Reflexivity in teaching responsible management outside of the classroom:
lessons from ancient Greek theatre.

Angelo P. Bisignano

Nottingham Trent University, UK

Abstract

This paper discusses how the design of service-learning projects can foster students' reflexivity in learning responsible management. The paper builds on the existing debate on the nature of reflexivity. It proposes to focus on the relationship between students and the structure of responsible management teaching as defined by the curriculum, the learning outcomes, and the expectations of Business Schools. The paper adopts Archer's morphogenetic conceptual approach to explore analytically this agency-structure relationship in service-learning projects. Drawing on parallels with ancient Greek theatre, the paper investigates how this relationship can morph via *praxis* and dialogue and affect reflexivity. The paper reflects on the empirical evidence from two service-learning projects. Each was run twice: once using a traditional class-based method and once using the Aristotelian approach to Greek Theatre. The two versions considered different configurations of the dimensions of time, space and action as well as of the role of the teacher in the student's reflexive process. Empirical evidence highlights how students are more likely to take control of their own learning by enacting *praxis* in service-learning projects that are compressed in time, space, and course of action. Moreover, the reflexive journey changes when the teacher acts as a dialogical interlocutor as opposed to be a mere instructor in the project. The paper introduces implications for Business Schools in terms of teachers' training in preparation for responsible management teaching. It also discusses the design for effective service-learning projects and collaboration with external agencies.

Introduction

Aristotle advocates reflexivity as a crucial element for human flourishing (Butcher, 1951). Reflexivity is the basis of constructive evaluation of actions and experiences (Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith, 2004; Bolton, 2010). It helps individuals not only in making sense of events in their daily lives, but also it informs future behaviours (Hibbert, 2013). Indeed, reflexivity contributes to shaping who we are. It guides the insights of one's reflection on lived experiences into self-awareness and identity work (Hibbert and Cunliffe, 2015). Reflexivity also plays a crucial role in shaping the ethical approaches of individuals, organisations, and societies. It forges one's character in embracing civic responsibilities and moral causes (Ghaye, 2010). It orients moral compasses and offers opportunities for positive conversations (Cunliffe, 2009). Ultimately, it can enhance one's eudemonic happiness and well-being (Ghaye, 2010). In education, reflexivity supports learning, helps students to make sense of their progress, and it informs intentional action (Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith, 2004). Understanding students' reflexivity is crucial for effective teaching of ethical and responsible management (Cunliffe, 2004). The literature identifies two key aspects of reflexive practice in particular. First, it is a relational exercise (Garrety, 2008; Hibbert and Cunliffe, 2015). Any reflexive attempt is thus relational and derives from a dialogical interaction with individual, social, institutional, or political audiences (Alvesson, 2016; Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2017). Second, it involves enacting some form of change not only in the life of individuals, but also in the society around them (Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith, 2004; Cunliffe, 2013). In education, these aspects are especially relevant when addressing issues of responsible management (Hibbert and Cunliffe, 2015). Reflexivity can support students to take control of their own learning, to develop empathy with different stakeholders, and ultimately to question current management practices (Cunliffe, 2009; Segal, 2011).

Teachers expect that reflective practice will transform one's ethical approach, possibly by aligning it to the one shared by the academic discipline or profession. This process normally takes place through a continuous struggle of action and reflection (Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith, 2004). This is what Aristotle refers to as *praxis* (Scott and Marshall, 2009).

Therefore, *praxis* and dialogical interaction are crucial to understand how reflexive practice takes place. In educational contexts, reflexive practice is traditionally associated with opportunities for linking learning to professional practice (Leinhardt et al., 1995; Kortaghen and Vasalos, 2005). Often, these activities exist outside of the classroom (Brookfield, 1987; Ghaye, 2010). Therefore, student nurses can practise in hospitals; student teachers attend schools; and student lawyers might shadow barristers. On the contrary, Business School students traditionally remain in the confinement of the classroom, relying on case studies or simulations (Segal, 2011).

Lately, service-learning projects have presented Business Schools with the opportunity to rebalance the pecking order between in-class learning and practice (Furco and Billig, 2002; Vega, 2007). Service-learning projects are "a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to achieve desired learning outcomes" (Jacoby, 2015, p. 1-2). The use of service-learning projects can expose students to unfamiliar social issues (Ostrow, 1995), thus enhancing civic responsibility and citizenship (Furco and Root, 2010). Service-learning projects enrich the curriculum (Kinsley and McPherson, 1995) as they can improve specific skills (Eyler and Giles, 1999); invite reflection (Sandaran, 2012); and provide students with "action plans for their lives" (Vega, 2007, p. 650).

Service-learning projects hence offer an interesting context to observe the key aspects of reflexive practice in teaching responsible management. In particular, the institutionalisation of these projects and the associated autonomy for students favour the investigation of *praxis* and dialogue in the context of agency and structure. This paper explores how, by conducting service-learning projects using both a traditional and an Aristotelian approach, a morphogenetic sequence of *praxis* and dialogue contributes to shape reflexivity in the agency-structure relationship between students and the teaching of responsible management.

The paper is organised as follows. The next section explores the literature on reflexivity and proposes a theoretical approach to understand *praxis* and dialogue. Thereafter, this approach is contextualised in the agency-structure relationships of service-learning projects. Finally, empirical evidence from participatory action research shows how their morphing can produce different forms of reflexivity in service-learning projects.

