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Sabina Leitmann and Fran Crawford

Connecting Community Participation with Entrepreneurial Thinking: A way forward?

Introduction

The idea of social entrepreneurship is gaining momentum in the developed world. Some say it is a phrase well-suited to our times (Dees 1998). The juxtaposition of the concepts 'social'and 'entrepreneur' serves to blur boundaries between holding a social justice mission against economic determinism and an alternate image of deploying business-like methods of innovation and risk-taking to achieve socially just ends. It is the contention of this paper that while the concept 'social entrepreneur' brings a renewed energy and hope to dialogue and action on complex and difficult social issues, the associated ideas are not altogether new. Rather, they are ideas that connect to a long and valued tradition of human engagement with developing community strengths. These ideas have worldwide roots across a diversity of cultures (Shiva 1989). In third world countries, where governments are often constrained in delivering on social aims, community-based entrepreneurial activities remain a vibrant source of effective response to social problems (Salamon et al. 1999). Numerous social development websites attest to the countless and networked local initiatives responsively working to meet immediate and long-term human needs. So the Janakpur Women's Development Centre of Nepal, in business partnership with Community Aid Abroad – Oxfam, offers a space for women in village communities to use their traditional skills of decorative arts as a way of economically surviving, becoming educated, building community strengths and actively coping with change (http://www. oxfamtrading. org.au).

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Arguably, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the enactments of such communitarian traditions in the West were largely displaced with the rise to dominance of discourses of modernism and statism (Turner 1986). This development remains singularly achieved in the West. The welfare states emerging as a consequence of the power of these ideas, delivered to their citizens much in terms of health, education, housing and an income safety net. These achievements have become increasingly difficult to maintain. Across developed nations there are crises of faith at governmental failure to deliver, with certainty and control, a welfare state (Giddens 1998). Citizens no longer have confidence in the application of taken-for-granted assumptions of universalist solutions to their specific human concerns. The public issue of drug addiction is just one example of contestation as to how to understand and respond to social problems. In Australia, as elsewhere, there is agreement that drug addiction is a growing and widely-shared private trouble. There have been numerous standardised governmentally sponsored responses such as the War on Drugs with a lack of demonstrated effectiveness (Durlacher 2000). Entrenched policy and research approaches that seek to impose standardised and globalisable solutions to social problems have proven insensitive to the contextual specifics of human trouble as experienced at the local level.

In this postmodern era of multiple realities and continuous change, governments face new challenges in equitably delivering a social welfare service to all citizens. Social work practitioners, along with other human service professionals, in addressing this challenge from outside modernist certainties of method, have access to alternative histories of dealing with social problems at the human level. Backing people rather than solely relying on the efficacy of bureaucratic structures has a clearly articulated tradition of practice (Kelly & Sewell 1988). Community development and contextualised, culturally aware practice to suit local conditions and issues has an extensive tradition and literature (Martinez-Brawley 1999). At the same time, this responsive tradition has often been dampened by those seeking centralised control and certainty.

The modernist state by its nature demanded that normalised, standardised systems of service be provided (Martinez-Brawley, 1999). Perhaps the conceptual turn with the new language of the Third Way (Giddens 1998; Etzioni 2000) and social entrepreneurship (Brickell 1995; Leadbeater 1999; Botsman & Latham 2000) is an opportunity for such professions to revisit their traditions with an aim of amplifying understandings surrounding the axiom of 'starting where people are at'. While both this paper and much of the literature on social entrepreneurship is positioned in the English-speaking West, there is a rich global and cultural complexity of practice knowledge that could inform us at this time (Gandhi 1957, Shiva 1989). Such resources serve to suggest ways in which human development is not always best served by a top-down social planning approach. The histories of Western welfare states themselves abound with structures that emerged from a range of participatory, community driven initiatives (see Dickey & Martin 1999). Critical awareness of these traditions would caution any unreflected embracing of social entrepreneurship as a new way forward. At the same time we can only gain by being part of a conversation seeking to enact the possibilities that talk of social entrepreneurship brings.

