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Entrepreneurship as a community phenomenon; reconnecting meanings and place

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Abstract

This paper explores entrepreneurship as a community phenomenon to establish the roles of entrepreneurship within the social and spatial boundaries of place. During the decade of studying this place through an entrepreneurial lens we were able to identify processes that might normally be overlooked. One, albeit unusual, entrepreneurial event, had worked to trigger these changes. We found a renewed sense of belonging and a stronger sense of place meaning that had revitalised this previously depleted community. Entrepreneurship had worked in and for the community by realigning the meanings and attributes of place. We argue that our novel unit for analysis, entrepreneurship in place, offers a broader, perhaps richer, view of entrepreneurship as a socialised phenomenon.

Keywords: societal entrepreneurship; entrepreneurship for change; longitudinal; rural entrepreneurship; engagement; place; context

Entrepreneurship as a community phenomenon; reconnecting meanings and place

Introduction

We tend to see entrepreneurship as if it were a property of the entrepreneur or a characteristic of a firm. Certainly, we have moved on from trying to find the quintessential entrepreneurial traits; we have progressed, a little, from the black box of much economic analysis with its fixation on entrepreneurial outcomes rather than process (Anderson, 2015). Although we now recognise that entrepreneurship is much more than starting a new firm, the phenomenon itself remains enigmatic (Drakopoulou Dodd et al, 2013). The purpose of this paper is to explore entrepreneurship from a different perspective to try to further our understanding. Our theoretical point of departure is that the concept of entrepreneurship is socially constructed and takes on its meaning by how it is used and by who uses it. Perhaps this is because we can never see entrepreneurship, we may experience it. We can see where it has been, the results are there for all to see and for some to analyse. We know who does it, and occasionally why. Sometimes we can discern how the processes unfold. Somehow, although we come close to identifying the nature of entrepreneurship as value creation, the concept itself remains slippery and elusive. This problem is actually typical of many concepts,

simply because of the very nature of concepts; concepts are socially constructed and concepts describe but cannot define. Davidsson (2005) illustrates this by offering numerous accounts of the meanings of entrepreneurship, but concludes that none of the overlapping constructs are sufficient in themselves. Instead he proposes that we look at the social realities of entrepreneurship. For Steyaert and Katz (2004) this implies a study of how entrepreneurship creates a society. This problematic describes our research objective; can we understand entrepreneurship better, or at least differently, by looking at the social realities of entrepreneurship from a different perspective? What can we learn by considering entrepreneurship as a community level phenomenon?

Our objective is to approach the question from a novel angle, community, to try to further our understanding of this magnificent dynamic. We are conceptually predisposed to see entrepreneurship as much as a social as an economic phenomenon (Light and Dana, 2013). We justify this perspective by pointing to the insights generated by this viewpoint. In fact, we build on one such insight, the importance of context (Welter, 2011) and how it relates to enterprise (Anderson et al, 2012). We put context into the foreground rather than the more conventional treatment as background. Our unit for analysis was entrepreneurship in its societal context, entrepreneurship in the community and entrepreneurship by the community - societal enterprise. This, we argue, is not social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship when wearing a welfare badge. Rather our study is a processual viewing, an appreciation of entrepreneurial engagements in a local place. Indeed, we respond to Peredo and Chrisman (2006) - the need to look at interactions between communities and entrepreneurs. Exploring as Drakopoulou Dodd and Hynes propose, "The weft and weave of local entrepreneurship capital generates the inter-linked structures, cultures, resource matrix and learning systems" (2012; 744).

We have a rich ethnographic case about the entrepreneurial transformation of a small rural town in Sweden. Skoghem's entrepreneurial story stretches over 10 years and begins with an unconventional, but entrepreneurial event- the construction of a garden. The garden was built in a small, but depleted Swedish rural town. In 1998, Janne arrived from Stockholm and together with friends started Green, an organization including gardens, a forestry park and a restaurant. Green also ran courses, workshops, exhibitions, concerts and other events. What we are able to show is that this entrepreneur and the entrepreneurial event fired up a whole chain of entrepreneurial actions that had the effect of transforming a depleted community into one with a renewed sense being and purpose. We found that the effect of entrepreneurial action was connecting and reconnecting; connecting ideas about renewing, connecting with old and forgotten values of purpose and connecting the old to project into the future. Entrepreneurship as a change process had renewed the sense of place and the experience of belonging.

