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**Theories of Smallholder Agribusiness Entrepreneurship in the
African Context: A Critical Review**

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Abstract

There have been changes in the political systems of several African countries which were under colonial rule. Consequently, more than 32 African countries launched “land to the tiller” reforms between 1990s and 2000s alone. Land reform programs gave rise to the new breed of farmers, the smallholder farmers. This new breed of farmers is faced with market challenges yet they are key to Africa’s development. This desk study reviews theories of entrepreneurship that could explain how smallholder farmers in Africa engage in markets. Classical theories, neoclassical theories, and neo Austrian theories, and the Schumpeterian approach to entrepreneurship are reviewed. The paper revealed the weaknesses of these theories and concluded that they do not sufficiently explain how smallholder farmers in Africa engage in markets. The theories’ limited insight to the African context gave rise to the concept of collective entrepreneurship which is centered on entrepreneurial behavior and skills of farmer organizations or farmer groups. The review has also found out that although collective entrepreneurship is considered as an appropriate tool for rural development, there are potential problems which can undermine its effectiveness. The paper recommended the concept of collective entrepreneurship to be developed into a theory using evidence from Africa.

Key words: Collective Entrepreneurship, Smallholder farmers, Theories of Entrepreneurship

Introduction

There have been changes in the political systems of African countries which were under colonial rule. During the first decades of independence, the new governments re-distributed land from the minority large-scale (white) farmers into the hands of the majority (black) farmers (FANRPAN, 2005). According to Wiley (2011), more than 32 African countries launched “land to the tiller” reforms between 1990s and 2000s. For example, Egypt had its land reform in 1962-69, Ethiopia (1975), Zimbabwe (1980, 1990, 1992, 2000), South Africa (1994), Tanzania (1990), Eritrea (1992), Rwanda (1997), Mozambique (1999), while Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger and Senegal had their land reforms in the 1990s and South Sudan (2009) (Wiley, 2011). This gave rise to the new breed of farmers, the smallholder farmers who are now the majority occupants. The new breed of farmers is faced with market access problems. Markelova, Meinzen, Hellin and Dohrn, (2009), added that as a result of poor market access and limited bargaining power, smallholder farmers have become price takers. Smallholder farmers in Africa and elsewhere have attempted to deal with their market challenges by forming farmer organizations such as farmer groups, and cooperatives. (FANRPAN, 2005; Mangus and Piters, 2010; Sifa, 2012; Mukindia, 2014; Pawar, 2016). There are theories on entrepreneurship that explain people’s engagement in markets. Most of these theories were developed to explain the multidisciplinary field of entrepreneurship. Research in the latter field of study is ongoing. According to Amolo and Migiro (2014), theory has a significance that affects the reality of issues upon which people act. Pal (2012) posited that it is important to focus on what questions the theory is designed to answer and what tools are being used to answer them. He added that when the concept of entrepreneurship is used in economics, the purpose of analysis is mainly to explain how the market system works and the various kinds of income- especially profit, and their relation to entrepreneurship. Albeit there are several theories of entrepreneurship, this desk review focuses on the following: Classical theory, Neo-classical theories of entrepreneurship, Neo-Austrian theory, Schumpeter’s approach to entrepreneurship, and the concept of collective entrepreneurship. This paper critically evaluates the validity and relevance of these old and emerging theories of entrepreneurship to smallholder farmers in Africa in the face of opportunities and constraints presented by the changing economic environment. Examples of changes to the operating environment in Africa include; globalization, urbanization, population pressure, agri-food system transformation, and diet change (Wiggins, 2009; Mukindia, 2014; Reardon and Timmer 2014).

Theories of Entrepreneurship

While entrepreneurship is considered important for economic development, not much scholarly attention has been given to the issue in the concept of producer-owned firms, such as in farmer organizations (Jos and Bart, 2008). Jos and Bart added that

entrepreneurship is a function rather than an attribute of economic actors, and is expressed through ownership and control over assets. Foss and Klein (2008) presented entrepreneurship as having occupational, structural and functional views. Jos and Bart (2008) argued that the functional perspective can be found in various lines of economic thinking on entrepreneurship. Most commonly entrepreneurship is considered in the functional aspects of management, leadership, alertness or innovation. The following entrepreneurship theories are discussed below: Classical theory, Neo classical theories of entrepreneurship, Neo Austrian theory, Schumpeter's approach to entrepreneurship, and the concept of collective entrepreneurship.