Reflexivity in responsible management

Reflexivity is essential to develop responsible and ethical practice (Cunliffe, 2004; Bolton, 2010; Hibbert and Cunliffe, 2015). It represents the basis for a constructive evaluation of actions and experiences (Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith, 2004; Bolton, 2010). Traditional learning models consider reflection on experience as an essential and sufficient element for learning (Kolb, 1984; Boud et al., 1985; Schön, 1991). Nevertheless, these models are mostly task-focused and have limited applicability to the comprehension of personal improvement (Reynolds, 1998). They overlook what individuals learn about their own moral selves and their social world (Cunliffe, 2009). The identification of the dimensions of reflexivity would allow a more comprehensive understanding of the processes that accompany learning through experience (Bolton, 2010). Reflexive practice offers learners the constructive power to use experienced incidents to inform future behaviours (Hibbert, 2013). It implies action upon reflection to allow learners to enact a new perspective on the events observed (Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999). Criticality is a "necessary, but insufficient" condition of reflexivity (Alvesson and Willmott, 2012, p. 24). Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith (2004) stress how

experience-based learning can shift assumptions about learning from an epistemological to an ontological perspective. Learning *within* the experience promotes practical reflexivity and this allows learners to question not only the ideologies, texts, and theories they read, but also one's self (Cunliffe, 2002; Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith, 2004). Action invites individuals to challenge their role in social relations and to transform how the self is constructed in relation to social dynamics (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992). Experiential learning hence becomes a process to redefine participation in the social world and eventually, to redefine one's own role in reconfiguring practice (Cunliffe and Eastery-Smith, 2004; Hibbert and Cunliffe, 2015). Reflexive learners enact action and change at an individual, relational, or societal level (Raelin, 2008; Hibbert et al., 2010a). In reflexive processes, action gifts reflection with an emancipatory power to rethink the social production of one's self (Bolton, 2010). This, in turn, involves questioning established assumptions, re-evaluating relational aspects with stakeholders, and reconsidering issues such as power and control (Reynolds, 1998). Questioning established assumptions crucially includes not only the re-evaluation of one's moral practice (Cunliffe, 2009; Hibbert and Cunliffe, 2015), but also the reconsideration of the balances of power and control with the existing structure of teaching and learning (Ng and Tang, 2009). In pedagogy, these dynamics occur especially with the risk of an oppressive relationship between teacher and student (Freire, 1986). Reflexivity hence requires students to challenge the *status quo* and to consider the implications of misaligning oneself to the leadership diktat of the structure.

The current approach of teaching and learning responsible management in Business Schools frames both the learning outcomes and the delivery methods for students. Modern Business Schools invite students to develop reflexivity, aiming to promote an active approach to responsible management. On the other hand, they create a structure that signposts codes of conduct and promotes specific ethical behaviours. The school's institutional ethos, as well as different systems of reference, informs this approach. For example, alongside their own commitment to teaching responsible management, such Higher Education institutions build their strategy of teaching and learning on the indications of accreditation services (e.g. AACSB; EQUIS); international frameworks of reference (e.g. Sustainable Development Goals; PRME); and suggestions from donors (e.g. alumni associations). These considerations imply a discussion of students' reflexivity in a context of agency and structure.

To address these agency-structure issues, the literature introduced the Aristotelian concept of *praxis* (Archer, 2017). *Praxis* is the transformative process by which an agent enacts learnings and ideas (Scott and Marshall, 2009). In his Poetics, Aristotle defines *praxis* as "mainly an inward process, a psychical energy working outwards; deeds, incidents, events, situations, being included under it so far as these spring from an inward act of will or elicit some activity of thought or feeling" (Butcher 1951, p. 123). In the Aristotelian perspective, praxis embodies knowledge into action and this in turn, informs ethics (Ridout, 2009). Looking at *praxis* in eductional settings, Freire (1986) defined it as "reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed" (p. 126). *Praxis* might generate discomfort, dilemmas, perplexity, uncertainties, which in turn initiate a reflexive review of one's moral practice (Myers, 2010). At the same time, *praxis* moves students to reconsider not only their own ethical framework of reference, but also the one proposed in the institutional context of learning (Brookfield, 1987). This highlights the impossibility of considering the reflexive journey of students separately from the structures of teaching and learning responsible management.

Reflexivity is not only an intimate journey. It spills over into interactions with others, as critical reflection is essentially relational (Garrety, 2008). Action requires learners to invest in the relational aspect of reflection (Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith, 2004). Individuals do not exist in a vacuum; their lives reverberate with dialogical interactions (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992). Individuals make sense of the lived environment via continuous exchanges of meanings, symbols, and spoken words (Archer, 2017). Existing structures provide directions of behaviour and fall-back routines at times of uncertainty. Nevertheless, reflexivity challenges individuals to rewrite known codes. This process does not only offer new lenses through which to observe the environment; it also calls for bolder steps

towards changing what is around us. This continuous tension between habit and the observed environment eventually sets in motion transformations in one's world (Ostrow, 1995).

The current literature on reflexivity amongst Business School students often overlooks the central conflation that exists between students as agents and the structure of responsible management teaching in different contexts (Archer, 2017). Some authors recognise the importance of this interface, especially when agents examine and unsettle the assumptions of structure (Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith, 2004; Cunliffe, 2009; Cunliffe, 2013). These approaches indicate with this a particular type of reflexivity, i.e. *critical-reflexivity* (Hibbert and Cunliffe, 2015) and distinguish it from the inner journey of *self-reflexivity*. Although Hibbert and Cunliffe (2015) stress that self-reflexivity and critical-reflexivity are always connected, they do not consider how these dynamics might change when key elements of the relationship morph. Going beyond a progressive quest for ontologically framing reflexivity in relation to a defined structure means that perhaps there is the opportunity to explore reflexivity when contextual situations change.

