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Turning hustlers into entrepreneurs, and social needs into market demands: Corporate-community encounters in Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract

This article contributes an empirically rich account of a social enterprise project embedded in local urban economies of Nairobi, Kenya. The confluence of rapid, unplanned urbanization and economic liberalization has led to growing formations of informal settlements and a vibrant informal sector across post-colonial cities. These "slum" neighbourhoods, housing the majority of the urban population on a fraction of the city's land, are often ignored and marginalized by the state and municipal authorities, particularly with regards to basic service provision. As a result, slum economies provide entry-points for various enterprise-led development schemes seeking to commercially engage both entrepreneurial individuals and their existing customer base in order to scale access to unmet needs. The discussion is based on an ethnographic study in one of Nairobi's largest informal settlements, which focused on the everyday practices of a local micro-franchise called "Community Cleaning Services". The article illustrates how waste workers and self-proclaimed "hustlers" were turned into micro-franchisee entrepreneurs providing a sanitation service to residential customers, through their engagement with Community Cleaning Services. This ethnographic account raises two potentially contradictory but inter-related debates that are rarely considered alongside one another in the existing literature on corporate involvement in low-income markets. First, it reframes the critiques of enterprise-led initiatives to "poverty alleviation" by focusing on the implications of commercialising "basic" services and on the logistical and cultural challenges of turning social needs into market demands. Second, it emphasizes the often-invisible role of grassroots informal economies in enabling access to vital services in the absence of an adequately resourced and responsive municipality. The article concludes with a broader reflection on the effects and limitations of corporate-led development schemes targeting the urban poor and points to the contrasting logics of grassroots entrepreneurial urbanism and corporate—albeit "socially responsible"—parameters of success.

Keywords: Corporate-community encounters; Hustle economy; urban sanitation; youth; entrepreneurship; informality.

Highlights:

- Corporate-led micro-franchise provides sanitation services in Nairobi 'slums'
- 'Hustlers' of informal waste work turned into sanitation "entrepreneurs"
- Sanitation enterprise turned 'basic needs' into a business opportunity
- These corporate-community encounters are relationally constituted
- Cultural logics of 'slum economies' inform contrasting economic rationalities

1. THE BEGINNING STARTS AT THE END

This article contributes to the debates on corporate and social enterprise-led development, by investigating how a social enterprise project between a transnational corporation and informal sector entrepreneurs became embedded in the local urban economies of *Mathare*, one of the largest and oldest informal settlements located seven kilometres from Nairobi's Central Business District. The research studied the micro-politics and social economies of social enterprise, "Community Cleaning Services" (CCS) over the course of 15 months of fieldwork between 2009 and 2012. CCS was originally created as a micro-franchise in 2005 to serve as a conduit for working with local youth living in Nairobi slums engaged in garbage collection, recycling, and urban farming. Co-founded and sponsored by an American transnational company (hereafter the Company), the story of CCS and its peculiar alliance with the Company reveals the complexities of a commercial partnership between seemingly disparate organizational entities. The article investigates and unpacks the social relationships and dynamics of this partnership whose beginnings and credibility were inextricably linked to two separate and seemingly insurmountable problems associated with urban poverty: youth underemployment and inadequate sanitation infrastructure.

This article focuses on how self-proclaimed "hustlers" engaged in waste work "in the hood" were turned into micro-franchise entrepreneurs of a sanitation social business. The ethnographic account of this corporate-slum encounter therefore offers a series of contributions to urban, economic, and development geography. Most notably, this article contributes to recent scholarship interrogating the "entrepreneurial developmentalism" of corporate-led social enterprises that romanticise and repurpose the self-employed poor into "enterprising subjects" (Dolan & Johnstone Louis 2011, 30; Cross 2014). The intention is not to dismiss the corporate engagement outright, but instead to offer meaningful methodological and empirical insights on the convergence of two seemingly irreconcilable economic logics at play: those of corporate capitalism and those of informal economies. The aim is to focus on how a corporate-led project and its social enterprise parameters for success were shaped and re-configured by the "hustle economy" (Author 2013) of an informal settlement, and how particular aspects of the corporate presence, in turn, marked local practices of 'hustling'.

At a time when market-based approaches to assorted development challenges have multiplied in the 21st century, there is a dearth of geographical scholarship examining the political economies of social business ventures, in part because of the difficulties around gaining long-term and multi-sited research access to the project fields spanning the boardroom and grassroots, as well as the methodologically and ethically challenging research process requiring shifting roles from participant observer to observing participant (Welker 2009; Holmes and Marcus 2005; Mosse 2005; Cross 2014). Through seeking to establish trust and an ethnographic foothold in both the corporate and the informal life worlds (Holmes and Marcus 2005), the methodology of this research included being both a participant observer in the business meetings of the social enterprise as well as an observing participant in the sanitation service operations of slum-based youth groups.

The article is structured in three sections. First, the theoretical section summarises the key debate concerning the role of the private sector in development, and provides background context to Nairobi's political economy of slums, urban sanitation inequality, youth and informal economies. Second, the empirical section summarises the different stages of the corporate-community encounter, highlighting the complexities of the hustle economy amongst youth involved in waste work and the micro-politics of sanitation in their neighbourhoods. The last analytical section investigates the effects of this encounter on both youth job creation and improved sanitation, arguing that abstract conceptions of business, market demand and entrepreneurship were perceived, articulated, and experienced differently by different actors in everyday lived practice. The article argues that the particular social and economic rationalities and coping strategies shaped by youth income precarity and sanitation poverty did not necessarily match the imagined outcomes of a corporation seeking to improve lives. The aim, therefore, is to conceptualise the corporate-slum encounter, by reflecting critically but empathetically on the respective assumptions, norms, and parameters of both a corporation adapting to local informal economies and infrastructures, and the self-proclaimed 'hustlers' who are pro-business, but whose social and economic organisation 'in the hood' challenges the foundational logic of corporate capitalism where success is tied to sustained growth and profit, and where notions of entrepreneurship presume the pursuit for individualistic and continued economic gain.

