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Social enterprise and wellbeing in community life

Social
enterprise and
wellbeing

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to explore the well-being impacts of social enterprise, beyond a social enterprise *per se*, in everyday community life.

Design/methodology/approach – An exploratory case study was used. The study's underpinning theory is from relational geography, including Spaces of Wellbeing Theory and therapeutic assemblage. These theories underpin data collection methods. Nine social enterprise participants were engaged in mental mapping and walking interviews. Four other informants with “boundary-spanning” roles involving knowledge of the social enterprise and the community were interviewed. Data were managed using NVivo, and analysed thematically.

Findings – Well-being realised from “being inside” a social enterprise organisation was further developed for participants, in the community, through positive interactions with people, material objects, stories and performances of well-being that occurred in everyday community life. Boundary spanning community members had roles in referring participants to social enterprise, mediating between participants and structures of community life and normalising social enterprise in the community. They also gained benefit from social enterprise involvement.



Originality/value – This paper uses relational geography and aligned methods to reveal the intricate connections between social enterprise and well-being realisation in community life. There is potential to pursue this research on a larger scale to provide needed evidence about how well-being is realised in social enterprises and then extends into communities.

Keywords Wellbeing, Social enterprise, Community, Disadvantage, Health geography

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

This paper explores the relationship between social enterprises, their participants, well-being realised in/from social enterprises and the experience of well-being *outside* of social enterprises, in community life. We used a relational, geographical approach (Cummins *et al.*, 2007) to collect and consider data. We concluded from a previous study (Munoz *et al.*, 2015) that this provides a useful methodology to assess how and why well-being is realised in/by a setting that has material, cultural and social aspects. In this case, the originality of this paper lies in using relational methods to explore if and how a social enterprise might have well-being impacts on people's lives in a community. The paper seeks to explore the added value of social enterprises, which Hazenberg (2014) suggests has been insufficiently explored, to date, in academic research.

Much of the promise of social enterprises for socio-economically disadvantaged people is based on their purported capacity to realise well-being (Lysaght *et al.*, 2012; Teasdale, 2010). We understand individual well-being here, from Fleuret and Atkinson (2007), as comprising elements of integration, security, capability and therapy, fluid and relative rather than fixed (Atkinson, 2013), but we acknowledge that well-being is multiply interpreted.

In a previous study conducted in 2011 (Muñoz *et al.*, 2015), we applied a relational geography approach to explore how well-being was realised for individuals engaged in GreenShed, a social enterprise in a regional Australian town. In that study, we found that applying Fleuret and Atkinson's (2007) Spaces of Wellbeing Theory helped to identify well-being realised in a social enterprise and how well-being realisation occurred. Therapeutic assemblage, another concept from relational geography (Foley, 2011), was helpful in understanding how material things, stories and practices come together to realise well-being in places. We provided quotes from social enterprise participants that showed their experiences of well-being in a social enterprise, and how these developed. From relating participants' discussions to spaces within and associated with the social enterprise, we were even able to show different aspects of well-being built in productive and social spaces. This enabled a micro-geography of well-being realisation in a social enterprise to be portrayed.

From the 2011 study, we were intrigued by participants' discussions of their social enterprise experiences in relation to "life in the community"; for example, discussing how social connections formed in the social enterprise extended into, and affected experiences in, community life. This led us to wonder if and how the social enterprise impacted on participants' lives in the community and whether impacts were more widely felt – like ripples on a pond – by others in the community.

This paper discusses a further small, exploratory study we conducted, again with participants of GreenShed, but in 2014-2015. It builds on the 2011 study and largely involves a different group of participants. The goal was to explore if and how the well-being realised by/in a social enterprise impacts on participants' "everyday"

community lives – and the lives of others in the community. We ask – Are there well-being benefits that are experienced beyond the boundaries of engagement at/in a social enterprise? We understand community as comprising a geographical location, the built/natural environment there and the people who live and/or work there. We view community as constructed through ongoing interactions between these aspects. We understand community here as associated with a meaningful location (Cresswell, 2004, p. 7), but fluid and composed of networks and flows between relations (Massey, 1997), experienced differently by diverse participants and at different times, alone or together (Doughty, 2013). In this respect, while recognising that community is variously understood (McGregor, 2012), our concept of community is akin to relational understanding of place. Cresswell (2004, p. 37) describes place as “an embodied relationship with the world. Places are constructed by people doing things and in this sense are never ‘finished’ but are constantly being performed”. We use the term “everyday life” from de Certeau (1984, p. 16-18) to signify that we are talking about the ordinary, rather than special, workings in communities of “practices, mixtures of rituals and makeshifts” which are “all in general circulation and rather drab”.

Community well-being has been depicted as involving citizen safety, empowerment, socioeconomic security, social cohesion and social inclusion (Miles *et al.*, 2008). Here, we do not consider what social enterprise contributes to a pre-defined concept of community well-being; rather, we present a beginning exploration of how social enterprise might influence well-being of participants and others in everyday community life.