This paper adopts Archer's notion of morphogenesis to unpick analytically the agency-structure relationship that surrounds reflexivity (Archer, 2012). This methodological stance recognises the interdependence between agency and structure in the process of reflexivity (Giddens, 1992). In addition, it argues that contextual aspects such as unity (in time, space, and action) and social interaction might isolate structural (and indeed cultural) factors that would contribute to articulate *praxis* and dialogue (Archer, 2017). The emerging morphogenetic sequence might produce, in turn, alternative reflexive experiences.

To assess the interprative power of this approach, this paper explores how reflexivity emerges in the context of service-learning projects. To do this, the paper first uses the allegory of the ancient Greek theatre to understand the dynamics of reflexivity in the context of agency and structure.

A morphogenetic approach to understand reflexivity

Ancient Greek theatre offers a vivid display of how humans reflect on ethical issues (Ridout, 2009). Greek tragedies especially, allow spectators to observe how actors enact reflexive practice via *praxis* and dialogue (Sandywell, 2013). Moreover, ancient Greek theatre facilitates the observation of reflexive practice in a context of agency and structure (Nellhaus, 2010). In this perspective, *praxis* is an act of agency situated within social, historical, and institutional structures. This performative effort has the "discoursive power to reproduce or transform a social relationship or circumstance through a production of meaning" (Nellhaus, 2010, p. 159). *Praxis* hence requires the actor not only to live the experience, but also to enact change. Change is contexted in dialogical interactions that accompany the reflexive process in the struggle between the actor and the structure. Therefore, discourse "has powers to cause people to think, feel, and imagine; and it is susceptible to its audience's misinterpretations, counterinterpretations, criticisms and inattentions" (Nellhaus, 2010, p. 159).

Aristotle considers theatre the supreme art-form where one can observe how *praxis* and dialogue facilitate reflexive practice at the interface between actors and the forces that orient their lives. Building on his position, the neoclassical interpretation of ancient Greek theatre identifies two key dimensions of the agency-structure relationship: the *chorus* and the three unities (time, space, and action).

Time

The neoclassical interpretation of Aristotle's theatre prescribes that a play should conclude within 24 hours. Timing is central to the actor's reflexive journey. Tragedies cannot remain unresolved on stage because of the constraints of time. Therefore, the pressures of time move the actor to initiate effective reflexive practice (Belfiore, 1983). On the contrary, the existing pedagogic literature suggests that reflexivity requires time to allow the learners to develop consciousness of the changes occurring in

and around them (Mezirow, 1990). This occurs especially because of the disorientation that reflexive practice generates in learners (Myers, 2010).

In this traditional perspective, time pressure might increase the learners' disorientation as it favours the reliance on heuristics such as habit; polychronicity; and cultural ambiguity. First, time pressure might entrench one's behaviours into familiar routines (Mezirow, 1990). Second, time pressure might affect the learners' ability to multitask, so they would prioritise task-reflection over self-reflection (König and Waller, 2010). Third, time pressure might cause disorientation as learners struggle with the relevance of new meanings and symbols (Brookfield, 1987). In all cases, time pressures might freeze decision-making leading to an *impasse*. These considerations traditionally invite teachers to spread reflexive practice over time so that students can dedicate 'enough' time to the process. Whenever studies recognise that sense-making processes can be intrinsic to the experience, they argue that this might be achieved for task-focused reflection, but not for learner-centred reflexivity (Schön, 1991; Reynolds, 1998). This means that normally reflexive projects are designed to factor in time. Therefore the traditional approach to design projects that promote reflexivity is to align them to the entire period of study of the subject (e.g. semester, term).

Space

In the neoclassical interpretation of ancient Greek theatre, all actions (and reflections) must occur in the same location. Actors have to make sense of their actions in relation to the context where they take place. In the Aristotlean approach, the different dimensions of the context (e.g. objects, positions, light) ultimately contribute to shape the reflection. Modern literature on reflexivity, in contrast, overlooks the relevance of context (Boud and Walker, 1998). The consequentiality of the traditional approaches to reflexive practice implies that the context where the process takes place is irrelevant. For convenience, therefore, projects aimed at promoting reflexivity often continue in separate contexts, with a dichotomic distinction between the space for action and the space for reflection (Zeichner and Liston, 1987). This choice is traditionally associated with power relations between the student as agent and the educational setting as structure. Context can represent an opportunity for students' emancipation as well as empowerment (Freire, 1986). The context where reflexivity takes place can empower students in taking control of their own learning; in questioning any authority relationship between them and teachers; and in continuously renegotiating the aims of the programme with the teachers (Zeichner and Liston, 1987). In the classroom, students might feel intimidated by the structure of the space. Power distance might be embodied by symbolic elements such as the physical distance between the teacher and the class, the teacher's dress code, and linguistic reverence. In these contexts, it is likely that students will align their reflection to the institutionalised expectations of their programme of studies. In ancient Greek theatre, the Aristotlean approach recomposes the inside versus outside dichotomy. Reflexivity takes place in front of the audience and in the context of action.

