

Hybridisation of institutional logics and civil society organisations' advocacy in Kenya

Emmanuel Kumi¹  | Tara Saharan² 

¹Centre for Social Policy Studies, University of Ghana, Legon-Accra, Ghana

²Department of Geography, Planning and Environment, Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Correspondence

Tara Saharan, Department of Geography, Planning and Environment, Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands.
Email: tara.saharan@ru.nl

Funding information

NWO-WOTRO Science for Global Development programme, Grant/Award Number: W 08.311.103

Abstract

Managerialist logic has become dominant in development policy and practice. However, in recent years, the Dutch government is seeking to adopt social transformation approaches to development interventions. The implementation of social transformation ideas takes place in an environment dominated by managerialism. However, our understanding of how the logic of social transformation and managerialism collide or come into conflict and the pathways through which the managerialist principles dominate the social transformation principles is limited. Drawing on qualitative data from the Strategic Partnerships (SP) and Accountability Fund (AF) policy instruments for civil society organisations in Kenya, we find that in practice, the social transformation principles underpinning the SP and AF 'vaporise' or get lost during implementation due to the wider aid system within which they are embedded. We highlight the implications of the broader aid system on attempts by donor agencies to shift from managerialism towards a social transformation perspective on development.

KEYWORDS

advocacy, civil society organisations (CSOs), dialogue and dissent framework, institutional logics, Kenya

1 | INTRODUCTION

Civil society organisations (CSOs) operate within an environment characterised by competing institutional logics of social transformation and managerialism.¹ In theory, social transformation logic focuses on the significance of power and recognises unequal power relations and exclusion as the underlying cause of underdevelopment and poverty (Elbers et al., 2014; Mitlin et al., 2007). Informed by this, it emphasises the importance of alternative models, practices, and ideas of development such as grassroots participation, empowerment,

and ownership where CSOs play a lead role in the design and implementation of development projects due to their contextual knowledge (Mitlin et al., 2007). However, in practice, the application of social transformation logic in development interventions is not common among many bilateral donors. An exception is the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its policy instrument of Dialogue and Dissent Framework (Kamstra, 2017, 2020; van Wessel et al., 2020).

On the other hand, managerialist logic focuses on top-down development characterised by a linear path, apolitical and

¹In this article, we define CSOs as a "dense network of voluntary associations and citizens organisations that help to sustain community relations in a way that generates trust and cooperation between citizens and a high level of civic engagement and participation" (Newton, 2001, p. 201).

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited and is not used for commercial purposes.

© 2022 The Authors. Public Administration and Development published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

technocratic understanding of development based on the application of management, and rationalised planning tools and practices (Elbers et al., 2014; Roberts et al., 2005). However, the adoption of managerialist logic in development policy and practice has been widely criticised for being incompatible with the political roles of CSOs. This is because managerialist logic largely considers CSOs as service delivery instruments (Kamstra, 2020; Wallace et al., 2006). It also depoliticises development by recognising CSOs from an instrumental perspective where their role is to complement or supplement the government's service delivery rather than challenge power structures that reinforce poverty and inequality. Managerialist logic also focuses on short-term contracts, top-down agenda setting, and emphasises on measurable outcomes (Elbers et al., 2014).

Notwithstanding the above criticisms of managerialism, development policy and practice have been dominated by managerialist logic which has influenced the decision-making, understanding, and behaviour of donors, aid agencies, and CSOs (Gulrajani, 2011; Gutheil, 2020). While the spread of managerialist ideas is still dominant in development policy and practice, in recent years, some donor agencies and development practitioners have become convinced of the limitations of managerialism and are doing development differently by moving towards more social transformative approaches (Honig & Gulrajani, 2018; Kamstra, 2020). Therefore, there is a recent shift in development thinking where some donors incorporate perspectives from both social transformation and managerialist approaches. This is informed by renewed interests in recognising the centrality of advocacy in addressing the root causes of poverty, underdevelopment, and inequality. To this end, the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) designed the Dialogue and Dissent: Strategic Partnerships for Lobby and Advocacy policy programme (hereafter, Dialogue and Dissent Framework Policy (DDF)) around social transformation principles rather than managerial principles (Kamstra, 2017).

While the Theory of Change (ToC) of the DDF seeks to advance a social transformation logic, its implementation often takes place within a context that is largely not conducive to that because it is dominated by a managerialist logic (Elbers et al., 2019; van Wessel et al., 2020). This creates challenges for the Ministry to reconcile its managerialist perspective with the need to advance a social transformation approach that underpins the DDF. The competing institutional logics of managerialism and social transformation create tension resulting from the hybridisation of conflicting logics within the same institutional field (Pache & Santos, 2013). For this reason, in practice, our understanding of how the logic of social transformation and managerialism collide or come into conflict and the pathways through which the managerialist principles dominate or edge out the social transformation principles of the DDF is limited. This raises two important research questions: How is the hybridisation of managerial and social transformation logics under DDF manifested in practice for advocacy CSOs? What accounts for the loss of the social transformation principles underlying the DDF in practice?

We answer these questions by drawing on qualitative data from interviews with CSOs in Kenya using the Strategic Partnerships (SP) and Accountability Fund (AF) funding instruments of the DDF by the NMFA as a case study.² In doing so, we analyse our empirical evidence by drawing on the concept of institutional logic. Institutional logic is useful for highlighting how hybridisation manifests itself in practice at the level of advocacy-based CSOs involved in the SP and AF in Kenya. It also helps us understand whether social transformation principles and goals underpinning the DDF are realised better in Kenya.

Drawing on empirical evidence from Kenya, we provide an in-depth case study that explores in practice how the conflicting institutional logic of managerialism and social transformation collide or interact in the operations of advocacy CSOs and how the managerialist principles edge out the social transformation principles. In doing so, we show that in practice, the ideas and practices of social transformation principles underlying the SP and AF 'vaporise' or could not be translated entirely into practice mainly because of the multi-layered nature of rules and the broader aid system within which actors in the aid chain (i.e., CSOs and the NMFA) operate and are embedded. Our research findings highlight that the wider aid system within which the SP and AF operate limits the potential of the social transformation logic to be translated effectively into practice. More so, our research findings show how individual workers within the NMFA and CSOs influence the realisation of social transformation logic through their informal personal relations.