We don't offer a new theory of entrepreneurship, but we do add a little to what we already know. The paper contributes by offering a different perspective of entrepreneurship which highlights different aspects and dimensions of enterprise. Conceptually, we determined that entrepreneurship is not just an event, but a process in time and space. More importantly our analysis of entrepreneurial engagement with place and interactions with people highlights how social, spatial and economic processes are dynamic and interwoven. Our analysis offers a fresh insight into the nature of entrepreneurship itself. By employing a different unit of analysis and thus identifying connecting values as part of the entrepreneurial process, we can see that entrepreneurship can be conceptualised, not just as a thing or a quality, but also as a flow of activities. We recognise that entrepreneurial energy was sparked up by Janne then flowed to others, so that they too become energised and entrepreneurial. The flow of energy did not dissipate, but became amplified in its dissemination and distribution. Entrepreneurial energy propagated enterprise (Gaddefors and Anderson, 2015). In this analysis we take a step back to reflect on how this came about.

Although we knew that context shaped entrepreneurship (Harbi and Anderson, 2011), we had been less aware of how entrepreneurship shaped the context. So our place bound analysis sheds some fresh light on the nature and practices of entrepreneurship in the dynamics of context. We found that entrepreneurship worked in this dynamic context to re-connect people and place. We saw how the context had become disconnected and that entrepreneurship worked to reform connections. Anderson et al (2012) had argued that entrepreneurship could be conceived as a practice of making connections, but here we show that entrepreneurship also re-connects the past and the present. This re-connection seems to have imbued place with a new sense of confidence, purpose and belonging.

Our approach

Because we are interested in context, we note Dana and Dana's advice, (2005:83), "a quantitative strategy often limits the researcher's ability to study context and environment. Adopting an ethnographic approach in non-quantitative research would enhance our knowledge and understanding of such pertinent and critical factors". Moreover, the use of a social lens to examine entrepreneurship has highlighted the socially embedded nature of entrepreneurship (Karatas-Ozkan et al, 2014). It has brought out the importance of social capital and social processes that may encompass co-creation (Gaddefors and Anderson, 2008). It has shown that value created by entrepreneurship can be both economic and social value. Significantly, it has shown the parts played by connections between people and between people and places- the importance of context (Welter, 2012; Korsgaard et al, 2015a). Traditionally context is viewed as shaping entrepreneurship (Dana et al, 2014) but we want to take a different approach and look at context as the locus of entrepreneurial engagement. We build on ideas first presented by Bengt Johannisson (1989; 1990; 1994) and more recent work (McKeever et al, 2014; McKeever et al, 2015) that has taken a similar approach in establishing the role played by place in entrepreneurial engagement.

Our conceptual framework

Conceptually, putting place into centre stage involves understanding place as relationally defined and socially constructed. Place, in this view, is continuously recreated in interactions between social practices and the spatial environment (Cresswell, 2006). Place is almost synonymous with community, in that places are where community persists. As a founding concept in sociology, community has an intrinsic association with place (Barrett, 2014) and has the characteristics of propinquity, population stability and continuous interaction patterns. Consequently places have structural qualities that shape agency in these communities. Communities can be thus understood as places where people are connected and where they interact. Communities are recognizable social entities, greater than kinship but more immediate than societies (Cohen, 2013). Markey et al (2010) describe communities as a matrix of place that precipitates shared sentiments and expectations, and generate strong feelings of community attachment. Nonetheless, we are mindful to avoid what Richard Sennett (1997) described as a destructive *Gemeinschaft*; an overly rosy Tonniesian view of organic community,

Central to place attachment is the *experience* of belonging; people belong to a community and places become their community. The idea of belonging is variously described in identity and as community attachment, sense of community, place attachment, place identity, place dependence or simply the sense of place. Nonetheless, the notion is summarised by Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001) as the affective bonds of place attachment. A sense of belonging is created through cultural and social constructions along with local interactions, personal experiences and individual actions and beliefs. McManus et al (2012) describe belonging as an emotional experience. We thus argue that a key issue in understanding entrepreneurial

engagement is the experiencing of place and the meanings attributed to these experiences. Moreover we note how Heidegger's phenomenology of being- being in the world - is founded on how we experience our world (Dodd et al, 2013). Indeed, just as a sense of place offers an experience of stability and continuity (Relph, 1985), Heidegger's concept of *dwelling* represents a stability which only when interrupted causes us to consider that which we have taken for granted. Although Heidegger referred to a mental state, it is interesting that he used the analogy of an idyllic rural cabin to illustrate the concept.