Action

Action is the most elusive of the three Aristotelian units (Butcher, 1951). It refers to how the narrative plot of the story connects the actor to the educational message of theatre (Gadotti, 1996). The drama must offer one single archetypical plot to which the audience can relate. This allows the actor, and in turn, each spectator to adapt the general message to their individual stories and contexts (Belfiore, 1983). Pedagogy scholars, similarly, design models for guiding students through their individual reflexive practice (Dacre-Pool and Sewell, 2007). The design of the curriculum/assessment often informs the style of communication used for sharing views and ideas emerging from reflection (Roebuck, 2007). Although offering structure and direction in style might support students in their first experiences of reflection, this scaffolded design risks hindering some of the crucial aspects of reflexive practice (Fernsten and Fernsten, 2005). For example, students may be reluctant to report any discomfort or uncertainties in a written piece that represents an assessed coursework (Boud and Walker, 1998). Students might anticipate negative repercussions to their evaluation and present their

arguments showing respect and avoiding criticisms and potential confrontations (Fernsten and Fernsten, 2005).

This might be more likely to occur if the teachers invite students to use a particular format for the reflection (e.g. CareerEDGE); to engage with mainly traditional literature; to adopt a specific communication style; or to align to predetermined ethical frameworks (e.g. PRME; Sustainable Development Goals). Similarly, the design of the educational infrastructure might prevent students from decoupling the activities occurring in the context (i.e. action and reflection) from the requirements of the curriculum (e.g. assessment, engagement, alignment). A secondary implication is that this approach shapes the use of the sources and the methods used for reflexive practice. For example, in Business Schools, the experience is mostly based on secondary data, such as case studies, simulations, or desk-based projects. Where practical service-learning projects are used, the reflection often occurs in a different context, which could be the classroom or the exam/coursework (Vega, 2007).

Social interaction and the chorus

Praxis is inherently intertwined with dialogue (Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith, 2004). This is particularly relevant in experiential learning and especially in projects conducted outside of the classroom (Freire, 1986). In these, the teacher plays a crucial role of bridging between the experienced practice and the theorising process with which students engage.

In Greek dramas, the *chorus* has the role of reminding the actor of the high civic values his/her story embodies for the citizens (Belfiore, 1983). In doing so, the *chorus* intervenes in the action whenever the storyline needs to make things happen. Nevertheless, the continuous dialogical interplay that the actor performs with the *chorus* is more than just an opportunity to reconcile dialectally theory and practice (Gadotti, 1996). The *chorus* facilitates the reflexivity work of the actor (Butcher, 1951).

In ancient Greek theatre, the interplays between the actor and the *chorus* favour *praxis* through dialogue. The actor acquires critical awareness of his/her own condition not only through informed action, but also through continuous dialogical exchanges with the *chorus*. The *chorus* assumes the role of a *dialogical mirror* of the consciousness of both the actor and the spectator. The *chorus* uses its songs to reflect back to the actor his/her inner monologues and so to help his/her questioning of the status quo. This, in turn, promotes *praxis* and forces the actor into reflexivity (Freire, 1986).

Dialogue facilitates empathy between actors and the *chorus*. This is perhaps even more relevant when they are trying to break away from shared and accepted moral conduct. The *chorus* might disapprove, but it has to understand the struggle of change and support the actor to take control of his/her own destiny. Never is this more strikingly evident than in one of the darkest moments of Greek drama. In Euripides' Medea, the actor confides to the *chorus* her plot to slaughter her own children as revenge upon her husband. In spite of not sharing the objectives, the *chorus* dialogically supports Medea to enact *praxis*. The dialogue with the *chorus* is integral to the struggle of the actor (Butcher, 1951). This is especially relevant because of the educational role of theatre. The dramatic teachings of ancient Greek theatre are universal. Euripides' play had the role, at that time, to educate society about the need to sacrifice its own children in battle. The audience needed the damned, yet cathartic, journey of Medea to make sense of changes in the socially accepted moral conduct.

As emotions run through Greek drama, reflexivity in education is a highly emotional journey (Myers, 2010). Especially in settings of professional education, students can find themselves reassessing their identity, their values, and their entire ethical approach. In these circumstances, traditional models of reflection fall short of considering such aspects (Korthagen and Vasalos, 2005). Likewise, teaching is a profession strongly influenced by emotions and feelings and educational processes often overlook the teacher's own reflexivity (Sutton and Wheatley, 2003). It is therefore important to understand how to structure learning opportunities effectively for reflexive practice.

The next section discusses how service-learning projects are an ideal context in which to observe the dynamics of reflexive practice. The flexibility of their design allows teachers to shape different structures of teaching and learning. Moreover, they offer the opportunity to directly engage students with issues of responsible management. Service-learning projects allow students to enact change to their practices in observable timescales and within specific cultural settings.

In this context, the paper considers whether issues of unity (in time, space, action) and social interaction might isolate structural (and indeed cultural) factors that would contribute to articulate *praxis* and dialogue (Archer, 2017).

Service-learning projects as contexts for reflexivity

In contrast to other professional studies, business students broadly rely on their in-class experience for learning. However, packaged case studies do not allow students to immerse themselves in the variety of issues associated with lived experiences (Segal, 2011; Hibbert and Cunliffe, 2015). Service-learning projects represent a valuable alternative to in-class activities, especially when they allow students to interact with a variety of external stakeholders (Vega, 2007). Service-learning projects present a special opportunity to bridge the classroom and external communities (Furco and Billig, 2002; Jacoby, 2015). Previous studies show how service learning projects favour the sedimentation of civic values, despite variance in the evidence supporting the enhancement of academic learning (Mabry, 1998). Experiences from these projects are crucial for promoting critical reflection (Sandaran, 2012). Actively reflecting on such experiences increases the effectiveness of the projects and facilitates students' reflexive work on their personal ethical approach (Vega, 2007).

Time, space and action, as well as the role of the teachers, are crucial issues in the design of service-learning projects. Traditionally, the literature suggests that service-learning projects should unfold over a long period of time (Eyler and Giles, 1999). Teachers hence normally design service-learning projects that align to the length of the semester or term and that, in general, reflect the pedagogic cycle of the educational institution (Jacoby, 2015).

