Phenomenology and Integral Pheno-Practice of Embodied Well-Be(com)ing in Organisations

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Aiming for developing a comprehensive understanding this paper investigates the multidimensional phenomenon of well-being in organizations as an embodied and integral process from a phenomenological perspective. In particular, the paper will show how the advanced phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1964) can help to render an extended understanding of the ‘incorporated’ dimensions of well-being. Phenomenologically organizations will be understood as situated in an embodied life-world in which well-being takes place. Based on this phenomenological understanding, the article proposes an integral pheno-practice of well-being, by which the interior and exterior dimension as well as individual and collective spheres of well-being and its interconnected processes are integrated. For overcoming a dualistic orientation, then a processual turn is suggested, allowing a decentred perspective of well-be(com)ing as an emerging and inter-relational event and accomplishment. In addition to some practical effects and implications by concluding some perspectives of further research of an integral well-be(com)ing are discussed.

Key words: Phenomenology; Well-being; Body; Embodiment; Integral Model; Pheno-Practice

INTRODUCTION

Currently organisations and their members are situated in a constant changing and challenging context, in which various influences contribute to altering realities of work-places (Noon and Blyton, 1997). Re(con-)structuring strategies, changing employment patterns, on-going downsizing and delayering or ‘layoff’ measurement, outsourcing and job insecurity, etc. become a feature of many of today’s organisations. These and further strategic transformation endeavors and practices impact the organisation’s work processes, corporate culture, values and attitudes. Within this context, more and more affected employees find less and less meaning and satisfaction, but frustratingly are losing their motivational energies at work. Thus, a growing demotivated work force of disenchanted workers marks a pervasive problem for companies today. As a factual influence, demotivation leads to serious consequences for the person affected, her relations and the entire organisation (Spitzer 1995; Wunderer and Küpers, 2003). These include psychosomatic complaints (Watson and Pennebaker, 1989) ‘internal resignation’ and ‘withdrawal’ behaviour and ‘burn-out’ or forms of so-called ‘organisational misbehaviour’ or ‘organisation violations’ (Hearn and Parkin, 2001) bullying behavior and mobbing, etc. Together with anticipating or being in conflict, in a self-perpetuating cycle, these and further problems produce severe health problems, lowered job satisfaction, and increased turn-over and absenteeism (Zapf, Knorz...
Collectively, this all adds up to decreased performance, a climate of distrust, stifled innovation and reduced creativity, etc., by which the organisation becomes passive and debilitated, undermining the best intentions or change initiatives. These and other significant phenomena and developments in the nature of work and of workplaces in recent decades has lead to questions about what gives meaning to work and quality of working-life. Facing these problems more recently, ‘organisational well-ness’ (Gavin and Brewis, 2005) and well-being became an influential concept for various personnel-related topics (Cooper and Robertson, 2001), and in the discourse about ‘positive organizations’ (Spector, 1997; Warr, 1999).

Traditionally, organisation theorist and economists have shied away from investigating well-being not at least due to its supposed highly subjective nature. The main focus has been on job satisfaction as a strong predictor of a worker’s behaviour and performance, leaving the more comprehensive question of well-being relatively under-researched. This is astonishing as the pursuit of well-being has been a common theme in philosophy, religion, law and literature for a long time in all ages and places. Despite the long history of the attempt to understand and pursuit of well-being and the whole cultural legacy guiding thoughts about it, the concept is still elusive in organisation theory. Contexts, conditions practicable categorisation of determinants and dynamics of well-being in organisations in its complex interrelation, still need to be researched. The paper tries to respond to this need and will be structured as follows: First, basic ideas of subjective hedonistic and eudaimonic well-being will be briefly outlined. Then, phenomenologically embodiment will be outlined as base for a more integral understanding of well-being in organisations. Accordingly, organisations will be interpreted as embodied ‘life-worlds’ and a corresponding integral pheno-practice of well-being presented. Following a processual turn, a dynamic understanding of inter-relational well-be(com)ing as well as practical and research-related implications be discussed.