As a social enterprise, GreenShed might be regarded as a “work integration social enterprise” (WISE), intended to provide social support, build social capital and provide supported employment for vulnerable people (Barraket, 2014). On the surface, GreenShed appears to be a “men’s shed”, i.e. a type of organisation popular in Australia and aimed at providing men with traditionally male-oriented, productive activities like woodworking (Ballinger *et al.*, 2009). GreenShed is more than this and is open to all genders and incorporates activities such as art classes. GreenShed was established originally by a religious group following a natural disaster in the early 2000s. Its intention is equity and providing purpose through meaningful activity. GreenShed generates funding from sales of wood products, contracts with disability organisations and the Correction System and community grants. We propose it is a social enterprise because it has a social mission, makes goods for sale and provides services for contract (Barraket *et al.*, 2010). Geographically, this study is located in a relatively disadvantaged and historically distinct suburb of a regional town in Victoria, Australia. The suburb is distinguished from the larger town by a boundary formed by a creek which acts as a physical and emotional barrier for connections with the rest of the town. Both the regional town and this suburb grew out of intense gold-mining in the 1850s-1870s, followed by later development of rural industries and services.

The study involved nine purposively selected social enterprise participants, and four interviewees with knowledge of the social enterprise and the community (depicted here as boundary spanners; Richter *et al.*, 2006), identified from participant data collection. Data were collected from social enterprise participants using mental mapping and walking interviews, and from others using face-to-face interviews.

Background

Social enterprises and well-being

Social enterprises could be interpreted as part of a broader economic social and solidarity movement, an alternative to mainstream capitalist enterprise, that aims to combine economically viable business for wealth creation, service provision and improving well-being of individuals and places (Amin *et al.*, 2002). This acknowledges the contribution of diverse economic enterprises to social and cultural life. To be successful in such a paradigm, an enterprise should be commercially viable and strive to make positive impacts on society, addressing individual and collective well-being of local people, for example through providing work experience and/or training (Ferguson and Islam, 2008; Fioritti *et al.*, 2014).

We suggest that GreenShed, the social enterprise in this study, might be understood as a WISE. Borzaga and Depedri (2014) typologise WISEs, suggesting categories of:

- social support (supplying vulnerable people with mainly social integration opportunities and social capital building);
- sheltered employment (employing vulnerable people to produce goods/services for public administration); and
- supported employment (integrating vulnerable people into market-oriented enterprises).

They suggest that “over the past 20 years, work integration social enterprises have increasingly become a solution to the issues of work placement of vulnerable persons” (Borzaga and Depedri, 2014, p. 97) and note that WISEs provide opportunities for those “with psychological and physical disability, people with substance abuse, other disability, longterm unemployment, disadvantaged young people, immigrants, women and those with low education” (p. 91). Barraket (2014, p. 105) says that, in Australia, WISE “typically combines the work integration objective with the delivery of specific goods and services that serve the unmet needs of the beneficiary group”. This resonates with Spear and Bidet’s (2005) analysis of the rise of WISE to provide welfare services, coinciding with the de-institutionalisation of social care and with policies focusing on welfare to work.

Benefits for individuals and communities are claimed to arise from social enterprise activities (Williams *et al.*, 2008). Recently, attention has turned to instrumentally applying social enterprise as a form of public health intervention, although evidence to support this remains sparse (Roy *et al.*, 2013). Benefits for individuals are linked to attaining a sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1979) and/or gaining “the skills and confidence to manage the demands of life, to respond to an environment that is both comprehensible and manageable” (Roy *et al.*, 2013, p. 61). Collective benefits identified in the literature include the rehabilitation and increased inclusiveness of civic spaces resulting from social enterprise operations in rural communities (Barraket and Archer, 2010). Proponents note that the impact of social enterprise on well-being development is difficult to measure and quantify. In particular, there is poor understanding of causal mechanisms (Roy *et al.*, 2014). A systematic literature review of the impact of social enterprise-led activity on health and well-being found few quality studies (Roy *et al.*, 2014), which indicated improvements in mental health, self-confidence, self-esteem, motivation and life satisfaction. Our case study here presents evidence from a social

enterprise that aligns, to an extent, with the Men's Shed concept. Milligan *et al.* (2015) have investigated well-being benefits from Men's Sheds, but suggest challenges with causation, questioning if those who are most healthy or who have best capacity for improved health are most likely to participate.

Roy *et al.* (2014, p. 190) suggest social enterprises could provide "a window of opportunity for mutual understanding and interaction with the community", but again there is little evidence that probes micro-scale social enterprise–community inter-relationships. Our study moves understanding away from viewing individual well-being as a fixed stock, to understanding how well-being assets, realised from interactions with social enterprise as a space of well-being, inter-relate with aspects of everyday life, giving opportunities for affecting well-being in the community.

Space, place and well-being

In this paper, we apply ideas of spaces of well-being and therapeutic assemblage to develop understanding of how well-being is (re-)realised through inter-relationships between people, material objects, stories, practices and performances (Foley, 2011). The geographical theories used align with the idea of therapeutic landscape, defined by Kearns and Gesler (1998, p. 8) as places that have achieved "reputations for providing physical, mental and spiritual healing". This view has evolved into contention that a therapeutic landscape is a place with the potential for health, but its realisation is contingent (Conradson, 2005). People will experience places differently, depending on their personal situation, environmental conditions and over time. Thus places are not fixed in their potential to benefit. If a place is culturally understood as linked with health, people will approach it with expectation of benefit. This is likely to influence the realisation of benefit. Foley (2011) highlighted that participants will, in a sense, "perform" health to participate in the implicit potential. As social enterprises are promoted as beneficial, society already regards them as a space where people and ways of organising are part of a landscape that has therapeutic intent. Participants need only to go along and perform health, perhaps, to realise benefits for themselves.

