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# Hybrid Organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa: Insights for Research, Policy and Practice

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## Introduction

The Khayelitsha Cookie Company (KCC) is a hybrid organization in South Africa that provides affirming employment for women from disadvantaged township communities, who are paid a fair wage and have equity in the venture. Cookswell Jikos is a hybrid organization in Kenya that produces and sells energy efficient cook stoves to achieve its environmental mission of house-hold level sustainable seed-to-ash cooking in Africa. In Zambia, the hybrid organization the Mumwa Crafts Association connects low income craft producers from remote rural areas with domestic and international markets, providing them with a much needed steady source of income. These are just three examples of hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa - the area of the continent of Africa that lies south of the Sahara desert. Indeed hybrid organizations, which exist at the interface of the public, private and third sectors, and which span the boundaries between them, can now be found across the Sub-Saharan Africa region.

Globally, hybrid organizing and the number of hybrid organizations has proliferated in recent times (Haigh et al, 2015), with it increasingly suggested that such organizations have an important role to play in tackling global sustainable development challenges. Accompanying this growth has been a rapid increase in academic interest in this phenomenon and in these types of organizations (see Billis, 2010; Jay, 2013; Doherty et al, 2014; Haigh et al 2015). However, despite this growth in academic interest and research there remains much about hybrid organizations that we do not know, particularly about hybrids in the developing world. More specifically there is a relative paucity of work on hybrid organizations and hybrid organizing in Sub-Saharan Africa (Holt & Littlewood, 2015), this reflects perhaps wider limitations in business and management scholarship on Sub-Saharan Africa (see Zoogah and Nkomo, 2013; Walsh, 2015). This chapter aims to contribute towards addressing these gaps.

This chapter has three main objectives: (i) to examine the state of the research field on hybrid organizations and hybrid organizing in Sub-Saharan Africa; (ii) through a

contextualised framework of Billis (2010) theory of hybrid organizations, explore the types of hybrid organizations found in Sub-Saharan Africa and their characteristics; (iii) identify challenges faced by different types of hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, and possible strategies for overcoming such challenges.

The chapter is structured to address these objectives as follows. It begins with a review of extant literature on hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is followed by discussion of Billis (2010) theory of hybrid organizations which we contextualise for use in Sub-Saharan Africa. This theory is then applied as a framework to explore the different types of hybrid organizations found in Sub-Saharan Africa, and their characteristics, illustrated with reference to examples. The challenges different hybrid organizations in this context face are then discussed, along with strategies for overcoming such challenges. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary discussion of its contributions to knowledge and theory, with areas for future research also identified, as well as its implications for policy and practice.

### **Hybrid Organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa: What do we know?**

This section explores what we know and what we don't know about hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa through a review of extant literature. This review is positioned within the context of wider developments in the field. The term and notions of 'hybrid organizations' have risen to prominence relatively recently in the business and management field (Pache & Santos 2010; Haigh and Hoffman, 2012), with a rapid growth in scholarship on the subject (see Battilana, & Dorado, 2010; Battilana et al, 2012; Doherty et al 2014; Bruton et al, 2015; Haigh et al 2015; Mair, Mayer & Lutz, 2015). However, underpinning this recent literature is earlier work informed by new institutional theories focussing on how organizations cope with competing institutional demands and logics (see Scott & Meyer, 1991; Scott, 2001; Hoffman, 2001), as well as extant studies in the public administration field (Lan & Rainey, 1992; Denis et al 2015) and indeed across the wider social sciences, addressing the issue of the blurring of boundaries between the public, private and third sectors (see O'Neill, 1989; Billis, 1991, 2010).

As part of this wider growth in hybrid organization scholarship in business and management, a stream of research has begun to develop examining hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. Rivera-Santos et al, 2015; Holt & Littlewood, 2015). Although, there also exists a relevant wider cross disciplinary literature on NGOs and the third sector in Sub-Saharan Africa, and on how the blurring of boundaries between public, private and third sectors plays out in Sub-Saharan African contexts. This review engages with these disparate literatures.

In this chapter hybrid organizations are understood quite broadly to be organizations that possess the structural features and characteristics of more than one sector (public, private and third). This understanding is founded on the idea that organizations in different sectors manifest generic features and characteristics that are in some way "pure" and distinct (see Billis, 2010). According to Pache & Santos (2013) hybrid organizations span sector boundaries, incorporating elements from different institutional logics. After Doherty et al (2014), social enterprises are a classic example of a hybrid organization in that they combine properties and logics associated with private, public and third sector organizations. Another example of a hybrid organization might be state-owned enterprises (see Bruton et al, 2015) which combine logics from

the public and private sectors. Meanwhile Hockerts (2015) identifies some fair trade organizations as hybrids – these organizations aim to manipulate trading relationships to create income for poor marginalized producers by charging premiums to conscientious consumers - and some organizations engaging in Base of the Pyramid (BoP) initiatives as hybrids – they provide essential products and services (e.g. health, transportation, finance) at an affordable price to poor customers who would otherwise not have access to such products, or only at a prohibitive cost. In these latter instances these organizations combine private sector logics with those of the third and/or the public sector.

In business and management studies there is an emerging body of literature on hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a significant proportion of this work focussing on social enterprises, as a specific type of hybrid organization. In one early study Thompson and Doherty (2006) consider the hybrid organization Playpumps as part of a review of global social enterprise cases, whilst Kerlin (2009) examines social enterprise cases in Zambia and Zimbabwe in her global comparative work. In 2011 a major research project was conducted on social enterprises in South Africa funded by the International Labour Organization and Belgian government, with 24 cases examined focussing on best practice learning. This work considered the cases' backgrounds and histories, business models and target markets, with various tools, guides, and training materials developed as well as reports addressing themes like impact measurement (Fonteneau, 2011) and appropriate policy responses (Steinman, 2010; Steinman & van Rooij, 2012).

