

The role of community entrepreneurs in depleted communities: A case study of Father Greg MacLeod's 'action research' in Cape Breton

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Abstract

Community Business Entrepreneurs are significant actors in many depleted communities – towns, cities and regions which have lost much of their rationale as economic spaces as a result of disinvestment by capital, resulting in job losses, high unemployment and a declining population as younger people leave, but which retains high social attachment to place. This paper reviews two books about Father Greg MacLeod, a catholic priest, professor and prominent community business entrepreneur in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, a region whose once thriving resource-based economy was devastated by the contraction and ultimate closure of its coal and steel industries in the final decades of the 20th century. Government initiatives to create replacement jobs were largely ineffective. MacLeod played a key role in establishing several community businesses, notably New Dawn and BCA Holdings, using what was at the time the innovative structure of the company limited by guarantee. The paper reviews his 'entrepreneurial experiments' – which he described as 'action research'.

Keywords

Community entrepreneur, depleted communities, local economic development, Cape Breton, organisational innovation

Introduction

Capitalism has created an economic landscape that has profound geographical inequalities. Specifically, there are numerous 'depleted communities' (Johnstone and Lionais, 2004) – towns, cities and regions which have lost much of their rationale as economic spaces as a result of disinvestment by capital,

resulting in job losses, high unemployment (both visible and hidden) and population decline as younger age groups move away,

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leaving older home-owners trapped both by the lack of demand for their homes and their invested social capital. Nevertheless, these places continue to exist as social entities, with residents retaining strong social bonds and emotional attachment (Hudson, 2001; Johnstone and Lionais, 2004). The removal of significant growth mechanisms, along with the ‘upas tree’ effect (Checkland, 1976) – a single dominant firm or sector which deters the development of alternative industries – and place-based constraints on entrepreneurial activity, means that redevelopment is unlikely to occur through traditional industry-led mechanisms; hence, depletion is likely to become a permanent condition (Johnstone, 2019; Johnstone and Lionais, 2004). Government efforts to revitalise such communities have largely been unsuccessful, with any positive impacts being short term.

Where new economic activity has occurred in depleted communities, this can often be attributed to the activities of ‘community entrepreneurs’. Two types of community entrepreneur can be identified. The first is what Thompson (2010) has termed an ‘entrepreneurial enabler’ – individuals who take actions to build the necessary infrastructure and develop an environment that facilitates entrepreneurship by others in their community. The second is the community *business* entrepreneur (Johnstone and Lionais, 2004) – individuals who engage in the entrepreneurial process, ‘embrace[ing] the tools of business to identify and pursue opportunities for [the benefit] their communities’ (Johnstone, 2019). They are distinct from social entrepreneurs who create ventures that have a social purpose. Community business entrepreneurs have not attracted the same degree of attention as other types of non-conventional entrepreneurs. But in view of their important role in seeking to reverse the economic decline of depleted communities (Johnstone and Lionais, 2004), it is, as Thompson (2010: 72) argues, ‘important to tell their stories ... in the context of what they do and what they achieve’.

Daniel Doucet (2019) and Harvey Johnstone (2019) provide deeply insightful accounts of the life and work of one community business entrepreneur – Father Greg MacLeod – a catholic priest, scholar and social activist who, over a period of more than 40 years until his death in 2017, aged 81, developed various unconventional approaches to address the economic decline of Cape Breton, the northern region of Nova Scotia, Canada. This involved a programme of place-based initiatives – which he termed ‘action research’, an innovative approach at the time but now mainstream (Stoecker and Falcón, 2022), that he undertook from his post in the local university. These ‘experiments’ – innovative ways of doing business in a depleted community which he has written up in numerous publications (e.g. MacLeod, 1986, 1997, 2010) – gained MacLeod the status as both a national and international community economic development pioneer.

His philosophy, approach and experiments in community economic development have potential application to depleted communities around the world. The books are perfect complements to one another. Doucet, who was a close friend and travel companion of Fr. Greg, provides an intimate chronological account of his life, highlighting the influences that shaped his approach to economic revitalisation. He also had access to some of MacLeod’s personal journals. Johnstone, who was a colleague of Fr. Greg at Cape Breton University, and an adviser, collaborator and friend, focuses on what he calls Fr. Greg’s ‘entrepreneurial experiments’ – his approaches and activities to bring economic revitalisation to Cape Breton.

The place

Cape Breton experienced economic growth from the late 19th century based on the coal-mining and steel industries. This resulted in rapid population growth, especially in the 1891–1911 period, in a cluster of six communities known as ‘industrial Cape Breton’.