2. Engaging the (Hustle) Economies of Slum Worlds

The "geographies of marketization" have positioned markets as the dominant institution of modernity, across the formal/informal sector divide (Boeckler and Bernt 2012). The corporation, one of the dominant protagonists of 20st century global capitalism (Paine 2004) and co-producer of dominant business knowledge (Olds and Thrift 2005), has become an opportunistic agent of development (Cross and Street 2009) in the 21st century as market-based approaches to development have mainstreamed claims to poverty alleviation, access to basic needs, and partnership with the entrepreneurial poor. These claims and subsequent practices vary widely across industries and geographies, simultaneously demonized and venerated. Some regard these interventions as void of moral agency (Korten 2001; Welker 2009), others hail them as the most efficient option for delivering on the promises of globalisation including the advancement of social and environmental causes (Hammond *el al* 2007; Hart and Prahalad 2002; Kandachar and Halme 2008). More recent critiques have stayed away from the moral and ethical debates, instead suggesting that appending development claims to social business ventures is both highly unrealistic and questionable business strategy. The provocative argument here is that new business development is challenging enough in low-income markets with highly informal structures, so businesses should stick to their fundamental competencies of growth through sustained increase of supply and demand, rather than hope to address the multi-dimensionality of poverty through enterprise (Simanis 2012). Across the claims and counter-claims of market-led approaches to development including Corporate Social Responsibility, Base of the Pyramid, Markets for the Poor, and more recently "Creative Shared Value," to mention the most common idioms, lie under-explored grounds for geographical inquiry concerning how these increasingly mainstream discourses are put into practice, funded, justified, and contested in rapidly growing cities, and how they interface with informal economies in contexts of unplanned urbanisation.

Two sets of recent literatures focused on the role of corporations in development are ideologically opposed: One rooted in business and management scholarship celebrates the emancipatory potential of corporate-led development and Base of the Pyramid strategies**,** while the other, including a growing literature on the anthropology of corporations, interrogates the implications of corporate-led development particularly on vulnerable communities. A more nuanced account of the vicissitudes and dynamics of urban informality in everyday lived practice and its encounters with corporate practices *must* engage both sides of the business and development debate spectrum in order to reflect meaningfully on the challenges, limitations as well as possibilities of market-led approaches to development. Therefore, the empirical context of this article dialogues with both of these literatures, as well as building on the informal economy literature in order to conceptualise the *leitmotiv* of key informants, whose conception of business was inextricably tied to "hustling". In Nairobi, the 'hustle' has become integral to the "creolized argot" (Comaroff & Comaroff 2005) of youth living and working in informal settlements (known as "slums" to most in the city, or the "ghetto" to urban youth referring to their neighbourhoods), and this expression epitomises the under-documented and complex social fabric and everyday logics of life in the slums.

An estimated 4-5 million people live in Nairobi, with over 60 % of the city's inhabitants living in slums (Huchzermeyer 2011, 3). This jarring statistic reflects the global trends of rapid urbanisation in the 21st century, with one in seven people living in informal human settlements (UN-Habitat 2003; UN-Habitat 2010; Davis 2006; Sattherthwaite 2007). Across mainstream representations of slums, the social and economic modes of organizing, exchanging, sharing, co-habiting, and learning are not only largely and uncritically categorized as "informal", they are usually defined by what they are not (Roitman 1990). This is especially the case with narratives of urban poverty in African slums (Mbembe and Nuttall 2004; Ferguson 2006; Myers 2005). As a result, the lives of the marginalized but majority city-dwellers go undocumented or are reduced to essentialized narratives of either deprivation and entrapment, or romanticised entrepreneurialism. Yet, as informal economies absorb and generate diverse (albeit tenuous) income opportunities amongst a growing urban labour force, unlike normative assumptions that the informal sector is a transient state of economic liminality moving towards the formal market economy, informality is actually growing and becoming the norm in today's global economy (Myers 2011; Roy and Alsayyad 2004; urban informality is growing (Neurwirth 2012).

Scholars across economic anthropology, micro-economics and development have since the early 1970's studied and sought to theorise the "economies of the poor". Starting with Keith Hart's seminal research in urban Ghana, research conceptualising "informal economies" demonstrates the logic of diversifying income opportunities and risk in conditions of rising unemployment and diminishing state welfare in post-colonial cities (Hart 1973; Potts 2008; Skinner 2008). Influencing the justifications for bottom-up approaches to development, scholars focused on development practice concerned with the multi-dimensionality of poverty and well-being through the lens of "livelihood strategies" (Chambers 1995; Chant 2009), to examine the ways in which people's diverse activities, capabilities and assets (stores, resources, claims and access) are mobilized and pursued. Using economists' frames of reference to articulate what the poor *have,* Moser (1998) suggests that an "asset vulnerability framework" points to the "tangible and intangible assets" of the poor, who are in effect "managers of complex asset portfolios." Similarly, Banerjee and Duflo (2011) refer to the poor as "barefoot hedge-fund managers" and emphasize the high degrees of risk involved in "poor economics" and their 100% liability, unlike their white-collar counterparts whose occupations are high-risk but who enjoy limited liability. And finally, a detailed study of "how the world's poor live on two dollars a day" (Collins *et al.* 2009) uses financial diaries in villages and urban slums across Bangladesh, India and South Africa to document the careful attention, financial literacy and frugality that goes into everyday earnings, spending, and saving patterns of poor households.

Read together, these studies capture meaningful though often piece-meal aspects of everyday economic survival demonstrating that being income-poor does not equate lack of planning, but rather requires continuous sophisticated calculations of risk and adaptation to uneven development and the absence of state or other public welfare. Yet, what is often less explicitly articulated in the literature expressing disaffection from the Left in the face of seemingly unstoppable neoliberal capitalism and "privatization of everything" (Watts 1994) is that informal economies re-appropriate capitalist relations, using market means to deliver products and services to customers in their own communities in contexts where state welfare, basic services, and public institutions are often absent or unevenly distributed (Fontaine 2008; Neurwirth 2012). One of the effects of economic liberalization policies has been the increased absence of public services for the city's majority living in material poverty (Chaplin 2011; Ferguson 2006; Huchzermeyer 2010). This absence has fostered entire informal economies capitalizing on the gap left by the state and the available workforce, to carve out alternative sources of work (King 1996). Forms of privatization of public services 'from below' have emerged especially in sanitation, water, and waste services (McFarlane 2011; Gill 2010; Moore 2009; Author 2013; Fredericks 2009).

Gidwani's work in *Capital Interrupted* (2009) is of particular theoretical relevance here, as his ethnographic study of the effects of a large surface irrigation scheme in Central Gujarat on agrarian development seeks to re-orient the discussion towards a broader interrogation of established narratives of capitalism. Euro-centric and neo-classical theories of capitalist accumulation and labour relations do not adequately represent the realities of agrarian capitalism in Gidwani's fieldsite. He points to other "cultural logics" and micro-politics of work to examine the contingent constructions and assemblages of economic relations. It is in this sense that this article points to the cultural logics of youth operating within the urban informal economy, and the alternative parameters, norms, and interpretations of work of these situated informal economies.