Fleuret and Atkinson (2007) conducted a multidisciplinary literature review of relationships between well-being and spaces. Acknowledging that "well-being is a notoriously abstract and unfigure term" (Atkinson, 2013), they identified four key perspectives: capability, integration, security and therapy. Rather than delimiting well-being to one philosophical viewpoint, Fleuret and Atkinson (2007) suggested that embracing diverse perspectives on well-being beneficially produces an encompassing concept that understands well-being realisation as therapeutic assemblage. Atkinson (2013) views well-being as fluid and dynamic, situated and relational, and realised by interaction between material, organic and emotional dynamics of places. Thus, the spaces of well-being approach underpins the idea that different social and spatial contexts may be facilitative of well-being. In a previous paper (Munoz *et al.*, 2015), we applied thinking about spaces of well-being and therapeutic landscape to suggest how well-being was realised in a social enterprise. In this study, we used the same thinking to explore if/how well-being realisation from social enterprises might come together with aspects of everyday community life, to help realise well-being in the community.

Methodology

The study described here used methods consistent with relational geography, that is mental mapping and walking interviews, and incorporated technologies including geographical tracking and photography. The methods were intended to capture places significant to participants and locate what was said and expressed there, recorded in photographs and observed in the action of taking photographs. The methods were intended to facilitate participants to steer researchers where participants wanted to go, associated with what researchers asked them. Walking in the locale allowed us to capture feelings expressed and incidental events that happened as participants encountered other people, things and locations. Emotions as expressed in smiling, language tone and body language were aspects observed and recorded. Walking interviews have been discussed as helpful for vulnerable participants because they address the norm where researchers lead the agenda, affording elements of empowerment to the study subjects (Evans and Jones, 2011). Doughty (2013, p. 145) notes this equalising quality, suggesting “walking-with” provides a “temporary form of companionship”. She explains that walking interviews capture the reality of our mobile lives performed in meaningful, but incidental interactions with others.

GreenShed was our study setting because we had researched there before, had contextual understanding and established relationships with staff. GreenShed produces wooden products from recycled timber, and services related to planning, building and installing these. GreenShed participants are unpaid and deal with the range of life challenges described by Borzaga and Depedri (2014, p. 91), including long-term unemployment and disability. They are referred from within the local community, by the Correction System and by disability services and organisations. GreenShed also has a paid manager and inputs from other paid workers. GreenShed is difficult to precisely typologise as a social enterprise (Borzaga and Depedri, 2014). It appears to focus most on the production of social integration outcomes produced through engaging people in productive activities, but it also has elements of work/business integration because goods are produced for sale. Our previous study (Munoz *et al.*, 2015) showed that engagement in work that produced goods for sale was significant for GreenShed participants. GreenShed participants are mainly men, although there are some female participants.

Nathan is the manager of GreenShed. We received his consent to undertake this study. Formal ethical approval was from La Trobe University Ethics Committee (FHEC 14/178 01/08/2014). We asked Nathan to identify social enterprise participants for mental mapping and walking interviews based on his assessment of their capacity to participate. Ultimately, nine male participants were involved, eight chose to map/walk in pairs (i.e. with a companion from GreenShed) and one was involved on his own. All were between 20 and 65 years old.

Participants received an information sheet. This was read out, as some had literacy problems, with Nathan and/or another paid staff member present. Care was taken that participants did not feel obliged to be involved. We tried to make the experiences as unthreatening as possible. Members of the research team spent some time informally at GreenShed getting to know participants beforehand and during the time the study took place. Participants were welcome to participate in the mental mapping and walking interviews with a companion, as was requested by some participants.

Following data collection with participants, we decided to interview “boundary spanners” (Long *et al.*, 2013), as Nathan, a student volunteer and two community members were mentioned, by more than one participant, during walking interviews. We understand boundary spanners as people with connections and roles in community life, as well as knowledge of the social enterprise. These four consented to participate in face-to-face, audio-recorded interviews. A total of 13 subjects were thus involved.

Social enterprise participants were first asked to draw a mental map (Brennan-Horley, 2010), using marker pens and paper, of places they might visit in the locale during a normal day (open to them to interpret), and to describe how these places made them feel and what they did there. Some participants found this challenging. We did not probe this, but it appeared related to literacy and/or confidence challenges. In most cases, therefore, researcher TdC talked with participants about an imagined journey around the community, sometimes drawing what they described, but sometimes not – as thought appropriate.

Following this, participants led TdC on a walk from GreenShed around the locale. TdC wore a geographical positioning system (GPS) tracker, and TdC and participants wore lapel microphones to record conversations. Walks lasted around one hour. Participants were asked to walk and talk about places in the community, following up the earlier mental mapping experience. Participants were encouraged by ongoing conversation from TdC to talk about, and photograph, places that they related to their social enterprise experiences.

Interviews were transcribed and thematic qualitative analysis was carried out using NVivo, coding to the well-being dimensions of Spaces of Wellbeing Theory, and highlighting material objects, social interactions, practices or stories according to therapeutic assemblage. Analysis was open to new themes. Study subjects were given pseudonyms to preserve anonymity. Rounds of discussion of data were conducted among the research team, to explore what had been found.