In terms of space, the main advantage of practice-based learning is to favour non-obvious forms of exchanging knowledge (Leinhardt et al., 1995). Service-learning projects normally achieve this aim as they connect students to unfamiliar realities (Ostrow, 1995); engage them with local communities (Jacoby, 2015); and decouple experiential learning from the classroom (Furco and Billig, 2002). However, in Business Schools, service-learning projects are still often confined to the space of the classroom. Despite a lack of data on the subject, there is widespread evidence of a large number of international prizes promoting simulations, business plan competitions and case study analysis as forms of service-learning projects. These also often represent the preferred forms of assessment associated with such experiences.

Teachers often design service-learning projects with contents clearly aligned to the course; precisely communicated learning outcomes; and a defined expected level of civic engagement (Levesque-Bristol et al., 2011). Normally, teachers also associate the learning of a particular skill with the experience (Eyler and Giles, 1999). The alignment of service-learning projects to the curriculum implies that reflection will often shift to meet term dates, course structure, and assessment requirements (Dacre-Pool and Sewell, 2007). This reduces the opportunity for students to associate action and reflection with precise times and spaces.

Finally, in spite of evidence suggesting that service-learning projects are more effective when students are involved with teachers in the design of the experience (Levesque-Bristol et al., 2011), teachers mostly still act as the primary instructors and assessors (Butin, 2010). In terms of teaching responsible management, this situation might seriously limit students' ability to take reflexive control of their own actions (Freire, 1986). These considerations highlight how service-learning projects are normally designed in line with current pedagogic approaches to reflexivity. Nonetheless, their flexibility offers

the opportunity to also adopt a different approach to time, space, and action as well as to the role of the teacher. This paper details a study that explored how conducting service-learning projects using both a traditional and an Aristotelian approach might unveil a different morphogenesis of reflexive practice and help to construe a different understanding of the agent-structure relationship between students and the learning of responsible management. Table 1 below compares the Aristotelian approach and the traditional approach to service-learning projects using the lens of the three units and of the role of the *chorus*.

Table 1. The Traditional vs the Aristotelian approach.

	Traditional Approach	Aristotelian Approach
Time	Timeline for reflection aligns to semester or term.	Compressed reflexive experience (e.g. single day).
Space	In-class.	On location.
Action (i.e. narrative plot)	Precise schemes and assessments inform the learning of responsible management.	Schemes and assessments offer general directions to the learning of responsible management.
Chorus (i.e. teacher's role)	Figure of authority – presenting evidence, setting tasks, directing analysis, responding to questions.	Peer, dialogical mirror – challenging students using prompts, questioning ethical assumptions.
Praxis	Emerges mainly as self-reflection over past action.	Might emerge in different forms.
Stakeholders	Students, teacher, Business School.	Students, teacher, NGOs, NGOs' clients.
Engagement with evidence	Mainly secondary – (case studies, videos, students' personal research).	Mainly primary – (direct experience working with organisations and their clients)

Empirical evidence

In line with Archer's morphogenetic conceptual approach, the study wanted to analytically explore the agency-structure relationship in service-learning projects and observe whether different approaches to service-learning projects could help explain reflexive practice. Inspired by Freire's (1982) positions on action research, two service-learning projects were devised to link students into socially challenging situations (Vega, 2007).

The service-learning projects were conducted in two different academic years. Each project ran twice. In one year, the two projects followed a traditional structure. In another year, they followed a structure reflecting the Aristotelian approach to Greek theatre, as described above. One teacher followed the reflexive journey of 36 students in the first year and 38 in the second.

The overall aim of the projects was to offer opportunities for students to evaluate the importance of management issues in contexts other than 'the firm'. The projects took place in settings of social marginalisation that traditionally remain outside of the students' experience in a Business School (Ostrow, 1995). Secondary objectives were to push students out of their comfort zone and to invite them to re-evaluate their approaches to business ethics (Mezirow, 1990; Mabry, 1998).

The first project saw students providing business solutions to social enterprises in a variety of situations of social marginalisation. The project included familiarisation with experiences of poverty, homelessness, or social and gender discrimination. As a response to their analysis, students had to create business plans and operational solutions for improving the situations observed. In line with the main aim, students had to consider the applicability to the context of social marginalisation of

solutions such as enterprise-based approaches (Prahalad, 2004); sustainable business models (Bisignano et al., 2017); and decentred stakeholder management models (Werhane, 2011).

In the second project, students collaborated with a local NGO to support asylum seekers and refugees. The students offered advice in terms of improving enterprise skills, adapting to the British culture, and understanding British laws, markets, and customs. The project included researching migrants' activities in the shadow economy. Examples of these activities included asylum seekers working without legal status or starting informal enterprises. Students familiarised themselves not only with the migrants' stories of escape and travel, but also with their stories of survival in the host country. In many cases, asylum seekers had started informal (and at times illegal) enterprises to achieve economic independency and circumvent labour exploitation. Students hence encountered critical ethical issues regarding informal enterprise (e.g. illegal activities; working conditions; risks of human trafficking and exploitation) and faced widely diverse cultural approaches to business ethics. In line with the main aim, students had to consider the applicability of management principles to this unique context of social marginalisation.