Social enterprises and social entrepreneurship in South Africa is now relatively well studied (see Urban, 2008; Karanda and Toledano, 2012; Kodzi Jr E. 2015; Littlewood & Holt, 2015a, b), particularly compared to other countries on the African continent. However, increasingly research is also being conducted on social enterprises in other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, see the Trickle Out Africa project<sup>i</sup> or recent work by Cieslik (2016) examining a social enterprise community-based green energy project in rural Burundi. Rivera-Santos et al (2015) meanwhile present the findings of quantitative research on social enterprises from across 19 Sub-Saharan African countries exploring the significance of environmental characteristics, and more specifically four African contextual dimensions (informality, acute poverty, colonial history and ethnic group identity), for the ways social entrepreneurs in Sub-Saharan Africa perceive themselves and their ventures, and on their choice of activity. Other recent cross country studies include Littlewood and Holt (2015c) who provide an overview of the landscape of social and environmental entrepreneurship in Africa, whilst in another study Holt & Littlewood (2015) explore the identification, mapping and monitoring of impact in hybrid organizations, introducing their Hy-Map impact framework, and illustrating their discussions and its use with reference to case examples from Kenya, Zambia, Mozambique and South Africa.

Widening the scope of our literature review, Bitzer et al (2015) present a collection of works on social and environmental innovation in Africa, encompassing case examples of social enterprise hybrids, but also BoP type hybrids, and hybrid cross-sector partnerships. In its early incarnations BoP literature focussed particularly on multinational corporations (MNCs) as the principal agents for BoP initiatives. It was suggested that there was a fortune available for those multinationals that could tailor their products and services for low-income consumers and markets, and that this

would simultaneously have benefits for such consumers in providing them with needed goods and services (see Prahalad 2004; Hammond & Prahalad and Hammond, 2004).

However, as discussed by Kolk et al (2014) since this early writing BoP approaches have evolved quite dramatically, as exemplified in discussion of BoP 2.0 (Simanis & Hart, 2008) and most recently BoP 3.0 (Hart & Casado Caneque, 2015), where rather than searching for a fortune in the BoP it is suggested that firms can make a fortune with the BoP, through processes of co-creation (London, 2009). BoP literature and practice is also now less MNC focussed, indeed Kolk et al (2014) suggest that most initiators of BoP programmes are not the large MNCs originally envisaged in early work, but are rather often small local firms, or it may be not for profit charities or social enterprises, and in some instances even the state. Some literature exists addressing BoP initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa contexts, for example Arnould and Mohr (2005) examine the BoP innovations of local companies in Zinder in Niger, whilst McFalls (2007) considers HP's i-Community in South Africa and the limits of "inclusive capitalism", see also Anderson and Kupp (2008), Dolan and Scott (2009) and Simanis et al (2008). Nevertheless, Kolk et al (2014) identify a need for a broadening of the empirical base in BoP research, particularly to Africa.

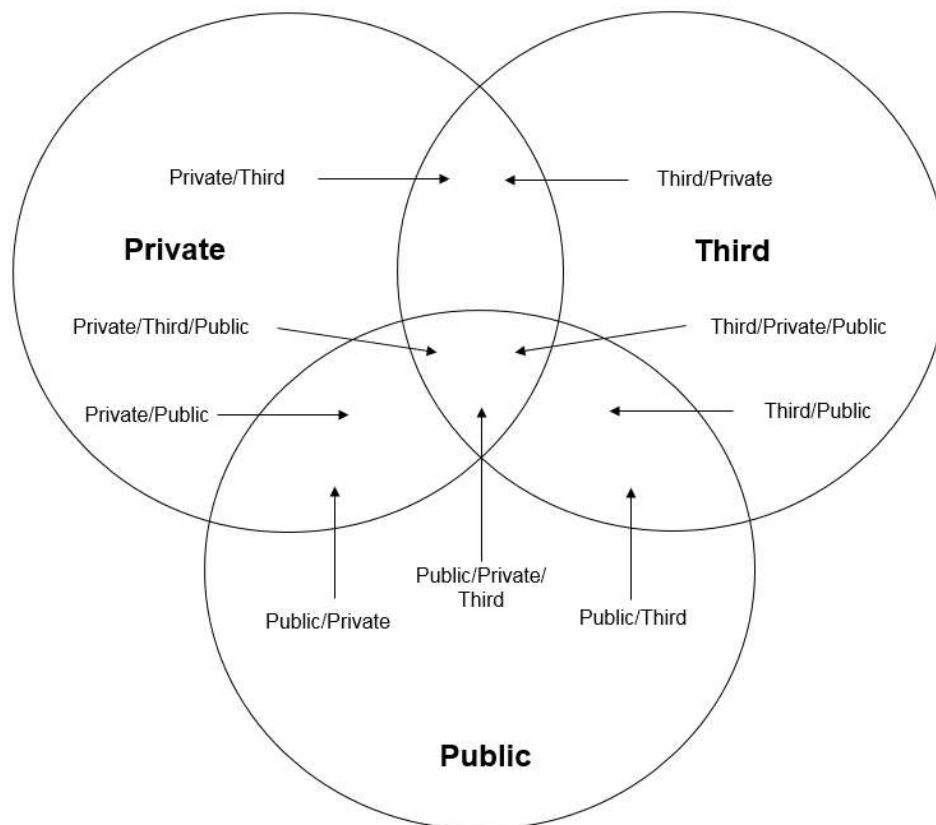
Research has furthermore been conducted into other types of hybrid organization in Sub-Saharan Africa, both within the business and management field and across the wider social sciences. For example there is a significant body of work on fair trade hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, addressing a range of issues including international relationships, governance, and impact on producers, all explored with reference to varied fair trade products (see Becchetti and Costantino, 2008; Raynolds & Ngcwangu, 2010; Bassett, 2010). The tourism industry across Sub-Saharan Africa is also populated by diverse organizational forms, many of which possess the structural features and characteristics of more than one sector and might be considered as hybrids. Researchers have examined tourism social enterprises in Sub-Saharan Africa specifically (see Von der Weppen & Chochrane 2012; Van Wijk et al 2015), but also organizations undertaking 'pro-poor', 'community based' and 'sustainable' tourism, each of these notions has its own body of literature. State owned enterprises are furthermore prevalent in the tourism industry in Sub-Saharan Africa, as will be discussed, and may be considered a form of hybrid organization (Bruton et al, 2015). There is also a wider body of work on state owned enterprises in Africa (Ariyo & Afeikhena, 1999), although there is significant scope for further work in this space.