Using GPS tracking and timestamps, we were able to align discussions with locations in the community. In a future, larger study, we would like to identify if there are key interaction points (locations of consistent significance), but this study largely tested the methods and approach, for feasibility. Interacting with the technology proved engaging for participants, and maps of each participant’s journey were produced, by overlaying it with a picture captured from Google Maps. These are not included here, but again the idea was tested for feasibility in a larger study.

Findings

In our previous study (Munoz *et al.*, 2015), we identified well-being realised in a social enterprise and we described how it realised, using quotes and examples illustrating therapeutic assemblage of well-being from interconnections of material objects, social interactions, stories, practices and performances. In this study, we sought to explore whether this well-being from inside social enterprises might impact on participants in their everyday community life and whether it had any wider impacts on well-being in the community. Below, we explore evidence for these aspects, dividing our discussion into consideration of participants and, then, the wider community. As in our previous study, we shape discussion by drawing on the idea of therapeutic assemblage.

Social enterprise participants and well-being in community life

Findings suggest that well-being for participants realised inside GreenShed – in a sense – moves with them into their community life. Doughty (2013, p. 145) proposes that therapeutic landscape could be viewed as “a moving space that unfolds within and through interactions with the environment (including other humans, as well as non-humans), rather than a fixed geographical location”. In various ways, during walking interviews, well-being realised within GreenShed could be interpreted as extending and augmenting through individuals carrying out their day-to-day activities in the locale. Data suggest the participants as having developed a sort of mobile “well-being bubble” which could be construed as having their space of well-being, stimulated and nascent in GreenShed, move with them into the community. Below we illustrate how participants’ experiences of well-being from GreenShed could be linked with their well-being in community life, through: community locations or material things acting as triggers for participants’ expressions of well-being; the telling of stories about how well-being from GreenShed has improved participants’ community life; and performances of well-being (being “ordinary” (Thrift, 1999) in the community), which participants attribute to GreenShed participation.

Materiality: community objects as well-being triggers

Participants led the researcher around the locale, discussing locations and objects that act to tie together their well-being, GreenShed and community life.

Objects and locations were discussed in relation to social integration; for example, Don explained, outside the chemist’s shop, his difficulties interacting with staff there, in the past. He tended to get confused about whether or not he had received his drugs and said he sometimes got upset and angry. Nathan (GreenShed manager) had mediated with the staff to devise a system for Don to record and sign-off which drugs he had received. This led to new, cordial relationships with shop staff:

Don: before I came to [GreenShed], I was pretty angry and I was very suspicious of everyone. It was the way that I survived [...] they were the wrong mechanisms, but they were the only ones I knew. Nathan used to come up with me to the chemist. When I first went up there, I went off because I thought they were trying to rip me off. They were showing me these things and I couldn’t work it out. I was getting confused. So I told Nathan what happened, and he said I better come with you, so he came up with me and made them do a list and I had to sign for it [...]

Another participant, James, led the researcher to a bus stop which symbolised his journey to becoming an “ordinary” (i.e. non-disruptive) citizen. James described:

I was hanging out at the bus stops mainly, but I’ve not done that for ages now. All of the shop owners complained about me. I was yelling at the people and what not. I used to be really aggressive, I still am a little bit – and people used to be intimidated because they’d hear me yelling at people at the bus stop [...]

James was referred to GreenShed by Mary, who works at a shop beside the bus stop. Mary contacted Nathan about James. James began participating at GreenShed, and explained, to TdC at the bus-stop, how that led to an upturn in his life:

TdC: so this is the infamous bus stop you used to hang out at

James: yeh that’s right, there’s the shop owner [Mary] as well – I have to wave now

The incident is significant as occurring at the location associated with James's previously disruptive behaviour, changed by engagement with GreenShed, arising from Mary's referral. James implies a reversal of the power relationship, suggesting his obligation – now – to wave to Mary, thus conferring his favour on her. James explained that the bus stop, and adjacent shop, is further symbolic of his recovery because, periodically, he is now invited by Mary to help out at the shop.

Other locations triggered stories of personal realisation and health improvement that participants connected with GreenShed involvement. For example, Thad led the researcher past a gym, saying:

[...] I want to become a professional weightlifter. I wouldn't if it wasn't for all this community [...] [gestures involvement]. I wouldn't want to do it. I wouldn't even go to the gym [...]

A material thing/location in the community could show the value to others of participants' skills and work. An example was where Rob and Angus highlighted a wooden fence that four social enterprise participants had built for Sue, a community member who also ran art classes at GreenShed. Rob and Angus discussed how they had helped to build the fence and talked enthusiastically and proudly, at the fence, with one photographing the other, his arm draped over the fence and a smile on his face:

Angus: we put the fence up [...] just four of us [...] yeah we got all the stuff delivered, we got the pickets delivered and [...] Rob oiled them all up [...] that's it there [points to fence]

Rob: stand in front of it and get your picture taken, mate. Hang onto the fence, lean on the fence, that's it, just like that! Get your hand away from the number, that's it! That's it, look at it, aye [...]

Rob added: [...] it needs a coat of bloody paint on it, doesn't it? Or something? Look at that, that one's split, better get on to her [...] it needs a coat of something on it [...]

Adding to the illustration, a passer-by shouted over to Rob, Angus and the researcher, highlighting his acknowledgement that the men had made the fence.

In this vein, most participants showed researcher TdC evidence of some work or project achieved for community benefit; another example was an ArtSpace renovation. Participants also discussed projects that had been planned, but fallen through, for example new benches for a sports club. Although these projects had not occurred, participants had a positive attitude, suggesting they were resilient about these adverse events.

