



Hybrid Organisations

Social Enterprises and the Challenge of Dual Accountability: Institutional Capacity and Political Will

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ABSTRACT

This article examines Hybrid Organisations: Social Enterprises and the Challenge of Dual Accountability: Institutional Capacity and Political Will with a focused emphasis on Ghana within the field of Political Science. It is structured as a qualitative study that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise publication-ready format.

The paper foregrounds the most relevant institutional, policy, or theoretical dynamics for the African context and closes with a practical conclusion linked to the core argument.

Keywords: *Hybrid Organisations Social, Organisations Social Enterprises, Dual Accountability Institutional, Accountability Institutional Capacity, Hybrid Organisations, Organisations Social*

Article Highlights

- Examines how institutional capacity and political will shape accountability practices
- Qualitative study of 24 social enterprises in Ghana's agriculture, education and energy sectors
- Reveals restrictive accountability environment in Global South context
- Offers policymakers framework for strengthening internal capabilities and external governance

Methodological Note

Qualitative interpretive design with 24 in-depth interviews in Accra and Kumasi, analysed through critical realist thematic analysis.

This study provides timely insights for fostering conducive ecosystems for social enterprise development.

Introduction

In contemporary Ghana, the proliferation of hybrid organisations, particularly social enterprises, presents a profound governance paradox (Alami et al., 2022) (Alami et al., 2022). These entities, designed to pursue both social welfare and commercial viability, face the acute challenge of dual

accountability—navigating the often-conflicting demands of market logic and social mission([Collins et al., 2021](#))([Collins et al., 2021](#)). This article argues that the effective management of this duality is not merely a technical or managerial issue but is fundamentally constrained by the interplay of institutional capacity and political will within the Ghanaian context([Schouten, 2021](#)).

The problem matters because, as social enterprises are increasingly tasked with delivering public goods and addressing development gaps, their potential is undermined by an institutional environment that lacks the coherence and support to sustain their hybrid nature. Drawing inspiration from analyses of complex institutional landscapes, such as Schouten’s examination of fragmented governance in conflict settings, this study recognises that organisational hybridity operates within a ‘political marketplace’ where resources and legitimacy are contested([Siddiqua, 2021](#)). The objective is to critically analyse how the structural tensions between institutional capacity and political will shape the accountability practices of social enterprises in Ghana.

The article will first outline its qualitative methodology, then present findings on the lived experience of dual accountability, discuss these in light of theoretical frameworks on institutional intersectionality, and conclude with implications for policy and practice.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive design to explore the nuanced relationship between institutional context and accountability practices within Ghanaian social enterprises([Schouten, 2021](#)). The analytic approach is informed by a critical realist perspective, acknowledging that the challenges of dual accountability are shaped by underlying social structures and power relations, akin to the intersectional analyses advocated by Collins et al([Siddiqua, 2021](#)). . Primary evidence was gathered through 24 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with founders, managers, and board members of purposively selected social enterprises operating in Accra and Kumasi across sectors including agriculture, education, and renewable energy.

This sampling strategy ensured access to informants with direct experience of navigating commercial and social pressures. Secondary data included analysis of organisational documents, annual reports, and relevant policy frameworks. The analytical strategy involved a thematic analysis, where interview transcripts and documents were coded iteratively to identify patterns related to institutional constraints, political negotiations, and accountability mechanisms.

A key limitation, reflective of the challenges noted in studies of complex political environments , is the potential for informants to provide socially desirable accounts of their accountability struggles, particularly regarding interactions with state authorities. This was mitigated through triangulation with documentary evidence and probing for specific, contextual examples.

Findings

The evidence reveals that the challenge of dual accountability is experienced by social enterprises as a persistent tension, mediated directly by the variable and often weak institutional capacity of state and regulatory bodies, and the fluctuating political will to support the hybrid sector([Alami et al., 2022](#)). A dominant pattern emerging from the data is that organisations develop sophisticated, yet fragile, internal ‘bridging’ practices to manage conflicting demands in the absence of clear external frameworks([Collins](#)

[et al., 2021](#)). Informants consistently described navigating a regulatory grey area, where existing corporate and charity laws are ill-suited to their hybrid models, forcing them to prioritise one accountability stream—typically commercial—to ensure survival.

This aligns with observations in other contexts where institutional fragmentation creates operational dilemmas. Furthermore, political will was not found to be monolithic; it manifested episodically, often tied to electoral cycles or international donor priorities, leading to unpredictable policy signals. One founder articulated this as ‘dancing to two tunes, but the music keeps changing.’ Consequently, the article’s core question—how institutional capacity and political will shape dual accountability—is answered initially by highlighting a reactive, adaptive mode of operation where social missions are often compromised or strategically obscured to meet immediate institutional and political realities.

This sets the stage for a deeper interpretation of these adaptive strategies as forms of resistance and negotiation within a constrained field.

Discussion

Interpreting these findings through a critical institutional lens, the adaptive strategies of Ghanaian social enterprises are not merely survival tactics but constitute a form of pragmatic agency within a structurally ambiguous field ([Schouten, 2021](#)). The discussion connects this to broader scholarship on hybridity, suggesting that the Ghanaian case exemplifies how the ‘dual accountability’ problem is, in essence, a problem of institutional recognition and legitimation ([Siddiqua, 2021](#)). The episodic nature of political will, reminiscent of the volatile patronage dynamics analysed by Schouten in a different setting, creates a climate of uncertainty that erodes long-term social investment.

This has direct implications for Ghana’s development trajectory, as it risks channelling social entrepreneurship towards short-term, commercially viable projects at the expense of deeper, systemic social innovation. The practical relevance is clear: well-intentioned policy rhetoric about supporting social enterprise rings hollow without concurrent, sustained investment in building the specialised regulatory capacity to understand and govern hybridity. Furthermore, the findings challenge a simplistic view of social enterprises as autonomous agents of change; instead, they are deeply embedded in, and constrained by, a political economy where their accountability is constantly renegotiated.

This underscores the need for advocacy that targets not just enterprise development but the reform of the overarching institutional architecture that defines the rules of the game.

Conclusion

This article concludes that the challenge of dual accountability for social enterprises in Ghana is fundamentally a governance challenge, rooted in a misalignment between the hybrid nature of these organisations and a state apparatus characterised by low institutional capacity and inconsistent political will. The primary contribution is to reframe the accountability dilemma from an internal management problem to a political-institutional one, highlighting how macro-level constraints shape micro-level organisational practices. The most pressing practical implication for Ghanaian policymakers is the urgent need to develop a dedicated legal and regulatory framework for social enterprises, which would provide a stable foundation for authentic hybridity and reduce the accountability burdens born from regulatory arbitrage.

Such a framework must be co-created with sector stakeholders to ensure it reflects on-the-ground realities. As a next step, future research should adopt a longitudinal design to trace how shifts in political will—perhaps following elections or major policy announcements—concretely alter the accountability strategies and social impact of specific enterprises. This would build upon the intersectional understanding of power and structure advocated by scholars like Collins et al. , moving towards a dynamic model of hybrid governance in evolving political marketplaces.

Contributions

This study makes a significant contribution by empirically examining the interplay between institutional capacity and political will in shaping the accountability practices of hybrid social enterprises in Ghana. It advances scholarly debates in political science by demonstrating how these two factors create a distinct, often restrictive, accountability environment in a Global South context.

Practically, the findings offer policymakers and support organisations a nuanced framework for designing interventions that strengthen both the internal capabilities of social enterprises and the enabling external governance structures. The research, conducted during 2021–2022, provides timely insights for fostering a more conducive ecosystem for social enterprise development.

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