This section has reviewed the state of the field in research on hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, exploring what we know but also what we don't. In the following section we consider the theory of hybrid organizations proposed by Billis (2010) which we contextualise for application in Sub-Saharan Africa.

### **A Theory of Hybrid Organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa**

In constructing his theory of hybrid organizations Billis (2010) first reviews existing literature, identifying three major approaches to understanding hybrids, these are: conceptualisation of hybrids as occupying points on a continuum between sectors; those studies that emphasise a single sector (public or private), and explore organizations on their boundaries from the perspective of that sector; studies that throw out the sector metaphor and view hybridisation as ubiquitous. However, Billis

(2010) takes a different view, introducing his prime sector approach, which argues that hybrid organizations will have their ‘roots’ in and primarily adhere to the principles of one sector – either public, private or third. Each sector then has three forms or zones of hybridity which it is possible for organizations to move or slide into, or to be born into. Billis (2010) describes this latter scenario as enacted hybridity and the former as organic hybridity. He also distinguishes between ‘shallow’ hybridity i.e. a modest form of hybridity, and ‘entrenched’ hybridity where hybridity is embedded in governance and/or operations. Figure 1 is taken from Billis (2010: 56) and illustrates the three sectors and their hybrid zones:



**Figure 1: Three Sectors and their Hybrid Zones**

As discussed in the previous section Billis’ (2010) model and theory of hybrid organizations is based on the idea that organizations in different sectors – public, private and third, present certain generic features and characteristics that are “pure” and distinct, and that each sector has its own mechanisms for accountability linked to particular ownership types. In this chapter Billis’ (2010) model is used as a framework for discussion of different types of hybrids found in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, in Sub-Saharan African contexts the key building blocks of Billis’ (2010) model, namely the public, private and third sectors, are at least in some respects different to those found in developed countries. There are additional complexities associated with Sub-Saharan African contexts, with the public, private and third sectors manifesting and interacting in particular ways. This in turn has implications for the types of hybrids that emerge and can be found in Sub-Saharan Africa. A more contextualised theory of hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa is therefore needed. We will now unpack the nature these three sectors – private, public and third – in a Sub-Saharan African context.

## **The Private Sector in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Whilst recognizing significant differences across Sub-Saharan African countries e.g. South Africa versus Mali, and also intra-country variability, the private sector in Sub-Saharan African countries is in general quite different to that found in developed economies. This first manifests in the presence of a large informal economy in many Sub-Saharan African countries. For example in 2006, informal economy employment in Kenya was estimated at 6 million in contrast to the estimated 2 million people working in the formal economy (Kapila, 2006). Meanwhile across Sub-Saharan Africa more widely it has been suggested that the informal economy contributes 75% of non-agricultural employment, 61% of urban employment and up to 92% of new jobs (Commission for Africa, 2005), see also Holt and Littlewood (2014). This significance of the informal economy clearly has implications for hybrids in Sub-Saharan Africa. Such organizations may choose to locate themselves in the informal economy, they may also move in and out of the informal economy as circumstances change, straddling the boundary between the formal and informal economies. Hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa may also have informal economy suppliers or distributors, or work with informal economy enterprises who are the beneficiaries of their training and support, furthermore they may sell their products in the informal economy or in wider BoP subsistence markets. Such subsistence marketplaces are often characterised by institutional 'voids' (Mair et al., 2012; Parmigiani and Rivera-Santos, 2015) or 'gaps' (Kolk, 2014) where institutions may be absent or non-functioning leading to market failures or inefficiencies. However, these voids or gaps can also present opportunity spaces for hybrids organizations.

At the other end of the private sector spectrum, many large firms in Sub-Saharan African economies are multinational enterprises, or their subsidiaries. We would suggest this is the case to a larger extent than in most developed countries, although we do also recognise the growing number of large African companies active in varied sectors including finance, telecommunications and consumer goods, and often serving BoP markets. Finally, full or partial state owned enterprises are prevalent across Sub-Saharan Africa, for example in the extractive industries but also in the provision of public services like railways, power, water, and managing tourism and wildlife resources.