Classical Theory of Entrepreneurship

The classical theory supported the virtues of free trade, specialization, and competition (Ricardo, 1817); Smith 1776). The theory was the result of Britain's industrial revolution which took place in the mid-1700 and lasted until the 1830s. According to Simpeh (2011), the classical movement described the directing role of the entrepreneur in the context of production and distribution of goods in a competitive market place. Classical theorists articulated three models of production *viz.*, land, capital and labor. Although the classical theory explains the Britain's industrial revolution, it fails to explain the dynamic upheaval generated by entrepreneurs of the industrial age (Murphy, Liao, and Welsch, 2006). I wish to argue further that albeit the theory explains the industrial revolution of the 17th and 18th century, it fails to explain the African green revolution of the 21st century which is centered on smallholder farmers.

Neo-Classical Theory of Entrepreneurship

The Neo-classical theory discussed below was articulated by A. Marshall (1842- 1924). Marshall attempts to explain how markets reach equilibrium under the assumption of perfect knowledge and information, perfect competition, existence of homogeneous goods, and free entry and exit (Bula, 2012). He explains that many small firms compete, and, in equilibrium, there is no excess profit earned by each firm and does not give each individual manufacturer a specific role in terms of innovation or change. Firms anticipate the actions of their rivals in the market. Further, Marshall argues that there is no exploitation of labor in production since everyone earns his marginal contribution to production and to national income. Despite Marshall's explanation, there are weaknesses in his model. Tiryaki (2005) noted the following potential problems in the Marshallian model:

- Marshall states that "...a characteristic task of modern manufacturer is that of creating new wants by showing people something which they have never thought of having before; but which they want to have as soon as the notion is suggested to them. In this statement, Marshall contradicts his competitive market theory by indicating that in creating new products and

technologies, the entrepreneur will have monopoly power and earn monopoly rents in that market unless everybody in the market has the same technology, produces the same good as efficiently at the same time and sells at the same time.

- According to Marshall, an entrepreneur anticipates the action of his rivals in the market yet under perfect competition, each firm is a price taker, thus in this scenario, there is no need for each firm to anticipate the actions of the others firms (rivals) since their production decisions do not affect the market price.
- In Marshallian analysis, manufactured produce for the market get zero profits but it is not clear what stimulates these people to be producers apart from wages. There is no explanation for profit.
- In Marshall's treatment of economies of scale, the economies themselves are related to knowledge and change: the law of increasing returns states that an increase in inputs improves the organization of the production, which increases the efficiency of these inputs. Thus, the advantage of large scale is that it leads to innovation, not only in technology but also in products. If this is true, then the accumulation of capital leads to concentration in the market and this leads to existence of imperfect competition.

The critique above shows that Marshallian analysis has its own controversies in explaining the equilibrium conditions, the role of entrepreneur in the market process; and there is no explanation for profit. The model fails to explain profit and how changes and innovations occur in a capitalist economy and ignores the role of creative entrepreneurs' effects on economic development. I argue that Marshallian analysis is centered on firms and manufactures and fails to explain how market systems work for the new breed of farmers, the smallholder farmers in Africa. Sraffa (1926) strongly thinks that Marshall's theory should be discarded. In my view, the Marshallian theory ignored the small producers and focused on large firms and large producers.

Neo-Austrian Approach to Entrepreneurship

The Neo-Austrian approach to entrepreneurship discussed herewith is represented by Kirzner. Kirzner's claim is that initially the economy is in disequilibrium and the competition among alert entrepreneurs takes the economy back to equilibrium (Pal, 2012). Unlike Marshall and other Neo classical economists, Kirzner realizes that markets are not always clear, there is no perfectly informed representative agent and for the change the entrepreneurs need incentives and these incentives come from the difference among agents in terms of information and knowledge. Thus, Kirzner's theory sees mistakes of the Marshallian analysis and attempts to correct them. Kirzner

sees agents as heterogeneous in terms of ability, alertness and ability to access information. He argues that since each agent in the market is an entrepreneur, every other agent is therefore an entrepreneur and a speculator. His entrepreneurs seek to exploit opportunities and thus are decision makers while other actors in the market are not. Kirzner's "alert" entrepreneur is an arbitrator and sees profit opportunities and exploits them. He further argues that an improvement in the technique of production or a shift in preference leads to change or disequilibrium in the market which was initially in equilibrium. Loasby (1982) disagreed with Kirzner new opportunities are continually created by changes in the underlying data. Loasby (1982) argues that Kirzner's model does not provide any incentives to produce such changes. Pal (2012) added that Kirzner's model sees all non-entrepreneurs as programmed robots who do not respond to incentives and do not learn from past experiences nor from others. Pal (2012) argues that Kirzner's theory fails to explain how market systems work and the various kinds of income, especially profit and their relations with entrepreneurship. Tiriyaki (2005) also disagreed with Kirzner and had the following queries on to his model:

- If producers are passive agents who do not have the ability to change who or what factors cause improvements in the technique of production?
- Since the bulk of the production do not take decisions and they simply behave in a programmed way what is the cause of shift in preferences?

I wish to concur with the above controversies about Kirzner's theory. In addition, I wish to argue further that Kirzner's model doesn't explain how smallholder farmers in Africa are involved in the market and how they attempt to solve their market challenges.

Schumpeter's Approach to Entrepreneurship

Schumpeter's theory of entrepreneurship is founded on the concepts of "innovative entrepreneur" and the destructive entrepreneur caused by him (Basilgan, 2011). Schumpeter views an entrepreneur as an innovator and not an imitator (Bula, 2012; Dorin and Alexandru, 2014). This implies that the status of entrepreneurship is acquired through the process of innovation. The Schumpeter argued that money is not what decisively motivates an entrepreneur (Swedberg, 2002), but innovation. Scherer (1999) posited that Schumpeter's entrepreneur is responsible for the introduction of a new good; introduction of a new method of production, opening of a new market; the conquest of a new source of supply of raw materials and creation of a new organization of an industry. A Schumpeterian entrepreneur moves the economy out of static equilibrium by creating new products or production methods, thereby rendering others obsolete (Bula, 2012). Thus, the Schumpeterian entrepreneur is responsible for disturbing the equilibrium in the market, hence he is a destructive entrepreneur.

A unique characteristic of the Schumpeterian entrepreneur is that he is a leader (Prendergast, 2006; Basilgan, 2011; Bula, 2012). Arena and Dangel-Hagnauer (2002) argued that if there are leaders, there have to be followers and the latter play a more passive role in that they are the mere recipients of leaders' decisions, acting to diffuse them. Arena and Dangel-Hagnauer (2002) added that what differentiates between leaders and followers is that leaders' motives are related to their 'instinctive urge to domination', an 'excess energy' or 'activity urges springing from capacities and inclinations that had once been crucial to survival'. Schumpeter, further proposed that there are two types of entrepreneurial leaders; the individual (psychological) and social (sociological) leaders. He pointed out that sociological leaders are group leaders. By this, Schumpeter implies that an entrepreneur could be a single person or organization. Social leadership means to decide, to command, to prevail, to advance as such it is a special function, always clearly discernible in the actions of the individual and within the social whole (Schumpeter, 1966). This implies that the success of an entrepreneur with leadership functions does not only depend on their intrinsic characteristics but also on their social leadership (Festre & Garrouste, 2008).

Consistent with his concept of equilibrium creative destruction, Schumpeter's entrepreneurial leader is not a static person, who is passive, who seeks equilibrium and, who repeats what has already been done, but the man of action, who is dynamic; who breaks out of an equilibrium, and who does what is new (Swedberg, 2008). The basic function of Schumpeter's entrepreneurial leader is that he must be able to overcome the psychological and social resistances, which stand in the way of doing new things, thus he gets things done (Schumpeter, 1934). Stolper (1994) posited that entrepreneurs with this leadership quality are exceptional people, who have the ability to appreciate the possibilities of doing things differently, and materialize it. However, Schumpeter does not regard leaders as superior or "great men", they are not in possession of special intellectual qualities that would lead them to play a pre-eminent social role.

Based on the above scholars, there are wide differences between Marshallian entrepreneurs and Schumpeterian entrepreneurs. Schumpeter sharply differentiates himself from Marshallian theory of entrepreneurship in the following ways:

- According to Marshall, small contributions from a very large number of modest entrepreneurs lead to economic progress. Schumpeter argues that entrepreneurs play a revolutionary role in creating new production functions and methods. Thus, Schumpeterian entrepreneurs create disequilibrium and are also viewed as agents of creative destruction in the market process.
- Marshall's theoretical framework for equilibrium economics was criticized by Schumpeter. While Marshall sees the market in a state of static

equilibrium, Schumpeter's entrepreneur moves the economy out of the static equilibrium (Bula, 2012).