In this paper we begin by briefly examining the thinking of Anthony Giddens (1998), a key British architect of Third Way thinking. Giddens has identified five current forces disrupting taken-for-granted ways of developing and delivering social goods in modern Western democracies. Taking these ideas as an entry point, social entrepreneurship is examined in the Australian context, which is both connected to and different from developments in Britain and America (Stewart-Weeks 2001). Two recent Australian conferences focusing on social entrepreneurship were sites of interactional dialogue and tussling as to how this emerging concept could be best understood and enacted (Inaugural Conference of the Social Entrepreneurs Network 2001; National Social Policy Conference 2001). Articulating some of the same territory Stewart-Weeks (2001) suggests social entrepreneurship 'combines the passion of a social mission with an image of business-like discipline, innovation and determination' (p. 23). He identifies the nature of social entrepreneurs as reflective of some of the following defining characteristics, able to:

> combine under-utilised resources – people, skills, money and physical assets – to create the possibility of securing social outcomes... business management and a vision for social change...[as] a potent platform for performance...[believing] in 'people before structures'...[with a] capacity to be authentic and effective ...[in getting] the job done to secure outcomes that people and communities need and want (p. 25).

Drawing on an in-depth interview with a practitioner of social entrepreneurship, Carol Martin, a member of the Western Australian parliament, the paper concludes by interrogating how these ideas play out in everyday practice. This process is intended to be part of the evolving dialogue as to the nature of this under-developed concept (Dees 1998). By examining the work of a social entrepreneur in a particular remote region of Australia with a large indigenous population, a description is offered of how place and base can shape the practice of social entrepreneurship. Such case studies foreground the importance of connected and ideographic readings of place and context in enacting social entrepreneurship. Extending on Brown's (2001) metaphor of resisting the Mcdonaldisation of the concept into a standardised product, this story of Carol Martin's practice is offered as a taste of one variety of regional cuisine that may well prove adaptable across place and time.

The emergence of the third way

Over the last two decades enormous changes have inscribed themselves on daily life. In reflecting on the situation in Western democracies, Giddens (1998) names five interlinked forces contributing to change. These are: globalisation; the changing nature of concepts of self and individualism in the West; the increasing gap between the nature of emerging social issues and traditional responses provided by both the Left and Right of politics; the increasing gap between the political

activism of emerging social movements and insulated traditional structures of governance, and finally in an age of uncertainty, the need for responsible risk taking. He argues these radical developments require a robust response from those wishing to maintain and propel a democratic social agenda.

Giddens details how crafting a different framework - what he terms a third way – to deal with this situation confronts those involved with a series of dilemmas. These dilemmas insinuate themselves throughout society, through state and economy to community and family and across all political geographies. Economic globalisation and the information and communication revolution have collapsed national boundaries while developing stronger ties at both local and global levels, away from central state control. Goods and ideas flow with economic and social costs and consequences without regard to national borders. A dilemma for both government and citizens is what role and authority the nation state should or could have in terms of protecting citizens' rights and responsibilities. In unraveling this dilemma, the concept civil society is being increasingly re-examined. Civil society, broadly speaking, covers the space between state, family and the market and generally includes community organisations and interactions (Cox 2000).

> The revival of interest in civil society emerged in part from the recognition that 'legal formulas of citizenship' do not necessarily promote participation or solidarity, or explain satisfactorily the need for the public sphere…the institutions of civil society are the chief counters to the promotion of commodification, marketisation, and privatisation by the market and the neo-liberal state (Cox & Caldwell 2000).

There is widespread agreement that civil society is usefully conceived as the sphere of collective human action standing beyond purposive government intervention (Salamon et al. 1999). It is axiomatic that the promise of civil society will not be delivered by government alone. Rather civil society is made through the ongoing organic processes of contextualised partnerships between government and local community, in all their diverse forms from grass roots community activism through a variety of 'third sector' organisation to national and transnational social movements.