The decision to consider two different projects was to account for other aspects potentially influencing the agency-structure relationship. Firstly, the service-learning projects had different natures, with one aiming at directly helping people (migration project) and the other aiming at creating solutions for reducing social exclusion. Secondly, the projects had different cultural embeddedness, with the migration project exposing students to a variety of cultural factors. Thirdly, the projects had a different level of engagement with external stakeholders. In the social exclusion project, students needed to present their proposals to external agencies at the end of the project. In the migration project, the students worked directly with a local NGO throughout, which could have shaped expectations. No significant differences were observed between the two experiences.

In the traditional approach, the projects were aligned to the curriculum; unfolded during an entire semester; and took place within the Business School, using mainly secondary data. The students had to produce two assessed outputs: a business plan or other strategic documents for the external agencies and a written critical reflection, with clear directions for ethical reflection. The teacher acted purely as an assessor. They introduced theory, facilitated links with the external agencies, (loosely) followed project progression, and assessed both the coursework and reflective reports.

In the Aristotelian approach, the structure was shaped so that the projects took place over a series of intensive one-day events. Students were fully immersed in the activities of the local partner agencies, with the task to produce some form of 'change' at the end. Students were required to provide a reflection on their experience immediately at the end of the project, using a presentation method of their choice. The teacher had an active role. They did not only introduce relevant theories, but also participated first hand in the projects. The teacher provided constant dialogue, talking with each student at the end of each element of the day. Students' outputs and reflections were graded as pass/fail only. In both cases, students had one to one meetings with the teacher at the end of the project to reflect on how the experience changed their knowledge of social and ethical issues and how they made sense of responsible management in the context of marginalisation.

As part of a larger study, a survey measured the perceived ability of students to make sense of different aspects of ethical and responsible management. The survey asked students about their agreement with a series of statements, both at the beginning and at the end of the project. The statements measured expectations of whether the course would increase their abilities at all, marginally, or significantly. Table 2 below shows a summary of the perceived *significant* changes in some of the most relevant areas. The paper reports these data to offer some context of how the two approaches are associated with different levels of student engagement with responsible management.

Table 2. Perceived significant change to students' perceptions using different approaches to service-learning projects.

I think this course will significantly increase / has significantly increased my understanding of:	Aristotelian Approach		Traditional Approach	
	before	after	before	after
Ethical management	54.1%	75.7%	52.7%	55.4%
The role that enterprise might have on society	36.5%	75.7%	37.8%	54.1%
The importance of stakeholders' management	54.1%	70.3%	51.4%	58.1%
How I can take control of my own ethical management	27.0%	67.6%	32.4%	51.4%
Respondents	36		38	

Nonetheless, the aim of this paper is to understand the mechanisms behind these differences, especially in terms of how various and perhaps unexpected processes of *praxis* might emerge. The next section discusses how the morphogenesis of *praxis* and dialogue produced different reflexive experiences during a continuous renegotiation of the relationship between the student and the structure of learning (Archer, 2017). The discussion is based on: the teacher's personal observations and reflection, students' comment, evidence from the students' outputs, and field notes.

Discussion

Reflexivity invites students to challenge their existing system of ethical beliefs (Hibbert and Cunliffe, 2015). This journey is not linear and it often leads to challenging established truths. Through reflexivity, students may reconsider ethical stances traditionally shared with their institution in light of new experiences (Freire, 1986). The reflexive journey is not only negative (i.e. the rejection of existing positions), but also positive (i.e. the proposal of new alternative positions).

The evidence collected shows how students perceived that they had significantly increased their levels of understanding and control of ethical management in the Aristotelian approach (see table 2). In both service-learning projects, as time, space, action and audience changed in the interface between structure and agency, *praxis* and dialogue morphed to generate different forms of reflexivity: rebellious, recursive, relational, virtuous.

Reflexivity as rebellious practice

During the experience, *praxis* and dialogue manifested themselves as an open rejection of ethical imposed models and the subsequent proposition of new ones. This characterises a rebellious type of reflexivity.

In the reflective report on the migration project run with the traditional approach, students recognised how the experience presented them with unfamiliar dynamics and how it increased their awareness of informal enterprises. However, only two mentioned unease with the ethical dilemmas related to witnessing informal or illegal activities and most made marginal comments in their reports. In the design of business solutions, almost all students suggested to deal with the situation within the existing moral and regulatory framework (e.g. finding alternatives to move support to migrants within the legal economy). In the Aristotelian approach, instead, students mostly condoned the illegal behaviours on the basis of "*alternative rules*" governing the informal economy. All of the students questioned instead the ethical value of the current legislation preventing asylum seekers from working legally. The moral tensions emerging from the experience reverberated into dialectical exchanges with the teacher, for example where students tried to justify the illegal activities of a young informal entrepreneur. This led to some heated exchanges during each of the away-days, with some students openly questioning the social *status quo* and engaging dialectically with the teacher.

> Student: *"[with such demand] they're making quite a few quids out there"*
> Teacher (EEA citizen working in UK): *"perhaps you should report them to the police"*
> Student: *"easy for you to say, you could just come to this country boarding a plane without a visa"*
> Teacher: *"so what then? Leave it as it is?"*
> Student: *"They are not doing wrong there [...] they are helping the community"*
> --
> Student: *"[...] and if they don't do like this, they will not have enough.*
> Teacher: *"I know ... but that's wrong, isn't it?*
> Student: *"[...] and who are we to say it's wrong?"*

A similar pattern emerged in the social enterprise project. The Aristotelian approach facilitated *praxis* and dialogue with the teacher/*chorus* that allowed learners to challenge societal assumptions (Reynolds, 1998); to redefine their own approach to ethical management (Cunliffe, 2004); and to question authority (Boud and Walker, 1998). These are all crucial elements of moral reflexive practice (Cunliffe 2013; Hibbert and Cunliffe, 2015). The Aristotelian approach to service-learning projects also carries emancipatory powers. Learners avert the risk of any oppressive imposition of ethical values by the teacher or the educational institution (Freire, 1986). These considerations have important impact in terms of teaching responsible management. The understanding of how the agent-structure relationship morphs in light of time, space, and action allows teachers to design service-learning projects that facilitate *rebellious praxis* and dialogue. Through *rebellious praxis*, students can acquire a critical awareness of their own condition and start a transformation process of their own learning.