- While Marshall fails to explicitly explain the role of entrepreneurs in the market, Schumpeter's entrepreneurs take a leadership functional role in the market process. Schumpeterian entrepreneurs are leaders who have followers in the market process.

Albeit the Schumpeterian theory of entrepreneurship seems closer to reality and applicable to today's world, it does not go without criticism:

- Schumpeter puts all the responsibility of innovations on the shoulders of 'great man'. However, if innovations and the act of pushing them through commercially are carried out not by individuals, but by a generation, then the contract between the leader and imitators is irrelevant (Tiryaki, 2005).
- Schumpeter identifies his entrepreneurs as leaders in the market and further explained that there are two types of entrepreneurial leaders; the individual (psychological) and social (sociological) leaders. He pointed out that sociological leaders are group leaders but does not give more detail on group leadership and how it is similar or different from collective entrepreneurship.
- Schumpeter argues that his entrepreneurs are innovators and not imitators but does not define those who are imitators or those who simply recognize and respond to the new situations as entrepreneurs unless their responses consist of forming new firms to create new innovations.
- Schumpeter also clearly states that money is not what decisively motivates an entrepreneur but innovation. However, von Mises argues that money represents the only driver for an entrepreneur's actions.

Although Schumpeter's analysis is close to reality, it does not explicitly explain today's markets and does not best explain smallholder farmers' behavior and circumstances.

Towards a Theory of Collective Entrepreneurship

Theories of entrepreneurship discussed above were more appropriate in ancient times and were of best fit to firms, manufacturers and large-scale producers. Times have changed and so has the operating environment. There have been changes in the political systems of African countries which were under colonial rule but are currently no longer under colonial rule. During the first decades of independence, the new governments redistributed land from the minority large-scale (white) farmers into the hands of the majority (black) farmers. According to Wiley (2011), more than 32 African countries

launched “land to the tiller” reforms between 1990s and 2000s. For example, Egypt had its land reform in 1962-69, Ethiopia in 1975, Zimbabwe - 1980- 1985, 1985- 1990, 1992- 1997, 1998- 2000, and 2000-2004, South Africa - 1988, Tanzania - 1990, Eritrea - 1992, Rwanda - 1997, Mozambique - 1999, while Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger and Senegal had their land reforms in the 1990s and South Sudan I 2009 (Moyo, 2006; Wiley, 2011). This also suggests that land matters are a critical issue in Africa and has created a new breed of farmers- the smallholder farmers. According to Wiggins (2009), there are around 33 million small farms in Africa with less than two hectares of land (hence the term “smallholder farmers”) and these represent 80 percent of all farmers. He added that the small farmers are operated at household level using for the most part, family labor. This new breed of farmers are resource poor, about 70 percent of smallholder farmers in Africa are poor (Nchuchuwe and Adejuwon, 2012) and have poor access to markets (Sifa, 2012; Mukindia, 2014). Smallholder farmers’ situations have been made complex by the changing operating environment as aforementioned. Other examples of changes to the operating environment in Africa include: market liberalization; globalization, urbanization, population pressure, agrifood system transformation, and diet change (Wiggins, 2009; Reardon and Timmer 2014; Mukundia, 2014).

Resnick (2004) posited that development in African agriculture will not grow without engaging the new breed of farmers, the smallholder farmers. Ouma (2010) added that strengthening smallholder farmers’ activity is key to reducing poverty, ensuring food security and enhancing economic development. Sifa (2005) argues that unless Africa engages women and youths in agricultural activities and decision making, she will not fully realize her potential. In an IFAD program in Morocco which targeted women and youths in agriculture, more than 20,000 jobs were created, enabling farmer organizations to become more integrated into communities (Sifa, 2012). Sifa (2012) added that young farmers have become role models in contributing to wealth and stability, and creating places where agricultural business can thrive. However, Kaaria, Sanginga, Njuki, Delve, Chitsike and Best (2004) argue that markets can fail the poor and marginalized groups, especially women. Johnson (2005) argues that in remote rural areas, markets may fail because of “thin” markets, high costs of participating, social or economic barriers to participation. Kaaria et al. (2004) added that women are shielded out in markets by their male counterparts as soon as the agricultural produce enters the market.

