Hall, P. V., & MacPherson, I. (Eds.). (2011). *Community–university research partnerships: Reflections on the Canadian social economy experience.* Victoria, Canada: University of Victoria. 259 pp.

Review by Tom Buchanan

*T*his is one of three new e-books from the Canadian Social Economy Hub. This organization takes on the difficult challenge of participating in, organizing, and advocating for social economy research. The coeditor of this volume, Ian MacPherson, is also codirector of the Hub. The Canadian Social Economy Hub's work is reflected in the huge collection of supplemental documentation and information on its website (http://socialeconomyhub.ca). Although this review does not encompass the content of the website, this volume does exist in its context. It is my impression this group is doing social economy research on the highest level.

A critical component of the social economy research endeavor is the resulting formation of partnerships between communities and universities. The dedication of the editors and authors of this volume to facing and addressing the challenges manifest in these partnerships is undeniable. Editors Hall and MacPherson have assembled a fairly comprehensive collection of entries related to community–university research partnerships. This volume is extremely insightful and helpful to anyone seeking to take the plunge into this field. The title suggests what the book in fact entails: a series of reflections. Themes represented throughout the volume intersect across many dimensions (e.g., nodes, funding agencies, university researcher vs. community practitioner, relationship building, outcomes, and project lists). This is probably not the volume for those looking for an explicit A to Z guidebook, nor is that the intention expressed in the title. Guidance is nevertheless embedded throughout. If the desire for a perfectly sequenced guidebook is relaxed, this volume is essential reading for anyone attempting social economy research or engaging in community–university research partnerships. In this review, I will briefly address the specific chapters and select themes in the collection.

Specific Chapters

The first two chapters set the stage for the volume. The authors assume a general knowledge of social economy research. For those less familiar, I recommend going to the branding information or

resources link on the Social Economy Hub website. These areas include documents that contain some history and framing of the social economy perspective. I found these documents very informative in reading the first two chapters.

The introduction chapter by Hall (coeditor), Smith, Kay, Downing, and MacPherson (coeditor) provides a review of the importance of the social economy model and offers eight criteria that address the community–university partnership. The criteria provide a much needed framework for critiquing the somewhat abstract and complex community–university relationship.

The second entry, by MacPherson (coeditor) and Toye, provides even more context to the challenges facing social economy research and accompanying partnerships. The authors address two important issues. First, social economy pursuits are not perceived as falling "within" research. Second, those institutions, committees, and individuals who evaluate faculty typically perceive social economy research as service work. Both issues pose challenges for the early-career academic and are well articulated by the authors.

Brown focuses more on partnership dynamics in Chapter 3, highlighting seven principles that provide guidelines for a healthy partnership: inclusivity, transparency, accountability, relationship building, mutual respect, consultative process, and participatory and collaborative project governance. A researcher who tends to underestimate the importance of relationships would benefit a great deal from reading this entry.

In Chapter 4, Bussieres and Fontan further address the evaluation of partnerships. The authors make the case for partnerships and their impact on knowledge development of society. There are some additional evaluative guidelines as well as the beginning of the discussion of practitioner–academic differences.

In Chapter 5, authors Hanne, Mook, Quarter, and Sengupta address the lack of incentives provided to practitioners in the partnerships. For instance, academics get release time for their work in these partnerships, but it is difficult to pay practitioners. This diminishes practitioner incentives and can impact project continuity. This chapter provides realistic perspectives for academics who are less experienced with off-campus research.

Broad captivated my attention with the focused perspective and use of examples in Chapter 6. The writing is accessible, and I was able to gain more understanding of partnerships as a result. The topics are placed in the context of specific cases. The use of Aboriginal and First Nations examples proved especially

poignant. Long-term commitment to relationships is an ongoing theme throughout the volume, and in this chapter Broad highlights the need for it quite effectively. She further emphasizes the need for flexibility on the part of the university researcher, especially in terms of timelines. Broad's use of examples generates a passion in the pursuit of partnerships that I found refreshing.

In Chapter 7, Findlay, Ray, and Basualdo use the example of the Northern Saskatchewan Trappers Association Co-Operative to further address the issues of relationship building. This critical aspect of partnership is likely to be particularly salient when working in Aboriginal and First Nations communities. However, the lessons of process are transferable to partnerships in other disadvantaged communities. The authors also cite the need for shifting the approach away from a positivist distancing to a more critical approach to power relations in these communities. The authors' use of the history of past mistakes as well as their focus on relationship building and process make this a great chapter.