This article makes two contributions to the literature on institutional logic by showing how competing institutional logic works in practice when it comes to donor-CSO relations. First, while acknowledging that recent studies on the DDF have shed some useful insights (see, Gutheil, 2020; Kamstra, 2020; van Wessel et al., 2020), they fail to explore how the hybridisation of logics associated with the DDF work in practice with CSOs in low-income countries (LICs) and lower-middle-income countries (LMICs) whose advocacy is supposed to be strengthened by the programme. This is because existing studies mainly focus on the perspectives of Dutch-based CSOs or Dutch policymakers to the neglect of CSOs in LICs and LMICs (Gutheil, 2020; Kamstra, 2020). In addition, they have also focused exclusively on the SP component of the DDF to the neglect of the projects in AF. Therefore, this article presents empirical evidence on the perspectives of CSOs in Kenya to enrich the discussion and deepen our understanding of how competing institutional logic works at the micro-level within advocacy-based CSO. Second, we show how

²The Dialogue and Dissent Framework (DDF) is a 5-year funding initiative (2016–2020) by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NFMA) under the Dialogue and Dissent Theory of Change. The Programme seeks to support the lobby and advocacy capacities of CSOs in lower-income countries (LICs) and low-middle-income countries (LMICs) to perform their political roles. The Strategic Partnership (SP) component involves 25 CSO consortia that were led by CSOs in the Netherlands who receive funding directly from the NFMA. These funds are later transferred to partner organisations in LICs and LMICs. On the other hand, the Accountability Fund (AF) component of the DDF is a €75 million grant that provides direct funding to local CSOs through Dutch Embassies. The AF aims to enable embassies to strengthen the advocacy capacity of CSOs in their country.

the context within which donors and CSOs operate offers limitations in achieving intended policy reforms. By exploring the effects of the broader aid system within which the SP and AF are embedded, our research highlights the interconnectedness between actors (i.e., donors and NGOs) and how actors within the wider aid systems are influenced by the actions of others.

This article is organised into six sections. Following this introduction, we review the literature on institutional logic and hybridisation. Next, we present our research context with a focus on the funding instruments of SP and AF. This is followed by the research methodology. The penultimate section focuses on our research findings. The last section presents a discussion of the findings, concluding remarks, and implications for policy and practice.

2 | INSTITUTIONAL LOGIC AND HYBRIDISATION: A BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

Institutional logic has emerged as an important concept because of its emphasis on culture and cognition within institutional analysis (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). Institutional logic focuses on defining the contents, meanings, and beliefs inherent in institutions. They also serve as a framework for analysing the interrelationships between society, individuals, and organisations (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton et al., 2012). In this article, we follow Thornton and Ocasio (2008, p. 804) in defining institutional logics as “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organise time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality”. Within institutions, institutional logic serves as the frame of reference that guides actors' actions which can be enabling and constraining at the same time.

Institutional logic provides organising principles within an institutional field (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton et al., 2012). In particular, organisational practices and legitimacy are determined by the institutional logic within which they are embedded. For instance, the belief system of an institutional field determines which practices are considered culturally legitimate. As Scott (2001, p. 139) observes, institutional logic is the taken-for-granted rules that guide the behaviour of actors within a particular institutional field. Institutional logic is also made up of the belief systems (i.e., the motivations and assumptions underpinning what specific goals are to be achieved) and related practices (i.e., actual decisions and actions taken by organisations to achieve their goals) within an institutional field (Elbers et al., 2014; Thornton et al., 2012).

Organisations are organised based on the dominant institutional logic. However, as some scholars (see Mair et al., 2015) have argued, there exist multiple institutional logics within an organisational field. Institutional plurality, therefore, results in hybrid organisations. For instance, Mair et al. (2015) show how competing logics of promoting social and market values among social enterprises make them hybrid organisations. Hybridisation constitutes an important aspect of institutional change as it focuses on movement from one dominant

logic to another (Greenwood et al., 2002). However, in an environment dominated by a new institutional logic, old logic continues to guide organisational behaviour (Zilber, 2011).

Informed by this, Reay and Hinings (2009) argue that institutional change creates opportunities for competing logics to co-exist rather than supplant each other. For instance, some studies have shown how multiple logics resulted in resistance against a dominant logic (Greenwood et al., 2011; Zilber, 2011). Zilber (2011) demonstrates why institutional residues associated with old logic continue to exist even when the dominant logic is shifted. The existence of multiple institutional logic has led to the idea of institutional hybridisation (Greenwood et al., 2011).

Hybridisation is common within the aid system where social transformation and managerial logic co-exist (Elbers et al., 2014; Wallace et al., 2006). In this article, we use the hybridity that results from the social transformation and managerialist logic as our analytical framework. Specifically, we focus on funding arrangements, accountability, and project design and implementation as the aspects in which this hybridisation takes place. The choice of funding arrangements, accountability, and project design and implementation is on the basis that they are central to the discussions of donor-CSO relations in terms of accountability, resource dependency and power relations, and setting agenda-setting (Ebrahim, 2005). In addition, accountability and project design and implementation are key domains of managerialism and social transformation in the field of CSOs (Roberts et al., 2005). They are therefore useful in understanding the manifestation of hybridisation in practice under the DDF.

3 | RESEARCH CONTEXT: STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND ACCOUNTABILITY FUND OF THE DIALOGUE AND DISSENT POLICY FRAMEWORK

The DDF focuses on strengthening the lobby and advocacy capacities of CSOs in LICs and LMICs. The aim is to build the capacities of CSOs to perform political roles in the fight against poverty and injustice to promote sustainable and inclusive development (Kamstra, 2017). The DDF has four main policy instruments for funding CSOs namely: (i) Strategic partnerships for dialogue and dissent; (ii) Accountability Fund; (iii) Voice and; (iv) Leading from the South (Kamstra, 2017). However, for this article, we focus on the SP and the AF because they are the two main CSOs' lobby and advocacy instruments under the DDF. The SP is the biggest policy instrument of the DDF and the amount of funding disbursed to CSOs between 2016 and 2020 was about €1 billion (Kamstra, 2020, p. 765). As part of the SP, 25 CSO consortia were partnered with Ministerial departments based on a shared thematic focus with the Civil Society Unit of the NMFA playing an important role in overseeing the programme and making sure that its social transformation principles are protected. Through the SP, the NMFA also aimed to create more equal and complementary partnerships with CSOs (Kamstra, 2017, pp. 11–12). The consortia were selected through a competitive tender process where

CSOs submitted joint applications to reduce competition while stimulating cooperation and complementarity. The consortia under the SP included Dutch Humanist Institute for Cooperation (Hivos), CORDAID, and Oxfam Novib with their projects ranging from labour issues in global value chains, fair and sustainable trade, climate and environment, gender-based violence, and human rights (Gutheil, 2020; Kamstra, 2017; van Wessel et al., 2020).