However, growth subsequently slowed, and the region went into a protracted decline from the 1960s, with its economic base undermined by the exhaustion of the coal mines and the run-down and subsequent closure of the steel mills (see MacKinnon (2019) for a detailed study of the latter). Being taken into public ownership by the Federal Government could not reverse their decline. The last coal mine and last steel plant both closed in 2001 (Hudson, 2006; MacKinnon, 2019). This resulted in high unemployment and out-migration to large urban centres in other regions of Canada, undermining the region's social base. The fishing moratorium, imposed by the Federal Government in 1992 in response to diminishing fish stocks, resulted in job losses in rural Cape Breton, added to the region's economic difficulties. Various Federal Government initiatives to create jobs to replace those lost in the coal and steel sectors – largely geared to offering incentives to attract firms to invest in the region – were largely ineffective (Hudson, 2001; Savoie, 1992, 2006). Even the jobs created by Crown Corporations proved to be insecure: in 1984, the Federal Government made the decision to close its two heavy-water plants with the loss of over 600 jobs, with the justification that they were 'a symbol of waste and mismanagement' (Savoie, 2006). The economy was further disadvantaged by the growth centre policies of the Provincial Government that centralised government institutions in Halifax, the provincial capital of Nova Scotia, to the detriment of the rest of the province.

The Person

MacLeod was born and grew up in Sydney Mines, Cape Breton. His heritage was a mix of Scottish and Acadian.¹ He attended Xavier Junior College in Sydney (Cape Breton) and St Francis Xavier University (in Antigonish, NS). He went into the priesthood because – according to Doucet – he believed that this was the most effective route to improve the world

and society. As he said, his calling was 'to improve the world and society. And the priesthood seemed the most obvious route' (Doucet, 2019: 18). This view was shaped by the activities of two Catholic priests from an earlier generation – Father Jimmy Tompkins and Dr Moses Coady – who drew upon the tradition of Roman Catholic social thinking to establish the Antigonish Movement in North East Nova Scotia in the 1930s and 1940s in response to the insufficient or non-existent response of traditional institutions to the region's economic decline. This movement involved the establishment of adult education programmes, the first credit unions in English-speaking Canada, the first regional library, and various types of co-operatives (housing, producer, marketing and consumer), including the first housing co-operative in North America, all with the objective of empowering the local population to effect change themselves. By the end of the 1930s, the Antigonish Movement had been responsible for the creation of 142 credit unions, 39 consumer co-operatives, 11 fish plants and 17 lobster canneries (McAuley, 2004). However, by the time that MacLeod was an undergraduate at St Francis Xavier University in Antigonish in the mid-1950s, the Antigonish Movement had become considerably less effective.

Having been ordained into the priesthood in 1961, his first job was as assistant to a priest who was one of the pioneers of the co-operative movement and who encouraged him to 'get out and help people'. He was then assigned to a post at Xavier College in Sydney (close to his birthplace) – which subsequently formed part of what is now Cape Breton University – to teach philosophy and in due course became a permanent member of the faculty and eventually Research Chair in Technology. Wanting to develop the expertise that would give him the tools to effect change in society, he then studied at the University of Louvain (Belgium) from 1964 to 1969 where he obtained a PhD in Philosophy. He also spent time at the University of Oxford which, according to Johnstone,

had a huge influence by encouraging him to take an empirical approach, with the local economy as his laboratory. He travelled extensively both during and after his PhD studies in Europe and Central and South America to experience different cultures and broaden his knowledge. These travels – where he saw the role of the church as a force for change – shaped his ideas. The Mondragon Cooperative Corporation (MCC) in the Basque Region of Spain – also founded by a Catholic priest – was particularly influential on his thinking (MacLeod, 1997). It offered a proven alternative to conventional economic development approaches which had been shown to be less effective in economically disadvantaged regions. Moreover, it operated in a similar geographical context to that of Cape Breton, with both regions linguistically, politically and geographically isolated. Its focus was on the local control of business and the need for them to be at the forefront of technology, with the cooperative structure used as a tool to achieve its objectives, but not an end in itself. Indeed, Johnstone (2019) notes that competitive pressures have forced MCC to reassess the continued suitability of the co-operative form, and several of its recent initiatives have not adopted this format.