Cafes, pubs, sports facilities and shops were highlighted as locations signifying greater ease with community interactions. Several noted their confidence, now, to try out new facilities – e.g. a new superstore. Participants often discussed whether they felt welcomed or accepted or were treated “like an ordinary person” at shops and cafes, showing a relational connection between locations, participants and others, and tacitly relating these interconnections to new-found well-being. Their discussions suggest well-being from GreenShed plants seeds of confidence to be adventurous; however, other aspects are necessary for well-being transferral to be achieved in another setting. For example, Don notes that chemist shop staff are welcoming and friendly, so he is comfortable going there, but newsagent staff are not perceived as welcoming, so he does not go there.

Metaphorical: stories reinforcing well-being

While community locations or objects could stimulate discussion of well-being connections, participants used stories – sometimes linked to locations, but sometimes abstractly – to link well-being from the social enterprise with aspects of community life. All participants portrayed moving from a dark period of their life, characterised by experiences of loneliness, disconnection, exclusion, loss of worth and/or mental illness, to a current time where they experience greater connection to others around them (including other GreenShed participants), control of aspects of their life, future orientation and a wider range of connections with people and locations.

Rob described suddenly losing his capacity to work and drive, through illness – to now feeling a valued participant in community life, at least partly due to GreenShed involvement:

[...] I can say to people, bloody-yeah, I was one of those blokes that, with my [illness] [...] I found out about the [illness] down at the City Hospital four years ago [...] they reduced me to tears down there. I was one of those blokes that thought Beyond Blue and all that was a load of rubbish [...] it's not [...] I had a depression slump [...] at one stage I was suicidal, been through that sort of rubbish [...]; and added

[...] Mary at [shop] – she's the one that got me onto this here [...] it's a long story [...] I bumped into her at the shop, had a bit of a chat with her [...] she suggested about coming down here and meeting Nathan and she sent Nathan an email [...], and sent me down there, you know, and I come down not really expecting too much [...] I've been there ever since and you can't keep me away from the place [...]

As they walk, a car horn honks [...]

Rob: I can't walk down the street without someone knowing me [...] there you go, hear that! So that's the way it is, you know [...] that's it, toot toot. Quite often I will call into Mary there. Saturday morning or whatever and quite often I'll call in and if Glenda's going [to GreenShed], I'll pick her up a cup of coffee or whatever

Engagement with the social enterprise provided some participants with experiences of productive work, portrayed as evidence of recovery and worth. As described above, James moved from disruptive behaviour at the bus stop, to helping at the adjacent shop. Thad described:

I used to play video games, but what GreenShed has done, is everyone knows me. I know how to talk to a lot of people around here. I've got my own little business too [...] a [name] business [...] I make [products] [...] it's community-based. If you asked me about five years ago, if you want to do something in the community [...]. I would say no [...]

[...] adding: for me, it's about being part of the community. I never wanted to be treated differently. I couldn't care less if I had a disability or not. I still have to wake up with a disability. It's not going to change so you might as well be treated normally [...]

Don described his severe mental illness linked to a traumatised upbringing. Now, as well as amicable interactions with his general medical practice and chemist's shop staff, Don tells of a changed perspective regarding his gambling, money and his future, explaining to TdC outside the bank:

I'm a bit hot on the horses. I won \$600 when I first got to GreenShed. Nathan said: "are you going to bank some of it?" I said 'ok I'll bank half of it [...] last year I had nearly \$400 in the bank and this year I've got nearly \$500.

Participants' recovery stories were often linked to feelings of social integration. For some, the reach of their activities had extended in nature and geographical scale. James's involvement in art classes at GreenShed led to him being linked, via Sue (community member that runs art classes), with an initiative taking socioeconomically disadvantaged people on a visit to UK galleries. Thad and Jules described attending national sports events and music festivals. They explained that these new adventures stemmed from attending a national rugby match with Nathan and his friends. Thad said, previous to this: "we never went to Melbourne on our own [...] I'd probably go with someone else that made me feel comfortable [...] now I can do it on my own".

Like the example of James given earlier, Thad suggested a changed power relationship, this time with Nathan:

[...] I'm planning to go to at least one match in Melbourne [...]. If Nathan wants to come, Nathan's more than welcome to come. I would never do that before. If I knew Nathan [wanted to go] [...] I wouldn't ask. One thing I would have thought of back then was, if I ask someone from GreenShed, they would think they'd have to look after me [...].

Relationships with family members or friends not associated with GreenShed were not probed. Nonetheless, some participants mentioned family relationships. Rob depicted positive relationships, but some participants mentioned being unconnected with family members and some related stories of negative relationships with family members. Participants' stories of enjoying well-being in community life – linked to GreenShed – were invariably positive, and depicting an upturn in life. Perhaps this is linked to undertaking walking interviews in pairs, where participants might have felt encouraged to support and build on each other's positivity.

Performance: practising and communicating well-being

Participants discussed attending GreenShed within a routine of everyday life. Discussions portray GreenShed as a workplace, as in this conversation between James and Nathan:

J: I stay here for most of the day, til 3 o'clock sometimes, don't I Nathan?