For this article and the discussions on SP, we focus on the Women@Work Campaign (hereafter, the Campaign) by Hivos and seven partner local CSOs in Kenya. The Campaign seeks to improve the working conditions of women, promote gender inclusiveness and also increase awareness and publicity on living wage for workers in Kenya's horticultural value chains. It also focuses on strengthening the lobby and advocacy capacity of local CSOs to work on gender inclusiveness. Hivos–Kenya is responsible for the day-to-day management while Hivos–The Hague is in charge of reporting and engagements with the NMFA. While acknowledging that the term CSOs in Kenya is made up of different organisations including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), social movements, professional associations, and community-based organisations (CBOs), the discussion in this article focuses on 'formal NGOs' and CBOs that are funded by Western donors (Frederiksen, 2010).

On the other hand, the AF is aimed at supporting the advocacy capacity of local CSOs in LICs and LMICs including Kenya. A key difference between the AF and the SP is that for the AF, the NMFA provides direct funding to local CSOs through its embassies. The underlying assumption is that local CSOs have developed enough capacity to receive funds directly and the Embassies are better

positioned to provide the necessary support because of their local contextual knowledge. The local CSOs apply for funding directly from the Embassies after calls for proposals have been issued. These calls reflect the specific priority areas of the Embassies as part of their long-term and multi-annual strategic plans. The focus of the AF varies from country to country based on the needs and priorities of the Embassies. Therefore, the AF gives freedom and flexibility to the Embassies in choosing topics and partners that match their priorities. For this reason, the management of the AF is left solely to the discretion of the Embassies. However, the Civil Society Unit of the NMFA is responsible for managing the AF in terms of the reporting and accounting requirements.

In understanding the workings of the AF and its belief system, we focus on the fund managed by the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Kenya (RNE-Kenya). The management of the AF is the responsibility of the RNE-Kenya while its implementation is undertaken by a local CSO and its partners (i.e., local CBOs in Kenya). Therefore, the implementing CSO is responsible for screening and disbursing of funds to other CBOs. The names of the implementing CSOs in both AF and SP are not included in this article to maintain their anonymity. The two policy instruments (SP and AF) are depicted in Figure 1.

4 | RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article used qualitative research methods, including in-depth semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation, and document analysis in Kenya and the Netherlands

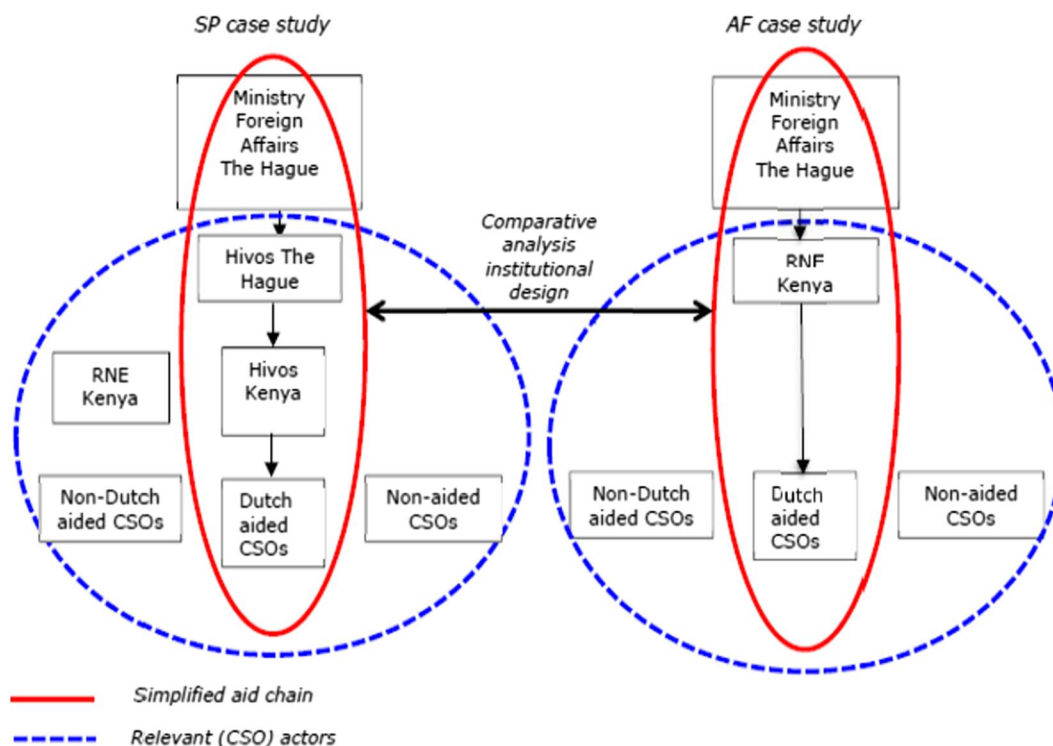


FIGURE 1 Funding instruments of strategic partnerships and accountability fund. Source: Elbers et al. (2018) [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

between May and December 2018. The choice of the Netherlands was informed by the fact it was the Dutch government that designed the DDF and also funded this study. Moreover, the 25 CSO consortia under the SP were largely Dutch-based with their local partners operating in LICs and LMICs. Kenya was chosen as it provides a suitable venue for studying the DDF because it is considered an 'SP and AF darling' given that 18 SP-consortia and AF programmes are active in the country. The NMFA also considers Kenya as a 'best practice' country for the AF (Elbers et al., 2018).