When MacLeod returned to Cape Breton to resume his university position in 1969, he was distressed by the state of its economy, reporting that it was like a third world economy. Doucet quotes from his journal: ‘everything was the same as before, only older and more rundown’. MacLeod saw the region as close to a ‘tipping point’, with an urgent need to create local jobs but which he thought was unlikely to occur through conventional economic mechanisms. However, he saw opportunities to promote local economic development based on the community’s idle and under-utilised resources, social capital, knowledge and skills, but recognised the need for innovative solutions to exploit them.

Starting in the early 1970s and continuing over the next 40 years, MacLeod used the

university as a platform to bring about socio-economic change in Cape Breton, pursuing his church work on the side. He developed new, innovative inter-disciplinary courses that cut across technology and humanities, reflecting his view of the importance of science and technology as integral parts of economic development, and an MBA in Community Economic Development, the first of its type in Canada. He set up the Bras d’Or Institute and the Tompkins Institute to develop his programme of action-oriented research to support local economic development that involved the establishment of several community businesses, notably New Dawn and BCA,² and was influential in the formation of others. Some of the action research that gave rise to these ‘experiments’ was funded by Canada’s research council. However, operating from a university base was by no means straight-forward. Doucet describes the difficult relationships he had with university managers. It also required him to step out of his roles as priest and professor to take on the role of entrepreneur. He was also active in promoting and preserving Cape Breton culture, especially its music, setting up a music publishing company, and establishing the Cape Breton School of Crafts. His activities were also characterised by strong community involvement that was inclusive of Cape Breton’s different communities who called Cape Breton their home. For example, he successfully promoted Mi’kmaq studies at what is now Cape Breton University and sought to introduce Acadian and Gaelic studies. He also worked on a project to develop cooperatives in Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula.

He also engaged in numerous forms of community activism, participating in campaigns to achieve local control of organisations that were managed from outside Cape Breton, notably the struggle to give the college in Sydney its own degree awarding powers (achieved in 1974 with the formation of University College Cape Breton (UCCB), now Cape Breton University), a successful campaign to get a new community college (which

the provincial government wanted to locate in the Halifax metro-area), successful opposition to the relocation of the Coast Guard College out of the region and campaigning against credit union amalgamation. He had a high profile both in Cape Breton and beyond as a media commentator, lobbyist of government and public speaker. He was recognised by the media as the spokesperson for the community.

The actions

Following his early attempts to mobilise people for community action, MacLeod organised a small group of business-minded people in 1973 to set up the Cape Breton Association for Co-Operative Housing to renovate buildings using grants and volunteer labour. Its first project was the renovation of a building in Sydney, Cape Breton's largest urban centre (population c.30, 000) to create commercial space for rent, a craft school and a couple of affordable apartments. This created a significant asset base for the organisation. It followed this up with some similar projects. However, MacLeod concluded that the organisation was limited in what it could do as structured. In his view, a business approach was essential, with profit the means to achieve community improvement. However, he rejected the community business model in which votes were determined by the number of shares owned, having had prior experience of a community radio station in which the original philanthropically motivated investors were bought out one-by-one by investors who were attracted by its proven success and, having found a legal way around the dividend limitation, turned it into a standard commercial operation thereby subverting its original community character (Johnstone et al., 2008). He also rejected the co-operative model which he considered to be too ideological and too inflexible, with each co-operative required to focus on a single activity (e.g. housing and banking), hence requiring a new co-op to be established for each new

business. In MacLeod's view, community enterprise had to be multi-functional.

In 1976, MacLeod launched New Dawn – an initiative that was developed in the Bras d'Or Institute at UCCB – with initial funding from a Federal Government demonstration grant. It was the first community development corporation in Canada. Drawing on the expertise of Stewart Perry, a US expert in what was the emerging field of community economic development (Perry, 1987), and guided by a friend who was a corporate lawyer, it was structured as a company limited by guarantee – an innovative legal structure at the time – to ensure that money could not be taken out of the business; hence, the economic benefits accrued to the community and not to individuals. It also meant that it could not be bought out, unlike co-operatives which he had observed being closed following their acquisition. It had members, not shareholders. Each member would guarantee a certain amount that would be accessible to creditors in the event of the failure of the company. However, this could be nominal (e.g. \$10), so members were not exposed to financial risk beyond this amount. MacLeod recognised that many people who support social improvement are risk averse and hence reluctant to assume the financial risk required. Because profit maximisation was not an objective, it could pursue economically viable but low return projects, and therefore rejected by conventional entrepreneurs, that had community benefits. The main downside was that because companies limited by guarantee did not have equity, like any charitable organisation, it would have difficulty in raising credit from a bank. However, members who could afford to do so could co-sign for loans (Johnstone, 2019).