Giddens (1998) argues that the function of the welfare state is to sustain a concept of citizenship that binds the rich and poor within an industrialised nation. The dual purpose of the welfare state; to ensure economic redistribution and social solidarity , against and alongside the market economy, has to be rethought and refashioned in a context where the meaning of both state and citizen have profoundly changed. Giddens notes that globalisation has impacted at the same time as the nature of citizenry in many Western democracies has become more diverse, less certain, and heterogenous on matters of identity. Class is no longer identified as the key subjective divider between citizens. This in turn brings into question the relevancy of traditional oppositional politics of parties of the left and right. Traditional partisan political parties are increasingly left unprepared to respond to the many passions of citizens. Such passions cut across race, gender and cultural issues to the environment and global issues of poverty and equity. Responding to such diverse political concerns requires a thinking that moves beyond the traditional binary, adversarial paradigms of both left and right. To quote from Giddens:

> Third Way politics as I conceive it is not an attempt to occupy a middle-ground between top-down socialism and free market philosophy. It is concerned with restructuring social-democratic [thought] to respond to the twin revolutions of globalisation and the knowledge economy….The citizen is not the same as the consumer, and freedom is not to be equated to the right to buy and sell in the marketplace. Markets do not create or sustain ethical values, which have to be legitimised through democratic dialogue and sustained through public action. On the other hand the left needs to drop the idea that markets are a necessary evil….Markets do not create citizenship, but they can contribute to it and even to the reduction of inequality….The good society is one that strikes a balance between government, markets and civil order (2000, pp.163-165).

While Giddens developed these ideas in the context of Britain they have global resonance.

The enabling state

In Australia we have experienced marginalisation with globalisation, leaving us unable to capitalise on our sustained and strong economic growth over the last decade (Johnson 2000; Jamrozik 2001). The benefits of this economic growth have been unequally distributed between old and new industries and rural and urban dwellers. These inequities have been compounded by the impact of neoliberal government policies privileging the doctrine of individual freedom being secured through the untrammeled workings of the marketplace. An outcome has been ongoing economic and social insecurity as experienced by many

and evidenced in the rise of Hansonism (Kingston 1999). Together these developments have re-fashioned Australia's social, economic and political landscape. In this context it is argued that new ways are needed to implement the values of equity and social justice (Botsman & Latham 2001). Though government is seen as remaining an all important source of social support, it is communities, not bureaucracies that need to define, deliver and manage appropriate forms of social action. This discourse positions government as an enabler of community-based processes rather than as a social engineer (Botsman & Latham 2001).

In this enabling work, the purpose of welfare is understood as more than income maintenance, just as being gainfully employed is about more than receiving a pay cheque. Welfare, to be effective, must encompass building the capacity of people to access a satisfying life. Mark Latham (2001), a federal Labor politician, urges the development of an enabling state that puts people before universal service structures. He argues that increasingly the problem of the Australian welfare state is the paucity of social connections between those it claims to serve. This makes for a poverty of social capital and, as he points out:

> Transfer payments, while good at providing material benefits, are paid to people in isolation. They do not provide a long-term solution to the crisis of social exclusion. Too much of government service provision is structured around the individual, rather than civil society (Latham 2001, p.23).

Social entrepreneurship

How social exclusion can be addressed is presently a vibrant and contested topic of conversation in Australia. With the rise of cultural diversity and an increasing gap between rich and poor, a deeply held belief that Australia is an inclusive nation offering a 'fair go' to all has been disrupted (Jamrozik 2001). In the resultant self-examination and dialogue, social entrepreneurship has been identified as one way of enriching social connections and building communities that work for people. As mentioned above, two major Australian conferences, held in 2001, prioritised an examination of the concept. One, the National Social Policy Conference, within a traditional academic form, devoted a conference theme to articulating and debating the concept. The other, The Inaugural Conference of the Social Entrepreneurs Network was held to launch the network. Here more than five hundred delegates, from men and women in suits to moleskinned farmers, came together for two days to engage in lively discussion as to what the concept meant in practice. To quote from the conference brochure:

> Social entrepreneurs are people who use the techniques of business to achieve positive social change. The term is new. The practice of forming partnerships, taking risks and mobilising capital to create worthwhile outcomes have been around a long time. It is just that now, more and more people are doing it....Social entrepreneurs can be found in all walks of life – finance and welfare, schools and farms, stock exchanges and public housing estates. Working in creative partnerships, they are achieving unlikely outcomes, often in most unpromising circumstances with limited resources.

At least sixty per cent of the Network Conference participants were observed to be men. This contrasts with our experience of the usual gender balance at social work and community development conferences, where women tend to be in the majority. The juxtaposition of the word 'entrepreneur' with 'social' seemed to resonate with a male audience in new ways. There was an energy generated at both conferences that indicated something noteworthy was happening around the idea of social entrepreneurship and its place in mobilizing forces to refashion welfare.

Back in Perth, as educators, practitioners and writers in the fields of social work and community development, the authors sought to critically engage with this new concept of social entrepreneurship and the community building ideas it carried. We were interested in teasing out several strands in the conceptualisation of social entrepreneurship. We wanted to understand how directly this concept is connected to traditions of community development; and to what extent this concept is vulnerable to being captured by a discourse of neo-liberalism (Brown 2001).

A perusal of the growing literature, primarily on numerous web sites (Ashoka; Community Action Network; The Institute for Social Entrepreneurs; The National Centre for Social Entrepreneurs; The School of Social Entrepreneurs) illuminates the diversity of understandings as to what the term implies. In this paper we do not have the space to detail the diversity of meanings made of social entrepreneurship. Instead we have identified six dimensions of the concept as needing to be considered in effectively implementing the concept in the territory of human service practice.

Six problematic dimensions of social entrepreneurship

1. How new is the concept of social entrepreneurship and what will be involved in enacting it? In the binary logic integral to modernist thinking there is a tendency when bringing in the new to dismiss the old. In addressing the crisis facing the achievement of social well-being, are there lessons from the past that can be usefully carried forward?
2. What is possible through entrepreneurial means in achieving social well-being? What place do centralised standardised systematised structures continue to have in achieving a good society?
3. What is the relationship between governmental, private and community sectors in enabling effective entrepreneurial innovations to flourish without undermining the effective network of those standardised social services that work?
4. How do small local efforts connect with the big picture of social structuring and policy-making and vice versa? How is democracy served by citizen participation at the local level and how is this inclusivity sustained and expressed in the translation to global and national public policies?
5. How are tensions between accountability for taxpayer dollars and risk-taking accommodated in the effective practice of social entrepreneurship?
6. How do the logics of capitalism and individualism interplay with a community-minded 'ethics of care'[1]? Is the social entrepreneur a task-focused hero rescuing impoverished depleted communities (Handy 2001)? Can being in a caring relationship with a particular network of people generate and authenticate effective forms of process-focused action (Sevenhuisjen 2000)?

Mindful of Clifford Geertz's (2000) dictum that to understand a practice it is necessary to study what practitioners do, we resolved to interview a practicing social entrepreneur. Carol Martin, a graduate of the course in which we teach, and the first indigenous woman to be elected to an Australian parliament has many years of experience as a community developer and social worker in the

Kimberley region of Western Australia. In more recent times, her focus has been on developing Aboriginal controlled businesses in Broome. In February 2001 she was elected as the Labor member for the Kimberley Legislative Assembly Seat of the Western Australian Parliament. In this sparsely populated and remote northern region, some fifty per cent of the voting population identify as Aboriginal (cf. three per cent of the total state population). Carol sees her current career as extending the social entrepreneurial skills developed prior to her successful campaign as a politician.