A total of 73 in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 44 participants. It is worth clarifying that many participants were interviewed more than once during the data collection exercise. The interview participants included officials from the Social Development Department of the NMFA-The Hague (three staff), RNE-Kenya (two staff), and CSOs implementing the SP and AF projects (39 staff). Participants were purposively selected based on their unique positions in the DDF either as project implementers or intended beneficiaries. The interviews varied considerably in length ranging from half an hour to nearly 2 h. The interviews were audiotaped with the verbal consent of the participants and were later transcribed.

As part of data collection methods, six focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with 30 CBOs officials in Meru and Kilifi counties and 65 flower workers in Naivasha and Nyandarua Counties. The FGDs were open-ended, guided by a set of questions related to the projects, and lasted for nearly 2 h.

Data collection also involved participant observation where two researchers were stationed at the offices of the two implementing partners (i.e., Hivos-Kenya and a local CSO) over 5 months in Nairobi. Participant observation provided a first-hand experience of 'being there' and understanding the everyday operations of the CSOs. This helped in capturing issues within their natural setting and also provided insights into ascertaining the typicality of participants' behaviour in terms of what they said and what happened in practice. This was useful in delving into issues beyond CSOs' self-representation of themselves and their activities. As a part of the participant observation, field visits were made to workshops in Nairobi and flower farms in Naivasha, Kiambu, Limuru, and Ngorika as well as the county offices in Kilifi and Meru where the projects were being implemented. Additionally, for the SP, regular visits were made to seven other implementing local CSOs in the project.

Document analysis was also employed as a complementary data collection method. Specifically, the policy documents, ToC, and partnership agreements associated with the DDF, funding proposals and contracts, narrative and financial reports, quarterly and annual project reports, baseline surveys, work plans, and risk matrices of CSOs were reviewed. The aim was to help distinguish between the belief systems scripted in texts and their actual practice on the ground. Organisational documents helped in triangulating findings from the semi-structured interviews which were crucial for reducing potential biases associated with using one data collection method.

Transcripts from the interviews and FGDs were coded using NVivo 11. An inductive analysis for this research was guided by the

research questions and the analytical framework (i.e., funding arrangements, accountability requirements, and project design and implementation). As part of data analysis, thematic analysis was used in identifying emergent themes in the logic underpinning DDF. The analysis was inductive and iterative and followed the steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). These are familiarisation with the data, the generation of initial themes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming of themes.

In terms of our positionalities as researchers, it is worth mentioning that although this study was funded by the Dutch Research Council under the NWO-WOTRO Science for Global Development programmes, this did not in any way affect the responses provided by the participants and our objectivity as independent scholars with regards to the analysis and interpretation of the research findings. Among the mitigation strategies put in place to minimise the risk of influence is that learning events were organised to disseminate and validate the research findings with the stakeholders involved in the research in Kenya and the Netherlands for their feedback. This was incorporated into the final analysis. More importantly, we were reflexive of our positionalities as independent researchers in the analysis and interpretation of the research findings.

5 | FINDINGS

In this section, we present findings on how the hybridisation of social transformation and managerial logic is manifested in advocacy-based CSOs in Kenya. We also explore the processes that shape the realisation of social transformational ideas underlying the DDF in practice. In doing so, our analysis focuses on funding arrangements, project design, and implementation and accountability requirements associated with the SP and AF as a case study.

5.1 | Funding arrangements

For funding arrangements, social transformation principles prescribe that donors should engage in long-term, open-ended and flexible relationships with CSOs to enable them to perform their political roles. In doing so, social transformation principles recognise that advocacy is a long-term process that requires an understanding of the complex contexts within which CSOs operate. This, therefore, requires the provision of long-term and flexible funding including overheads or core funding to ensure that CSOs are financially stable and sustainable to be able to undertake their advocacy activities.

However, a common issue reported by interviewees was that the funding arrangement for the SP and AF was project-based with short-term contracts as stated by an interviewee who argued that "the funding we receive from the Ministry is project-based which is tied to a specific duration of 4 years. So, it's strictly project-based funding" (Interview 17th July 2018). The managerialist logic associated with the funding arrangement was also expressed in funding

disbursement practices. For the AF, funds were released on an annual basis to the Embassy in Kenya. These funds were then granted to the local CSOs upon meeting the Embassy's reporting requirements. However, in the SP, many interviewees explained that funds were disbursed in tranches with the view to reducing financial risk. For instance, interviewees widely stated that over the 4 years, the NMFA disbursed funds in six instalments or tranches to Hivos. However, as part of efforts to reduce its financial risk to the Ministry, Hivos disbursed funds to local CSOs quarterly upon submission of their reports. According to interviewees, the rationale for the release of funds in tranches was to "assess the risk of the partner, how they can perform and deliver activities but also how they do their financial management" (Interview 12th August 2018). This was because although the SP is designed using social transformation principles, these principles were not mainstreamed because the Ministry had a strong managerial focus as stated by an NGO representative: "the donor [NMFA] doesn't accept risk to work with high-risk partners" (Interview 7th December 2018). This statement demonstrates that in practice, the managerial logic of the NMFA (i.e., risk-aversion in funding arrangement) supersedes the social transformation principles underlying the DDF.

The reluctance of the NMFA to accept risks working with perceived small and high-risk CSOs was mentioned by NGO representatives as an impediment to the uptake of the social transformation logic. Also, the use of intermediary organisations (i.e., Dutch-based INGOs) accounted for the 'vaporisation' of the social transformation logic in practice. This is because the intermediary organisations reduce their own risk by imposing additional stringent practices and rules on local CSOs. For instance, although the representatives of NMFA claimed to have provided the INGOs (e.g. Hivos) with flexible funding arrangements, we found that this was not passed on to the local CSOs. Rather, stringent risk mitigating measures were put in place when dealing with local CSOs in Kenya. In practice, we found that Hivos imposed additional risk-mitigating measures when engaging with perceived high-risk CSOs as explained by a staff:

"We have the new control framework that is used to assess our partners. So, once we ran the assessment process and we identify an organisation as high risk in terms of governance structure and financial reporting, our first point of engagement will be an annual contract rather than a long-term contract [...] We do that because we are of course protecting the donors' money as we mitigate these risks with the partners" (Interview, 16th October 2018).