N: (joking) 'til we kick him out

J: 'til they kick me out, 'til they've had enough of me

Angus notes asking Nathan if he could attend GreenShed "full-time", rather than three days a week. Jules discussed his journey to GreenShed, undertaken almost daily:

I walk, I walk, I drive my chair to Emu Road near Bunnings and then get on the bus and come out here [...] [person] showed me how to get the bus and stuff [...] [sometimes] [...] we go out at night to a pub [...]

Each walking interview revealed instances of participants chatting with or waving to others in the locale. James waved to Mary from the shop and Rob and Angus got a friendly "toot toot" from a passing car. A lady with children chatted to Don and Greg.

During their walking interview, Thad and Jules met and greeted various people, for example a gardener in the park:

Thad: when we see the gardener that we know, we talk about other stuff. I would never stop by and talk to someone, from a garden or doing the garden.

Jules: We'd probably never have done that before, talked to a random [...]

Carer: [...] but he passes through [GreenShed] though, you seen him when you're there.

Participants discussed interactions with others from GreenShed in community settings. Don and Greg went to the YMCA to watch Thad and Jules play basketball and Thad and Jules discussed involving a group of participants in a fun sporting event.

All participants discussed feeling more confident and happier while moving about the locale and interacting, and linked this to GreenShed participation. Sometimes descriptions of these feelings were reinforced by feedback received at GreenShed. Don noted: "[...] Nathan said to me – 'you've come a long way, Don – you've come from an angry person to a happy person'".

In the above section, we have endeavoured to use findings to illustrate how social enterprise participants found well-being feelings stimulated from community locations and objects, how they used stories to link their community well-being with the social enterprise and how they linked "healthy" practices in the community with their engagement at GreenShed. We now move to consider what evidence we gained about relationships between the social enterprise and community life for others, and how that might affect well-being in the community.

Social enterprise and well-being in everyday community life

Discussions with social enterprise participants highlighted some key people whose names occurred more than once, and that appeared active in bridging between GreenShed and community life. We decided that a way of beginning to understand relationships between the social enterprise and community life and what that might mean for wider well-being would be to interview these people who appeared to act as boundary spanners. Interviewees included Nathan, manager of GreenShed; Sue, a volunteer who runs art classes at GreenShed; Mary who works in a shop in the community, and who knows about the work of GreenShed because her parents volunteer there and from her involvement on community organisation committees; and Liz, a student volunteer.

One role of the social enterprise in community well-being was acting to knit disconnected people into community life, thus protecting community functionality. In conversation, Nathan regularly states an active mission to connect participants with community life. For example, he mediated between Don and chemist's shop staff and discussed connecting other participants with health and social care services, such as counselling. Nathan called local police to speak with James regarding his disruptive behaviour. This allowed police to speak with James as a warning rather than the situation escalating to a formal criminal proceeding:

Nathan said: the locksmith and the café half way along there used to complain [...] they all had a bit of a spit and asked me to fix it [...] I got the police down here [...] I actually rung the police, not because it was a criminal problem [...] I got the policeman to come down and have a talk to

these guys. That was after they'd started here though. Just about their noise and how that might frighten people, they weren't in trouble [...]

Mary alluded to how GreenShed's role in maintaining community security might be misunderstood, suggesting that some local residents actually saw GreenShed as a place where troubled people gathered, noting:

[...] initially I was aware of some of the people attending GreenShed, and I had seen them around here [...] it was, like [...] what do they do down there? [...] I thought it was great what they were doing, but I thought it was a bit dubious about [...] [makes hand gesture of collecting together].

She highlighted a need for the wider community to understand this "peace-keeping" role of the social enterprise, saying:

[...] there's this kind of [suburb] stigma [...] about GreenShed [...] people haven't taken the time to go [...] no [...] they're trying to do something there. There's a little narrowmindedness [...] I don't think the community appreciates fully what is happening down there.

Having a more subtle and covert role than Nathan in this community security dimension, Mary reflected on her own role – in a sense, triaging disconnected people who she encountered through interactions in her shop as appropriate for GreenShed, or otherwise. Mary suggests that some people are suitable to become more connected through GreenShed, while others require other sorts of engagement. Here she notes why and how she connected Rob with GreenShed:

Rob was a really good fit [...] I'm like – I reckon he'll fit down there [...] it's like referring someone to your hairdresser, you're really cautious. You go, are they going to be a good client, or not [...] .? [...] there's a few that are, like, I would not do that to Nathan [...]

[...] adding: [...] I am selective about who I say, go down and check it out [...] it's a higher level of need, versus, the one's that I have recommended are the ones that have come into town and they don't know people [...] and they want social interaction, one of the things is how long they come in here [the shop], sit in here and talk [...]

While Sue depicted motivation to connect people into community life through her volunteering at GreenShed, her discussions also show that she gains well-being for herself from her connections. She appears to gain benefit from engaging with art (her passion), engaging others with art and making social connections for *herself*, in the community. She noted:

[...] with my work the idea is to make links in the community, and to identify places that the guys can come and do different things [...] I've been here about three years [...] there was a little group happening here, but it wasn't really much. I said [...] I can bring these guys out and started off the [...] all day art class and then just developed it from there. It was just a good space for guys to come and do whatever it was they were wanting to do almost, mainly woodwork and art [...] there is a few that come in from the community, like apart from guys from GreenShed [...]

Sue went on to explain: "[...] we're going to the MONA gallery [...] we're taking about six guys there for 2 nights and 3 days [...]" and [...] "I know a lot more people from being connected here".