Interesting too is Robert Sack's account of place. He sees place as the "fundamental means by which we make sense of the world and through which we act" (1992; 1). Moreover, places are centres for meanings, such as those associated with the natural and the social. For Sack, places bring together meanings that would otherwise be held apart. Indeed, most humanistic geographers focus on the relationship between people and the world through the realm of 'experience'. Cresswell (2013) elaborates this humanistic geographic concept of place. He describes three conceptual dimensions of place; materiality, meaning, and practice. Materiality is the physical and tangible; meaning is the social constructions and practice is how places are enacted and reproduced. As we see it, it is important to recognise that the physical changes slowly, but meaning endures whilst practices evolve. Cresswell points out how meanings gain a measure of persistence, but are open to contestation by practices that do not conform to the expectations that come with place. Similarly, McManus et al, 2012 concluded that place-identity and the sense of belonging are subject to much greater inertia than economic practices. What these authors propose is a path dependency of place meanings that may not fit very well with what actually happens in practice. The alignment or non-alignment of meanings and practices of place, the synchrony, even dissonance between what is expected of place and what happens in place - experiences- seems to offer some explanatory possibilities for our curiosity about the entrepreneurial engagement with place. Entrepreneurs are, after all, agents of change (Diochon and Anderson, 2011). They enact entrepreneurship in the prevailing circumstances and more arguably, in terms of (local) values (Anderson, 1998); they may also be able to create change.

We have drawn a conceptual picture of community places as centres for meanings, and that belonging to a place means sharing some of these meanings and practices. But we have also considered the dynamic between the meanings about places and the practices performed in places. Usually these are aligned and conform to each other. A classic example is a rural place. Notwithstanding a Tonniesian *Gemeinschaft* or even a Heideggrian dwelling, there is an expectation - a meaning - for rural places. These meanings are social and shared representations selected from our economy of space and sign (Lash and Urry, 1994). Irvine and Anderson (2004, 2008) describe the *otherness* of rural places as a difference from urban industrialisation. What it means to be rural is not to be urban. One implication is to be closer to nature. But in modernity rural places have become less bucolic; farms have grown to industrial size, mosaics of fields have given way to crops carpeting the landscape. Even these fields are no longer tilled by the strength of a magnificent horse, but ploughed up by giant tractors. Moreover, the rural has moved from a zone of natural production towards a zone of immaterial consumption; consumption of the very signs and symbols of that bygone age. Thus meanings of the rural have persisted in spite of contradictory practices. Moreover where there is production, it is often the production of aestheticised cultural goods that reflect the meanings of rural (Anderson et al, 2015 forthcoming). This example shows how meanings may become disengaged with practices, but also how the power of meaning persists and influences practice.

In the example above, entrepreneurship has been a significant change agent (Korsgaard et al, 2015b). But entrepreneurial agency was constrained by the prevailing structures of

meanings attributed to rural places. Theoretically we can explain this by Giddens'

structuration theory; the interplay of agents encountering structures that shape what they do and the resulting changes to structure that new agents encounter (Anderson and Starnawska, 2008). Entrepreneurs had introduced new ideas and new ways of producing that reflected rural meanings (Drakopoulou Dodd and Anderson, 2001). We thus propose that these ideas about meaning, belonging and experience offered us a conceptually powerful view point to discover, examine and to begin to explain entrepreneurial engagement with place.

Place as context for meanings and entrepreneurial practices

Examining entrepreneurial engagement in community is not novel. Bengt Johannisson and Anders Nilsson (1989) discussed the topic in the very first issue of *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* in 1989 and Bengt followed with a further article in 1990. A key conceptual point was in showing places - communities - as networks of connections and the entrepreneurial role was to bridge different arenas; markets, institutions and political. Later Johannisson et al (1994), made an argument for taking context and its connections as a better unit for entrepreneurial analysis than the individual entrepreneur. Accordingly, we follow an exploratory path pioneered by Johannisson and others.