In doing so, Hivos has consolidated its funding rules from different donors into a template for engaging local CSOs. Thus, we found that despite the NMFA giving flexible reporting options to Hivos, it did not pass down this flexibility to the local CSOs in Kenya. Instead, to help manage the reporting requirements of different donors to their programmes, Hivos made all local CSOs report to the

most stringent of the largely managerial requirements. This is therefore a clear indication that the local CSOs did not benefit from the flexibility afforded by the social transformation principles of the DDF. This suggests that the social transformation logic of the SP gave way to more managerialist logic in practice.

Additionally, we found that the implementation of the SP and AF is characterised by the absence of core funding to support the advocacy work of local CSOs. According to interviewees, the absence of core funding was incompatible with the social transformation principle and goal of supporting the political roles of CSOs. It was emphasised that the lack of core funding had the potential of negatively affecting the sustainability of local CSOs and their ability to perform their political roles effectively because of its effects on organisational infrastructure and capacity. In particular, for both the SP and the AF, local CSO representatives reported that they were unable to retain their qualified staff especially when project funds ended. However, many CSO representatives explained that the absence of core funding was a common practice among different donor agencies in Kenya as captured in the statement: "We have never received core funding. It's a challenge that we are all struggling with the changing funding landscape in the country" (Interview 17th July 2018). A staff of the NMFA argued that the provision of core funding was not available under the SP and the AF because as he/she maintained, promoting the financial sustainability of CSOs was not the Ministry's responsibility:

"So, for financial sustainability, I think it's a responsibility of the CSOs themselves because it would be strange that somebody else [the NMFA] would become responsible for your financial sustainability if you are an independent organisation [...] I am not sure that as a government [Dutch government], you should be responsible for the sustainability of CSOs" (Interview, 28th May 2018).

5.2 | Project design and implementation

Social transformation principles recognise development as a political process aimed at changing unequal power relations between donors and local CSOs. Informed by this, a social transformation approach in project design and implementation focuses on making local CSOs take the lead in agenda-setting and co-creation of projects to enhance the autonomy of local CSOs to effectively undertake their advocacy work. Social transformation principles also recognise local CSOs and donors as 'equal partners' in setting project outcomes, hence donors refrain from interfering in the work of local CSOs. Equal relations between donors and CSOs are important for promoting local ownership and the sustainability of advocacy interventions.

With regards to project design and implementation, interviewees explained that there was a great deal of mutual interdependency

between the NMFA, the Embassy, and CSOs. Within the SP, the NMFA and the lead CSO (i.e. Hivos) were considered equal partners with shared roles, responsibilities, and objectives. The NMFA due to its reach, scope and capacity was considered an important partner that added value (e.g., providing funding, lobbying the Kenyan government and building the credibility and capacity of local CSOs) to the advocacy work of CSOs. Importantly, interviewees emphasised there were opportunities for regular interactions between the lead CSO and the NMFA staff in The Hague. However, the local CSOs did not have a direct relationship with the NMFA as explained by an interviewee: “The architecture of this programme is designed in such a way that as partners, we don't have a direct relationship with the Ministry [...] Our relationship is rather with Hivos” (Interview 8th June 2018). However, for the AF, local CSO representatives explained that the Embassy added value (e.g., brokering relationships, enhancing their credibility, co-creating advocacy agenda and building their capacity) to their work. The Embassy, therefore, played a key role in overseeing project implementation and management through their direct involvement in the co-creation of the advocacy agenda. Additionally, the ‘open-door policy’ of the Embassy allowed the local CSOs a great deal of flexibility in the design and implementation of their advocacy activities as explained by an Embassy staff: “The Embassy has a direct relationship with [name of CSO] [...] They design their projects with their partners and we fund them. So, we provide them much flexibility in designing their projects” (Interview, 1st November 2018). Interviewees explained that the Embassy and the NMFA sought to “become more equal partners with the CSOs” (Interview 28th May 2018) which reflects a social transformation approach to partnership with the local CSOs.

The social transformation logic of the DDF was also evident in project implementation for the SP and AF which were informed by a ToC as described by a staff of NMFA: “the ToC has been presented as the basis of our programme document” (Interview 28th May 2018). The design and implementation of projects under the DDF, therefore, sought to move away from top-down planning toward providing CSOs with more flexibility and autonomy in their work. The design and implementation of projects under the DDF were described as “a lot more open because instead of asking for a detailed log-frame, it asked for an overview of a ToC [...] which allows for flexibility and opens up space for them [CSOs] to do advocacy” (Interview 28th June 2018). According to interviewees, the use of ToC allowed CSOs a great deal of flexibility in their activities because they were directly in charge of specifying their project plans and assessing their outcomes. The flexibility in the ToC also created opportunities for local CSOs to shape, adapt and monitor their project interventions based on the complexities encountered in the field. For example, staff at the Ministry argued that “this programme [DDF] allows for flexibility and as CSOs, you can even change your goals [...] We need to be flexible in this kind of lobby and advocacy work because this is the best thing to do” (Interview 28th May 2018). According to representatives of the Ministry and the Embassy, a distinctive feature of the DDF was the flexibility it provided for CSOs in undertaking their political roles which reflects a social transformation approach.

We also found that informal relations and personal networks created opportunities for promoting equal and mutual relationships between the Ministry, the Embassy, and CSOs. Our findings suggest that although on paper, partners' selection criteria were based on their ability to meet formal requirements (e.g., track records and knowledge of advocacy), informal networks and personal relations played a key role because individual contacts with the NMFA and Embassy staff was crucial in project implementation. For example, interviewees explained that in selecting partners for project implementation, staff at Hivos and the Embassy drew on their previous relationships with some local CSOs. This was based on their understanding of the Kenyan context which allowed them the flexibility to use their discretion in the selection of partners. To this end, it allowed them to select perceived trustworthy local CSOs based on previous partnership experience. It is worth mentioning partner selection of local CSOs by Hivos happened after the funding had been granted by the NMFA because it was not a requirement in the application process for the DDF. Therefore, this allowed Hivos the flexibility to select partners they had worked with previously and could be trusted as explained by the staff of Hivos: “we were working with some of the partners as strategic actors in the past [...] So that is part of how the partners were selected” (Interview 17th July 2018). Thus, the social transformation nature of the SP and AF allowed Hivos and the Embassy to build a relationship with local CSOs based on the personal and organisational trust established over time.