Finally, in a concrete way, the social enterprise contributed by bringing new people into the area to act as volunteers, exposing people from different backgrounds to the

area and its benefits. This quote from Liz, a student volunteer, shows how connection with GreenShed opened up different perceptions:

[...]I'd never visited [suburb] before I came to Uni. It was only, like, those passing comments: "You don't really want to go out to [suburb]? You know there's that lower socio-economic people that live there". I never really had much to do with it [...] you know you'd get fruit just near [suburb] and different things, but I never really came out this way, until actually going to GreenShed and that's when I actually fell in love with the area around here [...]

Discussion

In a 2011 study, we applied the Spaces of Wellbeing Theory and the idea of therapeutic assemblage, from relational geography, to explore what and how well-being realised *in* a social enterprise (Munoz *et al.*, 2015). Here, we wanted to find out if that well-being extended into community life for social enterprise participants, and to begin to consider if the wider community experienced well-being benefits.

Our findings in this study are preliminary and exploratory. They suggest that well-being from social enterprise can extend into affecting participants' community lives. Social enterprise participants might almost be imagined as moving within a sort of mobile "well-being bubble". An alternative conceptualisation is to view life *outside* the social enterprise as an extension of the *inside* social enterprise space of well-being. This implies a potential role for social enterprises in constructing spaces of well-being that bridge "organisational/institutional" and "everyday community" life. The experience of well-being in the community, linked with social enterprise, is contingent, however. It is linked with the opportunity to construct therapeutic assemblages (Foley, 2011), including the participant and their interaction with material objects, people, practices and stories that stimulate or reinforce well-being in the community context. This is exemplified by Don's discussion that he feels comfortable going to the chemists because the staff are welcoming (at least partially based on Nathan's mediation of his relationship with them), while he does not like to go to the newsagents because he perceives the staff as unwelcoming. Findings support Atkinson's (2013) idea of well-being as fluid and relational. Participants deploy positive stories that conjoin well-being realised in the social enterprise with new-found benefits in community life, for example confidence and freedom to explore new places and experiences. Participants talk and perform themselves as "ordinary people" in the community – waving, chatting and working, but often these well-being performances are linked to a person or activity associated with the social enterprise. As in Foley's (2011) notion of therapeutic assemblage, and recent studies of therapeutic landscapes (Bell *et al.*, 2015), social enterprise participants appeared to realise webs or constellations of well-being, as they moved around. These are composed of people, material things, locations, experiences, stories and performances, and hints of these, that link their well-being from social enterprise with community life experiences.

Considering well-being in participants' everyday community lives as potentially an extension of the social enterprise space of well-being, all of Fleuret and Atkinson's (2007) elements of well-being were identified. Participants chat and wave, reflecting their *social integration*. They make objects or provide services, on view to the public, showing *capability*. Their enhanced social connections and greater ease with trying new experiences shows *security* in the environment through which they led the researcher. Their verbal but also physically embodied expressions of ease, pride, physical mobility,

happiness and relaxation exhibit experiences of *therapy*. Manifestations of well-being described or seen connect the social enterprise, well-being realised from it and everyday community life for participants.

A link between employment and health is well-established (Barraket, 2014, p. 103), with latent benefits being time structure, social contact, social status, engagement in a collective purpose and meaningful activity (Jahoda, 1982). GreenShed might be understood as a WISE with goals of social support, supported employment and trade. Although it does not provide paid employment, participants do appear to gain well-being from the kinds of factors associated with work, e.g. the routine of going to work. While the relative benefits of paid versus unpaid work may be debated, it is worth considering that paid work was possibly not an option for GreenShed participants, most of whom described or manifested high levels of vulnerability. What this study perhaps points to is that work-like activities in a work-like environment, with certain supports, can result in benefits like those of paid work, even for quite vulnerable people. Simultaneous with Barraket's (2014, p. 105) depiction of WISE, such enterprises might "simultaneously be sites of economic participation, social connectedness and civic engagement".

While we mostly found an upbeat story, scrutiny indicates negative issues beneath the surface. Individuals discussed community organisations' renegeing on contracts. Don noted that workers in some shops were unpleasant to him. Thus, overall, possible abuses to well-being were hinted at by participants. These did not appear to faze participants, which could show resilience, or perhaps they were swept along in the overwhelmingly positive feel of discourse and performance expressed in this study. We also found some evidence about people who were not considered to fit with the social enterprise or were not referred. In our previous study of GreenShed (Muñoz *et al.*, 2015), we found mention of people who did not fit in and who left. In this study, people who were not considered appropriate for referral to GreenShed were discussed. We do not know what happens to these "others", where they go and whether they find their place. If they do not, then social enterprise itself could be acting as an exclusionary institution in a community.

This paper provides indicative evidence of potential effects of social enterprise on well-being in wider community life. Part of the potential for well-being emanates from the chance for disconnected people to experience greater social inclusion through social enterprise engagement. While we portray this as a therapeutic outcome for individuals, it could alternatively be interpreted as acting to mould disconnected participants to fit with community norms, resonating with neo-liberal requirements to "govern oneself", as Rose (1996, p. 331) depicts within "relations of mutual obligation [to] the community". Elements in this process are sometimes overt, as when Nathan invited the police to warn James about being a disruptive influence; other times, less so, as when Mary discusses her desire to connect people with others, identifying potential participants because they spend time chatting in the shop. As well as helping participants to "fit in", Nathan, Mary and Sue each showed aspirations to extend people to reach their full potential; for example, when Nathan takes Thad and Jules to a sporting event and Sue organises to take art class participants to a gallery.