UNDERSTANDING WELL-BEING: HEDONISM AND EUDAIMONISM

Well-being research has been predominantly oriented to two distinct, yet overlapping, perspectives and paradigms. One is related to hedonism (Kahneman, Diener and Schwarz, 1999) reflecting the view that well-being consists of subjective pleasure or happiness. The other perspective—reviving the ancient idea of eudaimonism—relates well-being to the actualization and realization of human potentials at all (Waterman, 1993). These two traditions of hedonism and eudaimonism find their base on different understandings of human nature and of what constitutes a good society. Accordingly, they focus on different levels and issues concerning how developmental individual and social processes relate to well-being in the enterprise of living. For attaining a dynamic and integrative understanding both need to be related to each other and interpreted in an inter-related way of what will be called ‘well-be(com)ing’.

Hedonism and hedonic approaches as a view of well-being have been expressed in many and various forms mostly related to subjective happiness as attaining (maximizing) pleasure versus reducing (minimizing) displeasure (pain avoidance). For a subjective hedonic orientation the individual well-being is defined as an individual, positive, emotional state (Diener, 1984; Diener et al., 1998). This ‘subjective well-being’ is characterised as a multi-factorial phenomena consisting of various components like life satisfaction, the presence of positive mood, and the absence of negative mood, which together are summarized as happiness (Diener and Lucas, 1999; Strack, Argyle and Schwarz, 1991). The ‘anatomy of subjective well-being’ (van Praag et al., 2003) is increasingly and is now regarded as something worthy of empirical investigation among economists. Consequently, well-being is explained by
individual subjective domain satisfactions with respect to job, finance, health, leisure, housing, and environment investigated by ‘objectively’ measurable variables like income. Accordingly mainly personality factors (of employees’) like personal goals, values, aspirations and motives are investigated (Emmons, 1986; Salmela-Aro and Nurmi, 2004) that contribute to the creation of life circumstances that foster pleasant or unpleasant emotional experiences (McCrae and Costa, 1991). Understood as ‘psychological well-being’ (Ryff and Keyes, 1995) various distinct aspects of individual actualization are taped like autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, mastery, and positive relatedness (Ryff, 1989; Ryff and Singer, 1998) for measuring quality not only of psychological but also of social functioning. With this ‘interpersonal flourishing’ becomes an essential feature of well-being (Ryff and Singer, 2000). Accordingly, community-oriented psychology research on well-being has considered social relations, seeing humans within their social worlds for using this understanding to improve people’s well-being (Orford, 1992). Consequently, what has been called ‘social well-being’ consists of various elements, e.g., social coherence, social actualization, social integration, social acceptance, and social contribution (Keyes, 1998), indicating whether and to what degree individuals are functioning well in their social lives. Thus events and circumstances of subjective well-being—as meaningful and healthy life (Ryff and Singer, 1998)—must be understood in the context of the social lives in which they are experienced (Keyes, Hysom and Lupo, 2000). Moreover, as personality, goals, social relations, culture, and other contextual factors change the meaning of events for different people (Diener and Fujita, 1997) there is the need to develop a more comprehensive understanding on conditions that impact the attainment of well-being by others.

The second tradition of well-being is related to the ancient concept of ‘eudaimonism’ as state of perfection in which man is constituted when he exercises his highest faculty, in its highest function or its highest good. Eudaimonism (Greek eu- = good, well + daimon = inner spirit), literally means ‘the well-being of the daimon’. The daimon refer to those potentialities of each person, the realization of which represents the greatest fulfillment in living of which each is capable (Waterman, 1993: 678). That is the eudaimonic conception of well-being calls upon people to live in accordance with their daimon as innate potentiality or excellence of the ‘true’ self. This becomes alive when people’s life activities are most congruent or meshing with deeply held values and are holistically or fully engaged and being authentic. With this understanding, ‘eudaimonism’ represents a very old idea of a life-form that relates in terms of conduciveness to ‘flourishing’ for ‘living well’ or ‘doing well’ (Aristotle, 1926: I, 7). From an eudaimonic perspective, subjective happiness and pleasure alone cannot be equated with well-being (Kraut, 1979). Whereas hedonic happiness considers a subjective state, the experience of eudaimonia presupposes that, the individual meet certain ‘proto-objective’ standards in addition to the subjective standards required for happiness. Accordingly there has been a radical distinction been made between hedonistic and eudaimonistic happiness, where the latter one is defined as having a life that is ‘worth living and worth having’ (Telfer, 1980: 37). However, as various investigations have indicated, well-being is probably best conceived as a phenomenon that includes aspects of the subjective hedonic as well as social and the eudaimonic dimensions (Ryan and Deci, 2001: 148; Compton et al., 1996). Therefore, what is needed is an integrative understanding, which considers experiential realized well-being as an enfolding inter-relational process, covering subjective, inter-subjective and (inter-)objective dimensions. For investigating these multidimensional spheres of well-being in organizations, the following uses advanced phenomenology, as this provides an understanding of well-being as an embodied and more integrative process.