Moreover, informal networks and personal connections between local CSO and Embassy staff created opportunities for negotiating unachievable project outcomes: “We can negotiate and give reasons as to why we have to amend our initial plan” (Interview 30th July 2018). In this regard, trust-based relations were established between the partners “beyond the boardroom conversation”. Similarly, the use of informal networks and personal connections helped Hivos staff in The Hague to lobby and influence the agenda of the Ministry: “We have informal contacts directly with the Ministry [...]. They [informal contacts and networks] are extremely important. The contact person [at the Ministry] and our Programme Manager knows each other” (Interview 7th December 2018). Moreover, while formal contractual agreements require local CSOs to submit an annual report, there was a lot of room for engagement as stated by an interviewee: “you can't just wait to submit a report. You must purpose to build a relationship to be able to communicate what is happening [...] we have not been able to move on with the activities, is it possible even to change some of the strategies that we proposed to do?” (Interview 31st August 2018). The use of informal networks, personal connections, and friendship enhanced the translation of the social transformation logic in practice despite the fact the institutional environment within which they operated is dominated by managerial logic. Thus, individual staff members were found to be significant actors in the translation of the social transformation logic in the SP and AF.

Despite the flexibility provided in the DDF, it was explained that key decisions in project design and implementation were primarily top-down and asymmetrical reflecting largely managerial thinking. For example, it was mentioned that while local CSOs were able to

negotiate or request for a change of work plans and no-cost extension, the final decision-making authority was solely exercised by Hivos and the Embassy. It was explained by local CSO staff that as a result of their resource dependence, the preference of Hivos and the Embassy took precedence over theirs as highlighted in the quotation:

“Because of the power dynamics, it is the donors’ preferences that hold. They will tell you if you cannot implement within these guidelines, thematic area and contribute to these results, then we cannot support your work [...] You may not necessarily agree with what the donor is asking you to do, but as an institution, you need the resources to be able to carry on with the work and to survive” (Interview 22nd August 2018).

Managerialism was also found to be reflected in power asymmetry among different actors in the SP and the AF. In fact, managerialist requirements became stricter as the funds flowed down the aid chain. For example, in the AF, while some Embassy staff claimed to have given the flexibility to local CSOs, some CBOs’ staff felt that this sense of flexibility was not extended to them by the lead local CSO which acted as a ‘donor’. They argued that the local CSO was much stricter in how it exercised power over them during project implementation. Similarly, in the SP, some local CSOs staff constantly lamented the strict nature of their relationship with Hivos by arguing that “the rules are a bit stricter for us as a small organisation” (Interview 30th October 2018). This statement was confirmed by the staff of Hivos who argued that “[...] So, Hivos found the need to employ a bit stricter regulation to govern the relationship with partners” (Interview 25th July 2018). The imposition of stricter requirements down the aid chain is a demonstration of managerialist logic in practice. It is important to mention the ‘vaporisation’ of the social transformation logic is as a result of the consolidation of different rules from other donors operating in Kenya. In the case of Hivos, it was found that because the organisation had different donors, it has consolidated the rules from donors into standardised terms and conditions and reporting framework for all its implementing partners. This is irrespective of the type of project being implemented. According to the interviewees, the decision to streamline the rules was informed by the organisation’s quality control standards and internal procedures to ensure the efficient and effective use of donor resources.

Our findings suggest that while the DDF sought to move towards social transformation, the institutional environment within which the SP and AF were embedded was largely managerialist in nature. For this reason, the social transformation logic was not necessarily upheld by other donors in Kenya which resulted in the creation of hybridity in logic within the institutional environment.

5.3 | Accountability requirements

Managerial and social transformation principles recognise the importance of partners’ accountability. However, a social

transformative approach to accountability requires that donors refrain from interfering in the internal affairs and operations of CSOs. The role of donors is to facilitate the work of local CSOs; hence they have little or no control over how funds are spent and what accountability requirements are met by partners. Local CSOs, therefore, have a degree of discretion on how funds are used. Moreover, they are directly accountable to their constituents which enhances their legitimacy, credibility, and sustainability of development interventions. They also develop their results, monitoring, and evaluation tools based on a ToC rather than using a reporting template provided by donors.

With regards to accountability requirements, we found that managerialism formed the dominant institutional logic governing accountability requirements of the SP and AF. For instance, practices related to financial risk mitigation such as instituting stringent reporting mechanisms on high-risk partners were adopted to ensure value-for-money (VfM). According to a staff of Hivos, this was because: “institutionally we are accountable for the fund [...], we suffered for that in the past, so I think to avoid similar occurrences, we’ve got more stringent controls” (Interview 31st October 2018). Similarly, as part of risk mitigation mechanisms by the Embassy, organisational assessment and recommendations from the past donors of local CSOs were undertaken before the signing of contractual agreements. According to Embassy staff, this was necessary because it gave them some assurance about the track records of the partners. In addition, local CSOs were expected to contract the services of auditors to provide an “external audit opinion” on their financial and progress reports on the project. Moreover, local CSOs were also required to be ‘professional’ by having staff with certain expertise and educational qualifications. By doing so, the aim was to ensure the inclusion of professionals who understood the “donor language” and were better able to manage the projects by ensuring VfM. However, it was explained that the emphasis on VfM had unintentionally become a vector of managerialism in the day-to-day implementation of the DDF.

Additionally, our findings suggest that in practice, the emphasis on upward accountability also accounted for the vaporisation of the social transformation logic. In the case of the SP, for example, the NMFA expected the submission of annual and quarterly updates from Hivos and its implementing partners. Accountability requirements, therefore, involved multiple chains of command (i.e., from local CSOs to Hivos- Nairobi to Hivos-The Hague to the NMFA).