We employ the conceptual framework described earlier in our case about entrepreneurial encounters in Skoghem. Skoghem is a rural small town of some 6,000 people and located in lower northern Sweden. This region is characterized by small industrial districts, often historically dominated by one large company. However, in the concentration of economic resources to urban areas and internationalization of industrial production these rurally situated industries have increasingly lost their competitiveness and are closing down. Skoghem had an old industrial heritage of iron founding and forestry; the woods remain, the foundry is silent but plastic manufacturing replaced the clamour of the ironworks. But today plastic manufacturing has fallen on hard times. Skoghem thus represented what Johnstone and Lionais (2004) call a depleted community, a place whose purpose has diminished and whose sense of place has become disconnected with practice; yet maintains its old social and cultural capacity. Skoghem provided us with a rich exploratory case with a heritage of meanings, but not much sense of a future. Its relative isolation provides a bounded community entity to contain actions and its relative smallness allowed an informed overview of entrepreneurial engagement.

Being depleted and disconnected has both economic and social impacts, especially for rural places. Economically, limited employment and incomes cause problems for maintaining local services such as post offices, pubs and shops (Bosworth, 2012) and justifying public services such as schools and health care. A descending spiral of increasing depletion drains out economic vitality and new economic opportunities struggled find a foothold in a shrinking environment. Being disconnected means more than uncoupling economic and spatial linkages. We argue that Skoghem was disconnected from what it had been and seemed to have little idea of what it wanted to become. A mismatch between how things were and how they are, lead to a loss of knowing, experiencing what Heidegger would describe as the way of being-in-the-world. But entrepreneurship carries the power to change things. Higgins and Thompson (2014) show how entrepreneurship mediates the relationship between what they term community culture and local, social and economic development. Vestrum's (2014) work on community entrepreneurship shows how a community entrepreneur brought fresh ideas and energy to the local community and stimulated social change. Furthermore her case illustrates entrepreneurship as a relational and place bound process

and moves away from the enterprising individual as the key explanatory variable. A similar argument is made by Welter (2010) in emphasizing the important benefits for the wider community and even nonprofit goals in community entrepreneurship. Such perceptions connect well to Johannisson et al's (1994) appreciation of entrepreneurship in communities. These ideas about the connections and disconnects between meanings and experiences of place form the basis of our enquiry. We consider them sufficiently important and potentially explanatory plausible to ask about the role of entrepreneurship in realigning meanings and practices.

The structure of the remainder of paper follows from our objectives. Having set out our theoretical position we next offer the case story of Skoghem to ground our empirical data. We begin our analysis by describing what our respondents saw as happening in Skoghem. These are of course their own phenomenological experiences, but they allow us to see themes and patterns in these experiential data. Our next level of analysis is to try to establish what these patterns mean- to describe what is going on in Skoghem. As we described earlier, we saw processes of connecting and reconnecting. We saw how this reconnecting became a key part of the entrepreneurial process in demonstrating and producing values. Taking a step further back from these actions, we ask how we can understand this. We conclude that Janne's entrepreneurship worked to recreate meaning. It connected the folk in Skoghem with an older, greener sense of being. This seemed to produce confidence and purpose in who they are; it inspired them with a sense of direction of who they want to become.

Methodology

We wanted to focus on entrepreneurship as a socio-relational process situated in a particular time and location. Thus, sampling and data collection had to be adjusted to the particularities of this setting (Jack, 2005, Drakopoulou Dodd and Hynes, 2012, Gartner and Birley, 2002). Jennings et al (2013) point to the lack of cultural context and the problems with an over-emphasis on individual level agency in research on entrepreneurship and communities and propose a use of deeper methodological techniques that may capture meaning. We aimed for an open-ended, rich empirical material to improve our understanding of what was happening and as suggested by Jack et al. (2008) we used a longitudinal ethnographic approach (Alvesson, 2002; Gaddefors, 2005). We wanted to develop insights of social and spatial dimensions (Van Maanen, 1988, Czarniawska, 2007) in the entrepreneurial process over time (Lindgren and Packendorff, 2009, Jennings et al 2015, McKelvie and Wiklund, 2010).

The fieldwork ranged over a 10-year period between 2005 and 2014 and largely consisted of interviews with residents and local actors, coupled with observations. The software NVivo was used for organising material (Mueller, 2014, Tunberg, 2014). Different sources have been used including semi-structured interviews, participation in formal and informal meetings, shadowing, as well as basic statistics on, e.g., business start-ups, population growth and the density of clubs and associations (Silverman, 1993; Alvesson, 2002). When collecting data at intervals an advantage was that development over time was monitored (Haugh, 2007). Thus, activities could be related to its outcome and evaluated ex post.