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1 Also hedonic happiness can be derived from attainment of goals or valued outcomes in varied realms (Diener et al., 1998) hence can be related to eudaimonism. And eudaimonism without relation to any pleasure or fulfilling
PHENOMENOLOGY OF EMBODIED WELL-BEING IN ORGANISATIONS

Embodiment as Base of Well-being in Organisations

Phenomenologically, well-being is realised through experiential processes, which is why the body and embodiment represent a kind of underlying ‘sine qua non’. A phenomenological approach can help to render explicit and to obtain a deeper understanding of these very basic processes. From a phenomenological perspective, all those involved in their ‘life-world’ (Husserl, 1970; Schütz and Luckman, 1973) are first and foremost embodied beings (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Being embodied means that the incarnate ‘subjects’ and their relationships are always already being related to their ‘lived situations’ and its complex encounters. Within this situatedness, the ‘living body’ intermediates between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ or ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ experience and meaning (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: xii). That is the primordial constituents of the lived world of well-being are neither only ‘subjective’ nor ‘objective’ properties, but a specific spacio-temporal situatedness of existence. This embodied situatedness is as much part of the ‘subject’ and inter-subjective relations as of the ‘inter-objective’ world as all of them are inextricably linked to each other. We find the embodied life-world meaningful primarily with respect to the ways in which we act within it and which acts upon us.

Accordingly, the experience of well-being is based on daily dealings within the ‘in-corporate’ environment of organizing with its various kinds of tacit knowledge or implicit knowing. Without the bodily sense of the situation we would not know where we are, or what we are doing; in this way our bodies respectively embodiment ‘are’ our situation, they ‘do’ our living (Gendlin, 1992), hence ‘are’ the essential media for our well-being. Following Merleau-Ponty we can recognize that experience of well-being is built upon an original, pre-reflective, ambiguous ‘ground’ which is the world-horizon; and any reflection is always an abstract derivative of this primordial, lived experience. Furthermore, this embodied ‘foundation’ is also the base for all social communication through the language, the ‘living present’ in speech as expressive medium of inter-relational communication (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 197).

It is through the body that any and all comprehension, expression and sharing about well-being of ourselves and of others are possible. One consequence of this phenomenological approach is that by including embodiment into an integral understanding individual hedonic, social experiences and ‘proto-objective’ eudaimonia, can be incorporated. For spelling out happiness is lost in a neo-stoic austere ascetism built on denial of embodied sensual experiences. A continual exercise of self-fulfillment through integrity requires both happiness and eudaimonism. That is, eudaimonism as striving for the best kind of a life a person can live or what is the good life for a human being requires to be linked to what is the right thing to do and pleasant or unpleasant in a given situation to create the same as a happy one. A eudaimonic life is an enjoyable life filled with absorption, immersion, and flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). According to Waterman (1990, 1993) – who incorporates ideas from Aristotle’s concept of eudaimonia with contemporary psychological theories of well-being – the basic tenet of eudaimonism is that true happiness is derived from activity which expresses the best within us, or excellence (arête). For him eudaimonia is being more strongly related to feeling challenged, investing high levels of effort and concentration, having clear goals, and feeling competent. With his (ethical) individualism as base for positive psychological functioning – even related to collective goals and societal benefits and interdependence (Waterman, 1984) he seems to remains bound to a person-oriented “individualistic” paradigm.