Interviewing Carol as one indigenous, female, rural West Australian voice of practice was done to enable the explication of key aspects of the evolving concept of social entrepreneurship as they play out in particular sites. There is no intention to claim Carol's story as a representative one but rather as one that may well be instructive in the ongoing discourse as to the meaning of the concept and how it is to be effectively enacted.

Reflections on being a social entrepreneur

The topics covered in the interview conducted with Carol were wide-ranging. The questions were open-ended. It followed the form of an interactive conversation around her understandings and practices of social entrepreneurship. Then the authors worked with both the interview transcript and the audio-recording to reflect on the content and how it connected to the problematics in enacting social entrepreneurship we had identified. Below we have used direct quotes from the interview to convey how Carol experiences being a social entrepreneur. Interwoven are our own interpretations of and reflections on this material.

1. New nature of concept

In response to being asked what she understood by the term social entrepreneurship, Carol replied:

> Entrepreneurship is about being creative. It is about looking at things in a new way. It's about inventing things I suppose. And entrepreneurship is the means by which you do it. Whatever it is! But it is about change, it is about changing even your paradigm. Like I worked in a welfare system for many, many years and then we learned about Liberation Theology and how you empower people and that was a dynamic change for me. But we still had a base like a welfare system. Social entrepreneurship is a step forward, I believe. It's actually about taking our place in the economy so it's no longer just about a welfare service.

Listening to Carol reflect on social entrepreneurship, we are reminded that change and looking at things in a new way are constants of being an effective practitioner. This involves being open to revisit one's understandings and indeed worldview. Carol speaks of social entrepreneurship as a new concept but one that connects to history and traditions. It is not the first time she has taken on board new framings for practice. What she identifies as different this time is that it takes her into radically new space. Seeking a base in the economy by and for her people challenges and refashions the taken-for-granted nexus between Aboriginal people and welfare.

When asked how she thought social entrepreneurship connected to and differed from community development, Carol laughed and said:

> I don't think there is a difference. I think we learn at different levels and then we realise that there is another level; I don't think that they are separate. It is my honest belief that it is a progression...Well community development is a process. Yet twenty years ago when I heard those idiots talking about it I thought what a mob of ratbags!

Here we hear Carol saying that for her community development is not frozen in time but is a dynamic process responsive to shifts in context. Social entrepreneurship is an appropriate name for community development at this time in her context. While her initial reaction to hearing about community development was a negative one, after twenty years of practice she concludes that these ideas are useful in framing effective practice. Her 'mob of ratbags' comment can be taken as a tongue-in-cheek suggestion that similarly social entrepreneurship may initially be dismissed but an opportunity to test the ideas in practice may lead to different judgements.

2. The place of welfare bureaucracies

While Carol celebrates the movement away from reliance on welfare systems, she does not suggest that this needs to be an either/or choice between the structures of welfare and the economy:

> I heard all the arguments about, like you can either have welfare or you can have development. But I believe you can't just drop welfare....And the reality of that is that we set ourselves up in some ways but you still need the welfare system to see you through, to actually then take your part as equals within the economy. And being an entrepreneur is actually forging that path from one to the other.

Part of her experience in enacting the ideas of social entrepreneurship is the importance of being able to

connect the worlds of social care and of paid work so that each strengthens the other, while acknowledging the interdependency of people moving between both worlds.

3. How entrepreneurs connect to the public, private and community sectors

Here Carol reflects on her own positioning in and between these three domains of public, private and community life during her career as a social worker, community developer and politician:

> I think it is definitely a part of that progression I talked about before because I believe that all people, regardless of who they are, have a right to a voice. And the one thing that I have known over the years is that minority groups, whether they be indigenous people, ethnic women's groups, it doesn't matter, you do not have a voice...Now there is an indigenous woman in there, you know. I am not going to change the world overnight but I can tell you what, I'll give that mob a nudge before I head off. And that's what it is about. It's about the challenges, it's about challenging views and assumptions that are for all intents and purposes, ignorant to say the least... I chose my life and the way that I live it. And that's my empowerment, you know, it didn't fall out of the sky or anything. And I earned the right to be who I am. And I won't relinquish it for anything...That's the other thing about being a social entrepreneur and who I am, is that I understand what power does, I have seen it all my life. I have seen power corrupt. I have seen power distort, I have seen power lay waste. Legitimate power is there. But with it comes responsibility and I understand that above all else.