## **The Public Sector in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Whilst we again recognize the potential for significant variation across and within countries, the public sector in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly when compared to that in more developed economies, is characterised by limited resources and capacity, regulatory voids, corruption, bureaucracy and a lack of accountability. Sub-Saharan African contexts are also characterised by significant legal (Meinzen-Dick and Pradhan, 2001) and wider institutional (Lund, 2006) pluralism. Indeed scholarship has identified a situation of '*dual*' national and ethnic institutional structures in many African states, where on the one hand you have national level institutions, policies and bureaucrats, and on the other ethnic norms, institutions and traditional leaders (see Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2015). These dual national and ethnic institutions coexist, sometimes in harmony and at other times and places in conflict (Herbst, 2000). Finally, within some Sub-Saharan African countries, conflict, political instabilities and limits to government resources have resulted in other actors taking on the traditional role and responsibilities of the state, with various consequences, see

for example oil companies in the Niger Delta, or NGOs and donors in Malawi who at one time provided an estimated 40% of the country's budget (Guardian, 2014).

Taken together this mean there are significant complexities in what constitutes the public sector in Sub-Saharan African contexts, which again has implications for the types of hybrid organizations found in such settings.

### **The Third Sector in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Historically the third sector in Sub-Saharan Africa has been heavily influenced by international dynamics and actors. International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) operate directly in Sub-Saharan African countries, they also act through local partner organizations to which they provide funds and support. Assistance for local and international NGOs in Africa is also provided by developed country governments, international philanthropic foundations e.g. the Ford Foundation or Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and international institutions like the Commonwealth, UN etc. This contrasts with the third sector in most developed countries where domestic funding sources, including government service contracts, and local organizations generally prevail. Another difference is the perhaps greater preponderance of community organizations that are unregistered and which operate informally in Sub-Saharan Africa. The third sector in at least some Sub-Saharan African countries is also less mature and able to hold government to account compared to that found in most developed countries, this may be particularly the case in conflict affected or post-conflict countries, or those experiencing authoritarian rule.

In this section we have discussed Billis' (2010) theory of hybrid organizations, considering its application in the context of hybrids in Sub-Saharan Africa. This application is complicated by contextual factors in the Sub-Saharan African environment i.e. the informal economy, the existence of dual institutions, and international influences on the third sector. These contextual factors in turn influence the types of hybrid organization that are emerging in Sub-Saharan Africa, but also how they emerge i.e. whether 'organic' or 'enacted' and the degree to which they are 'shallow' or 'entrenched'. In the following section we apply this contextualised theory as a framework to explore the types of hybrid organizations found in Sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Types and Examples of Hybrid Organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa**

As illustrated in Figure 1, Billis (2010) suggests that each sector – public, private and third – has three forms or zones of hybridity, representing nine hybrid zones in total. In this section we use this model and his prime sector approach as a framework to explore the types of hybrid organizations found in Sub-Saharan Africa and their characteristics, illustrated with reference to examples.

### **Types and Examples of Third Sector Hybrids**

Third/Private – These kinds of hybrids are common across sub-Saharan Africa. They are hybrids with the dominant logics and characteristics of third sector organizations that are engaging in some form of income generating or business like activities, albeit this might be at quite a limited or superficial level. In recent times, in response to declining international donor funding, more and more third sector organizations in the



developing world have started to move into social enterprise spaces. Billis (2010) might describe this process as one of organic emergence, whilst after Munoz (2010) such organizations may be considered “*proto social enterprises*”, or proto hybrids. An example of such a hybrid is the organization the Africa Craft Trust, which implements craft development and training programmes across the Southern Africa region. The Bicycling Empowerment Network (BEN) South Africa might be another example of this, it is legally registered as a Public Benefit Organization and attempts to address issues of poverty and mobility through the promotion of bicycles. BEN South Africa furthermore provides a good illustration of the complex international networks and relationships within which many hybrids in Sub-Saharan are embedded. BEN is one of a number of social enterprises across the Sub-Saharan Africa region that receive bicycles from the UK charity Recycle - Bikes to Africa, which in turn describes itself as both a charity and company demonstrating its own hybridity. Recycle works with eight different organizations in seven African countries, with these organizations undertaking various bicycle related interventions. These organizations have varied legal forms, with some registered locally and others registered in the UK, and they have quite different operating models.

Third/ Public – These types of hybrids are also widely found in Sub-Saharan Africa. Historically, limitations and the failure of the state in many Sub-Saharan African countries to meet basic needs has often necessitated third sector organizations having to fill the gaps. These may be local third sector organizations receiving international funding, local subsidiaries of international third sector organizations, or community based and informal member groups and associations. To varying extents across Sub-Saharan African countries you also find some sub-contracting of public services to local third sector organizations. For example the not for profit social enterprise Learn to Earn (LtE) in South Africa undertakes training on behalf of the local authority.

Third/ Public/ Private – Hybrids that primarily adhere to the principles and characteristics of the third sector, but which engage with and have traits associated with both the private and public sectors, can also be found in Sub-Saharan Africa. One example of this is the social enterprise the Book Bus. The Book Bus Foundation is a UK registered charity that undertakes literacy related development interventions in Zambia, Malawi and Ecuador. Alongside delivering tens of thousands of books to rural schools in impoverished communities, volunteer tourists who pay to travel with the Book Bus also work in and with local schools to encourage reading and improve literacy. The Book Bus is also engaging with local education providers to ensure its interventions add value and to build capacity. It furthermore provides a mobile library service, and is involved in library building. Finally, the Book Bus began life as a third sector organization but through organic processes has moved into hybrid spaces, with its hybridity becoming more entrenched over time.

### **Types and Examples of Private Sector Hybrids**

Private/ Third – These kinds of hybrid are also prevalent across Sub-Saharan Africa, with significant variety in the types of private/third sector hybrid existing. Indeed a characteristic of many firms in Sub-Saharan Africa is that they are highly embedded in their communities, and that through generating employment, selling products and providing services, or through philanthropic giving can have a significant local, regional and national development impact. In Sub-Saharan African contexts therefore the

boundary between traditional private sector firms and private/third sector hybrids can be particularly blurred.