For smallholder farmers to thrive in the changing environment or global economy, it is necessary to create an entrepreneurial culture in rural communities. This means shifting the focus from production-related programs to more market-oriented interventions (Mukindia, 2014). However, most of agricultural production is undertaken by smallholder farmers scattered all over the country, engaged in different agricultural enterprises without specialization, and with limited marketable surplus (Mukindia,

2014). Therefore, scattered produce in small quantity needs to be collected and assembled, graded, and transported from one market level to another (Barham and Chitemi, 2009). It is difficult for individual smallholder farmers to meet the demands of the changing agrifood system and hence smallholder farmers come together to work as a group. Thus, to deal with challenges and opportunities by the changing environment, smallholder farmers in Africa have responded by engaging in farmer organizations. This has placed renewed attention on institutions of collective action, such as farmer groups, as an efficient mechanism for enhancing marketing performance (Kariuki and Place, 2005). Still, the new market demands require more than collective action but an entrepreneurial culture for smallholder farmers to aggregate produce, move the produce, negotiate with buyers of produce and to cope with the changing operating environment. The Schumpeterian, neoclassical theories of entrepreneurship, and Olson's view of collective action attempted to explain people's access markets but could not sufficiently describe how smallholder farmers in Africa engage in markets. This gave rise to the concept of collective entrepreneurship which is based on Olsonian view of collective actions and on Schumpeter's seminal work on the development of an entrepreneurial function and his writings on innovation (Schumpeter, 1928, 1949; Olson, 1965). Ben Hafaiedh (2006b) and Burress and Cook (2007) supported the notion that entrepreneurship is frequently a collective, rather than a sole, endeavor. They further consider the probability of collective entrepreneurship to be greater than the probability of sole entrepreneurship. This implies that the percentage of new ventures developed through collaborations among multiple entrepreneurial actors out-numbers the percentage of new ventures formed by one entrepreneur.

Collective Entrepreneurship has emerged as a new concept in the literatures of economics, management and entrepreneurship (Ribeiro-Soriano & Urbano, 2009; Toledano, Urbano & Bernadich, 2010). It emerged as a strategy to accrue economic benefits and improved market access (Chagwiza, Muradian, Ruben and Tessema, 2011). Stewart (1989) was the first person to put forward the concept of collective entrepreneurship based on the result of his ethnographic research on high-performing work team. While Stewart (1989) is recognized for coining the concept of collective entrepreneurship, I wish to argue that he didn't relate the concept to the field of agriculture. Cook and Plunkett (2006) were the first to relate collective entrepreneurship to agriculture, focusing on agricultural cooperatives. They defined collective entrepreneurship as a form of rent-seeking behavior exhibited by formal groups of individual agricultural producers that combine the institutional frameworks of investor-driven shareholder firms and patron-driven forms of collective action. Further, Cook and Plunkett (2006) point out that for any form of a collective organization to achieve the highest performance, members' decisions about their own on-farm activities and investments should be aligned with the cooperative. They

posited that this is the risk associated with collective entrepreneurship that producers should be willing to take. Poteete and Ostrom (2004) highlighted social and economic heterogeneity, group size, and the mediating role played by institutions as factors influencing collective action or collective entrepreneurship. There are social norms and values such as trust, loyalty, and social capital which can play a big role in facilitating the success of collective entrepreneurship. Agrawal and Goyal (2001) argued that the cost of monitoring rise more than proportionately as the size of the group increases. Bandiera (2005) and Chagwiza et al. (2011) added that monitoring is easily implemented in small groups. While this is true for small groups, I wish to argue that large groups also enjoy economies of scale. Olson (1965) also addressed the “free rider” problem whereby the contributions offered by group members towards collective goals decline with increases in group sizes. Olson hypothesized that “unless the number of individuals in a group is quite small, rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests unless certain conditions are present.