Carol, speaking as an indigenous woman, connects her lived experience with that of other silenced groups. This silencing can take place in the public, private and community domains of life. In all these settings it has been her aim to give voice for and with the marginalised. She is proud of having earned the power, involving many skills, to speak for change. At the same time she is conscious of the ethical responsibilities such power brings and the limits as to what it might achieve. Connecting to the entrepreneurial aspect of social entrepreneurship she is a risk-taker, prepared to push and call to account those with the power to be part of her project for change. There is tension here in Carol's very achievement. As she states, her individual achievement in becoming the first indigenous female politician (at state or federal level) brings with it a 'responsibility' to be 'answerable, in the end, not to a distant government department or Minister but to the people on whose lives and opportunities they are trying to have an impact' (Stewart-Weeks 2001, p. 35). Delivering on this responsibility requires the practitioner to effectively straddle actions focused on outcomes and those required to sustain a process that allows for 'voices' to be heard.

4. Travelling in and between local efforts and the big picture

Carol's practice as a social entrepreneur in Broome included the facilitation of ongoing discussions between participants in the community building process. These conversations were then documented in ways that allowed for group reflection on ideas achieved in practice and goals for the future:

> So I gave you a piece of paper earlier on, in the back of it is my framework or what I call my tools. It's like the things that are said in there are all these discussions and debates that I have had with my colleagues. After being in an intellectual desert for years, I moved to Broome and find a group of Aboriginal people who want to debate. Who want to have intellectual debate. Isn't that wonderful! And we wrote it down.

Part of what was written down were feelings of grievance and misunderstanding at the nature of media discourse on 'Aboriginal issues'. The process of documenting this volatile material enabled the development of enough emotional distance to be able to work productively with it.

> You will find through it that there are all sorts of things that we wrote about that hurts. That's the reason we talked about it, because when they said things about us in the (news)paper like Aborigines this, Aborigines that you know, we would go to work and my boss would walk in and he'd go 'yo'! And we say 'Yea what about that' and so we'd be into it. We'd be there and the mechanic would come in and a couple of builders would come in and you know a couple of the yard cleaners, people would just come in and we'd all get into this debate. Like you didn't need to be a university graduate to have a bloody opinion. And when they realised that, we just had a great time.

As educators, we contrasted this active involvement with the media to our social work students. Students often reported not reading newspapers because they did not experience the contents as being of any relevance to their daily lives.

> So we had this rule that whoever got in first, which was 7.30 or 7, usually it was me would put the water on and then as people lobbed up we'd like write something on the white board. 'The pen is mightier than the sword' And I said well we can prove that by

writing what we are talking about....We made that space available in our workplace and we actually put in place rules like if Max starts jumping up and down and frowning, we cut him off. And say, stop, think about it and then we go to somebody else....We had rules....We created things as we went along and the beauty of being with this group of people, like the majority of us were Aboriginal, so of course our views, were dominant. See the non-indigenous people that were there were a minority and here we were, we were actually forging the way through to open debate....It was out there strong!.

Creating this space, shifted the group to being an empowered group of locals, able to democratically frame their participation in ongoing conversations as to race and history in ways that connected to and had the potential to transform 'the Big Picture'. Carol mentions the importance of such activities in sustaining her own ability to democratically travel from the local level to becoming a state politician.