In the African urban context, youth (particularly male) experience prolonged transitions to culturally contingent norms of adulthood, and comprise the majority of the informal labour force (Yaqub 2009; Jeffrey 2010; Honwana & De Boeck 2005; Chant 2009; Hamilton and Hamilton 2009; Author 2013). The informal sector has grown due to job losses incurred in the wake of neoliberal economic policies, as an entire generation of young people has never had jobs to lose. In such a context, youth are perceived as socially and politically vulnerable, a "potential category of exclusion and exploitation" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2005, 22) but whose status of liminality, marginality and "trouble" (Butler 1990) becomes a generative space of opportunism. Youth move fluidly and sometimes inconspicuously between illicit and licit ways of making a living, finding their own "ways and means" which sometimes "involve the supply of hitherto unimagined 'services,'" that may involve illicit or stigmatised forms of work blurring the lines of legality/illegality in the absence of formal employment opportunities (Comaroff & Comaroff 2005, 23). Hence, youth are left to their own devices, to "create their own social worlds" (*ibid.*) and shape alternative economies that both reject formal institutions of authority while maintaining "multiple interconnections" and continuously negotiating political and economic arrangements.

The 'hustle' is an expression of capitalist relations, but performed and exercised in ways that defy central assumptions of capitalism related to particular pursuits of profit, growth, and "rational" economic decisions. "Making a living" (Chant 2009) for youth 'hustling' in Mathare included a portfolio of income generating activities and livelihood strategies that were entangled with everyday street practices of "hanging about" (Jones 2012). Often misunderstood, youth elicit polarized narratives (Comaroff & Comaroff 2005, 20) that mirror the competing discourses of the "slum city" as an lawless ghetto on the one extreme (Davis 2006; Angotti 2005) and a site of creative coping strategies and "generative spaces" at the other (Simone 2010).

In the absence of formal institutional support, chances of survival and success are predicated on "webs of exchange" with other "ghetto bound individuals" (Venkatesh 2006, 95; 103-104). In Nairobi slums, youth operate on the periphery of legal and formal employment, their webs and networks anchored in friendship and place-based youth collectives. These "youth groups," describing their everyday circumstances and work under the idiom of 'hustling', have taken on waste work to strategically modulate between survivalism, livelihood strategy, and contestations of authority, striking a tenuous balance between feeding themselves and renegotiating their place within the city (Author 2013). Rather than the endless pursuit of economic profit, the everyday goals are to remain anchored in their commercial relations, constantly realigning their businesses to fit the demands and shifting economies of their neighbourhoods (Venkatesh 2006). These constant shifts and adjustments reflect the unregulated nature of informal economic structures, and are part of the "cultural logics of work" (Gidwani 2001, 2008) based on constant adaptation and improvisation. These "hustle economies" generate processes of interstitial learning in the streets, and shape "generative spaces of experimentation” for youth (Chant 2009; Hart 1973; Moser 1998; Saunders 2010; McFarlane 2011). These ‘hustlers’ appropriate and commercialise particular corners, goods, and services as and when they can, often only able to capture the least desirable opportunities, such as dealing with garbage and, in the case of this research, shared toilets. The following section describes how a corporation sought to build on (rather than displace) these existing youth-led waste micro-enterprises to create a new local market for cleaning products whilst delivering positive social outcomes in low-income neighbourhoods including job creation, and safer, cleaner toilets.

3. THE CCS STORY

3.1. The Company

Founded in the late 19th century, the Company is an American family owned and run consumer-packaged-goods company. Sustainability has been a core part of the Company's ethos, reflected in its various efforts to reduce the environmental footprint of its operations even before regulations were imposed on industry, and to invest in greening its manufacturing processes through renewable energy sources. Curious about the Base of the Pyramid (BoP) thesis, in 2005 the Company began to widen its commitment to sustainability by focusing on poverty alleviation through enterprise models and became one of the first corporate pioneers of BoP incubation.

The Company’s East African subsidiary was established in 1968, five years following Kenya’s independence. As a leading provider of insecticide products, the Company had become the world’s largest buyer of Kenyan Pyrethrum, a natural insecticide grown in the fertile Kenyan highlands. In the 1980’s and early 1990’s, the Company was best known to Kenyans for selling locally manufactured mosquito coils, special because they were sold individually for 2 KSH (0.023 USD), and called *Mwanainchi* (“common man”). In the late 1990’s, the mosquito coil packaging started shifting its product image and name to a more global brand, and in 2004 the Company’s Kenyan factory was closed down. Today, while the Company products are available on the shelves of Kenyan supermarkets, they have lost considerable market share to other corporate competitors.[1] Furthermore, retailers in lower income neighbourhoods cannot afford most of the Company’s cleaning products, and at best stock a few of the aerosol insecticide. Ironically, a few years after the “common man” mosquito coil and local production facility were strategically removed from the Kenyan market, the Company would sponsor a BoP project in Kenya to identify potential business

[1] Semi-structured interviews conduced in July 2010 with former COMPANY Kenya employees who had worked with the Company from 1992-2003.

innovation opportunities working with and in low-income communities.

3.2. Leading up to CCS

In 2005, the Company sponsored a Kenya-based test of a business development methodology called the Base of the Pyramid Protocol™, developed to facilitate corporate engagements with low-income communities to "co-create businesses of mutual value" (Simanis *et al* 2008). Sponsoring the BoP Protocol™ pilot marked the beginning of a long-term commitment to explore innovative ways to deliver the benefits of the Company products—from insecticides to "home cleaning" products—to previously unfamiliar low-income markets, recognising the need to rethink business potential in communities formally considered charity cases or causes for humanitarian aid (Author and DeKoszmovszky 2012). The venture started out as an applied academic project, and eventually focused on Nairobi's low-income urban communities, as a business innovation initiative.

From the Company's point of view, operating in such a different environment meant accepting and working with 'partners' who had little formal business training. Recollecting the challenges of taking this kind of risk, former VP of Developing Markets noted,

> We were working with young people who had very little capital and knowledge about how to start new businesses. In many cases at the Base of the Pyramid people don't even have a rule of law to be able to control their assets or their money or be able to own property.[2]

For any company, this posed a considerable challenge not least because of how difficult it would be to track, document, and monitor operations. And yet the conscious decision to by-pass formal institutional channels, including government, and engage directly with young people in the slums afforded the Company a certain license to start *somewhere*. What the business would ultimately become was unexpected.