Nevertheless, a first example of such a private/third sector hybrid is the Kenyan environmental enterprise Cookswell Jikos. This private/third sector hybrid sells energy efficient charcoal and wood fuelled cook stoves and charcoal ovens, as well as small packets of tree seeds focussing particularly on BoP customers. Cookswell Jikos is a for-profit venture that aims to create a sustainable “seed-to-ash” cycle of cooking in Africa. Its products are designed to reduce charcoal use in cooking, saving customers money, whilst also helping to reduce tree cutting and preserve Kenya’s forests. Another example of a private/third sector hybrid is the Khayelitsha Cookie Company (KCC), a social enterprise in Cape Town with the twin aims of producing the best cookies in South Africa, whilst empowering and improving the lives of previously unemployed and disadvantaged women from Khayelitsha, a township community with a high unemployment rate and which is beset by various social ills. The KCC is also strongly committed to training its staff, who through a trust fund have equity in the venture. Both Cookswell Jikos and KCC were born or enacted as hybrids, with hybridity entrenched from their outset.

Fair trade organizations i.e. they sell Fairtrade certified products, or adopt wider ‘fair trade’ practices can also be considered private/third sector hybrids. Examples include the fair trade organization Kuapa Kokoo, a farmers cooperative in Ghana at the heart of the highly successful global Divine Chocolate venture, but also the social enterprise Alive and Kicking with production facilities in Kenya, Zambia and Ghana that operates using ‘fair’ employment practices, with profits used for health related outreach activities. Kuapa Kokoo is also a cooperative, a type of private/third sector hybrid that can be found in rural and urban areas across Sub-Saharan Africa.

Other types of private/third sector hybrid include those found in the tourism sector across Sub-Saharan Africa, including eco/community and sustainable tourism ventures. For example in Zambia KaingU Lodge seeks to minimise its environmental footprint whilst benefiting the local community through the KaingU Community Trust. In Kenya meanwhile Gamewatchers Safari’s and Porini Camps seek to similarly minimise their environmental impact, support wildlife conservation, and contribute to community development through payments to local conservancies and their members. See also extensive work on conservancies and community based natural resource management in Namibia (Massyn 2007; Barnes 2008).

Within the private/third sector hybrid zone many microfinance providers may also be found. Although it is important to recognise the significant variation that exists in microfinance business models. For example at one end are microfinance providers operating as traditional businesses whose primary goal is the generation of profits, whilst at the other end are third sector organizations providing microfinance motivated ostensibly to alleviate poverty and which might be better considered third sector/private hybrids. However, also within this space one might find informal economy microfinance providers who again may have variable motivations, and community savings and credit groups which may also have varied origins, goals and play different roles in their communities.

Finally, the private-third sector hybrid grouping might also include semi-autonomous foundations established by MNCs, for instance in the extractives industry in Namibia

a number of firms have established such foundations (see Littlewood, 2015). But also some BoP initiatives, see London et al (2010) for a description of multiple BoP initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa, including those run by MNCs and local companies, but also international NGOs, development agencies and through partnerships between multiple actors. In these latter cases it may be that they are better categorised as a different type of hybrid organization.

Private/ Public - As in the developed world private/public hybrids can also be found in Sub-Saharan Africa. At a shallow level this manifests in private sector organizations both large and small fulfilling public service contracts. However, other types of private/public hybrid include joint ventures where the state is a minority shareholder, for example in 2008 the Epangelo Mining Company (Pty) Ltd was established as a vehicle for Namibia's government to undertake joint venture investments in the mining industry (Littlewood, 2015). Hybridity is entrenched in such ventures which can emerge organically e.g. over time state actors take progressively greater equity in private sector ventures, or be enacted i.e. hybrid from the start. Other quite specific examples of private/public hybrids might include instances where extractive companies may create purpose built communities to house their employees with their own local government structures, health and education facilities (Littlewood, 2014). See also work on the extractive industry in Nigeria where oil companies are often assuming a "*quasi-governmental*" role in response to state failures, with quite variable implications for communities and the reputations of the companies themselves (Frynas, 2005)

Private/ Third/ Public- These complex hybrids with the dominant logics of the private sector but which also embody characteristics associated with the third and public sectors, and engage with these sectors, can also be found in Sub-Saharan Africa. An example is the South African National Lottery. The Lottery is now run by ITHUBA a privately owned company in which the state has a shareholding, but so do a number of third sector organizations including the organization the Disabled People of South Africa, the SANCO Development Institute which is the investment arm of South African National Civic Organization (SANCO), and NEHAWU Lottery Investments which is the investment vehicle for the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Unions. Proceeds from the South African National Lottery are also used to support the country's third sector.

### **Types and Examples of Public Sector Hybrids**

Public/ Third – These types of hybrids can also be found in Sub-Saharan Africa. At quite a shallow level they may occur in local government initiatives supported by third sector organization, whilst a more entrenched manifestation would be partnerships between public and third sector organizations. Reflecting the institutional pluralism prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa, public/third sector hybrids may also involve traditional authorities and institutions working with third sector organizations. Universities and semi-autonomous public sector training institutions provide an example of public/third sector hybrids.