In Chapter 8, Heisler, Beckie, and Markey continue to contextualize social economy in their reflection on the British Columbia–Alberta Research Alliance (BALTA), which was developed as the western node of Canadian Social Economy Research Partnership (CSERP). In addition to describing the unique configuration of this research node, the authors examine the dilemmas faced by members on both sides of the community–university partnership. This is the crux of the community–university partnership challenge, in my view. They provide a solid analysis of the distinct professional cultures that systematically hinder success. For instance, they address practitioners' occasional lack of follow-through. In order to combat these issues, the authors emphasize the need to implement research forums designed to identify and address shared objectives. The time and commitment necessary to achieve success appears substantial. The authors address one much-needed positive theme relating to partnerships. One of the driving forces enabling the growth of university–community partnerships is funding from organizations such as Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Canadian Institutes for Health Research. These funding opportunities are contributing to increasing institutional recognition of this research among universities.

In Chapter 9, Southcott, Walker, Natcher, Alsop, Jeans, and Falvo reflect on the Social Economy Research Network of Northern Canada. This is an interesting example of a unique regional context. As a result of a shift from federal to First Nations and Inuit control,

researchers in this region have to follow a unique set of rules. For instance, researchers must have a research license, and the license requires interim and final reports. Northern councils of research review proposals on a monthly basis and discuss whether they meet the appropriate criteria. All research follows Tri-Councils ethical guidelines as well as the Canadian Universities Association for Canadian Studies' "Ethical Principles for Conduct of Research in the North." The authors not only address the importance of developing relationships but also describe how doing so is institutional procedure in this region. For instance, researchers must show proof of benefits to the community. These new procedures posed new issues for SSHRC funding, and new mechanisms were added. I found this chapter on the Northern Node quite useful for several reasons. The authors demonstrate the research process in an Aboriginal region in which the community has a great deal of control over the research occurring within it. This is another template for working in Aboriginal and First Nations communities. The sensitivities to outsiders, for good reason, are likely much greater in these communities. As a reader, I reflected on my own research in disadvantaged communities and questioned my level of awareness of certain issues. The frameworks described in this chapter could be adopted by researchers in unregulated areas as guidelines for relationship building.

In the final full entry in the volume (Chapter 10, by McKitrick, Wulff, Acton, Bussieres, Miller, Mook, and Walker), the academic–practitioner divide is addressed and critiqued. I wish this chapter appeared earlier in the volume. However, its placement is justified, as a familiarity with all the nodes is necessary to understand aspects of this chapter. The entry describes the reflexive component of the CSERP. The coordinators of each node convened to discuss experiences. The variations in approach (the different nodes and their functioning) became an opportunity for evaluating different approaches and geographical contexts. The authors list coconstructs which, they argue, should be part of any partnership. One important aspect of this chapter is the explanation of and emphasis on the coordinator role. For the sake of trust building, the authors argue that the coordinator should not be the lead academic principal investigator but someone with some practitioner or community experience. They support their position with a family analogy that I found quite intuitive. The authors also describe the structural difficulties with hiring a coordinator that SSHRC regulations present. For instance, modeling this policy after release time for academics limits the functionality of community member partici-

pation. The authors conclude by emphasizing the need for SSHRC to examine its own policies in order to create a more supportive milieu for supporting community–university partnerships.

For the Afterword, Jackson reemphasizes the social economy in the context of the global economy. He reviews the growth in the number of contract workers, or the precariat. This was a nice conclusion which represented advocacy for social economy research and marginalized groups.

Volume Overall

I would recommend this volume to someone who is already somewhat familiar with community or social economy research and is at the beginning stages of seeking external funding. The volume focuses on the dedication and time needed to develop successful partnerships. A great case is presented to those willing to fully devote their research agenda to social economy research. It is very clear throughout this volume that successful partnerships require an enormous commitment of time and energy. If reading as someone wanting to engage the community as an extension of a research agenda or as a tenure-track professor, I would be a bit intimidated. A new professor would enter this pursuit with limited time, limited resources, and limited recognition from her or his institution.

Acknowledging that specific projects are the topic of an additional volume, I still would have liked a brief description of a partnership with the accompanying outcomes for the community and the university from the beginning of the partnership to the results stage. Broad (Chapter 6) offers excellent descriptions, and there is much description of community trust and difficulties. A useful addition would be describing what happens when a university perceives social economy work as research rather than service. For instance, most universities encourage community work but not necessarily social economy research.

The volume reflects well on successes and past challenges but is less descriptive of the very early experiences of individuals entering these pursuits. The authors' level of dedication sparked my interest in their career biographies. Having a glimpse into the career life courses of a few university and practitioner social researchers could potentially encourage those less experienced to engage.

The entire volume should be read by academic administrators puzzled by community or social economy research pursuits among faculty. It demonstrates throughout the importance of social

economy research as a growing trend; the devotion of funding agencies to these pursuits; and the need for academic systems and funding agencies to reevaluate the manner in which this type of work is evaluated, viewed, and prioritized.

About the Reviewer

Tom Buchanan is an associate professor and chair in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Mount Royal University, Calgary, Alberta. His research interests are focused on race and gender differences in work attitudes and student adjustment to the university life stage. He earned his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Cincinnati.