New Dawn was established with an umbrella structure under which a range of enterprises and projects to promote community development were formed. The Cape Breton Association for Co-Operative Housing was rolled into New Dawn as a subsidiary. Reflecting both this prior experience in housing

and the real estate background of its first executive director, the pragmatic decision was made for New Dawn to focus on residential and commercial real estate, initially developing affordable apartments and townhouses for low-income tenants. This created a major asset base and income along with collateral to secure bank loans to finance its subsequent projects. These included its own construction company, assisted housing and care support for seniors, group homes for those suffering from mental illness (both located in a redundant military base that New Dawn re-developed), the building and fitting out of dental clinics to attract dentists to the community to address a critical deficiency (which were subsequently sold to the dentists) and the renovation and repurposing of a family-owned department store that had closed, creating space for six businesses, including a local music business. It also created a community education and engagement division to build community capacity and resilience. All of its projects had to make a significant contribution to the community and be commercially viable to go ahead. However, not all of these projects were commercially successful and so had to be closed. For example, an ecological diaper service designed to reduce the use of throwaway diapers was closed down after just a few months following significant losses and judged unlikely to be turned around. It also practised what is now known as community wealth building, buying from local suppliers (if the price difference was no more than 5% higher) and giving all of its mortgage business to local credit unions (Reed, 1999). By the early 1980s, MacLeod had stepped back from New Dawn's day-to-day operations, recognising that his talent was in starting rather than running businesses, and moved on to other projects (Mason, 1991). New Dawn – which had developed an 'almost religious' status in Cape Breton (Hudson, 2001) – continued to expand and evolve its activities to fulfil its mission to engage the community to create a culture of self-reliance. It currently employs over 175 people and serves 600 Cape Bretoners

each day through its companies and projects (<https://newdawn.ca/home/>).

A further significant action by MacLeod, once again reflecting an innovative business model, was the creation of the BCA (Banking Community Assets) Group – a venture capital company – in 1989 (Johnstone, 2013). This was a response to the challenges that depleted communities have in attracting investment, notably limited and low-quality deal flow, a lack of wealthy sophisticated investors with a local investment focus and expertise to add value, and no exit opportunities. Weak deal flow also prevents sector specialism: such funds have to be generalists. In MacLeod's view, venture capital in depleted communities required a different model that captured local wealth which would otherwise have been invested in distant regions in order to invest in projects in the local community that might not have been funded and supporting companies in difficulty that had the potential to be successful. The genesis of BCA was in the Tompkins Institute at UCCB.

BCA Holdings Capital was also incorporated as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee which operated as an umbrella company for several subsidiary companies, some of which were conventional share capital companies and others which were not-for-profit companies. MacLeod and two others made initial investments, each of \$5,000, with additional investment from its board members who agreed to lend money (which was returnable on demand) for what at the time was a modest return of 4%. In addition, MacLeod raised \$500,000 of external funding – a challenging process which involved drawing on his extensive networks – in order to access Federal government co-investment funding. There followed a long process of negotiation with Government to establish its eligibility under this programme. BCA never failed to pay the interest on the loans from its members or to repay investors at face value when they requested their money back. MacLeod subsequently set up BCA Investment Corporation as

a for-profit company to qualify for the Provincial Government's Community Economic Development Fund (CEDIF) which offered tax incentives to investors. It raised over \$1m between 1999 and 2001 from more than 300 private investors.

BCA's investments were predominantly in established companies, some of which were faltering, and in real estate ventures. Its successful investments – which included some turnarounds – included a rope manufacturing plant, a fish processing plant, a food processing plant, a plumbing and heating company, two commercial centres, a window manufacturing plant, a radio station and a hardwood floor manufacturer. As a strategy for minimising risk, sector specialists were actively brought into each of the investee businesses – either as management, strategic partners or co-investors. Investee companies had to agree to continue to operate locally. Other investments were in companies with capital assets and underdeveloped land with commercial potential, reflecting the expertise of MacLeod and colleagues in real estate, where their expertise could add value.