Farmer organizations or farmer groups to which collective entrepreneurship applies are common in Africa. By 2005, farmer organizations in Africa had grown to 70 (FANRPAN, 2005). FANRPAN added that out of the 70 farmers’ organizations, the majority (59%) were commodity associations, followed by farmer unions or association (30%) and cooperatives (11%). Zimbabwe, Malawi and South Africa had the highest number of farmer organizations while Namibia, Tanzania, and Botswana had the least (FANRPAN, 2005). FANRPAN (2005) presented three typologies of farmer organizations in Africa. These are: farmer unions or associations, commodity associations, and cooperatives. Farmer unions have a broader scope and bring together regional or district groupings and commodity associations. Examples of farmer unions are found in Zimbabwe (Commercial Farmers’ Union), Zambia (Farmers Union of Malawi) and South Africa (Agri South Africa, National African Farmers Union of South Africa). Commodity associations are the majority of the farmer organizations as they operate on the main crops and livestock common in Africa such as tobacco, coffee, horticultural crops, cotton, dairy farming, and beef cattle enterprise among others. According to Mukindia (2014) agricultural cooperatives were introduced in Africa in the 1970s and 1980s and targeted large-scale farmers. They have focused mainly on supply of agricultural inputs, joint production and agricultural marketing (Sifa, 2012). In some cases, agricultural cooperatives have combined both input distribution and crop marketing (Sifa, 2012). Sifa (2012) added that cooperative development in many countries has shown that smallholder farmers who are effectively organized can benefit from aggregated links to markets and services, from accessing centralized services that can help them achieve higher yields and higher incomes, and from speaking with a collective voice to advocate for their needs.

The growth of farmer organizations in Africa emanated from proactive response to be successful in pursuit of significant growth in a rapidly changing economic, social and

political environment (Sifa, 2012). Farmer organizations help solve farmers' collective action problems, that is, how to procure inputs most efficiently and market their outputs on more favorable terms than they could achieve by themselves (Sifa, 2012). Collective action has the potential to organize smallholder farmers in developing countries in the wake of agricultural market liberalization (Mukindia, 2014). Farmer organizations have recorded success in the dairy sector in Kenya, coffee enterprise in Ethiopia, cotton enterprise in Mali and cotton enterprise in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, farmer organizations are used by the government and NGOs to extend trainings and other capacity building initiatives.

With access to markets being one of the most difficult challenges, the role of collective entrepreneurship in helping them to exercise economies of scale is increasingly important (Sifa, 2012). Through collective entrepreneurship, farmers can attract traders and buyers, and can increase their negotiating power (Sifa, 2012). Although collective entrepreneurship is considered as an appropriate tool for linking smallholder farmers to markets and upgrading their socio-economic status, there are potential problems which can undermine its effectiveness. These include: low institutional capacity, inadequate qualified personnel, low entrepreneurship skills, lack of financial resources, lack of market information, lack of communication and participation among members, patronizing the business activity of the groups, control and support, mismanagement, financial scandals and poor governance (Bingen & Howard, 2003; Sitaram, 2009; Makongoso, Gichira & Orwa, 2015). Collective entrepreneurship can play an important role for rural development. However, farmer organizations or farmer groups are not always successful, and there is a need to better understand under what conditions of collective entrepreneurship is useful and viable. It is important to study the group entrepreneurial behavior that enable farmers to address market challenges. In my view, the collective entrepreneurship concept has the potential to be developed into a theory.

Conclusion

The trend in entrepreneurship research had changed over the decades from a more theoretical focus toward a more practical one. This alteration was due to the changing economic environment and new needs of the business world and scholars tried to keep up with the changes that took place in the world's economies. This has brought a lot of refinement to the theories of entrepreneurship in an attempt to explain people's behavior in relation markets. The discussed theories have a more limited insight, because for example, they do not offer a clear explanation on how smallholder farmers in Africa engage in markets, including the Schumpeterian theory. However, this does not mean that they are not of fundamental importance, they are relevant in other context and circumstances. This gave rise to the concept of collective entrepreneurship which is based on Olsonian view of collective actions and on Schumpeter's seminal work on

the development of an entrepreneurial function and his writings on innovation. Collective entrepreneurship better explains how smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe and other African countries, scattered all over, involved in different agricultural enterprises without specialization, and with limited marketable surplus engage in markets which have become competitive. In my view, the concept of collective action can be developed into a theory. Future research in Africa can validate this concept. Research can focus on the following: (i) farmer group leadership attributes and characteristics and how they can be improved in Africa (ii) under what conditions of collective entrepreneurship is useful and viable? (iii) what is the scale of farmer co-operatives or farmers group membership that is required to obtain competitiveness? (iv) which group entrepreneurial behavior enable smallholder farmers to access markets? and (v) what are the structural transformations occurring in Africa and how are smallholder farmers affected?

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