Reflexivity as recursive practice

Another difference between the traditional and the Aristotelian approach is that, in the latter, *praxis* and dialogue also appeared as a rejection of imposed methods of doing things and the proposition of new personal approaches. In the traditional approach to the social enterprise project, all students adopted one or more of the proposed models for an enterprise-based approach to social enterprising (Bisignano et al., 2017). On the contrary, in the Aristotelian version, almost all of the students revised the assumptions or implications of the proposed enterprise-based model.

> Student: *"this seems to be just another way to make money"*
> Teacher: *"yeah, but in this way companies can still make profit and help to lift people out of poverty"*
> Student: *"Uhm, I don't know, there must be another way".*

A similar experience emerged when students had to design solutions to support the asylum seekers.

> Student: *"[...] isn't this just a way to justify that we exploit them [asylum seekers]?"*
> Teacher: *"this [theory] can frame enterprising behaviours and help them becoming formal start-ups"*
> Student: *"it doesn't always have to be about business".*

In the Aristotelian approach, several students revised their approach to learning. For example, in their reflective reports they used photos, audio recordings, and even gifts received from the clients as symbolic tokens of organising thoughts. When allowed the possibility to choose how to organise and present their reflection, only a few students opted for the proposed format of reflection (i.e. written report). The majority of students preferred to produce videos, mind-maps, and collages not only to take and organise notes, but also to produce an output of their reflection. On the contrary, in the traditional reflective report, almost all students used the proposed approach to record and present notes. This is evidence of students taking active control in how to shape their own learning approach. Reflexivity assumes a recursive form as *praxis* and dialogue equip learners with the ability to revisit their learning processes (Hibbert et al., 2010a). Reflective practice changes over time and situations as students make sense of the structural limitations that restrict their learning (Hibbert et al., 2010a).

Reflexivity in its recursive form can make students responsible for their own reflective practice over time. This requires teachers to delegate more power in the process of responsible management learning.

Reflexivity as relational practice

In the third form of reflexivity, *praxis* and dialogue appeared as a rejection of the suggested type of relationships with stakeholders and the proposition of new personal relations. In both projects, the brief reminded students to consider both the external service-agencies and the local NGO as professional clients. In the traditional approach, this was evident in the fact that students only discussed their proposed managerial solutions with these stakeholders. However, in the Aristotelian approach, students engaged with the service providers in a more comprehensive manner. For example, they discussed with the interlocutors at the migrant NGO about the "*underground morality*" of informal enterprising and how it relates to issues such as the right to work, the right to happiness, and the right to safety. In the social enterprise project, students discussed how any company offering business solutions to marginalised people should involve both them and local institutions in the design and delivery of enterprising activities. The physical proximity of doing the projects on location rather than in the classroom facilitated these discussions. Nevertheless, in the in-class activities, no student took the initiative to contact the service-providers over the weeks of the project. Furthermore, in the Aristotelian version of the reflection output, many students linked their reflexive journey to their experiences with the service-providers. Surely, this was fresh in their minds having concluded their experience in the same day. Nonetheless, in the reflection report of the traditional version, no student discussed their relationship with these institutional stakeholders. In the traditional approach, the reflexive process was far more self-centred. This was also visible with regard to relations with the final clients. For example, in the migration project, most students developed an empathetic relationship with the asylum seekers. In the traditional version of the reflection, however, only a handful of students referred to the stories of the migrants. Most reports focused on how these encounters had favoured the development of skills such as cross-cultural management and global citizenship. Contrastingly in the Aristotelian approach, students also clearly related their reflexive processes to the people they encountered. They centred their own personal reflection on the migrants' stories and how they related to them.

Teacher: *"and why do you want to include how [name of asylum seeker] survived?"*
Student: *"they are not just a number, there is so much more in each story [...] it makes you think how lucky we are [to be born] in Europe"*

In the Aristotelian approach, the teacher/*chorus* challenged these approaches, mainly in an attempt to focus the attention of the students on the task at hand. The dialogical interaction appears, instead, to have integrated *praxis* in shaping this relational form of reflexivity even further.

Student: *"I knew they struggled, but I have never understood how much"*
Teacher: *"Yeah, but is this relevant to your reflection?"*
Student: *"but now I know [...] it was different before"*

Reflexivity emerges as *relational* as it facilitates learners to reposition their own identity in relation to others and to society (Bolton, 2010). It has the ability to allow learners to renegotiate their relationships with other stakeholders within their reflective practice (Osterman and Kottkamp, 2004). In terms of teaching responsible management, the relational nature of reflexivity implies the need to allow students the space to redesign relationships with stakeholders, both internal and external to the educational institution. In relational reflexivity, *praxis* and dialogue enact change at all levels, from the individual to social networks and ultimately to society. The ancient Greek theatre had an educational role in representing civic values and appropriate moral conduct to the citizens. Similarly,

reflexivity manifests its relational nature when *praxis* orients the student to enact change considering the lives of others.