Johnstone (2019) discusses several of BCA's investment in detail. One was a commercial complex that would 'rebuild the main street' of the small Cape Breton community of Reserve Mines and at the same time reflect its history. It was named Tompkins Place in honour of Fr Jimmy Tompkins who took up an appointment as the local parish priest in 1935 and was his base when he established the first credit union in English-speaking Canada. The complex provided accommodation for the credit union which at the time occupied a dilapidated building, reflecting MacLeod's abiding interest in credit unions, a small branch of the regional library, which also required better facilities, a museum for Fr Tompkins and a commercial tenant. Once the mortgage had been paid off, this provided an asset base to use for further economic development. BCA also invested in the Sydney Mines Renewal Association, a not-for-profit company that MacLeod

played a key role in establishing, to develop a commercial development to rebuild the main street of Sydney Mines, MacLeod's home town, that had become dilapidated following the decline of its resource-based economy (and which the locals referred to as 'plywood boulevard'). Johnstone describes the various challenges involved in bringing this project to fruition and the persistence required. Financial support from the provincial government was also critical (which he tentatively links to a by-election in which the new leader of the ruling party was standing). BCA also purchased a loss-making hotel in a rural part of Cape Breton which it was thought could be turned around on account of the rise in tourism to Cape Breton, proposed new tourism developments nearby and limited competition. However, it continued to make losses but eventually was turned around following the attraction of new management – a couple with deep experience of the hospitality industry and strong links to Cape Breton, and a change in the business model. Johnstone (2013) reports an independent economic assessment of BCA that identified positive economic impacts on jobs, GDP and household income. BCA continues to operate.

BCA's most successful investment was in Halifax-owned Scotia Ropes which had gone into bankruptcy in 1992, closing its main production facilities in Cape Breton at a time when its unemployment rate was above 20%. Scotia Ropes had installed state-of-the art machinery in the plant that it had financed largely from federal and provincial government grants and loans designed to attract industry to Cape Breton. The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) placed Scotia Ropes into receivership and the receiver invited bids to purchase the machinery. BCA thought that the plant could be successful under new management and so raised capital from its own resources and that of partners to make a bid. However, the receiver made the decision to sell the machinery to a US company which considered that the plant was not viable in its

current location and therefore intended to remove it to its US base. The community resisted, having become frustrated at seeing companies come to the area for tax breaks and then leave when the financial support ended. Former employees, with the active support of the community (led by a church group), organised a blockade to prevent the removal of the machinery, in defiance of a court order, on the grounds that it had been largely paid for with Provincial and Federal government grants and therefore belonged to the community. Under pressure from the community to intervene, the Provincial government – which initially supported the US company – eventually gave in and sought to diffuse the situation by getting the company to give up its purchase rights. Soon after, BCA was able to take possession of the equipment and re-opened the plant. This followed confirmation from a local businessman who advised MacLeod that the plant did not fail due to lack of demand – indeed, the order book was full at the time it closed – but from weaknesses in accounting, input resource supply and management. To address the missing management expertise, this local businessman was able to identify a potential CEO based in British Columbia with the necessary specialist knowledge who agreed to invest, along with associates, and manage the business. Having enhanced its production methods to enable flexibility, made efficiency changes, enhanced its service component, introduced customisation, resolved the working capital constraints and entered new markets, the company very quickly became successful. BCA was able to exit 1999, seven years after its investment. The indifference of the CIBC to the local economic context and the initial lack of support from government highlights the challenges that are encountered by community entrepreneurs in depleted places.

Reflections

MacLeod was a charismatic leader. He had an ‘effervescent’ personality. He was warm

and generous, attentive and engaging. The community regarded him with ‘warmth and affection’ (Reed, 1999: 660). His position in the community as a priest created trust and credibility. He drew upon his social capital to mobilise the latent talent resources inherent in a community that had close social bonds by appealing to their better selves rather than their narrower economic interests.

His motives – which were selfless, not for personal gain but to reverse Cape Breton’s downward economic spiral that threatened to decimate local communities, specifically by retaining skills and finance within the local community – were rooted in the philosophies of Christian social teaching. MacLeod explained that he ‘became a priest largely with the idea that this would be a means of improving society ... that is how I understand the gospel’ (Doucet, 2019: 172). Indeed, the tradition of the parish priest involved looking after much more than the spiritual needs of their practitioners. But he recognised the art of the possible: ‘I cannot change the world, but I can change my own backyard’ (Doucet, 2019: 173). He was anti-ideology, seeing its invisible hold as discouraging action by implying that certain things cannot be done. And he was a pragmatist. For example, despite the influence of the Antigonish Movement, he was not attached to the co-operative model, having observed its weaknesses and failures, and instead pioneered an innovative organisational form – the community interest company which operates as a not-for-profit holding company that cannot distribute dividends, with for-profit subsidiaries whose profits are remitted to the holding company and reinvested in community development activities. However, this attracted criticism that there was not the continuity between the Antigonish Movement and the New Dawn ‘family’ of businesses that was claimed (MacAulay, 2001), and that operating within the capitalist economy was inconsistent with Cape Breton’s tradition of grassroots self-help, co-operative working and not-for-profit activity

(DeRoche, 2003; Hudson, 2001; MacAulay, 2004).