Public/ Private – Parastatals or state owned enterprises are widespread throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. Such organizations may be considered hybrids (after Bruton et al, 2015), as they possess the dominant logics of the public sector but also some characteristics of private sector organizations. Examples of such organizations

abound across various sectors and are of different sizes, for instance founded in 1980 the Basotho Enterprise Development Corporation is a subsidiary of the Lesotho National Development Corporation and a parastatal of the Lesotho Government that establishes and promotes Basotho owned businesses. In nearby Swaziland meanwhile, the National Maize Corporation is a state owned enterprise which aims to enhance food security whilst also creating wealth through effective grain procurement, storage and distribution. In Kenya the Geothermal Development Company (GDC) is a state-owned company which aims to fast track geothermal resource development in the country. State owned enterprises can also be found in the tourism sector, for instance Namibia Wildlife Resorts which runs tourism facilities in the country's protected areas. State-owned enterprises are often enacted hybrids, with their hybridity entrenched. However, illustrating the dynamic nature of hybrid organizations and dynamism in Billis' (2010) model, state-owned enterprises may also be privatised whereby they move into the private sector sphere of the model, and may even lose their hybrid status entirely. One example of such movement is the Kenya Tea Development Agency Holdings Ltd. which was privatised in 2000.

Public/ Private/ Third – this is the final type of hybrid and is again prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa. Examples of this type of hybrid include national broadcasters like the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) or the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation. Zimbabwe's Campfire Association might also be considered this kind of hybrid. The Community Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) is a community based natural resources management (CBNRM) programme developed by Zimbabwe's government which is designed to promote the sustainable utilisation of natural resources and conservation through generating income for rural communities. At a local level Campfire is driven through Rural District Councils, which are the lowest level of government in communal lands. Through Campfire community members receive direct payments from tourism activities in their areas, whilst several schools, clinics and income generating projects have been established out of Campfire funds. Campfire also has benefits for the protection of wildlife areas and populations.

In this section we have explored the landscape of hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, identifying different types of such organizations with discussions informed by and structured around Billis (2010) prime sector framework approach, which we previously contextualised for use in a Sub-Saharan Africa. With reference to examples we have showcased the diversity of hybrid organization forms that may be found on the African continent. It should be noted that our discussions are by no means exhaustive, and are limited by the need for generalisation e.g. within a group like fair trade organizations or microfinance providers there is significant scope for further segmentation into different types of hybrids. In the following section we examine some of the key challenges faced by hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, addressing each of the three sectors (third, private and public), before discussing strategies through which these challenges may be overcome.

### **Challenges and Strategies for Hybrid Organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa**

To date, only limited consideration has been given by scholars to the challenges faced by hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, and to strategies for overcoming them. Where such analysis has occurred it has often focussed on a particular type of hybrid e.g. social enterprises or state-owned enterprises. Discussions in this section

therefore address what remains a broadly under explored topic, and in a way that is integrative of the similar and even shared challenges faced by different kinds of hybrid organizations in a Sub-Saharan African context.

### Challenges and Strategies for Third Sector Hybrids

Hybridity amongst third sector organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa can be a response to one of the key external environmental challenges such organizations face, namely reductions in international donor funding and increasing expectations from donors that individual programmes and the organizations running them should be more self-sufficient and sustaining. Third sector hybrids in Sub-Saharan Africa are also frequently operating in environments characterised by resource scarcity and wider complex and chaotic conditions (after Alexander, 2014), with significant potential for environmental shocks or 'jolts' (Meyer, 1982) e.g. natural disasters, political instability or conflict, economic turbulence. In the context of such external environmental challenges and change, resilience is a key trait for third sector hybrids. Research suggests that the ability to face down reality and to see things as they really are is a key trait of resilient individuals and organizations, whilst values and beliefs that are strongly shared are also suggested to help organizations and their internal and external stakeholders make sense of challenges and set-backs (Coutu, 2002). Furthermore the ability to experiment and improvise, and a refusal to be constrained by environmental limitations (Holt & Littlewood, 2016), a condition prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa, have also been linked to organizational resilience. These are therefore all important capabilities and traits for third sector hybrids in Sub-Saharan Africa to cultivate.

A quite different challenge faced by third sector hybrids in Sub-Saharan Africa is that of succession. Whilst this can be a challenge for third sector hybrids everywhere, and indeed wider organizations, there are particular dynamics associated with this issue in developing country contexts, and these are especially acute in Sub-Saharan Africa. Many third sector hybrids in Sub-Saharan Africa are initiated and managed by individuals from outside beneficiary communities i.e. they are expatriates or highly educated and skilled local people. As a result when these individuals move on their organizations frequently decline and in some instances cease to exist. The example of the social enterprise the Mumwa Crafts Association (MCA) illustrates this point but also perhaps also one way to mitigate against it. The MCA is a craft producer association in Western Zambia with 3000 plus members who are spread across rural areas of the province. The members are organized into craft producer centres and their products are purchased and then sold by MCA which performs a market linkage role. The MCA has existed for more than 20 years but was founded in the context of numerous failed often well-funded craft projects in Western Province, where the projects ended after their expatriate leaders and managers moved on. In contrast to such projects the MCA was developed bottom-up and led by local people, it is strongly embedded in the communities it serves, whilst local producer members also feel a strong sense of ownership. Communication with and accountability to the members is also strong. The positive role of embeddedness in social enterprise resilience is discussed identified by Sonnino and Riggs-Trevarthen (2012) in the context of the UK community food sector. Although, Sonnino and Riggs-Trevarthen (2012) suggest that such embeddedness can also constrain potential for up-scaling. Nevertheless such

embeddedness does seem to be important in the survival of third sector hybrids in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Upscaling is another challenge faced by third sector hybrids in Sub-Saharan Africa. One way in which a third sector hybrid, LtE (Learn to Earn), in South Africa is attempting to overcome this challenge is through a franchising type approach. LtE is a social enterprise in the Western Cape working in the field of skills development and job-creation. It has created the Learn to Earn Association as a vehicle for the LtE model to be replicated in other parts of South Africa and internationally. Rather than establishing LtE branches, LtE assists other organizations with capacity building to develop their own skills development and job creation processes. This approach is founded on recognition that all communities are different, they have their own particular dynamics and development challenges, and solutions to such challenges. Overall, this approach also facilitates local embeddedness and stakeholder ownership, which can have benefits in terms of sustainability and social impact.

