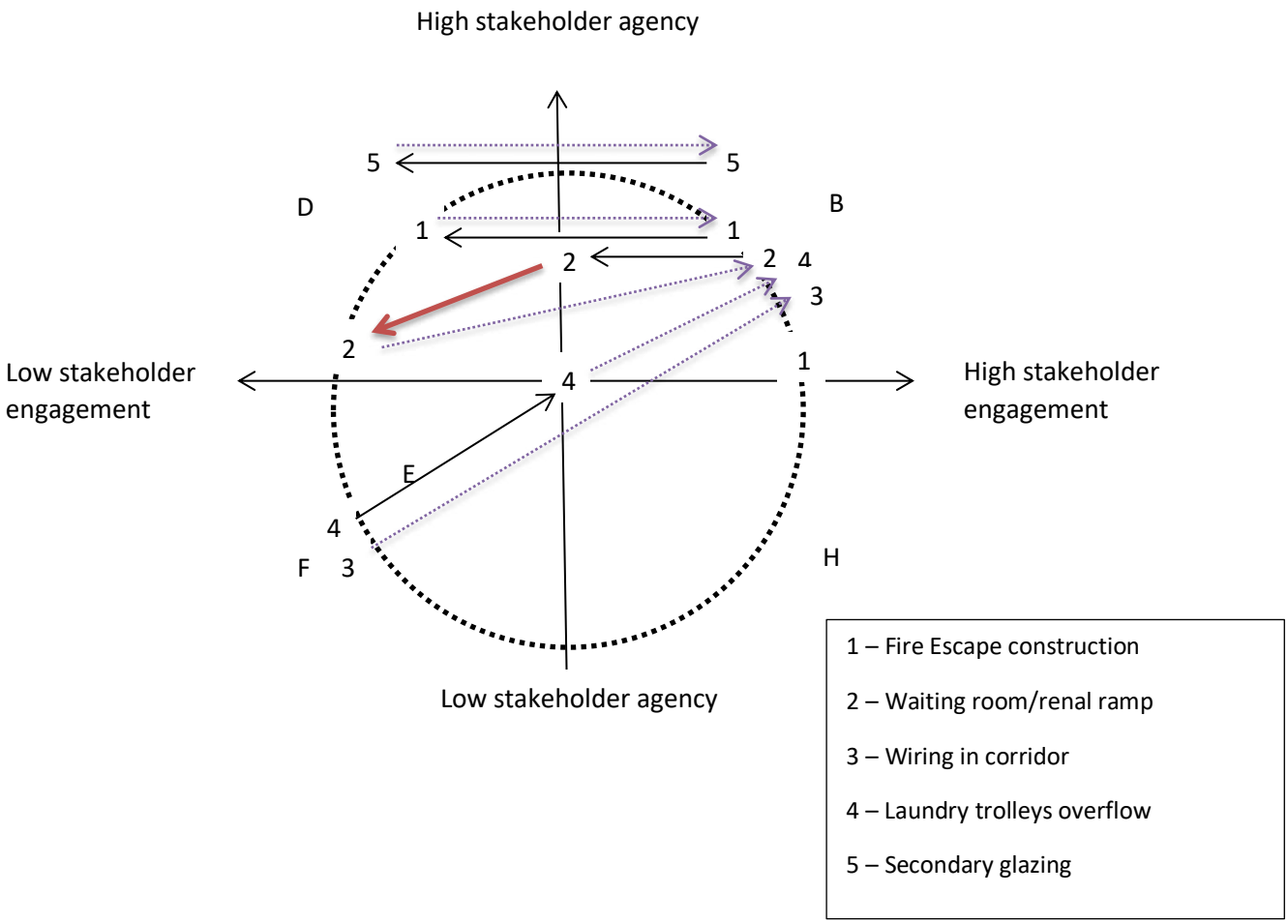

Figure 5: completion: positioning of vignettes of practice

FIGURE CAPTIONS

FIGURE 1: model of stakeholder engagement (Greenwood, 2007, p.322)

FIGURE 2: pre-construction: positioning of vignettes

FIGURE 3: commencement of work: positioning of vignettes

FIGURE 4: subcontractor phase: positioning of vignettes

FIGURE 5: completion: positioning of vignettes of practice

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