Our findings further show that the managerial practices underpinning accountability requirements usually did not originate from the NMFA per se but were a result of the wider institutional environment within which the SP and AF were embedded. For instance, we found that high-frequency reporting was not a requirement from the NMFA and the Embassy but rather a mechanism by local CSOs for ensuring resource efficiency and effectiveness. A local CSO staff explained the rationale for high-frequency reporting as “an internal accountability process” that they claimed aided them in compiling the annual reports to be submitted to the Embassy. To this end, our

findings indicate that the internal monitoring and evaluation procedures of local CSOs especially in the AF project were much more report-intensive than what the Embassy expected from them. This was derived in part from local CSOs' experiences with previous and current donors because the adoption of internal accountability was a key legitimisation strategy employed by local CSOs. For this reason, we found that the wider donor environment within which local CSOs operated influenced how the social transformation logic was translated into practice.

We also found that the social transformation logic could not be translated into practice because of the lack of trust as described by an NMFA staff: "it always comes down to trust and people don't trust [these] local CSOs" (Interview 28th May 2018). Maintaining trust-based relations was therefore found to be very difficult due to the managerialist nature of the SP and AF. The perception of mistrust according to some CSO staff was based on previous experience of corruption and financial malfeasance. To this end, ensuring transparency, accountability and efficient use of resources had become a key priority as explained by a local CSO staff: "now we do quarterly narrative and financial report because they [Hivos] want to monitor you so that if there are any red flags, they are picked at the right time for action to be taken" (Interview on 8th June 2018).

Despite the dominance of managerialist logic in accountability requirements, we also found some elements of social transformation logic. In particular, the reporting for the SP sought to move away from results-based management toward outcome-based reporting. In this regard, it was reported that the SP focused only on outcome harvesting while the AF was on ToC and results-based matrices. Thus, there was the hybridisation of social transformation and managerialist logic in the reporting requirements. It was, therefore, explained that while the ToC focused on qualitative indicators of change, quantitative measurable outcomes took precedence over the qualitative outcomes as stated by a staff of the Embassy: "so when I assess reports, if you were supposed to train 90 police officers, then I look for 90 police officers [in the report]" (Interview 25th June 2018).

6 | DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This article examined how hybridisation of social transformation and managerial logic manifests in practice in advocacy-based CSOs in Kenya and the processes that shape the realisation of its social transformation ideas in practice. We found that in practice, while the SP and the AF were designed around social transformation principles, managerialist logic dominates their actual implementation on the ground which results in the hybridisation of logics. Thus, we show that in practice, the policy intentions of the SP and AF get lost or vaporise.

One process that accounts for the 'vaporisation' is the institutional environment or broader aid system within which the implementation of the DDF is embedded. Our findings indicate that the broader aid system is largely dominated by managerialist logic which becomes the frame of reference that guide the actions, sense-making, and behaviour

of CSOs and donors. This is demonstrated in funding arrangements such as project-based funding, absence of core funding, and the disbursement of tranches which reflect a managerialist logic. More importantly, the idea of tranche funding and its associated risk mitigation strategies conflict with social transformation principles that underpin the design of the DDF. It is worth mentioning that it is not just donors that continue to follow managerial principles which undermine the social transformation principles of the DDF but also the lead CSOs (i.e., Hivos and the local NGO) who benefited from the flexible rules and reporting requirements from the NMFA and the Embassy. However, this flexibility was not passed down to the local CSOs and the CBOs in Kenya. We also show that managerialist funding arrangements have the potential of affecting the work of CSOs and their organisational capacity and sustainability. This finding collaborates with existing studies on the effects of funding on CSOs' work (Elbers et al., 2018; Wallace et al., 2006).

However, providing direct funding for local CSOs in the AF reflected a social transformation logic as it has the potential of addressing power asymmetries associated with Northern and Southern-based CSOs' relations. More importantly, such direct funding has become necessary because of the limited capacity of local CSOs to compete with their international counterparts.

We demonstrate that while in practice, project design and implementation in the SP and the AF resonates largely with a social transformation logic, elements of managerialism were also found to be present which resulted in the hybridisation of competing logics (Elbers et al., 2014; Pache & Santos, 2013). In particular, decision-making was found to be based on mutuality and flexibility which provided an opportunity for CSOs to influence project outcomes (Gutheil, 2020; Kamstra, 2020; van Wessel et al., 2020). Despite co-creation in project design, findings from this research indicate a strong emphasis on the power imbalance between the NFMA, Embassy, and the CSOs. Our findings, therefore, show that asymmetrical power relationships have not changed in practice as decision-making on funding arrangements and accountability requirements were unilaterally set by the donor. Resource dependency between donors and CSOs reinforces existing power structures which in turn hinders efforts to promote mutually dependent relationships (Elbers et al., 2018). This demonstrates the difficulty associated with promoting a social transformation logic within a sector that is highly dominated by managerialism. We further demonstrate that accountability requirements become stricter down the aid chain as actors within the aid chain add additional requirements as part of their quality standards for ensuring VfM. The imposition of stricter reporting requirements at the lower end of the aid chain results in the vaporisation of the social transformation logic in practice.

Our findings, therefore, show how institutional plurality influences the implementation of the SP and AF in practice. We show that the day-to-day operations of the NMFA, Embassy and the CSOs continue to have the institutional residue of managerialism which leads to the creation of institutional plurality. This is consistent with Zilber's (2011) argument that despite the emergence of new logic,

elements of old institutional logic tend to dominate a young organisational field. According to institutional logic scholars (Mair et al., 2015), institutional plurality occurs within an organisational field where competing logics co-exist together. As our findings indicate, social transformation logic was dominant in project design and implementation through the adoption of ToC. Notwithstanding, high reporting frequency by local CSOs reflected a managerialist thinking which has the potential of negatively influencing the work of CSOs because it fails to recognise that CSOs' advocacy interventions take place in complex environments which makes it difficult to predict results with certainty.

In conclusion, our findings demonstrate how competing logics of managerialism and social transformation work in practice in the SP and AF. In doing so, we have also shown how the policy intentions of the DDF get lost in practice mainly due to the wider aid system within which the DDF is embedded. To this end, our findings suggest that the aid system acts as a potential force that structures the translation and adoption of the social transformation logic underpinning the DDF into practice. Thus, the wider aid system has a structuring effect (intended or unintended) on the actual implementation of the DDF. In particular, we have shown that given the prevalence of managerial logic within the Kenyan civil society sector, changing this belief system requires effective collaborative efforts by all stakeholders rather than changes in the belief systems or logic of a particular donor agency (e.g., the NMFA).