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2 The life-world is the inter-subjective, mundane world of background understandings and experiences of the world. It is the world of the natural attitude and of everyday experience referring to the tacit context, tenor and pace of daily life. Husserl (1970) argued that it had gone largely unexplored in earlier accounts of meaning, knowledge and understanding. Incorporating the idea of the life-world into phenomenology served to direct its attention to the role of these unconscious, ‘sedimented’ understandings in our dealings with everyday reality. Schutz and Luckmann (1973) have gone beyond the consciousness-centered approach of the preceding phenomenologists. The life-world is described by them as ‘the region of reality in which man can engage himself and which he can change…at the same time, the objectives and events which are already found in this realm (including the acts and the results of actions of other men)...place him up against obstacles...as well as barriers...’ (Schutz and Luckman, 1973: 3).
the relevance of such integral well-being in organisations, these need to be understood as embodied ‘life-worlds’.

**Organisations as Embodied ‘Life-Worlds’**

From a phenomenological perspective, organisations can be interpreted as specific life-worlds. This understanding contrasts reified interpretations by which organizations are seen as immutable “objects” that, somehow independent of human embodiment, intentions unconscious motives or inter-subjective agencies and communities, which are creating, sustaining, communicating and transforming all (phenomenal) relations and events in organizations. The body has been marginalized as a medium of organisational practices and theory (Hassard, Holliday and Wilmott, 2000; Casey, 2000: 55; Dale, 2001). Considering the ‘absent presence’ of the body (Shilling, 1993: 19) also as (and what) matter(s) within organisational research, there is a need for a ‘re-membering’ between body and organisation and further embodied turn in social science (Hassard et al., 2000: 12). The incarnate status of the perceiving subject opens the way to a phenomenological description of well-being in ‘re-embodied’ organisations. Through their perceptual selves the ‘subjects’ of the organising processes are situated in their environment in a tactile, visual, olfactory or auditory way. Whatever they think, feel or do, they are exposed to a synchronized field of inter-related senses (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 207), in the midst of a world of touch, sight, smell, and sound. It is through the body that the agents of the organisational process directly reach their perceived and handled ‘objects’ and relations at work. ‘Making sense’ of embodied well-being implies ‘enlivening the senses’. Moreover, members of organisations experience well-being while being situated spontaneously and pre-reflectively, in accordance with their bodies.

In order to approach these body- and sense-related contacts and interrelated processes, these can be interpreted as embodied intentions and responsiveness. All those involved in the organisation process—even in media virtual networks—always encounter perceived realities through some bodily organs, from an intentional and responsive point of seeing hearing or touching. With an intentionality and responsiveness of the bodily ‘consciousness’ the member within ‘in-corporations’ does not feel only ‘I think’, but also ‘I can’ or ‘I relate to’. In other words: the atmosphere within organisations—and from which well-being emerges—takes places not only by what people think about it, but primarily what they ‘live through’ with their ‘operative intentionality’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: xviii) and in a responsive order (Gendin, 1997). The ‘body’ responds to meaningful questions, problems and challenges posed to it through a situational context, in which the body itself takes part. With this understanding of practical action, there is a close link between what we aim at and what is given, between intention, responsiveness and the well-being situation, which implicitly include emotional and aesthetic dimension (Bradburn, 1969; Küpers, 2002).

Everyday practices constitute local ways of well-be(com)ing. This implies multiple processes of well-being as different local patterns of possibilities in ongoing relations and situated demands which may cross all levels (e.g., individual, collective, organizational). The practical intentionality and responsiveness of our embodied actions and the perceptions involved are largely habitual; learnt within a specific environment and a community. Therefore, to participate in a practice is to learn the ‘logic’ of that practice, kept within a habitus, which produces historical anchors and ensures the correctness of practices and their constancy over time which are more reliably than formal and explicit rules ever can. Embodied habitual knowledge and learning are like a non-conceptual, pre-linguistic ‘silent practice’ that is implicit in actions. However, this habituality is far from being merely a mechanistic or behaviouristic propensity to pursue a certain line of action. Habitual modes of being are
constantly being altered. They are far more akin to a competence or a ‘flexible skill, a power of action and reaction (Crossley, 1994: 12), which can be mobilised under different conditions to achieve different effects (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 143). The embodied habitual action is a practice consisting of skill acquisition and skilful performance (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1980) that makes up much of our everyday activities (Dreyfus, 1991, 1996). With the possibility to modify habitual modes the embodied learning practice allows that the hardened understandings of the practical field becomes free for revision and that identities are opening for a re-evaluation, and that possibly new ‘strategies’ of engagement can be realised. This allows innovative opportunities for an alternative (self-)description and re-description to emerge. This re-created practice relates to an enfolding life-world constituted and shared within ‘inter-passions’ with the co-present others and structures of power and domination (Hearn, 1993; Freund, 1982). In this way practice is a social creation and negotiation of meaning in which well-being is an embodied and inter-related emergent process.