In 2007, following months of what was referred to as a "test small, fail small and learn big" experimental phase resembling a more standard Avon ladies model of door-to-door home pesticide control service, some of the youth engaged in the process turned their attention away from private services to the ill-maintained community-based public toilets. In Nairobi, due to the shortage of toilet coverage in all public spaces subject to rapid and unplanned urbanisation, toilets have become a business and tool of political opportunism, often fuelling

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[2] Interview conducted and recorded at corporate headquarters, May 2010.

the stigmas and "bads" (Beck 1992) associated with slums, including inadequate sanitation (Chiuri 1978). Yet for a company seeking "BoP business innovation", these poorly maintained and managed community resources fit "triple bottom line" values, overlapping commercial, environmental, and social objectives (Robbins 2006). Toilets were at once the site of potential income for youth waste workers, a potential source of revenue and product placement for the Company, and a potential preventive healthcare offering through improved sanitation conditions. So, moving away definitively from the first experiment, the focus of the BoP project turned to developing a shared-toilet cleaning business. The micro-franchise *Community Cleaning Services* was thus co-founded by the Company's American Sustainability Manager (SM), hired in 2006 in part to lead BoP efforts, and the Company's former Kenyan Marketing Manager, CCS' new Manager, to provide an entrepreneurial sanitation service-model to slum residents.

While daily CCS operations were handled by the local CCS Central team (headed by the CCS Manager, the only person *not* from a slum neighbourhood), weekly phone updates and quarterly field visits were part of the Company SM's involvement, as was a delicate balance between considering the challenges of new business development in volatile and unpredictable economies, and considering the unyielding demands and parameters of a multi-national company. Everyday operational decisions were made on-site by the CCS Manager, while broader strategic decisions including how to identify potential entrepreneurs, cost structures, team training procedures, and product delivery logistics were made between the Company's SM and the CCS Manager, who referred to each other as "my business partner". While the SM was attuned to local economic realities, had considerable field experience (including basic Swahili skills) and knew most entrepreneurs by name, the nuances of everyday practices amongst local CCS teams were not perceptible from afar. And yet, as the next section describes, these nuances were inextricably linked to the reasons why CCS would ultimately have difficulty scaling its operations, and why its impact was difficult to measure and quantify.

By 2008, CCS operated daily, selling and delivering cleaning services to shared residential toilets accessed by several families, schools, clinics, restaurants, and bars. One of the Company's Research and Development employees had identified the optimal existing formulas of the Company's cleaning products that would prove effective in Nairobi's 'slum toilets' infrastructures. These were imported to Kenya from the Company's Egypt facility in barrels, not cases of consumer packaging. Bulk importation was an important business adaptation for the CCS service model because it "closed the loop" on packaging waste within the CCS business, allowing re-use of all packaging—locally sourced repurposed 20 litre jerry cans—reducing CCS' environmental impact and service cost.

In 2009, CCS was working with over 20 independent entrepreneurs and over one hundred public toilets, establishing a presence in most of Nairobi's low-income communities. Overall, the business development phase of CCS between 2007 to the end of 2009 aimed to provide a platform for iterative experimentation ("business innovation") and test the feasibility of the business model. In practice, this phase put in sharp relief the friction as well as complementarity of different corporate and community economic logics, parameters and norms.

3.3. Embedding CCS

3.3.1. Understanding everyday cultural logics of "entrepreneurs"

CCS had identified potential entrepreneurs in 2007 with the help of a local NGO with ties to local youth groups whose associations were systematically tied to childhood friendships, football team allegiances, and their local sub-neighbourhood ("the base"). For youth on the fringe of the urban economy and entrepreneurial in spirit, waste work had become a kind of urban rite of passage in the slums, known as *Taka Ni Pato* (Trash is Cash). These *Taka Ni Pato* networks became logical partners for a social business venture focused on urban sanitation.

Youth groups provided entry-points, but an 'entrepreneur' or contact person within the group was then identified and made responsible for selecting a team. At first, most of these teams were composed of 6 to 12 individuals. Initially the entire youth group seemed interested in CCS. They saw uniforms, cleaning equipment, and a "sponsor". Soon after, many members were discouraged that CCS involved hard physical work, door-to-door sales, and meagre earnings—a small initial customer base meant that there were not enough cleaning jobs to justify large teams. Once the novelty of working with an outside sponsor faded, the disinterested left. "They realized that there was more to this work than just getting a free uniform."[3]

For the cleaning teams, CCS work started with early morning meetings at the youth group "base" to assemble, uniform and equipment in hand, and conduct deliberate pedestrian marketing, walking through the slum at peak rush hour to the first toilet stall.

[3] Interview with CCS member, October 2009.

> Many of these toilets are not well connected to the sewer line, and because of the big number of people using them daily, we have that problem of clogging. It is common to find that there are ten plots [homes] using two toilets, with an average of five people in each plot, so you can imagine the mess they're in. After we clean every part of the toilet, scrub the walls and the floors - every corner, we then use the product to disinfect. Then we add the gel. That is how we clean. [4]

That would be considered "one job". Because toilets were shared, so was the cost of the service, usually between 250 and 350 KSH (3-4 USD), an average of 30 KSH (0.34 USD) "per door" of households whose monthly rent ranged between 1,000 and 3,000 KES (11-34 USD). A CCS job usually involved between two to four cleaners, and each "job" could take between 20 and 40 minutes. Whatever the earnings were, the team split the amount equally, and if the lead entrepreneur wasn't present, he or she would get a 'finder's fee' but the majority of the earnings went to those who actually cleaned. Completely four to six "jobs" was considered a good day.

Although it was deemed easier to deal with one micro-franchisee per area, in practice the unit of the micro-franchisee was the group rather than a single individual. Initially it was hoped that individual entrepreneurs would themselves manage multiple cleaning teams (and hence, scale the micro-franchise). Informed by Western conceptions of entrepreneurship, the Company had encouraged CCS to target "self-interested entrepreneurs" (Dolan and Rajak 2011) who were dually motivated by prospects of an additional business opportunity, and by bringing the "social benefit" of the cleaning service. Yet, individuals who would prove to be capable "self-interested entrepreneurs" were not necessarily "team players" nor considerate of community interests. For instance, one such entrepreneur nick-named Ben Clean was initially lauded for his ability to grow his enterprise, but was eventually asked to leave CCS in 2009 when it was rumoured that he was using acid to "make the bowl as white looking as possible" while not providing protective gloves for his cleaners.

In contrast to Ben Clean, most CCS entrepreneurs were accountable to and part of a youth group collective. So in practice, the cleaning work and customer relations, operational decisions, and even cash management were shared or rotational responsibilities amongst a smaller unit within the youth group. Consequently, by late 2009, the nomenclature within the Company and CCS Central officially shifted from "entrepreneurs" to "mobile cleaning teams" (MCTs), which had paradoxical effects. On the one hand, promoting a more

[4] Interview conducted in Kawangware, Nairobi, with CCS "Quality Assurance Professional", May 2010.

egalitarian and less hierarchical structure meant that if the so-called entrepreneur faulted for whatever reason, another team member could take the reigns and keep operations going. On the other hand, managing teams meant having to acknowledge group micro-politics.