Reflexivity as virtuous practice

Reflexivity also assumed the form of virtuous moral practice. Here, *praxis* and dialogue appeared as a rejection of the type of engagement with moral practice and the proposition of alternative ways of acting ethically. The service-learning projects mainly aimed at introducing students to alternative forms of enterprising, to unfamiliar situations, and to a world distant from the traditional notions of "firm" and "profit" taught in Business Schools.

The traditional approach fully achieved these aims. In the project with social enterprises, the business plans offered alternative solutions to serve people marginalised in society. In the migration projects, students provided innovative solutions to support the progressive integration of asylum seekers. The reflective reports showed how students evaluated their experience linking to the learning of new skills and competences. These processes were very similar in the year when the service-learning projects used the Aristotelian approach. In addition, students seemed to change how they engaged with marginalisation in their day-to-day activities. After the end of the migration project, a few students decided to go back to volunteer with the local NGO on a long-term basis and one recently became a manager in the local centre. Two students decided to actively engage in politics with the aim of changing current policies on the social integration of asylum seekers. One collaborated with local TV on the production of a documentary about refugees. The same level of engagement emerged in the social integration project. A few students went back to volunteer regularly at a community garden. Others organised independent volunteering days at a community kitchen. Two groups of students started international projects to promote responsible management and global citizenship across universities and institutions. Reflexivity emerges in its virtuous form as *praxis* moves individuals to act in ways that consider moral conduct (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). *Praxis* empowers learners with the mindfulness for developing accurate awareness in their practical wisdom (Bolton, 2010). Reflexive learners develop a novel, personal, ethical stance and they embody it in their lives via a state of *phronesis*, a moral disposition to 'act rightly'. Ultimately, reflexivity nurtures learners to flourish as human beings to progress to a *eudemonic* state of happiness and well-being (Ghaye, 2010; Archer, 2017). The implications for teaching responsible management are challenging, as this approach requires offering students greater control with the risk of the emerging positions becoming misaligned from institutional beliefs or from the programme's learning outcomes (Freire, 1986).

Teachers do indeed play a positive role in order to create the stage for *praxis* to enact the different manifestations of reflexivity. In ancient Greek theatre, a continuous dialogical exchange between the *chorus* and the actor facilitates *praxis*. In the context of using reflexivity as a pedagogical resource for teaching ethical management, a teacher ought to embody the role of the *chorus* in providing the continuous dialogical exchanges that permit *praxis*. This means that the teacher has to be prepared to act as *dialogical mirror* for supporting reflexivity. This revised role requires more direct involvment in the experiential activities and might lead to open confrontations with the students (Korthagen and Vasalos, 2005).

Conclusions

This paper aimed at assessing how the design of service-learning projects can foster students' reflexive moral practice. Building on the existing debate on reflexivity, the paper explored it in relation to the agency-structure relationship between students and the current designs for teaching responsible management in Business Schools.

The paper adopted Archer's morphogenetic approach to explore analytically the dimensions of this agency-structure relationship. Drawing on parallels with ancient Greek theatre, the paper investigated how issues of unity (of time, space, and action) and interaction (with teacher/*chorus*) contributed to

morph two constituing aspects of reflexivity: *praxis* and dialogue. The emerging morphogenetic sequence, in turn, generated different forms of reflexivity. Inspired by Freire's (1982) techniques of action research, the paper compared the experiences of two service-learning projects, each run once with a traditional approach and once with an Aristotelian approach to unity and interaction. The empirical evidence highlighted how the Aristotelian approach offered students the perception to better understand ethical management and the role of its stakeholders and to take more direct control of their ethical practice.

In the traditional projects, students followed the proposed frameworks of reference both for designing their solutions (e.g. enterprise-based approach to engage with marginalised individuals) and for presenting their reflective reports (i.e. CareerEDGE). Overall, they showed less autonomy in devising new ways of engaging with ethical issues. In the Aristotelian approach, however, students produced very diverse works. They used a wider range of sources, theorised from their own experiences, and presented their reflections with unique personalised solutions.

The compressed design (i.e. a series of one day events) and a more involved role of the teacher (i.e. as a dialogical mirror) within the Aristotelian approach favoured a morphing of *praxis* and dialogue that helped to explain this difference. The emerging morphogenetic process identified four forms of reflexivity: rebellious, recursive, relational, and virtuous.

From a theoretical perspective, the paper suggests how the morphing of *praxis* and dialogue can characterise moral reflexive practice in different forms. This highlights their relevance in teaching responsible management, especially in a context of collaboration projects between Business Schools and external agencies.

From a pragmatic perspective, the paper recommends teachers to adopt an Aristotelian approach to the organisation of service-learning projects. Compressed and compacted deliveries offer an adequate balance between change-oriented action and the ability to conclude a cycle of action-reflection within a feasible timeframe. The pressures of time, in turn, keep the students focused, by reducing the risk of falling into a habit or the temptations of multi-tasking. In addition, moving the activity completely out of the classroom and into the setting of an external agency facilitates student understanding of stakeholders' interests and how to manage them.

The paper concludes with the invitation to revise the role of the teacher from a mere assessor of the critical reflection process to one of a dialogical mirror. Continuous, albeit dialectical, conversations with the teacher support students in making sense of their own moral reflexive practice, in challenging current assumptions in business ethics, and in ultimately taking control of their own approach to ethical management.

This finding is even more relevant when integrated with the meta-reflexivity of the teacher. Seminal organisational studies discuss the relevance of this practice for understanding research processes (Archer, 2007; Hibbert et al., 2010b). Nonetheless, the meta-reflexivity practices of teachers in teaching ethical responsible management remain under-explored and offer interesting avenues for future research.

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