**Integral Pheno-Practice of Well-Being**

As we have seen, understanding and enacting well-being in organisations demands a comprehensive and integrative framework and more inclusive practice-oriented approach that is suited to investigating complex, inter-related processes involved. As any single perspective is likely to be partial, limited and, maybe distorted, and for avoiding reductionistic fallacies, a holonistic view and multi-level framework and analysis of well-being is required. For this and based on the outlined phenomenological understanding, the following presents a corresponding integral ‘Pheno-Practice’. This ‘Pheno-Practice’ is understood as a special employment and application of (advanced) phenomenology. Following an over-arching, explanatory

![Image of a diagram](image-url)

**Figure 1.** Multidimensional and multilevel integral pheno-practice of well-being.
framework and integral theory (Wilber, 1999, 2000a, 2000b) the subjective, inter-subjective and objective dimensions of well-being can be accommodates equally. Accordingly, the interior and exterior as well as individual and collective spheres of well-being and its specific interconnected processes of intentional, behavioural, cultural and social domains are considered. With this, the inner spheres of well-being and the external, behavioural aspects as well the collective embedment within an organizational community and culture and the external structural-functional realms of well-being can be assessed together. The crossing of these dimensions gives four quadrants representing four different perspectives of interior-agency or self and consciousness (I), exterior agency or behaviour as enactment (My; It), interior-communal or culture (We) and exterior-communal or system (Its). While the first quadrant involves the intra-personal or internal reality of a person (e.g., emotion, intentions)—the second domain treats the individual/external aspects (e.g., action, competencies). The third quadrant deals with group/internal issues (e.g., organization’s culture, history, stories, unwritten beliefs and rules, values) and referring to further collective domains. Finally, the last quadrant covers the group/external aspects. It is the quadrant of structural or functional order and systemic mechanisms and resources, technologies as well as organizational design, strategic plans and workflow procedures, external constraints and further manifestation of collective explicit dimensions of well-being.

Each of the four orientations on well-being would be incomplete without the others, and each depends on the others for its basic existence and sustenance. That is, change in one quadrant will always affect the functioning of the other three quadrants, as all are inter-related. What is therefore needed is an approach that considers All Quadrant, All Level, All Lines: (AQAL) (Wilber, 2000a, 2000b, 2001). Within these four domains, well-being is played out as an embodied practice and development. Correspondingly, an organisation striving for well-being will show a balance between its interior cultural life and its exterior functional life at both the personal and communal levels (Paulson, 2003; Edwards, 2005). Furthermore, a series of different developmental stages and lines of subjects and practices of well-being can be considered systematically. The stages or levels of development mark out new capacities and emergent qualities through life or situated in the context (e.g., acquiring, competing, conforming achieving, including, visioning). The developmental lines concern complex developments, like spatio-temporal, object-relations, cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, behavioural, knowledge and learning developments and ethical lines as part of a full-spectrum holonomic and dynamic approach (Cacioppe and Edwards, 2005; Edwards, 2005).