Most teams had specific days for CCS work. Mathare Number Ten Youth Group (MANYGRO) had a landlord for whom they cleaned daily, but most other CCS teams had weekly clients, and a few monthly clients including primary schools. The likelihood of accessing water was higher in the earliest part of the day, so jobs were often completed after dawn, and during dry season when water was predicted to be scarce, the teams ensured to fill (and guard) enough 20 litre jerry-cans of water the night prior, and rented the CCS handcart to transport them around. The end of a CCS workday could be at 10 a.m., noon, or 2 p.m. But it was rarely the end of the workday. Before the team disbanded, if the group felt rich that day, they might buy a cup of "chai" (tea) and a "*chapati*" (flat bread) from a local street-food vendor. That was often the first meal of the day, and usually the last until suppertime.

CCS youth could spend hours after their day's work hanging around their base in their CCS uniform, a sort of de-facto marketing statement that became part of a performed "face to face" kind of capitalism (Jeffrey 2010) where corporeal presentation, movement and style, afforded the MCTs a degree of improvisation and interpretation that mere products and their packaging narrative could not have. In their professionalizing function, the uniforms afforded MCTs not only the legitimacy to enter semi-private compounds, schools and elite spaces such as the local Chief's compound, but also gave specific meaning to the moments of *kuzurura* (loitering) that provided a public sign-post implying, "I may be idling right now, but I had a job today". The various meanings and moments of uniform display illustrated how CCS' branding was locally appropriated, a highly "embodied" work practice (Gidwani 2001) that was incorporated into the subjectivities and performance of the "hustler". As they circulated the neighbourhood to come in and out of semi-private spaces to clean, they moved from one public space to another as branded pedestrian "sales people", "professionalizing" the hustle economy of waste work and rendering "dirty work" more visible and acceptable.

Some MCTs created a separate CCS account to keep track of earnings, even if part of CCS revenues were re-invested in other youth group activities. Each team handled this "weeding out" process differently, but systematically most CCS MCTs ended up being a four to six person collective, anchored within a broader youth group of approximately 25-30 members. As a result of this internal fissure, practices of *kuzurura* involved two contrasting though adjacent rhythms: youth who were working at a particular time, and their other mates who were hanging out—those on the "job" adjacent to the "jobless corner". The jobless corner provided a social entourage, and served as a source of protection in the face of potential harassment from police, other youth gangs, or the disapproving remarks of overbearing *wazee watiaji* ("elders on our backs").

3.3.2. Economic rationalities in 'the hood'

Since 2007, MANYGRO's CCS team had identified the lack of community toilets in their community and targeted two kinds of customers. They marketed CCS to households that had access to a shared residential toilet (trained and encouraged by CCS Central to do so). They also negotiated with the landlord of a residential plot in a central area of their neighbourhood to construct a "community toilet" in 2006. The agreement was that MANYGRO would manage running and operations of the toilet at a pay-per-use cost of 2 KSH or 150 KES (1.68 USD) per month per household. In exchange, MANYGRO paid the landlord 700 KSH (7.83 USD) a month, and agreed to take on any repairs or additional costs including water. This toilet had significant local meaning, serving thousands of residents who otherwise lacked access to a shared facility. The CCS team cleaned it every morning and after a while, most neighbouring shack-dwellers, whose landlords had consistently refused to provide shared toilet facilities in the residential compound, accessed the MANYGRO toilet for a monthly fee. In 2011, MANYGRO added to the community toilet's offering (and revenue potential) when they re-routed a water point so the toilet had near-by access to water, adding significant value and foot traffic to the MANYGRO "base".

Between August 2009 and April 2010, MANYGRO's CCS sales—number of toilets cleaned and product used—remained relatively consistent but stagnant throughout the months. They sought out customers within their existing garbage collection customer base—residents with whom they had developed trusted relationships over the years. The leitmotif explanation for lack of growth was, "it's difficult to market CCS because so many people say they appreciate the end result but cannot afford to pay for it regularly." But as the following section shows, the challenge was not only the (un)willingness or (in)ability to pay.

As *Figure 1* shows, the challenge of scaling CCS was that even those who seemed most active in CCS work still held onto their other sources of income, which formed an expanding portfolio of income generating activities including garbage collection, plastics recycling, and urban farming. For MANYGRO, CCS provided the seed capital for their urban farming business, and important access to business training and regular visits from CCS field officers, affording MANYGRO a certain status of recognition and influence in the community as a youth group capable of eliciting external sources of attention and support including NGOs and the Company. This risk diversification depended on logics of solidarity but was also subject to peer pressure amongst group members whose allegiance and sense of place was highly situated. Both the territorial sensibilities of the groups who were economically bound to their "base", and the individual social cost of doing "too well" posed real psychological limits to individual economic gain, regularly manifest as strategic discretion concerning personal income and an implicit resistance to scaling up the portfolio (Author 2013). Each enterprise stayed strategically small in scale, and profits from one were used as seed capital to invest in another, allowing the diversified portfolio to expand laterally. Consciously hiding and subconsciously limiting one's income was a protective mechanism against the risk of becoming a target for crime, being exploited by friends and family and subject to social exclusion.

So, MANYGRO CCS sales numbers indicated a tendency to maintain a limited number of regular customers and focus especially on the "daily clean" of the community toilet. They were not trying to grow their CCS business, and certainly did not venture out beyond their informally marked economic zone of existing residential garbage collection customers (*see Figure 2*). This raised the following paradox. They admitted that,

> Unlike with garbage collection where you get paid once a month and the income doesn't change since you have a set number of plots each month, with CCS you get paid each time you clean, and the income and customers have potential to continuously grow.[5]

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

And yet, to MANYGRO the importance was retaining a set number of customers. Whilst they participated in CCS Quarterly General Meetings where the "market potential" of tenement buildings in each CCS customer base was discussed at length amongst the MCTs, in practice MANYGRO were more committed to sustaining a constant, albeit small-scale venture.

In contrast, one of the CCS entrepreneurs locally known as *Mzee Kijana* (young elder) who worked as a sole entrepreneur, had little ability to retain "repeat" customers and instead focused continuously on seeking out new customers beyond his immediate residential periphery. *Mzee Kijana* belonged only loosely to a youth group and was not involved in the

[5] Focus group discussion, Mathare 10, January 2010.

garbage economy, or its associated economic or relationally constituted territorial zoning. He was the only 'non-youth' CCS member (in his late 40's), and preferred to work alone, hiring cleaners he trained personally on a case-by-case basis. MANYGRO and *Mzee Kijana's* approaches and impact contrasted: a small sustained set of repeat customers versus the continuous expansion of a one-off customer base. As these two examples show, CCS members and their life histories challenged the deceptively homogenizing qualifier 'micro-franchisee' or even 'entrepreneur.' Despite efforts to standardize operations, no two CCS teams would ever be the same, act the same, work the same, nor would the value of CCS work acquire the same meaning to any two "hustlers". The notion of a 'job' in the hustle economy was often spoken about in similar terms but lived in different forms from one 'hustler' to the next.

[FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

4. CONCEPTUALISING IMPACT WITHOUT GROWTH

4.1. Turning hustlers into entrepreneurs

The incremental growth of the business, "one toilet a day", was to many CCS respondents a source of pride in a context otherwise marked by expected and frequent setbacks. This contentment in incremental improvements, akin to the "politics of patience" (Appadurai 2001) of other community-led slum upgrading efforts, would inevitably clash with a corporation's temporal expectation and vision of change. To the Company, "incremental change" meant stagnant growth, and equated its investment to loss. Conversely, CCS' Manager understood (and relied upon) the reality that change and gaining communities' trust took time, that "trust has to be earned and cannot be forced."[6] But to the Company's Sustainability Manager, "patient capital" and social investment had a rapidly approaching expiration date after six years. CCS' Manager was aware of this and received considerable pressure from his business partner to produce more data from the field to justify the investment if only for "business innovation learning" purposes, yet did not express the same sense of alarm when faced with CCS' "P&L" (profit and loss). This tension was reflected in the weekly CCS meetings between 2009 and 2010, which simultaneously offered moments of ephemeral celebration concerning positive field-anecdotes, followed by deflated enthusiasm when the "numbers" of that month were disclosed. At best, MCT sales had plateaued throughout that year. While business concerns were raised about CCS' inability to scale, my ethnographic research revealed that youth perceived a limit to the desirability of growth and the risks of doing "too well" (Author 2013).

[6] Interview in Huruma with Mzee Kijana, July 14th, 2010

To the *Taka Ni Pato* 'hustlers,' for whom income activities were diversified into a waste work portfolio, CCS meant *job creation for youth* equated with two key values: "earning an honest living" and "building trust" with customers. According to one of the first CCS team leaders who had an active role as a youth mentor and football coach, opting for an "honest living" meant making a choice between potentially higher gains from criminal activity, (despite high risk of gang in-fighting and conflict with the police), and working hard for a small wage. CCS faced the following paradox: It offered more lucrative work than casual labour in the industrial area, with a fair payment structure, in-field training and a strong social support system. However, in fostering self-employment around an un-established service, each team was responsible for marketing, customer relations, and recruiting new members. This made it much more laborious than the alternative income generating activities in the 'hood' that had become well-established businesses (garbage collection, second hand sales, recycling) and less lucrative than petty criminal activity, or just relying on NGO projects engaging youth as foot soldiers, often jokingly referred to as "feeding programmes".

Trust was critical and yet difficult to ground in concrete terms, as consistent with the informality of social and economic relations. No CCS contracts existed and any attempt to draft official contractual agreements might have put off most of the 'hustlers' whose work always retained a degree of strategic discretion. The notion of trust was continuously evoked in relation to cash management, customer relations, inter-team dynamics, and between CCS entrepreneurs and CCS Central. The issue of cash management in particular reflected the tension between self-interested individualistic behaviour and group interests.

Striving for an honest living and earning trust of customers and peers alike were ideals that could not be granted with permanency in a context where survivalism and unforeseen circumstances often created lapses of solidarity and group ethics. So while both "earning an honest living" and "building trust" were laudable and oft expressed goals in normative rhetoric, in practice they were both entangled with the messier reality of the *mtaa* ("hood") where constant risk calculation and opportunism in the face of everyday adversity blur the line between licit and illicit work.

CCS wasn't meant as a temporary band-aid to urban poverty or to just target a phase of youthhood in a tokenistic fashion. Many individuals within CCS had grown with it since 2006, going from team cleaners to team leaders to hired staff or "mentors" of other teams. Both the Company's SM and CCS Manager agreed that all CCS personnel needed the same "street credibility" and knowledge of "codes of the streets" as any savvy "ghetto-based" entrepreneurial youth in order to relate to, let alone manage teams.

> Often as businesses grow, they start needing people with bachelor or even master degrees, bringing people from outside. This is what makes us unique, as long as we're able to say we create employment opportunities within these communities, the people working within CCS will be from these communities. The second you start having country manager or someone running things with a masters, you begin to withdraw from these communities.[7]

For some individuals, CCS had provided either a stepping-stone to other forms of work or education, or a legitimizing channel towards attaining symbolic markers of adulthood. For example, for Mambo, CCS was the first job he had *not* wanted to quit after four months. It was a vehicle with which he was able to mentor and motivate troubled youth along with football, offering alternatives to criminal activity. In December 2011, savings from years of CCS work helped him finally afford a proper dowry and wedding celebration to make official his union with his long-time partner and mother of his three children. These were meaningful but intangible effects, detectable through ethnographic study but difficult to measure and communicate in "return on investment" terms, as the next section illustrates.

4.2. Socially meaningful, commercially insignificant

At the community level, by 2009 CCS was "becoming a movement. The name speaks for itself".[8] CCS clients and non-clients alike referred to the "professionalism" of MCTs and the use of the Company's "world class" products. Visual and olphatic references to the "sweet smelling" product or "whiteness of the bowl", driven by personal and social pride, stood out above any health benefits. Despite income and infrastructural poverty in Mathare, residents valued having a toilet facility that they, their families and their guests could use without discomfort or shame. CCS was the only community-based business to provide and enforce the use of uniforms, protective gear, and cleaning techniques subject to "quality control" follow-ups.

Recent anthropological studies have provided key insights related to the retail distribution of products in low-income markets, and the political economy of such products (Burke 1996; Cross and Street 2009; Dolan and Rajak 2011). CCS did not resemble most mainstream

[7] Personal communication with CCS Manager, Nairobi, June 2010.
[8] Observational notes, community walkabout with CCS entrepreneur, March 2010.

corporate approaches seeking explicitly or implicitly to shape and meet "common sense" hygienic demands. In contrast to other BoP businesses, CCS did not distribute "sachets" of cleaning product to local small-scale retail outlets, to be sold to individual customers for private in home use, but instead trained *Taka Ni Pato* 'hustlers' to operate as entrepreneurial channels of product sale through a service model, targeting a "public good". Targeting public toilets was precisely what had enabled the impetus of CCS at first, but what also entangled business practices with the contested attitudes towards the shared commons, and towards the agencies of residential "end-users". The issue was not convincing people that CCS offered a valuable service, but instead convincing them that the service's cost of was worth the price, and this was not merely a matter of "better marketing" but rather of understanding the norms and codes of the local economy in relation to sanitation.