> You mention, Oh what's that (woman's) name? Pauline Hanson[2]. They'd all go beserk and I'd go Heh hang on guys. She's somebody's aunty, she's somebody's mother you know....But we brought it out and when we actually analysed what the woman was saying, all she is doing is spewing out what other people think anyway. That's the only thing that she has done. And every time we react we add credence to what she has said. The worst thing we could have ever done was to respond and to allow the media to make such a kafuffle about, to say the least, a really shoddy first speech. I mean when you really sat back you would think that a very ill-informed person had written it. When you really looked at it, it wasn't that well done. Now this woman is a phenomena. And that's fine. Like she could be a social entrepreneur for like people that are less informed. She is.

This insightful play with the idea of who can be a social entrepreneur brings to the fore the importance of value positioning in enacting any concept. Both community development and social entrepreneurship are concepts whose potential can only be realised in embodied practice. Edgar (2001) reflecting on the rise of One Nation led by Pauline Hanson, argues that her activities

> Tapped a common cord of dissatisfaction with top-down policy making, a widely shared distrust of politicians seen to be out of touch with the common good, and in particular, the rich vein of regional self-interest that lies beneath any notion of national self-identity . . . The fact that One Nation lost its force quickly as a viable political movement does not invalidate its causes; rather, it reflects the emergence of more credible independent candidates who know their own electorates and appeal directly to their interests (p. 89).

Community in the literature is often conceptualised as a product to be manufactured rather than a process to be negotiated (Edgar, 2001). Carol describes the ongoing complexities of achieving such processes in action and the importance of socially just values in that. Pauline Hanson, in selling the message of One Nation, also worked with process. She engaged well with Australian people at the local level. At the same time she promised a sentimental realisation of community as a remembered Australia of homogeneity and insulated wellbeing. This promise had ethical dimensions in that it denied the diversity that is Australia and our connectedness with the global. Social entrepreneurship that can travel beyond the local has to be based on democratic values able to build inclusive and just communities.

5. Accountability for tax-payer dollars and taking risks

Risk-taking is central to the idea of social entrepreneurship in this age of uncertainty (Latham 2001). Governments have needed to move beyond top-down solutions to incorporating the support of risk-taking into their delivery of services. This devolution of decision making and funding is an integral part of achieving this shift in practice. Carol details some of what is involved in deciding levels of acceptable risk taking in terms of the levels of resources invested against the potential failure of the outcomes to be delivered. She describes the use of government funds to create Aboriginal traineeships and support Aboriginal businesses in Broome.

> We created businesses to make apprenticeships. Isn't that stupid? No its not! Kids are our future. The young people that have a trade now have management skills. Without the opportunities and risks that we took, we would never have those young managers. We would never have those apprentices....One (business) was a mechanic's workshop, and there was a young bloke who finished his trade a number of years ago, worked for other people and we identified him. He was an Aboriginal person, part of the local community, bumming round, doing a project officers job he didn't really like yet here he was with a trade. And the first thing we did was get him to agree to take on an apprentice. So then we worked with the manager, this tradesman who is now the manager, he is now ready to take on the business. It's his. OK it takes years but the outcomes are what we needed. Um,

> if you can show some kids that other kids can make it, it gives them a vision at least. It gives them something to look forward to. So we put two apprentices through the mechanics (business) and we have given part time employment to other people....So it was to generate employment and we know that if you are employed one way or another you have an impact on the economy. We learned this....So what we are trying to do is to generate employment in our local area, which means it will benefit everybody.

There is a lot of risk-taking described here, not just financial risk. There was risk involved in investing in the training of untried young people, and in creating management opportunities for those who have not done this work before. In enacting this entrepreneurial vision of creating Aboriginal enterprises, Carol speaks to the importance of taking time. Allowing for this compounds the degree of risk for all parties. Australian election cycles of three to four years can force a focus on quick term results to the detriment of supporting initiatives over the long term. Becoming directly involved in the business of government as a politician would seem one way forward against this impasse.