**Processual Turn towards Inter-Relational Well-Be(com)ing**

Unlike many other models, the comprehensive nature of the outlined integral framework allows for a very detailed analysis of the complex phenomena that contribute towards well-being. However, it is still bound to a kind of heuristical dualism. For overcoming such dualistic orientation, the following describes a necessary processual turn towards an inter-relational understanding of well-being as an emerging event. With this, the processual space in-between (Bradbury/Lichtenstein, 2000) as intermediate field and inter-play is emphasised. In this relational realms all parties involved meet and influence mutually in an ‘on-goingness’ within embedded con+-Texts (Küpers, 2001). Well-being can then be understood as a quality that emerges in such con+-textual inter-relations in which people are able to reflect on a situation, evaluating, making choices and relate this to the sorts of practical actions that are right for the social situation and systemic-structural context; that is, individual and collective well-being is relationally and mutually constituted in the course of being experienced and put into practice. With recognizing the primacy of relational processes, these become media, in which well-being is continuously created and changed. Accordingly, well-being is
not something individuals ‘have’ but relationships created by engaging in processes and dialogue and corresponding action. Such a processual and dynamic interpretation of the inter-related phenomenon invites a semantic shift by using instead of ‘well-being’ the notion of ‘well-becoming’: that is ‘well-be(com)ing’. Accordingly, what is valued as well-be(com)ing emerge out of communal inter-change and inter-play in these relationally achieved realities with their multiple rationalities and indeterminacies. Understanding that the constituencies are dispersed within dynamic sets of relations, relationality provides a post-dualistic understanding and decentred perspective on well-being. The methodological advantages of such a relational perspective are that it avoids the problem of how to bridge individual, collective, and organisational levels of well-be(com)ing and that it bridges theoretical constructs and practical undertakings. By recognising the primacy of relational processes these become media, in which practices of well-be(com)ing are continuously created and changed in the course of being practiced, triggering various practical effects.

**Practical Effects, Implications and Conclusion**

Well-be(com)ing and positive impacts in organizations are mutually interdependent and reinforcing each other. On the one side, it has been argued that as employee’s well-be(com)ing become enhanced, their engagement in pro-social behaviours (Fredrickson, 1998; Isen, 1987) and creativity and productivity of organization increase too (Spector, 1997; Keyes et al., 2000). Studies have shown that employees who have high levels of emotional well-be(com)ing receive higher performance ratings from supervisors (Wright and Bonett, 1997; Wright and Staw, 1999; Wright and Cropanzano, 2000). Furthermore, well-be(com)ing is linked to job satisfaction (Warr, 1999) and life satisfaction (Suh et al., 1998). Conversely it is likely that productivity and effective and shared leadership practices promote employees’ feelings of well-be(com)ing, which in turn leads to positive business outcomes (Keyes et al., 2000).

Organizations in which well-be(com)ing flourishes stand apart from businesses that merely turn profits and increase shareholder value, because they promote and sustain high levels of employee well-be(com)ing. This in turn can then produce ‘success’ more efficiently, enhance customer loyalty and higher rates of employee retention and attendance, as well as higher levels of productivity (Harter, Schmidt and Keyes, 2003). Furthermore, promoting positive well-be(com)ing contributes to eliminating unfair discrimination and socially and environmentally responsible sustainable behaviour (Newell, 2001). These are well-founded reasons for supporting the well-be(com)ing in organizations. However, as we have seen well-be(com)ing is a complex inter-relational process and therefore cannot be simply ‘organised’ or ‘managed’. This implies that it cannot be ‘designed itself’, rather it can only be ‘designed for’, i.e., facilitated or frustrated. Therefore, what can be done pragmatically is to consider the antecedent conditions likely to facilitate well-be(com)ing. Creating conditions and supporting relationships that generate well-be(com)ing requires shaping possibilities for developing or upgrading more fulfilling embodied and emotional experiences and relationships in the every-day life-work, hence quality of life.