MacLeod was particularly influenced by the Mondragon Co-Operative Corporation which he discovered when studying in Europe and for the remainder of his life maintained strong links, including organising tours to the Basque region. He recognised it as providing an alternative to conventional approaches to economic development that had failed in Atlantic Canada (Savoie, 2006). As Catholic priests, MacLeod and Jose Maria Arizmendiarieta, the Mondragon founder, both viewed their lives as a focus for social Christian action. And like Mondragon, MacLeod emphasised the need for this philosophy to be combined with business know-how and technical competence, reflected in combining volunteer boards comprising members with domain knowledge and professional management.

MacLeod embraced the tools of business to pursue activities – notably locally produced goods and services including social services and cultural products – tailored to the prevailing local conditions that created jobs and income from which social value would result. This meant that they were subject to market discipline, with the possibility – which did occur – of failure. He sought to manage risk by drawing upon his extensive network of connections (which – on account of his education and travel – were not confined to the local community) to identify and attract successful, community-minded people with business, professional and technical expertise to provide the knowledge and skills that his organisations required and that he did not possess, often providing their expertise on a pro bono basis. Critical to the success of his organisations were the board of directors – all volunteers – who contributed skills and sweat equity, and a sophisticated management team that possessed both business skills and an understanding of social issues. He combined this knowledge and resources in innovative organisational structures which he saw as being critical to the success of community economic initiatives.

However, this attracted criticism that his organisations were elitist and not accountable to the community. Equally important were the employees who were encouraged to see themselves as engaged in the common purpose of working for the good of the community and volunteers who sat on the various committees of its enterprises and projects (Reed, 1999).

His approach was to build financial assets, typically property-based, which created financial autonomy and the finance for subsequent developments (although MacAulay (2001) suggests that this approach became problematic in the 1990s when deep cutbacks in coal and steel industries led to falling real estate prices). Although each of the initiatives was focused on being financially self-sustaining, he often leveraged available government monies, creating new legal structures if necessary to be eligible for funding. However, although he made use of government funding, his organisations were not dependent on it. Indeed, he was insistent that the needs of the community rather than government objectives should direct business decisions. In his view, politicians were influenced by party politics, special interest groups and their own political survival; hence, their long-term support was unreliable. This view was based on his experience of one of the organisations that he had been involved in early in his career that provided housing for low-income people who needed shelter that closed when the government programme was ended (Johnston et al., 2008).

Conclusion

The authors of these books were friends and colleagues of Greg MacLeod and are positive and admiring of his achievements. But they are not critical. Others have criticised MacLeod's approach to community economic development (but not MacLeod himself) (e.g. MacAulay, 2004). However, some of these criticisms were of aspirations of New Dawn that it did not have and ascribed intentions and mandates that it did not possess or desire

(Hudson, 2001). MacLeod demonstrated that it was possible to imagine alternatives to existing approaches to the revival of depleted communities, and that an entrepreneurial mindset was necessary to turn these ideas into action. His approach sought to draw on the untapped human, physical, financial and social resources of the community – particularly volunteer labour – an approach that could be described as an effectuation strategy. It also features many aspects of what is now recognised as collective entrepreneurship (e.g. Hertel et al., 2021). And in developing his initiatives within a university, MacLeod was engaging in impact research, which is now a key component in university research assessment exercises (notably the UK's Research Evaluation Framework (REF)). His actions have achieved positive, albeit relatively modest, economic outcomes, especially when compared with the MMC (Hudson, 2001; Mason, 1991; Reed, 1999), although its social, cultural and psychological outcomes have perhaps been more significant (Mason, 1991). Both books provide important insights into his contributions to community economic development and how they were achieved. These are insights that have considerable value for the current generation of community economic development practitioners.

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Notes

1. The Acadians are the descendants of the French who settled in what is now Eastern Canada's Maritime provinces, as well as parts of Quebec and present-day Maine to the Kennebec River during the 17th and 18th centuries. Acadia was a distinctly separate colony of New France.
2. In the language of the UK's Research Evaluation Framework (REF), these would be termed Impact Cases.

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