Within the informal waste economy, residents were end-users of sanitation and waste services, but exercised their agencies in different ways. In certain cases, the "end-user" was a citizen recipient of the right to better sanitation. In other cases the end-user was an agent of improvement. In all cases, the end-user became a "consumer-client" of a particular service. In merging the roles of citizen and client, community member and customer, sanitation was both subject to consensus building (when it came to maintenance, management and payment) while remaining a private matter of consumer choice and personal hygiene. In this regard, CCS faced the following paradox.

In Mathare, the commercialisation of public health and basic services (e.g. water vendors, waste collection) had already happened, given the absence of municipal service provisioning. Therefore CCS was actually *building on* existing modes of grassroots basic service privatization. In these hustle economies, you could not get anything done if you didn't "do it yourself" or pay some enterprising person to do it for you. Mathare hustlers at community levels have long been private providers—albeit small scale—offering services in the absence of municipal provisions of proper waste and sanitation management. Yet, given that CCS's model depended on private interest and capital engaging with the delivery and management of "public" services and goods, turning residents with very little disposable income into paying customers of the most basic bodily practice was not as obvious as anticipated.

CCS's offering inevitably shaped new geographies of "difference and subjectivity" (Burke 1996) as certain residents became "regular customers" of the cleaning service, while others did not; as certain 'hustlers' of waste work were refashioned into uniform wearing "sanitation entrepreneurs" representing a "professionalised" company name, while other peer groups involved in similar waste work remained isolated from external support. These cleavages within slum neighbourhoods where CCS had a presence reflected the inevitable geographies of exclusion that occur through monetized economies and fee-paying services, no matter how "socially responsible" the business model may be in theory. The fact is, CCS became embedded in existing structures of difference and uneven access to a clean toilet. Most 'customers' were residents living in semi-private shanti-compounds or a 4 to 8 storey tenement walk-up. The "cleaning contract" had been informally established with the landlords, who had consistently neglected the state of these poorly managed shared toilets (in the poorest pockets of Mathare they even refused to build a toilet for their tenants). The other public toilets serviced by CCS had always been pay-per-use toilets accessible by surrounding households, local businesses, schools, and pedestrians. CCS had either been given a license to clean these ill-maintained "public goods" by local politicians or had sufficient social capital and "muscle" to rehabilitate the toilet themselves. Moreover, improvement schemes could not just create a supply, be it of upgraded housing with self-contained toilets, rehabilitated toilets, new toilet construction, or more 'education' campaigns regarding health and hygiene. They could only create change if matched by grassroots efforts to build demand. Part of creating the demand was to normalize the monetization of *cleaning* shared facilities and human waste disposal through justifications attesting to environmental and public health claims. But these normative values were often rendered irrelevant in the face of adverse infrastructural conditions, to the extent that abstract notions of "social good" or "public health" were less convincing claims than economic value. If it cost more to be healthy and safe without some immediate benefit (e.g. mobile phones cost money but the value is clear and the return on investment immediate), behaviour change was unlikely in slum economies.

According to triangulated interviews conducted with residents and local clinicians, the cost of treating a case of diarrhoea was equivalent or higher than the average day's wage of a slum resident, and a third of one household's monthly rent. But while appending a social and health message to a commercial sale might seem like a logical and commendable social enterprise strategy, asking waste workers to serve both as marketers and community public health officers, showing the health value and potential healthcare savings of a clean toilet, was quite another hurdle in practice. As a result, securing "repeat customers" was limited because the full value was difficult to transmit and perceive in neighbourhoods unfamiliar with any kind of door-to-door service, and with MCTs who were not used to selling a new idea. How do you show a frugal and sceptical customer the value of disease prevention in the context and time-frame of a door-to-door exchange? These practical challenges reflected the faulty assumptions around meeting public health ends through commercial means: the classic trap where a health need (as proven by science) does not necessarily transfer into market demand or consumer behaviour (as proven in the market).

One poignant example: In March 2010, after noticing the dip in sales for his area reported at the CCS weekly meeting, I spoke with *Mzee Kijana* to ask him about “business last month”. He explained that in February the children were on holiday from school. During holidays, regular customers told him not to come, because the children “will make the toilets dirty”. In other words, when the children were around, it was not worth paying for a cleaning service because too quickly the value of the cleaning job was undone. But the other pragmatic reason was the financial strain on all parents around February of each year, when school fees were due and household budgets were already “stretched” following the recent Christmas holiday travel expenses ”up-country”. This illustrated residents’ pragmatism concerning the cost of clean toilets, especially related to children. Children were rarely given a 5 KSH coin to use the community public toilets either, and instead forced to defecate out in the open spaces near the rubbish heaps or near the river. In schools, those who cleaned toilets were children who had “misbehaved”, so it was stigmatized as a degrading task associated with punishment and public shame. Plus, few schools provided water or soap for hand-washing, and while hand-washing before meals was part of Kenyan cultural norms across income levels, cost of water and soap impeded many residents from doing so.

Given the challenges of building market demand in the face of survivalist pragmatism, CCS Central’s financial performance consistently lagged behind break-even targets and by 2012, could no longer justify further business investment. Paradoxically, MCTs were profitable with revenues from clients covering their operating costs, included earnings well above minimum wage for each team member, and delivered profit for re-investment or disbursement. Yet, costs of training, follow-up and quality assurance were well above projections, far outpacing the revenue generated through sales of product to the MCTs, impeding profitability for the Company. The dilemma was that these processes were a key driver of the “buzz,” crucial to relationship building and establishing high quality standards, and the business could not grow without it. And yet, creating more demand through sanitation marketing efforts and public health educational campaigns aiming to shift residential expectations of cleanliness and change individual hygienic habits would still not solve the structural business problem. The uncomfortable truth revealed only later was that more demand from the residential customers would mean more cost to the business. So, despite dual positive impact on customers and cleaners, the business was not covering its operating costs and could not be considered a viable investment from the Company’s point of view.

"Increased demand" could add new entrepreneurs, new teams, and new streams of income for youth in the waste sector, but in relation to the business and the Company's investment in CCS, cost scaled with revenue.

In February 2012, seven years after its inception, CCS received its last instalment of funding from the Company. A year later, a CCS staff member sent me a message to say, *"Today's meeting was to close CCS officially."* One of the first CCS entrepreneurs followed soon after with,

> It is indeed true and sad, I still cannot believe it, six years of doing something you like and believe in, only to have it suddenly crumble, times are hard and what we have worked for so many years to build to fade so abruptly is hard to bear, anyway it's still encouraging to see teams still working, this means at least we did something right to inspire them.