In the following, only a few practical conditions and possibilities within the broad scope of (targeted) measurements for each of the outlined pheno-practical spheres of well-be(com)ing that is on personal, interpersonal and structural levels are outlined. Concerning the self-bodily relationships, well-be(com)ing requires physical health depending sensible diet and nutrition, physical exercise, ergonomic factors, sufficient sleep and rest patterns. For this ergonomically designed equipment and healthy environments, time and stress (self-)management, finding work-life balance and many further possibilities for promoting physical and health wellness are beneficial (O’Donnell, 2002; see Wellness Councils of America, 2001):
Furthermore, research has shown that the fact that feeling competent and confident with respect to valued goals and experiencing self-efficacy is associated with enhanced well-be(com)ing (Carver and Scheier, 1999; McGregor and Little, 1998). The relative autonomy and integration of personal goals and its efficacy enhances well-be(com)ing at both within-person and between-person levels of analysis (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

On an interpersonal level this could comprise reducing emotional dissonance with others, decrease of fears or boredom, and providing chances for constructive flow. This presupposes developing conditions where team members feel psychological safety for engaging in interpersonal risk taking such as speaking up, asking questions, or trying new roles (Edmondson, 1999). Possibilities for a more community-oriented well-be(com)ing comprise an attainment of age-appropriate, interpersonal, and coping skills and emotional and social competencies, and exposure to environments that empower the person (Cowen, 1991). As relatedness—as a basic human need—is essential for well-being (Baumeister and Leary, 1995; Deci and Ryan, 1991) there cannot be well-be(com)ing without specific qualities of relationships like warm, trusting, and supportive interpersonal relations (Myers, 1999), e.g., to colleagues, team members and to managers and vice versa.

Because poor management can deteriorate well-be(com)ing, a responsive ‘management’ is required, which is to do with both developing a post-heroic, dispersed leadership capacity in the employees’ and nurturing them so that they are not dependent on formal leaders. This may contribute overcoming the ‘dominance model’ of subordination and developing new ways of Leader-Follower-Relationships.

Understanding that enthusiasm and commitment cannot be superimposed upon employees the status of rewards as a more structural-functional means need to be seen critically. As embodied experiential forms of well-be(com)ing require lee-ways for self-organizing and intrinsically self-sustaining, it is problematic to use reward systems as a way to manipulate behavior. Any form of institutional reward and recognition needs to be adapted to support embodied and emotional relevant conditions and activities for well-be(com)ing.

Concerning future research there is a need to clarify which process and dimensions interventions affect which quadrants and which levels of well-be(com)ing. Further research avenues may also imply concerns for issues of play and fun (Fagen, 1992) aesthetic, ethical (Küpers, 2002) or spiritual (e.g., Conger, 1994, Pauchant, 2002), hardly studied for understanding and promoting well-be(com)ing yet.

For this advanced phenomenology and an integral pheno-practice research design and corresponding methodologies allow the phenomenon of well-be(com)ing to show itself in its fullness and complexity, i.e., how it arises as an experience, social meaning and systemic event in a rich and multidimensional way. Thus the outlined framework provides a ‘bedrock’ for more rigorous theory building, further analysis and empirical testing.

This paper has tried to show the significance of a phenomenological approach for understanding and interpreting the process of well-be(com)ing in organisations. With an extended approach subjective and interpersonal, hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions have been integrated. Based on phenomenological insights, the constitutive role of experiential dimensions of well-be(com)ing has been outlined. Not only reconceiving the experiential ‘base’, the outlined integral model of pheno-practice and the processual understanding of well-be(com)ing tries to provide new ways of a more inclusive and dynamic interpretation. This also allows not only that the pleasant (hedonic) and the good or meaningful (eudaimonic) life can be integrated, but also provides a richer conceptual base for modelling the complexity of modern work environments with regard to well-be(com)ing.

With this, it will be important to recognise that the outlined frame-work is only a map, a method and a heuristic framework that provides direction and useful tools, but not the
territory of organisation and well-be(com)ing itself. The real work for realising well-be(com)ing happens on a day-to-day basis in the perception, behaviours socio-cultural and systemic realities of real people in the embodied life-word of organisations.

However, all in all the extended phenomenological and integral approach as outlined in this paper can be used to illustrate, highlight, interpret, deconstruct or re-conceive the experiential ‘base’, spheres, levels and lines of developmental processes and interrelated dynamics of well-be(com)ing in organisations. Leaving behind the reductionistic ‘flatland ontologies’ (Wilber, 1999) and researching the lived experience (van Manen, 1990) of the interrelated complexities of well-be(com)ing is a challenging endeavour. Setting out for realising this contributes not only for further research on well-be(com)ing, but also for a more integral practice of organisations and beyond.

References