Third sector hybrids in Sub-Saharan Africa like those elsewhere also face challenges in understanding and reporting on their impacts. Such work can be time and resource intensive, whilst there may also be tensions between the kinds of metrics and reporting required for different stakeholders e.g. that conducted for international donors, that needed to ensure local accountability to beneficiaries, and that needed to help hybrids reflect on and improve their activities. Existing impact assessment frameworks, and wider performance management tools, even those tailored for third sector hybrids, may also be unsuitable or require significant modification for use in Sub-Saharan African contexts. Although a recent framework for identifying, mapping and monitoring the impact of hybrids, which was developed drawing upon research with hybrids in Sub-Saharan Africa may provide some guidance on this (see Holt & Littlewood, 2015).

Finally, and as with third sector hybrids globally, mission drift can be a challenge for third sector hybrids in Sub-Saharan Africa, as can maintaining the organization's primary focus on its social and/or environmental mission in the face of imperatives for economic value creation and the need to ensure survival. This is particularly the case where often poorly resourced third sector hybrids engage with powerful state and private sector actors with their own particular goals and agendas for such collaborations. In such scenarios a reflexive and critical perspective is essential for managers in third sector hybrids to assess the opportunities and threats stemming from such relationships.

### Challenges and Strategies for Private Sector Hybrids

There are overlaps between the challenges faced by third sector hybrids and private sector hybrids. For example, the business environment in Sub-Saharan Africa is also challenging for private sector hybrids, which similarly face environmental shocks or '*jolts*' (Meyer, 1982), and operate in conditions of constrained resources, uncertainty and institutional voids (Mair et al 2012) or gaps (Kolk, 2014) i.e. institutions are absent or non-functioning leading to market failures and inefficiencies. Parmigiani and Rivera-Santos (2015) identify five types of institutional voids, particularly in subsistence markets, these are: product market, labour market, capital market, contracting, and regulatory, all of which present challenges of different kinds for private sector hybrids, and indeed other types of hybrids. These external environmental challenges are starkly illustrated in the World Bank's Global Ease of Doing Business Index, with 8 of

the bottom 10 countries in the Index located in Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2015). As with third sector hybrids these environmental challenges require individual and organizational resilience and associated capabilities.

In the previous section the notion of embeddedness was discussed as an important factor in the ownership of organizations by communities, and related to that organizational sustainability. Embeddedness was also identified as having implications for social impact. Private sector hybrids that purchase from, employ, or sell to the poor, also require a strong understanding of the dynamics of subsistence markets if their interventions and activities are to be successful. Insufficient understanding of subsistence markets, and the needs and preferences of low income consumers has been linked to the failure of many early BoP interventions. The importance of local knowledge and for 'co-creation' of BoP interventions with the poor, who are recognized as more than just consumers, is acknowledged in more recent BoP 2.0 and 3.0 approaches (Hart et al, 2015). These may also be led by third sector hybrids, which are often perceived as having greater local knowledge and embeddedness, or through partnerships between such organizations and MNCs.

However, BoP interventions have also often been financially unsuccessful, Karnani (2007) for example argues that there is no fortune at the base of the pyramid. Suggesting that BoP markets are quite small and costly to serve, whilst the poor are culturally heterogeneous and geographically dispersed. Thus whilst notions of win-win and 'shared value' creation are rhetorically appealing they can be difficult to realise in practice. It is also argued by Crane et al, (2014) that in such initiatives trade-offs between economic and social and environmental value creation are still often necessary.

A further challenge for private sector hybrids in Sub-Saharan Africa may come when competing against more traditional private sector firms that may be able to offer lower prices e.g. if they do not offer employees such favourable terms and conditions. For instance it may be that employment creation is a key part of a for-profit social enterprise's mission, which might then restrict its ability to mechanise and automate production as this would reduce staff numbers. Private sector hybrids therefore need to be careful in their approach to the market and selective in the markets in which they choose to compete. A strong understanding of their target market is also important, as is a clear sense of on what basis they compete.

The risk of imitation is another challenge for hybrids in Sub-Saharan Africa, where enforcement of intellectual property especially in subsistence markets can be limited. Hybrids may develop innovative low cost contextually appropriate products and services but quickly find these duplicated by both large (domestic and international) competitors and those in the informal economy. For example the private sector hybrid Cookswell Jikos in Kenya now faces significant competition from cheap imitation cook stoves made in the informal economy, but also from imports. It has predominantly adopted a differentiation strategy emphasising the quality of its products, both in terms of robustness and design but also in reducing fuelwood consumption and wider positive environmental impacts, which it implements through constant experimentation and innovation. However, it also innovates to improve efficiency and reduce costs in production and distribution.

A final challenge private sector hybrids may face is that albeit well intentioned NGOs and donor interventions may flood their markets e.g. an influx of donated energy efficient cook stoves into a community or region. As before a differentiation strategy may offer some protection against this risk.