To this end, the findings of this article have two policy implications for donor funding for CSOs' advocacy work. First, changes in belief systems at the policy level and the actualisation of their objectives on the ground take shape over time because their uptake occurs at different levels, especially in a complex aid chain. This is because changes in the belief systems of donors require CSOs and other stakeholders to also change their organisational culture by adopting new practices. However, changing established internal organisational norms and values is not easy. This accounts for why despite efforts to advance a social transformational logic in the DDF, its translation remains far from reality because of the pressures emanating from managerialist logic in the broader aid chain within which it is embedded.

Lastly, changes in belief systems require collaborative efforts by all stakeholders including donors operating in the broader aid system to change their practices. As we have shown, attempts by the NMFA to promote a social transformation logic did not translate into practice because CSOs interact with and are affected by the wider aid system. This, therefore, calls for the need to embrace complexity thinking that recognises linkages and interdependencies in the aid system. It also points out the fact that efforts by a single donor agency are not enough to address global development challenges and therefore require effective collaborations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the participants in this study for their valuable time and discussions. We are also grateful to the CSOs that hosted us and Paul Kamau for all his support during fieldwork in

Kenya. We also want to thank Lau Schulpen and Willem Elbers for their comments on earlier drafts of this article. This study was supported by NWO-WOTRO Science for Global Development programmes [Grant number W 08.311.103].

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

POLICY/PRACTICE STATEMENT

Attempts to by donor agencies to shift from a managerialist logic towards a social transformation approach to development takes time and requires changes in organisational culture and practices. Collaborative effort by donors and CSOs is therefore required in changing their practices because they interact with and are affected by the broader aid system.

ORCID

Emmanuel Kumi  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8318-8499>

Tara Saharan  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8042-6348>

REFERENCES

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Ebrahim, A. (2005). *NGOs and organizational change: Discourse, reporting and earning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Elbers, W., Frobisher, E., Kamau, P., Kumi, E., Saharan, T., & Schulpen, L. (2018). *Aid chains and advocacy in the Global South: Asset, nuisance or necessary evil?* African Studies Centre.
- Elbers, W., Knippenberg, L., & Schulpen, L. (2014). Trust or control? Private development cooperation at the crossroads. *Public Administration and Development*, 34(1), 1–13.
- Elbers, W., Schulpen, L., Kamau, P., Frobisher, E., Kumi, E., & Saharan, T. (2019). *Catalysing development: Towards enabling rules for advocacy*. NWO-WOTRO.
- Frederiksen, F. B. (2010). Mungiki, Vernacular organization and political society in Kenya. *Development and Change*, 41(6), 1065–1089.
- Friedland, R., & Alford, R. R. (1991). Bringing society back in: Symbols, practices and institutional contradictions. In W. W. Powell, & P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis* (pp. 232–263). Chicago University Press.
- Greenwood, R., Raynard, M., Kodeih, F., Micelotta, E. R., & Lounsbury, M. (2011). Institutional complexity and organizational responses. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 5(1), 317–371.
- Greenwood, R., Suddaby, R., & Hinings, C. R. (2002). Theorizing change: The role of professional associations in the transformation of institutionalized fields. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45(1), 58–80.
- Gulrajani, N. (2011). Transcending the great foreign aid debate: Managerialism, radicalism and the search for aid effectiveness. *Third World Quarterly*, 32, 199–216.
- Gutheil, L. (2020). Why adaptive management will not save us: Exploring management directives' interaction with the practice. *Public Administration and Development*, 40(2), 129–140.
- Hong, D., & Gulrajani, N. (2018). Making good on donors' desire to do development differently. *Third World Quarterly*, 39(1), 68–84.
- Kamstra, J. (2017). *Dialogue and dissent theory of change 2.0. supporting civil society's advocacy role*. Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Kamstra, J. (2020). Civil society aid as a balancing act—navigating between managerial and social transformative principles. *Development in Practice*, 30(6), 763–773.

- Mair, J., Mayer, J., & Lutz, E. (2015). Navigating institutional plurality: Organizational governance in hybrid organizations. *Organization Studies*, 36(6), 713–739.
- Mitlin, D., Hickey, S., & Bebbington, A. (2007). Reclaiming development? NGOs and the challenge of alternatives. *World Development*, 35(10), 1699–1720.
- Newton, K. (2001). Trust, social capital, civil society, and democracy. *International Political Science Review*, 22(2), 201–204.
- Pache, A. C., & Santos, F. (2013). Inside the hybrid organization: Selective coupling as a response to competing institutional logics. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(4), 972–1001.
- Reay, T., & Hinings, C. R. (2009). Managing the rivalry of competing institutional logics. *Organization Studies*, 30(6), 629–652.
- Roberts, S. M., Jones III, J. P., & Fröhling, O. (2005). NGOs and the globalization of managerialism: A research framework. *World Development*, 33(11), 1845–1864.
- Scott, W. R. (2001). *Institutions and organizations* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Thornton, P. H., & Ocasio, W. (2008). Institutional logics. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, R. Suddaby, & K. Sahlin (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational institutional*. Sage Publications.
- Thornton, P. H., Ocasio, W., & Lounsbury, M. (2012). *The institutional logics perspective: A new approach to culture, structure, and process*. Oxford University Press.
- van Wessel, M., Hilhorst, D., Schulpen, L., & Biekart, K. (2020). Government and civil society organizations: Close but comfortable? Lessons from creating the Dutch “strategic partnerships for lobby and advocacy”. *Development Policy Review*, 38(6), 728–746.
- Wallace, T., Bornstein, L., & Chapman, J. (2006). *Coercion and commitment: Development NGOs and the aid chain*. ITDG Publishing.
- Zilber, T. B. (2011). Institutional multiplicity in practice: A tale of two high-tech conferences in Israel. *Organization Science*, 22(6), 1539–1559.

How to cite this article: Kumi, E., & Saharan, T. (2022). Hybridisation of institutional logics and civil society organisations' advocacy in Kenya. *Public Administration and Development*, 42(4), 245–255. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.1989>