We used a comparative analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), but the research processes were different depending on how data were collected. Analyzing semi-structured interview material it is possible to follow the line of argument from question to answer and over to analysis. However, the process of analyzing ethnographic material is more difficult to follow

from source to result resulting in a slightly different procedure. Nevertheless, the approach avoids the risk of empirical statements being anecdotal, because the context created in a study of this type makes it possible for the researcher to act reflexively when continuously comparing and evaluating statements made within the case (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000). Separating sampling, data collection and analysis in the presentation as we have done in this section suggests progression, logic and linearity. However, this is not how it happened. The learning process taking place over the years in a longitudinal approach does not lend itself to reductionist explanation. The authors of this paper have discussed the Skoghem case over a ten year period, indicating how results emerge from the empirical field and theory, but also from debates and conversation with colleagues.

The story of “Green” and its entrepreneurial engagement in Skoghem

Skoghem is a depleted community, one badly affected by a downturn in traditional industries such as the sawmilling and plastics factories. Place was depleted as younger people moved out, bank offices and petrol stations closed alongside decreasing employment and increasing numbers of retirees. But in 1998 a group of incoming, but locally connected entrepreneurs decided to create a spectacular garden in Skoghem. A result was to place Skoghem on the tourist map. The numbers of visitors grew to become surprisingly high (30,000 per year) given the rural, remote location, some 140 kilometers from the nearest small city. Today Skoghem’s garden has developed into more than a tourist attraction, but has become an inspirational resource for the community. As well as new businesses, we find regeneration in education, elderly care and housing. A nearby university even offers a degree in gardening located to Skoghem. Green, the garden, is a great tourist attraction and fosters a showroom for the local artisanal cooperative. However, as well as these physical manifestations of an improved environment, we found remarkable changes in attitudes. The *meaning* of Skoghem has been renewed and revitalised by the entrepreneurship of the garden.

Data and findings

The extended duration, ten years, of our study meant that we collected an enormous volume of data. Initial and ongoing analysis of these data provided us with many potential themes to follow. However for our arguments about meanings and practices, we have selected the theme of (re)connecting. As we will discuss later, our analysis demonstrates how the sense of belonging shifted from being negative and constraining to a revitalised sense of being. We will attribute this to the pervasion of entrepreneurship and argue that entrepreneurship invigorated by showing what was possible. But first we want to describe how entrepreneurship worked through the community by proposing and practicing the reconnecting of established meanings and the possibility of new practices. In our analysis, we see the construction of the garden as an entrepreneurial event. Creating the garden was social innovation; a novel “product” that showed how Skoghem could change. But the garden was the materiality, as Cresswell would describe it; the physical thing. As we are mainly concerned with meanings, it is useful to appreciate what the garden meant. Later will explain how meanings were constructed by reconnecting people with the old and the natural.

In line with our phenomenological approach, we offer respondent’s own accounts of their experiences. For us, they are examples of how they experienced the effects of Green. We first identify a category of reconnecting with nature and the natural order. Listen to how

Green has reshaped meanings about the local; how Green has encouraged an older sense of meaning and purpose that reaches behind the lost industrial towards a fundamental sense of being. We begin by explaining what motivated Janne, the entrepreneur. We use the respondent's own words to illustrate our interpretations.

In many ways Janne's ideas are paradoxical; his concern about the future was rooted in old concerns about our industrial past. Just as Mary Shelley had allegorically presented Frankenstein as the monster created by industrialisation (Anderson, 1998), Janne saw a disconnection between material values and the sense of belonging to a natural world. As Schumacher (1973, p. 10), the author of *Small is Beautiful, economics as if People Mattered*, stated "man does not experience himself as part of nature, but as an outside force destined to dominate and conquer it." Janne was very aware of how modernity had separated people from the natural order. Artificial divisions arose between what we do and who we are, so that in the great scheme of things the sense of being and usefulness had drifted apart. The loss of a productive identity for place had created a loss of identity for people. Change had driven a wedge between what people did and who they are.