Mary, Nathan and Sue appear to have significant roles as boundary spanners; first, linking participants to the social enterprise and encouraging their attendance; then, smoothing their access to services and shops and connecting them to networks, with

local, national and, sometimes even, international reach. Boundary spanners or crossers have been described as “people who move freely between two or more domains and who understand the values, culture and language, and have the trust of both”. (Kilpatrick *et al.*, 2008) Boundary spanners have been described, within different disciplinary domains, to transfer knowledge and learning, create innovation and entrepreneurialism, change culture and help to generate social capital (Farmer and Kilpatrick, 2009; Peng and Sutanto, 2012). Here, boundary spanners who are intriguingly able to span the domains of socially excluded lives and community institutions are acting to socially integrate and include marginalised people. Additionally, novel perhaps, they might be viewed as acting to preserve community functionality by absorbing disconnected people into spaces where they will be exposed to community norms and values, shaping them to be “appropriate” local citizens. It is noteworthy that, although the boundary spanners clearly fill an important, literally life-changing role, their boundary spanning is informal. Considering non-governmental organisations, Isbell (2012) notes this as a feature of boundary spanners. As well as their roles for community and participants, Nathan, Mary and Sue, themselves, gain well-being from their interactions with social enterprise participants; for example, Sue notes she has met local people through running her art classes at GreenShed.

In this exploratory study, our small sample of non-participant informants provided only a glimpse of how the social enterprise might impact on well-being of people in the wider community, but we did gain ideas for further study. We suggest that social enterprises might impact on well-being in a community by generating social enterprise participants (people in the locale) who are more connected, included and “well”; transforming disconnected people into functional local citizens who fit with community norms; and affording well-being for boundary spanning individuals who enjoy making connections and trying to realise the potential they see in others. This is supported by findings of Barraket and Archer (2010), who found that social enterprises can resource civic infrastructure and act as boundary objects (Star and Griesemer, 1989) that integrate community members inside and outside social enterprises.

Contributing to applications of relational geography theory, this study is novel in showing what happens after, outside or in extension to an experience of social enterprise as a space of well-being. Previous studies have been static, exploring the potential of landscapes (Foley, 2011) or how a space realises well-being (Atkinson and Robson, 2012). This study followed participants from a space of well-being to see what happens next. Its findings validate suggestions by Atkinson (2013) and others that experiences and benefits (the potential for well-being) can travel with someone (Doughty, 2013). Our findings are new in suggesting this occurs on an ongoing basis only due to therapeutic assemblage, including factors amenable to well-being. We found largely positive effects and assemblages of well-being, but we note the constraints of a study where participants generally walked together, performed positively and visited public, busy (i.e. relatively secure) locations.

In terms of its limitations, the study was small and exploratory. While all of the social enterprise participants were male, there was diversity in age range and inclusion of people with health challenges. GreenShed’s operational model may be distinctive, limiting transferability of findings. Study participants were identified by staff, meaning there is potential for positive bias. Most participants undertook mental mapping and walking interviews alongside another GreenShed participant and, on occasion, with a carer present.

This might have affected topics discussed and the mood/tone. Data collection about participants' community life was restricted to walking in participant-selected spaces. Unselected spaces and home life were not included and could be sites of negative experiences that would reveal different findings. The number of non-participant boundary spanners who were included to extend insights about social enterprise participants and community life was small, and it is unlikely saturation of themes about social enterprise-community well-being relationships was reached. Future studies are needed that include more interviews with community members to provide a fuller picture.

Walking interviews appeared to engage social enterprise participants perhaps because they gave an opportunity to lead researchers, involved walking and talking with a companion and used novel technologies that interested participants. Walking in the locale involved interaction with objects and people who triggered participant discussion.

Conclusions

Our study indicated that participants did “take well-being with them”, from their social enterprise experiences into their lives in community. This could be envisaged as extending the social enterprise as a space of well-being which is constantly changing as participants move through community, creating and re-creating therapeutic assemblages. There seems potential for a dark side to this, with material and social inputs disturbing well-being, but there was scant evidence of that in this study. More research on this would be valuable.

The people living in the locale gained in several ways, including by the greater social inclusion of engaged, well social enterprise participants. The role of boundary spanning people who are both of the everyday community but understand the social enterprise is important in knitting participants into community life. While therapeutic landscape was a useful overlay in revealing relationships between social enterprise participants, well-being and community life, it would be useful, next, to explore how theory that is explicitly about understanding how community works (e.g. social capital, community resilience, community development theory) could be added. This would help to further explain what is going on in the relationships studied here, and to conjoin relational well-being theory with established theories about community.

We acknowledge this is a small exploratory study and that our approach could be understood as positively seeking for aspects of well-being realisation emanating from social enterprise connection. To this end, our findings may well over-simplify the connection between social enterprise, participants, well-being and community life. We recognise there is huge complexity in this study field, but suggest we have provided here some early ideas to stimulate further study. We saw tantalising glimpses of what might be going on when a purposed space of well-being meets a socioeconomically disadvantaged community. We think our findings tentatively support the promise of applying social enterprise as a well-being intervention – for individuals and places, larger-scale research is required to improve understanding.

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