The exact details of what "closed down" CCS a year after the Company's funding ended, are still unclear and each have their side of the story. CCS Central funds ran out, and while the CCS governance structure fostered a unique support system for micro-franchisees and staff, it had in parallel cultivated an inefficient and opaque accounting arm. In the meantime, since February 2013 a relatively peaceful presidential election came and went, and according to my local contacts, CCS teams in various pockets of Nairobi's informal settlements are apparently "still active". There is still enough "product" in stock to last at least another year. Some have decided to start their own cleaning businesses in their local area, while others keep working with their portfolio, including cleaning toilets. The CCS uniforms will get tattered and the Company logo might fade, but the 'hustle' goes on, in one shape or another, even without the "good company" or CCS Central.

5. Conclusion

The CCS story reflects the spectrum of BoP claims and counter-claims. A business professor learning of CCS's spin-off into a non-profit social enterprise would consider CCS a "business failure" and "a great shame".[9] A staunch critic of enterprise-led approaches to basic service provision would regard CCS as an example of the neoliberalising post-colonial city for three reasons: one, reaching into slums to turn survivalist poor into urban consumers, two, diverting resources away from focusing on improving public sanitation infrastructure towards

[9] Q/A following presentation delivered to faculty of *Business and Poverty* Chair, Haute Ecole de Commerce (HEC), Paris, March 2012.

privatising cleaning services of decaying sanitation "hardware"; three, encouraging "informalisation from below" (Chant 2009) a form of disguised employment to carve out new distribution channels for corporate products in markets where purchases of single units are unaffordable. A Corporate Sustainability practitioner might regard CCS as an example of "good corporate citizenship," harnessing business to promote job creation and improve hygiene, but might conversely be dismissive of CCS' inability to scale and meet corporate parameters of commercial viability, despite stable economic viability for "entrepreneurs" and value to regular customers. CCS had received an unusual degree of patience from its corporate partner, capital and otherwise, but could not be justified as commercially viable beyond a certain point by the Company. And yet, in my study, Company informants who were close to and sympathetic to CCS as a BoP investment frequently referred to CCS as "business innovation", a kind of important though complicated experiment that deserved attention, where "course correcting" and "failures" would become valuable learnings in the institutional memory for those pursuing the next BoP project elsewhere. If one adopted the view that the BoP thesis is a mere "mirage" occulting the more pressing imperative of increasing employment in order to address poverty (Karnani 2007), CCS' focus on youth job creation would be applauded, but the commodification and marketing of basic services would be criticised, as would CCS's business model for its cash outflow from the slum community. And finally, other ethnographers of corporate interventions might criticise CCS for appending a public health message to its market offering (Cross and Street 2009), pointing to CCS' legitimizing discourse (Welker 2009) associating a cleaning service with a "social good," purporting to improve lives (incomes and hygiene) by "repurposing" local informal waste workers into "entrepreneurial subjects" (Dolan & Johnstone Louis 2011), while seeking a new source of revenue for the Company.

Each of these interpretations offers important broader critiques of increasingly popular market-based development schemes including sanitation entrepreneurship. But neither as individual assessments nor as a composite critique do they relay the intangible meaningful effects of a social enterprise that *engaged* waste 'hustlers' *as* sanitation 'entrepreneurs'. CCS had adapted to the hustle economy, but as a corporate-led initiative, it could not survive as a flawed commercial proposition, unable to guarantee a return on investment or sustained growth. But what remained of CCS was a 'ghetto'-based appropriation of the service locally valued for the "sweet smelling product," and the "professionalism" of the cleaners. While mainstream business and even development metrics of impact would deem CCS a failure, the lasting effects of this corporate-community entanglement merit an alternative interpretation.

This article seeks to disrupt corporate-community binaries that stress what corporations *do to* local communities, depicting corporate agencies as elite classes who exploit, ignore, or extract from the poor. Instead, this article examines the relational dynamics of corporate-led project situated within local urban economies, and theorises how corporate presence (and absence) was shaped, interpreted, reproduced, and contested by the everyday lived experiences of those who managed, worked with, and wore uniforms representing a multinational brand. Thus, the focus has been on what the CCS project regimes *did* rather than dwell on the polarizing debates considering whether they were a "good thing" or "bad thing", a "success" or a "failure" (Ferguson 1994; Dolan and Rajak 2011). Just as "narrow conceptualizations and assessments of income poverty" (Gill 2010, 240) are insufficient to capture levels of "deprivation," narrow conceptualizations of "improved incomes" (or other "impact" measures) are equally insufficient in relaying the vicissitudes of the hustle economy. At the nexus of environmental "bads" (Beck 1992) and business opportunity lie shifting conceptions and experiences of well-being, revealing how personal gains can come at a cost, and how income poverty is cyclical, relative, and contingent on dynamic social relations that affect senses of belonging, advancement, and aspirations.

During the years of its corporate-community encounter, CCS had elicited the interest of diverse actors including different sanitation professionals, local politicians, NGOs focused on youth entrepreneurship, community development activists, and youth groups alike. CCS had brought in particular assets familiar to professional businesses outside the slums (uniforms, equipment, product), but acquired ghettoized street credibility, codes and sensibilities, and most of all respected and retained its youth members, thereby sustaining youth enthusiasm and engagement. This was something other youth programmes struggled with in a period where the economic imperative of addressing youth poverty through "putting youth to work" had become integral to discourses of peace-building and social stability following the 2008 post-election violence. CCS was one of the only organizations that managed to motivate, train, and bring otherwise fragmented youth together for both local economic and social development ends. Informal conversations with NGO directors in Nairobi revealed the difficulty of managing youth groups and the challenges of rapid turnover of youth participants in youth programmes (Makau 2011). In this, harnessing the entrepreneurial and opportunistic qualities of urban youth, by offering tangible access to "on the job" skills training and the intangible benefits of increased self-esteem, belonging, collective identity and respect from peers and formerly sceptical community members, seems important to acknowledge and perhaps even to replicate.

In conclusion, CCS was perceived as one or all of the following: a grassroots business focused on improved sanitation, a social network of youth groups, a youth-led organization, a mentorship model for youth teetering between crime and entrepreneurship, a training program, a corporate social responsibility project, a social movement, and lately a non-profit social enterprise. It had done more than provide a new source of product distribution in the untapped markets of urban slums. It tapped into the subjectivities of self-proclaimed 'hustling' youth and residential customers both living "hand-to-mouth", adding to the grassroots, underground economies that combined elements of capitalist logic—market-based approaches to 'public' services, lack of formal state presence, and acknowledgement of "healthy competition"—with logics of solidarity and "self-help," paradoxically coupled with peer pressure to keep struggling. It was this "*mtaa way*" in which CCS had successfully embedded itself over the years, but also what eventually emphasized the fundamentally different parameters, aspirations and expectations of urban youth operating within the hustle economy and a Company ultimately bound by its bottom line.

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