Janne had been influenced by the garden cities movement in England. Ebenezer Howard (1902) had famously proposed an ideal of combining the city and the country and obviously shared some of Janne's concerns about the separation of the countryside and the city. The rural represented the "natural" good, whilst the city presented an industrial "bad". Howard's idea was to bring the country into the city by building a garden city. Janne explained,

Today we call them garden towns, growing up as settlements around the major cities, based of course on that old model. There should be close to local service and it is based of course on a kind of town building model, derived from the judgment of the old men and their dreams of a better life.

It was Morris who said these famous words that "Humans need both town and country, the town for his intelligence and temperament and the country for its beauty and security." From there they built their town. I understand that it's not so easy to write user guide for building the perfect town, but there must be theories that still can be part of a model I guess, I do not know, but I suppose that's what we do, work on that model, one step at the time.

As we see Janne's "model", it is about reconnecting to a meaningful past. The garden itself is more than a manifestation of that old order, but symbolic of nature itself. The garden is a model of natural renewal. Moreover, Janne seems to be very aware of how this symbolism has physical effects,

There are seeds that can grow now but they didn't grow before. It works now because there are new conditions.

We found lots of evidence of the change in attitudes and meaning, the new conditions to which Janne had referred. Dan is an official with the local municipality and he described the pervasion of the shift in attitudes. Note how he emphasises the opening up and reshaping of discussions about what Skoghem means and what Skoghem does-

Look at how we have worked during these two years with the Skoghem vision, how people talk. It is very much Green's remit. The green, organic, locally produced, the

whole way of thinking; soil, energy, district heating, wind power. These questions have been far from a small industrial town like Skoghem. Here we talked about traditional stuff like the steel industry, plastics industry and perhaps food production and the slaughter house.

If you look at it, there has been a historical change in trend in the municipality.

Lisa is a local gardener. She expressed a similar perspective to Dan's view but she, perhaps understandably, related it to the garden. She certainly echoes Janne's perception of the natural role of a garden. Her point is thus about the role of the garden.

People have a special bond to gardens, sometimes from their childhood, it's peaceful, healing and there are no conflicts or dangers. In a way it's almost too good. Lots of people start to smile when you have talked about gardening for a while. Obviously gardens awaken something in most people that they want to get closer to, know more about.

Ron, another gardener, reflected on the symbolism of gardening.

The herbal garden is built on old knowledge about what to combine and at what times.

Later he went further with the natural analogy, explaining,

Composting is very important preparing our soils and in a way composting is at the heart of what we do here in the garden. It's about giving energy to where it is needed and wanted.

This reconnecting to old ways was not limited to gardening but was also considered in broader cultural terms. Anne a member of the of the local culture society told us,

Green try to bring old traditions alive. It is about iron, you can look in the garden which addresses this iron in different ways. And the same way about wood, look in the garden, its coming back together with the iron in different constructions. It is based on this; iron, wood and earth.

We saw plenty of evidence of this awakening the past to give sense to the future. Janne explained.

Speaking of villagers and locals, suddenly, two weeks before midsummer the old organizer's threw in the towel when it came to celebrating Midsummer Eve, and Midsummer celebrations in Skoghem is as sacred thing.

But when the question came "Is there anyone who would be willing to organize Midsummer?" And then it felt a bit like "Shall we, we're new in the village and this is after all a tradition is not it? and it has been in the same place for 50 years, should we ...?" But we offered to carry out the festivities. And it was of course one of the few days when the sun was shining and the summer winds sounded and Green was packed with locals, and we'd put a little effort into it, real musicians, and we led the

procession through the pine avenue, it was really good and everyone was very pleased.

Importantly, this reconnecting was not all metaphysical. It had very tangible effects over and above the number of tourists. Nina is a potter, but she described how the production of new meanings for Skoghem encouraged others.

A number of craftsmen have moved here. We are well around 15 members of the cooperative today out of which 8-9 live here during the winter. We were perhaps three before Green. I see this as an effect of Green being here. Skoghem as name and concept has become more exciting and interesting.

Bella, who works in the grocery store, told us about how Green's vision was shared to benefit community well-being.

When I worked at the post office in the big city nearby, we hired Green to develop a new concept we called green health. It was about stress related problems in the work place, and basically they talked about how everything is a cycle and that we are a part of that. They have done the same thing at the local grocery store in Skoghem now.