### Challenges and Strategies for Public Sector Hybrids

Finally, public sector hybrids in Sub-Saharan Africa face some similar challenges to those discussed previously for third sector and private sector hybrids e.g. resource constraints, operating in poorly functioning markets, how to assess impact. Although, public sector hybrids may also be implicated in institutional failures and the creation of the wider complex and chaotic environmental conditions (Alexander et al 2014) that third and private sector hybrids in Sub-Saharan Africa are required to navigate. For example in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, where countries are scored and ranked based on perceived levels of public sector corruption, the majority of African countries have a score of less than 50 percent, whilst the overall picture for the Sub-Saharan Africa region is described as one of 'endemic corruption' (Transparency International, 2015). Corruption is therefore a major challenge for public sector hybrids in this context.

However, hybrid state owned enterprises in Sub-Saharan Africa also face challenges and have been criticised for high levels of bureaucracy and inefficiency, nepotism, a lack of accountability and in some instances as being instruments of national level kleptocracy. Examples of failing parastatals and state owned enterprises in Sub-Saharan Africa abound, see for instance the repeated bailouts required by Namibia Wildlife Resorts and Air Namibia, the challenges faced by Eskom and SABC in South Africa, the historical losses at the National Bank of Kenya (now largely privatised), whilst Nigeria's president recently dissolved the boards of all the country's federal parastatals. At the same time hybrid state-owned enterprises and parastatals if managed effectively, with autonomy and accountability to citizens, and scope to innovate, have the potential to provide needed goods and services and be an important source of revenue for Sub-Saharan African governments.

In this section we have discussed the challenges faced by different types of hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, some of which are common across different hybrid organization forms. We have also reflected upon possible strategies for overcoming some of these challenges, illustrated with examples of such strategies in action. In the following section we conclude our chapter by identifying our contributions to knowledge and theory, potential areas for future research, and the implications of our discussions for policy and practice

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter we have explored scholarship on, and the landscape of, hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa. This chapter provide various insights for research, policy and practice:

#### Insights for Research

This chapter contributes to the still limited knowledge about hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa. As discussed in the literature review section whilst there is an



emerging body of work on such organizations there remains significant scope for further enquiry. Existing work also remains relatively fragmented, often focussing on particular types of hybrids, with few attempts to date to examine multiple hybrid organization forms together as occurs in this chapter. At a wider level, management scholarship on Sub-Saharan Africa remains underdeveloped, with this chapter also aiming to showcase Africa as a rich, complex and institutionally diverse setting for management research. We encourage further business and management research on hybrids, and indeed wider organizations, in Sub-Saharan Africa contexts.

A further contribution of this chapter relates to its contextualisation of Billis' (2010) theory of hybrid organizations. We have unpacked Billis' (2010) theory for use in Sub-Saharan Africa identifying additional complexities in how the three sectors manifest in such settings, for example a private sector in which the informal economy plays a central role, a third sector strongly influenced by international actors, and a public sector with significant legal and wider institutional pluralism. This provides insight for future scholarship on hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as for work examining hybrids in other developing world or emerging economy contexts which have their own complexities.

A number of areas for future research are raised by discussions in this chapter. Firstly, in this chapter we have explored hybrid organizations at the macro level of the entire Sub-Saharan Africa region, illustrated with examples from East, Southern and West Africa. However, there are limitations to this macro perspective, notably that we are not able to capture the very significant differences between countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and also variation within countries. How hybrid organizations manifest in particular African countries linked to national, regional and local institutions, the interactions between them, and with transnational actors, is therefore an area in need of further study. In-depth comparison of hybrid organization ecosystems in two or more Sub-Saharan African countries is also needed, as is more fine-grained analysis focussing on particular sectors e.g. private sector hybrids or public sector hybrids, sub-groups within these sectors for instance public/private hybrids, or types within these sub-groups e.g. state-owned enterprises and parastatals or fair trade hybrids. These hybrids could be looked at through a lens of particular sectors e.g. tourism or energy, or with a focus on particular challenges e.g. upscaling. Finally, hybrid scholars might apply other theories of hybrid organizations than that proposed by Billis (2010) to the study of such organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, or indeed develop new theories based on African data and organizations.

### Insights for Policy

Discussions in this chapter also have insights and implications for policy. First, the chapter showcases a range of hybrid organizational forms that exist in Sub-Saharan Africa. In doing so it illustrates the variety of options available to decision makers, which they might consider as well as examples they might look to, when developing new policies. Secondly, the chapter considers the challenges different kinds of hybrids in Sub-Saharan Africa face, some of which are specific to particular types of hybrids whilst others are more general, and also potential strategies for overcoming these challenges. This may provide insights for decision makers designing policies and initiatives to support hybrids in overcoming such challenges, or that are seeking to tackle the causes of these challenges. Implications for policy are also apparent in discussion of the need for public sector hybrids to be more accountable, innovative

and autonomous. Finally, discussions in the chapter may encourage decision makers to be reflective about and avoid interventions and policies that can negatively affect the functioning of hybrids e.g. flooding subsistence markets.

### Insights for Practice

Finally, discussions in the chapter have insights and implications for practice. These relate particularly to the challenges faced by different kinds of hybrid organizations and the strategies such organizations might adopt to overcome them. For example how hybrids might map and measure impact, how they might develop capabilities for resilience, the ways in which they can appropriately up-scale e.g. through contextualised franchising, and how hybrids might compete with for-profit businesses.

Whilst there remains much that we do not know about hybrid organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, this chapter has aimed to provide a starting point for addressing some of the gaps in our understanding, offering insights for research, policy and practice, and guidance for future scholarship.

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<sup>i</sup> Trickle Out is a research project examining social and environmental enterprises in East and Southern Africa. To find out more please visit the project website [www.trickleout.net](http://www.trickleout.net)