6. Social entrepreneur – Issues of individual autonomy and caring networks

A persistent theme in the literature on social entrepreneurship is the taken-for-granted acceptance of the importance of autonomous individuals heroically achieving their mission. So Handy (1999) identifies personal characteristics of dedication, doggedness and wanting to make a difference as being shared by successful social and business entrepreneurs in the current British context. This theme was also present in much of the discussion at both Australian conferences on social entrepreneurship.

Recent feminist authors such as Sevenhuijsen (2000) and Orme (2002) have pointed out that such a focus on the importance of the autonomous individual leaves out of the frame consideration of what is termed an 'ethic of care'. Writings on developing an ethic of care question the binary division of individual and society central to the possibility of an autonomous individual. 'The care framework is inherently characterised by a relational ontology: individuals can only exist because they are members of various networks of care and responsibility for good or for bad. The self can only exist through and with others' (Sevenhuijsen 2000, p.9). There has been a neglect of the importance of relationships, reproduction and nurture in social theory as to building sustaining community. Such a focus on the importance of social reproduction as well as economic production would suggest 'a view of self which stresses a sense of cooperation, interdependence and collective responsibility' (Banks 2001, p.47). Carol's reflections on being a social entrepreneur positions her as an embodied person in relationships of trust and reciprocity with others in building for her envisioned future. Below she speaks of agency rather than autonomy in her achievements.

> A lot of the social entrepreneurs that have identified themselves to me are lone wolves. They're people that go there because they know they can do it. I can't work like that with the answers. Humility is the first thing I had to learn; you know that you are not always right. But also to acknowledge that sometimes or most times what you have to offer is right...I think that as we all grow we find different ways of communicating with different people. And I think for me it has always been about 'what's the next step?'...Because I mean we can never go back....Social entrepreneurship is about forging a way forward as a collective because I am not a lone wolf. I have never been a singular. I have always been a 'part of' in the work that I have done.

Conclusion

This has been a brief investigation into one case of enacting the potential of social entrepreneurship to achieve positive change in the crisis facing western democracies and indeed global living. In speaking with social entrepreneur Carol Martin it would appear that her effectiveness is contingent on her embodied agency in contextualised interactions with others. As a practitioner she conceptualises the actualities of peoples' lives from a located and value-based spirit of open inquiry rather than from the top-down certainty of an expert specialist. She appears well placed to enact a concept of social entrepreneurship in her roles as indigenous woman, community developer and now politician. Stories such as hers indicate that indeed social entrepreneurship offers a way forward.

At the same time there is a long tradition within social work and other human service professions in the West, of uncritically adopting vogues and fads that promise a 'quick fix' to the ongoing issue of providing for social wellbeing. Social entrepreneurship has potential to be captured by those believing that social issues are solvable by applying the principles of business involving autonomous entrepreneurial individuals turning around 'failed

communities' as you would 'failed businesses' (Brown 2001). In her reflections Carol does not talk of being driven by principles of the bottom – line and the need to return a profit. The business principles she does illuminate are those of risk-taking, innovation, investment and positioning within economic verities. These business principles are tied to a moral commitment to ongoing local and collective engagement with building a good society. Carol Martin's narrative of being a social entrepreneur gives voice to the strong patterns of relationship, dialogue and reflection involved in enacting an 'ethic of care'. In reflecting on the current literature and talk on social entrepreneurship, such ideas are muted. For social entrepreneurship to facilitate new ways of community building practice, arguably ideas of an 'ethic of care' need amplification.

Notes

1 'Ethics of care' is a concept well-developed in the feminist literature referring to the fact that many people are oriented to address ethical dilemmas by seeing the self in active relationship to a network of significant others. This relational self can be contrasted to the autonomous self of rational thinkers oriented to the belief that ethical principles transcend relationship (See Gilligan, 1982, Orme, 2002).

2 Pauline Hanson, founder of the One Nation Party, whose initial platform was to stop Asian immigration and welfare assistance to Aboriginal people.

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