This idea of community well-being reaches out too. Frank, now a retired municipal official explained.

We had this program where we searched for migrants from Skoghem with the purpose to get them back. We saw lots of value in reconnecting with people who knew what Skoghem was and could appreciate the place on its own merits

Richard, another municipal official told us about how the "materiality" of place was incorporated in the renewed sense of belonging.

One of the problems solved by Green was the old iron masters estate and what we could do with all the old buildings up there. Now they have developed houses and gardens, all of it. It's used for a good cause and parts are open for everyone to visit. We are very happy about that.

Sally who is now the CEO of Green summed up this attitudinal shift and sense of belonging.

Thursday nights are now so-called summer nights with barbecues and beer, coffee and cake and entertainment, it's true that there was a craving for such typical simple rural activities.

But she asserts that it was because of Green that it actually happened.

It's like their place, yes there is a linkage here locally

Nina the potter summed this up rather well.

This I believe will be a strong factor in the future. Thus it is a factor of change in society.

Interestingly Anna from the local cultural society who we had heard earlier, likened the coming of Green to when the original iron founder brought industrialisation to Skoghem.

Janne is this guy who comes back like Sven Brake did 300 years ago when he started up the iron master and builds and establish with his employees something here.

Discussion

It seems that Janne's entrepreneurial efforts with the garden have brought about significant changes in Skoghem. The garden itself became a tourist spectacle and attracts many visitors. But for our analysis this is only the superficial level of change, albeit important change. What we see as significant is the feeling for change, a renewed sense of belonging to an interesting place. We see much of what Putnam would have called social capital. Moreover, he argued (2007) that where levels of social capital are higher, children grow up healthier, safer and better educated, people live longer, happier lives, and democracy and the economy work better. We don't make claims for all these effects but we do see a much stronger sense of belonging. For example, the summer nights, with their sense of *being together* in Skoghem, are powerful indicators of this renewed sense of place.

These are certainly new manifestations of belonging, but we made strong claims about how this came about. Of course there is pride, a well justified municipal pride in the garden. In this way the public reflects on the private. But what we saw was not merely basking in a passive reflection. We make claims about the importance entrepreneurial role modelling, Janne showed what could be done. The garden became an exemplar. This worked in two ways; first as a physical model showing how much can be done with so little. But it also seemed to provide a metaphysical model for sustainability. As Nina put it, *Green stands for a sustainable future*. For us, this sense of the future is key to understanding how change came about. Rather than looking back at what had been lost, people began to look at what the place was becoming. This process instilled confidence in place, it imparted a stronger logic of purpose.

Our entrepreneurial argument is that Janne achieved this by positively reconnecting place with meanings that had been forgotten or simply lost in the materiality of temporal changes. He revived ideas about our role in the natural and even used some of the old symbols to develop and construct these new meanings of place. The new use for the iron master's house is a good example of this symbolism in practice.

We recognise that this is our interpretation and that there may be other, perhaps even better, accounts of what went on and how it can be explained. Nonetheless, we are confident that Skoghem is experienced differently now than before Janne's intervention. If called upon to theorise our account and explanation we will revert to Creswell (2013). Earlier we described how Creswell had identified three dimensions of place; materiality, meaning and practices. Our interpretation argued that these had grown out of kilter in Skoghem. The materiality was the empty ironworks and a population growing old. The practices were a struggling plastic factory and the meaning was that of a depleted community, one that had lost a sense of direction. What Janne and his garden achieved was to realign these dimensions. The garden created a new materiality, yet one that was replete with green and sustainable values. It offered a revitalised sense of meaning, one reconnected to nature. Practices followed, the attention to new migrants, the increased number of businesses and even the strong sense of belonging. In these ways Janne had reconnected Skoghem's sense of place.

Conclusions

Entrepreneurship is an elastic phenomenon and it is sufficiently plastic to take many forms. What we have explored in this paper is a novel viewing of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship in place, as place and for place. In this light, entrepreneurship is not limited to starting new businesses, nor is it very economic. It appeared as a social phenomenon, but was not the conventional social enterprise. It seemed to be about engaging people in new ways of thinking, new ways of experiencing and above all about being. Indeed at root we argue for entrepreneurship as an experience. It may be experienced at first hand by doing; or experienced through what others do. However experienced, entrepreneurship appears to be a powerful agent for change.

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